

THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE SOCIAL IN HUMAN PHENOMENA

Today, the linguistic approach offers us an irreplaceable method for the direct study of the constitutive processes of social phenomena (A. Delobelle, 1981). In fact, each social phenomenon is basically inhabited or interpreted by language. It is language processes that give its ramifications to the social and form distinct sub-groups in it. This is why, when these processes are observed in their formal dynamics, outside their vehiculated “contents,” it is as though we find ourselves faced with the very functioning of the social: as though we have in it a typically experimental terrain for the direct study of social phenomena.

Boas pointed out that “the appearance of the most fundamental grammatical concepts in all language must be considered as the proof of the unity of basic psychological processes” (quoted in T. Todorov, 1978, p. 48). In spite of the extreme variety in particular grammars, many linguists today admit the possibility of defining a “natural logic” of human language, directly based on what is constant and universal in human activity. To describe and formulate this logic is therefore the equivalent of a definition of the parabola of the ways of giving meaning that are at

Translated by Jeanne Ferguson.

man's disposal and which he uses every day, formal logic being only one of them. Is that not the high road to a veritable theory of human phenomena and, particularly, to a theory of social phenomena?

Our main purpose in this article is to try to situate language or semiological processes within the ensemble of human phenomena. Essentially, it will be a matter of establishing the status of the question by synthesizing the opinions of various authors. In spite of some terminological variants from one author to another, a certain consensus appears between them as far as the principal criteria that should enter into defining the broad sectors within human phenomena are concerned. The interest of the study also comes from the possibility of going beyond the simple classification of these phenomena in order to observe the process of engendering of the different ways of expression or communication. The specificity of language (or social) phenomena will thus appear all the more obvious.*

1. THE HUMORAL AND THE NEURONIC

According to Thomas A. Sebeok, "there is no living creature that does not use signs". We may even go so far as to "establish an equality between semiotic processes and life itself", to the degree in which we have the right to consider that "the most fundamental property of life is, precisely, the semiotic phenomenon" (in E. Morin, M. Piattelli-Palmarini (eds.), 1974, pp. 65-66).

The *negative biological entropy* of natural sciences says the same thing. In fact, if a completely closed or isolated system is only an abstraction, a concrete ensemble is necessarily a synonym for order, that is, negative entropy. Thus, each concrete material phenomenon is the contrary of a closed system. The difference between the order that reigns in a living organism depends on the *differentiated* nature of exchanges with the environment. "Physicists know that the value of a message is not taken into account as far as information is concerned. A theorem of Einstein or the

* To understand the articulation of the subdivision of this study, see Diagram I, p. 66.

chance grouping of letters contain the same amount of information if the number of letters is at all the same [...] For the physicist, all genes—if they enclose the same number of bases—have the same information, that is, the same content that is the negative entropy. However, the biologist knows that each gene is different from any other, because each gene governs the synthesis of a specific given protein. The biologist readily speaks of information for the synthesis of a given enzyme. The concept of probability has disappeared, and the idea of quality, specific value, is included in the biological concept of genetic information [...] For the biologist, ‘genetic information’ refers to an actual given structure or to an order of hereditary material and not to the negative entropy of this structure. The physicist and the biologist must be aware of this situation” (A. Lwoff, 1970, pp. 174-175).

If all life is defined thus by its “biological” negative entropy, Paul Watzlawick demonstrates that a distinction between two different processes soon asserts itself: “The functional units (or neurons) of the central nervous system receive what we call ‘quanta’ of information through the intermediary of the connecting elements (synapses). Arriving at the synapses, these ‘packages’ of information induce potential post-synaptic excitors or inhibitors that are totalized by the neuron and elicit or inhibit its excitation. We can say, then, that this specific aspect of neuron activity—the release or non-release of excitation—transmits a binary digital information. The neuro-vegetative system itself is not based on a digitalization of information. This system communicates by sending discreet quantities of specific substances into circulation. Moreover, within the organism neuronic and humoral communications are not simply juxtaposed; they complete and depend on each other, often in a very complex way” (P. Watzlawick *et al.*, 1972, p. 57).

This difference between the humoral (non-digital), connected to the neuro-vegetative system and the neuronic (digital), connected to the central nervous system, thus opposes ungrouped exchanges in quanta to “quantic” messages, excitors or inhibitors. This opposition is on an equal footing with that which exists between types of retroactions: to the homeostatic function of the neuro-vegetative system is opposed the differentiating (significant?) system of neuronic communications. Subsequently, of these two

“informative” systems, one, humoral, is oriented toward the adjustment of the *internal* functions of the organism itself, while the other, neuronc, is oriented toward adaptation to the *exterior* environment, that is, to the psycho-social life of the individual (A. Delobelle, 1980, pp. 85-108). Studies on the communication of insects should allow the specification of the evolutionist “stages” of these “quantic” exchanges, through living species (C. Masson, R. Brossut, 1981).

2. PERCEPTIONS AND ACTIONS

Thus it is the same neuronc communications that make up the fundamental process in which all means of expression or communication of the individual occur. Also, it is in this perspective that we must reconsider the Saussurian formula according to which “in the end, everything is psychological in language” (F. de Saussure, 1966, p. 21). However, quite normally, we must begin by distinguishing between what is perception and what is emission or action in the brain of the individual. In the first case, we may turn to the concept of indices, now entered into current usage. If anything at all may serve as an index for the individual the notes must be capable of being specified by comparison with those that appear in the action of emission. However, what characterizes the index is its quality of *passive* object of a perception of the individual, as against what is the *active* product of an intentional conduct on his part.

For Charles S. Peirce, who launched the term, an *index* “is a sign that would immediately lose the characteristic that makes it a sign if its object were suppressed, but would not lose this characteristic if there were not an interpreter”. For example, he mentions the hole left by a gunshot: “without the gun there would have been no hole, but there is a hole, whether someone had the idea to attribute it to a gunshot or not”. The index is thus “in dynamic and spatial connection with the individual object on the one hand and the sense or memory of the person for whom it serves as a sign on the other”. The index is authentic in character: it “refers to the object it denotes because it is really affected by that object”. It is always a matter of “a fact that, in common experience, natu-

Individual and Social in Human Phenomena

rally implies or announces another fact: in this sense we would say that black clouds are an index of rain and smoke is an index of fire". The index acts "by blind impulse". "The index affirms nothing; it simply says, 'There'. It seizes one's eyes, so to speak, and forces them to look at a particular object, and that is all." "Psychologically, the action of indices depends on the association by contiguity and not on association through resemblance or intellectual operations" (Ch. S. Peirce, 1978, pp. 139-161). As such, this concept of index is synonymous with that of *symptom*, used especially in medicine, but it has a broader acceptance and a more psycho-sociological accent. Since it is passive in nature, the reality of the index is "exterior to linguistics" (G. Mounin (ed.), 1974, p. 174).

Indices play a particularly important role in the coordination of face-to-face relationships or in situations in which behavior is directly perceptible (M. Argyle, 1978). From this comes the qualifier "natural" that is often given to the index. It functions in a relatively unconscious way, spontaneously adjusting behavior. It is of the order of the concrete, like behavior. This last "has an exceedingly fundamental property and because of this fact often escapes attention: *behavior has no opposite*. In other words, there is no "non-behavior", or more simply, one cannot *not* have a behavior. Now, if we admit that in an interaction all behavior has the value or message, that is, it is a communication, it follows that one cannot *not* communicate, whether one wishes to or not. Activity or inactivity, speech or silence, everything has the value of a message" (P. Watzlawick, *et al.*, 1972, pp. 45-46). Language as such cannot thus occasion indices, since it permits negation, but a tone of voice can.

"Body language" is obviously a particularly important source of indices. There is in it a domain, at once vast and complex, that still essentially escapes us. Some disciplines, certain ones ancient, like prosody, others more recent, such as kinetics, have made it their object of study (P. Guiraud, 1960, pp. 71-125). An entire phenomenology of behavior is waiting to be developed, in which the "natural" is intermixed with the "cultural". It is, however, practiced by everyone, currently, in daily life.

