



THE CONFRONTATION OF MATERIALITY AND IMMATERIALITY OF SIGNS: REFLECTIONS ON JAPANESE CULTURE BY ROLAND BARTHES AND VERONIKA SCHÄPERS

Viola Hildebrand-Schat

ABSTRACT *Approaching the artist's book Praise of the Taifun by German artist Veronika Schäpers from a standpoint highly informed by Roland Barthes's thoughts while at the same time drawing from reception theory (Iser, Jauß), this essay suggests a semiotic reading of artist's books that pays close attention to their respective semiotic 'openness', interstices, and interspaces that produce a noteworthy ambiguity especially in works that negotiate the cultural differences between Japanese culture and 'Western' cultures.*

KEYWORDS *Book Art, Materiality, Immateriality, Semiotics, Japan, Veronika Schäpers, Roland Barthes, Durs Grünbein, Reception Theory.*

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Artist's books can be seen as a referential system of signs that benefits from different discussions as for example from the Mexican artist Ulises Carrión or from studies in literature, for example reception theory developed by Wolfgang Iser and Hans Robert Jauss. Confronting both positions—that of production and that of reception—I want to show that the essence of an artist's book unfolds when it is taken as a combination of signs.

THE AESTHETICS OF RECEPTION

Everybody knows what a book is. The book is connected with clear terms of reference, even if every reader has his or her own associations when thinking of a book. Given the apparent clarity and conformity of the term and the object it refers to, the strange dual nature of the book easily escapes conscious awareness. This duality is based on the specific material form or shape of the book and the immateriality of its content. Since approximately the 1960s, an ongoing discussion about authorship, the significance of text and the creative process has evolved. One of the leading contributors to this discussion is Ulises Carrión. His statements on textuality, text creation and authorship are unambiguous. He makes clear that an author does not write a book, but at best a text. On the question of a book's nature he answers that a book is a sequence of spaces and moments. Consequently, the book is an autonomous temporal and spatial sequence independent of text and literary form. These statements apply to the book in general. But Carrión then turns to the artist's book, which he terms as "new art". Characteristic for this new type of book is the responsibility of the writer or the producer for the whole process of conception and production. Subsequently, form and content become an intertwined entity. "Making a book means to realize the ideal sequence of space and time through a synchronic sequence of signs. They may be verbal or of other constitution."¹ Here Carrión expresses that everything concerning the book, its material as well as its ideal dimension, has to be taken as a sign or a cypher. This perspective with regard to the book finds a parallel in the research of Roland Barthes. Based on observations made during several stays in Japan, Barthes concluded that every human expression can be read as a sign. Not only scripture or design but every act of communication and cultural expression is in itself a sign. According to Barthes, gestures and actions are signs just as much as a product packaging and the preparation of food. The dense network of everything that is considered a sign and therefore a meaningful expression, is what the German conception artist Veronika Schäpers accesses in her works.

1 Carrión 1992, w. p.

AESTHETICS OF RECEPTION AND ITS CONSEQUENCES FOR THE ARTIST'S BOOK

The discussion of the creative process within text production is not new. Literary studies are concerned with comparable considerations, essentially at the Konstanzer School represented by Wolfgang Iser and Hans Robert Jauss. Maurice Blanchot, Roland Barthes and finally Michel Foucault invoke "the death of the author". In negating the significance of an author for the text they turn to the aesthetics of reception and shift the reader into a position relevant for the text. A text becomes meaningful only in the process of being read, and with every reading the text is created anew. That means, a text is never a given fact. This basic assumption implies an "openness" of texts. In his essay *L'empire de signes* Roland Barthes speaks of blanks and elsewhere he uses the term "interstice", a term also used in translated versions of his text. The interstices lead to a multitude of modes of signification as well as to a general openness of the system of signs.

