

Reinventing Relations with Dialog

Reinventing Relations with Dialog

By

Valérie Gauthier

**Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing**



Reinventing Relations with Dialog

By Valérie Gauthier

This book first published 2024

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Copyright © 2024 by Valérie Gauthier

All rights for this book reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

ISBN: 978-1-0364-1578-5

ISBN (Ebook): 978-1-0364-1579-2

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	x
FOREWORD.....	xii
THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF DIALOGUE LEADS TO AN ESCALATION OF CONFLICT	xiii
TAKING A STEP BACK / A HOLISTIC PERSPECTIVE	xiv

PART I: A HOLISTIC UNDERSTANDING OF DIALOGUE

CHAPTER 1	2
A VERY BRIEF HISTORY OF HUMAN RELATIONS	
1.1. THE FOUR KINGDOMS: INSTINCTS, BELIEFS, SCIENCE, AND DIGITAL	3
1.1.1. <i>The reign of instincts: A need to survive</i>	3
1.1.2. <i>The reign of beliefs: the needs of security and domination</i>	7
1.1.3. <i>The reign of science: need to explain the inexplicable</i>	9
1.1.4. <i>The reign of the digital: How the Internet challenges us to reconsider Relationship</i>	12
1.2. THE THREE THREADS OF THE RELATIONSHIP: SENSES, REASON AND EMOTIONS.....	18
1.2.1 <i>The triptych of relationships in children</i>	19
1.3. FROM RELATIONSHIP TO DIALOGUE	24
1.3.1 <i>What dialogue is</i>	26
1.3.2 <i>What dialogue is not</i>	26
CHAPTER 2	28
THE CHALLENGE OF THE 21ST CENTURY: THE ART OF DIALOG	
2.1 PEOPLE AT THE END OF THEIR ROPES	28
2.1.1 <i>Is fear the only response to the state of the world?</i>	28
2.1.2 <i>No one cares about the trains being on time</i>	30
2.1.3 <i>Turning inward</i>	31
2.1.4 <i>Gen Z and anxiety: « I don't understand anything anymore »...</i>	33
2.2. ORGANIZATIONS UNDER STRESS.....	35
2.2.1. <i>Sense and responsibility in the company</i>	35
2.2.2. <i>Happiness vs Burnout</i>	40

2.3. THE NECESSITY OF A RELATIONAL KNOW-HOW	42
2.3.1. <i>Interconnections, complexity and systems</i>	43
2.3.2. <i>The system is the territory of interconnections</i>	46
2.3.3. <i>Savoir-Relier, the key competence of the XXIst century</i>	47
2.4. FREEING OURSELVES FROM JUDGMENT	48
2.4.1. <i>Judgment as a reflex</i>	48
2.4.2. <i>What is judgment, really?</i>	50
2.4.3. <i>The eyes that judge</i>	50
2.4.4. <i>Point of view, opinion, reason, appreciation</i>	52
2.5. DIALOGUE IS INDISPENSABLE TO FACE COMPLEXITY	53
2.5.1. <i>Gaining serenity and confidence in our relations</i>	53
2.5.2. <i>Overcoming cultural injunctions with dialog</i>	53
2.5.2. <i>Stepping out of conflicts with a new form of dialog</i>	56
2.5.3. <i>Dialog as a mediator to meet the challenges of our century</i>	57
CHAPTER 3	60
THE DANCE OF THE 3Gs: SECRETS OF A VIRTUOUS DIALOGUE	
3.1. THE 3Gs ARE THE HEARTBEATS OF “SAVOIR-RELIER”	61
3.2. GENUINE, TRUE AUTHENTICITY	63
3.2.1. <i>Be Yourself</i>	64
3.2.2. <i>Is all truth good to share?</i>	64
3.2.3. <i>Secrets and omerta: the pitfalls of relationships?</i>	68
3.3. GENEROUS, THE BEST MINDSET IN WHICH TO ENCOUNTER OTHERS... 70	
3.3.1. <i>Generosity: the fuel of relationship</i>	70
3.3.2. <i>Transactional relationships and Savoir-Relier</i>	72
3.3.3. <i>Empathy: seeing the world through your eyes</i>	73
3.3.4. <i>Too much generosity kills generosity</i>	75
3.4. GENERATIVE, SOMETHING BIGGER THAN US	76
3.4.1. <i>Performance is not the end goal</i>	77
3.4.2. <i>Difference as strength</i>	77
3.4.3. <i>The limits of generative and the dangers of hyper-growth</i>	78
3.5. THE 3Gs IN BALANCE, A SUBTLE AND DELICATE DANCE	79
CHAPTER 4	81
CONFIDENCE, THE FOUNDATION OF OUR RELATIONSHIPS	
4.1. FOUNDATIONAL DIALOGUE: OPENING TO OTHERS	89
4.2. DIALOGUE IN THE CITY OR DIALOGUE IN POWER	94
4.3. MEANING, THE UMBILICAL CORD BETWEEN US AND THE WORLD.... 99	
4.3.1. <i>Incoherence destabilizes us</i>	99
4.3.2. <i>What resonates within us seems familiar</i>	99
4.3.3. <i>That which protects us makes us strong</i>	100

