

## Semiotics of Thinking

For the longest time our civilisation has given to discursive thinking the leading role in mental processing, we tend to picture God as a super-mind who thinks up the world, and we believe the world comes alive as "He" says the words. But when, under the pressure of inhibited imagination, classical reasoning surrenders, thinking falls back, so to speak, into materialism. From there, it is impossible to elaborate a theory of thinking that is not corrupted by wrath against idealism and metaphysics. After having denounced the myth of individual entity (Ego) and of the divine origin of the mind, rationalistic thinking was driven away from psychology.

To reduce thinking to mere reasoning is to exclude from the mind the non-intentional processes of thinking. The intrinsic processes of imaginative and somatic thinking, such as dreams and emotions, are also made of signs, but signs produced by holistic thinking, images without words. The difficulty of describing thinking from a materialistic and pragmatic point of view is greater in societies ruled by written laws, given that in such societies philosophy has taken over the vocabulary that could have been used to describe these mental processes. This monopoly of philosophy in the field of explaining the world forced other sciences to merge in its *discourse of truth* and imposed rationalistic and dualistic perspectives on any attempt to understand anything.

Nowadays, seeking a more pragmatic approach, the semiotics of thinking, with the help of neurosciences, is enabled to picture the mind in the like of the brain and the functional complementarity of its hemispheres. In other words, thanks to the collaboration of neurosciences and semiotics, mind and soul are now considered as mental functions of the nervous system in the human brain. Semiotics of thinking must then be made within the theoretical frame of an order-friendly epistemology, a way of thinking which principal law is logic. But since the signs produced by thinking are not all verbal, nor symbolic for that matter, the description of the production of mental signs will have to take in consideration the *qualitative* part of thinking, image and emotion.

A semiotic approach of thinking doesn't only enable us to consider thoughts as signs; it gives us a firm ground for the study of emotions in the sign producing process. The analytical method had driven us to "semiology" as to a door through witch, at the same time, a poetic breeze came into the rational field and what was for the longest time overshadowed by the myth of scientific objectivity, the night of the senses, came out.

To consider thinking as a sign producing process is to take into account the human body and satisfy the need of wholeness and unity in holistic thinking, it is trying to understand how the different parts of the brain function and let them work in search of their specific pleasure. The soul (*psyche*) is an unstable part of the body; thinking makes it go from one state to another, and with the means of dreams or reflection, drive the body to such and such pleasure: *rational grasp* for analytical thinking (the exclusive realm of words), *recognition* for the reflective mind (word/image), *ecstasy* for the imaginative thinking (image/word) and *material delight* for the somatic thinking (image).

Since the mind produced signs are not quantifiable things, but the result of fading neural exchanges, the description of thinking shall also take in account the respective strategies of discursive and holistic thinking. The mutual exclusion of word and image imposed by dualism does not prevent their combination; we can make images with words (we do so in reflective thinking) and insert words in images (as we do in imaginative thinking). With the help of a vocabulary elaborated by cognitive sciences we can then define the production of mental signs as a complex network involving many anatomical systems.

«Mental events are not epiphenomena, they have a causal effect on the physic-chemical reality; yet they depend on this reality, since they only exist if certain combinations of physic-chemical events are realized. »<sup>1</sup>

Certain processes are intentional; they constitute ways of thinking with contents are characterized by the fact that they are usable in reasoning. Other processes, called intrinsic by J.A. Fodor constitute kind of conscience or way of thinking resisting to any translation into symbols. In relation to scientific reasoning, which is an intentional *top-down* mental process initiated from the nervous centers toward the peripheral systems, the modular analytical process of personal reflection appears to be a *bottom-up* intrinsic process initiated from the periphery systems, a slow, flexible and deep process adding the qualitative dimension of holistic thinking to what can be called the textual body of discursive thinking. Discursive thinking acquires thus, pragmatically speaking, a constitutive function: *analysis*, a modular intentional process manipulating symbols according to syntactic rules, and a contributive function: *reflection*, an intentional global process. On the other hand, holistic thinking is mainly specialized in images, the free-flowing production of somatic indexes in which *somatisation*, freed from the repressive connotation given to it by psychoanalysis, is the constitutive function and *imagining* the contributive function.

The neurophysiologic description of the brain's hemispheres and their complementary functions and most of all the discovery of information exchanges between the hemispheres as the source or centers of individual pleasures provides semiotics of thinking with the materialistic ground lacking in traditional aesthetics. Even though conscious processes are not localized in the brain but depend on the interaction of many cerebral functions, the neural fibres relating brain areas cross the middle section of the brain; and contact is established between the left and the right hemispheres activity. According to clinical observations, the complementarity of the hemispheres and the balance of functions are signs of mental health, at least they show how well the human brain can perform. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the experiments of Paul Broca and Carl Wernicke on the localisation of speech centers in the brain opened the door to what would become neurophysiology. One century later, the works of

---

<sup>1</sup> Jean Delacour, *Conscience et Cerveau, la nouvelle frontière des Neurosciences*, 2001, Bruxelles, DeBoeck, p. 24.

R.W.Sperry on split brain<sup>2</sup>, D. Kimura on lateralisation and gender specialization of the brain, G. Edelman on the biology of consciousness<sup>3</sup>, J. Eccles, P.S. Churchland and E. D'Aquili in the field of neurophilosophy, help in the framing of our study on mental signs. Each person being the *topos* (place) of its thinking, the geography of human thinking is a metaphor of biology.

Even if we find out that *mind* is not breathed in the human brain by some external agent or transcendental will, but is the result of neural inter-hemispherical exchanges, it helps us in redefining the terms of metaphysical idealism (Kant) – even those of rationalistic idealism (Descartes) – and in grounding our theory of thinking on a simplified observation of what used to be called the *soul*, a way for the human body to be *with* the mind, a mode of existence of the *thinking body*. Intentionality is not a property of consciousness, but a «type of link relating the interior of a system and what is external to it»<sup>4</sup>.

After the German nihilism of the late nineteenth century (Nietzsche), after the confessed humanism of existentialists distracted in their task of deconstruction by the atrocious wars of the XXth century, after the naive realism of neo-liberalism reconstruction giving birth to egotistic monsters acclaimed as heroes, after the wrath and vengeance of these heroes always thinking they *are* who the mask (*persona*) they wear represents, we can only say that soul and body are modalities of the existing mind.

The epistemological starting point of the present study is that the technical description of the mind by specialists of the brain coincides with the bi-functional symbolic thinking (*dianoia*) studied by Aristotle in the fifth century B.C., and that the mind functions deduced from neurophysiologic experiments or psychological tests relate to the demonstrative function (*apodeiknumi*) and the illustrative function (*apophaino*) described in *Rhetoric*.

Then I was taken by an enthusiastic astonishment. The analytical method we had been using until then had led us to admit and even welcome in the field of analytical thinking a fresh breeze of poetical feeling that had long been hidden in the process of making the myth of scientific objectivity. A semiotic approach allows us to say that not only ideas but also feelings are signs. The soul (*psuchê*) is the most unstable part of the body; thinking makes it go from one state to another, always looking for such and such pleasure through dreams and reflexions. Thus, the study of bi-functional mind producing proof (*pistis*) and opinion (*gnômê*) and that of the bi-hemispheric brain merge into an organic conception of thinking. To consider thinking as the production of signs is to take in account of the body and try to satisfy the holistic mind's need for wholeness; it also implies that we try to understand the functioning of the different "parts" of the brain by looking at the way they specialize in searching a specific and exclusive pleasure: rational

<sup>2</sup> R.W.Sperry (1980), "Mind-brain interaction: Mentalism, yes; dualism, no", in *Neuroscience*, 5, p. 195-206. See also "Hemisphere deconnexion and unity in conscious awareness", in *American Psychologist*, 23, p. 723-733.

<sup>3</sup> G. Edelman (1992), *Bright Air, Brilliant Fire: On the Matter of Mind*, Basic Books, New-York.

<sup>4</sup> Jean-Guy Meunier, 2001: "La représentation en sciences cognitives" in *Cahier du Lanci*, No.2, Automne 2001, <http://www.er.uqam.ca/nobel/philuqam/lanci/cahierslanci/2001-02.pdf>.

grasp for analytical thinking, recognition (*anagnorisis*) for reflexive thinking, dream like ecstasy for imaginative thinking and sexual orgasm for somatic thinking.

One has to imagine the theoretical purity of any concepts. The logical link established between signs such as Peirce's *icons*, *indexes* and *symbols* needs to be illustrated. As it has been shown by Peirce, iconicity is the ground of semiotics; the relation between the production of a conventional sign and the production of a natural sign is necessarily established through a comparative process. What Peirce calls a *firstness* of the sign is precisely the fact that if there were neither distinction nor confusion to be established by the thinking mind between the Object and the Interpretant or *representamen*, there would be no sign. If Semiotics allows us to consider the movements of the soul from a higher stand point than the opposition of subjectivity and objectivity, since it considers the Self and the World as signs, one as a key symbol in the abstracting construction of the Ego, and the other as the undeniable indexicality of the matter present in the World, it also calls for a clear set of laws describing the mind's progress in and out of the brain.

«Everything leads us to believe there is a point in the mind from which life and death, reality and the fantasy, past and future, the communicable and the incommunicable, the high and the low, cease to be perceived in a contradicting manner." (André Breton, 1930, *Second Manifeste du Surréalisme*)

Semiotics of thinking starts there. We overlook the distinction between rational and imaginary thinking in order to describe the whole spectrum of thinking as sign production. The discursive thinking of the left hemisphere of the human brain and the holistic thinking of the right hemisphere must exchange signs, and these *exchanges* are only possible if some symbols (signs of essence) are charged with reference to materiality and some indexes (signs of existence) charged with conceptual references.

I must give homage to Gilbert Durand for the transformation of Gaston Bachelard's symbolic psycho-analysis into anthropology of the imaginary grounded on hermeneutics as well as neuro-physiology. In his book *Les Structures anthropologiques de l'Imaginaire*, he establishes the link between the different modalities (*regimes*) of imagination (imaginative thinking) and the dominant reflexes of the human body, with their derivatives and their adjuvants. The daylight modality of imagination has heroic structures and it is associated with the postural dominant and its manual derivatives and the adjuvant of far fetching senses (sight, audio phonation); the nocturnal modality, for its part, sometimes has antiphastic structures related to the digestive dominant and its coenaesthetic and thermal adjuvants and its tactile, olfactory and gustative derivatives; it can also have dynamic structures relating to the copulative dominant and its rhythmic drive with their sensorial adjuvants (kinesics, musical).<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> Gilbert Durand, *Les Structures anthropologiques de l'Imaginaire*, Paris, Bordas, 1969, p.506.

In *L'Imagination créatrice* (1967), the comparison G.Durand makes between instaurative hermeneutics and reductionist hermeneutics appears today as a fundamental data for the study of mental signs. In *Mythodologie* the links he establishes between myth and history has encouraged my own investigation of history and imaginary time. Even though the succession of mythical ages cannot be verified historically, the logical organisation of myth, the conceptual short-cuts taken by the human mind in producing images, allowed me to consider the grammar of situations (Aristotle's three cases) as a general mythology of the human mind.

«Imagination is an organizing dynamism, and this organizing dynamism is a factor of homogeneity in representation»<sup>6</sup>

G. Durand's work welcomes imaginary solutions, without questioning the supremacy of rationalistic thinking.

I owe to Northrop Frye the setting of a double opposition that of human experience and what he calls innocence and the opposition between realism and what is now called magical thinking, as the backdrop for the study of literary forms and schematizing in art. His book *Anatomy of Criticism* has been for me an important stimulation; the use he makes of themes gives back to imagination its righteous place in the edification of human mind. And since we do not consider the human mind as a building, but as the nervous motor of a vehicle common to all men and women of the human species, the body, we shall work with the concept of complementarity of analytical thinking and holistic thinking.

After the description of mental signs, we shall make an inventory, and this operation will not be possible without C.S.Peirce's categories. We will then have to redefine *iconicity*. A dynamic view of thinking shows how imagination works "into" analytical thinking when concepts made of symbols include emotionally loaded images mainly made of indexes. This kind of thinking "under influence", called reflective thinking, is responsible for myth-making; and any individual provided with brains uses it each time he/she yields to magical thinking without letting go the logical frame of analytical thinking. On the other hand, holistic thinking works "with" discursive thinking; the analytical part of holistic thinking, reasoning right down to the depths of dreams, is what Freud called subconscious.

Once established the functions of the mind which are relations between parts of the bi-lateral machine called the brain, our first semiotic task will be the description of these relations, and since symbols are the only usable signs in the frame of analytical thinking, we shall use the parts of the brain as metaphors of its functions, and so refer to *intra-hemispheric* (in one specific hemisphere) and *inter-hemispheric* (between hemispheres) relations. We shall then call "sign" a neural event and equate the person (a sign) and the thinking (an event). According to the same logic, the unquantifiable parts of the "person" can only be described metaphorically.

---

<sup>6</sup> G. Durand, *SAI*, p.26.

The second task of semiotics of thinking will then be the comparison between the Plato inspired Christian partition of the person (body/soul/mind) and the Freudian partition (Ego/Super-Ego/Id). Semiotics of thinking will then have to establish the laws of mental sign production, the functions of iconicity and indexicality, and define a new kind of logic where the four ways of thinking will be considered, a new mythology based on the comparison of mental activity with human behaviour and an aesthetics in which emotions will be linked to pleasure-seeking rhetoric and catharsis.

## Mental signs

Of all the signs studied by semiotics, the signs produced by thinking, the so-called mental signs have a special status because what they are made of cannot be seen, heard, touched or felt by others. Mental signs are made of neural matter. Thus we make signs for ourselves and we alone can interpret their full content. But as long as an interior dialog between the sender and the receiver of these signs is going on, it is somewhat bodacious to conceive the unity of the person. How indeed can we conceive that the author of our dreams and the maker of our rational concepts is the same *person*? The diversity of sign production in the brain, speech signs or visual and auditory signs raises the question of identity.

As Paul Ricoeur puts it at the beginning of his book about hermeneutics of the self *Soi-même comme un autre*, «Who speaks when I think? ». If a person was a quantifiable thing, if it could be kept inside the boundaries of the body's envelope, the interpretation of dreams would be an easy task. Yet, it often seems difficult to believe that analytical thinking, responsible for the production of concepts, could occupy the same mental space as holistic thinking, responsible on its own part for the productions of images. But, like thinking, the person has a double function: it is a «center of interior life and a source of autonomous actions»<sup>7</sup> The signs produced by thinking testifies to the physical vitality and the psychic integrity of a person.

We know, at least since Locke investigated human thinking, that thinking produces signs. However, it was necessary to wait for the neurophysiologic description of this production to understand that between mind and matter such a distinct opposition as we had previously thought. For one thing, the findings of neurosciences have reinforced Aristotle's view on thinking. In the same way *dianoia* has two functions, one is demonstrative (*apodeiknumi*) since its aim is proof (*pistis*), the other illustrative (*apophainô*), aiming at opinion (*gnômê*), the brain is comprised of two hemispheres, each of which specializes in a certain way of thinking. The discursive thinking aims at reasoning, sometimes through analyzing, sometimes through reflection, and the holistic thinking aims at global feeling, sometimes through imagination, sometimes through subconscious indexes.

---

<sup>7</sup> Jean -Pierre Vernant, p. 38

Neurosciences have changed the way we see ourselves. Thinking is no longer seen as a product of the person, as something belonging to the person who produces it, but as the bi-functional production of the person. Thinking is now considered to be determined by the physical organs that actually produce the mental signs. The bi-hemispherical structure of the brain and the diversity of functions make it impossible to determine what came first. Idealists believe thinking came first and materialists believe brain came first. Semiotics will have to maintain their complementarity as a primal condition of thinking. And since all signs have matter and functions, the main task of the Semiotician will be to maintain a constant relation between the two. Only then can we tackle the pragmatic task of establishing links between signs.

Research on the human brain have revealed the specific function of each one of its parts : the left hemisphere specializes in the elaboration of time sequences, logical and semantic representations, in a word «language»; the right hemisphere specializes in holistic perception of model relations, configurations and structures, and in the production of visual and acoustic signs. Neuroscientists have observed in the *corpus callosum* a network of axons relaying the two hemispheres. With the help of synapses, the language/time specialized hemisphere producing the mainly demonstrative discursive thinking, the left brain, and the space/form specialized hemisphere producing the mainly illustrative holistic mind, the right brain, can communicate. And what do they communicate with, if not mental signs? Signs made of neural matter, some destined to their own hemisphere, and some destined to the other hemisphere.

By combining peircean logic and neuro-physiology, we shall now define thinking as the production of mental signs. As a starting point, we shall use Peirce's own definitions of icons, indexes and symbols.

«An *Icon* is a sign which refers to the Object that it denotes merely by virtue of characters of its own» (2.247), as long as there is likeness or similarity between its qualities and that Object.

«An *Index* is a sign which refers to the Object that it denotes by virtue of being really affected by that Object» (2.248), it is a sign of existence.

«A *Symbol* is a sign which refers to the Object that it denotes by virtue of a law, usually an association of general ideas, which operates to cause a Symbol to be interpreted as referring to that Object. »(2.249).

We shall then define thinking as the production of icons, indexes and symbols. The different combinations of these sorts of signs, in the different «areas» of thinking, separated here for the sake of analysis, will permit us to confront *discursive* thinking, characterized by the production of symbols, and *holistic* thinking, characterized by the production of indexes. But, as we shall see, the complexity of sign production makes it possible for the brains to use icons in order to symbolize indexes or indexicalize symbols. Discursive thinking can thus be referred to as *analytical* thinking, if it aims at producing index-free symbols, or as *reflective* thinking if it lets iconicity work its way in the process of symbolizing indexes.

The existence of neural exchanges between the brain's hemispheres leads us to believe that the signs produced by discursive thinking in an attempt to communicate with holistic thinking are different than the signs produced by the same discursive thinking inside its own left hemisphere. Semiotics of thinking will try to see how the production of symbols, often related to a dominant mental behaviour obsessed by proof and solution, transparency and clarity, is different from the production of indexes often related to a weaker mental behaviour determined by emotional sensitiveness and flexibility, opacity and density. The work of Dr.S.Zeki has helped establish how the different layers of the visual cortex have specialized as they evolved. The fourth layer of the light-decoding brain is specialized in color and form with color.

We shall then set up the opposition between discursive thinking and holistic thinking, but not without considering first the difference between the intra-hemispheric and the inter-hemispheric relations in each one. In discursive thinking, we shall distinguish analytical thinking and reflective thinking. The first is an endogenous system totally impermeable to the signs produced by somatic thinking; the second is an exogenous system working with imaginative thinking. When confronted with an imaginary problem, analytical thinking runs short, but with the help of imaginative thinking and analogical iconicity it can find a solution.

In holistic thinking, on the other hand, we shall distinguish imaginative thinking and somatic thinking; the first is specialized in the indexicalization of symbols and the second, totally indexical, is deprived of any analytical drive. When confronted with a logical problem, holistic thinking has to count on the inter-hemispherical relations of imaginative thinking and its permeability to discursive thinking in order to solve it. That is why someone who lacks rational skills can solve logical problems and someone deprived of imagination can still be moved to tears. In this case, discursive thinking relies on reflective thinking to communicate with imaginative thinking. The incompetence of somatic thinking in symbolic matters can be compensated by an intense activity of imaginative thinking; with the help of iconicity anything can make sense. Any mental index produced by somatic thinking can be processed by inter-hemispheric relations in which the law of iconicity is applied; bright spots can then be compared to stars.

