

## GENERAL ANTHROPOGENY

### FIRST PART – BASIS

# Chapter 8 – THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN FUNCTIONINGS AND PRESENCE

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## GENERAL ANTHROPOGENY

### FIRST PART – BASIS

## Chapter 8 - The distinction between functionings and presence

When we approached the brain in the second chapter, we noted the strange phenomenon of presence, which at times accompanies, if not its own operations which are mute, at least some of the things, performances, physiological states, technical objects and signs that it treats. We even thought that we could indicate some of the physical or physiological "intimacies" that seemed to go hand in hand, or even underlie this phenomenon in the bio-electric-chemical computer, that a brain is.

We will understand that, in this case, we cannot simply say that something is there, by opposition to not being there or having gone or does not exist but that "presence" aims at apparition, apparitionality, phenomenality, presentiality of what is there. This is the sense that the word has in the title of Lavelle's 1938 work, *La présence totale*, with connotations that would embarrass us here, and that it has quite purely in Sartre's 1943 *Being and Nothingness*, particularly in chapters II, ch.3, I-II-III, where the word presence appears dozens of times in the sense that we understand it, i.e. apparitionality, phenomenality, presentiality.

Homo always felt that presence understood in that sense was common to himself and the animal, which is something that Shamans and Totemism primitively and eminently testify. But the animal does not seem to thematize this dimension of the Real, in the same way as it does not thematize its modes of existence <6> and field effects. In contrast, many hominid conducts are not only accompanied with presence, but take it as a theme and as a goal, for a source of pleasure and for object of desire.

## **8A. Presence versus functionings. Non-describable de jure. An occasionalism. Presence(s)-Absence(s). The physical/metaphysical distinction. The metaphysical animal**

What can we say about presence? That, even if it is assuredly associated to functionings, it is not a functioning; it even constitutes a certain real that opposes to functionings. Taken in its maximum extent, the term "functioning" encompasses every action, reaction and passion of the Universe insofar as for each one we can find antecedents and consequences and refer if not coordinate the ones with the others. Therefore, amongst perceptive-motor field effects, we thought good to make the distinction between <7G> those that are *calculables, even de facto, at least de jure*, like static, kinetic, dynamic field effects and those that are *not calculable de facto or de jure*, like excitable field effects. But all of them seemed to us to be *describable*, graspable, either in rigorously calculated coordinates or at least coordinates that were findable amongst the topological, cybernetic, logico-semiotic, and presentive referential. And these distinctions also seemed valid in the case of logico-semiotic field effects.

Yet presence (presentiality, apparitionality, phenomenality) not only escaped to every *de facto* and *de jure calculation*, but has never been *referred* by anyone, no one ever offered a referential. Its only pertinent denomination consists in being, being a real, and yet not being a functioning. Presence is indescribable, in contrast to the known or unknown functionings that can all be described. It is probably why it was never considered by any traditional philosopher, including Parmenides, Plato, Aristotle, Hegel, Husserl, Heidegger, Lao Tzu, or Sakkara. When Wittgenstein talks about presence in his 1921 *Tractatus*, he concludes in his last aphorism that "we must silence what we cannot speak of", after having said that we could "show" something of presence in a choice that he calls "mystical". And when Sartre, in 1943 *Being and Nothingness*, has the philosophical glory of considering it frontally for the first time and to question his being (his fabric of being), - in an ontology of phenomenality, apparitionality, - he places it on the side of "non-substance", of a certain "nothingness", "nihilation", "decompression of the being".

Since presence-apparition is not describable or coordonable, its relation to the functionings it accompanies is not either. However, a relation must exist. As this relation could not be an efficient, final, formal, material, or instrumental causality - in which case it would be coordonable, or at least describable - and as, on the other hand, we cannot explain it by resonances or phasing that would only be more concealed causalities, let us simply say that presence (presentiality, apparitionality) takes place "on the occasion" of some cerebral functionings. The word "occasion" refers to a minimal concomitance, since its etymology only evokes a fall (*cadere*) through (*ob*), spatially and temporally.

To which we should probably add that presence maintains a very tight link with absence. To the extent that we could, like many of our contemporaries, target a **presence-absence**, by understanding that in this case it is not question of the absence of something or someone, but of the indescribability and indeterminacy of presence. We must still determine whether absence-

presence is used **in the plural or singular form**. Since it takes place on the occasion of some cerebral functionings that have a beginning and an end, we may conceive that a new presence-absence corresponds to every new or renewed functioning, and that there are therefore *presences-absences* in the plural form. Likewise, as presence-absence can take place using a brain or using another, we can think that in one case it is mine, and in another case it is yours or hers according to a new plurality: our *presences-absences*. However, even if we are sensitive to the independence of presence, absence, presence-absence in relation to the functionings that they accompany, we are tempted to conceive them as being independent from the plural linked to the here/there, now/not now, existing/non-existing, and also to mine, yours, his/hers, by always writing *presence-absence*. Homo's civilizations have shown every sort of choice in this regard, through the privilege granted to one of these two terms or through the equivalence of the two. It is probably useful that an anthropogeny should sometimes write *presence(s)-absence(s)* to signify this game.