4.4. A DIALOGUE/CONVERSATION WITH THE WORLD: CONNECTING WITH LIVING THINGS	100
4.5. RESTORING DIALOGUE: TOO AMBITIOUS OF AN AMBITION?	105

PART II: TAKING CARE OF DIALOG' WITH THE RIGHT TOOLS

CHAPTER 5	110
A METHODOLOGY AND THE REQUISITE INSTRUMENTS TO FACILITATE DIALOGUE	110
5.1. PREPARING FOR DIALOGUE	110
5.1.1 <i>Mental preparation, reflexivity a precursor to relations</i>	111
5.1.2 <i>Sensorial preparation: Using speaking, listening and observing</i>	113
5.1.3 <i>Perception and interpretation: The bear and the painting exercises</i>	115
5.1.4 <i>The ladder of inference</i>	122
5.2. THE SOLO: INTROSPECTION, A NECESSARY GOOD	126
5.2.1 <i>The SOLO, user manual</i>	128
5.2.2 <i>The SOLO, why?</i>	129
5.2.3 <i>The SOLO, where from?</i>	130
5.3. THE DUO	137
5.3.1 <i>The DUO, user manual</i>	137
5.3.2 <i>A rigorous frame for a special kind of dialogue</i>	140
5.3.3 <i>The DUO, what next?</i>	143
5.4. SOCIO: RESILIENCE TO BUILD A GROUP WITH CORES	145
5.4.1 <i>A group of individuals does not make a team</i>	146
5.4.2 <i>Developing the team via confrontation</i>	151
5.4.3 <i>Stories of resilience</i>	153
5.4.4 <i>CORES, user manual</i>	154
5.4.5 <i>Uncovering resilience mechanisms</i>	155
5.5. CODEVELOPMENT (CODEV) AND COLLECTIVE INTELLIGENCE	155
5.5.1 <i>CODEV, user manual</i>	156
5.5.2 <i>An atmosphere of trust is critical</i>	160
5.5.3 <i>The traps of CODEV</i>	161
5.6. COREL TO SOLVE COMPLEX PROBLEMS	165
5.6.1 <i>COREL, user manual</i>	167

CHAPTER 6	183
SAVOIR-RELIER INDIVIDUALS	
6.1. CASE #1 – JUDGMENT	184
6.1.1. <i>Analysis: judgment versus assertiveness</i>	185
6.1.2. <i>Lowering the weight of biases and noises</i>	187
6.1.3. <i>Less judgment for better discernment</i>	190
6.2. CASE #2 – MANAGING CONFLICTS	191
6.2.1. <i>Analysis: the generational conflict</i>	192
6.2.2. <i>Looking at the other for who he or she is</i>	193
6.2.3. <i>Making progress in conflict management</i>	195
6.3. CASE #3 – STEPPING OUT OF TOXIC RELATIONSHIPS	196
6.3.1. <i>Analysis: what happened?</i>	197
6.3.2. <i>What can be done to avoid the pitfalls of toxic relationships?</i>	198
6.4. CASE #4 – PREVENTING BURNOUT	200
6.4.1. <i>Where does burnout come from and why?</i>	202
6.4.2. <i>How to prevent burnout?</i>	204
6.5. CASE #5 – WHEN THE CONVERSATION GOES ASTRAY	205
6.5.1. <i>Choosing dialogue is an act of courage</i>	207
6.5.2. <i>Rewarding as one option toward a solution</i>	210
6.5.3. <i>Dialogue or debate, choosing your battles</i>	211
6.5.4. <i>Keeping self-control or controlling the situation?</i>	211
CHAPTER 7	213
SAVOIR-RELIER IN ORGANIZATIONS	
7.1. CASE #1 – THE ANNUAL REVIEW FLOP	213
7.1.1. <i>The pitfalls of annual reviews</i>	215
7.1.2. <i>Feedback literally means “feeding in return”</i>	218
7.2. CASE #2 – RECRUITMENT: ENDING THE CAT AND MOUSE GAME ...	220
7.2.1. <i>The recruitment paradox: an encounter without dialogue</i> ...	221
7.2.2. <i>Recruitment is a double bind exercise</i>	224
7.3. CASE #3 – TWO COMPANIES ARE GETTING MARRIED: REASON VS FEELINGS	225
7.3.1. <i>Human relationships at the heart of any merger</i>	226
7.3.2. <i>Creating the conditions of shared trust</i>	228
7.4. CASE #4 – BULLYING, A CONTEMPORARY ILLNESS INCREASED BY THE DIGITAL AGE	230
7.4.1. <i>Too many players at stake?</i>	232
7.4.2. <i>Stopping the vicious circle of the system</i>	236

