



LECTURE

the LOGIC of SYMPTOMS

Introduction to Decoding Biological and Transgenerational Stresses

*stemming from the impact of our distant animal
and prehistoric origins on our lives and health :*
another way of looking at our illnesses,
blocks or general existential difficulties.

by LAURENT DAILLIE

To maintain that a symptom is logical may sound absolutely mad ! I wholeheartedly agree with that, all the more so since I also had doubts, to say the least, the first time I heard about this theory. And even though nowadays I no longer have the slightest doubt about it, it still comes as a great surprise to me when I see how relevant this approach can be and how much it can help some people.

From the Dawn of Time to Psychosomatics

Ever since humans became *sapiens*, they have been seeking to understand the causes of their sufferings. At the very beginning of humanity, they just realized they were not feeling well or were suffering, in the same way a sick animal would. Later, they thought that divine intervention was behind the illness, to put them to test or to punish them for any misconduct.

Then, empirically at first but gradually becoming more and more scientific, humans discovered that some things were toxic, but others were vital to their health; they understood that an energy imbalance could trigger illnesses; they discovered that invisible pathogens can produce serious infections and even that illnesses can be caused by a genetic disorder. Finally, they also discovered that symptoms could also be psychosomatic and due to existential difficulties or to a trauma earlier in their life.

From Psychosomatics to Biological Decoding

But even if all these remarkable discoveries can undeniably explain a lot of things, many others cannot be explained. And this is often the point when our good doctors (*and I say this with all due respect*) conclude that the origin of the symptom could be psychosomatic, without being able to say any more.

Because even if we can establish a clear link between a specific context or an event in our lives and a physical or mental symptom which appeared shortly afterwards, this simple observation cannot explain either why or how and, even less, the link between one specific event and any particular symptom.

Imagine the following case: a mother is suddenly exposed to major stress because one of her children is seriously ill. A little while later, she is diagnosed with breast cancer. You do not need to be a seer to connect these two events, but this will not explain why this woman is suffering from this illness in this context: this is precisely what decoding biological stresses sets out to do.

Decoding Biological Stresses

First of all, perhaps we should define what this term means. Because even if the word '*decoding*' is clear to everybody, the word '*stress*' is much more difficult to pin down. And '*biological*' can mean so many different things in this case. Therefore, the combination of these three words – *decoding biological stresses* – is incomprehensible. It should

be called '*decoding consequences of our subconscious archaic stresses on our physical or mental health*'. But this would be much too long.

To sum up: in some cases (*but not always*), this approach can explain the root cause of a physical illness, of a mental block, of a type of behaviour or of an existential difficulty through an understanding of our physiological reaction to stresses and a knowledge of our primitive survival reflexes and of our primeval behaviour codes inherited from our distant animal and prehistoric origins.

The fact is that our physical or mental symptoms, from the most innocuous to the most serious, are not necessarily the result of coincidence or fatality, nor even a random absurdity or an anarchic aberration. On the contrary, very often a symptom is the unwanted consequence of a natural mechanism for survival and adaptation to environmental pressures which is as old as life itself.

The symptom is often a kind of perfectly consistent biological assistance program set in motion by our archaic brain in order to try to come to our help whenever it believes, rightly or wrongly, we are in danger. This is because our brain has a very curious way of appraising our stresses and fears, since it reacts as if we were still facing the harsh realities and dangers of life in the wild, when surviving was a real challenge.

Take the case of somebody under huge stress because he is stuck in traffic when he has an important appointment. In this modern-day situation, which is not really serious, the archaic brain could conclude that such stress must be a sign of great danger.

By 'archaic brain', I don't mean a particular part of the brain, but just the location of all our body's regulation mechanisms which keep us alive; of the autonomic nervous system which manages our survival reflexes, of the archaic behaviour codes specific to our species, etc. Some call all this the 'reptilian brain'.

Stress

By definition, stress is a physiological adaptation response to an imposed situation exceeding an individual's resources and management strategies. And it is, thus, always detrimental to our mental and/or physical health when it is intense and/or prolonged. Because to our brain stress means danger of death since, in nature, it is always like that: as soon as we are stressed, our brain believes that we are being attacked by a predator, whose size and ferocity depend on the intensity of our stress.

In this case, the brain first sets in motion a series of physiological safeguard mechanisms (*increase of the heart and breathing rate, etc.*) to help us escape from the danger, all under the overriding authority of our autonomic (*or vegetative*) nervous system, the problem being that this becomes exhausted very fast. Stress weakens us, both mentally and physically, and that makes us more and more vulnerable.

Our brain thus manipulates us extremely efficiently to give us the appropriate survival reflexes (*for instance making us run away*) or trigger the appropriate behaviour. But it can also intervene in many other ways, including some which are harmful in the long term. The perfect examples are addictions: even though they can seriously damage our health, they are nevertheless 'orchestrated' by our brain to help us manage our stress.

Dreadful Misunderstanding

Even if it can lead to death when it is unleashed, illness should often be understood, at least at the very beginning of the process, as a formidable survival program activated by Mother Nature to help us overcome a difficulty, of which, in most cases, we are not in the slightest aware. The same applies to some kinds of behaviour that end up harming us.

And the reason why this initially perfect solution can become so imperfect is, in most cases, because of a dreadful misunderstanding between us and our archaic brain, a misunderstanding that can even be fatal if it lasts too long.

To give an example, imagine somebody facing intense, long-term stress because he is unemployed. He keeps dwelling on his worries: he is afraid he will not have enough money to pay the bills. In just six months, he puts on 20 kilograms of weight without eating more than before. Why ?

Simply because his archaic brain concludes that such stress, in this specific form of lacking, can mean only one thing: scarcity and starvation, i.e. a critical situation. The logic of this symptom is very easy to understand: cope with the adversity and/or build up reserves of fat while food is still available, just like animals do during the fine seasons in anticipation of the winter.

Please note that not all cases of putting on weight are necessarily for this reason and that a redundancy which hits the victim hard could trigger many other physical or mental symptoms : it will all depend on the intensity of the stress experienced and, above all, on the specific form it takes. It is precisely on this point that decoding biological stresses can be extremely valuable to help us to discover the root cause of our health problems and existential difficulties.

Visceral Emotion

Even if this idea that a symptom could be psychosomatic is a major advance in human history, it is still a dead-end as psychology – as we usually understand it – ultimately has little, not to say no, influence over our archaic brain. Therefore, it is not the direct cause of our illnesses or difficulties.

For our brain is completely oblivious to human psychological problems. All it is interested in is our stress level, in order to evaluate the seriousness of a situation, and, above all, our visceral emotion, i.e. the way we experience everything deep down, in the vestiges of our animality.

It weighs up and manages all kinds of everyday stresses, exactly as it always has, and its way of reacting to what it perceives as critical situations remains strictly the same as at the time of our earliest origins. Even if we are now highly developed creatures, we still react, without being the slightest aware of it, following the parameters of a very different epoch.

Like any animal, we must face primitive fears related to matters such as conquest, loss or marking of territory, the survival of the species, offspring tragedies, insecurity, the struggle for existence, confrontation or flight, under-performance, lack of food, choice of direction, loss of contact, fear of rejection, arguments within the group, fights for dominance, loss of integrity, etc.

In any case, as far as I'm concerned, my first reaction whenever somebody parks in front of my door is to turn it into a 'territorial conflict' before remembering, a few seconds later, that my village's church square doesn't belong to me. I have both an ultra-alert archaic brain, which concludes that I could potentially be in danger and also, at the same time, a highly developed human consciousness, which makes me realize that I'm not.

Everything is Bio-logical (*in two words*)

When we think about it, many things are perfectly *bio-logical*, for better or for worse. This applies to our physical or mental illnesses, our existential difficulties or our behaviour, our blocks or phobia, our compulsions or our addictions, our failures or our successes, our dislikes or our preferences, our sympathies or our antipathies and so on.

For example : a mother can suffer from a harmful breast illness because her son is seriously ill. Why ? Because she is feeling great stress deep down inside and her archaic biology responds to it by means of a mechanism that activates the mammary gland. In nature, it is true, a mother's milk is the best way she can take care of her ailing offspring (*please note that not all mammary pathologies have this root cause, since there are other types of case*).

