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THE PLEASURE OF SYMBOLIC EXPRESSION AND THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF SIGNS

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SUMMARY

THE SYMBOLIC PROCESS IN THE LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURIES

At the turn of the 20th century, science seemed to abandon the claim to capture and reproduce reality "directly", to the point of understanding that any objectification it can achieve, in truth is a mediation by analogy. This awareness was expressed in many different ways in the scientific and artistic fields. This paper aims to highlight the influence of this passage in the process of signification of the data of reality – a red thread of symbolic research that passes through the most wide-ranging disciplines – philosophy, psychology and linguistics, as well as painting and poetry – leading the consciousness of Western man to include the unity of mind, body and emotions in the spirit.

I begin this reflection on the different philosophical attitudes toward symbolic process in the late 19th and early 20th centuries by recalling two lines of thought that characterized this development in the 19th century.

A first line – which for the sake of convenience I will call *mechanistic-deterministic* – was influenced by scientific studies on the structures and developments of living bodies and by Darwin's reflections

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on natural evolution. This line of research, which tends to develop linguistics as a discipline of autonomous study – and therefore as an exact science – judged languages as if they were natural organic bodies[1]. This meant, first of all, that language were to be treated as a system with methods similar to those used for the natural sciences; and secondly, that the linguistic system, independently of the will and consciousness of the speakers, had its periods of growth, maturity and decline, as well as its struggle for survival[2].

It was therefore a scientific outlook that saw language as something that grows organically. In this regard, one thinks of the biological method of Schleicher or even the neogrammarians, who nevertheless considered language analogously to the physical sciences of *inanimate* nature, such as geology and physics[3].

This organic metaphor of growth, which characterized the social and cultural sciences of the 19th century, nevertheless correctly emphasized that normally, in natural languages, symbols are not invented by men voluntarily and in a planned manner[4].

The second tendency – which for the sake of convenience I will call *idealistic-creative* – emphasized the role of the individual, the individual speaker, in linguistic evolution.

In this regard, I have in mind Vossler, who drew his ideas on the nature of the language from Humboldt[5], emphasizing the individual and aesthetic aspect of man's linguistic ability[6].

Humboldt – who lived between the 18th and 19th centuries – also considered language as similar to an organism, but emphasized its essence of "*energeia*," namely a living, fruitful and vital faculty inherent in the speaker[7]. Language was not the fixed and dead description of the grammarian, which Humboldt called "*ergon*", but was primarily *creative*, and creativity was for a philosopher a faculty inherent in the mind of each speaker: it was force animated by an "*innere Sprachform*" which gave origin and shape to language. And so it would also be for the 'idealists': language as "each individual's self-expression"[8].

Each of these two tendencies, here simply sketched, reproached the other for something: the idealists believed that the linguists' claim of scientific exactitude was weighted excessively and pedantically on the mechanical and formal aspects of language; while they in turn were reproached for giving – in the study of the origin and diffusion of linguistic mutations – excessive emphasis to the literary and aesthetic element.

The two lines of thought outlined above strongly influenced 20th-century linguistic theories. The first tendency conditioned above all the development of American linguistics, which – as Robins points out[9] – was influenced by the positivism of behaviorist psychologists or mechanists. One recalls Leonard Bloomfield[10], whose method – applied to the human sciences – led him to focus on the study of phonetics and formalistic analysis, prompting him to claim that mental images, feelings and such are just popular terms for various bodily motions[11].

In Bloomfield's view, the definition of *meaning* is considered the weak point in the study of language, since it is the least treatable and interpretable aspect from the standpoint of a strictly empiricist and reductionist scientific method. So – as Robins notes[12] – because analyzing the meaning that a speaker has of a word or a phrase would involve recognizing both varied bits of extralinguistic knowledge and the many perceptions, feelings, thoughts and emotions of the speaker himself, Bloomfield decided to proceed in a semantic analysis of words according to a behaviorist vision, thus coming to define simple words such as *hungry* with laborious paraphrases like: "some of his muscles were contracting and some liquids were being secreted, especially in his stomach".