As opposed to perception and its indices (or symptoms) *action* defines the "operation of a being considered as produced by this

being and not by an exterior cause”, that is, “by its own initiative, by a voluntary activity that is not determined either by its nature or by anything exterior”. We are thus beyond the organic, without being subjected to the determinism of the environment, in a place where “the spontaneity of living beings, and particularly man, is manifested”. In this same place in which we had, with respect to perception and indices, the concrete impossibility of individual non-behavior, we have with respect to action the famous statement according to which “what does not act does not exist”. We are thus still touching the very definition of the individual as a psychosocial being. Let us also note in this regard that, linked to the verb *to act* (Latin, *agere*, to do) the term of action has been interpreted in philosophy in two complementary ways: as “interior feeling of effort or will”, and as the ensemble of “exterior movements which are its manifestation”. In the last case, action “is always the creation of an event, of a phenomenon, thus always a beginning for which the will that produces it is responsible” (A. Lalande (ed.), 1968, pp. 19-23).

Action ends in a construction, whatever it may be. Thus we must distinguish between the production and the product. The first has a *temporal* dimension: it concerns the formative moments or stages dictating the development of the production itself. The product appears in a *spatial* dimension: it appears as the formal and structural state of relations between elements that are simultaneously present at the same place. The first point of view, temporal, implies an analytical process; the second point of view, spatial, is of a synthetic nature.

A linguistic example may show us concretely how these two dimensions are at the same time distinct and complementary. In an expression such as the French “*une bonne bière*”, “we see that the linguistic units, whether signs or phonemes, have two distinct kinds of rapport: on the one hand, we have the rapports in the statement that are called syntagmatic and are directly observable; they are for example, the rapports of /bòn/ with its neighbors /ün/ and /bier/ and those of /n/ with the /ò/ that precedes it in /bòn/ and the /ü/ that it follows in /ün/. On the other hand, we have the rapports that we conceive between the units that may figure in the same context and that, at least in this context, mutually exclude each other. These rapports are called

paradigmatic and are designated as oppositions: *bonne, excellente, mauvaise*, that may figure in the same contexts, are in a rapport of opposition. It is the same for adjectives designating colors, that may all figure in *le livre...* and *... a disparu*. There is opposition between /n/, /t/, /s/, /l/, that may figure at the end after /bò-/ (A. Martinet, 1976, p. 27). At each stage of a production, the obligation to choose therefore involves opposite rapports between terms belonging to the same technical or semiotic ensemble and able to take their place at the same stage or figure in the same context. On the other hand, the produced result or statement has a structure that is contrastive or syntagmatic that allows it to be recognized and gives the sentence its meaning.

In other words, this double dimension of action, temporal and spatial at the same time, implies a digital or “quantic” principle after the production, just because of the oppositions between possible choices, but an analogical principle in the product itself, its elements, although differentiated, opening up to each other in a synthetic process.

To say that in any action the moments of production obey a digital or binary principle is to say that they always function according to a logic of “all or nothing”. We have an obvious model of this in the units of information or bits (binary digits) of binary computers (P. Watzlawick *et al.*, 1972, pp. 57-58). Any production thus involves at the same time a choice between opposite units and an effectuation in time, the *subject* being the example that puts this procedure into action. In each moment of the procedure, author, action and time coincide to the point of becoming synonyms.

If each action has a binary character, as the elaboration of an object, this necessarily entails certain “technical” consequences for that object. It will unfailingly undergo an analytical transformation of *decomposition*, the action not being able to produce it all at one time. Each production is a succession of gestures, proper to each moment, having for objective the composition of the object beginning with distinct elements. For example, in language, the intended message will have to be in some way mentally “taken apart” and concretely translated into a succession of words and phrases that the one who hears it will recompose also mentally, so that he can perceive its global meaning. Objectively, the binary

functioning of the moments of action entails the constitution and definition of technical elements or units that may be employed later in production, especially if it has a repetitive character. Since Saussure, everyone knows how much this operation of segmentation and “paradigmatic” selection is characteristic of natural languages. Etymologically, the idea of *sign* goes back to the idea of decomposition, the Latin *secare*, to cut, having the same root, like the French *scier* (L. Benoist, 1977, p. 17).

On the other hand, the product of whatever action is a concrete space, of an analogical nature: it is constructed on the scalar mode of discrete magnitudes. The oppositive rapport of the “all or nothing” type of binary data completely disappears to yield to rapports of the “more or less” type, as in ordinal magnitudes. We are thus in the domain of the intensive and the qualitative, this space being synthetic by nature and occasioning, because of this fact, inductions of values, these emerging from connections that are internal to the object. Again, the use of analogical calculus in certain computers may help to understand this kind of functioning (P. Watzlawick, *et al.*, 1972, pp. 57-58).

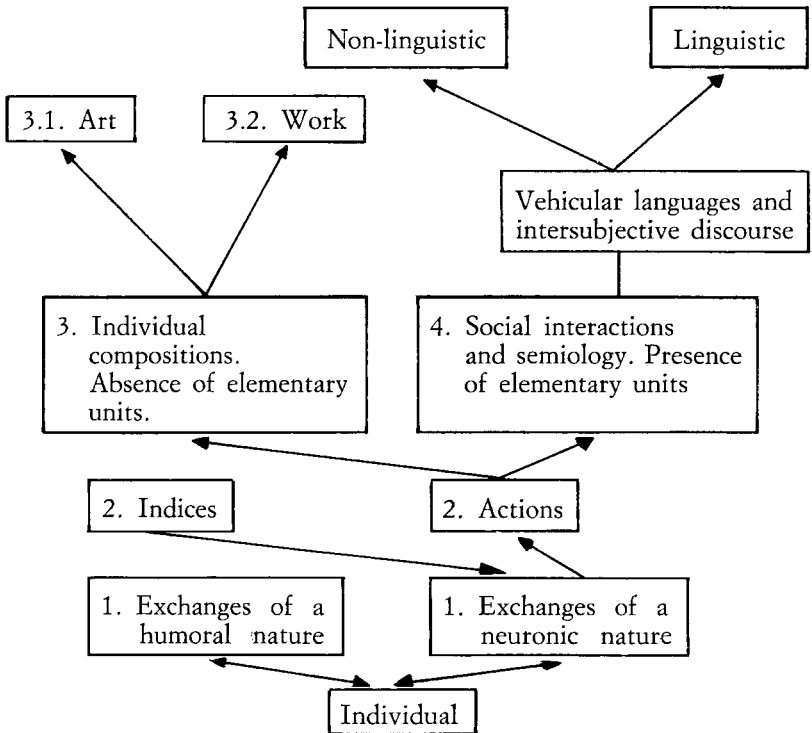
This space produced implies its own “technical” consequences just because of its analogical functioning. Quite normally, the cutting up into elementary units loses its pertinence. The idea of elementary units no longer has sense and yields to possible components, variable according to context and recognizable only by their particular distinctive traits. Everything becomes a function of the *composition of the ensemble* itself. Differently from the elementary units of production, these components may no longer even offer predictability from one group to another. At the same time, if the phases of production require a sequential order that may eventually go so far as the fixing of precise norms of construction, the greatest freedom may reign at the interior of this analogical space. Moreover, if the choices reveal the subject in the binary procedures of production, it is the *style* of the composition that reveals it in the analogous space thus produced. Simultaneously, to the temporal dimension of the production succeeds the temporality of the spatial dimension of the product.

Thus we have a double way of functioning of action, both time and space, choice and style. However, depending on the case, attention is given more to the production or to the product.

Individual and Social in Human Phenomena

Distinguishing between the *composed meaning* and the *divided meaning* of a statement, the *Logique de Port-Royal* (1622) had already discerned this double dimension and the theoretical difficulties to which it could give rise. Thus, “an expression is taken in the composed sense when the elements composing it must be understood, from the point of view of meaning, as dependent on each other and forming a solid whole,” but “it is taken in the divided sense when certain of these elements must preserve a proper and independent meaning from the rest of the formula,” that is, when they must keep a predictability, a general sense

Diagram I: Messages and Communications.



Legend:

—>: Subdivisions (species) and orientations.