If the mental depths of the human mind are forever foreign to reason, it is due to the incompetence of analytical thinking in indexical matters. But it proved a good thing for psychoanalysts that peripheric zones of somatic thinking, such as dream-related zones, are permeable to symbols. That is why a dream can only be successfully analysed by the dreamer who produced it. Even when the dreamer her (him) self tries to narrate it in details, usual symbols fail to translate the innumerable indexes mentally perceived during the few seconds the dream lasted.

## The index: a sign of existence

«In mouldy hallways he'd stick out his tongue,  
 Clench his fists into his groin  
 And shut his eyes to make himself see spots...»  
*The Seven-year-old Poets*, Arthur Rimbaud

These spots seen by the seven-year-old poet behind shot eyes, that is to say in the interior space of individual consciousness, are signs that remain impossible to translate with symbols. Even a master in the science of signs could not reach an approximate understanding of the "spots".

In the case of an emotion, the thinker can try to describe a physiological situation (a quicker heartbeat), but he/she cannot explain the feeling itself. In the case of a mental index like Peirce's "feeling of red" (2.245), the sign can only be produced once and since it is exclusively related to the circumstances of its production remains non-communicable. If we use the expression "seeing red", it has nothing to do with the production of mental indexes, we link the symbols "red" and "seeing", and the metaphorical use of these symbols will lead us to understand that wrath is involved. The wrathful subject is not seeing the actual colour as a mental index, but on the basis of a shared vocabulary, other thinking persons can understand, by comparison to their own experience of that feeling, how he or she feels. In the case of the interpretation of a dream, if it is not made by the dreamer her(him)self, it is impossible to know anything of the dream itself, there is no "privileged access"<sup>8</sup> to the dreamer's mind; there are only pictorial icons of existential qualities not related to the event of which the memory is a transposition. In that regard, dreams made by animals cannot be very different from those made by infants. As children learn linguistic conventions, the use of signs of essence or symbols is introduced in their dreams; but before that learning process, babies' dreams can only be made of iconic indexes, forms and colours looking like those he or she had perceived, be they intrauterine, when he or she started perceiving.

## The symbol: a sign of essence

Peirce tells us that a symbol is not an individual sign, but rather a true sign, that "any information on a sign is information on each of its replica"(2.315). If indexes have only one occurrence, as we have seen, symbols evolve and grow as they are used. New data can be added and old data taken out. Indexes are signs which qualities can be interpreted; symbols are signs which qualities are accessorially indexical, they can be interpreted by applying conventional laws. The word "door" designates, in English, an opening in a wall. Someone who would not have learned English would only find in the sign the

---

<sup>8</sup> Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, Princeton University Press, 1979.

concatenation of symbols (the letters "d", "o", "o", and "r"), and not the indexes allowing satisfactory interpretation from a personal point of view. On the other hand, the word "mother" or even better "mommy", closer to "mammal", is another set of symbols; but when pronounced, the repetition of the "m" iconically suggests, for who wants to recognize it, the joint activity of the lips in suckling. In such a process of meaning, a conventional sign of essence (the word designating the mother from a child's point of view) is aided by non-symbolic iconic indexes. It is the kind of semiotic relations most poets tend to use.

Signs which can be interpreted by laws, as are most words, don't even have to be uttered to be decoded by the analytical mind. And since there is no law to interpret the dots behind closed eyes or aurora borealis in the northern sky, he or she who sees them can only describe them by comparison.

### **Iconicity: the basic condition of any semiotic process**

« Anything whatever, be it quality, existent individual,  
or law, is an Icon of anything, in so far as it is  
like that thing and used as a sign of it. » (2.247)

For a sign to be interpreted, that is to say for the sign to be linked to its Object, what it is made of related to what it means, certain laws must be applicable, laws based on contiguity, cause and effect or resemblance. The sign produced in the field of application of the law of contiguity or the law of cause and effect are what Peirce call signs of existence or indexes. The signs interpretable under the law of resemblance are icons. But the law of contiguity and the law of resemblance can be simultaneously applied, and this is how the resemblance between two present persons can be recognized. However, in the presence of only one of these two persons, the memory of one of them is a logical icon and this mental sign will then be used as an illustrative support in the symbolizing process of establishing the resemblance.

Symbolization is the mental process by which an apodictic set of signs is produced with the help of a logical icon. Being the ground of any relation between the matter and the Object of the sign, iconicity works as a regulating device for multiple interpretants in the case of mental operations linked to rational grasp, analysis or metaphorical reduction aiming at reducing the interpretation down to the attribution of only one meaning for each sign. The icon is a *logical icon* when it is aided by conventional rules (2.280). Resemblance has a reducing function; it works on recognition and identification, and suspends the course of thinking. The symbol is to thinking what recognition (*anagnorisis*) is to drama, it closes the signifying process.

In the case of mental operations related to imagination, in other words the illustrative drive of interpretation towards the creative opening of holistic thinking, iconicity appears

to work as a multiplying device; it increases the number of interpretants. This kind of icon is not restrained to a univocal syntactical relation; it is open to an abundance of possible semantic relations. We shall call it an *analogical icon*; ignoring the semantic content of its Object, it uses its form.

The law of resemblance is differently applied in discursive thinking and in holistic thinking. In the verifying operations of analytical thinking, resemblance is used to restrain meaning; that is to reduce the number of interpretants of a sign.

### Logical icon

As a sign of essence (2.254), the *rhema* is a sign of qualitative possibilities (2.250), a logical icon, a sign in which resemblance is aided by conventional rules (2.279). Between this kind of sign and its Object there can be established the same kind of relation as between D.N.A. and the person whose genetic code it defines. Logical is a grammatical ground, a kind of sub-sign buried in the syntax of thinking and is used implicitly. A person (animated being) or a thing (inanimate being) is a logical icon. When we use a name (symbol), we join it to the rheme corresponding to the category of persons or to the category of things. Analytical thinking is always trying to determine among all the possible interpretants of a sign which one works best, that is to say which one, being the clearest, allows us to stop the interpretative process. By making iconicity the helping device and convention the helped part of the sign stresses, if only metaphorically, the importance of finality in sets of signs submitted to a temporal sequence.

When recognition crowns the cognitive process, as it is the case in symbolization, metaphorical or cathartic (*anagnorisis* in the theatre) there is a rational grasp. The succession of signs, if it is established according to a temporal factor, inevitably displays a certain amount of violence. G. Durand calls this organization of signs ruled by exclusion, contradiction and identity, the *heroic* structures of imagination. And the human behaviour determined by this selective and exclusive thinking in which the symbol is master and the index servant is what W.Morris calls *dominance*. The use of symbols has then to be preceded by the mastering of certain syntactical signs. To make a symbol, certain indexes must be used, sometimes they are memorized abstractions submitted to an indexicalization process. In other words, if discursive thinking (mainly located in the left hemisphere of the brain) is to keep its control on the general thinking process, the right hemisphere has to be tamed. In an incessant come and go, salvaged symbols indexicalized by holistic thinking are used in myth-making by reflective thinking, or submitted to verification so that their identity may be confirmed by analytical thinking.

As an example of logical icon, Peirce proposes the algebraic formula. He writes first that « It may seem at first glance that it is an arbitral classification to call an algebraic expression an icon», but then goes on saying that it is not so " For a great distinguishing of the icon is that by the direct observation of it other truths concerning its object can be discovered.» (2.279). The human qualities attributed to a person by analytical thinking are not part of the logical icon "person", their attribution is aided by the illustrative function of

the imaginative mind. But then how is the memory we have of things and persons transmitted from the somatic thinking to the analytical thinking? The skeleton-like logical icon is covered with a symbolic coat. As it is an illustrative sign, a kind of image in the simplest form, the logical icon, enters in the composition of a concept when used by discursive thinking.

One of the first symbols produced by an infant's brain is certainly the word "mamma"; in any case the first it had been thought. Symbolization of the comforting experience of the "other" is not possible if the mother has not been identified as an animated being. Among the objects the baby's vision and audition can recognize, there must be a distinction between animated and inanimate beings. The logical icon is used by reflective thinking (introspective ipseity) as a signpost that contains the somatic thinking's constant flow of indexical interpretants without the control of consciousness. When we think of a person, we assume this animated being can think (whatever the level of the thinking: reflective, conceptual, imaginative or somatic) and act (whatever the degree of autonomy), and that all inanimate beings cannot. We shall see later how the absence of verification becomes a suitable ground for myth-making. For now, we only need to consider verification as a basic operation of analytical mental activity in which logical icon is used as a grammatical gage for possible interpretants.

The concept of a person (centre/source)<sup>9</sup> is elaborated on the basis of an illustrative support, the logical icon "person". By comparing interpretants, analytical thinking eliminates those who do not relate to the grammatical ground. Since the logical icon is a sign of firstness resembling the object we are accustomed to relate to this sign in the presence of such and such conditions, we shall use it to make symbolizations when an interlocutor will seem to have a living interiority (consciousness) and be able to act by her/him self; he/she will then be used to make a symbolization. Personification is a symbolization using the logical icon "person".

### **Analogical icon**

The kind of sign Peirce calls ideograph (2.280) and makes sure to call it non-logical is not a conventional sign, as would be any sign with a syntactic or semantic function; it is a pictorial sign. It may come from the somatic thinking's non-stop flow, and its production is not ruled by conventions. It can also be the result of the imaginative thinking's mental operations located in the right hemisphere of the brain (association area). The memory of perceived things or lived events, often decomposed by selective memory, is also an analogical icon. In this kind of sign, resemblance is aided by the emotional impact of imaginative thinking rather than conventional rules. And this kind of icon helps one to see a mimetic copy of an absent reality, and «becomes a considerable part of the idea it excites» (2.354).

---

<sup>9</sup> C.f. J.-P. Vernant, «Catégories de l'agent et de l'action en Grèce ancienne », in *Religions, histoires, raisons*, Paris, Petite Collection Maspero, 1979, pp. 85-95.

In the realm of images, where the index is king, analogical icon is the entrance gate through which symbols seep in. Since imaginative thinking combines the use of symbols and indexes, the scouts of analytical thinking sneak in such a dream-like sign-production as Theseus has done in the Labyrinth. Taking up the task of naming the unnameable and enumerate the indivisible, they venture into the depths of somatic thinking and try to impose a symbolic grid on the production of non-symbolic indexes.

Since there is in discursive thinking an intra-hemispheric relation where no index is involved (analytical thinking) and an inter-hemispheric relation in which an iconic index can be linked with symbols (reflective thinking), we assume that there is in the right hemisphere's holistic thinking, an intra-hemispheric relation in which no symbol takes part (somatic thinking) and an inter-hemispheric relation in which symbols and indexes work together (imaginative thinking).

Imaginative thinking produces what Aristotle calls opinion (*gnômê*), an idea that is not necessarily based on a concept, but that can be emotionally charged and involve the whole person. The analogical icon is used here as a catalyst. Among the indexes produced by somatic thinking, imaginative chooses those who, by association, can help symbols play a secondary role in holistic thinking. Resemblance is not used in a negative and discriminatory way, as it is used in the series of comparisons preceding the acknowledgment of essential difference in rational grasp; it is a positive resemblance that doesn't include going back to stocked knowledge, like the logical icon does, but helps holistic thinking in its leap towards the unknown. With the help of analogical icon, imaginative thinking creates from invisible and abstract concepts something visible to the mental eye. That is what we do when we play at seeing acknowledgeable forms in clouds. A cloudy bump seen by one viewer as a nose can be seen as a head by another viewer. There is no law ruling here. Holistic thinking doesn't use symbols but icons of symbols treated as indexes. Reflective thinking compares these indexes (the clouds) and the memory of certain forms perceived, and this allows analytical thinking to grasp the icon of that memory and designate the cloud by a name.

### **Sets of mental signs**

These exchanges between discursive thinking (reflective or analytical) of the left hemisphere and holistic thinking (imaginative or somatic) of the right hemisphere are only possible if the symbol is somehow referable to matter, and if the index can be turned into a concept. For example, the word "man" as a sign does not possess any of its Object qualities; therefore no resemblance links the two. On the other hand, the Chinese calligraphic sign used to mean "man" has a higher degree of iconicity; the trunk and arms of a man are recognizable in the few strokes the sign is made of.

Sets of signs are differently assembled whether the demonstrative function or the illustrative function is dominant. In the conceptual sets of signs produced by discursive thinking, the demonstrative function is clearly dominant. In other words, whereas the analytical activity of the mind is constitutive of such a process because the making of

concepts necessarily involves the symbolization of a logical icon, the reflective activity is contributive, it gives an illustrative support to mental demonstration. As for imaginative thinking, it indexicalizes symbols borrowed from discursive thinking and uses them as a demonstrative support.

## Concepts

« We think only in signs.  
These mental signs are of mixed nature;  
the symbol-parts of them are called concepts. » (2.302)

The concepts produced by analytical thinking are obtained by adding symbols to a rhematic basis. We can therefore talk of conceptual sets of signs in which both symbols and logical icons are used, and where the demonstrative function of the mind is stressed and the illustrative function is used as an aide. Let us take for example the concept of "divinity". How is it different from the myth of a divinity's existence or the image of God? The composition of the concept shows a symbolic dominant; by convention, all that is divine is not mortal, the Gods have greater powers than the most powerful mortals. Thus, the signs composing the image of a divinity are mostly indexical: God the Father's beard, Mercury's feet wings, etc. As for the sets of signs used in the making of a myth, in this case that of a divinity's existence, they involve both symbols and indexes: personification is a metaphorical symbolization allowing imaginative thinking to see the divinity as it were a person. Analytical thinking may compare symbols; the intellectual pleasure obtained by such definition does not have the power to trigger the global bond (intellect + emotion) of the individual thinking subject. And since the making of concepts is a mental operation associating symbols in order to limit interpretation, the cold pleasure of proof-making only satisfies analytical thinking. Certain conventional abstractions such as "divine" and "mortal" have to be learned first. On the other hand, the warm pleasure obtained by having an opinion involves the whole person. In this case, the personification helps imaginative thinking in the visualization of the divinity and permits the production of the myth of the divinity's existence by analytical thinking.

## Images

Before we can consider image-making as a mental activity (*eidôlôpoiikê*) that would not be subordinated to imitative activity (*mimêtikê*) of the human brain, the image itself has to be considered, and it is not easily seized. As long as we have a platonic conception of it pure intellectual thinking, deprived of any link with the lower part of the body in which passions and desires roam, the image remains surrounded by fog,. For Plato imitation is common to all figurative and representative activity, and an image that would not be an imitation of something does not exist. In fact, phantasia, as it is called by Plato,

is the part of thinking which gives a spontaneous assent to the appearance of things, and as long as images have been kept under the level of consciousness considered pure thinking, psycho semiotics has not been able to study the part of thinking specialized in indexes. Images could not be seized by the rational means of discursive thinking until psycho semiotics, by stressing the dynamics of thinking, had identified permeable "zones" of thinking where inter-hemispheric relations occur. In these zones, discursive thinking makes use of signs "exogenous" to its type of activity, such as indexes in a mainly demonstrative discourse, and symbols in holistic thinking.

Analytical thinking, before it can have a rational grasp on anything, must translate to symbols some neural and emotional data picked up by reflective thinking. In other words, when trying to explain something, one must think with words. And mental calculation could not be done without the use of numbers. But a mathematical problem uses both numbers (symbols) and indexical images. I have a kilo of butter, I take 200 grams to make a cake and put 150 grams in the butter dish. How much do I have left? The same problem could be solved using margarine instead of butter. It would not change anything in the mathematical demonstration, but it would trigger different images and feelings in the holistic mind. What represents by convention is secondary in the field of illustration; symbols are translated to indexes or indexicalized by imaginative thinking. Whereas symbols play a major role in the centers of language indispensable to discursive thinking and located in the left hemisphere of the human brain, they play a minor role in holistic thinking. Indexes play a major role in the centres of envisioning located in the right hemisphere of the brain and a minor role in discursive thinking.

When one wants to see, one *must* make images. But one is free to use images in a rational demonstration or any analytical process of discursive thinking. With the help of inter-hemispheric relations, symbols can be indexicalized and used in the mainly illustrative field of holistic thinking, as indexes can be symbolized and used in the mainly demonstrative field of discursive thinking.

Let us examine a few sets of signs jointly assembled by reflective and imaginative thinking. Symbols produced by analytical thinking (an intra-hemispherical relation) are indexicalized. As a teenager I dreamt I had a hard time reintegrating the letter A. Knees to my forehead and elbows to my ankles I could not fit in the triangle formed by the top part of the letter. My holistic thinking was indexicalizing the symbol A, giving it a real feeling and a genuine sense of materiality.

When we represent God with a white beard, we do the same. In Aristotle's words, indexicalization gives an apophantic or illustrative function to an apodictic or demonstrative sign. In Peirce's words, it is to add a sign of existence to a previously established sign of essence. Only after discursive thinking had personified what was sensed as the cause of all being and of the world's existence, can imaginative thinking take on the task of allegorical illustration. Myth of the world's origin precedes the allegory of a celestial old age father with a long white beard.

Phantasm is a set of mental signs with an illustrative function; it can move consciousness and paralyze analytical thinking. With the use of phantasm, reflective

thinking cast off the yoke of analytical thinking and engages in a cooperative "effort" with imaginative thinking. The link between the imaginary indexicalization of symbols and the physical production of feelings is not a symbolic link, because iconicity is not aided therein by conventional rules, it is aided by natural laws. For dreams to come true, or even just to look and feel true, the world must resemble the idea we had of it before dreaming. Liberated from the stranglehold of symbols, holistic thinking can give in to the material in-stasis of somatic thinking; the production of mental signs is then entirely indexical.

A phantasm or anything envisioned in the right hemisphere of the brain can only be present in the world through the self-consciousness of one thinker. That is the core of metaphysics! And of sexuality! A phantasm is an incomplete image of wholeness designed to move self-consciousness into body action. It only comes to imaginative thinking when the analytical urge of discursive thinking has been put to sleep. Suspension of disbelief is not only a theatrical behaviour; it is also the semiotic context of the mental production of a phantasm.

We know an image is built from bits of memorized indexes, and that since these indexes had to be translated into symbols, we might be fooled or led astray. But if the phantasm is an allegorical personification, as it is the case for the bearded god, it appears on the stage of the mind as a real person whose power the thinker may pleasantly yield to.

## **Symbolization**

Symbolization is an aggression. Indeed, to abstract with the help of memory and reflection the essence of a sign, to establish firmly the meaning of the sign with the help of conventional rules, to set the standards for the ideal representation of the material existence of what the sign represents, is to force the Object of a sign into a univocal relation with symbols and hinder somehow the veracity of the real event. By limiting the number of interpretants, symbolization contrives representation and keeps it within the narrowing range of demonstration. And this selective violence of analytical thinking, this in-bred cruelty of the reasoning process is balanced by an unlimited indexicalization taking place in the left hemisphere of the brain. When images invade reflective thinking, the demonstrative function of analytical thinking is contaminated, the left hemisphere of the brain cannot reach its goal, and in such a semiosis (production of signs) there is no more rational grasp to be had. In this particular kind of semiosis, discursive thinking takes a shortcut to avoid verification; a process generally performed by analytical thinking, and gets directly to the production of a mental image of globalist called a myth. To counter-balance this production, imaginative thinking takes on the indexicalization of the symbols used therein.