While the considerations regarding the death of the author in the field of literature studies concern primarily the text and its immateriality, the concept may also be transferred to the book, since the content of a book is affected in a comparable way by immateriality. So there is nothing new about pointing out the immaterial qualities of a book. It nevertheless becomes meaningful in the confrontation with the physical aspects of a book, such as the material of the paper, binding, and so on. The material aspects of the book have always attracted special attention, not just for their practical properties, but also for their interpretative qualities. The materiality of the book becomes the frame for the immaterial content. But materiality is by far not only the substance, or, as Aristotle has it, the *res* which serves as container for the ideas. It forms part of the essence of the content, providing the means that allow to aesthetically experience the art object in question. What appears to be at first glance two different and independent aspects of the subject "book", its content and the material that this content is connected to or transported by, really is more strongly connected and reflects more substantially on each other than the scholastic separation of substance and mind stipulates. And exactly this interface provides the starting point from which to identify the central determinant of the nature of the book. Here, one can find arguments for the perseverance of the book. Throughout centuries it competed with and withstood innovation, mainly of a technical nature. Against all speculation that developments in printing techniques and in particular the appearance of new media such as film, radio and eventually the computer would lead to the demise of the book, the book still exists and persists in spite of all other media. Obviously, the book is still accepted by readers and users. In fact, it even seems to benefit from the various innovations, incorporating some of their aspects and emphasizing those of its properties which new media lack. The book, thus, seems to satisfy some elementary needs through the sensual experiences conveyed by its material qualities. These also serve as sign posts which mediate between the mate-

rial presence and that which has to be explored. The book-as-material experience provides a concrete as well as an associative bridge from the factual to the contextual and, thus, makes the unspoken literally visible. In this intermediate space the artist's book has gained prominence because it bridges the fields of literature, art, bookmaking and text production. As it refuses to be firmly located in either field, it offers a completely new perspective and approach, rather than just serving as a bridging vessel. The artist's book combines qualities which have remained separate throughout the centuries. Text and images connect artistic concepts, philosophical ideas and literary topics. The sum of the different elements allows for an experience of perception which none of the individual elements can offer. It is affected by the typographical form, the interplay between picture, text and material of the book, but also by the handling of the book which is required by its specific mediality. New ways of reading as well as insights to the relationship of text and images and contextual items follow from the close interaction of the different parts of the book. Or, to put it differently, the artist's book combines signs from different sources which, through their form, create a new, distinct system. Roland Barthes takes the Japanese culture as such a system and absolves the signs from any claim of representing reality. (Or, to refer again to the Konstanzer Schule, i. e. primarily Iser and Jauß, the question of representation is shifted to the act of reception.) Instead, he points to a difference in the characteristics of the symbolic systems.² In particular the spaces void of information, the "interstices", become relevant for understanding. We can refer to these interstices when we try to explain the relevance of the artist's book. Beyond any materiality they offer such interstices or interspaces. They have become even more relevant since the artist's book, a topic hardly receiving attention until it had been fully embraced by the conceptual art of the 1960s, has gained prominence along with the advance of digital media: i. e. since the e-book has gained ground and many publications are available only as downloads.

VERONIKA SCHÄPERS'S WORK ***PRAISE OF THE TAIFUN***

The significance accumulated in the signs of an artist's book and the openness of the structure, as emphasized by Barthes, leads to a similar lack of determination when it comes to the boundaries of the book. The interplay of the elements automatically introduces a new vantage point. The artist's book expands the limits of the normal book in and across many senses. The intentional use of materials and the utilisation of certain formal characteristics may subvert cultural as well as timebound conventions—notwithstanding the fact that processing and content are in a permanent reciprocal relationship and determine each other.

2 Barthes 1981: 14.



To demonstrate the possibilities of an artist's book, I will refer to the work of German artist Veronika Schäpers. The artist has graduated from the *Burg Giebichenstein University of Art and Design at Halle*. This university is one of the rare institutions with a department dedicated to book design and books as artwork. As multifaceted as the work of Schäpers is, her oeuvre is permeated by a reference to Japanese culture which results from her own direct experience. Following her studies in Halle she went to Japan to become the apprentice of a paper manufacturer, after which she continued to work and live in Japan for about another 15 years. Her experiences with the Japanese way of life have become part of her artistic work and have since intermingled with those of Western culture. A convincing proof is the work *Praise of the Taifun* from 2004, which is a concertina-fold showing haiku (fig. 1). Closed, the book is not wider than 8.6 cm, but extended to its full length it is 2.58 meters wide and 36 cm high. In the work of Schäpers the material "paper" comes into focus. Paper has its origins in Asia where it has always attracted great attention, giving an additional emphasis to the choice of a very specific paper for *Praise of the Taifun*. The concertina-fold is printed on a Mitsumata-tsuchi-iri paper, which was created especially for this occasion. The quality of this paper is such that it resists rupture and at the same time is smooth and extremely flexible. These qualities conform with the intention of the artist. The whole surface of the concertina-fold is made up of five sheets into which strips of the same paper are woven, which is comparable to the art of textile weaving. From this technique results a grid which gives structure to the surface. The interwoven strips in their measures correspond to Tanzaku. Tanzaku

