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## **Art for pedagogy: theatrical staging of the controversy about gay marriage**

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### **Summary**

This communication reflects an innovative pedagogical experiment of fictionalizing the societal controversy around gay marriage in France in 2013. It emphasizes the added value of a roundabout artistic approach to dealing with the question of otherness. It tackles both the alterity of the axiological positions on a society issue and the alterity of gender and sexual minorities.

### **Résumé**

Cette communication rend compte d’une expérience pédagogique innovante de mise en fiction de la controverse sociétale autour du mariage pour tous en France en 2013. Elle insiste sur la valeur ajoutée du détour artistique pour traiter de la question de l’altérité : à la fois l’altérité des positions axiologiques sur un enjeu de société et l’altérité du genre et des minorités sexuelles.

### **Key words**

pedagogy, creativity, theatre, controversy, gender studies

## **1. Introduction: the theatre of otherness**

The theatre coincides with pedagogy at a large number of junctions, which will be deployed in this present case study. Teachers can place themselves in a posture of “stage director”, which puts their students in a situation in which they can discover for themselves the solution of a problem (Raucent, and al., 2006). As for the learners, they can be placed in the situation of producing theatrical sketches or video clips, for apprenticeships as varied as group dynamics and the exact sciences (Corten-Gualtieri, and al., 2011) or else management (Bouchet, Fournout, 2016). Finally, a theatrical performance can provide a reference frame so as to understand better a given social phenomenon, for example the comprehension of gender (Butler, 1990).

The innovative pedagogical experiment in higher education which is presented here took place in 2013, when the Assemblée Nationale voted in the law allowing gay marriage in France, and it consisted in accompanying a group of students, who used theatrical fiction to report on their study of the social controversy about this new law. We shall focus on the contributions of theatricality when dealing with a twofold alterity at the heart of issues in this course: the alterity of different positions within the controversy, which were radicalised into a binary opposition (for or against gay marriage), and the alterity of sexual minorities which was particularly brought out in public debates at the time.

## **2. Set-up: training in the analysis of controversies**

This experiment was developed as part of an obligatory course in the core curriculum of the first year at Telecom ParisTech, devoted to the sociology of scientific and societal controversies. The student-engineers have generally studied for two or three years after leaving high school, before entering this school, but with almost no training in the social sciences.

The teaching of controversies, in the tradition developed by Actor-Network Theory (ANT) (Latour, 2005), has imposed itself these past few years as an innovative pedagogical format allowing students to identify the actors involved, the arguments advanced by each party, the forms of enrolment and alliance, the play of spokespeople and the arena in which the controversy takes place. In general, the students are invited to construct a website to report on their work.

Our experiment is aimed at exploring alternative forms for reporting this analysis. It is part of the pedagogy research contract FORCCAST<sup>1</sup>. The research axis at Telecom ParisTech consists in asking students to provide, as well as an analysis of the controversy, a research report which is different from the usual models: instead of a website, we ask them to produce a fictionalisation reflecting the controversy. Every year, this project involves 2 or 3 groups of students (out of twenty groups in all) who use the route of fiction to approach controversies. In this context, the subjects dealt with from 2013 to 2016 were: gay marriage, the airport of Notre-Dame des Landes, the penalisation of the clients of prostitution, and several themes associated with sustainable development. For further details, reference can be made to “Fictionalising a controversy, teaching differently” (Beaudouin, Fournout, 2016)<sup>2</sup>.

Here we shall focus on the theatrical staging of the controversy around “gay marriage and the anti-demonstrations”.

### **3. Issue: theory / theatre at the service of pedagogy**

As Howard Becker (2007) has pointed out, researchers into social sciences often have the impression that they have a monopoly over the production of knowledge about the workings of societies. Some consider that their methods for representing knowledge are the best. In opposition to these postures, in his essay, Becker proposes an exploration of the contributions of alternative forms for the representation of social knowledge, in particular those of artists, so as to study their advantages and limitations; in other words, to take them seriously.

In a different perspective, Mark Fortier, in *Theory/Theater* (2002), showed that the same social issues about society circulate between the world of the theatre and theories of human sciences. A fertile dialogue was struck up between alternative ways of thinking about and depicting society.

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<sup>1</sup> Training through the Cartography of Controversies in the Analysis of Sciences and Technology, under the direction of Nicolas Benvegno, financed by IDEFI - Initiatives D’Excellence en Formations Innovante - 2013-2019, in partnership with Science Po Paris, Mines Paristech, and the University of Paris Diderot.

<sup>2</sup> <http://controverses.org/en/news/fictionalising-a-controversy-teaching-differently-interview-with-val-rie-beaudouin-and-olivier-fournout/>

However, if there is one field in which theories circulating in society and creative theatre have evolved together, encountering one another, and mutually adopting their concepts, then this is clearly the question of gender.