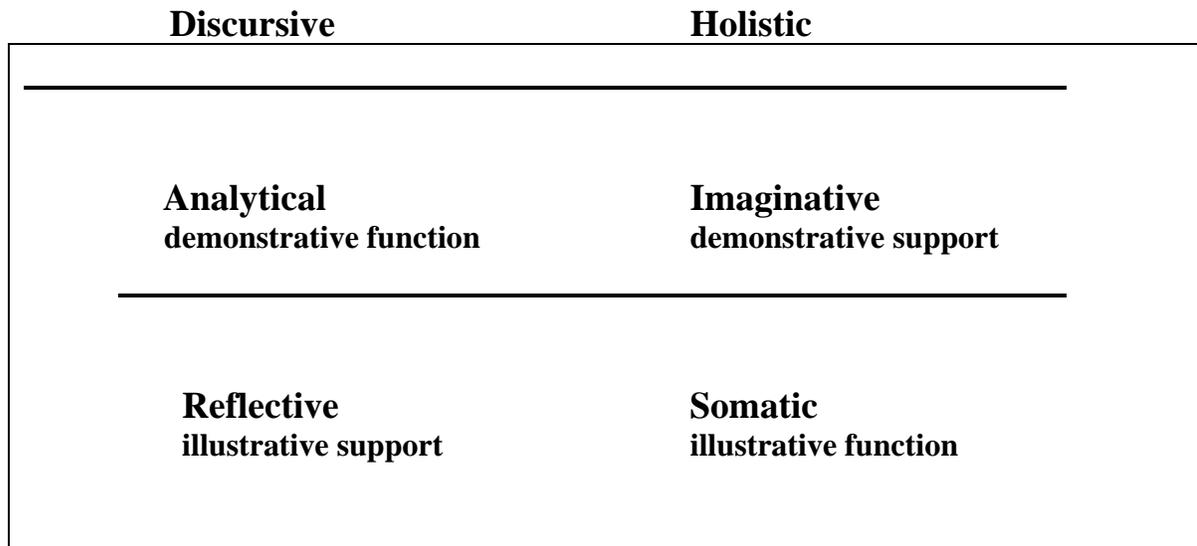
From a neurologic point of view, symbolization is the result of cooperative mental activity in specific areas of the brain (left parietal lobe, hypothalamus, neocortex). Indexicalization, on the other hand, is the result of mental activity mainly located in the right hemisphere of the human brain (the orientation association area, the emotional value operator and the existential operator).

## **Indexicalization**

The scientific description of the mental operations of symbolization seems to have a great deal of discursive homogeneity, since the description itself is a copy of its model. The theoretical frame of semiotics, especially when it deals with thinking, restrains any utterance to a conceptual and symbolic dimension. As long as we have to describe operations related to the production of language, we do it in symbolic terms, in other words analytical thinking only produces symbols; but when we try to describe the operations taking place in holistic thinking (imaginative and/or somatic), our "tools" prove unsatisfactory. Freud or Einstein weren't the last ones to use images as a convincing device in the field (intra-hemispheric relations) of analytical thinking. Anyone trying to make a point has to rely on the use of images. On the other hand, a theoretical view of dreams couldn't be anything but a heterogeneous utterance, since it would have to translate indexes produced by holistic thinking into symbols for the use of discursive thinking. And because the dreamer as a person of unified consciousness is the only one *present* at the mental event, the thinker her/himself as subject (Id + Ego +Super Ego= Self) remains the sole valid interpreter of the dream.

In the process of indexicalization holistic thinking takes over some concepts produced by discursive thinking, not so much complex sets of signs but isolated often relocated symbols. Imaginative thinking use some symbols displayed by reflective thinking while analytical thinking is asleep and this is why bits of coherent reasoning can be found in the deepest dream. Since the demonstrative function is not dominant in holistic thinking, concepts may be twisted around; the law of causality is the only one providing. The usual meaning of a word can be distorted; the conventional link to its Object can be forgotten. The word itself can become an index, and as such an agent of the propagation of interpretants. As undifferentiated individuals, we let them get lost in the forest or forgotten in the ever flowing somatic of Oblivion.

## Thinking

**Thinking and ideology**

Semiotics consider thinking as a production of signs, but inasmuch as semiosis proves to be a general process or set of operations in the human brain, certain differences have to be taken in account whether the thinker is an individual, whose thoughts and feelings are grounded in the biochemistry of the brain, or a group. In this case, collective thinking or ideology cannot be considered as neural dynamics; it does not produce indexes and can only be viewed and studied as a purely symbolic system. One of the tasks of semiotics of thinking will have to be the differentiation of intimate thinking and the various systems named after the persons who have conceived them. When I refer to the thoughts of Plato, of course I do not get to know anything about the indexes taking place in the philosopher's brains, but since some of these thoughts have been written, I can use them as symbols in any mental activity related to the demonstrative function of discursive thinking. As symbolizations apodictic sets of signs can be deconstructed and reconstructed. Thus, from a semiotic point of view, the difference between Plato's thinking and Platonism is that one is a mental event in which inter-hemispheric relations occur and the other a set of symbols restricted to the use of discursive thinking. And to know anything about the philosopher's thinking in relation with the emotional context of its occurrence, we have to use iconic projections of our own individual thinking.

Talking of thinking as brain mechanics and no longer as a gift of God is certainly a realistic statement, as we now take in account the material reality of the conceptual elaboration of thoughts and ideas; but as long as the durability of unified consciousness is maintained, be it constructed or given, such a realistic statement still carries on an idealistic view. Systems cannot be capsulated in any one concept; Aristotle was a realist

with an idealistic background and Plato an idealist with a realistic purpose. In order to learn from these philosophers thinking, we have opposed their systems, and to have a clear view of this opposition we have turned it into an image, that of two men fighting one against the other. The main difference between Platonism and aristotelism is, as we will see later on, one works with the myth of complementarity as the central core of mental activity in the individuals involved, and the other with the myth of originality. The history of the western world's ideologies constantly opposes the realistic understanding of human life, in which truths are the only valid results of analytical thinking, and the idealistic vision in which myths and images weigh more than concepts. As a way of thinking Mythology shall be approached as a joint venture of the human mind in which the control of emotions necessary to analytical thinking and the diffusion of meaning unavoidable in holistic thinking work "hand in hand".

In individual thoughts the use opposition between realism and idealism makes place for images, without the use of indexes (signs of existence) the Self cannot find its own ideology. And this takes us to the necessarily collaborative inter-hemispheric relations in what refers to the construction of the Subject. Whatever the identity of the mental speaker, we use words. If we hear them as if they were uttered by voices inside the brain, holistic thinking takes part in the process. But even though the demonstrative function of thinking has been located by neuroscientific experiments in the left hemisphere of the human brain, these words heard while thinking appear as indexes, icons of memorized symbols stripped of their original indexical context.

Thus, *discursive* thinking produces exclusively symbolic sets of signs, and we shall call *analytical* thinking the intra-hemispheric relations in which the illustrative function and the production of indexes, being of no use, are set aside. Rational grasp is the finality of such thinking and *symbolization* its main operation. And since it produces only signs of essence, analytical thinking becomes the model of true statements in societies where *dominance* is a valued behaviour. But discursive thinking does not always achieve rational grasp; sometimes it must produce memorial indexes to find its way towards relative rationality.

The part of discursive thinking not designed for the rational grasp of something abstract, but for self-consciousness and the construction of self as part of the world, has an existential purpose. Reflective thinking submits both symbols and indexes to iconicity, whether logical or analogical. The words heard in the thinking mind have sometimes such a resemblance to those uttered in real life that they are mistaken for them. We shall then refer to this part of discursive thinking as reflective thinking. The process of symbolization remains the main set of operations, and a sense of rationality; but unlike the sets of symbols assembled by analytical thinking, the sets of signs produced by reflective thinking deals with mental indexes and memorized feelings. It can easily drift into irrational daydream.

To get the feelings necessary to a cathartic reenforcement of the Self, sometimes a transformation or even a bettering of the person taking part in the representation reflective thinking has to use certain strategies allowing emotions in the field of concepts;

suspension of disbelief is one of them. Being there is not enough to talk of participation! One has to play the game. Another strategy of reflective thinking is to lure discursive thinking into myth. By avoiding verification and trespassing the checkpoints of analytical thinking, the thinker is led to take fiction for reality.

These two types of behaviour evolve into ways of thinking called ideologies: idealism and realism. One sets as truth the existence of fictive being; the other is led to proclaim the non-existence of any being that cannot be touched, heard or seen. When thinking someone trained in an ideology built on rationality will tend to stay away from images, and not rely on the illustrative function of the brain. The idealism of the French Encyclopaedists is still stained with the naive realism of Renaissance, as scientist these philosophers (Diderot, Rousseau, Voltaire etc.) knew very well and acknowledged the fact that there are limits to the rationalistic investigation. Nonetheless they focused on immanence and man's condition as social animal. In other words, they kept alive the cult of the perfectly transparent symbol. There was no need to destroy the notion of "God" as "thinker" of the world, the Supreme Being or the great clockmaker.

Their German neighbours (Kant, Hegel etc.) preferred the exploration of outer-limits and they tackled with the unnameable. Boldly fencing the indexical void of classical epistemology, their thinking gave birth to an ideology one could call metaphysical idealism. It still uses concepts, but it endows certain images with meaning and tends to disregard the analytical power of reason. The ground was ready for Schopenhauer to open the door to Buddhism, and for Nietzsche to find out God was dead.

We may call morbid the kind of materialism elaborated in the aftermath of divine bliss. Disillusion is the natural outcome of romance. Anarchists and negators of all symbols, Nihilists and Dadaists included, they all rejected authority. And they could not tolerate the double talk of iconicity. In that sense, they differ from the naive realists with their optimistic view, the safety-seeking believers of Liberalism.

Optimist materialism is another broadly used ideology; it is based on reflective thinking, and its principal sign is the logical icon. It induces what W.Morris has pinned as dependant behaviour. On the contrary, an ideology based on the images and indexes of somatic thinking, avoiding the duplicity of iconology and the rigidity of symbols, tend to lead to detachment behaviour.

### **Discursive thinking**

Each hemisphere, as it has been largely documented, plays a specific role in the general process of thinking: intra-hemispheric relations of the left hemisphere are specialized in symbols; the production of signs of essence and logical icons satisfies the demonstrative urge of the brain. The illustrative urge relies much more on the production of indexes and analogical icons in the right hemisphere specialized in images. As for inter-hemispheric relations, they compensate the bi-polarizing power of the two areas of intra-hemispheric relations, analytical and somatic.

The achievement of a demonstration depends on the order in which the arguments are put together. And when discursive thinking wants to achieve rational grasp, this order is a must. In a dream, there might be a time sequence, but this kind of one-centered, rational and restrictive order is not in use. The mental operations of holistic thinking seem to overlook verbal signs and prefer the visual. Unfortunately, we are still in need of accurate tools for the description of holistic thinking, especially the intra-hemispheric flow of indexes, and our epistemology being most entirely made of symbols, we are still in the babbling.

### **Reflective thinking**

Since words are mostly symbols, when we think with words, it is not the actual word but an icon of it. Especially if one hear words not uttered by her/his own voice. These words heard in the mind are icons of their utterance. One hears them mentally; He/She knows the "persons" "speaking" are not there and that no phonation occurs. In such a case, our mind gives an indexical support to symbolization. Neuroscientists still have to establish what part of this neural event is fuelled by the creative urge to achieve analysis by imitation, and what part comes from the depths of memory.

When the left hemisphere is called upon for the solving of a material problem, discursive thinking must put to work its secondary function located near the tracks, close to outer limits, where no prescribed time sequence provide. We could say that reflective thinking is the imaginative part of discursive thinking. For example, if he/she was to teach someone trapeze or figure skating, a coach that does not have the physical experience of such things has to choose the words very carefully. In these cases, pure analytical thinking is not as efficient as reflective thinking, open on the mental activity of the right hemisphere

### **Naïve realism**

« Penser, imaginer, rêver, c'est ainsi jouer  
avec des marques présentes de rapports  
vifs à l'expérience »<sup>10</sup>

The type of ideology based on reflective thinking is naive realism; it uses iconocity as a restrictive or logic link between the speaking person and the thinking mind. To a certain extent, the thinking is the person. Common sense, being more of a feeling than a series of demonstration, urges us to go along with the resemblance between one human being and another, to reflect the overpowering effect of human nature's homogeneity. The icon "human being" is used as an illustrative support to the demonstrative link between person and mind. Such a realist view of the world, tainted with optimism (idealism), has been adopted by Montaigne or Rousseau, two philosophers who enjoyed meditative

---

<sup>10</sup> Pierre Gravel, *D'un miroir et de quelques éclats*, Montréal, l'Hexagone, coll. Positions philosophiques, 1985, p.32.

walks and valued common sense. Hume's elaboration of ideas from impressions is another philosophical stand typical of optimistic materialism or naive realism. The Cartesian cogito is replaced by a necessary connexion to experience.

### **Analytical thinking**

Analytical thinking works on a dualistic basis; to get the real or true meaning of a sign there is no better way than compare them, as couples of opponents examined through the narrowing device of logical iconicity. Symbolical standards, memories and feelings are thus compared, in search of truth...or just for fun. In a world where analytical thinking is seen as the only legitimate thinking, imaginative thinking is doomed to condescension and rejected in the darkness of the non-symbolical. In this kind of thinking, the mental becomes the opposite of the physical. By abstraction (symbolization) the mind becomes the enemy or ruler of the body. And that other part of the thinking mind, the third area, traditionally called the Soul, squeezed between the opponents on the field of their comparison, seems to have the power to convince the Mind to materialize by the means of word-uttering, and the Soul, as we know, has the power to lift the body...if only in dreams. Therefore every abstractive project of the mind must ignore the somatic influx and the imaginative urge of holistic thinking. In a dualistic view, as is necessary to the utterance of a truth, the soul has to be silent. It has no place to be.

Analytical thinking's first operation is verification, and then the path is clear for symbolization. If it cannot achieve verification, the symbolization process may be aided by the will to believe, and the discursive thinking engaged in myth-making. Any dogmatic effort of that kind has a tendency to limit the number of valid interpretants; to achieve rational grasp the *rationalistic idealist* has to avoid double-meaning.

To describe analytical thinking, let us only say it is well represented by a sharp cutting instrument. G. Durand presents such imaginary behaviour of the day regime as diaïretical structures. Too much of it leads to the obsessive search of unicity and truth as the ultimate meaning. To declare "I believe in God as One and All", one has to lie about certain contradictions. If God is everything, It has to be Evil too; unless Evil exists as another God, as powerful as the good one.

### **Rationalistic idealism**

Under the rule of reason, reflective thinking can only be used as an illustrative support. An ideology based on such an exclusive mental behaviour uses the logical icon "self" as the key sign in the symbolization process. Self-consciousness becomes a model for the personification of God. It is a very demanding philosophical stand. Any dominant behaviour is the result of conquering one's independence and claiming one's autonomy, and is as such aided by dependence acting as a victimized support. Someone fighting against Her/his self in order to attain control still has to do with dependant behaviour. But the contributive mental behaviour to dominant reasoning doesn't have to be dependence;

it can be detachment. Liberated from the rule of "one track mind", open minded rationalist tend to yield to a more imaginative view of the world (*Weltanschauung*) and try to elaborate, as Kant did, an ideology we shall call metaphysical idealism.

### **Holistic thinking**

The left hemisphere of the human brain seems to be clumsy with signs of existence, and sometimes have a hard time coping with analogical iconicity. But in the field of visualisation and illustration, the right hemisphere, the mind tends to avoid symbols. In dreams, for instance, holistic thinking makes a heterogeneous use of symbols. Conventions, if they are used in anyone intimate mental visualization, may well be twisted or distorted. Only the dreamer her/himself holds the key of the one true interpretation, and experience remains fundamental. Hence, in the field of holistic thinking, even the reinforcement of a law is uncertain. The homogenous relation between the human body and the material world triggers the production of indexes. The demonstrative urge of human thinking is given a second role, and the illustrative function is in charge.

### **Somatic thinking**

For a very long time, the use of the word "thinking" has been exclusively attributed to the activity of the discursive mind, but where thinking is seen as sign production, the holistic mind also thinks, only in a different way, by producing a kind of interior cinema made of iconic symbols and non-symbolic indexes. This part of the mind referring to the Freudian Id or what we call somatic thinking, the free flowing indexical sign-production of the right hemisphere, temporarily forgets as it goes along. If it is not fed by discursive thinking's symbolic influx, it flows like a river of Oblivion, until the heroic Ego conquers the memory of what had been forgotten.

Seeing the colour red in one's mind, Peirce's qualisign, is the result of an intra-hemispherical relation, a special neural activity of the right hemisphere producing a mental image, even before the child has learned to name it "red". By using the symbol "red", we give in to the analytical urge of discursive thinking, an inter-hemispheric relation is established between the image made of neural indexes and the concept of the colour red made of the logical icon "colour" and of the symbolization of the sensuous experiment of a certain chromatic vibration, the memory of an event when the subject as a conscious person met the bright light she/he has learned to name red.

In the field of ideology, the rawest realism (cynism, nihilism, morbid existentialism) is the realm of the index. There is no symbol to be trusted. Philosophers like Nietzsche or Husserl have to deal with the sole substance of the world; their work is an attempt to think with the body, and not against it. Since we assume it is true that a sign is always made for someone, a god or an animal, for whom is somatic thinking producing indexes? In every day vocabulary, one would say the body gives the soul the substance

or matter of the images produced by the holistic thinking. In psychological terms, it would be said the Id gives the Self and the Super-Ego the indexical substance of their conception. The index is charged with iconicity to limit in symbolization or proliferation the number of interpretants.

### **Morbid materialism**

What is negated by nihilists and assaulted by all kinds of negators is never the material reality itself, but heaviness as a symbolic rendering of human condition. Their path inevitably starts where the unavoidable has been taken in account. And symbols are of no use for such philosophers; they even deny the authority of the symbol as the highest sign. An ideology setting the production of indexes as its model has to let go of symbols and traditional meaning bonds; but a total void of symbolic links makes it almost impossible to describe this very deceitful background of the least self-enhancing of all ideologies, pessimism or morbid realism.

The kind of behaviour related to such a way of thinking is what W. Morris would call detachment; it can be helped by self control, not as a fight against one's self as it is for rationalistic idealists, but as the first condition of self enjoyment. The kind of actions taking part in this type of behaviour is self-centered. Symbols are crushed by the omnipotent and ever flowing indexes. After God has become everything (or Nature), humans shouldn't need distinctive notions of body and mind. And if ever a student of classical texts wants to translate *noos* or *psuchê*, and their derivatives, they would have to do it in a scientific way. The absence of Spirit and Soul would have to be compensated by a more global approach. And not only Aristotle's mechanical functioning of *dianoia* is rediscovered through the semiotic description of thinking, but also the power of image-making and the silent fervour of the thinking body. Instead of a horseman (Spirit) mastering two horses (Soul and Body), modern man is seen a man without qualities (Musil), a no-name or no-future. Materialists refuse envizionement, but on the horizon of the one-lined landscape they present, one can guess a return of symbolic links. And to suggest as model of the human being the motorized machine or the computer will necessarily come as the answer to such pessimism.