It was thus that the claim to make linguistics an 'exact' and academically autonomous science excluded the process of *signification* – which in truth was precisely the pivot of symbolic development and the most vivid component of the language – from the main interest of linguists[13].

But at the start of the 20th century the influence of the afore-mentioned second line of thought began to gain ground, the one that made the meaning of language surface powerfully into consciousness as a human being's vital and creative sphere: philosophers and psychologists of language and thought, such as the neo-Kantian Ernst Cassirer or the psychologist Karl Bühler, placed at the center of the function of signs, and hence of the symbolic process, the very existence of consciousness. The scholars who belonged to this current were close to the theorists of the Gestalt circle[14] and initially focused on the process of signification in language.

In this view words do not have a meaning in and of themselves, but it is always man who gives meaning to his own experience: man develops and creates the processes that make up meaning. In this regard we think of Ogden's/Richard's well-known semiotic triangle, a triadic model of the linguistic sign, which appeared in 1923 in the book *The Meaning of the Meaning*, which highlighted three basic operational concepts, relevant to the search for the signified: *thing*, *idea* and *symbol*. The symbol's property of expressing a certain meaning is always seen in reference to the creative thought of the speakers. In emphasizing this fact – as Bonacchi points out[15] – the semiotic triangle differentiates itself from Saussure's dyadic model (1916), which defined the linguistic sign as a link between the signifier (the material bearer: in speech the acoustic signal) and the signified (what is defined). While in the dyadic model the signified seems to take on an *objective* value, in the semiotic triangle model the signified takes on a *relational* value: it is constructed and reconstructed by the speakers[16]. Thus – as Bonacchi emphasizes[17] – the *deception of signs* appeared to be unmasked, by which symbols have, psychologically, the property of inducing the speaker to remove the symbolic character, so that the speaker perceives the linguistic sign as the thing in itself instead of considering it merely as the medium that represents it. The unmasking of the deception of signs – she goes on to say[18] – also

Fig. 1. The Treachery of Images, 1928-1929 (Meuris 1994: 120)

appears in the painting by the Belgian painter René Magritte, "The Deception of Images," which appeared at the same time as the publication of Odgen's/Richards' book on the semiotic triangle: (Fig. 1) In this painting, beneath the pipe, the painter wrote the words: "*This is not a pipe*." Meaning, that is, that what we see is not the pipe itself, but its image.

As mentioned earlier, among the scholars who promoted a vision of the signified that places the speaker's consciousness at the center of the discourse in relation to others and in his environment, we mentioned the psychologist Bühler, who saw linguistic signs within a field conditioned by forces: reality (things and entities), which we refer to linguistically, and the speaker and listener, understood as psychophysical systems. It is within these field forces – as Bonacchi points out[19] – that the *formation* of the signified takes place.

In this perspective linguistic signs are not mere elements – by which the signified can be analyzed and dissected like a chemical substance or a corpse – but complex structures, and their use is linked to the laws of field forces: lexical and syntactic elements cannot be separated[20]. It was thus – in line with the first results of Gestalt psychology – that meaning was no longer seen as the result of a rationalistic calculation, but took on the status of a higher order, guided by its ability of *intuitive synthesis*, which – by nature – often precedes rational analysis[21]. According to Bühler – as Bonacchi also emphasizes[22] – linguistics had neglected some fundamental components of linguistic signs, such as the perceptible qualities of expressions, melody, intonation and prosody. He emphasizes that words, in addition to their conceptual content, have a value of the sentiment that emanates from the speaker and influences the listener.

In this new perspective of the linguistic sign, the objects we refer to – in order to be represented linguistically – must always be understood and motivated psychologically; this means that the use of linguistic expressions does not exclusively follow a linear, mechanical procedure, but rather involves the interaction of different psychic systems (perceptive, affective, cognitive). For example, the meaning of the word "mother" for a child – as the psychologist Usnadze explained in an experiment[23] – is not primarily the naming of an object I (the 'referent') refer to, but should be seen at a given moment as a precise *wish* that the child would like to see satisfied.