In the 1990s, Judith Butler considered our sexual identities to be performances (Butler, 1990). In the same era, theatrical creations invested the questions of gender and the place of sexual minorities in our societies. The play *Angels in America* (Kushner, 1994), Pulitzer Prize, which is emblematic of gay male theatre, shakes up gender in this way. The words are taken as constructing autonomous realities, whose function is not to reflect an external reality, but to create or misappropriate it: such could be a definition of the performative power of language which Judith Butler applied to gender questions.

In 2001, in France, Marie-Hélène Bourcier published *Queer zones*. Based on a reading of Butler, she forged the concept of the “unfaithful imitation-repetition of norms” to bring in transvestism, going so far as to claim that “at various degrees we’re all ‘transvestites’” (p.166). She founded a queer politics in the perspective of questioning the oppositions between subjective/objective, women/men, sensitive homosexuals/logical heterosexuals (p.135), leading to an examination of sexualities in general (p.180). That same year, the *Biennale des Créatures*, “multi-cultural festival of female creation”, hosted over twenty shows in a wasteland devoted to the arts in Arcueil (to the south of Paris). Offering a parallel vision of queer theory, the shows grafted into bodies, words and movements “a hesitation about the categories that are supposed to found us. Crazy/not crazy, beautiful/not beautiful enough, in love/not in love, young/old, woman/mermaid” (Fournout, 2002, p.85). This programme set up a vibration of identities, an overlaying of many attachments.

If, thus, theories and theatre are interested in convergent problems and depict them using their own means, the question is to know if, in a pedagogical context, so-called “artistic” modes of presentation should not become strictly, and more systematically, a complement to more classic representations of knowledge.

#### **4. Analysis of the theatrical performance about gay marriage**

In the context of this article, we are going to focus on four points concerning the treatment of otherness, which seem to us to be the major results of this experiment. To read the full sketch, we refer the reader to the transcription available in the annex.

### **Accepting the diversity of positions**

The first point to be emphasised concerns the process. In this course, the students choose the controversial subject they want to treat. For gay marriage, they had a strong underlying personal investment. Reflecting what was happening in society, opinions were divided: strongly for or against. They thus explicitly said that they wanted to find “a place to talk to each other without beating each other up”. Some students also affirmed that they were looking for analyses so as to be able to adopt a more informed view. At the end of the process, the positions on either side had not changed radically; on the other hand, they had acquired the capacity to understand and accept the diversity of positions better. The positions of the “others” were no longer seen as a threat. The work of analysis led the students to deconstruct dogmatic postures, to notice the diversity of postures within the same category of actors, and to identify the sub-debates at play (marriage but also filiation, which itself turns into numerous sub-debates: GS, ART...)

The theatrical sketch reflected these states of mind, not just in the diversity of the arguments adopted by the various characters, but also in the important place given to humour. For example, in the final scene, which takes place in a school playground, we discover:

**Child 2:** Come on, let’s play mummy and daddy!

**Myriam:** No, we’re going to play parent A and parent B!

**Children:** Yes, so are we!

*Din*

**Myriam:** I’m parent A!

**Child:** No, I am!

**Girl A:** I don’t really care, anyway, I want to be parent K!

Underlying this play of categorisation there is a sign of to what extent the assigning of categories structures the functioning of our societies.

## The inventiveness of enunciation postures

The second point deals with postures of enunciation. One of the riches of fictionalisation is the introduction of fictional narrators who open up innovative positions in the controversy. These positions might be third-party, mediatory, tinged with dilemmas, or else displace the issue.

For example, the prologue of the play opens with the following line: “Hello everyone, we’re the theatre troop for all. We’re on an international tour.”

This initial phrase is interesting in its semiological creativity, by playing on the words “for all”. The public debate opposed gay marriage, in French “mariage pour tous”/“marriage for all”, and the anti-gay-marriage, which called itself, as a provocation, “demonstration for all” or “demo for all”<sup>3</sup>, and now the theatre has joined in by also promising to be “for all”. While the two opposing camps had problems keeping this promise in the eyes of the other camp, the theatre, which encloses the diversity of oppositions within a single narrative, can claim to be “for all”, because both camps can recognise themselves. The theatre thus immediately adopts a metacommunicational position addressed to an “all” in the tradition of popular theatre.

But the main narrative choice, which structures the play, comes just afterwards. The prologue goes on: “our play’s called *marriage for all for children*. Why? Because children actually understand things very quickly.” The students chose to follow two little girls who play at getting married and set off on a quest for answers to the questions they have.

As introduced in the prologue, they are almost set in a position of learners. Like the students working on the controversy, the two little girls try to find a place in the complex web of public debate. Like a Candide arriving with a fresh gaze, an avid curiosity, and a desire to learn, they question the players in the controversy. They adopt a position of investigators, just like teachers ask their students to do in a classic study of a controversy.

However, several innovations attach themselves to this choice of children as “main characters”.

On the one hand, they do not only go to see the clearly identified main players in the controversy (for example, a priest, or a mayor). They go to see also an ordinary man, an

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<sup>3</sup> In French « Manif pour tous » (« Manif » is the diminutive of « Manifestation », which stands for « Demonstration », « Demo » in English).

uncle, who is a kind of French “man in the street”. They see some American homosexuals on the television, which provides a glimpse of the diversity of countries, with varying statuses for homosexual couples. Finally, some of the homosexuals say that they are against marriage: a diversity inside gay culture which is not a homogenous bloc.