But History took its toll. In a civilisation built around a monotheistic religious belief, one would think to find a clear concept of God. But all we find are images, often made of contradicting signs. The metaphoric substitution of a term for another, as well as the mental focus on the new term is a mental set of operations well adapted to myth-making. And since the separation of the mind and its somatic container is in fact impossible, it can only be dealt with as a non-verified truth. Mythology is then to holistic thinking what psychology is to discursive thinking, a way for each separate hemisphere to use signs or functions of the other side or the other kind without interfering in the natural course of intra-hemispheric activity. Mythology is a strategy taken by discursive thinking to avoid verification (analytical thinking), it necessarily involves reflective thinking and its imaginative collaborator engaged in inter-hemispheric relation. Psychology, on the other

hand, is a strategy taken by holistic thinking to avoid proliferation and dispersion of imaginary nowhere (somatic thinking), it necessarily involves imaginative thinking and its reflective collaborator.

### **Imaginative thinking**

Important parts of the right hemisphere's mental activity are the inter-hemispheric relations. Even though the great majority of images produced by holistic thinking are left to waste and forgotten, especially the indexes of dreams, a certain number of indexes have to be saved from oblivion, if the holistic mind is ever to transfer to the reflective mind images chosen to become logical icons.

What we call imagination, is that part of thinking busy with the production of sets of signs, in which the illustrative function of the holistic mind is the leading force. It is activated as soon as the analytical thinking's verifying control is shut down; when indexicalization needs to be performed. Everyday language can occur in dreams, and one can have valuable ideas, even from an analytical point of view. Where the semantic contract has every chance to be out of use, symbols may well become indexes. In the inter-hemispherical zone, imaginative thinking is used as a demonstrative support to the generally illustrative sign production of the holistic mind.

### **Metaphysical idealism**

Idealism is an ideology based on the superiority of the image, as a safer set of signs than the concept, if only by intuition of the exhaustion of all concepts. This way of thinking deals with signs comparable to Plato's *eidôlon*, a kind of image resembling something irremediably absent<sup>11</sup>. For a metaphysical idealist, only dreams tell the truth. Rationality, if not totally excluded, is used as a means to achieve global vision. But faith or any other non-rational yielding of the Self towards the other cannot be analyzed without betraying its holistic nature. How can the lover of God explain her/his enthusiastic opinion with conventional symbols?

The different philosophical systems elaborated on the grounds of this type of ideology use the analogical icon as their main sign; they insist on the "unnameability" of that fulfilling or complementary other they set above everything else, be it a transcendental being or an idol, and by doing this they avoid the traps of rationalization (myth) and prefer allegory, as did Plato. We know that human condition is not life in a cavern, but we play the game in order to believe in the "real" world our imagination has created. Since allegory is a strategy taken by the imaginative mind to trick holistic thinking into symbolization, we can say that any metaphysical idealist uses non-symbolic images (nature) in the rationalistic frame of meaning, inasmuch as they allow her/him to illustrate an inner vision. The type of behaviour attached to such thinking is dominant and

---

<sup>11</sup> Jean-Pierre Vernant, *Religions, histoires, raisons*, Paris, Maspero, 1979, p.117.

detached, but free from dependence and consumption. Detachment and self-reliability help us attain such self-control. There is no platonic love possible without the tragic withdrawal of the Self.

### **Psycho semiotics**

Thinking involves different functions of the human brain. The difference between these functions tends to trick us into believing different entities are at work in the mind. But we do not let go easily of the unifying image of the Self, and we generally prefer to think of the demonstrative function and the illustrative function as modes rather than independent entities. A person, as a semiotic construction, is first an undividable *topos*, on top of which flourish the numerous symbolical ramifications constituting a personality.

For one who believe in the unity of personality, the use of symbol (unity) as index (animated body), is a natural thing. He or she does not even question the validity of such an objective truth, logical verification is avoided and a myth is created. In fact, even though we can see a person as one, nothing can prove the unicity of its mental activity. We are drawn, by convention, to assume that the different functions of the thinking brain are related to the same subject/object (mind /body), sometimes consciously sometimes unconsciously used. What we call a person is a double-bound set of signs, an intricate device allowing us to have self-consciousness and to be, simultaneously aware of the world around us.

It is clear to see how semiotics of thinking questions the exclusive conception of identity (*idem*) and welcomes the inclusive conception (*ipse*) described by Paul Ricoeur in *Soi-même comme un autre*, which implies no assertion concerning the alleged non-changing core of personality.<sup>12</sup> The materialistic view of the world leads to pragmatism, and in the field of human psychology the different parts of a "person" are no longer seen as more or less autonomous entities (mind/body/soul; Ego/Super-Ego/Id), but as multi-functional mental activity. Modern hermeneutics and philosophy of language have led the way; we shall then define the self or ipseity of the person as the result of a non-symbolic iconic indexicalization performed by reflective thinking.

I am what I *fell* in myself.

### **The Ego: a symbol**

Freud has defined the Ego as the fraction of the mind. One fraction or part controls voluntary movements and another assures self-conservation in an ever-changing environment. The Ego has a defensive function. In order to prevent the invasion of incontrollable pulses of the Self (the non-constructed part of the *psyche*, a vital energy giving a feeling of existence), it keeps to it-self the love and hate objects designated by

---

<sup>12</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *Soi-même comme un autre*, Paris, Seuil, 1990, p.23.

the conservative and the destructive instincts. And then, using a cortical area of the brain equipped with arousal capturing organs and protection devices, the Ego acts against the Id. But the Self watches over these actions as it is related to cosmic energy. Like a child reassured by its parent's eyes, the Ego is tamed by reflective thinking, a kind of discursive thinking open to the inputs of somatic thinking and not yet controlled by analytical thinking.

### **The Self: a logical icon**

The Self is the living part of the individual person, a part common to all human beings. As a function it allows the brain to reflect and nourishes the analytical mind with impressions, memories of sensations, becoming symbols in the course of the abstractive process through which iconicity is helped by conventional laws. And since the essence of the Self can only be known through the use of symbols, any spiritual presence, even one's own, has to be translated into undeniable signs, if it is to be rationally grasped by anyone.

The mental sign production is "dividable" into its various functions. What we refer to as the non-symbolic process of somatic thinking used to be called the Id. The symbolic process of analytical thinking, its fictive part, used to be called the Ego, and what used to be called the Super-Ego, its metaphysical part, is specialized in analogical iconicity. What we now call the Self is a bridge over the gap between symbols and icons; it alternatively tends to specialize in the creation (invention, construction) of the Ego, by blocking the free flowing index production of somatic thinking, or in the affirmation of the Id, by deconstructing the Ego. The sameness of the person is determined by the use of a logical icon; it is the result of symbolization. Thus the semiotic transformation of indexical material, its passage from reflective thinking to analytical thinking determines the Self. I am the person called Pierre.

Self-consciousness can become painful when the thinking subject feels the separation between the Ego and the Self; but it can be fun or agreeable when it confuses them, when every part of the person merges into to self.

### **The Super-Ego: an analogical icon**

Unlike the Ego, built on the blocking out of the Id and its ploughing in the Self (the concealment of the index in the logical icon), the Super-Ego is built on the sowing of the Self. No more analytical reflection, but imaginative projection. This mental process supposes the concealment of the symbolic dimension of semiotic apophantic constructions, the works of the illustrative function of the holistic mind composed by indexes and analogical icons. In other words, when a thinking subject uses logical icons like "person", "thing" or "colour", he/she conceals the indexicality of the sign to intensify its iconicity and thus aid rational grasp. When analogical icons are used, like in the paradigmatic drift "father/chief/god/right/etc" or "woman/moon/water/left/etc", the

fictitious dimension is concealed and the indexicalization, giving a perceptible proof of existence, is intensified. The imaginary projection of the Ego onto the Super-Ego helps holistic thinking in its indexicalization task, but under the mask of the Ego, the Self weaves the web in which the wonderful hero that is the Ego will get caught when he/she proclaims his/her divinity.

Only the pious adulator of the Other, abandoning the Ego to its contemplation of the Super-Ego (God, cosmic consciousness), masks the angst and fools discursive thinking into the realm of imagination. The artist of one's Self is thus masked twice. Under the divine mask of the "creator", the Self is already masked by the Ego. My self-image could not be assembled, as a set of signs, if the indexes involved would not be translated into symbols. Analytical thinking has to extract the memories of physical experience from mental reflection. To put it very boldly: no Super-Ego without Ego, and no Ego without Self (including the Id).

### **The Id: an index**

Suspension of disbelief is a well known strategy of the mind. Coleridge examined it thoroughly in his writings about Shakespeare. As a mental strategy, it allows the spectator to be touched and thus to be had by the theatrical illusion. In the field of self-building, suspension of disbelief is crucial. A person knows how much of her/his personality is constructed, but everyone likes to believe in her/his originality and uniqueness. As soon as a person believe in one's Self,

A conversation between realism and idealism is going on in each one of us, but only those who can translate indexes into symbols can become historians or philosophers. The idealist answers the question of identity (*idem/ipse*) by stressing the invention of the Self as a metaphor of the World, a mirror (*idem*) of divine creation; the realist, by stressing the self-consciousness (*ipse*). From an onto-psychological point of view, the idealist projects her/his Ego onto the Super-Ego and the realist let it dissolve in the anonymous Id. The Self is thus constructed over the dam retaining the indexical flow of somatic thinking (Id).

It is not surprising that Freud's exploration of this particular zone of the mind has shaken the dogmatic monuments of idealism. An ideology setting at the top of its beliefs the abstract unicity of God or man as an original human being, an autonomous psychic entity persisting beyond life itself, beyond the mechanical limits of the body, goes astray without the use of an Ego.

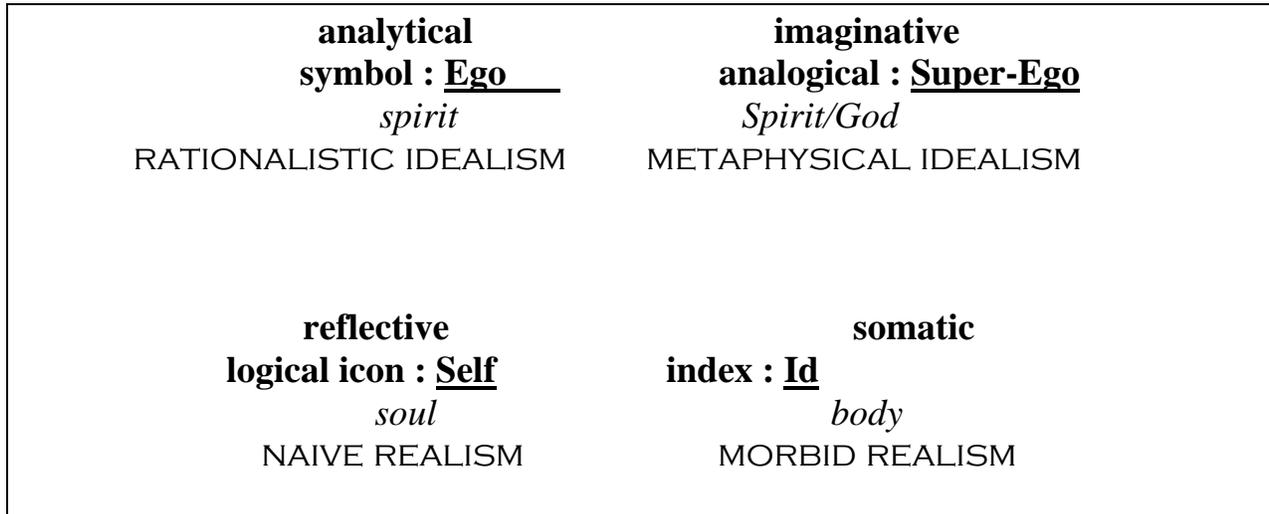
For the rationalist, the Ego is the model for building God. Its existence has less importance here than its resemblance. The iconic bond helps us imagine the existence of such a perfect being in order to believe in it as the Ego of the world. Yes, the Buddhists are right. The Ego is an illusion, but from a pragmatic point of view, a very useful one. The problem is that somatic thinking does not use symbols, it crushes them back to primitive indexicality or, whenever analytical thinking cannot perform logical

verification, it may nourish their mythical existence with phantasmatic memories, but it never gives into rational exclusivity.

**The composition of the person as a mental set of signs**

**discursive thinking**

**holistic thinking**



Psychological parts of the person: Ego, Id, Self, etc.

Traditional parts : spirit, soul, body, etc.

Ideologies : IDEALISM, REALISM, ETC.

## Mythology

A lot has been written about myth. But the ethnological, anthropological, linguistic definitions of myth could not, even in the times of structuralism, take in account the different functions at work in the thinking mind as neural exchanges of the brain's hemispheres before they were described by neuro-scientific experiments. We know now that generally speaking the left hemisphere is specialized in discursive thinking, it produces concepts; the right hemisphere is specialized in holistic thinking and it produces images. The task of the Semiotician will have to add to a functional dimension the traditional definitions of myth. We shall then call *myth* a joint production in which holistic thinking contributes to the symbolic production of discursive thinking by bringing images (icons and indexes) in a conceptual process.

When holistic thinking, craving emotional gratification, "seduces" discursive thinking in order to obtain the complete involvement of one human being into belief, it sneaks in by presenting discursive thinking with an image plausible enough to neglect verification. Since reflective thinking is not like analytical thinking exclusively symbolic, it does not exclude the use of indexes. To say for instance that extra-terrestrials have big head and wide almond-shaped eyes is to bring an image in the field of rationality and submit a mythical problem to analytical thinking. To believe in the non-verified existence of Extra-terrestrials involves the use of holistic thinking in the field of logical and discursive thinking.

Claude Lévi-Strauss defines myth as a structure in which the constitutive unities are "bundles of relations"<sup>13</sup> and whose "object" or purpose is to give the human mind "a logical model for solving contradictions"<sup>14</sup>. The short-cut taken by discursive thinking to quickly procure a thinking subject the soothing pleasure of a just opinion is made of emotion-triggering indexicalized symbols. Each time a thinking subject considers his/her opinion as truth, be it under the non-verified rule of a phobia or the sublime attraction of a god-like figure, imagination takes over and blurs any rationalistic attempt to explain what is going on.

The interpretation of a myth is thus necessarily the search of a conventional meaning, and this is what makes it from a tale or a legend. Myth is first and foremost a rhetorical device used as a quickening device to of belief. By avoiding verification, the believer of a myth, stresses the strategic position of analytical thinking in the semiotic process of myth-making. Myths are thus lies presented as truths. In his *Poetics*, Aristotle had already established the link between *muthos* and *anagnorisis*, one being the way the actions are put together (*praxeôs synthêsis*) and the other the crucial moment when the rational grasp of the moving drama (*dromenon*) gives the Self a chance to assert its existence.

<sup>13</sup> Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Anthropologie structurale*, Paris, Plon, 1958, p.234.

<sup>14</sup> Claude Lévi-Strauss, *op.cit.*, p.254.

Faith is thus the result of:

- 1) introducing an image in logical and discursive thinking
- 2) avoiding verification
- 3) emotional arousal of the thinking subject.

As we have seen, discursive thinking and holistic thinking collaborate in myth-making, but since myth is a mental process of explaining through invention, the imaginary and emotional activity of the holistic mind is therein subordinated to the rationalistic activity of the discursive mind. As a complex set of concepts and images aiming at explaining the unexplainable, myth has to be organized as a temporal sequence in which the indexes produced by the holistic mind are translated into rationally acceptable symbols by the discursive mind. The Greeks invented the story of Oedipus because they believed that same-blood marriages were doomed to degeneration.

I shall then attempt to define myth as a strategy or a mental set of operations overcoming contradiction, and leading the mind to assert as undeniable truth what is only suggested by reflective thinking. Each time the signs designed to reassure belief are produced by holistic thinking, indexicalization takes over symbolization. By making real the feeling of believing with all one's being, that is to transform in indexes the symbols stolen, or simply borrowed, to discursive thinking, imaginative thinking allows the subject to avoid the implacable tribunal of analytical thinking.

When reflective thinking gives analytical thinking a logical icon it can take as an undividable unity, there is a possibility of negligence; the task of verification might not be performed and, seizing the opportunity, imaginative thinking can alert the senses. For instance, reflective thinking uses the logical icon "person" to make a comparison between the image the subject has of persons he/she knows and the concept of *person*. Since there seems to be coincidence and since it seems useless to push forward the research, imaginative thinking seizes this non-verified truth and the thinking subject enters the most physical stage of the process, he/she becomes feeling subject. So, to be able to say « I feel good», the thinking subject has to go through the preparatory steps of symbolization and mythization.

Identity myths are those who represent two distinctive types of mental activity:

- 1) when analytical thinking excludes all other mental activity, its functioning can be symbolized as exclusion, or in a more positive way as *originality*;
- or
- 2) when reflection and imagination work in collaboration, if symbols existing are indexicalized, the representation of this outgoing natural thinking is pinned as the myth of *heredity*.

Ontologic myths represent represent these mental activities:

- 1) when somatic thinking excludes ( in a much more passive way) all other mental activity, its function can be called inclusive, and *indifferentiation* is the specific myth
- 2) when imaginative and reflective thinking collaborate, if indexes are symbolized, the representation of this collaboration is the myth of *complementarity*.

Myth is a short-cut taken by reflective thinking to avoid the usual verification made by analytical thinking, and engage in an inter-hemispherical exchange with imaginative thinking and its ability make visible to one's self something or someone who's existence has not been proven, and see it as if it were real. When a person wants to believe, he/she lends a fictive existence to what he/she wants to believe in, and tries to hide its fictivity.

At a cultural level, the belief in God relies on the same mental short-cut: personification of Nature or Energy goes around identity verification to signify one's adhesion to this belief. We know that God cannot be a person, but we go on acting as if He was one, making Him a privileged interlocutor of mental speech-like activity. Some people even go as far as feeling in their flesh the presence of this "person". Even if God does not exist, the emotional and somatic signs triggered by belief are undeniable.

In the field of holistic thinking, similar intrusions of discursive thinking deviate somatic thinking from its natural diffusion and incorporate symbols in imaginative thinking. A dream may contain words, but in imaginative thinking where symbols are subordinated to images, they are not necessarily illustrated by the images of the dream they feature in. When they are, when words govern the imaginary outputs of holistic thinking, the victim of this strategy is no longer the avoided reasoning, as it was for myth, but imagining, and the process is called *allegory*. By incorporating concepts (icons and symbols) in the field of images (indexes), holistic thinking prevents the indexical dissipation of somatic thinking, by producing images in which indexes are charged with a symbolical value. If myth could be defined as a strategy aiming at a mental sign-production in which holistic thinking contributes to the specific activity of discursive thinking, allegory can be defined as a strategy aiming at a mental sign-production in which discursive thinking contributes to the specific activity of holistic thinking.