(A. Lalande (ed.), 1968, p. 974). We will say, therefore, that a product (spatial) is interpreted in a “composed sense,” while production (temporal) always functions in a “divided sense”.

Action being thus defined, it remains to discover the species. Now, everything indicates that “the idea of unity is at the center of the problematic with which we are concerned and that no serious theory can be proposed if it overlooks or sidesteps the question of unity” (E. Benveniste, 1974, p. 57). If we examine action with the aid of this *experimental* criterion, two distinct sectors appear: the individual and the social. In the first, everything depends directly on the individual; in the second, conventional mediations are essential to its action, which becomes in a way indirect and reveals the insurmountable presence of the social. Let us look at these two major sectors, one after the other, through their subspecies.

3. INDIVIDUAL CREATIONS AND COMPOSITIONS

The canonical example is given to us by esthetic creation, especially in plastic arts such as drawing or painting. The analogical reigns throughout. Observation shows that logically “the existence itself of units [...] becomes a matter for discussion.” If there are units it can only be at the level of ensemble of each composed space, as this is distinguished from its neighbors: “Art here is never only a particular work of art, in which the artist freely installs oppositions and values at his will, having neither an ‘answer to wait for nor contradictions to eliminate, but a view to express, according to conscious or unconscious criteria to which the entire composition bears witness and of which it becomes the manifestation.” In the work of art, “the meaning is imprinted by the author on the work” and is essentially an affair of individual psychology. On the contrary, in the conventional or the social, “meaning is expressed by the particular elements in an isolated state, independently of the liaisons that they may contract” according to context and circumstances. In art, we thus see that “meaning is detached from the relationships that organize a closed world,” while in language, “it is inherent in the signs” themselves. Consequently, “the meaning of art

Individual and Social in Human Phenomena

never refers to an identically-received convention between partners,” since it is not even assured of remaining identical from one work to another, with the same artist (E. Benveniste, 1974, pp. 57-59).

This is what Etienne Souriau called the “presentative” character of art, as opposed to iconic or “representative” expression. As such, the work of art is in fact characterized by its “subject organization.” This “totally grasps and directly concerns the work itself—cathedral or obelisk, sonata or quartet, pavan or *chaconne*.” We must recognize then that “to speak as a logician [...] or a metaphysician, it is in being a sonata or a cathedral that are inherent, as to their subject, all the attributes, morphological or others, that contribute to its structure.” (E. Souriau, 1969, pp. 88-89).

Let us take the example of the colors in a painting, which might appear as so many elementary units. Observation shows “that they also compose a scale whose principal degrees are identified by their name. They are designated; they do not designate. They refer to nothing, suggest nothing in an unequivocal way. The artist chooses them, mixes them, disposes them as he likes on the canvas, and it is finally in the composition itself that they become organized and take on, technically speaking, a “meaning,” through selection and arrangement. The artist thus creates his own semiotics: he sets up his oppositions in strokes that he himself makes meaningful in their order. Thus he does not receive a repertory of signs, recognized as such, and he does not establish one. Color, this material, brings with it an unlimited variety of gradations in tone, none of which would have an equivalence with a linguistic ‘sign.’” Colors thus do not have, in themselves, a semantic function. Everything is always a function of the spatial ensemble itself: “the meaningful relations of artistic ‘expression’ are to be found inside a composition.” Inside this, they induce not meaningful but esthetic values. (E. Benveniste, 1974, pp. 58-59).

Since there are no elementary units, there obviously cannot be a question of distinguishing between the form and the content, as between the signifiant and the signified of the signs of language. Quite the contrary, form would only serve to manifest the structure itself of the selected content. If “articulated expres-

sion is a system of arbitrary signs, with no noticeable rapport with the objects it proposes to signify," it is quite otherwise with art, in which "a noticeable relationship continues to exist between the sign and the object". Instead of the "semantic fission" between the signifying and the signified of the units, we have an esthetic "fusion" between form and content. Their rapport is rather the one, homological, of *expressing* and *expressed*: "The particular character of the language of art is that there is always a very profound homology between the structure of the signified and the structure of the signifying" (C. Lévi-Strauss, 1961, pp. 96-98; 117; Ch. Metz, 1964, p. 84).

In a work of art, this equality of the expression and the expressed gives to the form a particular function: it is always both difference and identity, both what distinguishes similar compositions and what gives the work its originality, its individuality, its own structure. In art, form is always an *individualizing differentiation*. In a way, space in a pure state, the plastic composition is entirely in this form that functions like an immanent and singular *telos*. On the contrary, in the conventional or the social an exterior *finality* intervenes in the involved units. Extrinsic, this *finality* is imposed by the speaking subjects. Veritable systems of elementary units then appear. Logically, they function in the instrumental mood as so many recurrent means eventually submitted to formalization and convention (A. Delobelle, 1980, pp. 434-446, 552-555). However, this absence of elementary units in art has an important consequence: the simultaneous concrete and universal character of plastic compositions. Not involving conventional units, art, because it is "presentative" (or "subjective") is fundamentally polyvalent. It reaches what may be defined as the *pansemic*, that is, "an absence of meaning that is full of all meanings", "a plenitude of virtualities" (R. Barthes, 1964, p. 46).

Individual action is thus defined beginning with this archetype that makes up artistic creation. Now, we must distinguish species and sub-species. The principal difference is in the opposition between the sovereign freedom enjoyed by the subject in artistic creation and the concrete restrictions that are imposed on him in his utilitarian action. Direct individual action is divided into two distinct sectors: art and work.

Individual and Social in Human Phenomena

3.1 Esthetic or artistic creation

Of scholarly origin, the notion of esthetics means etymologically to designate individual sensibility to beauty or ugliness, especially if it is a matter, as in art, of forms or objects artificially created by man. The esthetic emotion is thus of an affective nature, that is, profoundly individual. It consists of that particular and specific kind of pleasure that is taken in the perception or expression in the domain of non-utilitarian, gratuitous things. Because of its scientific and philosophical origin, however, the notion of esthetics introduces a good number of theoretical problems. The problem becomes much simpler and more concrete when it is put in terms of poetics.

Taking the definition of Jacques Maritain, "Art and poetry cannot do without each other," even though the two terms are "far from being synonyms." He explains, "By art, I mean the productive or fabricating creative act of the human spirit. By poetry, I mean not the particular art of writing verse but something more general and primordial: that intercommunication between the interior being of things and the interior being of the human self that is a sort of divination (as Antiquity well knew: in Latin *vates* means both poet and prophet). Poetry in this sense is the secret life of each of the arts and all the arts. It is another word for what Plato called *mousiké*." For Coleridge, called on for support, "the generic term that contains all the fine arts as its species" is that of poetry (J. Maritain, 1966, p. 1). To make the distinction concerning this generic meaning of the literary idea of poetry, we will use the term poetics. The difference is established by the fact that in poetry articulated units are brought in: therefore it is a specific form of language, an echo of poetics in vehicular language.

Poetic or artistic expression, then, is none other than *creativity itself*, as it is understood in its individual origin and in what constitutes it: this divinatory and analogical art in which the sensibility of the person finds an echo in the structure of things. We may say with Claude Lévi-Strauss that this particular relationship assumes, from the beginning, two distinct planes, "two great orders of facts": that of nature and that of *culture*, "one thanks to which we depend on animality by all that we

are, [...] and the other, all this artificial universe that is the one in which we live as members of a society” and that ethnology or human sciences have in view to observe and define. However, this cultural act is at the same time an operation of the *poetic promotion* of the real: “The property itself of the esthetic transition, let us say, of the esthetic promotion” or poetic experience, is to bring to this human or cultural level “something that does not exist in this fashion or in this aspect in the raw state.” Thus, the artist “is faced with an object and, really, in the face of that object, there is an abstraction, an aspiration, that makes of the object, which was a natural thing, a cultural thing.” This action of promotion to the human, “if it is successful, must cause the appearance of certain fundamental properties that are common to the sign and to the object, a structure that is manifest in the sign and is normally dissimulated in the object but, due to its plastic or poetic representation, suddenly appears” (C. Lévi-Strauss, 1961, pp. 130-132, 154).