But, above all, the children are not “neutral” about these questions. The choice of the two girls who want to get married, who kiss each other on their mouths, who play a mummy and daddy game, is clearly remarkable. While, in this sketch, positions of authority are in general held by men (the priest, the uncle, the mayor, the schoolteacher... with the exception of Madame Taubira, the Minister of Justice), and while no explicit feminism puts into question this stereotype, the choice of a couple of girls as the protagonists of the narration provides a powerful counterpoint, a claim for otherness which is not made by a discourse, but by the simple presence of characters, bodies on the stage, acting.

### **The harsh apprenticeship of complexity**

Let us go back for a moment to the justification, which is made explicit in the sketch, of following the journey of two children asking question about gay marriage. The prologue provides us with this reason: “Because children actually understand things very quickly”. This initial affirmation is placed in a tension, in the continuation of the sketch, with the complexity of explanations and arguments (especially about GS and ART). Children may understand things very quickly, no doubt just like our students in a prestigious French engineer school, but the two heroines in the sketch constantly repeat (no fewer than 8 times!) that “it’s complicated”, “it’s too complicated”, “it gets complicated”, “it’s more complicated”.

The effort towards clarification that the sociology of controversies can provide is enriched, thanks to fictionalisation, in at least two ways:

On the one hand, thanks to the virtues of analogy and metaphor, which a fictional character can adopt more easily than a student presenting a classic academic paper. For example, Uncle Erwan explains: “So, imagine that your parents gave the ingredients to make a cake to the lady who lives next door, and this lady made it for your parents, and then, she gave them the cake. It’s like that with GS, only for a child.” Learning to use analogies and metaphors is a vital lesson for young engineers who, in the future, may have to explain complex technical systems.

On the other, thanks to the permanent coexistence of a twofold dimension: firstly, clarification by science (which obviously needs to be asserted), and secondly, the subjective, lived experience of a resistance from the complexity of the real, which will not allow itself to be reduced despite all the conceptual and technical apparatus of analysis. The apprenticeship of complexity does not consist just in convincing ourselves that we have the means to unravel it, and that a mapping, a table, with computer links or an analysis algorithm of big data will be enough to provide it; it also means knowing how to maintain a sense of complexity, even if this is only to lead to additional investigations. We then tend to applaud when a little fictional character reminds us in a bubble, even amusingly, that “it’s a bit complicated”.

It is an example of salutary complexification. In terms of the debate between constructivism and essentialism concerning gender otherness, it is not uninteresting to recall, as the sketch does subtly, that a homosexual affirmation is not necessarily a constructivist one, and can quite easily be part of an essentialism and a naturalism which is extremely “demo for all”:

**Girl A:** Today was crap, Baptiste was really horrible to me!

**Myriam:** Really?

**Girl A:** Oh yes!

**Myriam:** Why?

**Girl A:** He won’t stop bothering me...

**Myriam:** That’s normal, he’s a boy!

**Girl A:** That’s true... boys are crap.

**Myriam:** Yeah... you now what? Girls are the best!

**Girl A:** Yeah.

**Myriam:** And you’re the most beautiful girl of them all.

**Girl A:** And you’re really nice!

*They kiss*

### **Revealing the diversity of family models: love above all**

During the controversy itself, and in particular during the “Demos for All”, a representation grew up of the family as being made up of a father, mother, and two children, a boy and girl, as incarnated in the movement’s logo (cf. Fig.1). This model was reinforced during the



demonstrations by the use of pink and blue, the colour that traditionally marks gender differentiation.



**Figure 1. Logo of the movement “Manif pour tous”/“Demo for all”**

However, work on the evolution of family structures has shown up the erosion of this model, with the increase of divorces, the number of blended and single-parent families (Mehl, 2011): the family model, as communicated by “La Manif pour tous”, embodied in a broadly distributed visual, produces a narrative that now reflects the reality of only a part of our societies.

In the sketch, the students invented a very creative form of representation of family models by adopting the point of view of children. In their class, they are invited by their teacher to draw their parents, which are then projected onto the screen of the stage (cf. Fig.2). Then, they comment on their drawings, thus conveying the diversity of real lives. There can be seen four heterosexual couples, one homosexual couple, and one single-parent family. Of the heterosexual couples, two have used GS or ART, and are depicted with a “third parent” (a surrogate mother depicted as a cow and a robot), which disturbs the frontier between so-called “heterosexual” and “homosexual” models (i.e. GS and ART are not questions reserved to homosexual couples).

Over and above family compositions, the question of love comes over as an essential element in the apprehension of the family for the children in the sketch (a drawing of a heart appears in four of the six drawings). This is an unexpected message arising from its dramatic staging, and the question of affect, which is decisive from the children’s viewpoint, is often left in the background in “theoretical” discussions. It here finds its place thanks to the use of fiction.







