

Senior mistreatments and disabled people neglects:
which political and psychical issues for the victims?

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Three questions and two points in my communication

What is the social and cultural and ethical specificity of the question of Senior mistreatments and disabled or old people neglects now in France and In Western Europe?

Both a political, a social, a cultural an ethical and a medical (psychiatric question) in democratic societies protecting the human rights of the citizens



First question. Mistreatment, invisible abuses and everyday elderly' s neglects, which forms and issues for the public policies?

I. What is the social and civilizational specificity of the question of Senior mistreatments and disabled or old people neglects now in France and In Western Europe?

- Who are they? How old? What is there sex and sexual orientation?
- Where are they living?
- What have they to face to and deal with?

I'll say a word at the end of my talk... about these key questions, because My dear colleague Doctor Claire Scodellaro is going to explain it very precisely...



My data

- I'll base my demonstration first
- on sociological interviews of the single qualitative work in France asking the elderly themselves about the way they perceive and react to mistreatments (Thomas, Scodellaro, Dupré-Lévêque 2005),
- second on psychiatric description of their sorrow and grief
- and third on several clinical data which I collected during my ten years practice with elderly patients as a psychoanalyst.

3 questions 2 points

What is the social and civilizational specificity of the question of Senior mistreatments and disabled or old people neglects now in France and In Western European democracies?

I. Which political issues and which policies for the Care givers and for the Welfare State?

II. Which political and psychical issues for the victims?



Which policies and which political issues

Which policies? (when? And Why? Towards whom?)
and which political issues for the Care givers and for the Welfare State?

- A question of citizenship?
- A Question of the right of everybody to the dignity?
- A question of the respect of Human Being?
- A question of the new forms and patterns of close protection of the Human rights?



Whom(s) ?

- A revolution of the sight on disabled and people needing the help of other for their daily life
- The treatment of people seen as vulnerable and dependant on the help of other citizens or of the State because
 - of their race,
 - of their class,
 - of their age
 - of their gender status
 - changed completely in the last twenty years worldwide as the Welfare-State regressed and especially in Europe



HOW did the problem appear on the political agenda ?

- Which patterns for dealing with the care of aging people for Social democracies?
- In a context of incomes and pension crisis and in a anti-elderly (ageist) common perception in the society.



HOW? Who? and Whom?

- At each time we have to connect together the following questions
- What is mistreatment?
- who (plural) commits it
- and whom (singular) is victim?
- What links between them?
- which Gaps? Which similarities
- Who detect it and propose to protect the victims?
- Why and how preventing it ?



The social context

- Ethnic/age/generational gap or divides between care giver or helper and disabled people
- Wages/ Social/Diploma/ Sexual /cultural likeness and equality of status between people whom are targeted by the care and familial or professional ones who help them
- An unbalanced exchange, mentally disturbing the both part of the care link (the helper and the helped people)
- Difficult to think without guilt, shame aso to what to do and how to do it since 15 years.



Twenty years ago in France...

- The question of senior mistreatments as a public issues appeared in France in the 1990 when for the first time a Ministry of Elderly was created. By the way the Minister focused his action on elderly mistreatments during the heat-wave of 2003 and after.



How did the problem come up and how?

- Curiously the public problem of violence against elderly was and is always dealt with separately.
- It has never been connected to the similar question of
 - violences,
 - mistreatments
 - Sexual and work harassment Religious persecution
 - Privation of the access to the Human rights
- of women
 - neither by the social or medical scientists
 - nor by the public actors of Health or social inclusion.



No women, no Cry?

- Even though most of the neglected and mistreated elderly are women, they are not considered as such because of
 - their age
 - and of their social status
 - and their disabled condition
- French quantitative investigations and surveys since 20 years are either focused
 - on sexual mistreatment and conjugal violence (including rape and murder) for the grown up women
 - and secondly on psychological disease
 - or on psychological and sexual harassment at work
 - or at least on violence against children.
- But when they are more than 65 years old, people are not considered as entering in the targeted groups of the studies for the quantitative social or epidemiological enquiries and statistics upon violence and violation of the fundamental human rights.
- WHY?????????