For example : a person can suddenly lose their central vision shortly after returning home from a humanitarian mission in a war-torn country where the population is starving. Why ? Because the visual memories that this individual brought back from the trip are especially unbearable, and haunt him or her. In this case, the symptom is an attempt to avoid seeing the horror.

For example : a person can have an asthma attack every time in the presence of a colleague, who is otherwise perfectly nice. Why ? Because this colleague's salt and pepper moustache reawakens a long-forgotten memory and takes this person back to thirty years earlier, when he or she suffered physical and emotional violence at the hands of a teacher with a similar moustache. In this case, the archaic sense of the symptom is to warn of the imminent danger.

For example : a person could be in the habit of putting a few drops of oil in every hinge in the house because the slightest squeak of a door sends the person into a great panic. Why ? Because, during their whole childhood, they had been the whipping boy of a big brother whose bedroom door used to squeak. Whenever the individual heard this noise, they knew that the brother would probably come to torment them. In this case, the purpose of this phobia is to suppress this particular noise in order to avoid this intense stress

For example : somebody might have decided, at a very young age, to become a judge and then spent the next fifteen years devoting themselves to this ambition with crazy, unreasonable energy, sixteen hours a day and 365 days a year, until suffering 'burn-out'. Why ? Because their paternal grandmother is a despotic matriarch capable of the worst injustices. In this case, the deep sense of this choice of profession is to be able, at long last, to see that justice is done.

For example : a little girl could suffer from chronic eczema that no treatment can cure. Why ? Because in her fifth month of pregnancy, her mother went through a very painful situation, in the form of loss of contact and separation when she came to France to join her husband. She felt deeply separated from her home country, her city, her family, her mother, her friends, etc. In this case, the child is embodying the stress that the mother felt during the pregnancy.

For example : a young boy can be severely handicapped by chronic fatigue, which has even forced him to stay in hospital several times for check-ups, even though he makes a complete recovery during the school holidays. Why ? Due to a very strong 'allergy' to the notion of working. In his family, a great-grandfather died because of penal servitude and a great-grandmother worked herself to death to bring up her six children on her own. Thus, deep in the memory of this child, something says that work kills and that it is best to avoid it.

For example : somebody might always have been handicapped, to the point of falling ill, by a particular mental dynamic which makes them see life as an ordeal full of insurmountable difficulties. Nevertheless, they lead a peaceful life and have never lacked anything nor faced any tragedy which might justify this way of looking at things. Why this symptom ? Because they have inherited the deep suffering of ancestors who did lead particularly dreadful lives at the end of the 19th century, as they were working down mines.

Decoding Transgenerational Stresses

The last three examples show how an event or situation which occurred before we were born (*during our intra-uterine life, in our parents' past or during our family's history, in general*) can have a considerable influence on our life or health. But, in the final analysis, this is not magic.

Instead, once again, it is a matter of adaptation to environmental pressures: the ancestor has to face a particular situation, and the descendant adapts accordingly. Scientists call this epigenetic transmission, i.e. transmission of a characteristic acquired from one generation to another. Life has been following this principle for 3.85 billion years and we are living proof of this.

Knowledge is what heals

Of course, as these *bio-logical* programs become active in case of need, this implies that they can also deactivate themselves, albeit on condition that they are no longer useful. This involves understanding and/or resolving, in one way or another, the problem that made it necessary to trigger the archaic assistance program.

In many cases, if we are simply made aware of the deep roots of our physical or mental symptoms we can get rid of them: because as soon as we understand what they mean, the illness no longer makes any sense and has no reason to exist. In any event, this is how many people have been able to shake off illnesses, sometimes even ones which had been declared incurable, or, more simply, to overcome more or less incapacitating existential difficulties.

NOTA BENE

Decoding Biological and Transgenerational Stresses is not, of course, a panacea. First of all, it does not cover everything, for example a symptom that is induced by a severe nutritional deficiency, intoxication or irradiation. And, beyond that, we can have failing eyesight because we are getting old, we can have back pain because our mattress is too old, we can be worn out because of our bad lifestyle and we can suffer migraine because a vertebra is suffering :

Décoder est une chose ; déconner en est une autre
Decoding is one thing ; deluding is another

This approach is based on uncovering our subconscious fears. But it isn't a therapy in the true sense, even if what it reveals can sometimes be incredibly therapeutic. In other cases, it might be necessary to follow this up with an inner development programme, with the help of a psychotherapist if necessary.

Decoding Biological and Transgenerational Stresses must be understood as complementary to medicine (*or other therapies*). It is neither alternative (*since strength lies in union*) nor parallel (*since, by definition, they never meet*). It cannot and must not replace medicine.

Moreover, this approach is neither a philosophy nor an ideology and, even less so, a doctrine: it is just a tool for analysis and self-comprehension. Finally, it cannot be blamed for any misuse made of it, including in any sectarian way.

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The essentials have been covered, but I propose going further in order to clarify some points and to 'dissect' some specific cases. This will give you a better understanding of the three main prongs of this approach :

- ***Biology*** to explain why and how our physical symptoms and our mental or behaviour difficulties are often *bio-logical*, purely *bio-logical* and nothing but *bio-logical* ;

- **Visceral emotion** to explain why it is never what we are thinking that makes us suffer or ill, but rather what we are feeling deep in the vestiges of our animality ;
- **Transgenerational impact** to explain why the origin of our symptom can be sought in our *pre-history*, sometimes even long before our birth.

BIOLOGY

The first thing to consider under this heading is a set of very basic knowledge which, in various disciplines of natural sciences, allows us to understand better what we are deep down :

- **Biology** in the broad sense to understand the laws of nature that make life possible both at the level of cells and of individuals ;
- **Anatomy and physiology** to understand the purpose and workings of each organ and system, especially of the vegetative nervous system that commands the autonomic functions and our primitive reactions in the face of danger ;
- **Anatomo-physiopathology** to consider the various pathological processes and grasp their logic, if there is one because this is not always the case ;
- **Zoology** to discover the infinite diversity of the animal kingdom and the constraints of life in the natural environment, which could help us to understand better our reactions and those of our organism under certain circumstances ;
- **Ethology** to study animal behaviour and to understand our primitive reactions better in terms of archaic behaviour codes, survival priorities, social organization, etc. Because even if we are very human today, we are still primates, even if we pretend not to know it;
- **Paleontology** to understand the history of living things spanning 3.85 billion years and to appreciate the different stages that we have crossed on the path to becoming modern human beings. This can explain a lot of things ;
- **Evolutionary biology** to understand the evolution mechanisms of species to adapt to environmental pressures over the course of time. This last point is almost the most important in order to understand why often behind the symptom there is a positive *biological* intention at the beginning, as an evolution in order to adapt as fully as possible to a specific pressure.

Having said that, it isn't necessary to know everything about everything or to be a graduate in medicine and sciences to understand the deep sense of our illnesses or of our difficulties in general. All we need is some basic understanding, a bit of logic and, above all, a lot of common sense.

But why do we fall ill ?

Apart from special cases (*poisoning, intoxication, irradiation, traumatism, ageing, etc.*), the symptom is due to surpassing a certain stress level acceptable for our brain, induced by more or less intense and/or prolonged existential difficulty that we aren't able to handle through thought and/or action, all the less so since in most cases we are unaware of the deep roots of this stress, and sometimes even of its very existence.

As long as our stress does not surpass a certain level – *because the problem is not really serious and/or is quickly solved* – it is almost as if our brain doesn't care about it. But as soon as a certain stress level is reached – *because the problem is really serious and a vital matter, or also because it persists* – our autonomic brain steps in.

And once it decides to intervene, whether the problem is serious or not, it pulls out all the stops to find what it judges to be the best solution. It can choose any behaviour dynamic or else a physical or mental symptom if there is no other solution.

The problem is that our archaic brain manages our stresses in exactly the same way as it has since time immemorial. Its way of reacting to what it perceives as a danger is exactly the same as it was in our early origins. Because nature is a particularly dangerous environment where survival is a real challenge. Therefore, stress is necessarily a sign of danger for our brain, even if this is not the case. Regardless of the nature of our stress, our brain considers it and handles it like a matter of life or death. And this is exactly the origin of the symptom and of any eventual aggravation.

