


Eugène Enriquez (1931-2024): Memory, Thinking and Humanity

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Abstract

This article provides an overview of the personal and professional work of the French thinker Eugène Enriquez who had a great influence on the creation and development of Clinical Sociology and French Psychosociology. Enriquez's legacy continues to inspire academics and professionals through his innovative thinking and the depth of his oeuvre. This manuscript is divided into four parts. The first emphasizes the author's socio-professional history, revealing personal aspects from birth to academic and intellectual contributions as a pioneer in his field. In the second part, his three seminal works and their fundamental aspects are briefly presented. In those works, Enriquez adopts a psychosociological and clinical perspective to discuss social and organizational dynamics. His view significantly contributed to the recognition of the interdisciplinarity between psychoanalysis and sociology. In the third part, Enriquez's most recent texts are discussed in which he analyzes society's contemporary challenges, addressing social fragmentation and redefinition in human relations in the XXI century. And, finally, the last part highlights Eugène's generosity and humanity.

Keywords: Clinical Sociology, Psychosociology, Eugène Enriquez, Psychoanalysis, Power, Organizations.

Writing about Eugène Enriquez is a challenging task. First, due to the grandeur of his thinking and the rare combination of sensitivity and coherence throughout his trajectory as a human being. Second, this

text was issued shortly after his passing, with a nostalgic feeling of those who admired and loved him, including the authors. Despite his advanced age, no preparation seems to be enough for this moment. Demonstrating his vitality and passion for life, he was present with enlightenment and warmth just 20 days before his demise, on a soirée around his book of poetry, *Melodies for the Irreplaceable* (Chants pour l'irremplaçable), dedicated to his wife Teresa. Over 40 people attended the event, and 20 joined remotely to honor Enriquez, the poet. Thus, accepting the challenge of sharing with the world the story of one of the greatest thinkers of our time, it has been a privilege to both authors Ludmila Guimarães and Luciana Carreteiro to write this paper which represents a glimpse, as a small window into the vastness of his work and history.

The current manuscript was prepared based mainly on his major texts and interviews and on our personal experiences with Enriquez. Accordingly, four studies were highlighted: I) *Eugène Enriquez or the psychosociology at heart* (Eugène Enriquez ou la psychosociologie au cœur) by Arnaud, Carreteiro, and Giust-Desprairies (2024); II) *Psychosociology and clinical sociology: Eugène Enriquez and the wondering of experiments* (Psicossociologia e sociologia clínica: Eugène Enriquez e a errância das experimentações) by Braz and Carreteiro (2024); III) *The notebooks of the social change laboratory* (Les cahiers du laboratoire de changement social) by Eugène Enriquez (1997c); IV) *From the Horde to the State* (Da Horda ao Estado), the most recent edition launched in Brazil by Eugène Enriquez (2024a).

Furthermore, the division of this text was made into four parts, each addressing different dimensions of his life and work. The first part, titled "Trajectory, Influences and Footprint" provides a biographical and intellectual overview of the author, from his origins in Tunisia to his consolidation as one of the leading figures in Psychosociology and Clinical Sociology. The second part, "Works and Contributions," is dedicated to presenting his three main works: a. *From the Horde to the State* (1990); b. *Organization in Analysis* (1997); and c. *Figures of Power* (2007). The third part, "Contemporary Challenges," presents Enriquez's more recent considerations based on: a. *Insights into the Breakdown of Today's World* (2024b); b. the epilogue *Present, Future,*

and *Resistances in a Fragmented World* from the book *Dialogues with Eugène Enriquez* (2024c); and c. the second edition of *From the Horde to the State* (2024a), with a new preface written by the author in June 2021. Finally, after these three sections, we present the fourth part, “A Tribute to Eugène Enriquez”, as a brief heartfelt narrative homage to a man who combined intellectual depth and affection.