Who are the victims for the public policies and in the political discourses?

- This fact stress that for governants and the other citizen too
- the violations of rights of the persons, of their dignity and of their corporal and psychical integrity (*habeas corpus*) are not held as belonging to the same time than for the other citizens.
- It presupposes that the way they suffer from the neglects and violence
 - and their possibility to respond to the offences are different.



Who are the victims? Neither women? Nor grown up person?

- Elderly are not seen :
- either as « women » but instead of
 - only as (female?) victims of physical and psychical abuses, neglects
- Or as human being, grown up male subjects of the human rights



My main interrogation?

My assumption

- Who are the victims? Neither women? Nor grown up person?
- that is not a superfluous argument but in my point of view a key problem may be the main question
- It's necessary to try to understand the civilizational and political issues of this new “humanitarian government” (Agier, 2008) of the elderly, who see them neither as women nor as responsible individual accountable for their acts and their life,
- Which are the effects on the disabled and the vulnerable of this new government targeting orphan, lonely mothers with a lot of children, and elderly?
- We have to look at the singular condition of the abused elderly in democracy.



The (new) condition of victim?

- This condition could be subsumed so:
- they are seen as “victims without the possibility to testify their pain”.
- They are not considered to be ‘witness of themselves neither for the prosecution or for the trial nor for the investigation of the facts’ (Lyotard, 1983, Freedman Valluy J. 2007).
- Regarding these groups the process of *brutalization* and *trivialization* (Mosse, 1989) is at work.
- It diminishes the importance of the damages caused to elderly and put out of sight the way they feel, call, reply and endorse and sometimes account at the place of their author facing to these everyday injuries (Butler, 2004)

- Butler J. (2004), *Le pouvoir des mots. Politique du performatif* » [1997], trad. fr., Paris, Éditions Amsterdam.
- Freedman J., Valluy J. eds. (2007), *Persécutions de femmes. Savoirs, mobilisations et protections*, Bellecombe-en-Bauges Editions du Croquant
- Lyotard J.-F. (1983), *Le différend*, Paris, Minuit.
- Mossé G. L (1999), *De la Grande Guerre au totalitarisme. La brutalisation des sociétés européennes* , trad. Française, Hachette, coll. « Littérature », 1999.



How are explained and justified the trivial and everyday small invisible violences against elderly???

- When the care-givers have been blown off/ thrown off balance by the unsteady link and the queer relation with the disabled person
- Because the Alzheimer disease suffering patient or the psychically disabled person disturb the balance of the care-givers mind
- How do/ Could/ they react ???



Private abuse and vice, public virtue

- How are explained and justified the trivial and everyday small invisible violences against elderly???
- The caregivers
- That is to say
 - the spouse/husband
 - The child
 - The caregiver or helper for the daily life
 - The housekeeper
 - The houseworker
 - The roommate
 - The doctor, the social worker....



What is the explanation?

- Burn out of the helpers who needs holidays
 - In French « un répit »
 - translation a respite
 - from the heavy burden of the patient
 - Please a few days rest or a breathing space ...



What are the justifications?

A psychological point of view

- **I have been** snubbed by the ... elderly
 - crying
 - bad-tempered
 - old grouch
 - moaner
 - Depressed
 - Old woman

 - Protesting against me instead against her aches and pain
 - I'm constantly being snubbed *or* put down by her I broke down and



Who neglects whom?

- At each time to ask what is mistreatment you have to ask who (plural) commits its and whom (singular) is victim? What links between them? Which Gaps?



A regressive State

- The central role of the State either in the task of fighting inequalities and social injustice or producing solidarity and recognition for every citizen of his/her rights both to dignity and to wellbeing or to happiness weakened.
- Did the role of UE increase???



Four main changes in the democratic government of disabled very old women and social disease of Alzheimer

- The forms and the goal of the global/local government of poor and lower middle classes elderly mentally disabled women scales and the democratic protection schemes of underprivileged classes have changed completely in a **four-fold** manner.
- Thomas H. (2010), « Les vieillards en démocratie : des citoyens palliatifs », in Carbonnelle S. (edt), *Penser les vieillesse. Regards sociologiques et anthropologiques sur l'avancée en âge*, Paris Seli Arslan, pp. 53-72.
- Thomas H. (2010), *Les vulnérables. La démocratie contre les pauvres*, Bellecombe-en-Bauges, éditions du Croquant, collection TERRA, 2010, 256p.