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But since practical examples speak much louder than a long theoretical discourse, to help you understand all that, here are a series of natural stories which show the implacable *bio-logic* which can be found behind a symptom or behaviour.

the Natural Story of Birth Regulation

You might already know that one of the great laws of nature says that we must avoid having offspring when the environmental situation isn't suitable. When the future is uncertain or there is a risk of a food shortage, nature puts up its strongest defences: it blocks the fertility of females, who don't ovulate and don't receive males.

This avoids them putting themselves in danger as gestation is a great energy consumer, just like the nursing that follows. It also avoids giving birth to offspring that will starve after weaning. Don't you think nature is brilliant and full of wisdom ?!

the Natural Story of the Size of a Fish

One of the constraints to which beings might have to adapt is not being too big to fit into their environment. I discovered this principle thanks to my neighbour Christophe, who is an experienced aquarist. One day he invited me to visit his tanks and showed me, one by one, all his fish, some of which were remarkably beautiful. At one point, Christophe presented his biggest specimen, a *pterygoplichthys gibbiceps* about 50 cm long. It comes from the Amazon basin and belongs to the same family as the sturgeon. It is a burrowing fish that feeds on what it finds in the mud and it lives in shallow flood waters.

But when I heard that the fish can grow to up to 2 metres long, I immediately started to worry about this poor animal because of the size of the aquarium, which was just two metres long by 0.75 metres wide. My reaction made my guide smile and he explained to me, as if it were self-evident, that the animal had already stopped growing several months earlier, even before reaching adulthood.

In fact, this fish will not grow any more unless it is moved without delay to a bigger aquarium. When this fish was placed in this aquarium, its biology evaluated the dimensions of the living space available in order to adapt the size of the specimen. As soon as the animal reached the maximum length for the space available, its biology stopped its growth. Of course, exactly the same would have happened in the wild if it had been trapped for several months or more in a small pond after a drop in the level of the Amazon.

Because in the wild, if an animal is living in a limited space, it is preferable for it to limit its size so that it will have enough space to evolve freely and also to reduce its need for food to the level that this environment can supply. Isn't nature wonderful ?! Remember that this mechanism is by no means exclusive to this species: it is shared by every fish, reptile and batrachian – and even by mammals.

the Natural Story of Princess the Kitten

Princess is a small kitten who lives in a residential area close to Lyon. Up until now, her life had been peaceful: she has been pampered, groomed and, hence, has every reason to purr frequently. Moreover, as the area where she lives borders on fields, she can live the life of a feline hunter more or less as she understands it. At this stage of the story, her stress level is minimal.

But one day a new human family moves into the neighbourhood and brings with it a four-legged thug, distinctly macho and uneducated. Of course, the tomcat immediately starts to court Princess frantically, and the hard times start for her, who doesn't want to have kittens with this individual. Princess can't take a step outside without having this obsessive behind her and she must always watch her back, both literally and figuratively. In short: Princess is always on the alert, which steadily pushes up her stress level.

This goes on and on, so that after just a couple of days her maximum stress threshold is reached and then surpassed and it is time for her biology to step in. First, her archaic brain analyses the root cause of the problem and then it applies the best possible solution.

But what is the precise nature of Princess's problem? It is that she has to '*stand up against adversity*' and physically resist the tomcat's persistence. And what does she need in order to resist? In this situation, she needs, above all, to have enough potential muscle strength available at all times to be able to free herself and escape if necessary, or to last the distance when the chase is long.

How can her brain help? Simply by sending an order to block the pancreas for a while in order to make it secrete less insulin. This will trigger an increase in her blood sugar level to optimise the supply to the muscles in case of need, all adding up to a 'perfect winning solution'. After all, blood sugar fuels the muscles and the role of the insulin produced by the endocrine pancreas is to regulate the glycaemia.

Don't you think nature is great?! And you are perfectly right: it is absolutely remarkable. Except that in medicine this minor miracle is called hyperglycaemia, which can degenerate into diabetes, a potentially fatal illness.

I am sorry to say that this story has a sad ending for the tomcat, as he suddenly disappeared, but a happy ending for Princess. Because as soon as she and, in particular her brain, realized that the tomcat was no longer around, her biology cancelled the order partially blocking the pancreas and sent the opposite order to unblock it. Consequently, her insulin production returned to normal again and Princess's glycaemia stabilized.

the Natural Story of a Young Wolf

This is the story of a young wolf which lives in a pack in a big nature reserve in North America. It's a healthy animal but its status of being young doesn't makes things easy: rivalry is fierce and the social organization of wolves, led by a dominant male, is extremely rigid. Among other things, when the pack manages to kill a prey, the youngster must wait its turn to partake of the feast, if there is anything left.

One day, when the young wolf is very hungry, it has an opportunity to catch a good-sized partridge all on its own. As it has no wish to share its good luck, it hides in the undergrowth and gobbles its prey as fast as it can. It swallows the legs of the bird one after the other, then the wings and the neck, etc. Despite their size, each piece somehow slips down its oesophagus and reaches its stomach.

Like it does every time a piece of food must be processed, in order to use no more digestive energy than strictly necessary, the wolf's biology evaluates the mass to be digested with the help of sensors in the animal's stomach. Even if the situation is not exceptional, it is problematic. Because this wolf has to digest, as fast as possible, a plateful of par-

tridge which is very complicated to process: besides the meat, there are the skin, a beak, feathers, the claws, bones, cartilage, tendons and ligaments, all in large quantities.

Theoretically, the animal is even in danger in this case, as it is at risk of dying of hunger. Because, at the usual digestion rate of a wolf stomach, it would take too long to dissolve all the contents of the stomach. Consequently, the wolf will only very slowly be able to harness what is in its stomach and the occlusion of the alimentary canal provoked by the various pieces of partridge will not allow the wolf to eat any more.

But the biology of wolves is used to this kind of situation and has known, for millions of years, how to address it. As soon as the stomach sensors provide the necessary parameters, the brain implements the best possible *bio-logical* solution to digest the bird as fast as possible. How? Simply by activating a fabulous hyper-digestion program which considerably increases the number of cells that secrete gastric juice in order to make the stomach temporarily more efficient to '*digest the catch*'.

When the contents of the stomach are almost entirely digested, the stomach sensors inform the brain, which then stops the process. These additional cells disintegrate and are evacuated through the natural channels at the same time as the last remains of the bird. Don't you think that nature is wonderful?! And you are once again right: it is absolutely brilliant. Except that in medicine, what this wolf's biology does in this specific situation can be considered a tumourous process, i.e. a stomach cancer, and therefore a potentially lethal illness.

the Natural Story of Scribble, the Generous Grandmother

Scribble is a female labrador that lives with its female puppy Claquette with a human family in Normandy. Several years earlier, Scribble had puppies that the humans hurriedly gave away after weaning, except little Claquette, which stayed with her mother. Three years later, the daughter Claquette in turn gave birth.

Up until this point everything was normal, except that Claquette delivered a dozen puppies and this is where the drama started: she did not have enough teats for all of them and, worse still, not enough milk. This critical situation worried the whole household, including the humans, because the puppies were hungry: they noisily made sure everyone knew and every drop of milk became a struggle. The survival of the weakest puppies was in danger and their rations had to be completed with milk powder for human babies.

Even though this technique proved very effective, in the end it was grandmother Scribble's biology that found the best possible *bio-logical* solution in this situation. How? Simply by activating her mammary function in order to produce some milk. In this way, and very fast, the grandmother was also able to suckle the puppies.

Scribble's stress at the sight of this urgent situation made her brain act as required by the specific nature of the problem, which can be summed up as '*the puppies must be fed*'. The *bio-logical* way of achieving this consists of increasing the secretion of prolactin with the aid of hypophysis, the hormone that induces milk production by the galactogenous cells.

Don't you think that nature is wonderful?! It is indeed brilliant. Except that in medicine this miracle is considered an illness: we will see which one later. Remember that this mechanism that allows a female mammal to produce milk outside maternity is well known by naturalists because it is no exception.

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To draw a parallel with these real-life animal stories, here are some more very real-life stories, but this time about humans :

the Natural Story of a Young Woman

She is desperate because for years she has been trying to have a child, but without success. After a long succession of medical visits, countless check-ups, hormone treatment and several unsuccessful attempts at *in vitro* fertilization, she visits a colleague to understand the reasons behind her sterility.