We shall conclude with the essential philosophical declaration: **In the Universe, there are only functionings (describable) and presences (indescribable)**. The functionings/presence(s)-absence(s) is the original distinction. It can also express itself by **physical/metaphysical** qualifications. In this case, is *physical* (pHusika) all that concerns growths, regardless of what they are, inanimate or animated, organic or mental (pHuein, growing), which growths can be coordinated or at least described. And is *metaphysical* all that comes after physics (meta-ta-pHusika), what remains when we have envisaged the entire field of physics-chemistry-biology in its widest sense and that, in our primary distinction, can therefore only be the presence(s)-absence(s), apparitionality, which could not be described, but only designated.

It is true that in the introducer of the word "metaphysical", Aristotle, and later in the western philosophy, the word has had all sorts of derivative senses, linked to the paradigms of the era, and - for example - has designated a science that would focus on the ordering principle of the Universe, to which were conferred, apart from existence, powers and attributes of primary efficient cause and last final cause, sometimes called God, infinite being, realism being, etc. But if we stick to the first sense of "what comes from beneath or beyond physics", *metaphysics* comfortably designates what is not physical, therefore what is not describable, i.e. in our primary distinction, presence(s)-absence(s). And since metaphysics plays a constant role not only in religions but also in art, love and all hominid actions and passions, the *physical/metaphysical*, couple, taken in this etymological sense, lends itself to soberly express that Homo, on top of being a transversalizing, orthogonalizing, possibilizing, indexing, etc. being, is a **metaphysical animal**, therefore capable of thematizing presence(s)-absence(s) indescribably accompanying some of its functionings and to make it a theme of his desire, even the essential theme of desire.

The physical/metaphysical couple thus understood also has the advantage of making a clear distinction between **physical presence** (the fact of being there in contact or under the eyes) and **metaphysical presence** (presentiality and the phenomenality suggested on this occasion). This allows expressing easily rather subtle things, such as for instance the fact that, in some forms of theatre and dance, a metaphysical presence is targeted through physical presences. We think here to the acting of Beckett's actors.

## 8B. Range of functionings with regard to presence and "conscience"

If it is true that presence, absence, presence-absence are in an "occasionalist" relation with some functionings of the Universe, we must expect a panoply of rates in the functioning/presence couple, for example non-presential, pene-presential, para-presential, etc. The distribution of this rate is so much linked to Homo's overall structure that despite the differences in eras and cultures, the basic range is rather similar everywhere. An anthropogeny must at least provide one version of this range.

Yet a preliminary point. The functionings/presence distinction is foreign to the western reader because it is dissimulated by a more familiar notion of **conscience**, where presence (apparitionality) and knowledge (functionings) are more or less linked, added, confounded. Romans, very syntactic Indo-Europeans in whom the most intense experiences of presence were those that were accompanied by knowledge, invented the term *conscientia*. Whence the compound **con-scientia** where *cum* is an intensive that is simultaneously collective, reflected, respectful ("moral consciousness") of knowledge. With Christianity, *conscientia* designated increasingly interior grasping. Having become *conscience*, it will name the "interior sentiment" for Malebranche, which allows knowing a few "properties of the soul". For Locke, where it is translated into *consciousness*, it is an act of memory (as suggested by the German *mind-meinen*) creating a "representation of things from the past allowing for the definition of an I". Finally, since Hamilton, *consciousness* and *conscience*, and German counterpart *Bewusstsein*, acquired approximately the current sense of the word, where con-scientia = knowledge + presence.

We can see that the word *conscience* (*Bewusstsein*) is much too vague to serve as a theoretical concept in an anthropogeny. Apart from the fact that it blurs the distinction functioning/presence, it leads some Latins, such as Sartre, to think that by speaking confusedly of presence and conscience without articulating them, one can be exempted to envisage the mental and cerebral functionings that support every knowledge. Conversely, it leads some Anglo-Saxons, including physicist Penrose and cognitive psychologist Damasio, to think that it suffices, to "explain" presence, to explain the mental and cerebral functionings that come with it. However, historically, it would be too frustrating for Westerners to exclude every allusion to eastern "consciousness" from the range of the functionings/presence relations. We will therefore approach some of the possible parallelisms, by using the sign /// to mark their fragile character.

### 8B1. Non-presential

First, there is the huge area of functionings that escapes every presence-apparitionality-phenomenality even though they take place in organisms with a brain. It is for instance the case for cellular transformations, deep sleep, some phases of digestion, but also the operations of the brain's neurons and synapses, the constructive or eliminatory work of memorization <2A5>, according to the "silence" of the nervous support <2A7>. Such is the basal state for every living

being with a brain, as it is a state-moment of Universe. That state-moment that Saint Anthony of Flaubert was looking for when he found beatifying to identify himself with the stones of his desert. (/// "strictly unconscious".)