1. New discourses, renewed agencies

- First new discourses are promoting rhetoric schemes of vulnerability and resilience.
 - At the same time the leaders of the Welfare State have implemented new agencies to include the excluded people
 - by controlling their way of life and containing them outside of the public sphere.
 - They are promoting innovating operational instruments applying the managerial capitalistic forms of rationality.



2. A bad fate a marvellous hazard

- 2.Second change following these models
- poverty and mental illness including Alzheimer disease or dementia are considered either as
 - a personal bad fate a genetic fate
 - due to a casualty occurring to frail individual or genetic and medical causes.
- The linked assumption is that poor and ill people have to take a special part into their moral and social rehabilitation and to be involved in the social actions developed to empower themselves by activating their capabilities. For the elderly the families have to...
- These biopolitical agencies are now used in Europe for managing the social, racial and age issues and the mental problems too..



3. A new post rousseauist democratic « social contract »

- **3. Third** these new policies have been built on a system of
- different protection of individuals
- promoting an unequal recognition of human rights
- in a global world
- where the displacements of populations have increased and are both based on and creating an emergent democratic 'social contract'.



4. Consequences of the model on the poor disabled elderly

- 4. Fourth these new form of humanitarian governmentality promoted in the Western Welfare State especially has awkward consequences on the political and psychical subjectivity of the social and political minorities.



Which political and psychological consequences?

- Victims
 - With no possibility to voice only to exit or to be loyal
 - with no right to claim their right
 - and no possibility to involve themselves in the fight against injustice
 - no entitlement on their life
 - Palliative citizens
 - Condemned to shame and silence
 - Between two deaths
-
- Thomas H. (2010), « Les vieillards en démocratie : des citoyens palliatifs », in Carbonnelle S. (edt), *Penser les vieillesse. Regards sociologiques et anthropologiques sur l'avancée en âge*, Paris Seli Arslan, pp. 53-72.
 - Thomas H. (2010), *Les vulnérables. La démocratie contre les pauvres*, Bellecombe-en-Bauges, éditions du Croquant, collection TERRA, 2010, 256p.



- Which policies towards the frail and disabled elderly potentially victims of
 - Violence physical/ Psychological/financial/ sexual???
 - Mistreatments, abuses, harassment, violence and neglects
 - a graduate scale???



Medicare or Social Care the new model of governmentality

- During the last decades
- socio-economic reference-frame (assistencial), applied first to the old pensioners of the lower categories,
- to an economical-clinical reference-frame of protection, gradually extended to those of the middle class.
- It is the base of a new model of assumption of responsibility, which is pressed on a disciplinary device of new socio-medical control, implying the mobilization of the recipients and their entourage in the safeguarding of the concern of them selves (Foucault).



The concern of one self and the government of oneself

- «Le souci de soi est devenu un principe général et inconditionné.
- Ce qui veut dire que "se soucier de soi" n'est plus un impératif qui vaut à un moment donné de l'existence, et dans une phase de la vie qui serait celle du passage de l'adolescence à la vie adulte.
- "Se soucier de soi" est une règle coextensive à la vie.
- Le le souci de soi n'est pas lié à un statut particulier ou à une profession particulière à l'intérieur de la société.
- Il s'agit de l'être tout entier du sujet qui doit, tout au long de son existence, se soucier de soi, et de soi en tant que tel ».

M Foucault in *L'herméneutique du sujet*, Cours du 17 février 1982.



Social assistance transformation

- Policies of assistance either financial (news services and allowances) or material (creation of public services of assistance to the everyday life or rather help for creating private or para-public associations to the care of elderly or disabled people or young children) with the people evaluated like dependent physically on the one hand and socially and economically out of state to face their expenditure alone on the other hand, multiplied.
- This is the chosen way to finance the development of actions “of proximité” (closeness) and “services to the person”, assumed by less unskilled and precarious female workers (assistant-housewives, auxiliaries of life, nurses...)
- They led to a new form of segregative management in fact of the old people of the lower and lower middle classes, which are assisted today partly by unskilled professionals (whose social status are similar), partly by their descendants.