Myth, according to A. Newberg, E. D'Aquili and V. Rance, is a set of mental operations in which the parietal lobe is highly involved; it triggers belief by proposing a cause to any unknown and therefore threatening event or thing in the world (Wittgenstein's "totality of facts"). As it goes, the *amygdalia*, which is the Watchdog of the limbic system triggers an arousal response, and then the cognitive imperative drives the causal operator to a useless search that would lead it to a dead end if, in absence of a specific cause, the *hippocampus* or Diplomat of the limbic system would not trigger the

Sensory Association Area of the right parietal lobe to produce the signs of this proposal. Ritual, as they put it, «turns something you believe into something you can feel» (p.91).

## **Personification**

The personification of the world's cause has allowed discursive thinking to perform a deceiving symbolization: the conventional nature of the signs of resemblance relating the self and the world is masked so that the Ego's difference would be revealed. Psychologically speaking, the myth of the Ego is a mental construction identified with the unavoidable materiality of the body. This uniqueness denounced as an illusion by oriental philosophies, is the exact opposite of another "part" of the Self, the obscure part, not easily distinguished from the world, pinned by Freud as the Id.

Since myths are means of avoiding logical dead-ends, there should be no reason that they were not activated in collective thinking as well as in individual thinking. What the psychologist calls the Ego is a personification of the Self. We cannot prove the Ego exists, but we need to believe in its existence, in order not to be drowned in that other worldly part of the Self called the Id.

The semiotic definition of the myth as a short-cut or mental strategy take in account the Barthian metaphor of "stolen language" and the Levistraussian conception of an "overcome contradiction". From a neuropsychological point of view, myth allows the Self to create the Ego, but also helps hiding its fictitious existence. With myth, the Self can avoid dead-ends and contradictions. There shall then be as many myths as there are ways of explaining the existence of being surmounting or overcoming contradictions. We know, every time we dare an explanation, that what we will come up with will never be enough to close the case. We need myth to have a clear vision of the Self and the world. By submitting concepts (elaborated by persons who watch the world and not themselves) to the laws of mental vision (*theoria*), myth-making has no better device than personification. In mythical personification, iconicity works both ways : logically when the supposed being is reduced to a "person" figure, and analogically when it is dressed up and made up as a partly indefinable entity.

## **Allegory**

Allegory is to holistic thinking what myth is to discursive thinking. It is a strategy to avoid the principal mental activity of somatic thinking, semantic diffusion, by assembling indexical matter of images using symbolic criteria. If myth could be defined as a non-verified truth, allegory appears as a lie designed to reveal a truth. Allegory translates concepts produced by discursive thinking into images usable by holistic thinking, and charges them anew with logical iconicity, for the use of reflective thinking, as much as with analogical iconicity for the use of imaginative thinking. Where myth counter-balances the conventional rigidity of symbols by indexicalization in order to help person

to believe or love, allegory counter-balances the lightness of indexes by hyper-symbolization. As soon as an indexicalization is performed by imaginative thinking, allegory, with the help of reflective thinking's symbolizing icons, can prevent the loss of meaning. A mental image is quickly lost. If discursive thinking does not step in and take control of this image by analyzing it and recognizing it as its own (reflective thinking), the apophantic sign-production of holistic thinking is doomed to oblivion. The most striking occurrence of such a loss is a dream, where in general the dreamer forgets more than he/she remembers.

Let's consider an allegory: the course of the chariot of the sun through the sky. It is not designed to make believe that such a course is true, which would imply the existence of a real person driving the chariot and real horses pulling it, but to make intelligible through illustration a natural phenomenon. How could one having seen the disk of the sun in the sky believe it is the chariot of Apollo? When we use such an allegory, we know we deal with fiction.

To allegorize, the steps are the following:

- 1) intrusion of a concept in the field of images
- 2) by-passing hermeneutic dissolution
- 3) semantic determination independent from emotional response

The introduction of a concept in the field of images results in blocking off the analogical resonances of iconicity. Allegory presents us with a apparent confusion, but the principal goal of such a strategy being logical its interpretation cannot use polysemy. What G.Durand calls reductive hermeneutics is, in this case, the exact opposite of "instaurative" hermeneutics<sup>15</sup> with which the "bundles of relations" (Lévi-Strauss) are interpreted. In allegory an image is not used to illustrate a concept, but the concept is used to charge an image with a demonstrative function, a hyper-symbol subordinating all indexes to the semantic process. And because of this subordination, the thinking person does not get involved in emotions when he/she take on the interpretation of an allegory. The cognitive action, in this case, is not emotional but highly intellectual.

Once we have established the semiotic link between the different actions involved in thinking (analyzing, reflection, imagining, blurring) and their metaphorical representations through personification, we deal with emblematic figures. The number of names they are given is almost infinite, so for the purpose of more clarity we shall work with Greco-roman personifications. And since these personifications are firstly signs designed to represent actions, the characters they are given are exclusive. We cannot change myths, wrote Aristotle in *Poetics*, and characters are determined by the myth (set of actions).

To have a dynamic view of thinking, we shall have to describe how these different actions combine or not, and when they are not simultaneous, in what order they are performed. The mythological legends, in various literary forms, appear to be hermeneutic

---

<sup>15</sup> cf. Gilbert Durand, *L'imagination symbolique*, Paris, P.U. F., 1968.

entities, sets of signs, inter-relating through the omission or the addition of certain specific pattern. Nomination and personification are symbolizations, and as such they are necessarily linked to myth-making; illustration and ornamentation are indexicalization, second-fiddle in myth, but indispensable in allegory.

mental operation	metaphorical actions	emblematic figure
analyzing	separation, exclusion, election, Apollon tirer au clair	
reflection	repetition, return, imitation	Hermes (Mercury)
	establish links	
imagining	illustration, visualisation, harmonisation	Aphrodite (Venus)
	yielding	
blurring	forgetting, erasing, confusing absorbing, swallowing	Dionysos

## Myths of identity

If it is true, as suggest Schopenhauer's theory of the world as representation, that all existence only exists by thinking, there are two behavioural response possible: to accept the double law of time and space and suffer forever, or, to escape from this law and set one's will against the world, as an indivisible One, and proclaim with René Daumal: «Nom est mon nom» No is my name.<sup>16</sup>

Among the short-cuts that can be taken by discursive mind, the one designed to avoid confusion is particularly useful in the field of analytical thinking. Any trace of existence makes it impossible to perform a complete metaphorical reduction. No one but me can fully interpret, and make intelligible the images my soma and my imagination produce in dreams, for the neural matters of these images cannot be communicated. If the analyst is another person, only symbols can be treated. And in the field of symbols, it is important that every party involved in the convention on which is based a sign of essence use the same code to perform its interpretation. In this specific field of discursive thinking (analytical) we call "cat", and only "cat", a cat.

<sup>16</sup> René Daumal, *Clavicules d'un grand jeu poétique*, 2.

The short-cut through which one avoids semantic dissipation often leads reflective thinking, overwhelmed by the sublime void of an image as "a second similar object"<sup>17</sup>, to produce a representation of a non-being as if it were and give it the status of a symbolic truth. Through such thinking the myth of heredity is elaborated. To believe that there is between Sky and Earth a parental link is to give faith in the materiality of divinity. To believe that all beings are determined, that all one inherits from his/her parents is "written in heaven", is to cultivate the myth of heredity, as well as to believe that the soul, being divine, goes back home in heaven at the end of life. In all these cases, action is taken to control semantic dissolution in imaginative thinking.

Believing in one's self is a mental activity specific to holistic thinking. One has first to "see" (imagine) one's self as a whole, but to bring this inner-vision to the utterance of self affirmation is only possible if the absolute (essential) difference of the Ego is adopted as the principal criteria of personality. But imaginative thinking cannot demonstrate that the Ego and the Id do not have anything in common, it can only propose to use a symbol as an index, and on the experimental basis of self-consciousness to handle the Ego as a sign of existence. The result is the isolation of idealistic thinking in its ivory tower, where The Ego is cleansed from all traces of the Id, and the shrinking of all ties with somatic thinking.

To believe that each person is unique, is to use the myth of identity that describes metaphorically the part of the self Schopenhauer calls the will and Ricoeur the «*idem*» type identity. To believe on the other hand that there is no individual freedom whatsoever in a personality, that all is given in the origin, is to make use of the myth of identity designed to assure the *ipse* type of identity, a possibility of reflection based on blurring of indexes of "alterity" to focus on the indexes of identity. Since it cannot create images, reflective thinking produces indexical icons allowing it to establish the difference between the Ego and the world without ceasing to believe in their coincidence in the Self. The myth of heredity metaphorically represents the self-affirmation of a person's *ipseity*; the myth of originality that of a person's Ego-determined identity.

### **The myth of originality: *each person is unique***

To believe in the absolute individuality of each human being is to make a holistic use of the myth of originality. The unicity of personality gives analytical thinking a conceptual frame for rationalistic idealism. The theme of heroism evolves through negation of indifferenciation. When we sing, speak or write about a hero we should never use common expression nor ambiguous propositions, we cannot say that "to be or not to be" is one and the same thing or that a hero is averagely talented, because we would then be undoing the work of the mind through the myth of originality. All heroes are exceptions.

---

<sup>17</sup> Jean-Pierre Vernant, *Religions, Histoires, Raisons*, Paris, Maspero, 1979, p.111.

The son of Zeus and the mortal Alcmene, Heracles (Hercules) is simultaneously enthusiast (literarily full of divinity) and resistant to the law of Hera (Juno) who's reinforcement is the twelve works remembered by folkloric tradition. He since this hero has a divine uplifting side and a human suffering side (the poisoned robe), the mythical legend becomes the stage of a lie: the difference between divine and human can be blurred, ignored, surmounted.

If «the *mythos* is *dianoia* in movement, the *dianoia* is the *mythos* in stasis»<sup>18</sup>, the myth of originality has to be represented by a specific *dromenon* or sequence of actions. The hero ascending to his father must first be born on earth; he must also live with his mother for a while. Then his crowning or glorification becomes possible. Another law of the myth of originality is that the ascended hero must stay where the *dromenon* has led him. As we can observe, the myth of originality is easily combined to the compatible myths of heredity and complementarity. The only myth excluded by the belief in the unicity of the person is the myth of indifferenciation. The ascension to the highest summits and the fall to the lowest abysses could never be simultaneously represented.

The mental strategy aiming at belief in the unicity of the person (the myth of originality) uses the theme of **heroism** to illustrate the superiority of logical truth, but the glory of the individual is determined by the fierceness of the beast he/she fights. Victory over death and indifferenciation must belong to the one and only Saviour (Prometheus, Dionysus, Jesus). When putting together dramatic actions or organizing images is based on a mental *exclusion*, the reinforcement of logical iconicity in the field of analysis results in an ascendant movement of the user's soul called *exaltation*.

An exception can only be asserted after a logical exclusion. Antithesis is here the most representative figure. G. Durand sees it as the diaretic and schizomorphic structures of the day-mode of imagination. Such representations are objectively heterogenizing and subjectively homogenizing. As object, we see a fight, but since we identify with the hero, we manage to obtain a feeling of unity and wholeness through his actions, as long as they are organized in a specific order. When an artist uses a fight as a symbol, it is generally to say something else: the unevenness of the opponents or the superiority of one of them. The representation of war can then be used as a heroic motive, but if it would be used by a night-mode imagination, as a subjectively heterogenizing representation, it could also be a tragic motive.

From a logical point of view, the figure of Oedipus is an exception: at first sight there seems to be very few individuals who have actually killed their father and married their mother, but in the field of imagination, such a case becomes common. The analogy established between the son of Laios and the everyday man, contradict the logical assertion about his exception. We will never know if Oedipus ever existed, but since his story touches us, the symbolic associations hide his unreality to reveal his humanity.

When Jesus ascends to his father's home in the sky, or Hercules on Olympus, the exceptional being heeds an up lifting call. The myth of originality grows on this will to

---

<sup>18</sup> Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, Princeton University Press, 1957, p.83.

attain the top of the world. In every case of heroism, the hero lifts himself up; he is not picked up, like Ganymede by Zeus's eagle, or the Virgin Mary by angels. Sometimes a raised arm pointing a sword to the sky is enough to trigger the pleasure of exaltation.

Heroism as representational motive has also to be described as a symbol of self-consciousness; it tends to gratify the Ego of the user. If an artist aims at this kind of gratification, he/she must avoid all references to the abyssal Id, anonymous and shapeless, or to the human mass in which all differences are pointless, in order to lift the user's soul up; his/her art has only advantages, if such exaltation is its purpose, in separating logically and ironically the Ego and the rest of the world. Competition, be it athletic or intellectual, generally triggers in the user's body an adrenaline discharge inseparable from the pleasure of individual exaltation.

The emblematic figure of Apollo represents the myth of originality, the familiar lie consisting in believing that the Ego is a natural and existential entity and not the product of discursive thinking with a little help from holistic thinking). The mere existence of an exceptional being depends on the quiet masses; the more submitted they are to banality, the brighter he appears in the sky of uniqueness.

« ...le coursier d'Apollon n'est que ténèbres domptés »<sup>19</sup>

Like the Celtic god Bel, Apollo kills a snake (Pytho) with his arrows. To master such enemy in such a way is typical of a myth aiming at individual exaltation through a symbolic path (short-cut), it also represents this part of thinking assuming it has nothing to do with the body, and whose sole purpose is rational grasp we have called analytical thinking. As an oracular god, he is the guardian of the word of truth, and truth can never be revealed to humans if it is not the result of a demonstration (a specific sequence of actions ended by the recognition of one interpretant and the exclusion of all the others).

### **The myth of heredity: *like father like son***

Such a myth involves naive materialism, at an intellectual level, and the use of familiar themes. It sets the mental stage for a belief in progress counter-balanced by a prudent pessimism. Harmonisation of contraries and coherence in contrast are here substituted to the *coincidencia oppositorum*. Substitution, disguise and contrivance are at play when the mythical narrative takes in account the auto-erotic nature of reflection. When a user wants to be touched in a condescending way, he/she looks for signs relating her/him to the sameness of all beings. Here, our hero becomes a lover and wants to look like her/his beloved one; we go from logic to magic, and are no longer in the field of symbolic deduction but in the field of indexical illustration.

G. Durand speaks of synthetic and dramatic structures of the day-mode imagination; they integrate in a logical sequence all the other intentions of imagination<sup>20</sup> and

<sup>19</sup> Gilbert Durand, *Les Structures anthropologiques de l'Imaginaire*, p.82.

<sup>20</sup> Gilbert Durand, *Les Structures anthropologiques de l'Imaginaire*, p.399.

harmonize in a coherent whole the most flagrant contradictions<sup>21</sup>. The synthetic structures of imagination define the inter-hemispheric relation between reflective thinking and imaginative thinking, through dialectic antagonism, storytelling or future hypotyposis. Hermes (Mercury) is the emblematic figure of a way of thinking which does not yield to semantic confusion but seeks coherence while maintaining vivid oppositions between propositions.<sup>22</sup>

Metaphor plays a central role in logic. It is the prototype of all substitution figures. All thematizing based of the notion of sameness acquired by comparison allows the human brain to elaborate, from the mythical stand-point of heredity, and since it is determined by the dramatic structures of imagination, certain metaphors help it to acquire the mental means to obtain the pleasure of condescending compassion. The lie, here, or the non-verified truth is that everything a person is, has been given to her/him, and nothing is constructed. This myth is designed to conceal the violence involved in self-affirmation; the metaphor acts as a damper to the antithesis on which the Ego is built. The mere idea of comparing beings is a treat to their unicity. The description of an exception must involve general terms, and as such contradicts its own object. When we refer to someone as an "original", we can only compare her/him to another original. The myth of heredity accentuates the resemblance between persons; the themes used in this mixed (symbol/icon) sign production. The main thematic motive is here the substitution figuration.

The Greeks had a couple of theatrical figures; one was the self-deprecating *eiron*, and the other his pedant opponent, the *alazon*. But if the *eiron* lowers himself in the eyes of the spectators, it is precisely to give them the opportunity to lift him back up. Like most couples of comedy, the one joining irony (*eiron*) and cruelty brings together the structural power of the myth of originality (the difference between persons) and the myth of heredity (the resemblance between persons). They are compatible myths; they both reinforce the idea that thinking is mostly symbolic reduction. Any other myth free of explanation, and full of indexical power, like that of the adored Other or the actual physical existence of the body (*soma*) as the sole reality, is excluded from the process of obtaining the pleasures of individual exaltation resulting from rational grasp or release resulting from condescending compassion.

In the *commedia dell'Arte* we can observe the same duality. The first *zanno* (Arlequin) is a kind of *eiron*. The hero of comedy succeeds to contrive for his own sake; he is the master of the game. But the mechanism of myths only works if this lifting is counter-balanced by the lowering of the second *zanno* or *alazon*, it could very well be Pantalone, anyone who is unlawfully elevated to the height he doesn't belong to, and needs to be humiliated and shunned by the audience. Whenever irony is used, there can only be one speaker, the role of the redeeming Other has to be played by the silent spectator.

---

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. p.400.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. p.403.

The red clown, who wins the sympathy of the audience by lowering himself, is always, in the end, similar to each one of us; the white clown pushes distinction (difference from others) to disdain, and for that he must be punished (by the spectators) in the course of the theatrical ritual. The user of iconic symbols such as "ordinary people" and "valley of tears" has to harmonize them; he/she has to dim the brightness of pedants in order to enlighten the life of a peasant. If the spectator is to have the pleasure of recognizing her/himself in the rising figure lifted by her/his will to be successful and unique, he/she must have to identify the doomed figure against which this glorification takes place.

This type of mental activity tends to make childish the soon-to-be-glorified hero in order to get the erotic pleasure of release and the cruel pleasure of punishing the character who opposes the structural victim in her/his way to glorification. In the part of this work devoted to aesthetics, we shall investigate thoroughly the fact that irony in art is always a way to excuse violence and cruelty.

When the pleasure desired by the user is condescending compassion or erotic pleasure, the artist may use stylistic devices of irony and figures of equivalence or substitution to trigger it.

From an historical point of view, this world-vision centered on everything human is the starting point of a more optimistic realism; it could not be achieved without knocking off medieval pessimism and its theocentric world-vision.

When the myth of heredity allows the brain to thematize humanity, all the signs of resemblance, origin and belonging (fraternity, twinning, youth) are accentuated in order to let the mind achieve mastering through bonding. Contrary to the solar god Apollo who masters by cutting clear, Hermes (Mercury), who grew so quickly he showed as a child the kind of pragmatic intelligence Metis had before Zeus swallowed her, masters knots and relations.<sup>23</sup> He freely goes from earth to heaven, from divinity to humanity. He has wings on his ankles to represent his father in the sky and two snakes around his stick (*caducea*) to represent his mother Maia, daughter of Atlas, goddess of the Earth.

One day, after having stolen Apollo's oxen, he made stilts, meticulously (*Metis*) reversing the sandals tied to them, heels to the front and toes to the back, and led the herd away. The result is of course the deception of Apollo who returns to where he had left his herd when he follows the thief's footprints. In this mythological episode iconicity is used as an illustrative support to the demonstration of the conciliatory proposition. What can be mastered by force, can also be mastered by comprehension, even if one has to lie and steal to succeed.