The fact is that this woman was born in a very bad year : 1976, the year when a severe drought seriously affected some regions of France, especially the one where her parents were livestock farmers. Of course, during the whole pregnancy, her parents had been very stressed because they were extremely worried about their herd and, hence, their future. And the foetus had felt her mother's stress in this specific form of shortage and it had left a lasting impression, which would lead to her sterility some 25 years later.

Don't you think that nature is wonderful ? Not really ?! Yet the story of this sterility perfectly obeys the law of nature against having children in times of shortage.

the Natural Story of a Little Boy

He is seven years old, in great shape, vivacious and friendly. But he is in trouble because he is short, very short. They are starting to mock him at school and, of course, his parents are beginning to worry a lot. When he looked into the boy's past, another colleague could not find anything significant to explain this growth problem. The mother said that everything went smoothly during the pregnancy. She was very happy to be pregnant, the father was always there and the delivery took place without complications.

Nevertheless, she was under huge stress during the whole pregnancy. Because, at the time, the parents were living in a very small bedsit. For weeks and months, the mother-to-be was worried about how three people could live in such a cramped space: she kept wondering where to put the baby-changing table, the cradle, etc. So much so that the baby was born *bio-logically* programmed not to grow too much because of the lack of space.

Don't you think that nature is wonderful ? Not really ?! And yet the stories of this little boy and of the Amazonian fish are identical. There is no difference in terms of the *bio-logical* mechanisms that, in this case, induced a decrease in growth hormone production as soon as the kid reached a certain size.

It is noticeable that the boy's biology took no account of the fact that, in the mean time, the financial situation of the parents had improved markedly and that for many years they had been living in a much bigger apartment. Not until the origin of the problem had been identified – *i.e. the awareness* – did the boy's biology 'authorize' the initial program to stop and he start to grow normally.

the Natural Story of a Young Damsel

After completing her education and a long struggle to find a job, a twenty-five year old woman was finally recruited by a company very close to her home, in an interesting post and with a decent salary for her first job. The ideal job ... or almost.

Because very soon a boss started to court her and a daily hell started. She had to reject his barely concealed advances, then side-step crude traps and sometimes even defend herself physically to repel the individual when he managed to corner her.

She was, hence, in a permanent state of adversity and resistance, particularly as she was totally paralysed by her fear of losing her job if she complained or denounced the boss. She also really feared that no-one would believe her or that they might accuse her of leading him on: therefore all she could do was to resist and put up with it.

After a few weeks, she had reached her maximum stress threshold as, unfortunately, she still had not found any practical solution to put an end to the problem: at this point her

biology stepped in. Her brain analysed the reason for the stress, interpreted it as *'always be ready to defend yourself'* and activated the program that it considered best-suited to help her hang on, in this case the hyperglycaemia program. Her brain sent the order to reduce insulin production to her pancreas in order to keep her blood sugar level permanently at the ideal level for her muscles always to be ready to defend herself and to resist.

Don't you think that nature is wonderful? Not really?! And yet, once again, the stories of the little kitten Princess and of this young lady are strictly identical: there is absolutely no difference in the *bio-logical* mechanisms. Unfortunately, unlike the case of Princess, the disappearance of the boss changed nothing in this young lady. She ended up resigning after three years, but, unlike Princess, was unable to reverse the process because she remained blocked by her fear.

the Natural Story of a very ill Man

To draw a parallel with the story of the young wolf, this is the story of a man around sixty years old, who was very ill because he cannot 'digest a blow'. When their parents died in an accident, thirty years earlier, this man and his brother inherited a chain of stores. The fact is that they had two very different characters: one followed in his father's footsteps and became an experienced businessman very strongly attracted by power and money. On the other hand, the second brother – our man – followed a totally different path and spent his whole career serving the State as a diplomat.

They agreed that the company of which they both inherited equal shares would be managed by the elder brother who was fully competent to do so. Our man made only one demand: he wanted to talk about the whole thing as little as possible because money matters bored him. Therefore for the next thirty years he listened, without paying attention, to the activity reports made every year by his brother and he never read the balance sheets. At most he spent a few seconds signing the documents that his brother gave him from time to time, but always without reading them since he trusted him.

As for money, he didn't care about it at all: he had an excellent salary, enjoyed prestigious official accommodation wherever he was posted and had few expenses as he had never married and had no children. Therefore, on the rare occasions when his brother asked him what to do with his share of the dividends, he answered reinject them into the company, just to get rid of the problem quickly.

But some time before his retirement, our man suddenly realized that he had no home of his own and that it was high time to think about that. He made an estimate of the budget he would need to buy a flat in Paris where he could live as a pensioner: the amount was far above the modest savings he had made over the years, but he wasn't worried about it because he thought he was rich.

But at exactly the same time a scandal broke: his brother was accused of fraud, misappropriation and swindle, and was sent to prison. Our man was also investigated and the courts ordered him to come back to France. He was arrested as he stepped off the plane and then remanded in custody for several days until the police realized that he was also a victim of his brother.

Totally stunned, he consulted an expert, who confirmed his legal implication in this ugly case because of all the documents he had signed without even reading them over the thirty years: his brother was an unscrupulous swindler, the family business was not worth a cent and was crushed by debts.

It was almost as if our man's universe had collapsed: he was suddenly a suspect; his reputation was seriously sullied; the court prevented him from returning to his post; he was put on extended leave by his administration; he was just a couple of months away from retirement and still had nowhere to live. But, above all, this gentleman was very *'old*

school': to him, honour, honesty and keeping your word were primordial values. Never in his life had he seen so much guile. This was exactly what upset him most, especially as it was all the doing of his own brother whom he had always trusted.

This was what he continuously kept mulling over: this betrayal by his brother was an infamy, an enormous injustice, and he couldn't forgive him. But he experienced all this with such intensity deep down inside that a dreadful misunderstanding would arise between this man and his archaic brain which made him seriously ill: scarcely six months after the beginning of the case, our man ended up having to undergo treatment for a stomach cancer.

Because, considering the specific nature of this man's stress, his brain considered that the best thing to do to help him to '*digest this news*' was to set in motion a '*hyper-digestion*' procedure just like the wolf. Why? Because both in this man and in the wolf the visceral stress the brain will act on is exactly the same: the vital necessity to '*digest*'.

In practice, whether the '*indigestible thing*' is real or symbolic, our archaic brain interprets it in exactly the same way, as it draws no distinction between what is real, symbolic, virtual or imaginary: it treats everything as reality. Therefore, when the man reached his maximum stress threshold, first of all his brain analysed his visceral feeling and classified it as a real '*indigestible piece*' and then, absolutely *bio-logically*, it active-d this '*hyper-digestion*' program.

Of course, one thing followed another and everything got worse: because besides being ill, he was automatically pensioned off, he lived in a wretched one-bedroom apartment, many of his friends avoided him, the judicial proceedings made no progress and so on. Not to mention the shock that came with the diagnosis: his fear of dying, the surgery, the treatment and his enormous tiredness. And the more he kept bringing up his bitterness, the bigger this indigestible event became, the more active the '*hyper-digestion*' program was and the iller he felt.

I would avoid saying that in this case too nature is wonderful even if this man's story and the wolf's are strictly identical: there is absolutely no difference at the level of the *bio-logical* mechanisms. The only difference is that this man is in mortal danger. To get out of this situation and to avoid dying prematurely, ultimately this man doesn't have many options. He can do one of the following things :

- ***Solve the problem*** in practical terms, for example by hiring the best lawyers in Paris, being found totally innocent by the courts, restoring his honour and recovering some or all of his money. But, above all, he would have to be at peace with his swindler brother in order not to keep on bringing up his resentment.
- ***Get over the problem***, for example by discovering that he would prefer to live his elderly years in the middle of the Creuse, surrounded by fields, rather than in the contamination of Paris. He would then have enough money to buy a small house and to live a happy retirement. But in this case too he would also have to be at peace with his brother.
- ***Eliminate the problem***, for example by winning the lottery or inheriting a great fortune, which would make him so rich that he could afford the apartment of his dreams and even repay all his brother's debts. However, once again, he would have to be at peace with his brother.
- ***Transmute the problem***, for example, by falling deeply in love with a woman from a tropical island which would prompt him to settle on the other side of the world, next to a blue lagoon, where he needs no more than to seize the day. In this case, he could even thank his swindler brother for being the unwitting architect of such great happiness.