Medicalisation of ageing and care

- At the same time, the fight against the dependence became more medical, while being focused more particularly on the “psychic” dependence and in particular on the “disease of Alzheimer”, which became a “true disease” recognized like such officially in 2004.
- The Minister for Health said that it was “one of the large components of our future”, requiring a “plan of national fight” to dam up his “advanced relentless”.
- The insanity of elderly became in France as in the other European countries, in Canada and the United States, the object of a politization like “stake essential of public health” with equal of cancer.



2. Delivery or co-production

- Or how to supply a increasing demands by efficient public policies
- To conciliate
 - participation/empowerment/ protection of the frail people/ equality
- with in that order
 - efficiency/ /responsibility/ Dignity/ accountability/
responsiveness/



Local level or local network

- The very old people needs material and affective help
- from doctors
- from social insurance
- from their relatives
- This helpers are segments of a multifarious network



The local level forms a network

- The network and environment relationship network are defined in a wide sociological and anthropological sense.
- [It comprises many dimensions:
 - forms of reciprocity and opening,
 - the density of bonds
 - their connectivity
- It includes
 - the extended family which comprises the spouses, descendants and relatives
 - but also neighbours, friends, professional workers nurses and professional care givers, who have been involved for a long time and on a day-to-day basis with the person.
 - even professionals from the health sector or even the "Counters" (Regional Council, Complementary Pension and Medical Insurance Funds, local councillors ...)
- with whom the person is in contact albeit episodically



A local level depending from the users

- These segments are connected
- either directly among themselves (generalist and hospital, doctor(s), spouse(s) or children or professionals in certain cases ...)
- or through the intermediary of a third person.
 - This third person could be the aged sick person himself but not always.
- When is isolated, mentally ill or placed under legal protection, he does not ensure connection, even if he forms the basis for it.
- The psychically dependant and aged person is an integral part of the medical, affective and material networks that support him. He/she serves as a point of interface and link between the different segments that this network comprises.



The old female citizen is the quilting point of the network

- He is the "quilting point" (LACAN 1981)[\[1\]](#) of this network
 - he gives it its unity and meaning.
 - for it is by structuring itself around him that the network becomes a system.
 - Everything radiates out from and is organised around this signifier, similar to the little lines of what an upholstery button forms on the surface of material. It is the point of convergence that enables everything that happens to be situated retroactively and prospectively exist" (Lacan J., 1955-56).



III. Which psychological issues for the victims?

Who are they? How do they reply and act facing such a situation

The little Mairmaid and the Ugly Duck?

Alice, the duchess and the Queen

What happens to them?





PRENEZ SOIN DE VOUS

Take Care of yourself!