 <p>Two dads and kids</p>	 <p>Daddy, mummy</p>	 <p>Daddy, mummy</p>
 <p>Daddy, mummy and a robot (ART)</p>	 <p>Daddy, mummy, milk cow (GS)</p>	 <p>Daddy alone</p>

Figure 2. Depiction of their families by the children (drawings by Yu Ling Cheng)

## 5. Conclusion: embodying knowledge

In the prologue, the students say: “We’ve summed up months and months of debate in a 15-minute play. That’s why each facial expression, each sentence, and each location will have a meaning, and bring to mind a point we have encountered during our research”. While we, the teachers, did not express the objectives of the dramatic staging in these terms, it has to be said that we could adopt these two sentences as the epigraph for our course. Yes, there is this objective to sum up all of the positions in a public debate, and, yes, there is also the challenge, thanks to dramatic staging, to make the expressions (non-verbal, the bodily interpretation of the characters, their presence) and places (spatial dispositions, the scenography) convey meaning.

Thanks to its sensitive intelligence, the sketch is not so much, or not only, an objective reflection of an axiological diversity, it is also a reminder of moments during the research, the lived-out memory of a lived-out reality. The dramatic staging enriched the representation of alterities by saturating them with complexity, ambiguity, internal and external conflicts,

affect, the subjective investment of the actors, which the usual formats for the transmission and acquisition of knowledge, which are more analytical, intellectual and linear, tend to erase.

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## **Annex : Transcription of the sketch: *Marriage for All for Children***

**Controversy mapping course, Télécom ParisTech**

**June 2013**

### ***Controversy :Marriage or Demo for All***

Students: Myriam Bakir, Yu Ling Cheng, Charly Fontaine, Sara Moujahid, Edouard Seignol, Guillaume Soulé, Dominique Yang

**Staff members: Valérie Beaudouin, Olivier Fournout**

Drawings: Yu Ling Cheng

Translation from the French (by Ian Monk) : Le mariage pour tous pour les enfants

Hello everyone, we're the theatre troop for all. We're on an international tour. So thank you, Télécom Paris Tech, for welcoming us this evening. If you like our play, you can come and see us again tomorrow evening at the Olympia.

Our play's called *marriage for all for children*. Why? Because children actually understand things very quickly. We've summed months and months of debate in a 15-minute play. That's why each facial expression, each sentence, and each location will have a meaning, and bring to mind a point we have encountered during our research. That's all. Thank you.

*Leaving school*

**Girl A:** Today was crap, Baptiste was really horrible to me!

**Myriam:** Really?

**Girl A:** Oh yes!

**Myriam:** Why?

**Girl A:** He won't stop bothering me...

**Myriam:** That's normal, he's a boy!

**Girl A:** That's true... boys are crap.

**Myriam:** Yeah... you now what? Girls are the best!

**Girl A:** Yeah.

**Myriam:** And you're the most beautiful girl of them all.

**Girl A:** And you're really nice!

*They kiss*

**Girl A, excited:** I've got an idea!

**Myriam, excited:** Yes?

**Girl A:** Shall we get married?

**Myriam:** Yes! Do you know how?

**Girl A:** No, I don't!

**Myriam:** Well, my mum says we have to go to church.

**Girl A:** Ok.

**Myriam:** So, let's go!

*At church*

**Girl A, Myriam:** Mister Priest man, Mister Priest man, Mister Priest man!

**Priest:** Hey, let's calm down a bit! Where do you think you are? At Notre-Dame des Landes?

What brings you here?

**Myriam:** Well, we really love each other and we want to get married!

**Girl A:** We want to get married!

**Priest:** Ah! Get married... to each other?

**Myriam:** Yes!

**Girl A:** That's right, the two of us!

**Myriam:** We really love each other, so we want to get married!

**Priest:** But you do realise that when you play, you play at being mummy and daddy! Or daddy and mummy.

**Myriam, quickly:** That's right! Sometimes I play at being daddy, then she's the mummy!

**Girl A, quickly:** And then I'm the daddy, and she's the mummy!

**Myriam, quickly:** And then I'm the daddy, and she's the mummy!

**Priest:** Sorry, but you've understood the point! I can't marry you just for five minutes, I can't marry you first as a daddy and mummy, and then as a mummy and daddy. That would be absurd. And, as you know fine well, at church, the way we do things means that there has to be a daddy, and a mummy. We obey the same laws that have existed for ages... So we can't make any exceptions to the rule like that!

**Girl A:** But we're good girls! And then, my mum's a Buddhist. And she says that...

**Priest:** *Aside, pityingly to the audience* She's a Buddhist!

**Girl A:** ... homosexuals aren't bad people, we have the right to be in love!

**Priest:** But no one has said anything about homosexuals being bad. I just said that I can't marry a woman to a woman, or a man to a man.

**Girl A:** For two minutes, then?

**Myriam:** One minute?

**Priest:** We're not making any deals here. You're really starting to make things easier to... I mean, really, go and talk to someone else. I can't allow myself to marry you.