To establish meaningful links, one has to compare and reverse. The reflective mind likes to confuse images and concepts. So when the myth of heredity is used in link with the pleasure of condescending compassion, iconicity runs high and all exceptions are ridiculed. Hermes (Mercury) is a magician and a master of transformations, not in a

---

<sup>23</sup> Marcel Détiéne et Jean-Pierre Vernant, *Les Ruses de l'Intelligence. La mètis des Grecs*, Paris, Flammarion, 1974, p. 264.

seductive or dominant way, like his father Zeus, but in a cognitive and transmittal way, even though it might involve lying and cunning.

## **ontological myths**

Myths related to identity (both *idem* type or the *ipse type* of identity) or what C.S.Peirce would have called *essence* are common to the aesthete engaged in the search of an original truth, a truth so unique it can lift him up (or make her/him jump, if ever he/she finds it, in *exaltation*), even though it is purely symbolic, or of a convenient truth with which he/she finds comfort and compassion, the not so abstract essence of the Self. The two other myths we are about to examine are used by holistic thinking in the process of obtaining the anterotic pleasure of ecstasy or the anguishing pleasure of cruelty. Ontology having to do with the world as it is, independently from the Ego's will and the Self's reflection, the ontological myth of complementarity, a mental strategy aimed at believing in the absorptive power of the absolute Other, defines a mental frame different from the frame set up in search of cruelty. The Id, having no rational ability, wears an Ego mask when it jumps on the Self's wagon and leads it through darkness and indifferenciation.

The aspiration of the soul upward to God and the desire to join him in the sky is a typical illustration of how human imagination has used the myth of complementarity. Iconicity is not used in a restrictive way (as it is in painting a resembling portrait of someone), but as a widening device allied to indexicality. Complementarity involves a certain amount of resemblance, but it also depends on symmetry ( a neutralizing force over differences). Anteros, as the god of shared love, only exist as the brother Eros (desire). It unites lovers in a common feeling; desire separates them, each in her/his own hydraulic management of physical needs. In the field of sex, differences play a major role; in the field of Love, they have to settle for a second role, because resemblance reigns.

A certain number of *affinities* between modes of thinking are due to their semiotic specializing. Reflective thinking and imaginative thinking, the inter-hemispheric modes of thinking, are not separated by a hermetic partition. One goes easily from reflective to imaginative thinking, when lost in a day-dream, or "sailing" through the illustrations of a book which symbolic demonstration he/she has not followed. Even Einstein uses images to make more intelligible his theory. But it is not so easy to go from imaginative to reflective thinking, when waking from a dream and trying to make sense of it, or watching a drama with suspended disbelief. The fact that the overflowing production of indexes has to be suspended in order to make sense (essence) only goes to show how somatic thinking works through the myth of indifferenciation. If the Devil existed he would hide in the Id and his ways would be as mysterious as those of the Lord, even more so!

**The myth of complementarity: *there is in the world one person who can fulfill all my aspirations.***

The belief in another sometimes divine "person" who is the other half of one's Self, sets the mental stage for every production of signs having to do with Love, the thematizing of woman's nobility, the glorification of her virginity, in the field of what Aristotle called opinion (*gnomê*), a kind of emotionally charged thinking, and an ideology we can call metaphysical idealism in the field of analytical thinking. We can rationalize a good deal of phenomena, but the overwhelming power of the unthinkable is better left uncut. It is, in a nutshell, what E. Kant says. God, who was for rationalists like Descartes the thinker of the world, a clock smith for Voltaire, becomes an irrational whole, soon identified as Nature.

The myth of complementarity allows such imaginative settings or rational accommodations as long as it conceals heredity. Lovers don't want to be reminded that they are only acting out the reproduction plan of the species, that the animal attraction they feel for one another is the only thing that is not a symbol, that the words "I love you" or even "I want you" have been learned and are conventional signs of essence that translate a part of the feeling bundle of irrational behaviour. They are so much infatuated by the sublimity of their new faith, that they avoid reflective thinking. As long as they are passionately in love, family links can become gruesome rivals (c.f. *Romeo and Juliet*, *Le Cid*).

The theme of Love is thus incompatible with the theme of familiar sameness. Everything that can be doubled in representation isolates the thinking subject and forces her/him to use logical iconicity. The "divine" Other can only be compared to one's Self. But Love is compatible with heroic and tragic themes.

The excluding mental behaviour typical of the myth of originality uses exception and antithesis as its compulsory figures. They are here replaced by figures involving the use of analogical iconicity. Free association seems to be the typical mental behaviour resulting from the use of the myth of complementarity; metaphor is its compulsory figure. G. Durand describes the mystical structures of the night-mode imagination as the main playground of analogy and similarity.

As the word Assumption is used in the Christian tradition to designate the ascending movement of the Virgin Mary towards the Sky, it shall be perfectly suited to designate the mental behaviour of a person who lets go of her/his self-consciousness and gives in the contemplation of the ideal «Other». The word ideal itself refers to thinking with images (*eidon*). The translation of such thinking to symbols never satisfies the clarity criteria of analytical thinking. You can't rationalize Love, no more than you can reason lovers.

Psyche, whose name means «Soul» is lifted up and carried to heaven by Eros (Love); she is the negative counterpart of Pandora descending to Earth with a box full of "gifts". The difference between Ascension and Assumption is that the hero ascends by

her/his own power and will, and the lover ascends with the help of someone else with wings.

Ecstasy literarily means "exit of one's *stasis* (place occupied by a non-moving or stable person)". The lover made blind to the reality of others by an overpowering fantasy, meets a person in the same dispositions and sees this coincidence as an undeniable truth. As exceptional as he/she may be, the person yielding to the fulfilling power of this «Other» seeks a kind of pleasure we shall call *anterotic* in reference to Eros's brother Anteros who is in Greek mythology the personification of "shared love", by opposition to the arrow-throwing shear desire.

(Aphrodite) Venus is the emblematic figure of this myth. Two in one: Heaven (Ouranos and Earth (Gaia) having been separated for some times are reunited again through the double goddess of Love: the celestial Urania and the carnal mistress of Ares (Mars) and Adonis. Born from the foam on the Ocean, the goddess of Love doesn't have a mother. When Time (Chronos/Saturn) castrated his father, the forever young Sky (Ouranos), with his moon shaped billhook, his genitals fell on the Ocean.

When a beauty pageant was held on mount Olympus to determine which one of the three goddesses was the most beautiful, a young Trojan herdsman was appointed. He chose Aphrodite (Venus). Hera (Juno) and Artemis (Diane) have had many reasons to declare war to the goddess of Love. The jealous goddess of wed-lock orders her son Hephaestus (Vulcan), the legitimate husband of the most beautiful goddess, to make a net, hang it over the bed, and catch the lovers in the act. But this didn't discourage Aphrodite. She didn't change her lifestyle, and she kept "seeing" Ares.

In every case where the god in action is a goddess, a male mortal has to be scarified, at least neutralized, amazed by a Venusian spell or rejected by female honour. Artemis acts as a separating agent between sexes and Hera against the family-wrecking Aphrodite.

### **The myth of indifferenciation: *dust to dust, ashes to ashes***

The belief in nothingness or the absence of beliefs sets the stage for pessimist materialism. In works of art it comes out as morbid realism, it is elaborated on the ashes of innocent ecstasy, and it tries to conceal anything having to do with the originality of the personality. This mental strategy does not involve the use of symbols; it is purely indexical. In deep sleep we experiment this kind of thinking: any sacred object may appear as having no more value than a bit of trivia.

The prey-bird who feasted daily on the liver of Prometheus came from Heaven, it was sent by Zeus, to punish the hero, a Titan, son of the Earth, who stole the Fire from the Gods and gave it to the mortals. It was as good and bad a gift as was Pandora's box. She was Prometheus's sister in law, the wife of Prometheus's brother Epimetheus. Was she a gift from Heaven or a mortal appointed by the Gods to impersonate divinity. The result of her action has to be deceitful, because all the actions of the Titans have to oppose the newly acquired authority of their nephew Zeus, who tends to have an abusive use of his

power. Something similar happened to Pandora, when she lifted the lid of the box, the gifts of the Gods, intended to be good, turned out to be poisonous.

To grow as persons, human beings need pain, to challenge mental alertness, and a special kind of pleasure, to forget (avoid) the pain and release the tensions of representation, the cruel pleasure of destruction or humiliation. Often linked with frustrated heroism, the thematizing of death is always an assault on symbols.

From a logical point of view, the myth of indifferenciation allows the somatic mind to produce non-symbolic images. The lie here is to say that difference or individual originality does not exist, and that there is in existence only incoherent matter. Here, the hero is condemned for fraud and her/his difference makes her/him a victim.

Dionysus is the emblematic figure of this myth. He was born from Zeus's thigh, where he was kept after his mother Semele died. As the male victim of women gone wild, he is an always changing god, like Osiris. The mental behaviour of someone who seeks angst as a pleasure is tragic. There is no way out. No one escape from death, etc. are all expressions of this myth. The actual sacrifice of goats to Dionysus was designed to honour the god, but they conceal the fact that goats can make a lot of damage to the growing vine.<sup>24</sup>

There is a kind of life that needs destruction. In somatic thinking, vegetative life tears intellectual life to pieces. In our civilization, death is sad, because we tend to see it as the result of passing time, instead of a pre-life sleep, or a six months marriage to Hell like Persephone had, and the unresolved paradox of emptiness full of nothing.

From a psychological point of view, when the Ego who's essence is defined in response to the myth of originality is no longer able to trigger belief (in one's Self), the thinking subject can no longer perform adequate symbolizations, it can no longer find the words and images that could "call for meaning", as G. Durand would put it. The mind then falls back, even against its will, on the production of indexes, and since this plethora of signs of existence charged with emotions can also be reckoned as a lack of signs of essence, it gets the impression of falling down, never to come up again.

The impossibility to find a logical solution to existence and the necessity to destroy the illusion of individual freedom and submit one's Self to the unavoidable *fatum*, determine objectively homogenizing and subjectively heterogenizing representations that are not antithetic but mystic and «antiphatic». Death is certainly a common figure in this thematizing process of the myth of indifferenciation, but it could also be associated with heroism.

J.-P. Vernant writes: « the Dionysian religious experience, instead of integrating you to the world, in your right place, aims at projecting you out of it, into ecstasy »<sup>25</sup>. It has no more to do with an exceptional human being ascending to the Gods, but much more with the Gods descending upon mortals to ride their soul and make them dance. Dionysus blurs all borders between the divine and the human, in other words all differences between the Self and the «Other».

<sup>24</sup> J.G.Frazer, *The Golden Bough. A Study of Magic and Religion*, Macmillan Press, (1922)1976, p. 515. Nous traduisons.

<sup>25</sup> Jean-Pierre Vernant, « Le Dionysos masqué des *Bacchantes* d'Euripide », in *L'Homme*, no 93, janvier-mars, 1985, p.35.

After the jubilation (*lussa*) and the musical frenzy of the *thyasis*, Dionysus is cut in pieces and eaten by his followers in the course of the ritual *sparagmos*. When the Self, through choreographic trance, has become the "ground" on which the God manifest himself, Dionysus is the Other (non-Ego) is transformed through digestion into the new cosmic Ego, larger than the previous one.

The indo-European civilisation has more or less maintained its tri-functional model, but dualism always seems to take over. Materialism, in search of a new vocabulary will soon have to use the word "holistic" (referring to wholeness or globalness) to designate a kind of thinking involving the exact contrary of analytical thinking, somatic thinking, and a complement to reflective thinking, imaginative thinking.

Soul and Spirit are constructed sets of mental signs; and the matter used in such a construction is neural. But can we consider *dianoia*, the mechanism of mental signs production, as an exclusively physical phenomenon? As modes of thinking, Soul and Spirit are soon to be analogically assimilated to the complementary functions of thinking, analyzing and imagining. The opposition between reason and passion represent, in the thematic field, the opposition between the demonstrative and the illustrative functions of *dianoia*, each one at home in one of the brain's hemispheres.

Mental operations can be compared to other non-mental actions. It is easier to understand "rational grasp" than "symbolization", because the action metaphor is used as an illustrative support to demonstration. The grasping always comes at the end of a mental process. In order to bring the mind to recognition, the absent term must first be replaced by the term in focus. The steps of such a process are crucial: 1) focusing on the anomalic term (grasping : the mind has no hands!), 2) metaphorical reduction with the help of the context, and 3) recognition. But myth avoids such recognition; it prefers to let the image live, as ambiguous as it may be.

Aristotle uses the word *mythos* to describe the action of assembling metaphorical actions. It is the first and foremost mental action in tragedy-making. N. Frye claims, for his part, that the *mythos* is *dianoia* in movement, and this movement can only be represented by a narrative sequence. Personifications obtained through the use of logical iconicity are *emblematic figures*; they are not identified by a specific ordering of actions. They are metaphors used for describing mental strategies, and as such they are logical. One cannot simultaneously grasp and let go. The personifications submitted to a time sequence are dramatic figures, and as such they are not submitted to the logical frame of emblematic figuring. On the contrary, they bring the character (personification) to perform contradicting actions. These dramatic figures were then designed to avoid contradictions and try to deal with life's paradox.

Each emblematic figure stands at the crossroads of dramatic sequences. The beginning action of Oedipus, the capital action of Hercules, and the ending action of Ulysses are all related to the myth of originality. The exceptionally clever Oedipus, the exceptionally strong Hercules, and the exceptionally cunning Ulysses are all moving figures taken at an apollonian stage of their drama.

Oedipus 1) resolves the Sphinx's riddle, 2) marries his mother, and 3) blinds himself when he finds out he is the murderer of the King, his father. The hero is humbled for not knowing. Ignorance is the cause of such calamities as generic indifferenciation, being simultaneously the son and the husband of Jocasta, or the father and the brother of Antigone.

Hercules is 1) born through deceitful divine intervention, 2) he succeeds in his twelve labours, and 3) he is then introduced on mount Olympus. The hero becomes God after displaying god-like strength. Like Apollo, he is a sun-god, but he needs to go through this specific sequence of actions.

Ulysses is 1) "nobody". But 2) through cunning 3) this humble man becomes a hero. When he finally returns to Ithaca, he is the only archer who has the strength to use his bow.

Prometheus 1) descends on Earth with the God's fire, 2) he is tied to a rock and everyday his liver is eaten by a prey-bird, and 3) his liver grows back.

### **Sequences of episodes for dramatic figures**

Œdipus 1 Hercules 2 Ulysses 3	Prometheus1 Œdipus 2 Hercules 3
Hercules 1 Ulysses 2 Prometheus 3	Ulysses 1 Prometheus 2 Œdipus 3

The starting point of Prometheus dramatic sequence is the complementarity of divine and human. When he takes the divine fire from its original place, he breaks up this complementarity and proclaims indifferenciation. There is indeed no more difference between Gods and Mortals after what appears to be a glorious deed for Mortals and a crime for Gods. The consequence of this confusion (deed/crime) is that the difference between life on Earth and life in Hell is also blurred.

In an attempt to find in Greek mythology the feminine equivalent to the male dramatic figures, we shall propose the following four personifications:

Ariadne 1) gives Theseus the thread allowing him to come out of the Labyrinth, 2) leaves Crete with Theseus, and 3) is abandoned on the island of Naxos, where she becomes Dionysus's lover.

Pandora is/has 1) a gift from Heaven, 2) she opens the lid, and 3) humanity lives in constant suffering, sometimes brighten by hope.

Penelope is 1) the abandoned wife of a warrior, 2) she un-does every night what she has weaved during the day, and 3) her faithfulness is gratified by her husband's return.

Psyche is a human woman 1) seduced by a God, and as such 2) made exceptional. Then she is 3) taken to divine bliss.

1 Ariadne 2 Psyche 3 Penelope	1 Pandora 2 Ariadne 3 Psyche
1 Psyche 2 Penelope 3 Pandora	1 Penelope 2 Pandora 3 Ariadne

**Ariadne 1** : heroic episode: myth of originality : she helps Theseus out of the Labyrinth by giving him the thread.

**Ariadne 2** : idyllic episode : myth of complementarity : freed by Theseus, she leaves with him for Athens.

**Ariadne 3** : tragic episode : myth of indifferenciation : Theseus choosing her sister Phaedra as his wife, abandons her on the shore of Naxos where she start drinking wine and take part in Dionysian orgies.

**Pandora 1** : idyllic episode : myth of complementarity : She has been chosen to carry the box containing the gifts of the Gods. They adorn her with hair-piece and perfume.

**Pandora 2** : tragic episode : myth of indifferenciation : she descends to Earth with the box, but since human curiosity is untameable, she opens the lid and all ills come out of the box. There is confusion, what was intended as a gift of wealth is in fact a poisonous burden.

**Pandora 3** : humanistic episode ; myth of heredity : Hope, left in the box, is the lesser evil.

**Penelope 1** : tragic episode : myth of indifferenciation : she is abandoned by her husband who must go to war.

**Penelope 2** : humanist episode : myth of heredity : she is as cunning as her husband. She has promised to re-marry when the piece she is weaving will be finished. So

she destroys every night what she has weaved during the day in order to keep the pretenders waiting.

Penelope 3 heroic episode : myth of originality : Ulysses homecoming coincides with the crowning of her faithfulness.

**Psyche 1** : humanist episode : myth of heredity : a human rival to Aphrodite she is loved by Eros. But she doubts of the God's feelings. To punish her, Aphrodite enslaves her.

Psyche 2 : heroic episode : myth of originality : she is freed by Eros who takes her to Heaven.

Psyche 3 : idyllic episode : myth of complementarity : she lives with her loving God in eternal felicity.

It is clear to see that in a society where a rational and experimental method has always been opposed to the crazy imaginings of poets, mystics and theologians<sup>26</sup>, myth, which is an arrangement of symbols and images<sup>27</sup>, is different from logic, as it establishes ties between inter-hemispheric discursive and holistic thinking. And more so, semiotics of thinking could not be elaborated if it were not for this intermediary term or by-pass between intra-hemispheric analytical and somatic thinking. But if myth is a mental strategy subordinating concepts to images, as allegory subordinates images to concepts, the finality of such strategies, the pleasures they lead to, have now to be investigated.

The same sequential arrangements of actions are used in the search of pleasure. The bliss of sublimaty wouldn't lead to ecstasy if it wasn't for the mental strategy of mixed symbolization (a short-cut leading to the belief in complementarity including the setting aside of material contingency). The gore of morbidity wouldn't lead to shiver if it wasn't for the mental strategy of shear indexicalization (a short-cut leading to the belief in nothingness including the setting aside of logical iconicity). And so on for the cuteness and compassion (avoidance of analytical verification) or truth and exaltation (avoidance of non-controlled indexicalization).

---

<sup>26</sup> Gilbert Durand, *Introduction à la Mythologie. Mythes et Sociétés*, Paris, Albin Michel, 1996, p. 50.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

**3**

**aesthetics**

To talk about Art can mean to drop names and isms in a learned conversation or simply to say about a movie we have seen the night before it was a real tear-jerker. In any case, to talk about Art is to say something about one's Self. It is then obvious that beauty is in the eye of the beholder, that is to say its criteria are determined by the aesthetics of the user. Depending on what pleasure a person aims at, his/her mind elaborates strategies by which her/his body is moved or touched in a certain way.