Sophie Calle

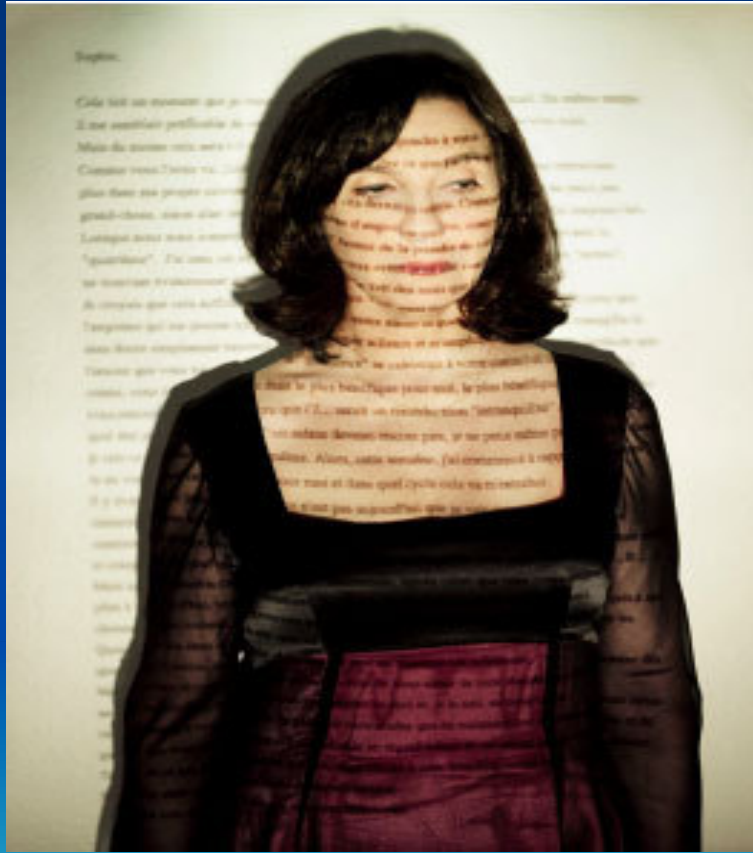


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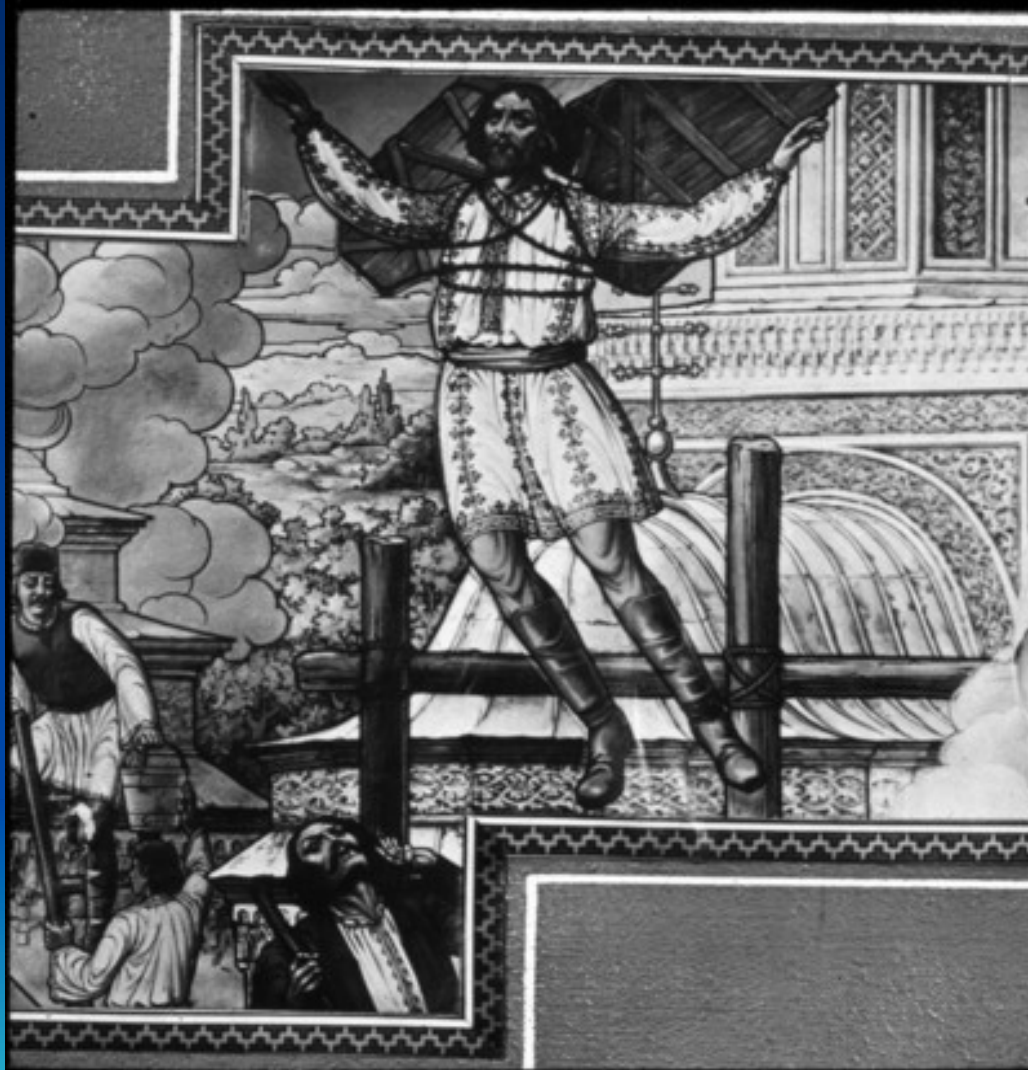
    



