

The place the hands can't seek - VII - Touch, the seize-wish and relational convexity

By Clémence Ortega Douville

A short article to end this section and introduce a new one on the formalisation of hermeneutological theory. When can we talk about relation ? Certainly, when there is an understanding between two subjective parts. Hence, can we talk about 'relation to object' really ? According to our definition, it seems that we must define a bit more precisely what we mean by the concept of relation.

There cannot be a proper relation to object, because objects (or people seen as objects) can't express in any way whatsoever a proper and willing relation to us. The interpretation of their will to be related to us can only be imaginary or obtained by force.

Therefore, it might be important to redefine the relation to object with the concept of *relational expectation* toward the object. We expect the object to behave in a certain way, and we expect a possible response from it. Shall it never come, we anticipate and wish to create this participation from the object. And that is exactly what it is.

Etymology of the word by the way is from the Medieval Latin *ob-*, "in front of, towards, against", and *-iacere*, "to throw". We throw ourselves, our mind, our attention and intention in front of, towards and or against the thing we would like a participation of - an assimilation to our wage on reality.

If the object doesn't respond, it happens that in absence of a resistance that would be equivalent or stronger to our assimilating them, we manage to forge them an identity that should be coherent and corresponding to our wish to seize them. By that, we intend here to push forward another concept that would be the concept of *seize-wish*. Of course, it serves us as a representation of an elementary constituent of human behaviour.

It is common to most mammals that the general relational way to objects and siblings goes by touch, either with the mouth, muzzle, the whole body, the paw or, for the primates - including humans -, the hands.

What happens is that at the moment I realise that there is something close to me that I can't grasp - the hand within my own hand, this object that I can only *throw myself against* -, I can constitute an expectation that it would be to force it in a way to become something else to me that I could seize and assimilate - even only in my imagination. I would have to destruct the hand as something that doesn't fit, in order to make it fit my intentional world. And then I enter an imaginary relation to my hand, based on a relational expectation that in fact could not lead me anywhere.

Because when I am focused on my hand that I gaze, if I want to gaze it, I nor it can move. Therefore I cannot expect anything from it, except from the knowledge that some things that could virtually be assimilated in fact can't - at least without intending destruction on my own hand, which would be mad. I am forced myself to be in relation to my hand, that is stronger than me. As I can't destroy it to make it fit my will, it subjugates me with enough equivalent power to stop the ongoing of my seize-wish, of my sensorimotor use to grasp and seize things that I like to seize, eat or use.

Hence, we agree with psychoanalysts Darian Leader and Denis Vasse whom in their way took a close and benevolent look on psychosis. In the absence of response, the suridentification of *one's meaning in the world* with the object becomes the unique way to deal with an expectation too high for solving the problem of loneliness and relational deprivation in an immediate way in space and time.

Yet, space and time are, as we mentioned it, morally set and orientated in the human's

landscape of possibilities. And we propose that it became so because some things appeared to be indestructible, and represented a sharper knowledge of mortality - the same knowledge that drives psychosis, for which the general apprehension of the Arts and creative fields can often be a getaway. Not the acknowledgement and feeling that someone is dead or that myself, I risk to be assaulted by a predator for instance ; but that my *will* is put at a mortal risk.

I can't assimilate the annihilation of my will without destroying will - in its sensorimotor and symbolic vision - itself. Then, if our vision of the beginnings of the human structures of the mind appears close to the structures of psychosis, it is important to remind us that a true relation to others surely allowed us to make it viable in the long run for everyone. It may have been so as long as it became a shared consistency given to the common perception of reality.

Then we could bring up the concept of the *relational convexity* of the object. It appears that it is most likely that the perception of volumes is to be phenomenologically connected with the apprehension of the volume of objects while we seize them. Volume is metaphorically what can or cannot fit the hand(s). Hence this deficit of grasping symbolically the object may appeal to the apprehension of a volume that escapes destruction, assimilation and dissemination. Objects are resistant, convex and plain volumes.