To speak of a work of art as a linguistic sign is valid only metaphorically. An esthetic composition does not permit an articulation between a visual meaning and a signified meaning referring to something on the exterior. Considering the distinction emphasized by Frege between the (internal) sense and the (external) reference, such a composition is only a universe in itself. It is “what pleases universally and without concept,” Kant said. This is why it may equally take the place of the imaginary. Everything in it is immediately contextual: “It is not the object itself that is the work of art,” but only “certain dispositions, certain arrangements, certain *rapprochements* between things” (C. Lévi-Strauss, 1961, p. 101). Art is thus typically in this partition of things, of which the formal process, living, in a way, is reinvented, re-expressed inside the work, by the fact alone of the poetic composition itself.

The nature of the object is of little importance, in the end, provided that this “reality of a semantic order” finds an echo in man’s spirit. The esthetic emotion is always that which is caught by this formal process, in some way natural, of things between themselves. An esthetic value is like the formal truth of the concrete. It is at the same time the fruit of a particularly rich intercommunication of equal to equal, of man and his en-

Individual and Social in Human Phenomena

vironment, in which everything is in the pleasure of discovery and reinvention of these forms of the concrete that “are common to him with the structure and the way of functioning of the human spirit” itself; a dialogue that is all gratuitous, sensitive and free and is the contrary of a technical or scientific utilitarian approach to the real: “A shell is not the same thing in a gallery of a Museum of Natural History as on the table of an amateur of curiosities...” (C. Lévi-Strauss, 1961, pp. 101, 132, 136). Art is, then, fundamentally of a psychological nature: it “proceeds from the spirit of man, from his reactions when faced with the universe” (E. H. Gombrich, 1971, pp. 118-119).

The poetic or artistic composition is also distinguishable from the icon, which is the reproduction of the object itself in its more or less conventional morphology and is thus properly a representation (C. S. Peirce, 1978, pp. 148-49). In this sense, the iconic belongs to the “representative arts,” since it is always the articulation of a visual signifier and a signified identifying an exterior referent, while in properly esthetic compositions, “work and object are fused” (E. Souriau, 1969, pp. 88-89). Emile Benveniste defined the work of art in the same way by qualifying it as “figuration,” as opposed to “figures,” that is, iconic representation: the first is characterized by the freedom of its internal connection, while the second has the traits of the represented object imposed on it, with all the social conventions that may involve. (E. Benveniste, 1974, pp. 58-59).

Thus defined, the esthetic composition arises from two large sectors, according to the spatial or temporal nature of the work. The first is that of *plastic art*. Such compositions do not really admit elementary units. In fact, “Is there something in common at the base of all these arts if not the vague notion of ‘plastic’? Do we find in each of them, be it only in one, a formal entity that we may call a unit of the system under consideration? But what can be the unit of painting, or drawing? Is it the figure, the line, the color? Does the question so put have a meaning?” On the other hand, something like the moments of action appear in the *performing arts*, the other sector. For example, “music is made up of sounds that have a musical status when they are designated and classed as notes.” However, they “have an organizing framework, the scale, in which they enter as discrete

units, disconnected from each other, in a fixed number, each characterized by a constant number of vibrations in a given time." Thus comparable to a scale of magnitude, the musical scale "fixes the paradigm of the notes" (Benveniste, 1974, pp. 54-56). In short, in both of these artistic sectors the analogical reigns supreme, the "units" being in all cases of a scalar type, even in the performing arts.

These two sectors are found as synonyms in the distinction established by Nelson Goodman between *autographic arts* and *allographic arts*. The first, represented by painting or sculpture, correspond to works that are a universe in themselves, in which form and essence are inseparable. These works are always there, concretely existing through themselves. However, the second, allographic, depend on "notational systems." They assume qualities of performance, because they do not exist concretely except to the degree in which their works are recreated *hic et nunc*. Symphonic music is a striking example (N. Goodman, 1968). These works must then be reinterpreted, performed; if not, they exist only on paper, abstractly. Their successive performances are themselves the function of a sort of ideal, mental model that each performer carries within himself.

However, these particularities of the performing, or allographic, arts, are accompanied by something more important: the very manner in which their temporal dimension is presented. These forms of art that unfold in time, like music or dance, do not really obey a linear principle. They do not have articulated units, nor do they incorporate linear temporality, as words do. Curiously, we are faced with a sort of atemporal action, if these two terms may be coupled.

For example, "music is a system that functions on two axes: the axis of simultaneities and the axis of sequences. We could imagine a homology with the functioning of language on its two axes, paradigmatic and syntagmatic. Now, the axis of simultaneities in music contradicts the principle itself of paradigmatics in language, that is, the principle of selection, excluding all intra-segmental simultaneity; and the axis of sequences in music no more coincides with the syntagmatic axis of language, since musical sequence is compatible with the simultaneity of sounds and, furthermore, is not subjected to any restriction of liaison

Individual and Social in Human Phenomena

or exclusion with respect to whatever sound or group of sounds there may be. Thus the musical combinative that comes from harmony or counterpoint has no equivalent in language, in which paradigm and syntagm are submitted to specific dispositions: rules of compatibility, selectivity, recurrence, and so on, on which depend statistical frequency and predictability on one hand and the possibility to construct intelligent statements on the other. This difference does not depend on a musical system nor on the chosen scale; serial dodecaphony is subject to it as well as diatonics" (Benveniste, 1974, pp. 55-59). Time is thus *reversible*: it may unroll on a plurality of axes at the same time, because of the extreme flexibility of the connections between the units of the scale. Analogy thus escapes the restraints of an irreversible time.

Plastic arts or performing arts, poetic compositions thus present properties that are equal to none other. Each time constituting an autonomous whole, each esthetic composition is an analogous space whose internal connections are always reversible. In spite of the efforts that each artistic creation demands of its author, it is not appreciated, experienced or alive except in disposable or leisure time, that is, a time outside of time. The extraordinary reality it constitutes may arouse fervor or enthusiasm, may lead to cults: the bonds are multiple between art and religion, as they also are between art and magic, to the degree in which the work appears no longer as a promotion of nature but as an enclosure and domination of its life forces.

Nevertheless, in these different manifestations, in a way exterior to the poetic creation itself, we constantly see the transition from the individual to the social. Art may become semiology. There, the intimate union of form and content suddenly cedes to the articulation of a figure and a myth. Precisely in this difference is noticed the crossing of the frontier between the psychological and the sociological.

3.2 Useful creation and work

If "art constitutes at its highest point this taking over of nature by culture," we must not, however, lose sight of the fact that

“after all, what is important is not what the artist thinks, it is what he does.” Any artist is thus equally, if not above all, an artisan. This is easily verified by the fact that the artist is “never entirely able to dominate the material and technical processes he employs” (C. Lévi-Strauss, 1961, pp. 115, 119).

From the artist to the artisan, all is in the point of view. Art as esthetics and art as technique—are they not encountered in the same person? And the word itself, “art,” does it not have “two symmetrically inverse meanings, starting with a common root?” The Latin *artifex*, artist or artisan, is still “the man incarnating an idea, making something that is not furnished by nature,” an artifact. It may be esthetic and utilitarian at the same time, just as it may be oriented in a more or less exclusive way either to “ideal ends” and “non-utilitarian needs,” or to “practical ends,” utilitarian and technical (M. Blondel, in A. Lalande (ed.), 1968, p. 80).

It is interesting to observe that the conceptual distinction between the artistic and the technical is a relatively recent thing. We know, for example, that for Aristotle, poetics (from the Greek *poiein*) refers essentially to “make”: it is above all a “science of production,” that is, a “transitive and fabricative action.” For him, it is always “the realization of a *poiésis*” or “a work exterior to the artist,” not in the present esthetic sense of art but only in that of technical art (J. Tricot, 1970, pp. 16, 501; R. A. Gauthier, J. Y. Jolif, Vol. II, 1959, pp. 458-459). In reality, the distinction between the two meanings of art really began with the Renaissance. In certain social milieus, something like the idea of “art for art’s sake” appeared (the expression itself dates from the early 19th century) and the term “artisan” was defined. Around this time “mechanical arts [...] that produce useful objects were distinguished from the fine arts whose only concern was beauty. The worker in mechanical arts kept the old French term, artisan, the worker in fine arts took the Italian name of artist.” However, up until the 18th century, in French, artisan continued to be used for artist, and it was only in 1762 that the Académie Française made an official distinction between the two terms, making the artisan “a man with a trade” (C. Seignobos and F. Brunot, in P. Robert (ed.), Vol. I, 1965, pp. 255, 259).