1. Trajectory, Influences and Footprint

Eugène Enriquez is a central figure in the development and consolidation of Clinical Sociology and Psychosociology, fields that seek to integrate psychoanalysis and social dimensions in the analysis of human phenomena. His academic and professional background are marked by an interdisciplinary approach, primarily articulating concepts from psychoanalysis, sociology, and social psychology to understand power dynamics and institutional relationships. Emeritus professor at the Université Paris-Diderot (now Université Paris Cité), Enriquez was one of the pioneers in the creation of Francophone Psychosociology and Clinical Sociology, contributing decisively to strengthen these fields.

Enriquez was born on July 30, 1931, in Tunisia, in the Mediterranean coastal city of La Goulette, when the country was still a French protectorate (until March 1956). He was the youngest of six siblings, born into Sephardic Jewish parents. His birth registered the arrival of little Eugène Salomon in the family, the well-born (in Greek) and wise son, with Salomon being his Hebrew name. Being Jew for Enriquez meant assuming a condition of marginality and, at the same time, carrying a tradition of critical and humanistic reflection which led him to question the structures of power and seek a more just and civilized society.

Child of World War II, Enriquez grew up in a world distinguished by armed conflicts, battles of beliefs and values, and the systematic persecution of Jews. As a boy, at the age of 11, he witnessed the occupation of Tunisia by the Germans for six months, between 1942 and 1943, to stop the advance of British and American troops already in Morocco and Algeria. During this period, his father and uncle were forced into hiding to escape Nazi persecution. These

experiences stimulated him to analyze quite young human barbarism and civilizational contradictions, questioning what leads civilized nations to such acts of extreme violence and annihilation. Mobilized also by readings of Freud's *Civilization and Its Discontents* and Valéry's *Reflections on the World Today*, these questions would accompany him throughout his life, becoming central to his work.

Being the youngest in a large family may have influenced his personality and his way of relating to the world. His Sephardic heritage brought a history of resistance, adaptation, and cultural diversity. A significant episode from his adolescence occurred days after his Bar Mitzvah: despite having dreamed of becoming a rabbi, he woke up one morning no longer believing in any God. With his authentic frankness, he informed his father and grandfather he had abandoned not only God but also any form of ideological veneration.

At the age of 18, he moved to Paris to enroll in the prestigious Sciences Po (Political Studies Institute of Paris, in French Institut d'Études Politiques de Paris) and studied philosophy and psychoanalysis. Freshly arrived from Tunisia, upon disembarking from the plane, Enriquez rubbed his hands together and repeated aloud the famous phrase of Eugène de Rastignac, a character from Balzac's *La Comédie Humaine*: "À nous deux, Paris!" ("It's between you and me now, Paris!"). Like the idealistic young law student arriving in the City of Light with a thirst for accomplishment, Enriquez saw the French capital as a stage of possibilities. His thirst for knowledge led him to graduate in law, psychology and ethnology. Later, he obtained his *Thèse d'État* in Sociology (State Doctorate), a prestigious French academic title awarded after defending a doctoral thesis and necessary for those aspiring to be a professor. This title was replaced in 1984 by the *Habilitation à Diriger des Recherches* (Habilitation to Supervise Research).

After his studies, Enriquez began working with Max Pagès at CEGOS company (Compagnie Générale d'Organisation Scientifique), which remains up to date a global leader in professional and continuous training, and at EDF-GDF (Electricité de France and Gaz de France) with Guy Palmade. That same year, the Université Paris X-Nanterre set up a new campus and opened a position for an assistant professor

in Sociology. Enriquez was selected for the position thanks to the recommendation of his friend Jean-Claude Filloux and the support of his former Sociology professor Didier Anzieu. His academic career was mobile. He moved through at Nanterre University, then Poitiers, returned to Nanterre and finally became a full professor in Sociology at the Université Paris 7 Denis-Diderot. After a career marked by significant contributions, he retired in 1995, becoming an emeritus professor and solidifying his legacy as one of the great names in France and Latin America.

