

Daniel Sibony is a French-language writer and psychoanalyst born on August 22, 1942 in Marrakech in a Jewish family that lived the Medina. His native tongue is the Arabic. His cultural language is the Biblical Hebrew. He starts learning French at the age of five and immigrates to Paris with his family at the age of thirteen. In Paris, he obtains a Bachelor's Degree and a Ph.D. At the age of twenty-one, he becomes a Mathematics Assistant Professor at the University of Paris. He is a Professor at this same university till 2000. He also accomplishes his studies in Philosophy and obtains a Ph.D. in 1986 with an Academic Jury composed of: E. Levinas, J.T. Desanti, H. Atlan and Michel de Certeau.

Daniel Sibony becomes a psychoanalyst at the age of thirty-two. He completes his training with Lacan and has a close professional relationship with him. For several years, Lacan attends the seminars of Sibony on "Topology and the Interpretation of the Dreams" at the University of Paris-Vincennes. "This exchange helped me to become neither a Lacanian nor an anti-Lacanian, but to be able to integrate the best of the Lacanian thinking: the readings of Freud and to stay away from the worst, the sects", states Sibony.

Since 1974, Daniel Sibony has animated an independent seminar on the relationship between therapy and creation.

The author has published so far thirty-three books in French<sup>1</sup> on a large variety of topics ranging from abstract to very concrete ones.

Sibony's books that focus on essential philosophical, anthropological and psychoanalytical subjects aim to convey original and innovative content and thinking. They invite the reader to reflect on the very root/origin of the problems and subjects discussed.

The most important moments of Daniel Sibony's thirty-four-year-creation are:

- ***The Challenge of Being. Analysis of Therapies [L'enjeu d'exister. Analyse des thérapies]*** (Seuil, 2007) highlights different contemporary psychotherapies, including psychoanalysis and medicine. It shows the role of the subconscious at different levels and reflects on the psychoanalysis, approaching both the sects and other types of critiques of the psychoanalytical thought. The book states that the main challenge for a human subject – beyond his/her symptoms and illusions or because of them – is to exist, to be. The author assigns a special meaning to this "being".
- ***Biblical Readings [Lectures bibliques]*** (O. Jacob, 2006) focuses on new interpretations of essential passages of the Bible. Sibony's thinking respects the religious or atheist approaches of the Biblical texts, and most importantly, it brings light to the subject by focusing on the subconscious.

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<sup>1</sup> At distinguished publishing houses: Grasset, Seuil, Odile Jacob, Christian Bourgois.

The author reads certain Biblical episodes as key moments in the transmission of a symbolical meaning, conscious and subconscious<sup>2</sup>.

- ***Creation. Essay on Contemporary Art [Création. Essai sur l'art contemporain]*** (Seuil, 2005) is an innovative analysis of the artistic creation as *an act that intermingles particular realities*. An act that connects the narcissism of the artist and the spectator in an emotional instant of truth that can be also called the “transmission of being” – which often has a therapeutical effect. Artists greatly appreciated this book. Some confessed: “I have the feeling that you have met me in a place where I thought I was so lonely...”.

Two major books of Daniel Sibony focus on religion today:

- ***The Three Monotheisms [Les Trois monothéismes]*** (Seuil, 1992; 1997) analyses the relationships of the three monotheist religions with the original Texts and the connections in between them.
- ***Name of God. Beyond Monotheisms [Nom de Dieu. Par-delà les monothéismes]***, (Seuil, 2003; 2006) reinforces the ideas of the previous book and raises an essential question: in what believes the unfaithful? Or, does the divine have a meaning for the unfaithful and for the ones that do not belong to the mainstream religions? The author, who reads Hebrew and has Arabic as native tongue, approaches directly the Koran to show its specificity besides the Bible and the Gospels. This approach helps to better understand the present situation of the Islam and its relationship to other cultures.
- ***The Middle East. Psychoanalysis of a Conflict [Proche-Orient. Psychoanalyse d'un conflit]*** (Seuil, 2003) analyses the subconscious core of this Conflict. A core that goes beyond the political, rational and simple solutions. The author introduces the term of “terre possédée”(possessed land) to better illustrate the particular status, paradoxically universal, of this “ombilic brûlant” (burning umbrilical point) called the Saint Land.
- ***Violence. Courses [Violences. Traversées]*** (Seuil, 1998) starts with the violence of the young and ends with that of beauty. The book is based on a research on the confrontation of two symptoms or narcissisms. It is about the present and ancient forms of violence. Sibony’s reflection overcomes the question of inner and culturally acquired violence. The opposite of violence, states the author, is not rationality (because the rationality can be as violent as the un-rationality), but freedom as an infinity of possibilities.