No gender no master



Empower yourself



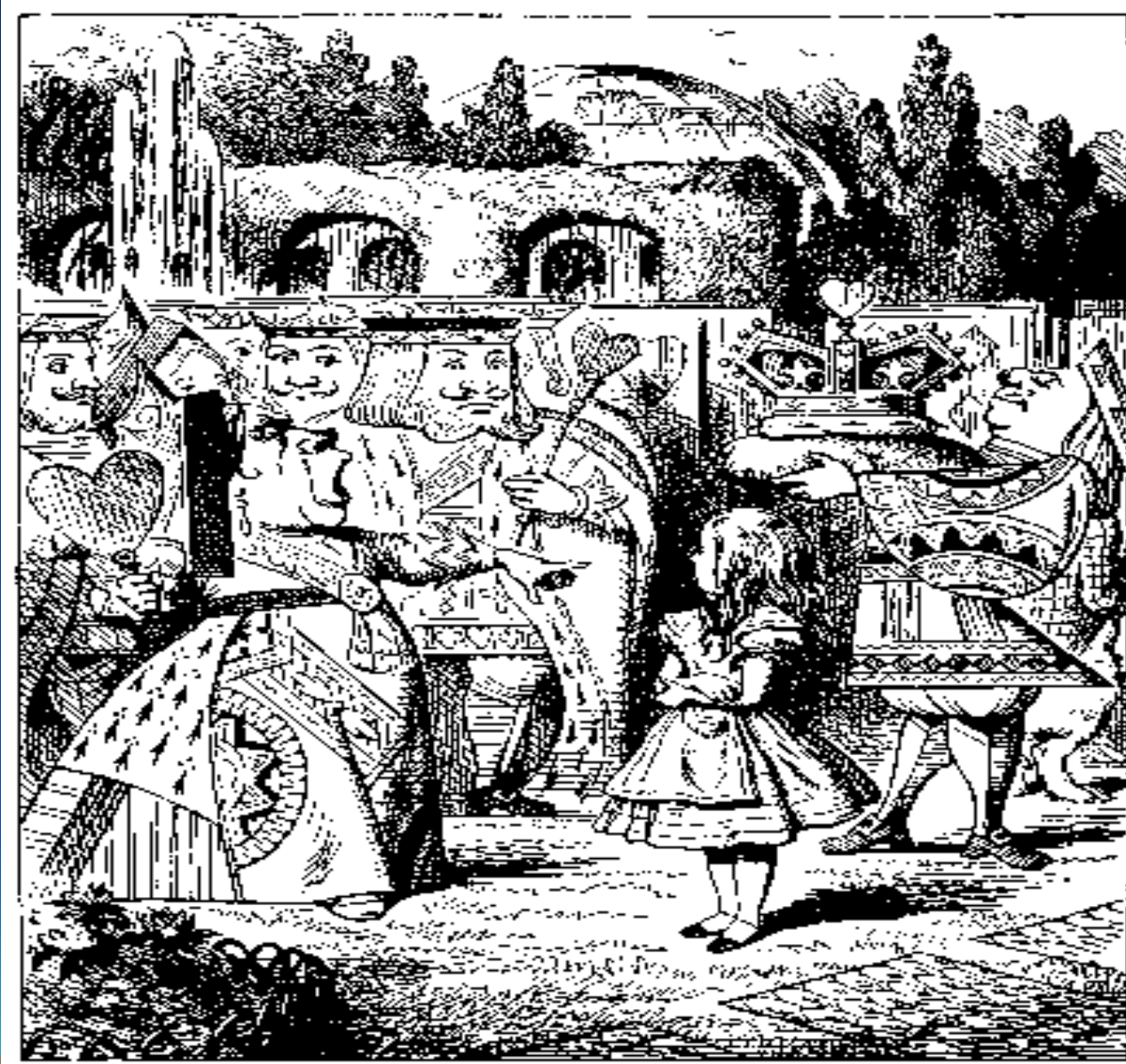
Be mute, resilient and compliant