On this line of thought various experiments were carried out in the field of psychology[24], in which the new intuitions about language – such as Bühler's linguistic conception – were confirmed.

In Usnadze's experiments, for example, we have seen that in giving a name and a meaning to a series of data, there emerged in people – on the basis of *perceptions* – semantic images that were the result of an interaction between different components: affective, cognitive and volitive. It was thus established that a set of perceptual data was

always interpreted in such a way as to give rise to a *figure*, as simple and weighty as possible, against a backdrop; in this perspective the formation of meaning became an individual's research guided by the faculty of intuitive synthesis: the persons interviewed often said they did not know why – in interpreting the data – they had chosen that particular image, and claimed to have simply had the *sensation* that that figure was the right one: the meaning was formed in the symbolic recognition, in the moment in which the evoked image showed a certain stability: the "good Gestalt" was closed.

The process of signification of data as the setting off of a familiar figure on a backdrop – as just mentioned – is biologically motivated by the fact that our eyes are accustomed to fixing a certain object, and when that happens everything else takes on a backdrop function. To get an idea of how a percipient subject participates in formulating the meaning of perceived data through the reciprocal alternation of

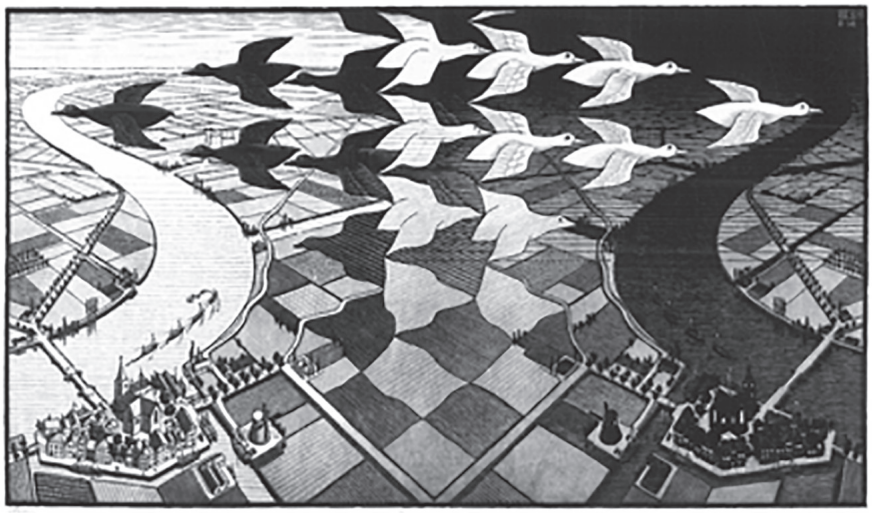

Fig. 2. Day and night (Escher MC, 1938).

figure and backdrop, let's observe the following Escher woodcut of 1938, entitled *Day and Night*: (Fig. 2).
In the drawing, the gray rectangular fields seem to transform themselves, as they rise from the ground, into two opposing formations of birds: the white ones flying rightward and the black ones flying leftward. On the left side the white ones unite to form the sky and the daytime landscape. On the right, the black ones unite to form the nighttime landscape. The daytime and nighttime landscapes are reciprocal reflected images joined together by the gray fields from which the birds take shape.
In the spectator who observes the picture, trying to give meaning to what he sees, the meaning seems to surface and take shape when the content of the image evoked through the perceived signal shows a certain stability. But the signified so formulated seems to get reversed when the 'forces in the field,' i.e., the context or environment of the semantic formulation, changes (exactly what had been confirmed by the above experiments in the field of psycholinguistics).
This description of the process of formulating the meaning of a set of sensory data recalls Benoist's description[25] of the formulation of symbolic images, which appear to be:

> *a waking dream, like that cloud in which Hamlet saw at the same time a whale, a weasel and a camel. He merely grasps a set of elements with the same shape, a group with the same attitude, a gesture with the same meaning, which represent the common reference characterizing our momentary interest. Language cannot achieve any greater precision than this thought which it tries to express and whose imprecision facilitates its expression. We can therefore say that from gesture to symbol, the mechanism of language, signs and our thinking uses a simple topological analogy.*

This is a poetic description that seems well suited to our intuitions concerning the definition of linguistic meaning and the processes of categorization of reality, which were beginning to make inroads into psychology and philosophy at the turn of the 20th century: it

was then that it began to come clear how comprehension can work well even in the presence of "vague, improper, fluctuating meanings, linked to intuitive psychological representations and even dependent on them" – as Cresti[26] writes in a reinterpretation of Husserl's phenomenology in the light of Cognitive Linguistics. We read in Cresti[27], concerning Husserl's improper representations, which are said to "fluctuate" [schwanken]; a passage in which we begin to accept the idea that expressions which convey many concepts do not have an immutable meaning, but "orient their meaning according to typically apprehended examples". This is a change of perspective that seems to herald the later and current studies on the categorization processes according to schemas and prototypes[28]. Husserl saw the fluidity and instability of meanings as "determined by the sliding of one apprehension onto another in the continuity of material developments, (...) traversed by regularities that determine the formation of typical experiences. Hence the processes of categorization appear marked by this continuous oscillation between typification and fluidity"[29]; and again: "Signs, when referring to experience, carry with them clouds of possible meanings and further characterizations provided by memories, images, associations"[30], an observation in which the subjective element of the percipient is emphasized in the process of formulating meaning.

One can only recall Bartlett's experiments in psychology on perception and memory[31], which saw operating – in the perceptual act – the tendencies to *give meaning* to what was perceived on the basis of analogies with what was known: trying to make familiar what was perceived (*effort after meaning*)[32].

Therefore, in no case could the perception of a concrete object (be it an image, a piece of music or words) be reduced to the mere reception of a given; on the contrary, the search for meaning was revealed as *the* decisive principle of being human. In attributing meaning, in many cases the tendency that Bartlett found in his interviewees was

that of having a "sensation of something" about a certain object (a tendency also found in Usnadze's aforementioned experiments): in trying to give a name to the perceived item, and therefore in attributing a meaning to it, people follow a perceptual track and perform an "imaginative act," freeing themselves from what they have seen to *create* new relationships between objects and meanings.

In this perspective, in the process of signification, an individual or percipient is involved in a series of states of tension (facing the unknown) and of seeking an *equilibrium* by analogy to what is known: the new information is then integrated into a schema – or mental image – already present, *remembered*. Where, what underlies the analogy, is the quality of the relationships between the parts that make up the schema. One recalls what Husserl wrote about categorization processes, which appear marked by a continual oscillation between typization and fluidity, whereby what "guides subsumption seems to be an analogical criterion of similarity, rather than the verification of possessing all and strictly the distinctive features"[33]. This intuition already began to hint at some of the mechanisms of abstraction and typization – motivated on perceptual salience – which would emerge later on (from the 1970's to the present) in the research on the semantics of psychology and cognitive linguistics. That is to say, the critique of the componentional definition of meaning, according to which the meaning of an expression is based exclusively on verifying the possession of all and strictly its distinctive characters, to the advantage of the then emerging theory of prototypes[34], in which the definition of the meaning of words consisted of a network of sub-meanings, in which there were central members (prototypes) and peripheral or marginal members. In essence, the center of a lexical category is clearly established, while its borders are blurred and tend to overlap the borders of other lexical categories (what gives the sense of vagueness in the search for meaning). It is therefore in this historical moment that the motivations for formulating the meaning of signs, and thus of symbols, are

recognized in psychological priority: the linguistic semantic fixation comes after the activation of a program of phenomenological saliency[35]. In these terms the arbitrariness of the linguistic sign is called into question: words are *perceptual units* and conceptual categories whose meaning is *motivated* on the basis of the subject's cognitive, affective and physical experience. The listener or reader wants to find meaning in the expressions and *constructs* it.