### **8B2. Pene-presential**

Then there are functionings that are presential, but hardly. Such as food satiety and the first digestion, sleepiness, the moment when one half-awakes. And several states of semi-lucidity. (/// "Half-consciousness").

### **8B3. Para-presential**

Sleep, as it digests the traumas of the previous day through its intensified memorization <2A5, 2B5>, already signalled the traumatic character of many perceptions, even apparently banal. On the other hand, the brain has little to gain by charging too many non-urgent information onto its paths of perception-motivity, or those of its adjoining memories. For these two first reasons, many memorization and memoration functionings are usually non-presential, whilst being cerebrally sufficiently active to become conveniently presential in case of need at short term, at medium term and at long term. These functionings are for example, many reasons for decisions, or dream implications, which many peoples attempted to transform into premonition. (/// "Pre-consciousness, Vorbewusste".)

### **8B4. Pre-presential**

In a given hominid group, some cerebral functionings result so basally from social or language structures of the community or society, and they go so much without saying that it is almost impossible to relativize them, to grasp them in distancing or simply to see them. The "pre-" of "pre-presential" is then likened to that of "preliminary", "prejudged", "presupposed", "pre-existing". This group upstream of any singular functioning is already sensitive in the manner in which a specimen deciphers *indicia* and produces indexes. But it is more powerfully active in the everyday neutral language, which is spoken literally inside its speaker before and as s/he speaks it. (/// Freud's "Uber-Ich, Super-Ego".)

### **8B5. Central presential**

In the recent Western world, Homo is often convinced that the state of full attention (awakening) is its authentic state and that all others are preparations, expectations, and peripheral resonances, repressions. The anthropogeny must not, however, be under any illusion on the centrality and importance of presential functionings that are always made up of an alternation of awakening, distraction and cancellation. In a-wake and a-ware, the English suffix "a-" marks a

state that goes *towards* vigilance but at the cost of a work of Sisyphus. (/// The "conscient, conscious, bewusst, strictly speaking".)

### **8B6. Reflected presential**

Endotropic and distancing Homo's perception-motivity-perception circuit may sometimes stop going forward and come back to one of its stages for a moment. For example, to remove a physical or mental obstacle. To adapt the sequence of the thing-performance to a situation, to a circumstance, to a horizon <1B3>. To break down the distinct stages of the situation and the elements of the circumstance. To recover in the pene-presential, para-presential, pre-presential functionings those that are susceptible of influencing the current situation and circumstance, etc. The "re" prefix applied to "flection" [in re-flection] suggests well the returns we are referring to. The mobilisation inherent to reflective cerebral functionings means that they are ordinarily more presential than merely attentive functionings. (/// "Reflected consciousness", which does not have an equivalent for Freud, the index general of whom, at *Reflectionen*, only refers to *Grübeln*, digging one's head.)

### **8B7. Reflexive presential**

Reflexivity is a reduplication (plicare, duo, re) where functionings come back onto themselves, not to examine their adequacy to experiences, which is the task of reflection, but to raise in themselves the conditions of every full experience, thus also one's presence. It is even those functionings that question speculatively presence as such. They were thematized very late in the anthropogeny. But at the same time, they are so involved in the logical virtuosity and humour that, seeing how these latter activate-passivate from early childhood, we are entitled to ask if a certain reflexivity did not exert itself relatively early in the gestures or in the words of the techno-semiotic primate. (/// Maine de Biran's "reflective consciousness", introduced almost at the same time as Hamilton added a speculative dimension and one of presence-apparitionality to *consciousness* that the Latin *conscientia* did not have.)

### **8B8. Counter-presential**

Sometimes, some of the functionings that we have just seen become incompatible between them, or are crossed by others, particularly pre-presential functionings. Since it is a crossing place for informational construction and constructive information <2A1>, the brain cleaves them, conferring them the status of constantly para-presential functionings <8B3>. In memoration, these functionings kept apart diffuse nevertheless (themselves) amongst the others, (a) sometimes composing compromises with them (Freudian symptoms), (b) sometimes charging themselves explosively with field effects to the point that they create compulsory fantasies <7I6>, (c) or sometimes provoking non-situated and non-reconstructible unbalances that psychotherapies have always attempted to put back into a circuit. (/// Freud's "Unbewusst". The latter is supposed to result from a repression, "Verdrängung". But outside the bourgeois central

Europe of the 1900s, counter-presential functionings are probably often the result of a less dramatic cerebral hygiene.)

### **8B9. Presentive presential**

Finally, some functionings are there for the concerted thematization of presence-absence. They occupy a considerable place and perhaps a central place in hominid existence, giving way to specialised "lives", such as extreme art, mysticism, love, but also some everyday life, such as Café's life. We will broach them in the following paragraph under the name of presentification. (/// Few Western counterparts and no Freudian counterpart.)