Individual and Social in Human Phenomena

All this shows how astonishingly close, in their common origins and in their historical development, artistic creation and technical creation are. Their difference is essentially in the point of view adopted. In fact, they are the two opposed species of the same kind of activity. If, historically, the artisanal meaning showed itself different from the artistic meaning of art, it is nevertheless quite obvious that there is no esthetic composition that is not at first work or "trade." In this sense, the "technical" creation must be brought back to it; the inverse is never true.

An initial difference may be pointed out between these two kinds of action, the artistic and the utilitarian. If an esthetic composition is a whole having a value in itself, the technical composition necessarily implies a reference to something besides itself: it is a means to an end that is exterior to itself. Between the two, the utilitarian is synonymous with function, at the same time proportioned and circumstanced. A piece is functional relative to the machine in which it enters: it is proportioned to it, in every sense of the word. It is again functional relative to the circumstances of the action. A raincoat protects from the rain but loses its usefulness and becomes a-functional in dry weather. In the last resort, the functioning of all technical creation is appreciated in relationship to the needs of the individual himself.

Let us also note that this distinction between the means and the end, that is at the same time a functional relationship between them, opposes the object to its objective like the linguistic sign opposes its exterior referent. However, this external distinction is not accompanied by any internal distinction, contrary to what happens in the same sign. The functional rapport not being arbitrary, neither implies an internal arbitrary articulation between a material support and an idea. As in a work of art, the utilitarian object is a whole in which support and function immediately correspond and are in a way homologous to each other: the meaning (internal) of the tool coincides with its function (external). It is simply an object of material culture, where the esthetic work is an object of artistic culture. All that, without leaving the domain of individual action, that is, of what the individual may himself do.

Just as poetic creation ends in works, technical creation is concretized in utilitarian objects, but another difference appears in this regard. In opposition to the gratuitous and free nature of the esthetic composition, technical composition is a transcription of the "laws of nature" in what they have of the necessary and determined. There where the first remained, through and through, intuitive and subjective in its interpretation of the concrete, the second is the intuitive but objective comprehension of phenomena in the specificity and particularity of their internal relationship. Furthermore, let us observe that it is possible to speak of *a priori* forms of the beautiful (Kant) while the utilitarian object is always based on "an *a posteriori* interpretation established on experimental study of phenomena." The useful is accompanied by an objective knowledge of the real, a knowledge whose "truth is never anything but relative to the number of experiences or observations that have been made," thus always both empirical and relative (C. Bernard, 1945, pp. 85-93). There where the beautiful is the esthetic promotion of nature, the useful is a technical promotion of it. At the same time, esthetics, as a subjective expression, moves in the affective, while the useful has the objectivity of what moves in the efficacious and realistic.

The useful thus is developed equally in a sort of dialogue with nature but a dialogue whose principles differ from those which art holds. As in art, it is rather a question of a monologue, the individual posing questions, receiving answers by the discovery of the formal rapports that govern natural phenomena. Man progresses step by step, moment by moment, to the degree in which he submits to the internal restrictions of nature. It is by submitting to them that he learns to know them in their particularities: the only way to dominate and later use these formal rapports for himself, by integrating them into functional tools and utilitarian constructions.

To speak in this way of technical or mechanical art should not make us forget the restrictive nature of utilitarian action, these expressions being near to that of the fine arts. The esthetic rapport with nature is in opposition to the technical rapport with it, as liberty is opposed to restraint. From this necessary and deter-

Individual and Social in Human Phenomena

mined point of view of the useful better corresponds the term work, whose etymology (the French *travail*, from Latin *trepalium*) refers, and with reason, to an idea of an instrument of torture... This “feeling of a certain restraint is specific and differentiates the activities of work from those that are exterior to them” (G. Friedmann, 1961, pp. 14-15). Moreover, work is always singular and contingent, each task presenting a specific parabola of technical restraints and entailing diversification in competence and trades.

In opposition to the liberal nature of art, work has left the earthly “paradise.” “Subjectivity experienced on the occasion of work activity goes from states of dissatisfaction to sadness and even to depression and neurosis, up to states of self-realization, satisfaction and, rarely, joy.” Only, work in that regard is also “a decisive phenomenon in the rise of man above animality.” It is so, in particular, “each day, from the point of view of the individual, for the degree of realization of each and the balance-sheet of his particular destiny” (G. Friedmann, 1961, p. 15). Just as the distinction of the means to an end is also, positively, a functional relationship, alienation in work, the investment of self in the production of useful objects is, positively, the realization of the finalities man gives himself. In a Hegelian perspective, that which from the negative point of view is opposition of the subjective and the objective becomes, from the positive point of view, dialectic between differentiated sides and the overcoming of a construction, the realization of self.

The typology of these useful products is certainly more complex and ramified than that found in artistic creation, with the simple opposition between plastic arts and performing arts. To present this typology, it is to the epistemology of sciences themselves we must look, with its oppositions between mechanical or homeostatic sectors—arranged on levels of complexity—and a central trunk connecting these stages according to an “evolutionist” point of view whose dynamics is based (dialectically) on the presence of differentiated elements acting irreversibly on each other (A. Delobelle, 1980). Whatever the case with this tree of a particular type, it seems each time to oppose the domains represented by reversible and stable systems to others whose flow

is unstable and whose irreversible processes cannot be really known except through experimentation, these second domains being logically at the origin of the first (I. Prigogine, I. Stengers, 1979; M. Foucault, 1966).

By creating useful objects from this differentiated knowledge of nature, "man ceases to be in nature like a tree in a forest." In fact, "while the animal, whose practical intelligence [...] never really succeeds in pushing outward the frontiers of his environment," his behavior being stabilized in "variations that are similar and a thousand times repeated", "man creates new stimuli and thus spontaneously elicits new responses": "the interposition of the tool between the stimulus and the response, between consciousness of the object and consciousness of self, transfigures the one and other, identifies them and makes them sufficient and transparent." That means also that, need becoming "the need for a need," "the fixity of the instinct" yields to the "plasticity of work." The need changing "not only in object but in nature," it is a material culture that is built on change: "work disrupts an environment that was becoming fixed and hardened. Founded on experimentation with the concrete, the utilitarian act is thus also a historic transformation of the way of life. Work is the experience itself of time, inasmuch as a useful creation closes one epoch and opens another, transforming the one into the other (J. Vuillemin, 1949, pp. 15-27).

Even in the performing arts, allographic, we have only a reversible time. Subjective dialogue between the formal being of things and the human spirit, art is an esthetic rapport, that is, concretely spatial and atemporal. By adhering only to the *non-necessary* character of formal relationships, it may stop at no matter what detail, establish no matter what *rapprochement*, contemplate the singular as it is. In the technical arts, the dialogue is objective because it is directly based on the irreversibility of things, not adhering exclusively except to those contingent aspects that can bring about a transformation in the desired sense and, thereby, create useful objects. Moreover, whereas art is an endless movement, never exhausted, never definitively closed, around the beautiful, technique is progression, because it rests precisely on the necessary and irreversible forms of things. In this sense, the plasticity of work, different from that of art, is by

Individual and Social in Human Phenomena

nature historic. Because it is temporal, work creates a future (E. Bloch, 1965).

Also from that, work, again differently from art, opens up directly into the social. Both having their origin in individual action, individual creativity, art leads to an interindividual communion whereas work rapidly demands an articulated co-operation with others. Unfolding outside material restraint, the poetic composition has freedom and gratuitousness; the interindividual rapports themselves are in a way not necessary. On the contrary, work is a constant negotiation of space-time restraints, the constant operation of means adjusted to each other: social rapports have the same restrictive character. However, the need to work together is also, positively, a social dialectic, which is only possible through expression, another necessary formal restraint.