Enriquez always defined himself as a practitioner psychosociologist, dedicated not only to developing the theory but also to conducting interventions in organizations. One of the first milestones of his career was the founding of Association for the Psychosociological Research and Intervention (ARIP, in French, Association pour la Recherche et l'Intervention Psychosociologique) in 1959, along with other intellectuals such as Max Pagès, André Lévy, Guy Palmade and Jean-Claude Rouchy. ARIP was a space for experimentation and psychosociological interventions, seeking to integrate theory and practice in the analysis of organizational and institutional dynamics. In 1972, years later, he assumed the co-direction of the journal *Connexions* (Connections), linked to ARIP, alongside Jean-Claude Rouchy.

In 1992, he left ARIP and *Connexions* due to disagreements and the following year, founded the International Research Training and Interventions Center (CIRFIP, in French Centre International de Recherches, Formations et Interventions en Psychosociologie) with other colleagues and the journal *Nouvelle Revue de Psychosociologie* (New Journal of Psychosociology), originally called *Revue Internationale de Psychosociologie* until 2006 (International Journal of Psychosociology), which he co-directed with Gilles Amado.

Parallel to his academic profile, as a professor at the Université Paris 7, he co-founded the Social Change Laboratory (LCS, in French Laboratoire de Changement Social) with Vincent De Gaulejac, which they co-directed during the 1990s. Founded in Nanterre by Max Pagès, the LCS was brought to Paris 7 by Gaulejac when he became a full professor, and Enriquez assumed the role of deputy director.

This institution played an important role in the development of French Clinical Sociology.

According to Braz and Carreteiro (2024), Eugène Enriquez played a central role in the consolidation of Clinical Sociology, actively contributing to the structuring of this field and collaborating with researchers from various countries. Although the term was initially used by Louis Wirth of the Chicago School and later revisited by Jan Fritz and psychosociologists from Québec, it was Enriquez who propelled the development of Clinical Sociology in France. Robert Sévigny and Jan Fritz formed the first International Sociology Association (ISA) working group on this topic at the 1982 Congress in Mexico. In 1988, he attended the Congress of International Association of French-Speaking Sociologists (AISLF, in French, Association Internationale des Sociologues de Langue Française) in Geneva, Switzerland, where he helped to establish a new group associated with Clinical Sociology, contributing to its institutionalization

Beyond his initial influences, Enriquez was crucial in establishing the field within international sociology associations, collaborating with Vincent de Gaulejac and Jan Fritz to achieve this recognition. The three professors actively participated in negotiations to transform the working group in clinical sociology into an institutionally recognized Research Committee (RC 4,6) within the ISA. His involvement in France was as significant as Robert Sévigny and Jacques Réhaume in Québec, awarding them by the ISA for their fundamental contributions. While several researchers contributed significantly to subsequent developments, Enriquez stands out as one of the key figures in the initial structuring of Clinical Sociology. Vincent de Gaulejac in France, Jan Fritz in the United States and Robert Sévigny, Gilles Houle and Jacques Réhaume in Canada, also contributed to the establishment of its methodological foundations and its ties with psychology, ethnology and sociology. (Braz and Carreteiro, 2024)

2. Works and Contributions

The history of Eugène Enriquez reveals that his thinking was influenced by various intellectual movements. As a sociologist, he was among the early French intellectuals to apply a psychosociological

perspective to organizations, thereby pioneering an interdisciplinary approach where psychoanalysis plays a crucial role in explaining social phenomena and organizational processes. His ideas were disseminated through conferences, books, editing specialized journals and university teaching. Numerous European and Latin American researchers have been mentored by him throughout their academic careers. His interventions in organizations were critical and transformative, reinforcing his status as a researcher, thinker, and professional. At the same time, it is necessary to note his ideas encountered resistance. When he published his study in 1967, *The Notion of Power*, he felt overlooked by his peers: “When I ventured to directly employ psychoanalytic concepts to try to explain social phenomena, I found myself alone, and my attempt was either discredited or ignored.” In 1983, he acknowledged in the book *Organization in Analysis* (1997a) that the publication of *From the Horde to the State* in 1990 no longer faced the usual rejections.

The presentation will focus on three of his main works among his over 20 published books, articles, book chapters and texts for specialized journals: 1. *From the Horde to the State: Psychoanalysis of the Social Bond* (1990); 2. *Organization in Analysis* (1997a); and 3. *Figures of Power* (2007).