fig. 1
VERONIKA SCHÄPERS:
PRAISE OF THE TAIFUN,
2004

is the tall portrait format on which poems are traditionally printed in Japan. Schäpers prints the haiku only on these strips. Browsing the concertina-fold by fold, each column thus shows a text, which is followed by dates and location references that operate according to the same strict regime as the text (fig. 2). No more than two texts or two dates follow each other directly .

The haiku Veronika Schäpers bases her work on were written in German by Durs Grünbein. The German text is followed by a translation into Japanese by Yuji Nawata following the same fixed grid. The translation of the haiku from German to Japanese is a curious twist, since the haiku is a quintessential Japanese form of poetry and deeply rooted in Japanese philosophy. Nevertheless, Grünbein has accomplished to adapt to the form. He accurately adheres to the rules of the haiku, conveying impressions from daily life that he picked up during several stays in Japan in 1999, 2002 and 2003. His haiku refer to observations of the Japanese city, mainly Tokyo, but also other places. Marginal glimpses are captured in the three lines of the haiku, which may be a noodle floating in a pond, two disputing crows or just the sound of steps. Beside the presence of city life, the traffic and modern means of transport, Grünbein's haiku also refer to the cultural background, for example a Japanese cult movie. The dates and names of places integrated in between the haiku allow the reader to follow the route of the author. Besides Tokyo and a number of places in the city, such as hotels or districts of the town, one can find Kyoto, Suruga Bay, Shizuoka and Miyajima.

The itinerary of the author, hinted at by the haiku and the dates, is taken up in the design of the concertina-fold. Already when choosing the material for her work, the artist aimed for an adequate reflection of urban life, which dominates the texts by Grünbein. The greenish-greyish colour of the paper invokes the image of concrete or asphalt and is the result of rough peat pigment mixed with the paper pulp.³ The greyish surface is sprinkled with dark spots, which evoke associations of a map. Although this impression remains fragmentary, it accurately refers to the stages of the voyage of Durs Grünbein. His travel route was fragmentary, and consequently he only got into contact with parts of Japan rather than the whole of it.



fig. 2

VERONIKA SCHÄPERS:
PRAISE OF THE TAIFUN,
2004

3 Cf. Veronika Schäpers: Durs Grünbein. Lob des Taifuns (pdf-document of three pages sent form the artist to the author of this text).

As a matter of fact the dark spots on the paper are fragments of Japanese signs the artist printed on the surface before the material was folded to a concertina-fold. The two signs signify 影 kage and 街 machi. Kage is the sign for “shadow”, but also “outline” or “silhouette”, “light” and “trace”, while machi means „street“. Both signs are chosen intentionally and refer to the texts by Grünbein. Originally, these signs stem from a painted calligraphy by Akiko Kojima. The Japanese calligrapher drew them with a broad brush on an enlarged format, so that the signs became larger than the paper. Subsequently, they were cut at the margins and fragmented even before they were printed. However, fragmentation is part of the concept of the work of Veronika Schäpers. The parts implicitly refer to the whole which, according to Japanese philosophy, can never be represented. Fragments as part of the whole recall the open character of the work.

CHARACTERISTICS OF JAPANESE PHILOSOPHY IN THE WORK OF VERONIKA SCHÄPERS

The haiku as a poetic concept, their representation in German and Japanese and the signs as underlying structure of the whole provide a manifestation of the idea of the artwork. It refers to a close interaction of the two different cultures represented by the “West” and Japan. It becomes literally visible with the conception of the concertina-fold. The haiku, a quintessentially Japanese poetical form, depends on a morphology which cannot be translated. Thus, the German version is only an approximation to its essential content, but will never capture the haiku as a whole. The concept of haiku in German language must appear as a sacrilege and the translation of a German haiku into Japanese seems almost perverse. However, it also seems that the double inversion redeems the deficiency. The German and the Japanese are brought into close contact through the technique of weaving, which is applied to the paper of the concertina-fold. Characteristics of the haiku are its precision, its reference to the present and its open form which is completed only during the act of reading. The haiku’s statements, derived from short observations, mere glimpses, disclose neither feeling nor sentiment. It remains up to the reader to fill in the ideas and feelings and to create connections. “A haiku affords comprehension of the situation. The reader is asked to reject all individual current feeling in order to coordinate with those of the poet.”⁴ As a precondition for such empathy in the haiku, everything is left unnamed that can be expressed without words. Everything remains allusion and atmospheric implement and the words signify more than their verbal meaning. „Within all clearness the haiku has no subject, but exactly the double assumption provides the base for the open meaning,” writes Roland Barthes. He continues to point out that no interpretation will yield results, “since the readability of the haiku is connected to the