7.5. CASE #5 – GLOBAL VERSUS LOCAL: WHEN EVERYBODY IS RIGHT	240
7.5.1. <i>Cultural identity: between structure and freedom</i>	241
7.5.2. <i>Embodying the right mindset to align values</i>	244
7.6. COMPANIES CAN BE SOCIAL LABS	245
7.7. CASE #6 – WE CAN’T EVEN PRONOUNCE THEIR NAMES	247
7.6.1. <i>When fear of the unknown makes us climb our ladder all the way to the top</i>	248
CHAPTER 8	252
THE WORLD RESHAPED WITH DIALOG’	
8.1. THE DIALOGUE IMPERATIVE IN THE FACE OF THE « PLANETARY POLYCRISIS»	252
8.2. RETHINKING OUR RELATION TO THE LIVING	256
8.2.1. <i>Ecological crisis or crisis of sensibility</i>	256
8.2.2. <i>Act “ecology of dialogue”</i>	257
8.3. THE ECOLOGY OF DIALOGUE: A FIVE-ACT PLAY TO EMBRACE THE CHALLENGES OF SOBRIETY	260
8.4. 85 YEARS OF RESEARCH ON HAPPINESS AND ONE CONCLUSION: HEALTHIER RELATIONSHIPS	267
8.5. WHAT IF DIALOGUE WAS A STORY TOLD?	270
CONCLUSION	276

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book represents a tipping point in the history of Savoir-Relier. From the first article in 1994 to *Leading with Sense* in 2014 and *Reinventing Relations with Dialog*, the journey has been engaging and enriching on all fronts, with encounters and discoveries toward better human relationships. On these paths I have found unique souls whose support has made this journey a true-life changing experience. I wish to thank those who have made this journey so enriching and contributed to making this new book a reality.

The Savoir-Relier method that supports this new form of dialog with practice and experience across cultures and generations has grown thanks to Philippe Gaud, my partner in life and work, whose wisdom and insatiable thirst for knowledge helped face the challenges of human relationships. Philippe participated in the reflection and the writing of the original book in French and has brought serenity to the solution it opens with dialog instead of conflicts.

The adaptation for an English-speaking audience was done with the help of Chantal Carleton, my American friend and colleague at HEC Paris and Camila Lopes Masetti, my Brazilian friend and partner in the Savoir-Relier journey.

The collaborative work behind this book, particularly with the illustrations that bring a new perspective to the concepts thanks to the creative and listening mind of Lionel Paolini and Baptiste Vernier was also a unique and enriching discovery, including in the English adaptation of the illustrations for this book.

I also would like to pay tribute to the great minds that have inspired me on the Savoir-Relier journey, particularly Theodore Zeldin, British historian and sociologist with whom I was able to work and share my doubts and ideas alike; Edgar Morin, French sociologist and philosopher whose work on complexity and whose *Method* has led me into the formulation of the frame for Savoir-Relier. And many others you will discover reading the book.

Finally, the genuine, generous and generative support of my adult children, Julie and Geoffroy, who have helped me gain perspective and understanding in the application of *savoir-relier* as a behavior in their life and work. Maintaining dialog with them is a constant source of learning and joy, even in more challenging times as those we live in.

FOREWORD

“**Dialog**”¹ is not merely desirable; it is essential. The evolution of society towards more exclusion and division pleads for something new, something different. The divisions and polarizations growing from first verbal then physical violence are leading to chaos. Dialog’ is a courageous and conscious act. It is the triumph of trust over distrust. We must do something and fight for a more inclusive world. This is my sense of purpose and my mission.” (Valérie Gauthier).

The necessity for a new dialogue is becoming increasingly apparent in the contemporary world. This reshaped *dialog*’ will serve to demonstrate the potential for the reinvention of human relations.

An almost perfect dinner.

We were invited to dinner with friends, where we were greeted with a warm welcome. The room was warmed by a fireplace, the table was set with candles, and the kitchen was promising a delicious meal. These elements combined to create an ambience conducive to a beautiful evening and the opportunity to meet new people. However, this evening would prove to be one of the most painful experiences we have ever had to endure.

The evening commences with a conventional French aperitif in the living room, during which attendees engage in discourse and exchange ideas in a convivial and cordial manner. Subsequently, one of the guests begins to express his disillusionment and discontent with the contemporary world, which he perceives to have undergone a significant transformation. Despite the efforts of some guests to restore a sense of tranquility to the evening, the discourse becomes increasingly radicalized. As we move to the dinner table, the conversation takes on a distinctly racist and conspiratorial tone, making us increasingly uneasy.