- ***Become aware of the problem*** : if none of these solutions is possible, he will have to learn very quickly the whys and wherefores of his illness. In this way, he will then be able to manage consciously the stress provoked by his brother's abuse of authority so that his biology no longer has to take care of it.

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At this juncture, I propose that we conclude that :

It is our archaic brain which controls our life

As these stories show, we are permanently under the unsuspected, but benevolent, authority of our brain, whose sole mission is to look after us. First of all, it controls all our internal functions but it also tells us how to behave and how to react. And then, in some cases, it activates strategies that we call symptoms and which, unfortunately, can be harmful in the long term. But our brain never does anything with the purpose of harming us.

There is a positive intention behind symptoms

Hence, the symptom is not necessarily a product of coincidence nor of fatality and, even less, the consequence of an unpredictable malfunction or of aberrant anarchy. On the contrary, it is often provoked by a perfectly *bio-logical* mechanism, which is absolutely consistent and admirably orchestrated by the brain. However incredible it may sound, the primary goal of a symptom is to protect us, to save our life or at least to win moments of life for us.

Of course, this theoretically 'perfect' solution which our brain decides to implement to help us can also become imperfect and prove harmful, or even lethal. The main reason for all this is that a dreadful misunderstanding frequently sets in between us and our archaic brain, which never takes into account reality but only the tone and the intensity of our visceral emotion.

In fact, only at the very beginning of the pathological process can we appreciate the *bio-logic* of the symptom and describe the strategy chosen by the brain as 'perfect'. It soon becomes imperfect, incapacitating or even dangerous because the process persists and spins out of control. Because, unfortunately, most of the time we do not know the precise nature of the problem, nor even that there is one, and this prevents us from solving it.

In the case of our diplomat, his archaic brain clearly activated this '*hyper-digestion*' program because it thought he had something especially difficult to digest in his stomach. The illness then persisted and worsened as this man 'cultivated' his resentment against his brother without realizing it.

We are the healthy carriers of the programs of all illnesses

We are clearly all the healthy carriers of the programs of all illnesses, as it must be possible to activate them in case of need. Moreover, the characteristics of a given illness are always the same from one person to another: this therefore suggests that we all have the same 'hard disk'.

Thus we are all carriers of a *bio-logical* program for hyperglycaemia in order to make our muscles more efficient to resist adversity in case of need or also of a '*hyper-digestion*' program to help us to '*digest things*' in other cases. And the same applies to all illnesses.

Visceral Emotion

Our symptoms are manifestly very often psychosomatic. This concept is absolutely revolutionary and we can be very grateful to Sigmund Freud for formulating it. However, at the risk of shocking, I maintain that the symptom cannot be psychosomatic. Because psychology – in the sense that we normally understand it – has very little influence on our archaic brain, not to say no influence at all: our psyche is never directly responsible for the symptom.

The human psyche is certainly a fabulous success of nature, but it is also very unpredictable because of the fact that our memories and beliefs considerably complicate our lives. That said, our psychological problems (*and thus our problems of thought*) cannot be at the origin of a symptom, as our good old archaic brain is never interested in what we are thinking but only in what we are feeling deep down, in the vestiges of our animality.

The case of the young victim of sexual harassment is a perfect example : there is not the slightest relation at all between her psychological problem and the way her brain managed the case. At the biological level, her symptom is the best possible response to give her the muscle to resist, whereas her 'psychological' symptom will take the form more of hating men, fear of the masculine in general, possibly a bad relation to sexuality, etc.

In our deepest selves, we still work exactly as we did millions of years ago and our difficulties are still animal. Today, at the dawn of the third millennium, we still function on the basis of our '*animality*' following archaic codes of behaviour and priorities for the survival of the individual and of the species. Even if we are now especially sophisticated beings, and despite the amazing modernity of our world, we still essentially react like animals in a natural environment, a terribly dangerous one.

A psychological problem certainly triggers a higher stress level and somatization can follow if a certain stress level is reached. But between the two, between stress and somatization, there is the key element of the symptom: the visceral, animal, emotion which only the brain can interpret.

To demonstrate that visceral emotion is what counts, and not life experience nor thought, and also that there are always several possible ways of perceiving the same life experience, let us consider the following case :

Adultery in Flagrante Delicto

Imagine that a man or a woman returns from a journey earlier than planned, without telling their spouse. When he or she gets home, this person surprises the husband or wife in flagrante delicto, committing adultery and, moreover, in their marital bed. The intruder is taken by surprise, shocked, horrified and deeply hurt. Their stress level increases sharply.

We would, of course, all (*or almost all*) be equally stressed in a situation like this and would all (*or almost all*) make the same analysis and feel the same emotions ! But the visceral emotion will be very different, depending on the individual. Thus this person could live this misfortune in various ways :

- in terms of *resistance*, like the young lady, if the person opts for stoical management of the situation, for example, by deciding that they shouldn't get divorced because they have three children or because it is not compatible with their religious beliefs ;
- in terms of *digestion* like the diplomat if the person experiences the situation as 'hard to digest'. Their resentment could be directed against either their partner or their partner's lover if they know him or her ;

- in terms of *insecurity*, which is more of a feminine response, if the woman thinks she has lost the man's protection, just like a female who has lost her male and who is afraid of not being able to stand up to the dangers ;
- in terms of *loss of territory*, which is more of a masculine response, if the man feels that somebody is taking away an essential or kicking him out of his territory ;
- in terms of *marking territory* if the lover or mistress is seen as an invader. For example, in this case, the victim might be particularly shocked by the fact that this could happen in their own home, in the marital bed ;
- in terms of *general devaluation* if the person directs the problem against themselves: since the other partner feels the need to have an outside relationship, it means they are of no interest and worthless ;
- in terms of *sexual devaluation* if the person considers they fell short since the other partner feels the need to seek satisfaction with someone else ;
- in terms of *social devaluation* if the real problem lies not in the infidelity of the partner but in the damage to the person's reputation and what people will say about them being tricked ;
- in terms of *guilt* if the person thinks that he or she alone was to blame because they fell short, failed to understand there was a problem, etc. ;
- in terms of *rejection* if the person feels rejected or abandoned which, in nature, is a critical situation since we cannot survive if we are rejected by our group ;
- in terms of *annihilation* if the person feels like their world is collapsing, that they've lost everything and that they will never get over it. They could even collapse on the spot, completely stunned. This really intense feeling is one of the most archaic that exists ;
- in terms of *loss of physical integrity* if the person perceives this situation as a physical aggression, for example like being stabbed in the back ;
- in terms of *stain* if the person thinks that this infidelity isn't the first. They have had sexual relations with the other partner many times while the other was already unfaithful and his or her genitals were thus 'impure' ;
- in terms of *danger to the clan* if the person thinks the family clan is in danger of being dismantled, which, archaically, is another essential dimension ;
- in terms of *danger in the nest*, which is more of a feminine response, if the woman projects her stress onto her couple and her home, which she sees as irretrievably broken. That said, a man with a strong feminine side could also experience this in the same way ;
- in terms of *tragedy for the children*, which is also more of a feminine response, if the woman projects her stress onto her children who she can already see in great suffering because they no longer have a father to fulfil their needs ;
- in terms of *displacement* if the person feels that the real cause of this tragedy is their departure. In this case, displacement will be the main form their misfortune takes ;
- in terms of *unbearable noise* if the stress is auditive because the person stays stuck on what they heard, for example words of love between the two lovers, cries of pleasure or very crude comments ;
- in terms of *a vision of horror* if the stress is visual because the person stays stuck on what they saw when they opened the bedroom door ;
- *et cætera*... because we could experience this situation in many other ways corresponding to other precise archaic feelings.

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The fact is that our brain cannot interpret the real facts (*the experience*) nor evaluate how serious they really are: it is totally unable to do so. For example, it has no idea at all what adultery in flagrante delicto is according to our human criteria: it has never known and never will. All the less so considering that biology even seems to tend to encourage us to be unfaithful as it favours genetic diversification.