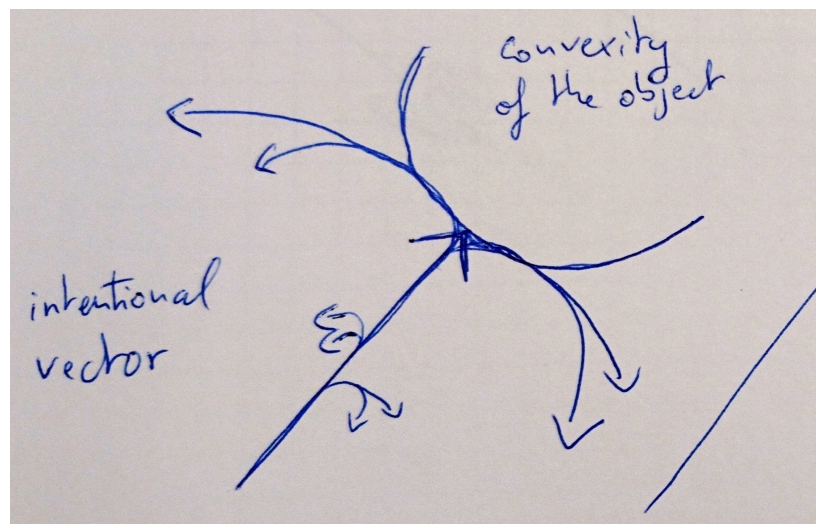


Illustration 1: See a raw sketch of relational convexity model

This convexity leads to several things :

- 1) Focusing on one point of the object that is resisting assimilation doesn't stop intentional force to carry on its will to do so ;
- 2) The relational expectation to the object doesn't prevent the senses to be aware of the surrounding environment ;
- 3) In deficiency of vision that is fixed on the point of the object, it is a more general awareness, and more specifically an acoustic awareness of the surroundings that takes over the perception of surrounding reality - the measure of space and time.

Some may remember French philosopher Gilles Deleuze saying in one of his class on cinema¹ : 'The invisible, it is what can only be *seen*. The unspeakable, what can only be spoken.' What did it mean if not that if you wish to see something in particular, that you wish you could only *see it*, you would happen to only "see" the rest that is not included in that object, "see" what you did

¹ In Gilles Deleuze, "Cinéma et pensée cours 90 du 28/05/1985", *La voix de Gilles Deleuze*, Paris 8 University, Saint-Denis, http://www2.univ-paris8.fr/deleuze/article.php3?id_article=138

not expect to see but that is still there around - because the object is convex and escaping your assimilation.

In *Difference et répétition*, Deleuze spent some time dwelling on the hegelian dialectics of the negative and the positive. If we take this idea over, while you wish to make the object a *negative* of you, you are only making the rest, the negative and *otherly* side of your expectation to the object, stronger, more present, more real. By excluding the rest of your reality in your symbolical intention, you cannot suppress your general feeling of the world. You cannot suppress sensations.

And then, that is the magic of thinking : thinking is putting you in relation to a space and time belong to the negatives of your relational expectation to the objects you wish to seize. And that is it with the hand, whether it is the concrete hand or the symbolic hand : the hand that you cannot seek and seize with your own hand is merely made a negative version of the relation you wish to establish with it. It cannot give it to you without breaking the relation : if you move your hand, the relation to the object is over, because the object, the fascination making the hand an object, is over. Then all you have left, is the feeling of the world outside.

The first abstract vision of the world we suppose is that : an acoustic image of time and space around, where the point you stare is the centre, the sight. Thus when it is about your hand, the specific structure created is that you cannot only know if the centre here must be you as your attention to the hand, or *you* that is reflected and sent back by the hand - this you that stares and wants and expects.

Then language, the symbol and the mind are only a displacement from the outside look to the inside. Yet the *I* too, has a convex side.