Despite numerous attempts to resume the discussion with factual information, a pervasive silence emerges, and all attendees, including ourselves, ultimately opt for an alternative course of action rather than continue the

¹ Dialog’ with this spelling and apostrophe refers to a new form of dialogue, one reinvented under the Savoir-Relier method as the book explains and illustrates. Each time the word dialog’ is spelled as such, we are differentiating from the common form of dialogue used today.

debate. The dinner concludes abruptly, and all participants depart the table with the dessert barely consumed.



The genuine disquiet that accompanied us on our return that evening was that we had been unable to alter the dial of the distressing clichés even slightly through dialogue and listening. When this kind of ordeal involves people with whom one is unlikely to have further contact, it becomes nothing more than a bad memory. However, what can be done when this impasse affects our relationship with a child, a friend, a colleague, or between two countries? The stakes are no longer the same. The survival of our family life, our work performance, and world peace are now at stake.

The impossibility of dialogue leads to an escalation of conflict

It is likely that you have encountered a situation of this nature. This is an "echo chamber debate" where individuals adhere to their pre-established positions, demonstrating a reluctance to engage in debate based on facts. Constructing a genuine exchange that is more nuanced than the sum of its individual parts is not always straightforward and requires a level of effort that *Savoir-Relier*, the capacity for relational know-how, makes possible. This approach necessitates the self-awareness of the participants and the creativity to envision possibilities beyond the constraints of partisan rhetoric. It requires a willingness to transcend one's own perspective and engage with others in a spirit of mutual respect. This is a potential solution

to the challenges that arise during these emotionally charged moments. We will explore this relational know-how in greater detail in the subsequent sections.

The relationship between humans is the fundamental reason for our work. We have chosen dialogue as a means of illustrating the strength of the bonds that are formed through human relationships. In a similar manner to how the sails represent the boat, dialogue represents the relationship as a whole. It is a prism through which we can gain insight into the nature of the relationship. By engaging in dialogue, we can learn how to connect with ourselves, with others, and with the world around us. But not just any dialogue, rather a new form that we will define, explain and comment as *dialog'*, using this precise typescript to identify its specificities.

Taking a step back / A holistic perspective

The relationship between two individuals is not merely a matter of connection; it is also the genesis of thinking. The relationship nourishes our thinking and our brains, enabling us to become more alive, curious, and open to others. Relationships facilitate growth and stimulate us. Relationships allow us to become aware of ourselves through the intersecting gazes of others. Without relationships, we starve; we become mired in our own beliefs, judgments, and biases. All of which ultimately impedes our growth.

The illusion of certitude impedes the growth and authenticity of relationships, including those between individuals.

The objective of developing the Savoir-Relier®² method was to gain a deeper understanding of the complexities and strengths of relationships. This understanding is essential for effective judgment, attentive listening, and meaningful action. It also provides the confidence to identify and fulfill one's purpose. While the method is not merely theoretical, it is grounded in decades of research and experience. It offers solutions to enable individuals and communities to challenge the convenience-driven habits that often result in the breakdown of relationships and dialogue.

² Savoir-Relier is a trademark registered with the INPI to protect the research that led to the creation of the method and to preserve its integrity, to support all individuals who wish to develop their interpersonal skills with rigor and impact over the long term. <https://Savoir-Relier.com>. See also the association <https://dialog.ngo/>

The project is indeed ambitious, but we are convinced that our proposal has the potential to transform the world for the better. This conviction is based on our extensive experience of implementing the approach with tens of thousands of individuals over many years. Our work has yielded valuable feedback and testimonies from these participants, which illustrate the profound impact that Savoir-Relier has had on their lives.



What this book is not:

- A theory of human relations
- A recipe book of easy “how-to” lists
- A textbook on neuroscience
- An essay on psychopathology

What this book is:

- The fruit of 30 years of research and practice in psychology, linguistics, leadership, and relationships
- A reflection on the need to improve the quality of human relations
- A method for engaging in dialogue
- A proposal for solutions to social and societal problems

This ambition is based on results and evidence from 30 years of research conducted at prestigious institutions such as HEC Paris, MIT Sloan, and New York University Stern. This research led to the writing of my book in 2014: *Leading with Sense: The Intuitive Power of Savoir-Relier* and its translation, *The Savoir-Relier: Towards Intuitive and Relational Leadership*. To date, over 150,000 learners have engaged with the Savoir-Relier method on Coursera and other learning platforms. The SR approach has facilitated the development of a network, comprising thousands of individuals who engage in the sharing, collaboration, and advancement of relational growth.