4. LANGUAGE AND SEMIOLOGY

Action is thus not only individual. It is also *interaction*, that is, both confrontation and cooperation with the action of others. From that, the phenomenon is obviously and by definition of a social nature. Language, which is the necessary formal process of it, brings to it an irrefutable testimony. A true difference is observed with regard to the individual: to artistic or utilitarian compositions the individual creates directly, entirely and deliberately, succeed elementary and meaningful units, obligatorily entering into all messages. These units assert themselves as so many indispensable intermediaries in social interaction. Functioning as communication tools, these predefined units make social action something indirect, of which the individual is no longer the master. However, recognizable by others, they permit mutual intercomprehension and the development of a social dialectic. From the psychological we pass, then, to the sociological, but by means of a logically second process, since an interaction is always either a conjunction or a disjunction of individual action.

Semiology is the science that studies the form and the functioning of these meaningful units in social life. Ambroise Paré (1509-1590) used the term "semeiotics" to designate the study of indices of illnesses (symptomology), but John Locke (1632-

1714) extended its meaning to make it the term designating the general science of the signs of language, that being considered by him especially from the logical angle. Charles S. Peirce (1839-1914) used it in the same way in the United States, in 1867, but with the term semiotics. The Académie Française recognized the term semeiology in 1762; Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) used semiology in his notes, beginning in 1894. The term had then the sociological sense that we give it today. "It had been claimed that linguistics is directly involved in psychology and expects enlightenment from it," he wrote. "Now, does psychology have a semiology? The question is pointless, since if it had one, the phenomena of language would themselves be so preponderant as a base for semiology that all that could have been said outside of them by the psychologist represents nothing or almost nothing" (R. Godel, 1957, pp. 37, 45-49, 101-102). Later, in his course at the University of Geneva, between 1906 and 1911, he explained that semiology is "a science that studies the life of signs within social life" and that it is "a part of social psychology" (F. de Saussure, 1966, p. 33).

Basically, semiology is the domain of representation. A *representamen*, wrote Peirce, "is something that takes the place for someone of something under some rapport or with some meaning" whatever this may be. Thus it is a substitute, in the place of something else. From this point of view, a representation never has the pansemic nature of a properly artistic composition, because it is an image of the object (or referent) not "in all respects, but by reference to a sort of idea" that is had of it. This reduction to the polysemy of the concrete nonetheless offers many advantages, particularly in conceptualization and thus in predictability. "We must understand 'Idea' here in the Platonic sense, in everyday language; [...] the sense in which we say, when a man remembers what he was thinking of some time before, that he is remembering the same idea; and in which we say, when a man continues to think of something—if only for 1/10 of a second, to the degree in which the thought continues to be coherent during this lapse of time, that is, to have a similar content—that he has the same idea and that this idea is not, at each instant of this lapse of time, a new idea" (1978, p. 121).

Individual and Social in Human Phenomena

In fact, each meaningful unit is a representation, and these units only encounter each other in semiology. They have a more or less conventional character. Semiology is also fundamentally distinguishable from art, since an esthetic work is always a universe in itself and has no referential function (contrary to iconic representations that have conventional figures and schemas and are of a semiological nature). Moreover, it cannot have referential functions, since it has no stable elementary units (E. Benveniste, 1974, pp. 55-60). Semiological representation is just as radically different from technical composition, the utilitarian function of the latter preventing its confusion with the referential function of the former. In fact, the useful is an adjustment in presence, the means being immediately integrated into the concrete act, while reference implies a substitution, the referent being absent but made present by representation, that is, by the meaningful unit.

All that indicates how the problem of vehicular languages is found at the center of the entire semiological problematics. For Saussure, "if we want to discover the true nature of language, we must take it first of all in what it has in common with all the other systems of the same order." For him, only comparison with other semiological domains allows the disengagement of truly pertinent criteria that must enter into a scientific definition of language. He continues this thought by adding that, nonetheless, "nothing is better than language to make the nature of the semiological problem known": which suggests the consideration of other domains, such as "rites, customs, etc..." in the same way as language signs. Everything concurs then to show the strategic importance of language in semiology. Saussure said in this regard that "language is a system of signs expressing ideas and therefore is comparable to writing, the deaf-mute alphabet, symbolic rites, forms of courtesy and military signals, for example," but that it is "the most important of these systems" (F. de Saussure, 1966, pp. 32-35).

The explanation is found in the observation according to which "language gives us the only model of a system that is semiotic in both its formal structure and its functioning: first, it is manifested through enunciation, which refers to a given situation; to speak is always to speak-of; second, it is formed of

distinct units, of which each one is a sign; third, it is produced and received in the same values of reference by all the members of a community; fourth, it is the only actualization of intersubjective communication.” If these first three conditions may also be met by other meaningful ensembles, language is the *only* one to be at the same time the formal process of the intersubjective word, of discursive communication between interlocutors. This is why it is “the semiotic organization *par excellence*”: “it gives the idea of what the function of a sign is, and it is alone in offering the exemplary formula” (E. Benveniste, 1974, pp. 62-63).

Even more strongly, however, being alone in putting into operation intersubjective communication, language “alone may confer—and it does effectively confer—on other ensembles the quality of meaningful systems by investing them with the relationship of sign.” It is by language alone that other semiotic ensembles may be created and installed in social life. “Thus there is a semiotic *modelage* that language exercises and whose principle we cannot conceive of finding elsewhere than in language.” “The nature of language, its representative function, its dynamic power, its role in the life of relationship make it the great semiotic matrix, the modeling structure of which the other structures reproduce the traits and the way of acting.” In this sense, it is quite true to say that “language is what holds men together, the foundation of all rapports that in their turn are the basis of society.” In short, “it is language that comprises society” (E. Benveniste, 1974, pp. 62-63).

This semiotic *modelage* of all meaningful representation through language is verified by the fact that semiology, globally, is distributed in “systems that articulate, because they manifest their semiotics,” that is, they create their own meaningful units, and “systems that are articulated and whose semiotics only appears through the grillwork of another way of expression,” whose units are defined by the intermediary of another semiotic ensemble, not being themselves categorizable. This distinction “between an interpreting system and an interpreted system” allows the definition of a *principle of interpretation* functioning between them. Now, by applying the principle to the various semiological domains, it appears that the “signs of society may be in-

Individual and Social in Human Phenomena

terpreted by those of language, but not the inverse. This fundamental dissymmetry” allows the introduction of a “general principle of hierarchy” between the semiological domains, their classification thus furnishing the basis for a global semiological theory (E. Benveniste, 1974, pp. 53-54, 60-62).

But “what does this property” of language depend on? Is it simply because it is the most common system, the one the most often used, having the widest field and, in practice, the greatest efficacy? Just the opposite,” writes Benveniste, “this privileged situation of language in the pragmatic order is a consequence, not a cause, of its predominance as a meaningful system.” This essential importance must itself be explained by a semiological principle. “We will discover it by being conscious of this fact that language signifies in a specific way which is proper only to itself, in a way that no other system reproduces. It is invested with a double meaning. It is a model without an analogue.” The specificity of language is thus to combine “two distinct ways of meaning.” It is *at the same time* a semiotic constellation and a semantic or discursive process, the latter creating and articulating the former for its own use, while all other semiological domains are either semiotic (non-linguistic) ensembles or the linguistic products of the intersubjective discourse itself. (E. Benveniste, 1974, p. 63).

In fact, in the semiotic aspect we have, for vehicular language, constellations of linguistic signs. These are the families or associative series that Saussure said have “their seat [...] in the brain,” since it is the mind that grasps “the nature of the rapports that connect them” and thus creates as many associative series as there are diverse rapports” between the terms. The particularity of such constellations depends on the fact that the terms of the same family or of the same group are not presented “either in a definite number or in a determined order.” However, each of these linguistic signs is “a psychic entity with two faces,” articulating between each other, and in a more or less conventional way, a signifier and a signified, that is, a representation (acoustic) and a concept (general). However, the importance resides in this, that “the linguistic sign unites not a thing and a name, but a concept and an acoustical image.” In the first case, we would have only the

passive phenomenon of a name imposed on a thing; in the second, on the contrary, and what characterizes language, we are dealing with the active phenomenon of the designation of an object. All natural real ties, but also all individual creations, artistic or utilitarian, are found in the first case: they are always designated and never designate (F. de Saussure, 1966, pp. 97-100, 169-175; E. Benveniste, 1974, pp. 58, 60, 64).