The importance, in the relationships between perception and language, of the criterion of analogy to what is known was also emphasized by Benoist[36], who recalls not only the role of topological analogy in the mechanism of language, signs and thought (see above the quotation from ibd: 35), but also how each new message is intercepted by a grid of personal or collective references. An operation that evokes for him the term "superimposition", made familiar by the cinema, and that seems to him almost more evocative than the word "projection" used in psychology. Proust – writes Benoist[37] – rediscovered this mechanism in the coinciding of two distant experiences, though he widens "the field of application to the point of confusing two geographical and sentimental environments, two periods and two places of his life, that the taste of the *madeleine* of Cambray and the contact with the uneven pavement of San Marco caused to come back to life. Thus, every sensation calls to the surface of consciousness a forgotten mental schema, a sign corresponding to an already experienced impression. This allows us to classify this sign in a "thematic" memory set and consequently to recognize and accept it. Gombrich summarized this operation by saying: "Decrypting a message means perceiving a symbolic form"[38].

Hence, in the process of signification Benoist saw a sort of "projective empathy"[39] that keeps active the principle of "original anthropomorphism" at the basis of any poem and any language.

This is a perspective that cannot fail to recall the most revelatory tool of the complexity of the relationship between perception and

language, thanks to its nature as a bridge between subjective experience and thought: *metaphor*. A first cognitive and rhetorical means, whose cognitive power of "showing", indicating previously unobserved similarities, even Aristotle acknowledged; and whose iconic principle is at the basis of the motivation criterion of signs mentioned earlier. Today – as Cacciari points out[40] – the results of the neurosciences help us shed light on the relationships between neural representation and the processing of perceptual information to language, and in doing so, great importance is given to cross-sensory associations which many metaphors express. Without doubt, synesthetic metaphorical transfer has given rise to an almost infinite repertoire of poetic expressions of a figurative nature, so much so that we have come – as Cacciari points out[41] – to speak of a "psychophysics" of linguistic metaphors in referring to the senses, which attempts to trace the psychophysical bases of the correspondences between sensory similarities and verbal metaphors. In doing so, studies have shown that expressiveness (the emotional component) is a basic component of every perceptual act, and not – Cacciari goes on to say[42], citing Massironi – an "occasional emotional vibration"; expressive power transcends language because every object also transmits information of an emotional nature[43].

What we recognize today as a new conquest of the neurosciences, namely the centrality of emotions in cognitive intelligence, has its roots, among others, also in the research work of the early 20th-century Gestaltists (Koffka, Kohler, Metzger, Werner, Wertheimer), who had defined the expressive qualities of percepts, that is, their evocative properties, as linked to emotions and associated with physical phenomena; qualities that seem to resonate "in the innermost core of the sentient subject, although topographically placed also in external things"[44]. In this vision, in which the body is seen as the source of the formation of concepts and meanings, man's bodily dimension is reconsidered: it is the beginning of a "new science" that already had been demon-

strated by the philosopher Vico, who in 1744 wrote on metaphors that they succeed in giving life and passion to inanimate objects:

> *In all languages most of the expressions dealing with inanimate things are made with references to the human body and its parts and human senses and human passions. Like head for top or beginning; forehead, shoulders, forward and backward; eyes of the vines (...) Thus everything follows that tendency: that "the ignorant man becomes the rule of the universe"*[45].

Vico – anticipating the current cognitive perspective – places metaphor in an evolutionary perspective and praises it for its role in developing the human species. He proves that symbolic activity is not something reserved and occasional (almost sacralized), but rather a daily practice whose purpose is to express ideas in a manner accessible to everyone because recognizable and referable to something known.

