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Cours au Collège de France - janvier-mai 1977

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« **Comment vivre ensemble - Sur l'idiorrythmie** »

Leçons au Collège de France - 1977

01. Leçon inaugurale - January 7, 1977 / 7 janvier 1977

02. January 12, 1977 / 12 janvier 1977

03. January 19, 1977 / 19 janvier 1977

04. January 26, 1977 / 26 janvier 1977

05. February 2, 1977 / 02 février 1977

06. February 9, 1977 / 09 février 1977

07. February 16, 1977 / 16 février 1977

08. March 2, 1977 / 02 mars 1977

09. March 9, 1977 / 09 mars 1977

10. March 16, 1977 / 16 mars 1977

11. March 23, 1977 / 23 mars 1977

12. March 30, 1977 / 30 mars 1977

13. April 20, 1977 / 20 avril 1977

14. April 27, 1977 / 27 avril 1977

15. May 4, 1977 / 04 mai 1977

The audio material available here represents the whole lectures given by Barthes during his first 2 years' teaching at the Collège de France in 1977 and 1978, and also his inaugural lecture about the question of power (and the way it is inscribed in the core of the language).

The Collège de France, in Paris, is a prestigious institution created in 1530 and whose vocation is both being a research center and a teaching space. Neither a University nor a High School, it also has to be distinguished from public research centers and does not award any degree either ; admission to lectures is free and open to all students without any preliminary registration. There are 52 chairs for 52 holders in a wide range of subjects. Professors are elected by their peers and, on their arrival, name their own chairs according to the researching themes they mean to develop. Actually, in opposition to the other institutions that provide an established knowledge (Lacan's « S1 »), the Collège de France deals with knowledge 'inthe-making' (Lacan's « S2 »). The prestige of the Collège can be judged by its old professors : Champollion, Paul Valéry, Henri Bergson, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu, André Leroi-Gourhan, Pierre Boulez, etc.

Roland Barthes was elected to the Collège de France on Michel Foucault's proposal in March 1976 and created the chair of literary semiology there. A few days after his inaugural lecture on the 7th of January 1977, Barthes starts his lectures entitled « Comment vivre ensemble » ('How to live together') for the year 1977.

The initial question that he asks to himself (: « How to find the right distance between me and my neighbour in order that an acceptable social living may be possible for all of us ? ») finds a direct answer in Barthes' following proposal : the idiorhythmy as a way (as a fantasy) of living, i.e. a system in which everyone should be able to find, impose and preserve their own rhythm of life.

These lectures about living in community seem strangely refer to themes that Michel Foucault had previously dealt with. According to Barthes, power is precisely what forbids any idiorhythmy because it imposes strict rhythms to individuals. The design of the paragon of an idiorhythmic way of living should be that of an anchorite or an ascetic stylite secluded on the top of his column (cf. Buñuel's *Simon Of The Desert*) ; on the other hand, the total rejection of idiorhythmy is what will produce such communities as convents, monasteries or phalansteries (and we should also add two other types of communities that proscribe the possibility of idiorhythmy to individuals, two main institutions in Foucault's works : psychiatric hospitals and prisons).

During his 1977's lectures, Barthes will apply himself to clear a path to a living-together (probably utopian), towards this fantasy of society he suggests : a society that would allow everyone to live according to his own rhythm inside the community but without being based on an extreme solitude for each individual (hard to reach, except in the case of the authentic extatic mysticism and in the case of a deep - pathological - feeling of dereliction), a society that wouldn't be based on the extreme alienation of individuals by a power (whatever its forms) fixing strict rhythms.

- Guillaume Patin, Editor / Curator