### **8C. Presentification conducts. Peak Experiences**

In all the populations known to us, hominid specimens cultivated presentive or presentifying conducts, i.e. where presence or presence-absence was expected and maintained. Actively, passively, tangentially. In any case, by rejecting by ruse the circuit of techno-semiotic means and ends characteristic of functionings. We encountered these experiences on the occasion of excited field effects, but we must come back to these under the light that the primary distinction functioning/presence now proposes.

Three main paths are offered to thematize presence-absence. (a) Overexciting functionings, particularly excited field effects, until they either implode or explode. (b) Conversely, to unravel functionings until the order of means and ends blurs in the vagueness of meditation and consideration <6A>. (c) To move in the order of functionings without stopping to be available to the passivity that accompanies some of them, the middle voice of the Greek and Latin verbs sometimes approached this attitude.

Assuredly, some circumstances-on-a-horizon make things-performances-in-situation presentifying. Some times of the day: the clear night, nightfall, noonday, and the early morning. Some places: the desert, the river, the steppe, and the great north. Some seasons: Easter, ruts and heat.

But Homo did not content with waiting for these random coincidences and usually put in place cyclical rituals allowing to hope for the emergence of presence-absence regularly. These were fighting to death, the duel (Stendhal's described by Merimée), crime (according to Genet), extenuating dancing, fasting, prolonged immobility, orgies, maintained divagation, pilgrimage with its fatigue and disorientation. In more intellectualist cultures, the same finality produced paintings, architectures, music of extreme art <11I3, 27D1> and some political "great nights". Assuredly, presentifications are maintained by the eight properties of rhythm <1A5> and especially their excited field effects. Often too, they are helped by drugs that work on neurotransmitters directly.

Presentifications are not aberrations or exceptions of the anthropogeny. In the sixties [1960], American psychologist Maslow imagined an ingenious protocol to show their triviality. He asked some students in his university to designate those who seemed especially "balanced", "healthy" and "normal". Once he had the list, he interrogated the elected. They all confided that they practised extreme sports, extreme mountain climbing, extreme art, anticipated death, extreme love, scientific or mathematical insight, heroism, mystical rapt, various passions, all cases where functionings are not limited to their production, but are the occasion to thematize presence-absence. On this subject, Maslow spoke of *peak-experiences*. He could also have used the term "bottom experiences" or, referring to Baudelaire, of "anywhere out of the world experiences". Most of Maslow's students probably never noticed that they were practising peak or depth experiences before taking part to the study. Like the labourer who goes to have a drink in his favourite seat in his favourite pub after work, either keeping silent or speaking about anything to anyone. Like the adolescents and adults that "erupt" in nightclubs on Saturday night.

Phylogenetically, these types of experiences probably played a role in the passage from Homo habilis to Homo erectus, then to Homo sapiens and Sapiens sapiens. Ontogenetically, they take place according to the contrasted ages of hominid specimens <3C>, during the initiations of adolescence, of marriage, renouncement of old age, funerals. They can have the force of a cataclysm at the end of childhood. Sartre described the brisk fulguration of the *undifferentiated pure exist* in a little girl looking at the sea from the deck of a ship.

## **8D. Ideation of presence-absence. The absolutes: eternity-immortality, ubiquity-infinity, spontaneity-almighty-power. Strong versus weak freedom**

To the approach of presentification that "raises" functionings to presence-absence, the anthropogeny will couple the inverted movement by which technician and semiotic Homo constantly tries to make presence-absence enter into the order of functionings by conceptualizing it <2B2>. And also, because presence-absence is subject to appetite, pleasure, desire, by magnifying it into regulating ideas, following the sliding by which *idea* gave *ideal*. We find such ideations in all cultures. We are reduced to express them in our western words, and even our French-English words, by entrusting the readers to follow the equivalent terms with other nuances elsewhere.

(1) Eternity. Immortality. - The idea of eternity offers a good start. A sensation, a perception, an indiciality, an indexation, a possible, a pain, insofar as presence-absence is thematized, tends to escape time and to belong to a sort of "any-time-always-never". This is what is targeted in age as a time of life (aetas), from the Indian-European root \*aye that we find in the Greek *aiôn*, Latin *aevum* (pronounce aiFoum), old English \**â* (*aye*), a root still active today under the forms aeternum, aeternitas. Eternity thus perceived contributed to confer various immortalities to those who were supposed to be inhabited by it, man or beast. It accomplishes at best in the tense of the verb that was precisely called the "present" (prae-esse, being-before), encouraging the relation between eternity and presentia.

(2) Ubiquity. Infinity - An absolute domination of the present goes hand in hand with an indefiniteness in space, according to the sentiment that then my present must also be the present of other events everywhere else right to the end of the Universe. There would therefore be in the Universe events whose present corresponds to my present, according to a concrete duration, of which Homo defended the originality against the relativist physical time when the latter was postulated (see the Bergson-Einstein correspondence). The term ubiquity (ubi, there where, -que, enclitic of generalisation) rather well fits this sentiment that, joined to eternity, has diversely supported the idea of spatial infinity.