It is no coincidence that etymologically – as Benoist recalls[46] – "the word symbol derives from the Greek *sumballein* and means 'to bind together'. A *symbalon* was originally a sign of recognition, an object cut into two halves whose juxtaposition allowed the bearers of each half to recognize one another as siblings and to welcome one another as such without ever having seen each other before". In the field of ideas, a symbol is an element of mediation and analogy. In this sense – I add – *symboli*c is the opposite of *diabolic*: in fact, in Greek *diabolein* means "to separate, to cast all about" (which is the role of the devil), while *sumbalein*, I repeat, means "to reunite, reassemble".

The ability to give meaning to what we see or hear enables us to feel whole and satisfied because it brings together our physical and spiritual components; and it is the experience of our body, understood as a psychophysical system in rapport with others in its environment, which provides images to express what we feel[47].

The retrieval of the bodily dimension and the emotions in cognition is perhaps one of the most important achievements in the history of Western philosophical thought.

Specifically, in the study of symbols, this reconsideration has gone hand in hand with the reconsideration of meaning and metaphor in language. In the human sphere more generally, the appreciation of emotions and the body in developing intelligence, is going hand in hand with the attempt – at least in words – to retrieve the feminine element in human beings. As Rigotti writes[48], while philosophers and linguists as the inventors of artificial languages (from Leibniz to Frege to modern computational techniques) "have always been anxious to abolish polysemicity, others have understood that in creative activity an essential role is played by a structure of thought in tension, mobile and oscillating, therefore in becoming, in continuous metamorphosis and transformation, like the body of a growing child, in place of the solid and fixed type of hierarchical configuration which instead proceeds gradually from top to bottom".

Thus, the body, with its sensations and emotions, condemned for centuries, excluded and denied by philosophical thought, demonized because not altogether rationally controllable – just like meaning and metaphor in linguistics – today has been rehabilitated: today we can speak of the intelligence of the heart in linguistic development. One thinks of the contemporary psychologist Greenspan[49], who notes that it is precisely a child's ability to differentiate the emotions that lies at the basis of conceptual development: the difference between the time adverbs "before" and "after", or between the place concepts of "here and "there" comes from the child's experience of seeing its mother *first* with him and *now* behind the curtain. Or again, to express the concept of causality, a child must be able to link its action to the sense of a goal to be reached, understood as "emotional intention". The ability to develop grammar, namely to sequentially place different linguistic elements, presupposes the *sensation* of a deep desire, an emotional intention to communicate. Before a child is able to link together words into sentences, he is able to link the different parts of his experiences with each other. He can

link ideas and sequences of inner images, which allow him to evaluate how to act, before he puts them into practice or verbalizes them. It is not abstract logic, but the intelligence of the emotions perceived in his body that enables a child to evaluate and manage situations, giving them meaning. It is the emotions that – in connecting the body and the mind to each other – make it possible to create *symbols*. The mind is not a computer; it works on the basis of emotions and is part of an individual's experience. And it is precisely at the turn of the 20th century that in scientific and artistic experimentation, in which an interrelation is sought between the different aspects of human doing and knowing, in an attempt to overcome Cartesian dualism, that all this comes to be understood. What now must be fully retrieved.

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2. Robins RH, La linguistica moderna. Bologna: Il Mulino; 2005.
3. Robins RH, ref n. 2, p. 71; Arens H, ref n.1, p. 248, p. 337.
4. Robins RH, ibd.
5. And, even closer to us, by the Italian philosopher Benedetto Croce (Arens H. ref n.1, p. 425).
6. Arens H, ref n.1, p. 425.
7. Robins RH, ref n. 2, p. 23.
8. Arens H, ref n.1, p. 426.
9. Robins RH, ref n. 4, p.101.