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<sup>2</sup> Josy Eisenberg, a specialist of the Bible, stated on a TV program that Sibony’s book was the best on the subject.

In fact, violence is the reaction of human subjects that can neither bear their freedom nor lose it.

Three books dealing with the subjects of the game, the theatre and the contemporary dance have been published before *Creation. Essay on Contemporary Art*:

- ***The Game and the Pass. Identity and Theatre [Le Jeu et la passe. Identité et théâtre]*** (Seuil, 1997) analyses the term “game” as an essential moment of life, as well as the possibility to *change mediums* and to be in connection with “the game of being”. *The Pass* is the only play written by Sibony.
- ***The Body and the Dance [Le Corps et la danse]*** (Seuil, 1995; 1988) is a research on the body in the contemporary dance. Many choreographers, actors and psychotherapists use it in their work and research. The key notion of the book is “the dance of being”. In the same volume there are some original texts on fashion, music etc.
- ***With Shakespeare. Glares and Passions in Twelve Plays [Avec Shakespeare. Eclats et passions en douze pièces]*** (Grasset 1988; Seuil-Points, 2003) contains twelve conferences of Sibony on the twelve famous Shakespeare plays (*Hamlet, Macbeth, Othello, Romeo and Juliet, Julius Cesar etc.*). Soon, the author will publish another volume on the Shakespearean plays. He has already given conferences in Paris on the thirty-six plays.

Other books on the symbolic transmission follow Sibony’s thinking on religions:

- ***Gift of Self or Sharing the Self. The Levinas Drama [Don de soi ou partage de soi. Le Drame Levinas]*** (O. Jacob, 2000) is a research on Levinas philosophical track and a critique – soft but well documented – of the philosopher’s thinking. The starting point is that Levinas – after Heidegger adhered to Nazism – had to give up some of Heidegger’s ideas taken from the Hebrew Bible. Ideas regarding *the being, the ontological failure, the revelation etc.*
- ***The Anti-Semite Mystery [L’Enigme Antisemite]*** (Seuil, 2004) focuses on the positive particularity of the Jewish people and on the negative affect this people has attracted for centuries. Sibony interprets this affect as an identity crisis that can touch the Jews themselves.
- ***Racism, an Identity Hate [Le “Racisme, une haine identitaire]*** (Bourgois, 1988; Seuil-Points, 2001) highlights extreme forms of affect as the Nazism or the Islamic fundamentalism. The author criticizes the notion of identity that becomes so rigid in the case of certain individuals.

On the same topic:

- ***The Jewish Woman [La Juive]*** (Grasset, 1983) and ***Pleasures of Saying [Jouissances du dire]*** (Grasset 1985). The two books have the same subtitle: ***Essays on the Transmission of the Subconscious***. This eight hundred-page volume is the Ph.D. dissertation that Daniel Sibony defended in 1986 at the Paris-Sorbonne University with a jury made up of E. Levinas, H. Atlan, M. de Certeau, O. Revault d'Allones, J.T. Desanti et R. Mizrahi. He describes the major points of what he calls *the movement of the letter* and *the spirit of the letter* in the Biblical transmission (Jewish and Christian). In this same work, he introduces the key term of *incarnation of the letter* that he also calls “the coup of Christian force”. That happens when a man takes the responsibility to incarnate either a literal trace (and that gives a symptom) or the failure of the letter itself, which is the sacrificed Christian incarnation. Other notions as *the intrinsic breaking of the law*, as well as the three forms of symbolic transmission (the direct or subconscious transmission and the transmission of the subconscious) are introduced.

Following ***The Challenge of Being***, there are two clinical books:

- ***Perversions. Dialogues on the Present Insanities [Perversions. Dialogues sur les folies “actuelles”]*** (Grasset, 1987, Seuil-Points, 2000). This book studies different sorts of perverse scenarios, giving to the notion of *perversion* a meaning beyond the usual *sado-masochism* or *fetishism* up to the terrorist acts. The author also highlights certain phobia and addiction symptoms.
- ***The Hate of Desire [La Haine du Désir]*** (Bourgeois, 1974; 1994; 2008) introduces the term of *l'entre-deux femmes* [in-between two women] that allows Sibony to largely approach hysteria. *L'entre-deux femmes* represents the stage where a woman encounters the Other woman aiming to conquer her femininity and feeling either guilty for taking everything or anguished for losing everything. The father/man can intervene and help or simply throw obstacles. However, the crucial moment concerns the confrontation with the Other woman. This same book studies the obsessive neurosis and the difficulties of transmitting identity.