(3) Spontaneity. Almighty power - Insofar as it escapes the order of causality, presence-absence, when it is projected in the order of functionings, bears the idea of a pure spontaneity (spons, source). Whence an ideal of freedom, on which we can find premonitory symptoms elsewhere, but that culminated in the end of the West. For Sartre for example, in around 1945, no exterior or interior event could act on a "conscience", a "freedom", which conversely had the power of intervening in the order of things. The idea of freedom is to the principle of the idea of almighty power, in a form of temporal infinity. (Calling this freedom "**strong freedom**" allows to distinguish it clearly from the "degrees of freedom" or "dimensions" of a system that we can call "**weak freedom**".)

Contrary to conducts of presentification, that seem to have appeared very early, the three major ideations of presence-absence, eternity, ubiquity, spontaneity appeared very late in the anthropogeny, hardly before Taoism, Buddhism, Pythagorism, Christianity, modern rationalism. Nevertheless, the notion of reciprocal implication of conducts and ideas is such in the hominid brain that presentifying conducts have from the start had to comprise virtually some ideation of presence-absence, and that in turn these ideations have always continued to feed from presentifying conducts. To the extent that regulating ideas that we have kept are often nothing more than more or less purified presentifying conducts (discharged, abstract) and variously grouped in a beam of indexes.

The three absolutes (unbound, solvere, ab) of eternity (immortality), ubiquity (infinity), spontaneity (strong freedom) were conceived as more objectal or more subjectal, more substantialized or more qualitative, more relative or more absolute according to the areas and moments of culture. In any case, we shall be careful not to confuse them with the **divine**, which etymologically would relate them too much to a luminous Indo-European absolute (\*diF, dies, deus, Zeus, divus): Hoc sublime candens quem omnes invocant Jovem. And even less with the **sacred**, that relates to a generalised compensatory exchange, in which these regulating ideas only intervene as exchangeables like the others. This does not exclude that they often shared qualities with the divine, and with the sacred.

## 8E. Real and Desire

The primary distinction functionings/presence-absence with its procession of presentifications and regulating ideas invites to insist on the semantic distinction that the French allows between Reality and Real, need and desire.

### 8E1. Real versus Reality

**Reality**, word ending in -ity, which rings more familiar (like "possibility") designates all that, in the Universe, hominid specimens can regasp, assume, understand, describe, handle in their current or future technical and semiotic systems. For each one, Reality results from technical and social consistencies that determine each other. Such is also the German *Realität* according to Freud. According to the initial articulation functionings/presence, Reality covers everything that belongs to functionings, from atoms to distant galaxies and quarks, right up to logical paradoxes. Correlatively, **Real**, a word that sounds more absolute, is apt to designate what Homo cannot and will never be able to regasp in his systems, what cannot be described, i.e. presence-absence. And as such *participates from* Real what intensely involves presence-absence, what is *strongly presential*, and that can be said *presentifying*, such as artistic, mystical, love experiences.

On this momentum, some may be tempted to make uncoordinable functionings (de jure or simply de facto) enter into the Real. This is the case of *insights* where a mathematician begins to suspect that the form of one of his equations expresses a much wider structure that he will never know; of the paradoxical beginning of the big bang for the physicist; of the logical paradoxes and limits of formalism; of excited field effects insofar as they are uncoordinable; of sexual and generalised partition-conjunction insofar as it precisely exploits many excited field effects and that its combination of minimal duality and of open unity puts ordinary logics uncomfortable; of ideas or ideations of eternity, ubiquity, spontaneity. But in its own interest the anthropogeny will resist approximations. And it will be convenient for the anthropogeny to reserve Real (versus Reality) to presence-absence and the hominid experiences that imply it, when they are envisaged as implying it.

### 8E2. Desire versus need

The distinction between Reality/Real allows specifying the need/desire distinction. The phenomenology of desire is familiar to hominid specimens of all cultures. It is a quest, but directed to an inaccessible object, more or less indefinable, and that in any case escapes, even when it is re-joined or possessed. Desire encompasses a sort of spatial-temporal elongation of the

questor, that the Kluge dictionary considers to make sense to the German speaker in *langen* and *erlangen*, and that also makes sense to English speakers in *longing to*.

The Latins who invented the words *desiderare* and *desiderium* immediately marked these aspects by comparing the objects of desire to sidera (stars) and by rendering the relation that it maintains with them by *de* (from) [de-siderare, from-star]. Moreover, under the influence of Roman-Christian interiority, *desiderare aliquid* (desiring something) went to *desiderare ad aliquid* (desiring towards something) for Augustine (sicut cervus desiderat ad fontes aquarum, sic desiderat anima mea ad te, Domine). The French *aspirer à* shows the same sliding by privileging in the desire the volatility of the breath (spirare) with the movement (ad).