Our business and corporate experience has been carried out in the most diverse sectors, demonstrating our ability to reach targets ranging from large groups to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and very small enterprises (VSEs) in sectors which are not the easiest to convince. These sectors include construction (Vinci, Bouygues), luxury (Chanel, LVMH, Kering, L'Oréal, etc.), insurance (Aéma group), pharmacy (Sanofi), mass consumption (Pernod Ricard) or technology (Apple, Atome), public service (Véhiposte). The feedback has been consistently positive from both management and executive committees, as well as from employees, both junior and experienced.

In the field of higher education, I have held the position of Professor at HEC Paris. Most significantly, I have served as Dean of the MBA program for eight years. I have participated in events and conferences as a speaker in numerous circles. The success encountered in both in-person and online courses developed since 2015 demonstrates the potential of this approach and the impact that we can have on some of the crucial issues that are disrupting our world today. The objective of this publication is to disseminate the results of our research, which focus on the "how" of addressing toxic relationships, preventing burnout, managing conflicts, restoring a broken bond, and initiating dialogue in the most challenging circumstances. The "how" is the primary focus of this book.

As human beings, we are both social and selfish animals. Our species is driven by a contradiction between our deep need to live in community and

our equally deep need for individual attention. We are a living paradox, navigating between the unique individual that we are and the groups to which we belong or wish to belong, which push us to adapt to their constraints. The act of learning to walk creates a necessary imbalance with each of our steps. Walking constantly oscillates between the instability of the movement and the stability of both feet placed on the ground. The child who begins to walk knows this feeling well: this imbalance is both frightening and exciting. The pleasure of seeing oneself move forward alone, without help from anyone or anything, provides a feeling of incredible freedom and power. However, the need for support is equally strong. It is in the encouraging reactions from the parental figure that the child gains confidence. Thus, we advance step by step in a complex and dynamic ecosystem whose essence is movement, the source of our stability. Our relationship with others is the energy of this movement. Let us then examine the history of human relationships in four stages.

PART I

A HOLISTIC UNDERSTANDING OF DIALOGUE



CHAPTER 1

A VERY BRIEF HISTORY OF HUMAN RELATIONS

Definition

The term "human relationships" refers to the "various connections and interactions between individuals who interact with each other, whether in person, through communication, or on a regular basis" (Larousse dictionary).

The study of human relationships became a particularly personal area of interest for me during my childhood, particularly following the decision of my father to leave our family when I was 11. His departure had a profound impact on my beliefs, emotions, and sense of security. I had previously regarded my father as the most important figure in my life, and his departure led to a period of confusion and distress. My intense anger and profound incomprehension at his abandonment led me to refuse to see him for four years, despite the significant physical distress caused by intense emotions. The self-imposed isolation from my father compelled me to attempt to comprehend how my relationship with him both facilitated my becoming the joyful, balanced, and athletic teenager I had been; and subsequently became the source of my greatest sadness.

My studies in a wide range of disciplines, the travels, encounters, and my career as a professor-researcher are all inextricably linked to this pivotal episode of my childhood, which shaped my life by placing relationships at its core.

I became intrigued by the nature of relationships that can simultaneously unite and destroy. I sought to understand how these relationships have evolved over time to grasp their essence.

The objective here is to gain an understanding of the nature of relationships to facilitate their optimal support. Four distinct periods have been identified in which specific elements have emerged that are of particular importance to human needs.

1. Instincts predominate in Prehistory and the Neolithic.
2. Beliefs play a major role during Antiquity and the Middle Ages.
3. Sciences control modern times and the contemporary era.
4. The advent of the Internet marks the ascendance of digital technology in the late 1980s. This final era prompts a reexamination of the very nature of the relational fabric, which is constituted by complex systems.

