

Conference Market economy and new public in the social field, impact and alternatives
Martine TRAPON. Workshop n° 6: "Heritage and transmission, telling our trades"
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Argument.

Robert Castel, sociologist, in the foreword to his book "La montée des incertitudes, travail, protection, statut de l'individu" quotes a formula by Paul Valéry concerning the kingdom of France at the time of Montesquieu, before 1789, "Le corps social perd tout doucement son lendemain" He adds that if we are not on the eve of a revolution, "a considerable transformation has taken place (...) as to how we can represent the future and have influence on it".

In this workshop we propose to share our experiences on several issues: The relationship to the social body, that is, in what we are dealing with, our relationship to the trades we are talking about here and more broadly to the changes in this relationship for everyone in a society that has become a "society of individuals".

Our representation of social progress because, as Robert Castel writes, "it is not only a conceptual construction that makes sense in an ideology of history. For social subjects, it is lived through the concrete projects they implement on a daily basis, oriented towards a future that will ensure their well-being", concrete projects that constitute the cornerstone of our support practices in the exercise of our professions.

Finally, since it is a question of "saying our jobs", it will be a question of speaking out about what we are the heirs and what we transmit. We will therefore not be able to avoid examining the metamorphoses that we are all going through, especially in our relationship to the past, the present and the future of these particular social work professions.

"Inheritance, transmission, telling our trades. «

What is an inheritance?

Inheritance is the inheritance left by a deceased person and transmitted by succession. Figuratively speaking, what is transmitted as a succession, what is inherited from the predecessors in terms of character, ideology, and/or what is painful to assume.

Social work" as an object of transmission is a complex object, but it is no less so as a heritage. Its exercise is composite, it varies according to the organization of public action, institutional forms and audiences as well as the professions and activities in which it is carried out.

As a reminder, the International Definition of Social Work approved by the IASSW General Assembly on 10 July 2014 in Melbourne: "Social Work is a professional practice and a discipline. It promotes social change and development, social cohesion, empowerment and the liberation of people. The principles of social justice, human rights, collective social responsibility and respect for diversity are at the heart of social work. Supported by the theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work encourages individuals and structures to meet life's challenges and acts to improve the well-being of all. »

Social work was born at the beginning of the 19th Century from a process of fundamental political change, the constitution of a new form of government, the State, accompanied by a progressive sécularisation of mutual aid systems, the advent in Europe of a republican, united and democratic society. A society in which the law guarantees unconditional assistance to all, where it becomes possible for everyone to discuss their situation again, to reconsider their failure, to calm their worries or to live with their disability. It is from this political project that social work was founded, a political project that supports its scope and symbolic effectiveness on two fundamental axes: to be a place of engagement of subjects in the relationship about the social question posed in a unique and particular way, in a discursive space and to constitute a social space where the incompleteness of the institution and the possibility of its criticism as well as its progress is manifest.

The construction of social work as a heritage began during the so-called century of modernity, in the wake of the Enlightenment, and continues to this day. However, according to many political philosophers, this legacy was thwarted at the end of the Second World War by the emergence of a "definitive rupture between past and future" and the erasure of the "treasure" that the 18th century constituted, carrying so many promises, including happiness and freedom for all".

So what happened between the Enlightenment and the twentieth and first centuries? The prophecy of Alexis of Tocqueville: "The past no longer illuminating the future, the spirit walks in darkness" would it have been realized? This is the hypothesis formulated by Hannah Arendt, philosopher, in the preface to her book "La crise de la culture" when she comments on the concern of the poet and resistance fighter René Char who wrote at the end of the war: "Our heritage is not preceded by any will! "The disappearance of the possibility of thought

being, according to the philosopher, one of the possible risks that may arise in this new state of the world. It is on this gap between the past and the future, this dangerous rupture that social work as we know it today appears. Professionalized assistance and relief, which I believe accompanies the weakening of the traditional bonds of mechanical solidarity to support the bond of organic solidarity in a society that has become that of the autonomous and responsible individual. Public action also places the practice of social work on a new division between public and private space.

Transmitting this heritage is not simple because this transmission requires resituating the different doctrines on which social work practices have been successively based in the evolution of historical, political and economic contexts, that of ideas and the metamorphoses of the forms of social cohesion. Knowledge, knowledge and feedback on experiences are therefore part of a field characterized by a multidisciplinary corpus and a sharing of knowledge that carries ideological, theoretical, clinical and methodological conflicts that complicate their transmission.

This transmission is also intergenerational. One can imagine the nature of this debate given the importance of the personal and emotional dimension involved in the professional engagement of each social worker. The duration of a human generation generally corresponds to the renewal cycle of an adult population capable of reproduction, i.e. about 25 years or about 3 generations per century. Social workers have therefore been involved for three generations if the birth of the social state is estimated at about a century. During this century society has changed, the forms of the social question have evolved and have changed the function of social work. As soon as what to transmit? What is accepted of these "old trades"? Are they the same jobs? The genealogy of these professions is also significant. In which line of descent should we consider, that of social service, special education, animation? What conception, what place should be given to the accompanied person, what ethics of the privileged act?

