



Heidelberg, October 3 2012

Mister President,

Dear Jean-Pierre,

Dear Members of the European Society for Vocational Designing and Career Counselling,

Dear Friends,

I want to thank you very much for awarding me the first major recompense of our society.

Although I'm not sure to deserve it more than many other good friends who are in this room - I'm deeply touched by your decision. I'm also very proud.

As Jean-Pierre said, you gave me this award as recognition of my contribution to the domain of vocational designing and career counselling. But I want to add that this contribution is no more than an outcome of the diverse relationships that made me become who I'm and helped me think and work as I do. And, at the risk of forgetting some of them, I would like to mention some of these major relationships who made me see things "this way" and try to act accordingly.

I would like to mention first my parents. Having been deprived of a long education because of World War I, they considered school as a major experience in life. My chance was that, in the small village of the Ardennes where I grew up, there were some dedicated school masters who greatly stimulated my desire to know. I remember that when Mark Savickas explained his career construction interview to me, he asked me: "Who did you admire when you were growing up?" I answered either Mme Beaudier or Mme Lapierre, the school mistresses I had during my first years at school.

A second network of people who made me become the synthesis of other people who I am, were the professors of the University of Lille, where I studied first

philosophy. This faculty of philosophy had been designed by a German philosopher: Eric Weil. Therefore the philosophers considered there as the major ones were Hegel and Kant. But the place was also open to many other thinkers and analysts.

I cannot refer to Lille without mentioning the name of a friend – Vincent Thiel – who was a student coming from Charleville, just like me. He was much more educated than me. But, above all, he knew how to work. In fact, it is through his contact that I discovered that I didn't know how to work efficiently. He made me understand, for example, that to read a book you need to ask it some questions so as to pick up its argumentation.

I arrived at INETOP, in Paris, in 1984. I met there many scientists who were real founts of knowledge in the various domains of psychology. Then, a public seminar was held every other Friday. It was a real “must” where many famous psychologists used to come so as to discover the latest news about structural equation modelling or to discuss the diverse conceptions of an explanation in psychology.

After five years at INETOP, I went back to Lille as a senior lecturer in psychology. I wasn't attached to the department of psychology, but to a mostly sociological one where colleagues were working mainly on outsiders, dropouts, unemployed people, social inclusion, etc. Their major frames of reference were Herbert Mead, the Chicago School, Palo Alto, Erving Goffman, Howard Becker, etc. From being with this new group of colleagues, I discovered a new way to approach phenomena...

A few years later, I was offered a position of Professor of Psychology at the Sorbonne University (Paris III). Again: not in a department of psychology, but in a department of information and communication. And again, it was a major occasion to discover new domains of knowledge. Above all, it was an occasion to develop an intellectual friendship with a major specialist of pragmatism and dialogism: Francis Jacques. First Francis made me discover that William James was not this old-fashioned psychologist who had written a few odd things about the self, as I had learnt when I studied psychology. Second Francis Jacques introduced me to Charles Sanders Peirce and to the central role of dialogism in



thinking...

In the specific field of vocational psychology and career counselling, during the 2 last decades, I had two great lucks.

My first great luck was to meet very interesting colleagues who worked in very different settings on the occasion of seminars, teaching activities or sabbatical leaves. As I'm afraid to forget the names of some of them, I just want to mention the names of some cities where we worked together and where I discovered some new issues and perspectives: Joensuu in Finland; Lisbon, Oporto, Braga and Coimbra in Portugal; Wroclaw in Poland; Buenos-Aires and Sao Paulo; Sherbrooke, Quebec city and Vancouver; Columbia, Missouri and Kent Ohio, Mannheim and Heidelberg; Bologna, Florence, Padova and Rome; Barcelona; Toulouse, Bordeaux and Lausanne; Reikjavik; Tunis; Etc.

My second major chance in our field was the creation by Raoul van Esbroeck of an International Research Group that we named the *International Life Designing Research Group*. Many of its members are here today and I would like to thank them particularly as the exchanges of ideas we had were really fruitful. In this group, we did work intensely, and well, in a real atmosphere of deep friendship.

To conclude this already too long talk, I would like first to mention all the students who prepared their doctoral dissertations under my supervision and helped me develop some ideas or verify some points.

But I also want to add one name. It is Guy's one. It is clear that without Guy's indefectible support, I wouldn't have done what I did. In fact, he was always more confident in the outcomes of what I was doing than I were. And most of the time, when I worked, I only tried to live up to his expectations.

In a word: it is all the people I mentioned – and probably some others I forgot today – who deserve this award which, in my mind, is an illustration of a motto that Francis Jacques uses frequently: *Primum relationis*.

And it is both in their names and in my name that I greatly thank you...

Jean Guichard