4 Buerschaper 1987: 46.



fig. 3

VERONIKA SCHÄPERS:
PRAISE OF THE TAIFUN,
2004

flowing speech.”⁵ Openness as a characteristic for this sort of poem finds its counterpart in the shape of the concertina-fold. As a folded book it could be continued into an infinite sequence (fig. 3). The segments given by the folds are not restricted like the pages of a book. They are not cut, but continue to the next fold without rupture. The concertina-fold as a total is not segmented by pages.

From this point of view it seems consequential that the artist has chosen the concertina-fold as her means of expression. The openness of the form corresponds fundamentally to the way of Japanese expression. Tsuneyoshi Tsudzumi in his *History of Japanese Art* repeatedly emphasizes openness as the philosophical principle permeating all areas of life and leading to a representation of the whole through segments.⁶ A landscape is depicted by a branch, a garden by a flower and so on. The whole will be conceived in a section, the large will be restrained. The uncompleted alludes to a perfection never reached. Contrary to the concepts permanently present in Western thinking, differences between an inner and an outer space, nature and spirit do not exist in Japanese perception. Confucianism and Shintoism harbour a view of the world based on a continuous flow instead of contrasts. The relation between man and animal, animal and deity, nature and creature is marked by a continuously shifting transition. According to this notion even rocks and stones are animated. Also, art and life are not antipodes, but are

5 Buerschaper 1987: 98–99.

6 Tsuneyoshi Tsudzumi. *Die Kunst Japans*, ed. Japan-Institut Berlin, Leipzig 1929.



rather in a continuous process of merging with each other. Consequently, works of art are not separated from their surroundings by a frame.

With the concertina-fold Veronika Schäpers also refers to the historic provenience of the book, because the concertina-fold is an advancement of the antique roll. Since the 4th century, rolls of silk were commonly used in China for recording scripture and images. Since the nearly endless rolls were not feasible for use, they were folded into a sheet sized format since the 9th century, which, in the 10th century, developed into butterfly binding. The traditional book-roll requires specific handling. It can be viewed only in segments, never in its totality. This refers to Japanese philosophy as explained by Tsuneyoshi Tsudzumi—since life and art are not separated, reception is determined by segmented viewing. The handling of the roll follows the same philosophy. The *emakimono*, which is the term for a scroll with pictures, is no taller than 30 cm, but can be of a length which makes it impossible to get an overview. Indeed, it was never conceived for an overview, since it is scrolled with one hand while the other unrolls it. Thus the process of viewing is segmented, each moment confronting the viewer with a new segment of the whole. The concertina-fold can be considered a comparable way of perception, even more so because its folds already pre-determine a way of regarding it.

fig. 4

VERONIKA SCHÄPERS:
PRAISE OF THE TAIFUN,
2004

A further reference to cultural practise is given by the way of bookbinding used for the concertina-fold (fig. 4). In this case, a banderole instead of a cover serves as a package. Together with this sleeve the concertina-fold is put into a bag of vinyl and the bag itself is wrapped by a long vinyl string. The unpacking of the concertina-fold, therefore, becomes a sort of ritual, a part of the reception process.