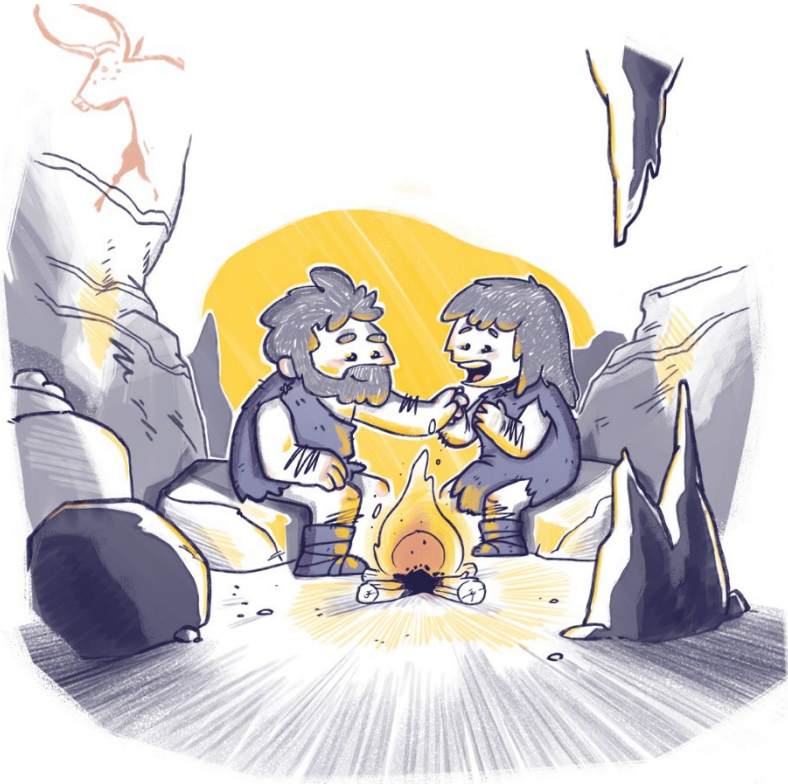
The common thread that runs through these four historical periods in the evolution of human relationships is the quality of the established bonds. Consequently, I have focused my research on the processes by which these connections are formed and dissolved, on the "how."

1.1. The four kingdoms: instincts, beliefs, science, and digital

It can be argued that human beings are not designed to live in isolation; rather, they require the company of other humans to survive and flourish. Research into the evolution of the human brain indicates that human relationships have evolved in parallel with their environment. It can be posited that the world moves because humans move, eat, conquer, build, and evolve together.

1.1.1. The reign of instincts: A need to survive

There is a paucity of data on the nature of human relationships during the Sapiens era (read *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind* by Yuval Noah Harari, 2011 in Hebrew and 2014 in English). This may be due to the fact that these relationships were nomadic and instinctive, making them difficult to trace. It is evident that the relationship between prehistoric people and their environment was primarily based on the senses, which enabled them to protect themselves, hunt, reproduce, and survive in a hostile world. In this context, it is possible to discuss the role of instinct. It is likely that these instincts were shaped by generations of experiences relating to the environment. The perception of the present (threat, risk, but also opportunity, security) is built on events of the past and presupposes stable social structures and cyclical events. "What has transpired will likely recur."



The recurring cycle of the seasons was found to have a stabilizing effect on the social and economic life of societies of the time. The work of Marcel Mauss, a French sociologist and anthropologist, among others, has demonstrated the political and social consequences of seasonal variations. Mauss referred to this phenomenon as the "double morphology," which explained how certain societies or tribes modified their social, political, and even religious structures depending on the periods of the year. In an article on the Inuit dating from 1903, he wrote:

"In the summer months, the Inuit communities disperse into groups of 20 to 30 individuals, each under the authority of an elder, who is always a man. The program includes activities such as freshwater fishing, caribou and reindeer hunting. During this period, the members of the community jealously protect their possessions, and the heads of families exercise almost

tyrannical coercive power. Conversely, during the lengthy winter months, when seals and walruses congregate in vast numbers along the Arctic coastline, we observe a striking reversal. Inuit communities converge in tightly packed dwellings and construct expansive houses, constructed from wood, whale ribs, and stones. These structures, known as hashims, serve as gathering places where collective interests and values are shared, and the values of equality and altruism prevail.” Claude Levi-Strauss reports similar practices in South American tribes, noting the remarkable adaptability to environmental constraints that brings about radical changes in governance, which can result in individuals changing their name “to the point of becoming another person”³.

The nature of the relationship is contingent upon the circumstances that humans encounter. The roles and responsibilities that individuals assume can alter the dynamics of their relationships. For instance, an individual who is a leader in a hunting group may also become a gatherer. This transition necessitates a certain degree of agility, which will serve as a catalyst for numerous changes and the evolution of human relationships.



³ Extracts from the book in question refers to M. Mauss and C.L. Strauss. *In the beginning was... a new history of humanity*, by David Graeber and David Wengrow, Éditions Les liens qui libèrent, pp. 142-144

The sedentarization of peoples and the Neolithic revolution, with agriculture, gradually generated a new need for adaptation. Humans transitioned from hunter-gatherer to cultivator-breeder. This allowed the still-unstable world to settle down. Human relationships continued to be governed by survival needs, but our relationship with the world evolved towards something else: a need for protection and security. The advent of writing marks the transition from prehistory to history, while the rise of belief systems reflects the emergence of a need for security.

As a consequence of this sedentary lifestyle, societal structures have been shaped by the ownership of property, particularly crops and harvests. For the first time, society has had to organize itself in a defensive posture, which has led to the first major conflicts of humanity.