2.1 *From the Horde to the State : Psychoanalysis of the Social Bond* - *De la horde à l'État: essai de psychanalyse du lien social, 1983.*

Considered one of Eugène Enriquez's most significant works, this book begins with a systematic rereading of Freud on collective phenomena and their meanings to establish a dialogue between psychoanalysis and sociology. The work seeks to answer the following central question: “*Why do men, claiming to be guided by the pleasure principle and the life drives, aspiring to peace, freedom, and the expression of their individuality, and consciously desiring happiness for all, often create alienating societies that favor aggression and destruction over community living?*” (Enriquez, 1990, p. 12)

To develop his analysis, Enriquez revisits Freudian ideas about the primitive horde and the murder of the primal father, exploring how these founding myths explain the formation of the social bond

and power dynamics. He expands concepts such as domination, authority, and organization, applying them to modern societies. The book presents a robust discussion on power structures and their unconscious roots, highlighting how life and death drives manifest in social and institutional relationships in modern societies.

2.2 *Organization in Analysis - L'organisation en analyse, 1992.*

This work, as Enriquez himself states, inaugurates a perspective on understanding organizations different from traditional conceptions such as Taylorist/Fordist approaches or the Human Relations School. In these perspectives, organizations were understood as stabilized, rational sets or even as a social system based on the development of psychosociology and the sociology of organizations. Enriquez proposes a new approach, in which organizations are seen as “a system that is simultaneously cultural, symbolic, and imaginary; a place where individual and collective fantasies and desires, the most underground as well as the most operative, intersect with voluntarist projects.” (Enriquez, 1997a, p. 9)

In this work, Enriquez dedicates himself to analyzing the internal dynamics of organizations, both in the public and private sectors, proposing the following analytical instances: mythical, social-historical, institutional, organizational, group, individual, and drive-based. Based on his intervention activities in different types of organizations for over 30 years, he investigated how unconscious processes, such as desires, fantasies, and conflicts, influence relations of power. He demonstrates how the clinical approach can be used to understand and transform organizational dynamics, offering theoretical and practical tools for interventions that consider both theoretical and social aspects. Once again, this book is a milestone for institutional analysis, particularly for considering psychic and social aspects in understanding organizational dynamics.

2.3 *Figures of Power - Les figures du maître, 1997.*

Composed of texts published between 1965 and 1989, Enriquez explores in this book the different forms of power that manifest in organizations and society. For him, “power is one of the essential

foundations of all social life.” In this work Enriquez presents the myth of good power, a central idea in the analysis of power dynamics in organizations and society, considering it “a fundamental myth insofar as all power wants to be good” (Enriquez, 2007). He formulated the concept that power, by portraying itself as protective and just, sustains its legitimacy and acceptance by seeming necessary and beneficial, even though it may subtly reproduce forms of control and alienation.

His analysis in this work covers mythical, social, historical, psychological and personological dimensions of power, including belief processes, illusions, identification mechanisms, and the role of libidinal and deathly relationships between humans. Most importantly, his theory on power dynamics illustrates how they are rooted in the unconscious and social relationships.

3. Contemporary Challenges

Enriquez stood apart from the digital world, deliberately disregarding email, cell phones, and social media entirely. Streaming content was entirely absent from his daily life, yet he remained deeply engaged with the world through his steadfast habit of reading newspapers. To grasp the complexities of the emerging virtual and high-speed environment, Enriquez relied on his sharp observational skills, thoughtful questioning, active listening, and extensive reading. This is an important insight to present his perspectives on contemporary challenges. So, in this third section, we will analyze three of his recent publications: I) *Insights into the Breakdown of Today’s World* (Regards sur l’éclatement du monde actuel), published in *Nouvelle Revue de Psychosociologie* (2024b, n° 38), based on his conference on March 28, 2020, in Brazil, for the Freudian Formation Group. II) The epilogue *Present, Future, and Resistances in a Fragmented World* from the book *Dialogues with Eugène Enriquez* (2024c). III) The second edition of *From the Horde to the State*, published by Hucitec (2024a), with a new preface written by the author in June 2021, one of his last manuscripts.