10. Nephew of the eccellent comparatist and scholar of Sanscrit Maurice Bloomfield (Arens H. ref. n.1, p. 554).
11. Robins RH, ref n. 2, 109.
12. Ibd.
13. Sharply diverging from Bloomfield's linguistic perspective, it is the vision and work of Sapir, who – in studying the origin and dissemination of linguistic mutations – demonstrated great versatility, exploring the relationships of the linguistic system with those of other disciplines, such as literature, music, anthropology and psychology. Like the anthropologist Boas, Sapir insisted on the influence of language in every field of human life, even in favor of a psychological interpretation of phonemes (Robins RH, La linguistica moderna. Bologna: Il Mulino; 2005.).
14. Christian von Ehrenfels (Ehrenfels C, Über 'Gestaltsqualitäten'. Vierteljahresschrift für Wissenschaftliche Philosophie 1890;14:249-292.); Liebert (Liebert WA, Metaphernbereiche der deutschen Alltagssprache. Kognitive Linguistik und die Perspektiven einer kognitiven Lexikographie. Frankfurt/Main: Peter Lang; 1992.), makes a first schematic distinction between three schools of Gestalt psychology: (i) the Berlin school (Köhler, Koffka, Wertheimer, Lewin, Metzger), the Leipzig school (the so-called *Ganzheitspsychologie* of Krueger, Sander and Volkelt) and the Austrian school (the "Graz school" with Meinong among others). The Berlin line is still present and active: as the most important tendency of the post-Berlin Gestalt-Theorie it veers toward an integration with radical constructivism.
15. Bonacchi S, Bedeutung und Sprache: Frühe Beiträge zu einer Gestalt-Linguistik. Gestalt Theory, 2012;34(1):31-54, in part. 34-35.
16. The linguistic triad image of the semiotic triangle, in which the objects referred to, in order to be represented linguistically, must always be understood and motivated psychologically, seems to me to find a symmetrical correspondence in Hofmannsthal's poetic image expressed in the verse: "*Und drei sind eins: Ein Mensch, ein Ding, ein Traum*" (and three are one: a man, a thing, a dream). In the verse – found in his 1895 sonnet "*Wir sind aus solchem Zeug wie das zu träumen*," in which he quotes Shakespeare, tying it to Schlegel's translation - Hofmannsthal mystically summarizes the poet's symbolic path. The thing (reality, the external world) is internalized by the artist, to become or create a dream, and lastly, a literary symbol. The verse seems to arise from the widespread perception at the turn of the 20th century, that the boundaries between the "I" and the world seem vague and blurred (a perception which lies at the basis of the spiritual restlessness of modern man);

yet it is precisely through the act of symbolic unfolding that man, according to Hofmannsthal, seems to rediscover his own integrity (triune), while at the same time retrieving his soul and spiritual qualities. This juxtaposition between poetry and linguistics is not accidental, if one considers that it is in this period that, between philosophers and psychologists of language, the idea begins to take hold that the meaning of words is vague and with blurred edges (this point will be taken up and discussed further on).

17. Bonacchi S, ref n.15.
18. Bonacchi S, ref n.15, p. 37.
19. Ibd.
20. This criticism recalls the observation of the neurologist Henry Head, who – in advancing his "schema" theory (later transferred by Bartlett into the psychology field) – defined as "morgue-like anatomy" the theory, then used in neurological and psychological fields, based on the exact correspondence between cortical stimulation and visual images. To this he protested that mental activities were not being considered from a dynamic perspective, but rather as a static synthesis of constituent factors. This was a concept that was found precisely in the study of linguistic meaning, and in particular in the "componential" semantics of structuralist derivation.
21. It should be noted here that one of the main characteristics of a "good Gestalt" – discovered by Christian von Ehrenfels in 1890 – is the "*Übersummativität,*" which states that the whole is more than the sum of its parts. An example of this law is the fact that a melody can be played as either sad or happy, but not the individual notes. In a different way, it's like saying that a part in a whole is something other than this same part isolated or included in another whole (for example, being naked in the shower is not the same as being naked in the corridors of a university). Thus, according to Gestalt thought, to understand the meaning of a thing, a situation or a behavior it is important not only to analyze it, but also to have a synthetic vision of it, in order to perceive the event as a whole vast context of the global context, and yet appreciating its original character.
22. Bonacchi S, ref n. 15, p. 42.
23. Usnadze D, Ein experimenteller Beitrag zum Problem der psychologischen Grundlage der Namengebung. Psychologische Forschung 1924;5:24-43, in part. p. 43.
24. Bartlett FC, An experimental Study of some Problems of Perceiving and Imaging. British Journal of Psychology 1916;8:222-266. Bartlett FC, Remembering: A Study in experimental and social psychology. Cambridge: University