In the Reality/Real couple, desire is linked to Real, i.e. presence-absence, but also to all it usually accompanies: excited field effects; sexual and generalised partition-conjunction; fantasy insofar as it participates to field effects and blurs functionings, especially in its version of the fundamental fantasy <7I5>; the spatial and temporal vastness that the German *die Weite* conveys, which comprises an imponderable, non-referenced dilatation. Ultimately, desire calls desire, desire for the desire of the other: "amabam amare et amari", confesses Augustine.

The nature of desire is best explained when compared to that of the *need*, which is a matter of lack and functionings. The western reader is used to consider desire as the consequence of a lack (thus Plato's *penia*, indigence) and even, when taken positively, as a functioning among others (therefore Deleuze's "mechanical arrangements" of desire). We must warn the reader that the anthropogeny supposes that one should note how much desire is neither of these two orders: *to desire* is neither *to greed* (by emptiness), nor *wünschen* (by full). Its paradoxes are due to the presence-absence that polarizes it, making it as immense and suspended as it is.

## 8F. Semiotic types

In the previous chapters, we have not yet encountered images, music or languages. Yet, what we have seen of the functionings and the presence-absence embraces hominid existence sufficiently for the anthropogeny to take a first global vision of Homo's semiotic field. And even of its general distribution, which goes from significations to sense, to the sense, to the Sense, to significance.

### 8F1. Significations

If it is true that a sign is a segment of the world that thematizes another while depleting in this thematization <4A>, signification (signum, facere) is the most current use of the sign. In this case, indeed, signs thematize a defined designated, often practical, and which is so pregnant or salient that they fade away in front of it as designators. Signification is often accompanied by

presence (presentiality, phenomenality), but the latter adheres so much to the practical urgency of the designated object that it does not have the opportunity to flourish, or to be seen as such.

## 8F2. Senses

However, for indicializing and indexating Homo, very often the designated are vague or imperfectly able to be pointed to, or decidedly pointed but undetermined, in which case we often say that their designators have senses rather than significations. Such is the case when signs point or trace (a) places, times, directions, orientations ("walking in the *sense* of an arrow, an indexating finger, the hands of a watch"); (b) relatively precise designated but in an open field ("in what *sense* do you understand this word?"); (c) processes with an aim or that are simply continued according to an internal consistency but without an envisaged term ("common *sense*"). Thus understood, senses are either indicium or indexes, sometimes calculations or speculations, and are often accompanied by a more vivid presence-absence than the significations, because they are freed of the absorbing details of particular things-performances-in-situation.

## 8F3. Sense versus nonsense

Sometimes emerges, on the occasion of specific processes, the notion, the idea or the sentiment of a process as a process or as a general course of things, where senses that are plural in a first while become sense in the singular form. This often comes with an insistence of presence-absence, and in Becket's *Waiting for Godot*, where it is a theme, we read "something follows its course". The English *nonsense*, of which the French *non-sens* is a too rational equivalent, designates a disruption that affects precisely that sense of the process as such.

## 8F4. Sense versus Non Sense

What we have seen of the three major ideations of presence-absence - eternity, ubiquity, spontaneity - augurs that homo should sometimes postulate, beyond relative sense or senses, a capitalized, absolute Sense and that the latter would then create a couple with an equally absolute Non Sense. The paths of Sense/Non Sense, where thematization of presence-absence is maximal, were manifold, and we shall focus on two.

(a) One path is to follow so far functionings, therefore the order of means and ends, that we get to the idea of a Primary Cause and Ultimate End, of an Alpha-Omega cycle, where functionings are both justified and transcended, reconciled with presence-absence to the extent that they seem to be born from it, to become one of its expressions. In the West, this would one day become Aristotle Causality (noësis noëseôs), Thom's Causality (intellectus infinitus), Leibniz' Reason of Being, Hegel's Substance-Conscience. And popularly, since the Roman Stoics, become Providence, the encompassing and advancing vision, in a general intelligibility of all that was, is and will be.

(b) The other path, which was the most used at the scale of the planet and of the species, is to put the area of functionings between parenthesis, and to consider it as an illusion or appearance, and to thematize the area of presence-absence as the only essential and truth, with which an eternity-ubiquity-spontaneity coincides. We think here to the doxa of pre-Socratic Parmenides, Buddha's Nirvana, and Lao Tzu's Tao.

### 8F5. The Cryptic

To this extent, Homo frequently targets things inaccessible by the negation of something that is accessible to sight, hearing, touch, smell or taste. Massive or semi-permeable, direct or indirect negation. It is the veil, or the tumulus of earth and stone dissimulating an object, or delimiting an emptiness, and which thereby want to point out something else or the Other. It will be the practices of the indecipherable in writings. In the intergesture and interlocution, it is the silences, reserves, gaps, apotropaisms, or still, negative substantives, when the dialect allows: "in-finite", "un-limited", "un-conditional. This last process invaded Sanskrit, where it gave way to a "negative theology" that we also find in our Neo-Platonism. "The divine is the unfinished, the non-form, the non-intelligent, the non-will, the non-act, etc."