The concept of agility is reminiscent of the way horses operate. Horses have survived as a species for more than 50 million years thanks to an organization of relationships based on competence. As prey animals, horses learn to adapt in the face of danger. They group together behind the fastest horse if they need to go quickly to escape their predator, or the best jumper if there are obstacles to allow the herd to survive. Concurrently, a more senior horse assumes a supervisory role during movements to anticipate and prevent dangers. Variability and adaptability in the nature of relationships are determined by the present situation. These relationships evolve rapidly, exhibiting an agility without prejudice. The extent to which this agility can improve the life of today's organizations and societies will be examined.

1.1.2. The reign of beliefs: the needs of security and domination

Beliefs are ideas and values that shape our perception of the world and ourselves. In ancient times, religion was often associated with politics, and gods and goddesses were revered as protectors of the city. Beliefs in life after death and ancestor worship were also widespread. During the Middle Ages, Christianity was the dominant religion, and beliefs in hell, heaven, purgatory, and the last judgment were widespread. At the same time, superstitions were also prevalent; people often believed in the magical powers of objects such as amulets and talismans. Beliefs can be religious, philosophical, or cultural, and they have been passed down from generation to generation. They have been important to our development as a species because they have helped us make sense of our environment and our existence. Furthermore, they have been a factor of social cohesion, enabling the sharing of a common vision of the world, particularly when these beliefs shift towards monotheism. Beliefs have also been instrumental in connecting the members of increasingly large groups. According to the research of Robin Dunbar⁴, an English anthropologist, the configuration of our brain (in particular the neo-cortex) prevents us from developing stable personal relationships with more than 150 people. Beyond this number, the cohesion of the group must be maintained by rules. These rules will allow the development of non-personal links, which are curated and controlled by intermediaries. This limit, which is imposed by our brain, would be at the origin of hierarchical structures and the relationships of power and domination associated with them.

Beliefs are also sources of conflict and division, particularly religious and political; they are often used to justify violent and discriminatory behavior. The strengthening of power structures and the progression of techniques call for agility in human relations, yet this is often difficult to achieve. Relationships are then built on respect for the established order, which leads to roles becoming fixed. The development of distinct classes leads to the appearance of new codes and statuses, which strongly impact the nature of relationships between members of the group. Submission and dependence on a fixed and indisputable order become the dominant forces, superseding agility. Authoritarian and submissive behaviors become the norm. Conflicts increase, and the first wars appear, resulting in the deaths of tens of thousands of people.

⁴ Robin Dunbar, Coevolution of neocortical size, group size and language in humans Behavioral and Brain Sciences, Volume 16, Issue 4 , December 1993

The Church and the army represent the prevailing models of relations during this historical period. These institutions impose a fixed worldview that precludes the possibility of doubt. They simultaneously serve to protect and reassure, while also subjugating and exploiting. This represents a novel paradox in the context of human relations. Technical progress and the monolithic and conformist vision of the world inevitably alter our relationships. By experimenting with new techniques, the certainties imposed on humanity by religion will be challenged. A new order emerges, replacing the spirit of territorial conquests with a spirit of conquest of science and knowledge.



The question of authority then raises the question of the nature of dialogue: authority "on" or authority "for"? Domination or sharing? "Authority over" a population to subject it to the rules of a dictatorship which exercises all powers without legitimacy? Or "authority to" save a population from an epidemic, within the limits of the legitimacy of a democratic power? Human relations are dependent on the established order. Two configurations can be

observed: either human relationships reflect the established order to submit to it, or human relationships fight to transform the relationship with authority, co-creating a more communal organization.

1.1.3. The reign of science: need to explain the inexplicable

Definition

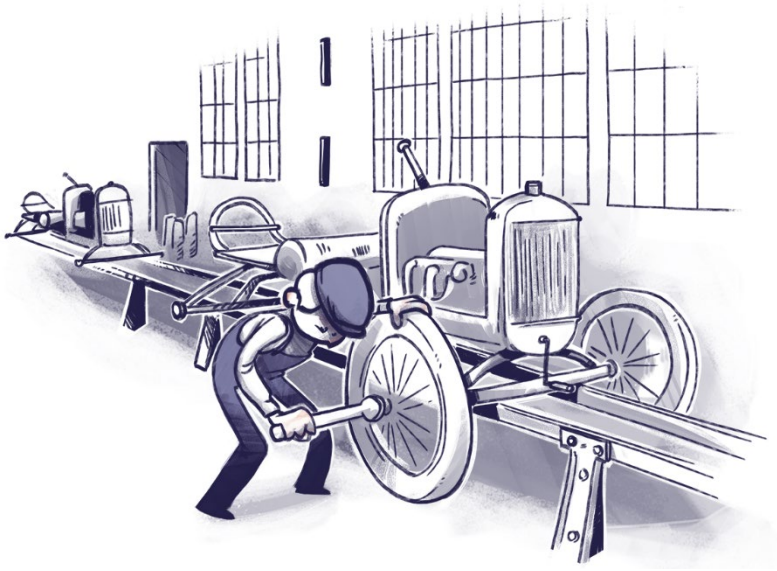
“Science comes from the Latin *scientia*, from *scire*, to know - a coherent body of knowledge concerning certain categories of facts, objects, or phenomena that obey laws and/or are verified by experimental methods” (Larousse 2023).