So, if we are going to aesthetics as a mental behaviour related to the quest of a certain type of pleasure, subordinating poetics to reception, and thus inverting the traditional conception of a muse inspired art, we might as well tear down the wall separating high Art and popular art. From a semiotic point of view, the pleasure of a melodramatic soap-opera lover, as tacky as it may seem to some art scholars, is not worth less than the pleasure of a grand opera lover.

Before we go on with such an inquiry, a certain number of problems have to be tackled. Art has to be limited to human technology; the beauty of a clouded sky, a landscape or a human body, as long as they are not man-made have to be kept outside the boundaries of Art.

Another problem is the overcoming of prejudices inherent to a civilisation dominated by *logos* (discursive thinking), with a good God and a menacing passage of Time, where self-sacrifice resulting from reasoning is valued as the most highly valued behaviour and consequently what Malebranche called the "fool of the house" (imagination) regarded almost as a decease.

To have a better grasp of the physical and sensorial dimensions of artistic experience we shall then use common metaphors to designate de movements of the Soul: elevation, lowering, condescending and retrieving. To go from anxiety to exaltation, for instance, the user will have to ignore everything that could hinder his will of Self-affirmation, and concentrate on rationality.

By introducing in aesthetics the notions of desire and pleasure, we open the door to mythology (logification or symbolization of reality) and, by indexicalization, to the creation of the un-real. There has to be communication between the language-making left-hemisphere of the brain and the image-making right-hemisphere. As we have seen, Logic is the part of thinking devoted to rational grasp (Aristotle's proof); it puts a hold on the natural flow of images born from the contact between words in order to bring the discursive mind to metaphorical reduction or conclusion.

Aesthetics is devoted to the illustrative function of the holistic mind, the realm of indexes; it doesn't create compulsory sequences as Logic does, but what Aristotle calls Opinion (*gnomê*).

In symbolic logic, convention and matter are opposed to one another. An iconical index like the silhouette of a man or a woman on the doors of public restrooms is more of a conventional sign than a material one, it can be thoroughly interpreted in logical terms. The image is subordinated to the concept. On the other hand, the dove representing Peace is not entirely reducible to logical terms, According to T.Todorov, such a sign "is and

represents"<sup>28</sup>. If we start imagining the vulnerability of the dove, its softness and whiteness, in opposition to the ferociousness of predators, we indexalize the convention tying the dove to Love (Aphrodite), we go out of the boundaries of such a convention to illustrate in a more vivid and material way the association of the concept of Peace and the image of a white bird. To create the allegory of Peace's dove, is to add indexes to a symbol, to move from essence to existence, from concept to matter. We go the other way around when we concentrate on a few gender-markings in order to indicate customers in a restaurant or people in a public place what door they should go to if they want to fulfill their natural needs; and the gender difference is even more symbolized (or conceptual) if, instead of silhouettes, we find words like "Dames" et "Messieurs" on the doors.

The human mind can thus operate the symbolization of indexes and the indexicalization of symbols, and this allows imaginative illustration of otherwise dry and abstract concepts as well as the analytical demonstration of ever-flowing images.

## Art

All sign production destined to aesthetic pleasure is Art, even if the pleasure in case is horrific shriek. From the Latin *ars* (fire), the word "Art" is used to translate the Greek word *technê*. What then distinguishes Science and Art? When attempting to represent the results of an analytical process, Science has to go out of its own demonstrative way, and make use of images to illustrate it. It generally does so through indexicalization of symbols made usable for reflective thinking. But in order to maintain its status of word of truth, Science has to conceal its use of myth. Art, on the contrary, is assertive about its status of non-truth or necessary lie, even if this lie always says the truth<sup>29</sup>. This doesn't prevent discursive thinking from analyzing works of Art and, thanks to the links between reflective thinking and emotions, trying to explain them.

The reader of a science book can get a real kick out of it, especially if it helps her/his self-affirmation, even more so if he/she recognizes in the formulas and demonstrations the originality of an individual genius. The image of one's Self (crystallized in the myth of the Ego) opens the door to holistic thinking. Rational aesthetics make very little use of indexes.

Art, if it is avoiding indexicalization, tends to consider itself as science, like music in the XVIIth century. But as soon as it is presented to an illustrative mind, its demonstrative process yields to the production of apophantic signs. And according to this, we have to acknowledge the fact that scientific literature is an Art and the analysis of Art is a science.

Dramatic art, because it is of all Arts the one Aristotle addresses in *Poetics*, and because it resembles thinking in so many ways, shall then become the model of a general aesthetics.

## mimesis

<sup>28</sup> Tzvetan Todorov, *Théories du Symbole*, pp.235-243.

<sup>29</sup> Jean Cocteau, *Le Menteur*, in *Petit Théâtre de Poche*, Monaco, Éditions du Rocher, 1960.

As a specific communicational structure in which only characters have utterances, dramatic Art separates in the theatrical space the sender and the receiver. As a rule there should be no spectators on stage and no actors in the audience. The spectator shuts up, looks and listen, while the actor speaks and move as character. As soon as the Renaissance, some dramatic characters talk to themselves, and the more they do the more the world depicted on stage resembles the world in which the spectators live.

In our civilization, it is almost impossible to talk about theatre without referring to Aristotle's *Poetics*. In this short text destined to dramatic poets, the necessary link between *mimêsis* (activity of the poet) and *catharsis* (activity of the spectators) is established quite clearly. But since the Renaissance, most theories of theatre have focused on the activity of the interpreters (*hermêneusis*), mostly the actors, but also the spectators, especially from a pragmatist point of view. Interpretation is an activity shared by actors and spectators. When B.Brecht asks the audience to stay intellectually awake and not give into emotional identification with the characters, it makes it clear that no catharsis is possible without interpretation.

According to *Poetics*, the representation of a dramatic poem is the imitation in action (*drama*) of a sequence of symbolized actions (*mythos*). In dramatic art, *drama* is the substance of *mimêsis*. Plato calls this an imitation of the third degree. Unlike the words of the poets, that are the substance of the *mythos* (they represent virtual actions), the body language of the actors *is* action; her/his gestures and intonations in the given time and space of the theatrical representation have to be symbolized in order to be compared to the mythical actions they are referring to. *Mimêsis* can then be seen as a first degree mental imitation, it involves poetic indexicalization; no new symbolic meaning can be produced, and as Aristotle himself puts it "traditional fables cannot be modified" (1453 b 22). The mental activity of *hermêneusis* is a second degree imitation, it involves logical symbolization; new symbolic meaning such as stylistic originality can be brought in. And the mental activity related to catharsis is a third degree imitation involving both symbolization and indexicalization. Of course in Aristotle's time the poetic discourse and the interpretative discourse were considered as a whole. But from the Renaissance on, they have been considered as two desperate things. And the more theatre became an art of interpretation, the more the mimetic work of a dramatic poet was denied its ancient priority. As the actor took the place of the poet, the spectator took a more active part in interpretation.

If all actions are signs of existence, is existence necessarily active? Existence is subordinated to action as long as a real non-intentional action is conceivable. What we call "real life" is a concept that doesn't have to be illustrated in order to be understood. In this sense, Aristotle is right when he says that action is the most important part of a dramatic poem and that characters are given in the second place (*sumperilambanousi*). Irreparable action is a necessary of the dramatic poem, but since it cannot be experimented on stage – no one dies on stage! –, it has to be represented by symbolic

actions which are not irreparable. The gesture of putting one's hand to the heart, frown or groan, could be replaced by other gestures without modifying their common meaning.

Actors on stage are *prattontas* (from *praxis*, action in general), *energountas* (from *energêma*, action as an outpour of energy), or *drôntas* (from *dromenon*, dramatic action). A virtual or mythical action is a symbol; a theatrical action is often an index addressed to spectators, and not necessarily a symbol. As for dramatic action, it is both virtual and actual, it refers simultaneously to the poet's words and to the spectator's reaction.

Imitation is natural to mankind, but does mimicry precede the will to express one's Self? Animal mimetics are instinctive; *mimêsis* is necessarily intentional. It is an artistic mean to satisfy simultaneously two cravings: the will of expression and the need to protect one's Self by reproducing what the collective memory wants to see and hear. But the preservation of tradition is seldom the first goal of an artist, most of the time he/she uses mimicry in order to be recognized as an artist, and subsequently be loved as a person.

«...the poets are of the same nature as us» (1455 a 31)

The Greek culture, which is certainly among the most refined, make a big deal of the wild (animal) part of men and certain gods who rise to ruffle the arrogant authority of reason. Against all sophisms possible, a liberator snake (Dionysus), coiled inside every actor and spectator, adapts for the soul or puts in perspective for holistic thinking the clear and categorical visions (Apollo) a person must have to be "someone" in society. Self-mastering hides under the mask of measure a certain deal of necessary madness. Thanks to theatre, gods come, down or up, and appear on the stage; and men may go in the world of gods.

If the anthropomorphic representation of divinities on stage was not a problem for ancient Greek consciousness, is partly due to the fact that such a representation was embodied in the language. The place designed for the magical apparition (*theatre*) of gods and goddesses is comparable to the place of inner-vision (*theoria*) of each person taking part in the theatrical event. If according to the philosopher Jacques in Shakespeare's *As you like it* the world is a stage, a theory of theatre is not possible without this analogical link between the mind and the stage. Thinking (*dianoia*) is a common activity to those who are separated by the designation of a sacred place. The person showing and the person looking think the same way, in the mechanical and functional sense of the term, even if they have different opinions and ideas. And a thinking human being is better off with "tools that are carved along the veins of the wood", as the Tao puts it, it gives it flexibility.

William Morris determined three basic types of behaviour: dominance, detachment and dependence, each one having a strong specificity, it can be combined with one of the two others, but is absolutely incompatible with the other. A dominant and dependant

person will have no detachment whatsoever. A detached and dependant person has no "control issue". A detached and dominant person has no dependence.<sup>30</sup>

We shall now try to determine the behavioural pattern of the persons taking part in a theatrical event. Each one a specialist, the poet of mimesis, the actor of hermêneusis and the spectator of catharsis, combines two of these activities but remains foreign to the third one. The actor involved in mimesis and hermeneusis cannot be moved through catharsis while playing on stage; the spectator is led to catharsis by taking part in hermêneusis, but he/she is never involved in the poetic imitative invention of mimêsis.

The poet should not be dependant. When he/she works at producing the signs of *mimesis*, a consuming action like yielding to illusion is preferably avoided. The actor does not act in detachment; he/she cannot produce theatrical signs alone in her/his dressing room or break down in cathartical tears on stage. A perceptual action is not possible while one is performing a manipulative action. And the darkness in which, since R. Wagner, the audience is kept in the course of the representation, reinforces this behavioural law : since the actor does not see the spectators, he/she is less distracted by her/his own perceptual activity.

A dramatic poem presents figures in symbolic actions and actors bring these figures to life. And because the actors can operate this passage from essence to existence, the spectators can identify with the mythical figures of the mimetic poem. But these characters have no existence outside the mind of the persons involved in the theatrical event. They are used as signs of sympathy to egg on Self-affirmation or signs of antipathy to counter the dreadful effects of being the puppets of destiny. In his famous three cases, Aristotle combines dramatic actions (do/not do) and psychological context (know/not know). The first and most tragic case is that of Medea: the protagonist knows that she is accomplishing an irreparable act (the murder of her own children) and accomplishes it. There is no turn of the plot and no recognition (*anagnorisis*). The second case is that of Oedipus : the protagonist does not know he is accomplishing an irreparable act, accomplishes it and finds out to late he was mistaking. The third case, Merope : the protagonist is going to accomplish an irreparable act, but finds out in time she is mistaking, so ends up not accomplishing it.

From a semiotic point of view, the spectator is first, her/his *will zum Glauben* is the *raison d'être* of any theatrical event. The mental activity of the spectator determines the physical interpretative activity of the actors. They play for applauses. The sign production of *hermêneusis*, as a re-action, is subordinated to the sign production of catharsis. The detached behaviour implied in suspension of disbelief leads to a dominant behaviour (the manipulative actions of appreciation) through a phase of dependence (the consuming action of amazement).

Theatre is a place where certain moves or changes in the thinking/action chain are designed for the use of self-conscious citizens. There is no such move in Aristotle's first case, but in the two others a three-time sequence allows the spectator to "return" to his

---

<sup>30</sup> William Morris, *Signs, Language and Behavior*, New York, Prentice-Hall, 1946.

own Self as a suffering being (Oedipus) or as a blessed Soul (Merope). In other words, any twist of a dramatic plot implies a movement of the Soul, a mental collaboration or refusal to cooperate of the mainly symbolic discursive mind and the mainly indexical holistic mind. The first dramatic case leads to fear: the spectator having discovered the intolerable in the nearest "steps" back from her/his previous sympathy.

The human animal can only be engaged in mental reflection if signs of essence (symbols) can be translated to signs of existence (indexes), and vice versa. Self-consciousness is a mental discourse, it uses iconicity in a logical way when self-glorification is at stake, and in an analogical way when we want the Self lost in the whole. We use symbols when we want mental control over physical and emotional needs, and indexes when we wish to let go of symbolic control.

### **hermêneusis**

In the theatrical event, the task of interpreting the signs of *mimêsis* is shared between actors and spectators. But their semiotic behaviours are exact opposites. The actor has done all kinds of symbolizations and what Peirce calls subjectifications prior to the performance, but when he/she appears on stage he/she only has to illustrate them by speech and movements. Actors translate symbols into indexes.

Spectators go the other way around. They translate the indexes perceived into symbols they can understand. This rational grasp does not necessarily happen in the course of the theatrical event. No more than the imaginative illustration, it does not necessarily have to be done during the performance of actors.

From symbol to index is the way to go if one wants to experiment ecstasy or emotional identification with a soon-to-be-glorified victim of the play. From index to symbol when the mind yields to its discursive urge, and longs for the critical, sometimes cruel, pleasure of rational grasp. This kind of spectator prefers to stick to what is known and well admitted; while the imaginative spectators likes giving in to the unknown.

When the curtain falls, the roles are inverted: the spectators produce indexes of appreciation (part of which are conventional, like applauses), and the actors, while they bow and smile, analyze their meaning to recognize their object. And this symbolization occurs, even when the only concept resulting from such a mental set of operations, is mythical, like the glory of the Self.

In his *Poetics*, Aristotle addresses dramatic poetry and does not really give guidelines for interpretation, and certainly not for the actor's *hermêneusis* we call acting. For those matters, we are better off studying rhetoric. And since the actors have become the main attraction of the theatre, dramatic art has focused on highly illustrative interpretation. Over the years, the poets, stars of yesterday, went low profile with their highly demonstrative symbolizations.

Interpretation is a combination of explanation and illustration. And what distinguishes the spectator's interpretation from the actor's is that it is mental, while acting is physical. The actor struts and frets to represent the walking shadow that is the character. Dramatic

actions are symbolic; theatrical actions are indexical. As long as they seem identical, the suspension of disbelief is maintained. The spectator's behaviour is never dominant, at least not in the time and space of the theatrical event. They quietly sits in the dark, retaining the marks their presence and give in willingly to the illusion on stage, because they know that in the appreciative part of the theatrical event they get to show what they think.

We find in the *Poetics* a theory of reception based on the assessment that poets are "like us". As long as writing or acting is not just a job, the poet and/or actor are in for her/his own pleasure, like the user of a work of art. But for moral purposes it has always been considered vulgar to yield to pleasure. So we had to hide the hedonistic side of Art consumption. But semiotics of theatre puts the spectator in the driver's seat. It is for his pleasure and entertainment that poets and actors work/play on and around the stage. For the spectator's understanding of the theatrical event, poets and actors have to make sure that those persons who are like them look at what they see and listen to what they hear in the time and space of the performance.

### **catharsis**

Any attempt to describe existence and put into words the events and experiments of life are doomed to metaphor. To symbolic metaphors when particulars are reduced to one general concept, or to indexical metaphors when generalities are used as particulars. The metaphorical use of words such as «depression» or «enlightment» in any attempt to describe the movements of the Soul is of this latter kind. When we are moved, overwhelmed, we can't find precise words to describe our state of mind; we rely on metaphors of physical movements. The Soul doesn't know high from low or in from out. But through thinking processes a person can induce feelings generally associated to physical movements; and if a person is going to say something about her/his thoughts in regard to a work of Art, the knowledge of such physical movements, associated to specific pleasures, is utterly important.

The Soul (*psuchê*) is not a concrete part of the human being; it is an approximated *symbolization* of the body's feelings, of the ever-flowing index production of somatic thinking in the holistic brain, allowing a rational grasp of the Self. But the Soul is also the capacity to freely illustrate concepts, an *indexicalization* of symbols, a lively interpretation.

When we say "save our Souls", we refer to the latter, the unifying device: we re-create a representation that is what G.Durand would call "*subjectivement homogénéisante et objectivement hétérogénéisante*". By imagining the objective reality of the Soul in Life after death, the thinking subject assumes he/she is one.

When we refer to Soul music, it is not so much about the unifying device used in logical iconicity, it is much more about a leaping part of the human being. To have Soul is not to have *a* Soul, like you have *a* body, it is to take part in a spiritual experience, to

bring into existence the otherwise abstract essence. To have Soul is thus to indexicalize Spirit.

Western civilization has been using the platonic model of the human being long after it has been proved irrelevant. The allegory of a two-horse chariot led by a human being (Soul), as wild as the black horse (body) and as wise as the white one (Spirit) has been replaced by the multi-functional mind. The Ego, as a symbol of unified consciousness, has taken the place of the demonstrative mind. But the separation of the human being in three parts, if it allows seeing in the mind (*theories*) the different modalities of being, leads us to think that the description of these parts circumscribe the whole. It is not so. There is a fourth element involved, the possibility that there would be such a vehicle. The Soul as a whole is a metaphor, its descents and ascensions are allegories of the forever lasting separation and (re)union of the essential Sky and the existential Earth. For the Greeks, the elevation of the divine bride Psyche, chosen by Apollo, is the mythical center-balance of the descent of the divine into the most horrific situations of the human condition symbolized as Pandora's box.

Human thinking has created the word Soul not so much as a deductive concept, but as an image, a metaphor for the most elusive part of the human being. And by doing so, we have tried to capture the emotional part of the thinking brain and the undeniable presence of the body in the world. So if we are to use the metaphorical movements of the metaphorical Soul, we now have to establish a metaphorical geography of mental states based on the opposition of high and low, familiar to the *homo erectus*, and the more elaborated opposition of inside and out created by the *homo sapiens*.

Aesthetics is then nothing more than a game played by the mind when it moves the Soul in such a way that it can get the pleasures it aims at. Some pleasures combine, others are incompatible. In rationalistic aesthetics, Self-esteem is enhanced by both erotic and anterotic pleasure, but it is incompatible with anxiety. In Romanesque aesthetics, the anterotic pleasure becomes the most important, and it can be combined with anxiety, but it is incompatible with erotic pleasure. In tragic aesthetics, anxiety is the main thing, though it be unspeakable, and self-esteem the avoided, incompatible pleasure. Finally, in ironical aesthetics, erotic pleasure combine with self-esteem and anxiety, and the anterotic pleasure of ecstasy is incompatible.

When making use of a work of Art we get the impression of being lifted, it is either outward or inward, and upward or downward. And the pleasure associated with such movements is either exaltation or what G.Bataille calls the shameful pleasure of anxiety, compassion or ecstasy.