The crypt exemplifies this approach which, to reveal a beyond or beneath, hides (kruptein) or dissimulates (similis, dis-). The cryptic can target functionings, for example in secret rites that increase the social power of a group. But it mainly concerns presence-absence. This approach is so archaic that we can see its announcement in a cover of leaves with which a group of chimpanzees covers a dead young congener.

### 8F6. Significance

Finally, we shall signal, for its considerable anthropogenic role, a universal hominid practise which is to insist so much on the designators as designators that the designated take on a far-away, optional status. We then speak sometimes of *significance*, by opposition to *signification* and to *sense*, somewhat like we distinguish remembrance and its floating content from memory and its determined content. Regardless of whether we are talking of signification, the senses, sense or Sense.

Significance so understood has a direct effect of awakening some presence, or some absence, and even very precisely presence-absence, as the signs, exempted from a pressing referent, intensify their capacity of distanciation as such. This re-joins hominid desire and pleasure to such an extent that, apart from very requiring technical situations and some urgent social conflicts, Homo took pleasure on a daily basis to use his signs in a state of significance, i.e. as being primarily designators with available designated: "Democracy", "duty", "the future", "nation". Assuredly in everyday, moral, political and philosophical statements. But also in exact sciences as soon as they depart from their controllable propositions.

## 8G. Semiotic transmissions

The distribution of semiotic types under the light of functionings/presence-absence distinction enlightens all at once the three main types of hominid transmissions, i.e. communication, communion and participation.

### 8G1. Communication

In urgent functionings, the transmission of information needs to be adequate, whether by signs in Homo or by stimuli-signals in the animal. We then call it *communication*, as in the reference title of Norbert Wiener: *Cybernetics or Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine* (1948). For Homo, this is the case of artisan injunctions, experimentation in exact sciences, mathematical writing, and some constraining indicia that Aristotle designated using "tekmèria" to oppose them to "semeïa", vague *indicia*. Assuredly, in hominid specimens, communication becomes less adequate as they are used in large - therefore blurrier - concepts, like in an educational or political programme or a page of philosophy. However, progressive approximations and rectifications remain in this case sought and practicable, and it is still a question of communication, even approximate, even illusory.

### 8G2. Communion

However, some transmissions convey something of field effects of presence-absence felt by a group or a particular. This presence-absence being incoordonnable de jure and even indescribable is no longer relevant of communication in the understood sense. In French, the only word befitting this is *communion*, probably because the speaker forgets its real etymology referring to "munus" (charge to accomplish) as in "communication", and that he only understands the false etymology, where "unio" and "cum", union-with, stay afloat without the demand for a determined message.

We could not exclude that some night howlings of dogs and wolves have a communal aspect along with the information that they convey. But hominid specimens thematize and target presence-absence, and thus the communion that is its sharing, its multiplying reverberation. Tangentially through a prolonged meal, drink, talk, stroking, intercourse. Frontally in the words of Dostoyevsky's drunkards, a verse of the Psalmist, a beatitude of Jesus, a surah from the Qur'an, a gesture of Buddha, a poem by Rumi, an illumination of Rimbaud, a phrase by Schumann, a paragraph of Poincare on the thermodynamic death of the worlds, a turn of the pen of Weinberg describing the Planet seen from a plane under the light of the universal fossil beaming at 2,7K. However, if communion seduces some hominid specimens by its presence-absence, it repulses others because of its rupture with the order of controllable functionings. Two

attitudes therefore prevailed, and the Qur'an formulated them with its customary intransigence by making a distinction between the Shuddering Ones and the Erasing Ones (Chouraki).

The term communion is, moreover, appropriate to the sharing of religious, political, scientist, discipical *beliefs*, that is to say these knowledge where the content is mainly verified by the rhythm of perceptive-motor and logico-semiotic field effects that it awakens in individuals or in a group <7I8>. Thus, it is rare that the thematizations of presence-absence should not be accompanied by sentiments of faith, mostly religious, and that conversely, sentiments of faith, particularly when they are religious, do not thematize presence-absence in any way. The most usual communion is that done by the resonance of the sound between a musician and his audience, between several concerting musicians, between musicians and the composer of whom they share the origin by resourcing.

### 8G3. Participation

The most frequent hominid practice is then the participation, which consists in the subtle dosage of communication and communion. While the *side* of "taking sides" (prendre parti, in French) cuts (partire, distribute), and while the *part* of "being part" supposes a whole, the *part* of "taking part", without being truly possessable and exchangeable is thematizable as an element of exchange by distancing and possibilizing hominid specimens. Combining the right dose of elementary communication and diffuse communion, participation had to intervene very early on in groups of standing primates, before the differentiated gesture and later on the language constituted defined areas. Today, in spite of the increased importance of functional communication in advanced industrial societies, participation is still the most constant resort of hominid groups, particularly during family meals and business lunches.

