

THE IMAGE OR DOUBLE INCONSISTENCIES

<< I see these roses, there, in the garden. They exist without a doubt. I can see them from far away, through the window, or nearby. Their color is always red. As a matter of fact, if they are external objects to me they are also within me. The proof of this is that I can remember them. If I close my eyes, they are still there, in my memory. If I read in Proust, for example, the description of these flowers, I see them. How can this double source of the image exist? That of the visual perception, apparently quasi mechanical, that of the imagination apparently totally invented. But to reduce the image to these two limits is wrong, because we know already that perception is already full of imagination and the imagination is the result of thousands of our sensations.

Bergson reveals two memories one of which imagines and the other repeats, the latter able to replace the first one and often saving the illusion.

What creates the ambiguity of the image is that there is neither an absolute of imagination nor of perception, but a very complex intertwining of the mechanism of perception with imagination. Optical illusions are much more present than we believe. The great painters know these interactions very well: << Look at that large flower on the lawn over there>> << Yes, come closer and bring me that sheet of paper which blew away>>. Or, isn't this beach rock an idol of the Cyclades Islands. No?

The portrayal is never exempt from a possibility of transformation because if there is no perception without imagination, there is also no imagination without the recall of perception. Man is incapable of inventing the totality of an object without having seen some of the parts. (Monsters, robots, science fiction, etc...)

If the image is, at the level of sensation of light and of perception, the result of our organ of sight: vision and of its very complex interaction of its nerve cells, the mental image and first of all the memory are also the result of the connections of billions of neurons in our brain, it still does not explain it all. If Penfield in the U.S. succeeded in bringing up images by electrode stimulation of certain cerebral zones, this also does not explain it. Why does this generate for us feelings of beauty, of ugliness, horror, of fear, of love, etc., etc... The depicted subject, you will tell me, is there for a reason. Would the image then be only a representation? I am listening to Monteverdi's << Le Combat de Tancrede et de Clorindre>> and I imagine the action, the stage, for I see internally what is transmitted by sounds of the music.

There is thus an interaction of the senses one upon the other. Proust's << La Petite Madeleine>> is a stunning example.

Must we therefore think like Lupasco that there are three levels of matter, three images: that of perception which answers to the most material rules of homogeneity, the image from memory which answers to the rules of heterogeneity, finally the imagination which is both homogeneous and heterogeneous.

JC LIBERT