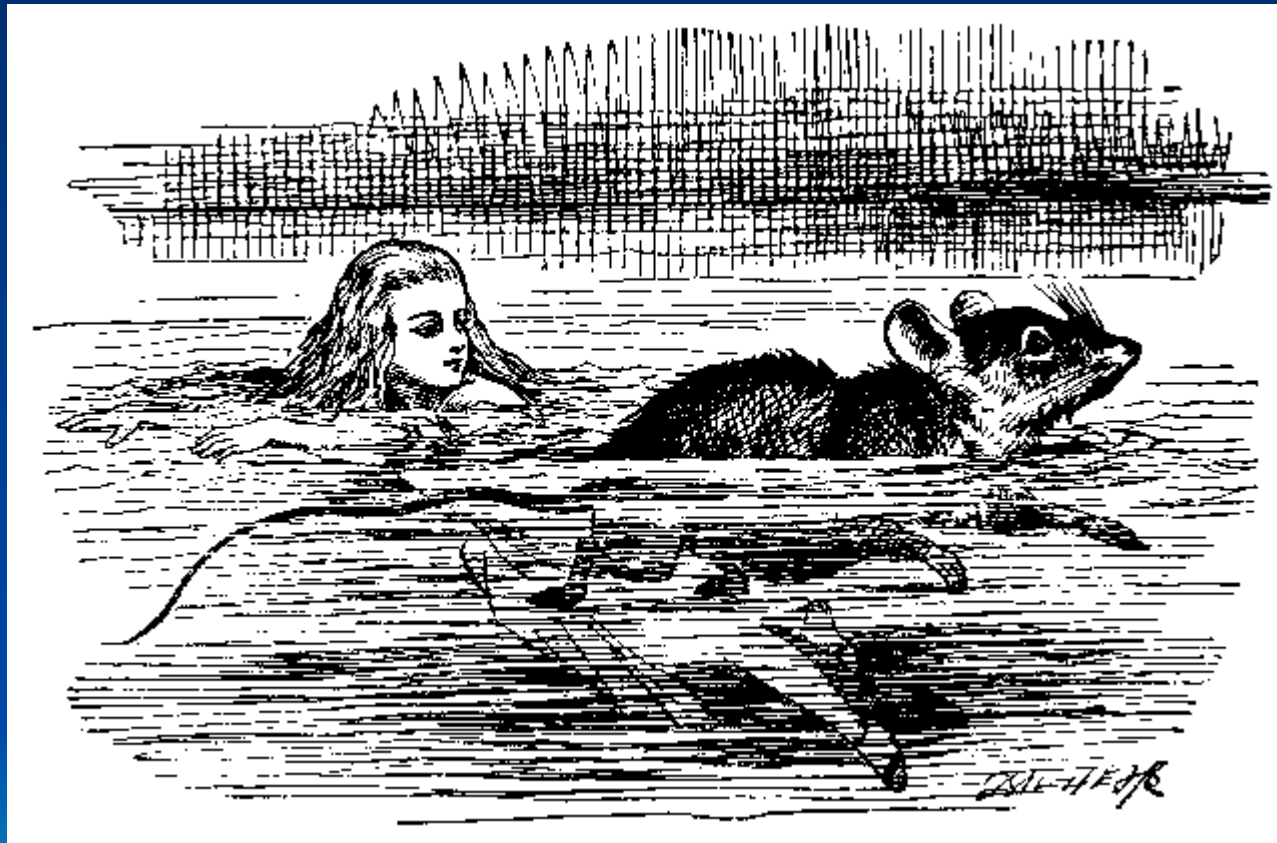


Talk to the Duchess















PRENEZ SOIN DE VOUS