In 2024, the second edition of *From the Horde to the State* was released in Brazil. From the outset, Enriquez addresses the challenge

of revisiting a text originally written in 1980, considering the significant transformations that have occurred in the 21st century. Intriguingly, upon reviewing his work meticulously, as if it had been authored by a peer, he concludes that no significant alterations were necessary to his original argument. However, he recognizes that the world has modified significantly and believed that “the current changes, particularly numerous in our societies, which give them their specific coloring, will paradoxically give additional weight to the theses defended in that book” (Enriquez, 2024a, p. 27). The preface will include topics addressing themes deemed essential for understanding the 21st century.

After World War II, Enriquez observes that the world was divided into two major blocks. By the 21st century, he notes that it had become completely fragmented. The fleeting sense of post-war peace was disturbed by events such as the September 11, 2001, attacks. He perceives international alliances as fragile and uncertain, illustrated by the 2015 Paris Agreement. Despite symbolizing hope in combating climate change, it has been marked by a lack of effective action.

The author suggests the unlimited exploitation of natural resources is redefining humanity's relationship with nature. As an example, he explains humans now see themselves as part of the animal kingdom and increasingly oppose animal abuse. Thus, humans no longer wish to be predators but rather “friendly and welcoming to diversity.” (Enriquez, 2024a, p. 29) Enriquez emphasizes that the destruction of natural resources and income inequality, intensified by the transition from industrial capitalism to financial capitalism, has led to a new individualism. This characteristic phenomenon is referred to as the Grandiose Self, a concept initially developed by Austrian American psychoanalyst Otto Kernberg and later revisited by Enriquez. His reflection indicates this human, overwhelmed by crowds and prohibitions after the war, came to recognize himself as a subject of rights, including the right to expression, recognition, and, above all, the right to seek unlimited satisfaction of its desires and pleasures.

Furthermore, this human being portrays himself as omnipotent, a person of success, a winner in all areas, constantly showing his

achievements. This creates a dichotomy between winners and losers. Based on this analysis, Enriquez concludes, almost mathematically, if we all belong to the best category, it becomes hard to be the first, thereby transforming relationships into rivalries. He states that the individual no longer acts as a collaborator but instead becomes a threat, leading to increased control and subtle forms of violence.

Therefore, the author explains how in this competition, isolation is not feasible. Enriquez will refine the role of social networks, which have become the stage to showcase the new human. Paradoxically, his vision emphasizes precisely how this competition makes the use of social networks even more necessary. Although such networks are used to seek connections, “friends,” and group belonging, they are also instruments of psychic death, used to attack those seen as enemies. Fake News and the disappearance of the concept of truth can be seen as tools to destroy others or gain control over narrative. The author suggests these dynamics shake democracies, feeding plots, conspiracies, populisms, and religious ideologies.

Enriquez will conclude everything is contradictory. He will refer to Freud stating there will always be a struggle between the life drive and the death drive. The pandemic, for example, brought innovations but also showed the inability of countries to work together in search of effective solutions and significantly strengthened social control. The author revisits the types of control, postulated in 1975, and the forms of the death drive cited in *From the Horde to the State* and in *Dialogues with Eugène Enriquez* to conclude that such control mechanisms have the effect of submission to transform humans into castrated beings. The controls advanced by the author were: control over personality, control on behavior, on results, ideological control, and control of love. The figures of the death drive developed by the author can complement the control portrayed above, such as innate aggressive drive, compulsion for repetition, aggressive drive towards nature, aggressive drive towards humans, sexual repression, the creation of a cruel ethic, and lastly, shame.

Finally, although Enriquez had a sensitive and realistic view of social facts, the smiling Mediterranean intellectual carried with him the hope of group resistance. He provides as examples women who

denounce patriarchal and violent behaviors and invites us to rethink the effects of the decolonization process by rereading authors such as Frantz Fanon and Aimé Césaire. Enriquez concludes inspiringly: “We must never let ourselves give into despair” and wishes “the life drive may become the predominant drive” (Enriquez, 2024a, p. 55).