However, from the discursive aspect, these vehicular languages are alone in their ability to produce messages, being the only ones capable of actualizing in intersubjective communication. Now, a message may never be reduced to "a succession of units to be identified separately," because in a statement it is never "an addition of signs that produces a meaning." Its "intention" or its sense is always "globally conceived" and must necessarily be translated in the syntagmatic structure of the entire sentence. It is here that the Saussurian analysis sets the pace and calls for a semiology of the "second generation," taking directly in charge the study of the sentence as such. This change in perspective, abandoning the study of semiotic ensembles alone, is today very much engaged in by generative or transformational grammars and by the linguistic currents that have issued from them. It was indispensable, seeing the "hiatus" that separates semiotics and discourse. They are "two distinct domains, of which each demands its own conceptual apparatus," because "from the sign to the sentence there is not a transition, either by syntagmation or otherwise." The signs of an associative family are still general concepts "in mention" cut off from all use in a concrete situation. They must become words of a statement, "in use", to acquire a real semantic status, relative to context and circumstances (E. Benveniste, 1974, pp. 64-65).

In this sense, semiotics and semantics should be considered as distinct phenomena. If a linguistic sign only demands to be "recognized," a discourse must be "understood." As far as semiotics is concerned, it is enough to "perceive the identity between the anterior and the present," while in a discourse (or in semantics) it is a matter of "perceiving the meaning of a new enunciation." In addition, there is the intervention of two distinct faculties of the mind, since "in the pathological forms of language" they are "frequently dissociated" (E. Benveniste,

Individual and Social in Human Phenomena

1974, pp. 64-65). Let us add, to confirm this opposition, that a semiotic ensemble, especially if it takes the form of a determined system, only exists synchronically, since it is entirely founded "on identities and differences, the ones being only the counterpart of the others." On the contrary, "it is the word that makes language evolve," and is therefore the source of its diachrony (F. de Saussure, 1966, pp. 151, 37).

Language being thus defined as the foundation of semiology, it is toward the pragmatic that we must turn to discover how much the other semiological domains, linguistic or non-linguistic, are set up beneath the discursive and intersubjective word. It is a matter of a discipline that, in spite of certain theoretical problems, appears as an "analytic of the discourse," a phenomenology of the work in action (H. Parret (ed.), 1980, pp. 9-48). However, to try to make the synthesis of its first contributions goes beyond the limits of this present study. Nevertheless, certain semiological principles, also defined by Benveniste, may help to clear up some essential aspects of life in society.

Thus, a *principle of non-redundance* has it that man does not "dispose of several distinct systems for the same rapport of meaning." That leads to posing as an axiom that each broad semiological domain functions on its own semiotic basis and is thus not convertible: "There is no 'synonymy' between semiotic systems; one cannot 'say the same thing' with words and music, which are systems having a different basis." On the other hand, "The graphic alphabet and the Braille or Morse alphabet or that of deaf-mutes are mutually convertible, all being systems of the same bases founded on the alphabetical principle: one letter, one sound" (E. Benveniste, 1974, p. 53).

A corollary of this principle would thus allow us to say that a "system may engender another system," if it is based on the same semiotic criterion. Thus it is that "ordinary language engenders logico-mathematical formalization" that "ordinary writing engenders stenographic writing," or that "the normal alphabet engenders the Braille alphabet." Such a *relationship of 'engendering'*, which must be clearly distinguished from simple historical derivation, "is valid between two distinct and contemporaneous systems of the same kind, of which the second

is constructed from the first and fills a specific function." It only occurs between systems that are convertible between each other, related to an analogous mode of meaning (E. Benveniste, 1974, pp. 60-61). This is the way Peirce's *omne symbolum de symbolo* may be understood (1978, pp. 165-166).

However, observation shows that the principle at the base of this relationship of engendering is readily transgressed. In fact, "by virtue of the connections we discover or establish between two distinct systems," we install between them a *relationship of homology*, based on the partial similarities between two distinct systems, the sub-groups being, metonymically, taken for the semiotic groups themselves. "The nature of the homology may vary, intuitive or analytical, substantial or structural, conceptual or poetic. [...] It all depends on the way the two systems are presented, the parameters used, the fields of operation." Observation also reveals that, "according to the case, the installed homology serves as a unifying principle between two domains and is limited to this functional role, or it creates a new species of semiotic values. Nothing assures in advance the validity of this relationship, nothing limits its extent" (E. Benveniste, 1974, pp. 53, 60-61). There also we are in the presence of a symbolic emergence, according to Peirce's formula, but one that obeys a pleasure principle rather than a reality principle. With this "psychoanalytical" slip we again find ourselves in a situation analogous to that observed in esthetic creation, in opposition to the restrictions of utilitarian creation, as though an exclusive analogous principle reduced everything to a common "space," scorning pertinent oppositions. This search for "correspondences" is characteristic of certain artistic schools with a "symbolist" orientation. It is manifestly at work in the unconscious, in the Freudian sense of the word, with its absence of negation and its indifference to reality but is found again, in a way that sometimes reaches obsession, in what has been called "prelogical" or "savage" thought and seems to go along with a "cold," non-evolutionary history of groups or societies.

Another principle has it that there is no "trans-systematic" sign. That is, "the substantial identity of a sign does not count, only its functional difference." For example, "the red of the binary system of traffic signals has nothing in common with the

red in a flag nor does the white in a flag have anything to do with the white of mourning in China." Consequently, "the value of a sign is only defined within the system that integrates it" (E. Benveniste, 1974, p. 53). We could speak in this regard of a *closed principle* of semiotic systems.

This calls for a commentary. In fact, this principle is closely tied to the purely oppositive nature of the meaningful unit. It is not interposed except when it is a matter of a closed group, that is, a closed system. Saussure's remark on these sign systems that only allow "differences without positive terms" refers to this semiological type. In the beginning, there was a sizeable "structuralist" movement whose success was evident when it was a matter, as in terms of relationship (C. Lévi-Strauss, 1967), of such closed semiotic systems. The example itself of such a system must be looked for, not in associative series, that are so many *open* semiotic constellations, but in grammatical paradigms. In fact, those are always presented in a limited and defined number and make up between them, in every language, determined and *closed* systems with purely oppositive units (F. de Saussure, 1966, pp. 173-175). Semiotic constellations and systems must thus be clearly distinguished for the very reason of their opposed theoretical implications.

In the domain of linguistic semiology, this opposition is reflected in the difference between the more stable character (because more strictly regulated and determined) of all that directly assures the grammatical structuration (syntax and morphology) of the statements, on one hand, the more free character—more "unmotivated," more "arbitrary"—of the semiotic or lexical units that are to be found there, on the other hand. These units, that are found more directly in individual creativity, afterward evolve more rapidly (F. de Saussure, 1966, p. 183). In addition, let us note that if a grammatical function defines only one sub-group of a sentence, this same sub-group may be made up of a plurality of lexical units, indeed, of a juxtaposition of synonymous terms or expressions. In the same way, we may again mention the generativist observation according to which, in all languages, a finite number of grammatical rules allows the creation of an infinite number of different phrases (N. Chomsky, 1971, pp. 30-35).

It thus seems that there is a necessary connection between the closed nature of a semiotic system and its functioning in action, acting as a sort of spinal column or protective railing. Inversely, there seems to be a connection between a semiotic constellation and its passive use in action: its nature places it outside action, as a purely mental phenomenon or as a purely esthetic, indeed iconic, product. This is to say, again, that a closed system is of a digital nature, while an open constellation is of analogous nature.