With the term “paquets” Barthes (1994: 775–781) refers to the significance of the method of wrapping in Japan. He describes it as an invisible frame, which in fact encloses the wrapped good, but at the same time connects it to the surrounding space. The latter is a consequence of the disproportion of the content and the wrapping. Through the art of unwrapping, a Japanese package becomes a “semantic meditation” (Barthes 1981: 63.). The envelope receives in itself a consecration as precious, even if it is without value. Schäpers’s remarkable choice of vinyl for the bag serving as packaging material for the concertina-fold alludes to this aspect. Vinyl contrasts sharply with the traditional material. The artist chooses it exactly for this reason. Vinyl is a representation of the contemporary and, therefore, is an indicator for modern Japan. During her stay in Japan Schäpers became aware of a general attraction to new materials. People in Japan were very open toward everything new. “For them everything new enriches their life. New material and new techniques are challenges they like to be confronted with. This curiosity greatly impressed me and I gained inspiration from it. Especially in Tokyo I met with a completely uncritical fascination with new technology on the one hand and a strict adherence to tradition on the other.”⁷

Attention should also be paid to the two stamps impressed on the sleeve of the concertina-fold. They are known under the term of *eki*-stamp or *eki*-seal. On one is written the word “Metro” in Latin letters, the other shows a train and the icons of some scenic landmarks. Stamps like these are common at points of interest, for example at particular train stations. They are openly accessible and all travellers can stamp their diary or other travel documents. Thus, the stamps become an authentic proof of the stages of a journey. They certify that a person has been present at a certain place and several stamps mark the route of the individual. Traditionally, stamps were used to indicate ownership. The different stamps on a woodcut or a drawing reflect the provenience of an artwork. In this way the stamps also become a mark of time.

THE OPEN SPACE OR THE BLANK IN THE CONSIDERATION OF ROLAND BARTHES

The conceptualization of signs in the work of Schäpers in a certain way demonstrates her understanding of the argument Roland Barthes presents in his essay

7 Veronika Schäpers in an e-mail from June 2, 2013 to the author.

L'empire des signes, published in 1970 after several stays in Japan. However, the focus on Japanese idiosyncrasy in the work *Praise of the Taifun* should not be taken as an illustrative adaptation of Barthes's work. Moreover, here the different items are independent from each other and text and design act simultaneously, although in correspondence.

The approach has been described by Roland Barthes at the very beginning of his essay. Here we can read, »Le texte ne ›commente‹ pas les images. Les images n'›illustrent‹ pas le texte : chaque a été seulement pour moi le départ d'une sorte de vacillement visuel, analogue peut-être à cette perte de sens que le Zen appelle un *satori* ; texte, image, dans leur entrelacs, veulent assurer la circulation, l'échange de ces signifiants : le corps, le visage, l'écriture, et y lire le recul des signes.»⁸

The understanding of Japan becomes clear through a glimpse of the symbolic. Barthes acquired his knowledge of Japanese culture not through images but through scripture. The *satori*, the loss of the senses in Zen philosophy, like scripture, produces a void in words and the void in words produces the words. From this void result the traces, with which the *satori* refers to gardens, gestures, houses, and faces. For Barthes primary signification is connected to further, not less significant, ones. Nothing exists for its own sake or for the sake of its function. Rather, everything, every gesture, every object, includes a symbolic meaning beyond its functions.

The pictures in Barthes's essay *L'empire des signes*, to each of which a separate page is dedicated, present a "subtext" to what the author writes. Picture and text do not interfere with each other. Nevertheless, some relationship can be seen. The textual description aims at interpreting everything as a sign: gesture, event, interaction come under the definition of Barthes's signs. Everything Barthes describes is seen as part of an all-encompassing Japanese culture of signification. This requires a fundamental openness of signs, which Barthes describes as blanks or permeable boundaries. He repeatedly refers to the importance of blanks, to which, under the heading of "interstice", he dedicates a chapter of their own as well as a correspondingly titled picture. Both are meant to equally show the openness of the signs as well as their reconciling function. All this is dominated by the structure of signs. A connection between the text and the following picture is drawn by the so-called "interstice". The connection may be a term, a keyword or something else. For example, the picture titled "interstice" depicts a Japanese woman arranging a curtain made of strings. Between the strings remains an interspace, referring to the concept of "interstice". At the same time the interspace is the main attribute of scripture, because without it letters would be unreadable. References like

8 The text does not comment on the pictures and the pictures do not illustrate the text. Each of them have an impact of their own, comparable to a visual flare and in correspondence to the loss of consciousness, termed as *Satori* in Zen. Text and image permit to change the significant from body, face, scripture, and mean the retreat of the sign." Barthes 1994: 745; Barthes 1981: 13.

this attribute a double meaning to the pictures as well as to the texts. In this case we find a chapter in Barthes's essay entitled also with "interstice". Here the author again pays attention to the arrangement of food and elaborates on the issue of the spaces in-between. This time he speaks of the void as basic figure of the interval, the interstice. "L'aliment rejoint ici le rêve d'un paradoxe: celui d'un objet purement interstitiel, d'autant plus provoquant que ce vide est fabriqué pour qu'on s'en nourrisse."⁹ ("Nourishment meets with the dream of a paradox which is an object completely interspace itself. This becomes the more provoking since the interspace is conceived as nourishment.")