In a manner analogous to religion, science has the capacity to impart a novel comprehension of the world and to transform the concept of "truth." Science becomes truth. The Age of Enlightenment is distinguished by this insatiable appetite for knowledge and experimentation, which will profoundly impact our cognitive processes. We perceive the world as a vast machine that can

be comprehended and controlled; it is no longer an impenetrable system governed by divine forces.

The advent of the industrial era led to a division of labor and tasks, with Taylorism and Fordism setting a frenetic pace for mass production. The emergence of new social classes has created a new power relationship between the working world and the owners of capital. A new form of submission has impacted the human relationship between different social groups, with each group (worker-boss, rural-urban, etc.) identifying with its role or status in society and forgetting its relationship with living things. The social or political order impairs judgment and precludes genuine dialogue between disparate groups.



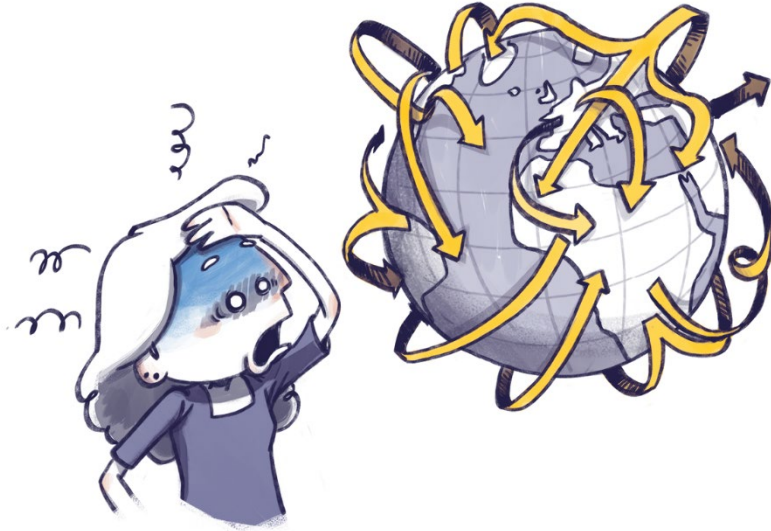
Philosophers endeavor to illuminate the role of humanity in the intricate evolution of societal structures. The Age of Reason emerges, wherein rhetoric, argumentation, proof, and logic serve as the foundation for our discourse. This phenomenon increasingly permeates interpersonal interactions. The world becomes increasingly complex. Rational discourse provides reassurance, offering protection from uncertainty and the illusion of meaning to our surroundings while distancing us from the lived experience.

The reign of science is not without its share of injustices and conflicts. The growth generated by scientific and technological advancement has the potential to create imbalances and tensions between social groups. It also has the potential to create imbalances between countries, as this growth has also dissolved our traditional understanding of borders and boundaries. Globalization demands a paradigm shift. The system in which we operate is becoming increasingly larger and more complex, transformed by the arrival of the Internet. Even our rational and scientific mind is no longer capable of understanding everything. The management of data assumes a pivotal role in the process of comprehending the world around us.



The nearly century-long period of unparalleled growth has reinforced our conviction that we are in control of the world, that nothing can impede our progress, and that we have a comprehensive understanding of the issues at hand. Our material well-being is improving, and this is also affecting our social and ecological lives. We are less reliant on the group because we feel less need for protection or guidance. Individualism is on the rise, and we are focusing on our development and well-being. Society is encouraging this by placing the individual consumer at the heart of the issues.

1.1.4. The reign of the digital: How the Internet challenges us to reconsider Relationship



The loss of givens gives rise to a vicious circle.

The spiral we have entered is such that our analytical mind can no longer keep up. The complexity and speed of change create an imbalance between certainties and uncertainties, rendering it difficult to make sense of what is happening. This climate of uncertainty creates a renewed need for certainty. We desire to rediscover the givens, the landmarks, that we have essentially eliminated from our lives because of our relationship to the digital world. We search for simple answers to a world we no longer understand. In response to the challenges we face, we tend to retreat into a state of self-protection.

The consequence of this isolationism is a loss of confidence in institutions (such as the Church and the State) and in opinion leaders (such as politicians and the press). Furthermore, there is a loss of faith in others, including neighbors and colleagues. Suspicion and distrust become the new hallmark of relationships.

The potential for social media relationships to become opportunities for trolling and score settling is a significant concern. Without moderators or