4. A tribute to Eugène Enriquez

(...) when I raise subjects so diverse as filiation, love, poetry, anti-colonial struggle, Judaism, I am basically stating the same thing: stand up, face adversity, (...), do not be afraid of freedom, (...) be able to criticize everything and also to love everything. (Enriquez, 1997c, p. 33)

At the age of 65, Eugène wrote about his desire not to reach the end of his life with the feeling of being mistaken and belonging to a lost generation or having failed in the most essential. “I always wished my life had a certain coherence.” (Enriquez, 1997c, p. 33), he would say. Eugène, stepfather of one of the authors, passed away less than two months ago. On December 30, 2024, he was cremated on a cold day in Paris, one of those days when the clouds devour the blue sky. On that grey afternoon, Teresa Carreteiro, his wife, exclaimed at the end of her emotional speech to the 180 people who came to honor his life: “*Vive Eugène!*” This cry praised his luminous trajectory, who was congruent, as he noted (Enriquez, 1997c, p.34): “I was called a specialist in social change, and I might have changed a little over the years.”

Eugène was a father figure not only to one of the authors, but also to many friends and students. He was sharp and honest; direct and gentle; caring and tough. As a child, watching a man, a second father, absorbed in books, smoking his cigarettes and cigars, loving a splendid woman with daily love declarations, writing his books and articles, lecturing, and laughing with his friends, felt like stepping into the pages of a novel. Eugène vast knowledge and culture were awe-inspiring. On one hand, he rejected modern technology, writing all his works with BIC® pens, never had an e-mail nor a cell-phone number, and did not even know how to change a light bulb. Yet, he emanated so much light. It has always been astonishing the

number of phone calls Eugène received from people who wanted to be with him. In his planners, penciled in (so he could erase if needed), he recorded where and with whom he would have lunch and dinner. Sometimes meetings were only for pleasure and others also for work. It was a privilege to receive his insights on manuscripts, thesis, and publications. While organizing his office in Paris in July 2024, dozens of agendas permeated with appointments, dinners, and seminars were found. A testimony to a life filled with relationships and profound social bonds.

His provocative writing sparks curiosity and a desire to seek out his sources. His writing is instigating. He speaks about love and quotes Éluard and Sade; speaks about poetry and cites Nerval and Baudelaire; speaks about being Jewish and refers to Aron and Park. When Eugène writes, it is evident that he draws profoundly from his extensive cultural background, historical knowledge, and intellectual capital, which he has amassed through reading nearly 10,000 books and listening to 3,000 opera records from his personal library. At the beginning of the 20th century, before the era of internet search engines, Eugène was considered by many friends and colleagues a “living encyclopedia.” It was possible to talk to him about any subject, including sports, as he loved tennis, for example. One day, he was quite worried about having forgotten who had won the Roland Garros in 1989. A few hours later, he surprised his wife, incredibly happy to have found the answer. She was curious to know where he had found the answer as he did not leave the room. Eugène said very naturally, as it was obvious, he had searched in his memory (if you might be interested, it was Chang in the men’s and Sanchez in the women’s). “Bah, dans ma mémoire, ma chérie, bien sûr.” (In my memory, honey, of course!).

Eugène Enriquez was not only one of the greatest thinkers of our time; he was also a man who knew how to reconcile intellectual depth with a rare touching humanity. His vast work crosses borders between psychoanalysis and sociology, Europe, North America and Latin America, and continues to inspire and provoke echoes. However, more than his academic contributions, it is the way he lived with passion, generosity, and an incessant curiosity that

profoundly touched us. As the Brazilian historian Luiz Antônio Simas would say: “The opposite of death is not life. The opposite of death is memory. And the opposite of life is not death. The opposite of life is forgetfulness.” Eugène’s ideas remain alive. And, like them, he remains more present than ever. Vive Eugène!

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