In situations like this, the brain steps in only if they generate an increase in stress level and, hence, are experienced as negative. Because although a partner's infidelity can be very painful, it can also be experienced positively, or even very positively. It may sound impossible to be happy to be cuckolded, but the fact is that :

Thanks to this, a man might feel great relief on discovering his wife's unfaithfulness because he suddenly feels much less guilty about having a mistress himself or a woman might take it as excellent news because it would at last relieve her of her marital duties, which she had always experienced as an ordeal, or, finally, someone else might see it as a release because she at last has a good reason to divorce.

Consequently, it isn't the experience which counts, but the way it is felt deep down. The same event can be a tragedy for some and a joy for others. One thing must be understood: our archaic brain does not take care of us unless it detects an intense or lasting increase in our stress level. In other words, it lets us get on with our activities without interfering in anything.

But if it does detect a sudden, intense and/or lasting increase in our stress level – *which means danger to it* – it listens to our visceral emotion to find about the nature of the danger. Consequently, our brain is never interested in what we are experiencing, but only in how we are experiencing it, in other words our feelings deep down. And how does it evaluate the seriousness of the danger and the urgency of the situation ? From the intensity of our stress.

In cases where it considers the situation serious enough for it to intervene (*at a physical or behavioural level*) the *bio-logical* solution it activates depends on the specific archaic feeling of the individual and on the urgency of the situation. Therefore, in this case of adultery in flagrante delicto :

- ***if the brain*** considers that the visceral feeling of the individual clearly falls into the category of digestive, in cases where it keeps repeating itself because their partner's attitude is absolutely unacceptable and they cannot digest it, the brain can chose to activate a '*hyper-digestion*' program in order to help them digest the indigestible ;
- ***if the brain*** considers that the individual's feeling clearly falls into the category of resistance, in cases where they force themselves to hold on through and against everything, the brain can chose to activate a hyperglycaemia program to make them physically stronger to resist ;
- ***if the brain*** considers that the individual's feeling clearly falls into the category of visual, in cases where they're deeply shocked by what they saw when they opened the bedroom door and can't rid themselves of this horrendous image, the brain can chose to activate an alteration of vision to help them no longer see this kind of horror ;
- ***if the brain*** considers that the individual's feeling clearly falls into the category of auditive, in cases where they stay stuck on what they heard of the lovers' frolics, the brain can chose to activate an alteration of hearing to help them no longer hear such unbearable noises.

It is always the visceral response – *and never our intellectual analysis* – that prompts our brain to activate the '*bio-logical*' solution which it considers most appropriate to help us solve a difficulty.

And sometimes even a very precise illness can be developed, corresponding to a very precise feeling, without the victims ever having experienced the corresponding tragic shock themselves.

Transgenerational Impact

So our physical or mental symptoms, our blocks, our behaviour or our existential difficulties in general can be the natural, *bio-logical* consequence of a subconscious stress related to a particular context or to a more or less serious event in our life.

But sometimes the cause might have to be sought at an earlier stage, before our birth, in our *pre-history*. Very many cases show that an event which occurred even before our birth – *during our intra-uterine life or during the history of our parents or of our family in general* – can have a considerable influence on our life and even on our health.

Because many things are transmitted from generation to generation, not only the genetic inheritance of our species or of our lineage: we can also be custodians of the memory of a particular event that one of our ancestors had to face, a memory that can handicap us during our whole life or even make us ill, even though we were not involved in the history.

For example : a girl might be obsessed by a fear of lacking food to the point of hiding her food in her bedroom when she was little and always being very anxious whenever the refrigerator and the cupboards were empty. Why ? To my mind, because she inherited the fear of the shortage experienced by her mother during her pregnancy at the time of the First Gulf War in 1990, a fear which her mother herself had inherited from her own mother, who had gone really hungry during the Second World War.

For example : a woman might be severely handicapped for forty years after every meal because of a hypersensitive liver that prevents her digesting the slightest food normally. Why ? To my mind, because she has inherited a bout of very severe food poisoning which her mother suffered shortly after her conception.

For example : after the birth of her first child, a woman might suddenly be seriously affected by a deep anxiety in the form of an illness leading to her death while there is no particular reason for it in her history. Why ? To my mind, because she has inherited a tragedy suffered by her maternal grandmother in 1935, shortly before her mother's conception, as her previous child died of illness at the age of 18 months.

For example : a woman might suffer for forty years from a major hypophyseal malfunction, one of the consequences of which is that she produces milk outside maternity. Why? To my mind, because she has inherited the tragedy suffered by her father in 1923 when he was five years old and his mother died giving birth to his little sister. In this dramatic context, all the stress of the boy will crystallize around the need to feed this newborn baby without delay without her mother to suckle her.

These few examples, chosen among many others, show to what extent we can be the involuntary inheritors of events that, in many cases, happened long before our birth. That leaves the questions how and, particularly, why.

Adaptation to Environmental Pressures

Even if there is little chance of this theory of transmission of a programming conflict from one generation to another being scientifically proven some day, nevertheless it is not a nebulous unfounded theory: thousands of cases prove it. As for imagining that it is a kind of unexplainable magic, this too is not true since it is the consequence of a strictly

bio-logical survival mechanism with the objective of allowing us to adapt optimally to environmental pressures.

Whether it is a matter of personal evolution, of evolution from one generation to another or of the evolution of species over 3.85 billion years, the basic principle has always been the same from time immemorial: to adapt to environmental pressures. But we still have to return to the theses on the evolution of species to understand why we are capable of a physical or mental manifestation related to an event or a context which occurred before our birth.

Darwin vs. Lamarck

This entails re-opening an old discussion about which a great deal has been written over nearly two centuries. Because there are two conflicting theories about the evolution of beings : one developed by the French naturalist Jean-Baptiste de Monet, Chevalier de Lamarck (1744-1829) ; the other by the English naturalist Charles Darwin (1809-1882). Put simply :

- **Darwin** said that the evolution of a species is, first of all, the result of rigorous selection of the individuals which are best adapted to their environment and also of selection of the best variants of details appearing by chance and making the lineage that possesses them prevail: this is the theory of natural selection.
- **Lamarck** said that the evolution of a species is induced by the adaptation of individuals to environmental pressures, and that this adaptation is transmitted to the following generations: this is the theory of acquired characteristics.

Here's a simple example to explain these theories: a famous American seed producer developed a variety of corn genetically modified to produce its own insecticide in order to protect itself against the gluttonous corn *Chrysomelidae Larvae*. Only six years later, it was found that this insect had adapted perfectly and no longer feared the insecticide produced by the plant.

- **the Darwinian point of view** will argue that the individuals which were sensitive to this insecticide have been eliminated and that only the specimens that had the good luck to be insensitive to it survived, and gave birth to offspring with the same characteristic.
- **the Lamarckian point of view** will argue that the need to resist the insecticide induced a genetic modification in this direction in certain individuals and that this characteristic was then transmitted to the following generations.

The fact is that Darwin's theory is absolutely irrefutable as natural selection plays such an essential role that Lamarck has been left totally ridiculous. To this day, it is still better not to talk about Lamarck in front of members of the Academy of Sciences: they would accuse you of being revisionist.

We 'decoders' are thus horrendous Lamarckians since we consider that symptoms can be an adaptative evolution in response to a difficulty encountered in our life, and that this adaptation can possibly be transmitted from one generation to another.

But some scientists dare to say, armed with supporting evidence, that Lamarck was not necessarily wrong. Indeed, it has been observed that some adaptative genetic mutations are much too fast and/or simultaneous to be the result of coincidence and/or of natural selection. This is the theory of epigenetic inheritance, in other words transmission of an acquisition from one generation to another through genes.