**Myriam, insisting:** Come on, please, later on, we want to have babies and everything...

**Priest:** No, we're not going to start talking about ART and GS as well!

**Myriam:** Really? What's GS?

**Priest:** No, it's too complicated. I didn't say a thing. You're too young! No, no, and no! Go somewhere else please. I'm sorry for you, come back when you've got... a husband!

**Myriam:** You know what? My mum told me that France is a secular country, and so we don't need you! Bah!

**Priest:** And that's what you came here to tell me?

*In front of the church*

**Myriam:** Let's go and see Uncle Erwan. Doesn't he have an answer to everything?

**Girl A:** Ok!

*At home*

**Myriam: Girl A:** Uncle Erwan, Uncle Erwan, Uncle Erwan!

**Uncle Erwan:** Here I am! Hi, kids, what's up?

**Myriam:** We're fine.

**Girl A:** No, in fact we're not fine! We wanted to get married at church, and we were told that we weren't allowed to!

**Uncle Erwan:** Yes, well, it's all a bit complicated! You know, it's quite normal for the church, because priests don't marry couples who are heterosexual...um I mean, homosexual! I'm losing the plot here.

**Girl A:** Not a single priest will do that?

**Myriam:** So we're all bad people?

**Uncle Erwan:** In fact, he's against religious homosexual marriages, because he obeys Christian religious doctrine! That's normal! On the other hand, nowadays, since they voted in the marriage for all law, homosexual couples can get married in France, thanks to Uncle Hollande.

**Girl A:** That's good news!

**Myriam:** Yes, so that means that we're going to be able to get married!

**Uncle Erwan:** That's right, it was one of François Hollande's campaign promises, and after a long struggle, we managed to get the law passed. It was a great victory for the left!

**Girl A:** Why was it so complicated?

**Uncle Erwan:** Because there were lots of opponents, among the population and also the right-wing deputies.

**Girl A:** Ah, that reminds me of something I saw on TV!

**Myriam:** Oh yes?

**Girl A:** Yes, it was... It was in the USA... I'll show you if you like!

**Myriam:** Sure!

**Girl A:** Come on then!

*In the bedroom, in front of a (pretend) screen*

**Myriam:** What side is it on?

**Girl A:** Channel 2!

*American 1, on the screen: And kids, this is how I met your father!...*

*Pause*

*American 1, on the screen:* My husband Barney and I had just got married, and we decided to go to Paris to check things out, this was in the fall of 2013 and, apparently, marriage for all had just been voted in. We were really surprised. We met some really weird people and heard some very strange things.

*The girls sing the theme tune of "How I Met your Mother"*

*American 1, on the screen:* Oh that bistro was magnificent, little baguette!

*American 2, on the screen:* Excellent!

*Passer-by on the screen:* You again? It's not possible! You're everywhere! Do you know the effect you have on me?

*American 1 on the screen:* No, what are you talking about?

*Passer-by on the screen:* You impose what you as a minority wants, in the name of equality! So what about the majority?

*American 2 on the screen:* But...

*Passer-by, on the screen:* You know the effect you have on me?



**American 2, on the screen:** But...

**Passer-by, on the screen:** No, no and no! Because of you, I've now lost my status as a mother! My child no longer wants to call me mom! So what's he going to call me now? Parent A or Parent B!

**Myriam:** Stop! Why is she being nasty?

**Girl A:** I don't know, she said that we can't play at mummy and daddy anymore!

**Myriam:** You know what, this really gets to me. I'm hungry!

**Girl A:** I'll get you something to eat!

**Myriam:** Yeah!

*Myriam uses the remote control. On the screen the characters retreat then advance*

**Myriam:** Back, back, back... forward, forward, forward.

*Rewind / fast forward*

**American 1:** It's unbelievable!

**American 2:** What a brute!

**American 1:** Come on, let's have a glass of wine!

**American 2:** That's a really good idea!

*At the wine bar, two men arrive, dancing together, they exchange greetings*

**Man in Bar 1:** Hey there, where are you from?

**American 1:** New York!

**Man in Bar 2 (taking American 1's hand):** Whatever's this?

**Man in Bar 1:** You aren't married?

**American 1:** Ah, yes, it's the magic ring, if you haven't made the leap, now you can!

**Man in Bar 2:** Ah, you leapt!

**American 1:** Yes, we were at the edge of the precipice!

**Man in Bar 2:** And we're right in it. You really don't get it, do you, kids?

**American 2:** I don't see what you mean!

**Man in Bar 1**, *quickly, more and more hysterical*: Anyway, what does having a ring on your finger or not change? What? I'll tell you what it means, it means that, thanks to you, we can't even walk down the street anymore without getting spat on!

**American 1**: It's always been like that, we've always been stereotyped, and stigmatised!

**American 4**, *deeply moved*: No, it's not true! In the past, people used to keep it to themselves, but now, we can't even go out on the street without being insulted all the time!