In the domain of non-linguistic semiology, but affecting the individual, the comparison asserts itself immediately with the phenomenon of psychic *associations*. Ordinarily, these are presented under the aspect of undefined networks that the method of "free association" helps to reveal. However, under the effect of conflict within the person these associations split into complexes of representations, in "separate psychic groups" and of a fantastic nature, all the efforts of Freud and psychoanalysis consisting of "interpreting the stability, the efficacy, the relatively organized character" of these phenomena (J. Laplanche, J. B. Pontalis, 1967, pp. 36-38, 152-157).

To conclude, more directly affecting social life itself, we may mention the distinction defined by Peirce between *icons* and *symbols*. The first, that are so many representations of things according to their distinctive and conventional morphologies, are in the same vein as semiotic constellations. The second, on the other hand, that obey strict rules, are manifestly the determined character of semiotic systems. The first are thus analogous, while the others are of a digital nature and as such, serve to order action and define social groups. This distinction clears up the functioning of many sociological domains of a non-linguistic nature. It is comparable to the one, noted by Benveniste in the linguistic domain, between the "two levels" of enunciation: that of historical representations and accounts, on the one hand, and that of properly-called discourse on the other (E. Benveniste, 1966, pp. 237-250). Peirce noted that "if an icon could be interpreted by a sentence that sentence would have to be in the 'subjunctive mood', that is, it would simply say, 'Let us assume that a figure has three sides', etc.", but that a symbol "is, by nature, in the 'indicative mood' or as we should say declarative" (Ch.

Individual and Social in Human Phenomena

S. Peirce, 1978, pp. 147-153, 161-166). Even if it appears today that the repartition of verbal moods is more complex, the observation of the difference joins the one that each can make between the icon, that may represent in the same space the most contradictory things, and the symbol, subjected to the principle of non-contradiction. If the icon may be an imaginary representation, road symbols (or signals) contradictory among themselves are unthinkable at the same place: it would be contrary to their digital nature and catastrophic...

5. CONCLUSION

From the organic to the psychic and from that to the sociological, it is thus possible to clearly distinguish between the different modes of action and interaction. Each time, precise formal criteria, of an experimental nature, brought out by semiology and linguistics, permit the separation of different genres and the introduction of the analysis of their sub-species. The way is thus progressively opened to the human sciences that are no longer tributaries of observations that are in a way exterior to the real problem, the internal level depending on introspection or on the external level having other data than those of behavioral experiments or statistical information. There we find the approaches to the human that belong more to the conscious "contents" than to the more essential one of the processes themselves that give to action its formal framework and structure it in distinct sub-groups.

André Delobelle
(Brussels)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ARGYLE, M., 1978, *The Psychology of Interpersonal Behavior*, 3rd edition, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 322 pages.
BARTHES, R., 1964, "Rhétorique de l'image", in *Communications*, Paris, 4, pp. 40-51.
BENOIST, L., 1977, *Signes, symboles et mythes*, 2nd edition, Paris, P.U.F., 123 pages.

- BENVENISTE, E., 1966, *Problèmes de linguistique générale*, Paris, P.U.F., 356 pages.
- BENVENISTE, E., 1974, *Problèmes de linguistique générale*, II, Paris, P.U.F., 288 pages.
- BERNARD, C., 1945, *Introduction à l'étude de la médecine expérimentale*, Geneva, 430 pages.
- BLOCH, E., 1965, *Processus et structure*, in M. de Gandillac, L. Goldmann, J. Piaget (eds). *Entretiens sur les notions de genèse et de structure*, Paris- La Haye, Mouton, pp. 27-241.
- CHOMSKY, N., 1971, *Aspects de la théorie syntaxique*, Paris, Le Seuil, 290 pages.
- DELOBELLE, A., 1980, *Epistémologie différentielle et sociologie*, Louvain-la-Neuve, U.C.L., 3 vols., 662 pages.
- DELOBELLE, A., 1981, "La sociologie comme science théorique. La voie linguistique", in *Recherches sociologiques*, Louvain-la-Neuve, XII (to appear).
- FOUCAULT, M., 1966, *Les mots et les choses. Une archéologie des sciences humaines*, Paris, Gallimard, 408 pages.
- FRIEDMANN, G., 1961, "L'objet de la sociologie du travail", in G. Friedmann, P. Naville (eds.): *Traité de sociologie du travail*, Paris, A. Colin, v. I, pp. 11-34.
- GAUTHIER, R. A., JOLIF, J. Y., 1959, *Aristote, L'Ethique à Nicomaque. Commentaire*, Paris, Béatrice-Nauwelaerts, Vol. I, 990 pages.
- GODEL, A., 1957, *Les sources manuscrites du Cours de linguistique générale de F. de Saussure*, Geneva-Paris, Droz-Minard, 284 pages.
- GOMBRICH, E.-H., 1971, *L'art et l'illusion. Psychologie de la représentation picturale*, Paris, Gallimard, 554 pages.
- GOODMAN, N., 1968, *Languages of Art. An Approach to a Theory of Symbols*, Indianapolis-New York, Bobbs-Merrill, XIV+278 pages.
- GUIRAUD, P., 1980, *Le langage du corps*, Paris, P.U.F., 128 pages.
- JAKOBSON, R., 1963, *Essais de linguistique générale*, Paris, Editions de Minuit, 264 pages.
- LALANDE, A., 1968, *Vocabulaire technique et critique de la philosophie*, 10th edition, Paris, P.U.F., XXVIII+1324 pages.
- LAPLANCHE, J., PONTALIS, J.B., 1967, *Vocabulaire de la psychanalyse*, Paris, P.U.F., XX+520 pages.
- LEVI-STRAUSS, C., 1961, *Georges Charbonnier, Entretiens avec Claude Lévi-Strauss*, Paris, Plon-Julliard, 168 pages.
- LEVI-STRAUSS, C., 1967, *Les Structures élémentaires de la parenté*, Paris-La Haye, Mouton, XXX+592 pages.
- LWOFF, A., 1970, *L'ordre biologique*, Verviers, Gérard et Cie, 188 pages.
- MARITAIN, J., 1966, *L'intuition créatrice dans l'art et dans la poésie*, Paris, Desclée de Brouwer, XII+422 pages.
- MARTINET, A., 1976, *Éléments de linguistique générale*, Paris, A. Colin, 224 pages.
- MASSON, C., BROSSUT, R., 1981, "La communication chimique chez les insectes", in *La Recherche*, Paris, 121, pp. 406-416.
- METZ, Ch., 1964, "Le cinéma: langue ou langage?", in *Communications*, Paris, 4, pp. 52-90.
- MORIN, E., PIATTELLI-PALMARINI, M. (eds.), 1974, *L'unité de l'homme. Invariants biologiques et universaux culturels*, Paris, Le Seuil, 830 pages.
- MORRIS, Ch. W., 1971, *Writings on the General Theory of Signs*, The Hague-Paris, Mouton, 486 pages.
- MOUNIN, G. (ed.), 1974, *Dictionnaire de linguistique*, Paris, P.U.F., XL+342 pages.

Individual and Social in Human Phenomena

PARRET, H. (ed.), 1980, *Le langage en contexte. Etudes philosophiques et linguistiques de pragmatique*, Amsterdam, John Benjamins, 790 pages.

PEIRCE, Ch. S., 1978, *Ecrits sur le signe*, Paris, Le Seuil, 270 pages.

PRIGOGINE, I., STENGERS, I., 1979, *La nouvelle alliance. Métamorphose de la science*, Paris, Gallimard, 310 pages.

ROBERT, P., 1962-5, *Dictionnaire alphabétique et analogique de la langue française*, Paris, Société du Nouveau Littré, 6 vols.

SAUSSURE de, F., 1966, *Cours de linguistique générale*, Paris, Payot, 336 pages.

SOURIAU, E., 1969, *La correspondance des arts. Eléments d'esthétique comparée*, Paris, Flammarion, 320 pages.

TRICOT, J. (ed.), 1970, *Aristote. La métaphysique*, New edition, Paris, Vrin, 2 vols., LVIII + 878 pages.

VUILLEMIN J., 1949, *L'Être et le travail, Les conditions dialectiques de la psychologie et de la sociologie*, Paris, P.U.F., 184 pages.

WATZLAWICK P., 1972, *et al., Une Logique de la communication*. Paris, Le Seuil, 286 pages.