## 8H. Destinies-Choices of existence. Conduct versus behaviour

Amongst all the protocols and panoplies encountered in these first eight chapters, each hominid specimen realises its own accentuations or mixtures, which make its idiosyncrasy. These singular reinforcement or blurriness rates are understood as a choice of existence or as a destiny of existence depending on whether one believes in "strong" or "weak" freedom as described above <8D>. We shall speak of destiny-choice of existence to signal the question whilst leaving it open.

Assuredly, in a hominid specimen's destiny-choice of existence, everything matters: the manner in which it favours or disadvantages each of the eight properties of the rhythm; cultivates fantasies of objects or rather a fundamental fantasy or compulsory fantasies; prefers static or kinetic or dynamic or excited field effects <7G>; is sedentary or nomad, etc. Yet, four aspects are particularly important. We encountered them for the first time when we outlined an evocable referential to describe somewhat excited field effects. They are, because of their primary

character, (a) topology, (b) cybernetic, (c) logico-semiotic, (d) presentivity that are activated-passivized on this occasion. In other words, to describe the destiny-choice of existence of an individual or a people or an era means qualifying its topology, cybernetic, logico-semiotic, presentivity. This means choosing amongst the following rates:

A) TOPOLOGY, or rate of close/distant, encompassing/encompassed, contiguous/non-contiguous, continuous/non-continuous, compact/diffuse, open/closed, etc.

B) CYBERNETIC, or rates of negative/positive reaction (thus of feedback/runaway), but also rates of submission/bluff, play/serious, exploration/coquetry, confrontation/isolation, dream/reverie.

C) LOGICO-SEMIOTIC, or rates of indiciality (indicium) / indexation, and rates of significations/sense/Sense/significance, or contingent/necessary/probable, etc.

D) PRESENTIVITY, or rates of functionings/presence, presence/absence (singular), presences-absences (plural), reality/real, need/desire, communication/communion, but also emphasis on the fantasies of things-performance or the fantasies of \*world, or partition-conjunction, or still, the fundamental fantasy <7I5>, etc.

The wording **destiny-choice of existence** thus defined will prove very useful. It will enable us recalling that images, music, languages, writings, theories, politics etc. always realise themselves through singular organisms, each having a topological, cybernetic, logico-semiotic, presentive destiny-choice being themselves also singular. By which each hominid specimen has a **conduct**, not only a **behaviour**. Besides, we can also speak of the destiny-choice of existence of a group, for instance the Chinese versus the Europeans, the Pre-Socratics versus the Romantics, Shiites versus Sunnites, men versus women. A historian has never truly understood an era, a people, an individual, and an artist before he has grasped his destiny-choice of existence.

## SITUATION 8

*The distinction functionings/presence is enlightened by its history. Jean-Louis Laroche, then a teacher of psychology at the Montreal University, one day asked the author to write something on consciousness, at around the same time when a dying Bateson wrote that consciousness is the sole philosophical problem. The concept demonstrated that it was double, covering both functionings (reasonings, perceptive constructions, sentiments, strategies, etc.) and another dimension: presence, even presence-absence. Functionings could be described and presence could not. Western "though" and then "consciousness" had mixed up or confounded both, with regrettable theoretical and practical consequences pointed out by Kant. Chapters 21-24 on Homo's theories will be the occasion to encounter the notions of thought and conscience in western philosophy, and the emergence of the notion of presence since 1940.*

*For the occasionalism invoked here as a pseudo-causal "relation" between functionings and presence-absence, it goes without saying that it is not that of Malebranche, which precisely intervened in the context of the classic primary distinction: thought/world, which will become the distinction consciousness/world, with which the distinction functionings/presence is in radical break. However, the notion of ideation of presence-absence in the form of regulating ideas is certainly influenced by Kant.*

*We shall not confound the Real of the Anthropogeny with Lacan's Real when he declares, in Radiophonie in Scilicet: "Thus, the real differs from reality". Indeed, since the trilogy "real, imaginary, symbolic" of his "Schéma R" <26E2b>, where the real is still the Reality, Lacan signalled, for example in Lacan in Italia, and then more and more frankly distinguished up to Ornicar: (a) a real of everyday objects, and also celestial objects, which are attractive because they can be calculated, and the weight of which "encumbers" us, "sickening us of the real"; (b) a real without fantasy, the criterion of which is that it contains "impossible", i.e. contradictory, which is not foreseen in Freud's "Realität". In his eyes, this "real without fantasy" can be glanced at on the occasion of paradoxical algorithms and non-figurable geometric forms, "mathemes" (Möbius strip, Klein bottle, Borromean rings, Desargues' projective plane), that the Anthropogeny would rank among functionings defying our capacities for coordination <26E2b>, and about which Lacanian mathematician René Lavendhomme gives a circumstanced presentation in Lieux du sujet, Le Seuil, 2001. On the contrary, the Real of this chapter only concerns the indescribable of presence-absence, leaving everything relating to functioning - whether coordonnable and un-coordonnable, knowable or un-knowable - to Reality.*

*Translated by Paula COOK, 2017*

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