**American 3**: See the mess you've put us in?

**American 4**: You're self-centred! I don't dare go out anymore, it's unbearable!

**American 1**: What is this? When we came to Europe, we told that this was a free country!

**American 3**: Go to the other countries then, go to Belgium, and don't stay in France to bother us, you don't get it at all!

*In the bedroom*

**Myriam**: Stop! It's too complicated, some people like it, and some don't!

**Girl A**: Yes, some want to get married, and some don't!

**Myriam**: But I still don't understand. Shall we go see Uncle?

**Girl A**: Yes!

*At home*

**Girl A**: Uncle?

**Uncle Erwan**: Ah, did you enjoy your show, kids?

**Girl A**: Well, it's complicated, some people want to, and some people don't! And then they have a row!

**Uncle Erwan**: Yes, there was a lot of opposition about that law, you know! Among the population and also among the politicians!

**Girl A:** Oh look, here's Auntie!

**Myriam:** Auntie!

**Uncle Erwan:** Hello, Agnès, how are things? You know, we were talking about the new marriage for all law. Do you remember all those endless fights, and those long days and nights spent at the National Assembly debating it? It was an epic struggle!

**Myriam:** Can you tell us about it?

**Girl A:** Tell us about it! Tell us about it! Tell us about it!

**Myriam:** Of course!

*At the National Assembly*

**Speaker of the National Assembly:** The floor is now the Minister of Justice's, Madame Taubira.

**Deputy 1 (opponent):** Who cares?!

*Enter the Minister of Justice under applause and booing*

**Speaker of the National Assembly:** Order, please!

*Hammer of the speaker*

**Minister of Justice:** Speaker, ladies and gentlemen...

**Deputy 1 (opponent):** Yeah, that's us! Yeah!

**Minister of Justice:** It is our honour and privilege, in the name of the government, to present a draft act...

*Boos*

A draft act which expresses the commitment of the President of the Republic to allow marriage and adoption for same-sex couples.

*Booing and clapping*

It will mainly be those articles in the Civil Code...

**Deputy Henri (opponent):** Yes, that's right!

**Minister of Justice:**... that concern marriage, adoption and the attribution of surnames which will be amended.

**Deputy Henri (opponent):** Then burn the entire Civil Code while you're at it, why not?!

*Yells, hammer*

**Minister of Justice:** For this reason, we are welcoming, with the greatest respect, all those people who have agreed to be heard with a view to improving the text.

**Deputy 2 (opponent):** All the people? What a joke! Just have a referendum, and leave it at that!

**Deputy 3 (defender):** It's stupid!

**Minister of Justice:** This draft act will allow same-sex couples to enter the institution of marriage and to compose a family, just like heterosexual couples, either by a contract, in a civil union, or by marriage. This draft act is above all a law based on equality.

**Deputy Henri (opponent):** Liar!

**Deputy 1 (opponent):** We don't want it!

**Deputy 3 (defender):** Equality!

*Din*

*The speaker's hammer*

**Minister of Justice:** It is inconceivable to think that, still today...

**Deputy 1 (opponent):** No it isn't!

*Din*

**Minister of Justice:** ...two people in love and who want to grow old together are faced with such injustice...

**Deputy Henri (defender):** It's shameful!

**Deputy 3 (opponent):** Too right, it's shameful!

*Din*

**Minister of Justice:** ...because the law does not give them the same rights as other, equally stable heterosexual couples. We all have the same obligations and the same duties. Why can't we have the same rights?

**Deputy Henri (opponent):** We won't accept the current majority to decide this on its own!

**Minister of Justice:** We aren't imposing anything, Monsieur Guaino! You'll have the possibility to express yourself when we vote!

**Deputy Henri (opponent):** And we certainly will, thank you!

*Din, yells and permanent vociferations from the rows of deputies*

**Deputy 1 (opponent):** We count on giving our opinion!

**Minister of Justice:** The motto of our Republic is: "liberty, equality, fraternity". And this draft law stands for those very same words. We are giving homosexual couples the freedom to choose to get married, have children and live in a state of equality...

**Deputy Henri (opponent):** Nothing to do with it!

*The speaker's hammer*

**Minister of Justice:**... with other couples and other families. This law will also open the possibility for these same couples to adopt...

**Deputy Henri (defender):** Marriage for all!

**Deputy 4 (defender):** Children for all!

**Minister of Justice:** ...with the stipulation of obeying the same conditions as for heterosexual couples. Refusing this law would be the equivalent of refusing the rights of those children, who you refuse to see...

**Deputy Henri (opponent):** That's right! We're refusing them!

**Minister of Justice:** ...and whom you are condemning to the hazards of life...

**Deputy Henri (opponent):** Yes!

**Minister of Justice:** ...and to whom you are refusing the love of one of their parents.

**Deputy Henri (opponent):** But which parent? Parents A, parents B, parent K?

**Deputy 1 (opponent):** It's a ball's up!

*The speaker's hammer*

**Minister of Justice:** You have chosen to protest against the recognition of the rights of these couples...

**Deputy Henri (opponent):** Yes!

**Minister of Justice:** ...which is your right. But we're proud of what we're doing.

**Deputy Henri (opponent):** Shame on you!

**Deputy 1 (opponent):** But you shouldn't be!

*The speaker's hammer*

**Deputy 3 (defender):** Evolve, grow up!

**Minister of Justice:** Now, let's open the voting for this new law.

**Speaker of the National Assembly:** Voting is open!

*The speaker's hammer*

Voting is closed!