Other books on the same topic:

- ***The Subconscious Group [Le Groupe inconscient]*** (C. Bourgeois, 1981) studies *the nature of the collective linkage* that holds a group together without any Freudian reference to the figure of the father or to the parricide.

- ***The Subconscious Love. Beyond the Principle of Seduction [L'amour inconscient. Au-delà du principe de séduction]*** (Grasset, 1983) analyses seduction starting from the idea that what seduces us is not necessarily hearing what we would like to hear but being taken away beyond what we hear. To have the feeling that we have acquired something essential.
- ***The Psy People. Present Situation of the Psychoanalysis [Le Peuple "Psy". Situation actuelle de la psychanalyse]*** (Balland, 1993, Seuil-Points, 2007) analyses the situation of the *psy* groups in different schools. It shows how these groups are affected by the subconscious and by the law that governs the human groups themselves. In other words, knowing these laws does not mean it is possible to avoid them.

One of the most innovative and famous books of Daniel Sibony is ***In-Between. Sharing the Origin [Entre-Deux. L'Origine en partage ]*** (Seuil, 1991; 1998). Sibony starts from the idea that the concept of difference (even written as *differance*) cannot completely cover the personal and social issues regarding this topic. Consequently, he comes up with the term of *in-between*, which represents a subtle dynamics where the affects of two opposite poles intermingle. This dynamics in itself plays the role of a *third* (tiers) in between the two poles. In fact, it connects and separates them creating the space of a *game*. In other words, let's think of the child that is *in-between* two parents. Growing up actually means separating from the in-between but also taking it with him/her. For Sibony, this symbol overcomes the complex of Oedipus. The author uses the term of in-between to develop other ideas such as: *identity as in-between, the in-between patient-therapist, traveling and in-between, life and death, image and origin* etc, as well as all sorts of intermediate objects, products and spaces.

***Between Saying and Doing. Thinking Technology [Entre dire et faire. Penser la technique]*** (Grasset, 1989) is a deep research on technology in general. It also tackles certain practical examples: the media technology, hypnosis, artificial insemination etc. Sibony discusses and clarifies the critical approaches on the subject of technology as pure alienation of humanity. He also dispels the naïve exaltations that see technology as the savior of humanity. The author shows that there are *transfers* even in technology, namely subconscious affects that intervene in the act of production. There are also "trans-facts" (trans-faire), that is the force to overcome what has already been *factored*. So, Sibony analyses every technological scenario as a *memory supplement* and he gets to draw conclusions on therapy techniques. (This book also contains a critique of Heidegger on technology stating the philosopher's fascination for the Nazism as a holistic social technique).

Sibony is also the author of three books entitled ***Events. Psychopathology of the Present [Événements. Psychopathologie de l'actuel]*** that consist of numerous journal and academic articles on social, cultural and artistic topics.

Finally, the works of Daniel Sibony can be categorized as follows:

- **Clinical books (3):** *The Challenge of Being, Perversions, The Hate of Desire*
- **Books on creation (4):** *Creation, The Body and The Dance, The Game and the Pass, With Shakespeare*
- **Books on religion (2):** *The Three Monotheisms, Name of God*
- **Books on the symbolic transmission (7):** *Biblical Readings, The Anti-Semite Mystery, Psychoanalysis and Judaism, The Racism, an Identity Hate, The Jewish Woman, Pleasures of Saying*

Books on other topics:

- *In-Between*
- **On technology:** *Between Saying and Doing*
- **On love:** *The Subconscious Love, The Feminin and the Seduction*
- **On topics of actuality:** *Events I, II, III, The Middle-East, The Mad of Origins*
- **On the relationship between psychoanalysis and writing:** *The Uncastrable Other, The Name and the Body*
- **On violence:** *Violence*

Daniel Sibony will be publishing soon:

- The fourth volume of *Events* entitled *Traces of Events* that comprises further original articles on various topics.
- *Marrakech – The Starting Point*, an essay on the city of Marrakech of the first thirteen years of life of the writer (before his leaving for Paris).

Other books in progress:

- The following volume of *Biblical Readings*
- The following volume of the Shakespearian plays
- A book on the *Body Effects* and the relationship of body and spirit based on recent researches
- A book on the ethics of being

The website of Daniel Sibony: [www.danielsibony.com](http://www.danielsibony.com)

The author's articles can be consulted on line as well as a brief video presentation of each of his books.

Starting September 2008, excerpts of his conferences in video and audio format will also be regularly available on the website.