Personally, I think that Darwin is, of course, right if we look at the history of life over 3.850 billion years. But I also think that Lamarck isn't totally wrong if we take into account the few practical cases explained before. The discussion could be formulated like this: couldn't some of these variants of detail which, according to Darwin, appeared by

chance also have been induced by adaptation of one or more individuals to a particular stress? This acquired characteristic was then transmitted to the next generation which, consequently, became better adapted than other lineages to this particular environmental pressure.

the Logic of Symptoms

To illustrate all this, let's go back to our practical examples to assess their logic. In each case we will see that the physical, mental or behavioural manifestation expressed in the following generation is the best possible adaptation to the tragedy experienced in the previous one :

- *in the case* of the young lady obsessed by the fear of being short of food because of the anxiety of her mother brought on by the shortage she suffered during pregnancy, her behaviour, which even made her build up some stocks during childhood, was truly the best possible adaptation to her mother's anxiety. This way, she was in no danger of going short of food ;
- *in the case* of the woman who couldn't digest anything because of the serious food poisoning suffered by her mother at the time of her conception, her hypersensitive liver was truly the best possible adaptation to this previous poisoning. This way, her liver was always alert, at every meal, and ready to manage any potential food poisoning (*remember: the liver is, among other things, the 'anti-poison centre' of our body*) ;
- *in the case* of the mother who was very anxious at the idea of her children possibly falling ill because of the tragedy experienced by her grandmother in 1935 in the form of the illness and death of her child, this psychosis was the best possible adaptation to the original drama. This way, this woman always kept a very close watch over her children's health ;
- *in the case* of the woman in permanent galactorrhoea because of the tragedy her father lived through in 1923 because of his mother's death, and especially because of the vital need to feed the newborn, this latter point was the environmental pressure and the symptom was the best possible adaptation to it. This way, this woman was always ready to suckle a child ;

I have, of course, chosen these four particular cases to illustrate what I said earlier: first, because they are very representative and then because once the link between cause and effect was understood the symptom disappeared. In this way, these people were able to cut the subconscious link that tied them to the past. In many cases (*but not always*) the simple knowledge heals.

Forms of Transmission

The reasons for this kind of transmission are, therefore, relatively simple to understand: the objective is to transmit vital information to the following generation in order to make it optimally adapted to the difficulty faced by the previous one. In other words, this transmission simply gives the next generation a better chance of survival because it will benefit from previous experience.

But explaining how this transmission takes place is a completely different matter: all we can do is hypothesize. In the case of the woman who couldn't digest anything, two hypotheses come into consideration: either the information '*you must always be ready to face food poisoning*' has in some way been transmitted from mother to child through the genes or the child has absorbed the information during its intra-uterine life and registered it in its cells.

By contrast, in the case of the woman in permanent galactorrhoea, only one hypothesis springs to my mind : the information '*you must always be ready to produce milk*' was, in some way, encoded in the sperm that her father used thirty years later to conceive her.

In the cases of these two women, the consequence of the stress experienced previously had expressed itself in their bodies. But much more often, as in the other two cases, the consequence expresses itself at mental level in various forms, such as specific patterns of behaviour, existential blocks, anxieties, phobias, neuroses or even psychoses in the realm of psychiatry. But whether physical or mental, the mechanism is absolutely the same.

That said, we can also be conditioned by family influence after a trauma which occurred before our birth. In the case of the young lady who was afraid of a food shortage because of the anxiety experienced by her mother brought on by the shortage she suffered during pregnancy in the middle of the First Gulf War in 1990, this mother had herself also been conditioned deeply and daily by the very distinctive dynamics of her own mother, traumatized by the shortage during the Second World War.

Diverse Memories

We are under the influence of a set of memories, starting with the experiences accumulated from the moment of our birth. But this is only a small part of a very long story since we are all depositaries of many other things :

- ***Intra-uterine memories*** since we are in symbiosis with our mother during this phase and in direct contact with her emotions and feelings. Moreover, through her, we are in relation with her environment, with our father, with our family and with the world in general. For example, a little girl has big problems at school with mathematics, to the extreme of being unable to add up $1 + 1$. Why ? Simply because her mother was under great stress at work during her pregnancy because of a serious accounting mistake which incurred the wrath of her boss.
- ***Parental memories*** since we are conceived, then brought up and educated by these two persons who, themselves, each have their own history and *pre-history*. For example, two siblings will have the same pronounced depressive structure inherited from the moral devastation their mother experienced when she was twelve, when she was the sole survivor of a car crash in which her whole family was killed.
- ***Family memories*** since we are the receptacle, for better or for worse, of the whole history of our parents' families, of our grandparents, of our great-grandparents, etc. For example, at the age of 53 a man suddenly starts to suffer a neuromuscular problem in his right arm which leaves him unable to write or sign his name : at more or less the same age, his grandfather had been sent to prison for swindle and fraud.
- ***Collective memories*** of which we are depositaries, depending on our sociocultural origins, our environment and the history of our region or of the country of our birth. For example, a Jewish woman might have many miscarriages, provoked by memories of the Shoah. Deep inside, she couldn't have children since they would have been exterminated in any case.
- ***Archaic memories*** since we have kept some very beautiful reflexes, like the man facing a situation he thinks insurmountable to the point of suffering a branchioma, a very serious disease affecting the neck and the embryonic vestiges of what were once our branchiae, in the days when we were fish.

All this shows that the impact of our *pre-history* and of our transgenerational heritage on our lives is primordial. To illustrate this – and draw the parallel to the story of Scribble the dog – here are the full details of an incredible story which I have already spoken about.

Paula's Story

Like many stories, this one starts with a coincidence that makes my path cross with that of an inhabitant of Valenciennes, who was forty-five years old at that time. Several chats later, Paula explained to me that she had been ill for nearly all her life: she had acute hyperprolactinaemia and had had surgery ten years earlier on a hypophyseal tumour with high prolactin, all symptoms I had never heard of. I had to consult a medical dictionary to learn that prolactin is a hormone secreted by the hypophysis and that its main role is to trigger milk production through the mammary gland at the time of giving birth.

At first I was intimidated by this symptom, especially as I had only just completed my 'decoding' training. But I nevertheless invited her to tell me more. What she told me can be summed up as follows : for nearly forty years, life had been hell for this woman ; splitting headaches, constant nausea and continuous vertigo day after day.

The illness had started very gradually around 1960, when she was seven years old or so. The first symptoms were migraines which became stronger, longer and more frequent over the years; then, little by little, vertigo and nausea followed. But this woman is so strong and stoical that she didn't go to the doctor, but just took aspirins.

But in 1989, Paula suddenly had problems with her eyesight. She went to see an ophthalmologist, who was so perplexed that he prescribed a brain scan, which detected a hypophyseal prolactin adenoma as big as a plum, compressing the optic nerve. This explained the eye problems, the migraines and many other clinical features typical of this illness. Because of the urgency of her case, she was operated on as a priority.

The next ten years were a real medical calvary. Because, despite the removal of the tumour, her hypophysis kept on secreting an enormous quantity of prolactin, hundreds of times too much. In other words, the clinical features persisted and even worsened with the medicines prescribed to her until, a few months before we met, she had to abandon her treatment.

At this stage, I still had no idea of the logic of the symptoms, so I asked her about her clinical signs and these put me on the right track. Because she explained to me that, in addition to nausea and migraines, her body was producing milk even though she had never had children nor even been pregnant. This happens to be one of the main clinical features of this illness. Sometimes she even had to change her bra in the middle of the day because of the quantity of milk she was producing.

Starting from the principle that there must be a good *bio-logical* reason why her body was constantly producing so much milk, I asked her to tell me stories about milk in her life or in her family's history, a question which made no sense to her, however much I persisted. But finally, at long last, I found the right question and asked her to tell me baby stories.

She then told me the story of how, at the age of five, in the summer of 1923, her father had had to come to terms with his mother dying in childbirth (*Paula's aunt*). To understand what really happened, we must put ourselves in this little boy's shoes and imagine what he experienced: we must set the scene, imagine the action and evoke the atmosphere of a home shaken by such a tragedy.

Imagine the emotional impact produced by this woman's death, especially on Paula's father, who has just lost his mother. But we must also imagine the life-and-death situation for the newborn girl who has arrived in the world without her mother to feed her. We are in 1923, just a few years after the First World War, at a time when formula milk wasn't available at the chemist's around the corner. We must imagine the atmosphere in this family in mourning desperately looking for a wet nurse to suckle the baby.

The five year-old child is in the middle of all this turmoil and it is easy to define his priority: *'the baby must be fed'*. It is precisely this overriding watchword that the child registers so deep down that the message will be transferred twenty-five years later to the following generation: this is the factor programming Paula's illness. As to how this information reached Paula, I can see only one hypothesis : she received it through her genes via the sperm her father used in 1952 to conceive her. Can I prove this ? Of course not. Why was this message transmitted ? It is a question of *bio-logical* utility and of adaptative evolution to environmental pressures, which have been governing life for 3.85 billion years.