*The speaker's hammer*

**Deputy Henri (opponent):** I got it wrong!

**Deputy 1 (opponent):** Henri, stand in the corner!

**Deputy 5 (opponent):** He's made a mistake, the fool!

*At home*

**Myriam:** Yeah, well, it's all a bit complicated!

**Girl A:** Maybe, but I now think I understand a bit better!

**Myriam:** Really?

**Girl A:** Yes, a bit better.

**Uncle Erwan:** Well that's already something!

**Girl A:** Yes, but there's still something I can't understand. Just now, the priest mentioned GS.

**Myriam:** What's GS?

**Girl A:** And what's ART?

**Myriam:** Yes, what's ART?

**Uncle Erwan:** Oh dear, this is all getting a bit complicated! Ok, I'll try and explain. Basically, ART means assisted reproductive technology. It helps couples who have fertility problems to have children thanks to science.

**Girl A:** And so that means we can, too?

**Uncle Erwan:** Um... well, you're still a bit young!

**Myriam:** And the two boys on the TV could as well?

**Uncle Erwan:** In their case, it would be more about GS!

**Myriam:** What's GS?

**Uncle Erwan:** Well, GS means... Ok, let's take an example, it will be simpler. So, imagine that your parents gave the ingredients to make a cake to the lady who lives next door, and this lady made it for your parents, and then, she gave them the cake. It's like that with GS, only for a child.

**Girl A:** She'd do that for nothing?

**Uncle Erwan:** That's where it can get complicated. Very complicated in fact, go and play in your room!

**Girl A:** Ok, let's go and play!

*Exit the children*

**Uncle Erwan:** Ah, kids, they want to know it all!

**Agnès:** They're still a bit young for all that.

**Uncle Erwan:** It reminds me of the opposition, during the debates!

**Agnès:** Do you remember the anti-gay demonstrations?

**Uncle Erwan:** Oh yes, they let all hell run loose! And there weren't just those problems!

**Agnès:** And you remember the Mayor of the 13<sup>th</sup> *arrondissement* who refused to marry them?

**Uncle Erwan:** Oh yes, what a pain all that business was!

**Agnès:** He subtly refused to marry them by saying he was exercising his freedom of conscience...

**Uncle Erwan:** Oh yes, I remember....

*At the town hall of the 13<sup>th</sup> arrondissement of Paris*

**Man 1:** Good morning, Mayor!

**Man 2:** Good morning!

**Mayor:** Good morning... gentlemen.

**Man 2:** We're here to get married!

**Mayor:** To each other?

**Man 2:** Yes, together, it's now legal, and so...

**Mayor:** Very well, very well. Just let me check the register...

*He flicks through the register on the desk. The two men point together at gaps in the schedule.*

**Man 2:** There! On Tuesday!

**Mayor:** No, I save my Tuesdays for...

**Man 2:** Or Wednesday?

**Mayor:** Ah no, no, Bernadette would kill me...

**Man 1:** Look, Thursday, or Friday, it doesn't matter!

**Mayor:** Sorry, sir, but it's full up, just look! No, I don't think that it would be possible until... 2020 at the earliest!

**Man 2:** You're doing this on purpose!

**Man 1, going behind the desk and picking up the register:** Look, there's a free place there!

**Mayor, pushing him away:** Stay on the other side of the desk. And calm down.

**Man 2:** He doesn't want to marry us, is that it?

**Man 1:** I don't think we're talking the same language!

**Mayor:** No, it's true, I don't want to marry you.

**Man 2:** Hang on, we want to have kids! So we're getting married, period!

**Man 1:** You're obliged to marry us!

**Mayor:** No, I'm not obliged, in fact. The constitution allows me to exercise what it calls my freedom of conscience.

**Man 1, offended:** What rubbish! You're the Mayor, and you're here to marry people like us, who come to see you, so give us a date...and not in 2020!



*Matérialisation d'une alternative par les bras*

**Mayor:** No, it's been like this since time immemorial, a man, a woman, a wedding, and then kids.

**Man 1:** And here we have a man and a man.

**Mayor:** All I can do for you right now is to suggest you go to the prefecture and ask for a civil union.

**Man 1:** We've already done that, and now we're here for... the icing on the cake!

**Mayor:** Anyway, I reckon that in a year or two, what with current technological progress, you'll be able to have a child all on your own...