Catharsis generally occurs at the end of a sequence of mythical, dramatic and theatrical actions including the creation and interpretation of a work of Art. The spectator being moved understands something about her/his own life, or, if understanding is not part of the pleasurable plan, he/she is entertained. One way or another the mind produces signs of existence that can trigger the senses and produce genuine feelings. The physical re-action we identify with catharsis is the result of the spectator's mental activity much

more than it is the predictable effect of efficient acting and staging. You don't need actors to have catharsis; and the catharsis of the spectator is the "*raison d'être*" of acting.

If the audience is to be moved, everyone involved in the process of creating this emotion has to act along certain lines; a cultural context has to be shared by artists and audience in order to even attempt such a double standard type of communication. The pleasure of being loved by crowds of fans is very different from the guilty and unspeakable pleasure of painful Self-consciousness. But since pleasure taking is highly volatile, the mind makes the Soul move so quickly sometimes, that these swirls carry away the spectator like Dionysus the raging Maenads. Catharsis is a series of mental operations leading to emotional outburst (or implosion). First a symbolization of the indexes seen and heard on stage, then personal indexicalization of the reflective-imaginative mind, and finally conventional indexes like applauses or hisses.

The style of the artists is thus determined by the way the audience takes part in the interpretation, and as for the style of the dramatic poet, it was determined by the way the actors would play and by the way the audience would receive it.

Once more, Aristotle's intuition about mental activity is confirmed by neurology. The spectator, while engaged in analytical thinking, creates an emotional state and is moved without losing rational control. Different combinations of such mental activities are somehow the various styles of reception or aesthetics. According to P. Gravel, the spectator elaborates a surplus (of fear or compassion) and then evacuates it. This elaboration/evacuation process is comparable to sexual orgasm, it brings pleasure and gratification.<sup>31</sup> The revolving Soul of the user is the only object of Art.

Where fear puts a distance between the user and the subject of a work of Art, the style has to fill the gap with compassion arousing combinations of symbols and indexes. And where compassion blurs the differences between the subject and the user, the style has to compensate by fear (or awe) arousing combinations. The use of academic style in theatre is almost compulsory: the catharsis being very intense (tears or laughter), at least more commonly than in other Arts, the suspension of disbelief has to be reinforced by numerous signs of regularity. Real life may sometimes move us to tears or flabbergast us to a freeze, but it does not make us revolve and does not bring us to go rapidly from one emotional state to another. Life may be tragic or comic; it is neither a tragedy nor a comedy.

Everything that can be rationally grasped reassures the individual mind, but a person tends to get accustomed to the synthetic products of the discursive mind and ends up taking these mental constructions for realities. But when confronted to the unknown, a person may lose the use of symbols. The production of an artificial fear through entertainment allows us to handle any eventual occurrence of real fear.

While feeling fear, there are two possible behaviours: freeze, because the overwhelming power of a holistic image of danger captures our mental attention; or run, move away and engage in discursive mental activity (reflection, analysis). *Horror*, as a

---

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p.53.

style we call panic, corresponds to the first, and *humour* to the second. Puns and jokes avoid the fear factor, they are exclusively discursive, and they send the Soul *inward and up*; shrills and thrills, giving in the fear factor, send the Soul *inward and down*, they are exclusively holistic.

While feeling compassion, the Soul is sent outward. If it is condescending compassion strengthening the feeling of sameness and brotherhood, the Soul is sent *downward and out*; it is sent *upward and out* when in ecstasy.

If the melodrama lovers watching a thriller can only get their erotic pleasure of soothing sameness through intellectual deduction, they will certainly be frustrated of their usual Romanesque aesthetics anterototic pleasure. The lovers of complex plots will be seemingly frustrated of their usual heroic pleasure if they have to watch a melodrama where everything is obvious : the poor girl, abused by bad people, will certainly triumph in the end. The more simplistic the plot, the more intense the emotions of the audience, like in a sporting event.

So, if a work of Art is to aim at a certain pleasure, specific rules have to be followed. Avoid laughter when you want fear and vice versa. In discursive catharsis, the Soul can be sent upward and in, when the Self is identified with the heroic Ego; or it can be sent downward and out, when the Self recognizes its sameness in others.

In holistic catharsis, the Self is dissolved in a greater being, upward and out, by an idol or a god-like figure, and downward and in, by the ever flowing Id or Nature. Tragic aesthetics aims at this kind of critical pleasure. The unknown has to power to paralyze the dependant and weak subject, but it also has the power to attract the dominant. Dionysus is officially hated but secretly loved by the rationalists.

### 1. rationalistic aesthetics

A successful symbolization makes one feel as if he/she is being inwardly lifted. Self-exaltation is thus the result of the symbolic control applied by discursive thinking. The gesture of pointing the index-finger towards the forehead, sometimes tapping it vividly, represents this movement of the Soul. What we call a flash has nothing to do with a « coup de foudre » or love at first sight, leaving the subject numb and speechless; it is an interior lightning, always a side-effect of a rational grasp or logical solution. This Soul`s movement, when compared to anterototic ecstasy, seems to be rather egocentric. The critical pleasure craved by rationalistic aesthetics involves a certain amount of violence. If any truth is to be proclaimed, someone has to strike. And excluding a compromising *tertio* (third) is the basic activity of analytical thinking. In the psychological process of Self-Affirmation, the Ego becomes an exception, and keeping it apart from the rest of the person`s possibilities involves discrimination of the Id and of all manifestations of its indexical empire.

We have discussed in the section on catharsis how humour and emotion are necessarily opposites, how laughter is naturally cruel. And cruelty is secretly involved in the critical pleasure obtained by intellectual sanction or rational grasp. In an intellectual

game like a crossword puzzle or an Agatha Christie novel, the thinking subject is in the driver's seat, Self-consciousness is a pleasant felling about one's difference.

A person who, visiting a museum or « surfing » through an Art book, go directly to the foot-note, and read the name of the painter or the title of the work and the date of its making before he/she even consider looking at it is a rationalistic aesthete. For that Art-lover rational grasp is on top of the criteria list. This doesn't mean that such a person cannot appreciate the style and the originality of the work of Art, but that, when showing such symbolically obsessed behaviour, he/she subordinates the pleasure of being taken by (anterotic) to the pleasure of taking by recognizing a cultural token. If he/she have any interest for the style, the rationalistic aesthete will not say: « I like it » or « It touches me », but rather: « It is one of X's most famous work! » or something like that, and this affirmation will procure this Art-lover the critical pleasure of Self-exaltation. And every time he/she uses these informations in a conversation, he/she will get the same kick out of it. In that respect, the rationalistic aesthete is more a connoisseur than an amateur.

Being able to talk about Art, with the right words, the conventional names of movements, styles and Isms, is a victory over the holistic mind. For the Self-conscious individual the dissolution of distinctions into the anonymous whole would be abominable, there is no other choice than symbolization.

Certainly the style of an artist is determined by her/his aesthetic choices, originality or convention, and technical mastery or spontaneous outpouring, but also by the receptive strategies of the user towards a specific pleasure. When technical mastery and originality coincide, the user is the only one who can recognize their coincidence. And this privilege enhances the critical pleasure of individual exaltation. The use of mirroring figures in baroque Art is a sign of aesthetical egotism, the distinction of contradictory figures is pushed to its logical limit, and such style calls for rationalistic aesthetics.

## 2. romanesque aesthetics

When a thinking person is moved by someone or something that seems to be outside of her/his body, if this Object appears to be superior and highly regarded, the pleasure obtained from such an outgoing movement of the Soul is anterotic. The twin brother of Eros, Anteros, represents shared love. Unlike the blindfolded and egoistic archer, he is the god of what we would call platonic love. Fainting and tears of adoration are the behavioural symbols of this type of Art appreciation. The myth of complementarity brings the person to believe in the actual existence of an ideal other, to even let go of all the analytical and rationalistic urges of the Self and only have eyes and ears for that sublime other.

The anterotic pleasure of *ecstasis*, the delicious drowning of the particulars in the general whole, is the result of a successful inter-hemispheric relation based on analogical iconicity. The normal reaction of analytical thinking would be denegation, but the Romanesque Aesthete puts imaginative solutions first and suspends denegation as a

means to obtain the anterotic pleasure of feeling uplifted like the Virgin Mary in the glory of her Assumption.

When feeling an uplifting attraction towards the Stars, or any other celestial being, we create that divine other through metaphor. With the help of language and symbols we bring the mind to address this other (celestial) being it has created, and ultimately the body to feel the presence of that other. The muse's descending inspiration is the metaphor of reflective mental activity. From the artist's point of view, inspiration is an ascending movement, leaping or levitating are metaphors of this movement of the Soul. This movement set culminates with the heavenly bliss of communion the nirvana is the metaphor of such a mental state.

The aesthetical strategy of a person whose Soul seeks this kind of peaceful and out of time feeling will necessarily involve a kind of thinking against terrestrial attraction (with symbols) and an ascending mythology. The beloved «Other» has, by definition, a higher symbolic value than the Self. But the ecstatic Self aims at the higher level where he/she is absorbed by a larger entity, beyond the borders of personality.

An artist wanting to bring an Art-user to ecstasy must aim at the sublime, a zone where symbols and indexes work together. But to avoid any distancing of the thinking Subject naturally overwhelmed by this non-symbolic bliss, all signs of essence have to be covered by signs of existence. The features an artist gives to God or the Virgin Mary, in the case of religious Art, or the features a user gives to his phantasm, can only be an indexical approximation of their ideal (symbolic) beauty. They cannot give them too distinctive traits. That is why the characters of Michelangelo or E. Burne-Jones all look alike. For two idealist painters aiming at the anterotic reactions of Romanesque aesthetes, beauty is not the devil, it does not divide, it abolishes distances between different beings. What we call Academic style is always at the edge of banality. Most of Mozart's music belongs to this category.

### 3. Tragic aesthetics

The setback of the rational Self, when consciousness has to face the only truth fully proven until now, the overwhelming non-symbolic flow of images is seldom victorious. The movement of the Soul corresponding to such non-symbolic somatic thinking is better represented by the *fall* (of Icarus on mythological ground) called *decadence* in the aesthetical field. It involves a certain amount of guilt and Self-depreciation, and consequently gives way to cruelty, be it against one's Self.

The pleasure obtained by the tragic aesthete is one that can be compared to soothing anxiety, or as G.Bataille puts it «*l'inavouable plaisir de l'angoisse*» (the unspeakable pleasure of anxiety), could be compared to sado-masochism.

Of all the possible attitudes there are to be taken in regard of the consumption of a work of Art, the painful appreciation of the tragic aesthete is certainly the most difficult to grasp by rational thinking. But some people cultivate anxiety to get a bigger thrill out of a work of Art.

Realists have paved the way to such an aesthetic behaviour, by turning their backs to idealism, they had no other choice than the low way. The “*transport tragique*” of Racine, the tragic shriek of Hölderlin where still related to the social task of tragedy, the immunization of citizens against fear and pity and the re-establishment of apollonian order. But the tragic aesthete seeks his morbid pleasure outside of the analytical categories established by Academies of all sorts, where ambiguity reigns : in horror and gore.

The morbid pleasure of Self-destruction is very different from the cruelty of a sadist, but they are related by the same aesthetics. Laughter is a sign of a logical redemption. The metaphysical defeat of Self-consciousness, which is the human condition in the material world, can find a symbolical way through the free flow of indexes, and return to reason. Gore is a conscious descent, a wilful disintegration into nothingness.

The artist seeking to procure such a pleasure to the users of his work has what we call a panic style. The «*dérèglement des sens*» (unsettlement of the senses) of Rimbaud and W.S.Burroughs or the logical confusion of Ionesco and H. Michaux, are all artistic manifestations of the specifically tragic coincidence of contraries. The oxymoron represents such a mind strategy. When Art users seek the kind of pleasure most users would consider a discontent, the pleasure of being shaken, not even moved, as were the other aesthetes inside the boundaries of Reason, but violently blasted to the ground, it is mostly related to the predominantly symbolic environment on which they turn their back in want of physical sensation and real life experience. A descending mythology is created against the sky, and against the ordinary compassion of humans towards one another, and it is put in place by those who want to believe that nothing matters since Hell is life on earth.

The style we call *panic* tries to annihilate the prestige of technical mastery, as long as it chocks or bring the user to material ecstasy. It fights its way out of conventions, sometimes with great violence, at the expenses of original expression. The aim is assault on the Art users, and since the tragic emotion is void of relations, the antirhythmic suspension becomes necessary to meet as “*arrachement*” the change and the exchange of representations at such a summit that it is not the change of representations but representation itself which appears, the artist must elaborate a strategy of choc.

In the XXth. Century, M. Duchamp’s urinary and J.Cage’s silences are documented masterpieces in such style. But also, earlier in history, when after the Council of Trento the Jesuits used tragedy to convey the modern and accessible physical experiment of divinity. And long before the Renaissance, many brands of gymnosophy, like yoga, have used the power of nothingness to trigger a violent reaction in the empire of symbols. Of course there is in those manifestations of panic style, the tragic acknowledgement that symbols are as necessary to Art as indexes. In a nostalgic way by symbolists and in a revolutionary way by modernists.

#### 4. Ironic aesthetics

When a proud mother pins on the frig door the latest drawing of her child, what pleasure does she get? A mixture of pride and compassion, a kind of fear related Self-gratification and a kind of pity, since she joint-ventures in an artistic project with her child. At the same time the mother plays the game of believing in her child's talent, she fears the autonomy it will give her/him. When the child draws a house and a sun, like she taught her/him, the style depends more on symbols and thus, though naive, tends to install the predominance of analytical thinking, but when the child artist indulges in free expression and scribbles a spontaneous use of form and colour, the naive style then tends towards somatic thinking and reveals its link to tragic aesthetics. The mother protects the child and has pity for her/him as long as the work of Art is what she expects; if it is not at all what she expects, her child's Art challenges her symbolic competence.

The compassionate user of Art being incapable of producing a clear symbolic explanation of her/his behaviour. The verb "to understand", with its double meaning, gives us the opportunity to see certain gestures everyday behaviour as metaphors of ways of thinking. The difference between the lyrical movement of the Soul acknowledging its own resemblance with weaker Souls such as that of the child artist (outward + downward) and the epic movement of Self-asserting rational grasp (inward + upward).

The pleasure obtained by such aesthetics is the exact contrary of the anterotic pleasure we have discussed in Romanesque aesthetics. Where the presence of the adored other was absolutely necessary, the Self is here satisfied by itself, if we may say so. Is that saying that any compassion contains a certain amount of Self-satisfaction? Yes. And that is why we call erotic the pleasure associated with ironical aesthetics.

Why ironical? Every time a sentence like «Giving brings more joy than receiving» is used in conversation, it tries to hide the egotistic, and sometimes cruel pleasure of taking or sometimes tricking (seducing) someone into one's own erotic pleasure of Self-satisfaction. In general, the ironical aesthete is not well educated about Art, or pretends he/she isn't, and he/she has a keen consciousness of her/his inferiority, every one of his/her statements is an understatement hiding a secret will to be recognized as the equal of high Art, or even do better.

Ironical aesthetes find Beauty in common things and everyday life. The use of an expression like «It's so cute! » is a typical expression of such an appreciation of Art. And such behaviour involves a specific value order of pleasures. If Erotic pleasure sometimes hide cruelty (deviated compassion), it can also be the stage of heroic Self glorification (compassion for one's Self).

The style corresponding to these aesthetics is what we call primitive style. A minimum of technical skill, or the return to the minimal for the well educated artists of the Old School. The artists wanting to procure good feelings to their users turn their back to tragedy and denial, they want the users to have fun and express themselves through their works of Art. To make sure they obtain this, they put an indexical mask on symbols. The free expression of an original artistic personality is expressed through pictorial conventions. In the early XXth century, the style known as expressionism is definitely a primitive style. In his famous painting *The Scream*, Edvard Munch is not trying to

overthrow all conventions, he uses symbols, but he “masks” them with an indexical coat of highly personalized expression.

If irony can be defined as a technical device allowing one to look intellectually inferior to what one really is, usually by understatement, saying less to mean more, then all aesthetic attempts to think up a strategic path leading to compassion have to raise the value of spontaneity and sameness, which involves lowering the value of virtuosity and authenticity.

Academic style was a perfect match for Romanesque aesthetics; the artistic strategy involved was aiming at the user's ecstasy. And in order to achieve this ordeal, a certain distance had to be maintained between the user and Art high enough to be kept in a museum. Ironic aesthetics, aiming at compassion, finds in primitive styles the perfect artistic strategy to speed up the user's mental sign production of «good» feelings.

Ironical aesthetics brings Art out of the museum, into the lives of real people. That is why primitive style is often a parodic reminder of academic style, freed from its solemnity. The semiotic approach to Aesthetics helps us in opposing a historical vision of Art, still largely accepted and taught in Art schools, where each style tends to be attached to a time period that defines it and leading, in many cases, to a real confusion. For instance, the terms «baroque» and «classical» are so overly used – think of classic rock or Coca-Cola - that it is impossible to know exactly what they mean.

In an attempt to clarify our aesthetic vocabulary, we have given to the four basic styles a non-historical definition simply deduced from the specific thinking related to such and such mental sign production. Of course, this doesn't stop history, nor language evolution; at certain time periods certain styles were more in use than the others. But a neurosemiotic study of aesthetics calls for a distinction between style and artistic movements. Style is a rhetorical strategy taken by the artist to «seduce» the user; an artistic movement is an important amount of artistic exchanges between artists and users along more or less the same aesthetic values.

Like the «*bassins sémantiques*» described by Gilbert Durant in *L'introduction à la Mythologie*, artistic movements have phases (streaming, separation, confluence, naming of a river, colonisation of the shores, meanders and deltas), and they are not exclusive to one another. Sometimes they merge and flow jointly. Classicism, Romanticism, Realism and Modernism are the names of these artistic movements and each one of these movements lasts for about nine generations. So each style is primarily given by the context in which the artist works, it evolves into one's own way, or manner, and dies after it no longer serves the changing demands of the user's aesthetics.

In Modern times, Classicism was born in the ashes of medieval Romanticism, in the morbid context of a surging artistic movement called Realism, it was first seen in the will to imitate the Ancients' models and the naive belief that the Renaissance man could equal Plato, Phidias or Aristotle. Then Classicism evolved, as it absorbed the Ancient's model, into an aesthetic need of authenticity, not only symmetry but truth was now the law. And then the institutionalization of the Arts brought this movement to an end, what

History has called neo-classicism in the XVIIIth century, is the swan's song of Classicism, the last kind of bigger wave of the lowering tide.

Romanticism was born on the ashes of Realism. It was first felt, in the context of baroque allegories, as the expressionist center-part to the vision of Art as science. Certainly Art was a serious thing, but so was the genius of children. Then, after finding an understanding home where academic style was established, Romanticism died as artists turn to various panic styles.

From this stand-point Art History can no longer impose its historical categories to Semiotics, but has to adapt its discourse to a broader categorization, a more human view of thinking, including somatic thinking and feelings. For a Semiotician, no art can be excluded from the field of her/his studies, not even a sunset, or some other manifestations of beauty somehow created by the viewer or the listener, as long as it brings pleasure to its user. Of course, for rationalistic aesthetics, since the identity of an artist is a warrant of the quality of her/his work, a rainbow may be very beautiful, it is not Art.