The stress suffered by Paula's father was so powerful that a permanent adaptative evolution was registered by the child with the aim of optimizing prolactin secretion. Then this adaptation to the 1923 tragedy was transmitted to Paula at the time of her conception. But all this would suggest that Lamarck was perhaps right, which puts me at risk of incurring the wrath of the Academy of Sciences.

The event programming the illness was now clearly defined, but we still had to find the event which triggered it. I therefore asked her to tell me more stories about milk and nurselings. Before she could do so, she had to quiz her mother first, since she had no memories about this part of the story. The next day, she told me that her mother had not wanted to breastfeed her four children, whatever her reasons may have been. This was no great problem for the first three, but it was for the fourth. In 1958, when Paula was only five years old – the same age as her father was when the great milk stress happened – she witnessed the same scene: her youngest sibling refused every kind of milk substitute she was offered. A great stress engulfed the household, to the same tune as in 1923, i.e. *'the baby must be fed'*.

In my opinion, this was the moment when Paula's brain activated the program sown by her father and which she had inherited in her genes on her conception. Her brain sent instructions to activate prolactinoma to produce plenty of milk in order to feed the baby. Paula's biology then took into account nothing but the archaic nature of her stress, without considering her age at the time or the fact that the baby wasn't hers.

For the first ten years, the tumour developed very gradually, but from 1968 on it started to grow much faster. Because in that year, when Paula was fifteen, her father had a serious car accident from which he would never recover. For the next eight years, until his death, Paula supported her father, to whom she was very close, exactly the same way a mother cares for her sick child.

However, as I explained earlier, in nature, when a child is ill, the best thing its mother can do is to give it some good healing milk, a task for which Paula's biology was already programmed. In this situation, in the jargon of 'decoding' purists, this woman had an *'upstream offspring tragedy'* conflict, i.e. at the pituitary rather than mammary level.

Whichever way you look at it, about ten days after our meeting, the symptom disappeared. Paula no longer suffers from migraine, nausea or vertigo, nor lactation. After forty years of misery, she can at last live without headaches. At worst, Paula's prolactin level is still sometimes a bit higher than normal when she is under stress.

But how is that possible? I can't say exactly why, but the hyper-secretion of prolactin clearly stopped very quickly after our conversations, in my opinion because Paula finally understood the whys and wherefores of her illness. The fact is that, since the birth of her sister, without being in the slightest aware of it, she had been subconsciously permanently overstressed in this specific form, as if she was really experiencing this *'offspring tragedy'*. But as soon as she became aware of all that, her stress stopped at a stroke and her archaic brain immediately noticed. It then concluded that there was no more danger,

no child to be fed or taken care of, and that it consequently wasn't necessary to produce more milk.

At most, I suggested that Paula carry out a symbolic act in order to fix this awareness through action. I suggested that she could go to the most beautiful dispensary she could find, buy the biggest baby's bottle available and a box of the best formula milk and prepare a perfectly dosed baby's bottle. Then she could go and reflect for a few moments on her father's grave and show him this magnificent baby's bottle, as a way of telling him there was no longer a problem. Finally, she might go to her aunt's grave and empty the maternal milk on her gravestone to feed the little girl symbolically. This is how, full of emotion, Paula put an end to a story which had lasted seventy-five years, from 1923 to 1998.

But the story doesn't end there : a few months later, when this hyperprolactinaemia was almost ancient history, Paula called me urgently and said she was very worried because she felt really bad. All the symptoms of the illness were back: she had headache, nausea and vertigo. She explained that, the day before, she had visited a friend in hospital, who turned out to be much worse than she had thought. When she left the hospital, she was so confused that she drove round for several hours and got totally lost in the city where she had lived her whole life long.

In this case, Paula simply stepped back into her '*offspring tragedy*' because of her friend's health problem and her archaic brain immediately reactivated the program to produce milk to take care of the child. To her brain, if Paula is experiencing any stress in relation to somebody who is ill, it can only be her child, exactly as she experienced the situation between 1968 and 1976 when she took care of her injured father. Forty-five minutes later, at the end of this phone call, Paula was again fully aware of what had happened and the headache, nausea and vertigo disappeared for good.

This story is a remarkable summary of every aspect of decoding biological and trans-generational stresses, covering all the subtleties and mechanisms. It shows the exactitude of the laws of nature, since the symptom is the best possible solution to feed and/or take care of the baby. It shows that psychology isn't at the root of the problem since Paula had not yet been born in 1923 and does not remember the episode in 1958. In the final analysis, it also shows that the transgenerational impact can be fundamental.

Misunderstanding

Even if these adaptative evolutions to the initial problem transmitted from one generation to another are absolutely remarkable from the point of view of biology, the fact remains that they can also prove harmful to the descendants because they are ultimately unsuitable. These few examples prove that these evolutions can be highly incapacitating or even a health hazard.

Why ? Simply because our biology still responds in accordance with very archaic factors totally unrelated to reality. This does not fail to provoke deep misunderstandings between our biology and our humanity. For instance, our biology does not know that we have domesticated animals capable of supplying us with milk to feed our babies, nor that we have invented medicines to heal them, so that it is no longer necessary to activate galactorrhoea.

Family Tree

It is always very useful to know where we come from in order to know who we are. This applies to our remote animal origins since they can help us to understand our archaic reflexes better. But it is also valid for our family origins since they could allow us to understand better our mental structure and its consequences for our life and, sometimes, our health.

We are all, inevitably, in some way or other the inheritors of the existential difficulties and sufferings of our parents, grandparents or ancestors in general. How could it be any other way ? On the one hand, we are their genetic descendants, and on the other they have influenced us in one way or another. Fortunately, we are also the inheritors of their strengths and excellences.

Analysis of our family line of descent is one of the most fascinating aspects of this approach. With a little experience, it is easy to see how the causes and effects are consistent from one generation to another, and to comprehend the logic of the influences which make us who we are.

Of course, we can't know everything about the history of our ascendants and in some cases it is totally inaccessible, for example for adopted children. But from my experience I have observed that we always know more than enough about our *pre-history* to understand the deep significance of our genealogical heritage.

Caution

First of all, I suggest fully understanding our history since our birth before looking further in the past for the origins of our existential difficulties and/or symptoms. The truth is not automatically hidden in our family tree, far from it.

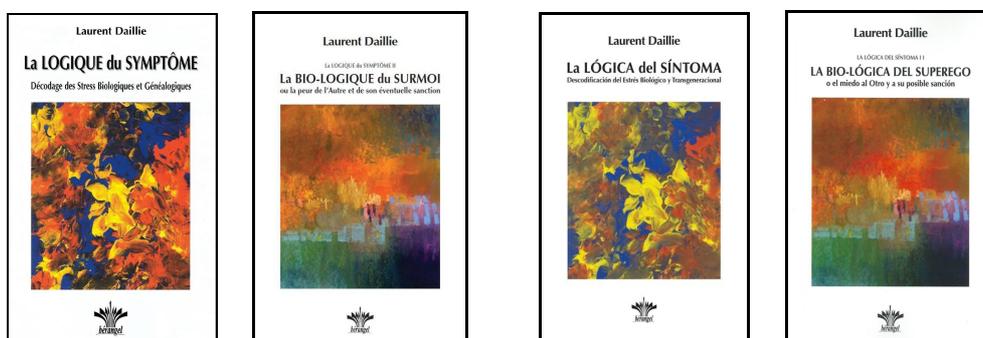
I also advise the greatest caution in interpreting our tree. We must stick to the principle of reality and take only the available information into account: we might otherwise lose our way trying to give a meaning to something which doesn't have any.

And, last but not least, I advise never forgetting the essentials: Decoding Biological and Transgenerational Stresses is, precisely, a matter of logic and can only be mixed with Science. We must not mix the unmixable.

Conclusion

It is thus our good old archaic brain that manages our life and it is much better to be aware of it. In addition to helping us to understand better who we really are deep down, it can also allow us to discover the subtle logic behind our physical or mental symptoms or our behaviour. This could be very useful in general, and sometimes even salutary.

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