**Man 2:** What?!

*The men move away.*

**Man 1:** We've landed a conservative reactionary!

**Man 2:** Let's go to the 14<sup>th</sup>, they're much cooler there!

**Mayor:** Say hi to them from me.

**Man 2:** Of course!

*In the bedroom, the girls have fallen asleep*

**Girl A:** Hey, it's school time! Come on, let's go, we're going to be late!

**Myriam:** I don't want to...

**Girl A:** Oh come on, the teacher's nice as well!

**Myriam:** Yes, he is, and what's more he's handsome!

**Girl A:** Yes, he is!

*At school*

**Child 1:** Yeah, ok at school?

**Children:** Yeah!!!

**Teacher:** Hello, children.

**Children:** Hello teacher!

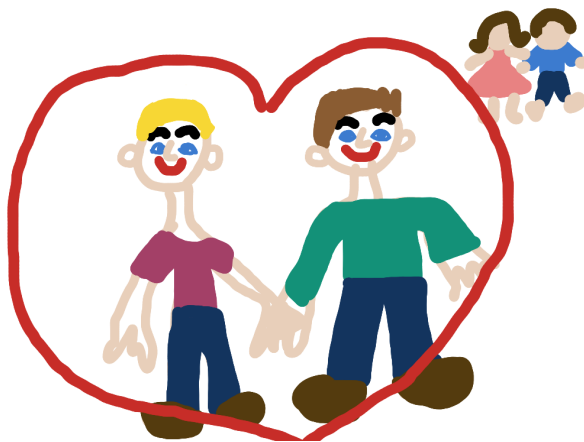
**Teacher:** So, today, it's a bit of a special day, we're going to make drawings for your parents. But there's not enough pieces of paper for everyone, so we're going to hand them around.

**Children:** Ok.

**Benoît:** I don't care, I'm writing on the table!

**Teacher:** No, you're not going to write on the table, Benoît! And stop eating your pen, Myriam! And don't write on your friends either! Come on, kids!

*Projection of drawings as they are evoked*



So what you have you drawn there, Dominique?

**Girl A:** Oh, why are there two boys?

**Children, laughing:** Ah, he's got two dads!

**Child 2:** Ah, that's really weird!



**Teacher:** And what have you drawn, Hector?

**Hector:** A dad and a mum, like everyone!

**Teacher:** Well done!



**Girl A:** Me too, I've got a dad and a mum, but they fight all the time! And anyway, him there (*pointing at Dominique*), he isn't weird, he's just yellow, like me!

*Laughter*

**Teacher:** Come on children, calm down!

**Dominique:** Anyway, with Dad and Dad, they're super dads! They explained everything. They told me that a man and a lady made me, but they didn't want to keep me, and so they took me instead. Anyway, I've even talked about it with the sy-carry-trist.

*Laughter*

**Teacher:** Please, please! Let's keep cool.

**Girl A:** And what did the sy-carry-trist say?

**Dominique:** He told me I was alright.

**Child 2:** Well, he was wrong!

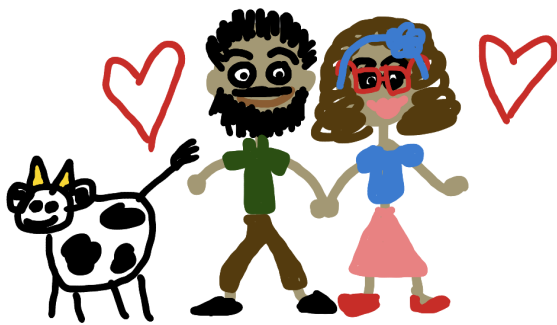


**Girl A:** What about you? (*talking to Child 2*). Just look, your picture is really weird!

**Child 2:** I've got a machine. Because I'm a super baby! Mum and dad told me: there's a daddy, and a mummy, and a robot! Because they couldn't make me on their own. And so I'm a super baby!

*Din*

**Teacher:** Calm down, calm down! Ok, Myriam, so what have you done? Why is there an animal?



**Myriam:** It's because my mum and dad couldn't have me, so they asked a lady to put me into her tummy, and now dad says that she was a cash cow!

**Child 2:** A cash cow?

**Girl A:** My dad says that my mum is a fat cow.

*Laughter*



**Teacher**, *more and more dismayed*: Ah, children, please stop! Now, Sarah, you haven't finished, why is there just one person in your drawing?

**Sarah**: Cos I've got a dad, but not a mum.

**Myriam**: So who does your makeup?

**Sarah**: No one. My dad says that I don't need that. My dad is the nicest dad in the world. He's got heart as big as that (*opening her arms wide*)!

**Teacher**: Ok, it's playtime, kids, go on! Away with you!

*Completely at sea, he takes his head in his hands*: What's going on?!?

*In the playground*

**Child 2**: Come on, let's play mummy and daddy!

**Myriam**: No, we're going to play parent A and parent B!

**Children**: Yes, so are we!

*Din*

**Myriam**: I'm parent A!

**Child**: No, I am!

**Child**: So who's parent A?

**Children**: I am!

**Child**: And who's parent B?

**Children**: ...

**Girl A:** I don't really care, anyway, I want to be parent K!

**Myriam:** Yes, I'll be parent A and can be parent K! Yeah!

*Curtain*