THE OPEN SPACE OR THE BLANK IN THE ARTIST'S BOOK

By confronting Schäpers's work *Praise of the Taifun* with Barthes's theory of signs, I do not want to assert an illustrative influence or even an inspiration of the former by the latter. Rather, I want to direct attention to how cultural differences in experiencing a work of art lead to an ambiguity of the sign¹⁰ by pointing to the blanks within the sign itself, opening it up for interpretation. The artist's work refers to the blank and at the same time proposes a multitude of arguments full of virtuosity. *Praise of the Taifun* accomplishes a transfer of Japanese language to Western comprehension in manifold ways. Like Japanese writing, where meaning of symbols depends on context, Schäpers's work is not fixed to a single meaning. This makes Japanese writing often completely incomprehensible in the eyes of a foreigner, and is only one reason why Japanese expressions are so difficult to understand. Another is the importance of the specific context of each situation, without which a literal translation is virtually impossible. This is the starting point for the artist. By merging European concepts with Japanese aesthetics, she creates an atmosphere favorable to accessing the multitude of meaning.

Since the reception is not fixed to one interpretation, the blanks of the signs can also be given an adequate meaning. The whole procedure is dominated by openness, which also includes the ambiguity given by the blank of the sign. Already given in the printing material, it includes the type of text, the layout and finally the interplay of the different elements.

Barthes's engagement with a system of symbols foreign to him, inspired by his stays in Japan in 1966 and 1967, has not aimed to explain the signs in a self-reflexive way. East and West are not to be understood as realities to be differentiated against each other or led to a synthesis on the grounds of historic, cultural, philo-

9 Barthes 1994: 758.

10 Here in the sense of: the work of art as a complex sign.

sophic or political argument. Rather, the essence of the East should be seen in the difference to the symbolic system of the West (Barthes 1981: 13).

“L’Orient [...] me fournit simplement une réserve de traits dont la mise en batterie, le jeu inventé, me permettent de ‘flatter’ l’idée d’un système symbolique inouï, entièrement dépris du nôtre. Ce qui peut être visé, dans la considération de l’Orient, ce ne sont pas d’autres symboles, une autre métaphysique, une autre sagesse (encore que celle-ci apparaisse bien désirable); c’est la possibilité d’une différence, d’une mutation, d’une révolution dans la propriété des systèmes symboliques. Il faudrait faire un jour l’histoire de notre propre obscurité.”¹¹

By pointing to the difference of completely alien systems of symbols and signs, Barthes wants to direct the awareness to the limits of the symbolic order. He resumes, “Nous savons que les concepts principaux de la philosophie aristotélicienne ont été en quelques sorte contraints par les principales articulations de la langue grecques. Combien, inversement il serait bienfaisant de se transporter dans une vision des différence irréductibles que peut nous suggérer, par lueurs, une langue très lointaines”.¹² Barthes undertakes a new conception of the signifier which includes all dimensions of a sign, but which are not included in the term representing the object.

CONCLUSION

Veronika Schäpers and Roland Barthes both approach Japanese Culture and benefit from an open approach to the system of signs. The openness results mainly from the foreign system which both are unable to read literally. Consequentially, they are even more aware of interpreting life and culture by the signs beyond writing. Their approach to Japanese culture occurs through observation of signs from daily life. Schäpers transforms her impressions into an artist’s book; Roland Barthes takes it as a foundation for his essay *L’empire de signes*.

11 “The orient [...] merely provides me with a stock of items, which can be arranged by me. And if the game is invented, I will profit from a totally new system of symbols. I do not aim for another metaphysic or wisdom (although this may be attractive). I just look for the difference, the possibility of a change of the character of the symbolic system.” (Barthes 1994: 747; 1981: 14).

12 “We know that the main concepts of Aristotelian philosophy were forced by the Greek language. How beneficial would it be on the other side if we could put ourselves in the position of the irreducible differences, of which a very remote language allows us a glimpse.” (Barthes 1994: 748; 1981: 17).

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