Press; 1932.; Usnadze D, Ein experimenteller Beitrag zum Problem der psychologischen Grundlage der Namengebung. Psychologische Forschung 1924;5:24-43.

25. Benoist L, Segni, simboli e miti. Milano: Luni editrice; 2017. p. 35.
26. Cresti S, Deissi e fluttuazione semantica tra fenomenologia e Linguistica Cognitiva. RIFL 2016;1:37-50, in part. p. 44.
27. Ibd: p. 46.
28. Labov W, The Boundaries of Words and their Meanings. In: Bailey C – N J/R W Shuy (eds.), New Ways of Analyzing Variation in English. Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press; 1973. Rosch E, Natural Categories. Cognitive Psychology 1973:4;328-350. Rosch E, Principles of Categorization. In: Rosch E, Lloyd BB (eds.), Cognition and Categorization. Hillsdale: Erlbaum; 1978. pp. 27-47.
29. Cresti S, Deissi e fluttuazione semantica tra fenomenologia e Linguistica Cognitiva. RIFL 2016;1:37-50, in part. p. 47.
30. Ibd.
31. Bartlett FC, ref n. 24.
32. A principle that – as Benoist writes (Benoist L, Segni, simboli e miti. Milano: Luni editrice; 2017.) – thinkers and artists of all time have understood: namely that "nothing can be understood by us if it does not evoke one of our memories." "We only see what we know," said Goethe. "We cannot admit the existence of a thing if we cannot give it meaning," says Cassirer" (Cassirer E, Philosophie der symbolischen Formen. Erster Teil: Die Sprache. Darmstadt: Wiss Buchges; 1956.).
33. Cresti S, ref. n. 29.
34. Rosch E, ref. n. 28.
35. Cresti S, ref. n. 29, p. 48.
36. Benoist L, ref. n. 32, p. 11.
37. Ibd.
38. Ibd.
39. Ibd, p.15.
40. Cacciari C, I sensi della metafora: sul rapporto fra percezione e linguaggio. In: Lo Russo AM (cur.), Metafora e conoscenza. Da Aristotele al cognitivismo contemporaneo. Milano: Bompiani; 2005. pp. 321-348, in part. p. 321.
41. Ibd, p. 327.
42. Ibd, p. 337.
43. Massironi points out (cited in Cacciari ibd.): "it is no coincidence that funeral monuments are full of falling drapes, arms abandoned in their laps and heads

tilted with sloping hair on their faces. Everything that appears abandoned, falling, without tonicity almost always expresses melancholy, discouragement (..) Expressiveness is not only present in these somewhat theatrical and caricatural manifestations, but it is a fact that constitutes a basic component of every perceptual act.".

44. Cacciari C, ref. n. 40, p. 18.
45. Vico G, Vico G, La Scienza Nuova d'intorno alla comune natura delle nazioni. Bari: Laterza & Figli; 1953[1744].
46. Benoist L, ref. n. 32, p.7.
47. We recall what was said in note 16 about the function that for Hofmannsthal the symbolic capacity possesses, that of enabling the reintegration in the subject of divided parts of its spirit.
48. Rigotti F, Partorire con il corpo e con la mente. Creatività, filosofia e maternità. Torino: Bollati Boringhieri; 2010.
49. Greenspan S, L'intelligenza del cuore. Milano: Mondadori; 1997.

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