Finally, in my opinion, the question of transmission is inseparable from the act of formation that we all carry out in the here and now of our professional practice and to this end I would like to evoke a cinematographic memory.

In their film "Le fils", Jean Pierre and Luc Dardenne show in a sequence shot all the components of the learning situation. A master carpenter gives his first lesson. For the students, it is a matter of learning how to assemble a beam on the structure under construction

of a house. He explains the steps: lean the ladder against the wall, then place the beam in balance on his shoulder and maintain this balance by climbing up the ladder with one hand holding the beam with the other. The apprentice is afraid as soon as he gets higher and it is immediately clear that the gesture will only be successful if a perfect angle is formed between the inclination of the ladder on the wall and that of the body of the carrier climbing the ladder, a perfect angle that alone makes it possible to maintain the beam in balance on the shoulder. The master also points out the need to turn his gaze upwards in order to facilitate movement. But we also see that each body being different, the angle formed between each other's legs and the inclination of the ladder will never have the same spacing, so this angle will be the invention of each apprentice finding in turn the balance.

The Dardenne brothers show us this: the components of a gesture can be learned, but its success depends on trust, that is, the sum of the student's invention and his trust in the teacher to overcome his fear and find his own balance at the risk of falling. Confidence of the apprentice who echoes the master's confidence in his own desire to transmit, a desire based on the acceptance of the incompleteness of his knowledge and the recognition of the apprentice's intelligence.

As far as the professions are concerned, what is it all about? What are the words? What are the gestures? What forms of experience are implemented? In my opinion, saying business is very close to this ethic of trust.

According to Michel Chauvière, sociologist, from the outset social work is composite and is supported by a "square of intelligences", formed "by law and the normative agreements that result from it, by institutions as well as by professional and democratic mediation, by social knowledge through research and training and finally by professional acts in situations, in other words clinical acts. »

So if it is a question of listing the "gestures" and "words" of social work (you will note that I do not say competence...) we must, on the one hand, take into account this "intelligence square" and, on the other hand, identify what would be common to all modes of social service practice.

Let's examine the visible mutations for each of the squares to try out the lexicon.

The experience of the meeting

Michel Autès, sociologist, recalls in his article "Les métamorphoses du travail social" that "the working contexts of social work professionals are from the outset situations of interaction. And he adds: what all professionals have in common is the encounter with the other. (...) the relationship is both the purpose and the object of the intervention. "This means that technology is at the service of the relationship and that the object of the transaction is about people. All work situations are part of the register of speech, exchange and intersubjectivity. Techniques are always pretexts, tools, mediations, but it is the relationship they allow that is essential. They are symbolic and identity-based transactions in which the subjectivity of the speaker will be deeply engaged. Because of this subjective and linguistic dimension, storytelling is at the heart of social intervention.

To say the job is therefore to tell it, to tell it, to tell a story and to hear it in all its originality, in order to better understand the particular nature of the encounter with the other and to leave all its place to his own story.

What is meant is therefore mainly the expression of this ability to engage in a "particular saying", this interaction where an encounter takes place in which the differentiation of places is due to the fact that the two protagonists do not have the same power but that their possibility of engagement in the relationship is balanced. If this capacity for engagement can be facilitated by learning the techniques of the relationship and a knowledge of the devices, it can in no way be sufficient to experiment, to take the risk.

However, the conditions of the meeting, the space of this commitment, must be made possible and identifiable in a story for two voices, to say this adventure which consists in meeting the other even if it remains an enigma.

Read the devices:

The law: The function of law has changed. In France since the 1980s, the social state has reduced its overall protective function and created new mechanisms and new categories of beneficiaries in relation to a social situation characterised as particular (RMI, FSL) or because of their domicile (City Policy). While this gives the illusion of increasing the possibilities of solving certain problems, these individualised schemes require more from the beneficiary in terms of responsibility. They put it at the centre of the system and suggest that it would be within its sole competence to assert its right and use it. We are no longer in the assistance but in the management of a situation that must lead the person to the resolution of his problem without sometimes having understood the statement.

Reading these new mechanisms therefore requires a greater effort on the part of the beneficiary and the person accompanying him or her, and leads to both a difficulty in sharing between social workers and the temptation to be satisfied with standardised and managerial responses.

Drawing the institutional geography:

According to Pierre Legendre, psychoanalyst "by signifying reasons to live and die, to support the human cause (...) Institutions designate a logical place inseparable from politics, a place where some of the most essential stakes in life, that is, in the reproduction of life, are played out". The institution institutes something other than care for the hospital, a beyond education for the school, more than help for the social service...

Today, institutions are transforming themselves into organizations, devices or platforms. From then on, the social dimension no longer comes under general and universal values and principles, but is organized, i.e. organic. It is clear that we will have to define its meaning in a different way. Saying our jobs therefore implies situating ourselves in this new geography and mapping it out. The places where social work is carried out are increasingly detached from the common law institutions for which they were previously the repair space and gateway to it. Today, they are made up of specialized islands and accentuate the targeting of populations and their discrimination. It is therefore necessary for social workers to identify their isolation, their weakening and their function as a smuggler as well as their inability to represent what founded them, the protective role of the social state, the guarantee of social citizenship and thus the place of the person in this new landscape.

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