The Smith of the Gods

23 - « Is there an evolution of Art? There is indeed a biological and social evolution of physical subjects... Is that not what To Create means? »

230- Among the principles which found, in Speth, his interpretative and correlative approach to the phenomena of the generation of variabilities and of internal forms, one finds the notion of interdisciplinarity. Since 1930, the field of disciplines has notably broadened to include paleoanthropology, neurobiology, neurolinguistics, animal ethology, computer science and the cognitive neurosciences, and accounts for various processes such as the distributed and parallel character of the processing of information in the sensory systems and in the corresponding cerebral structures, the role of action and of " doing " in the acquisition of knowledge, the importance of plasticity in the formation and the maintenance of the nervous networks. Speth describes these mechanisms when he speaks of the connection of the " spiritual " capacities and of the sensitive availability in the acting subject, inside and outside a social organization. The epigenetic phenomena, without changing the sequence of the genome, cause certain genes to express themselves or not, and possibly modify the functioning of the genome. Thus, this means that, in this domain too, the relations functions-structures and structures-functions are not immutable. There is no identity or homology between the structure and its functions, for to a particular structure can correspond several functions, and to several functions can correspond a single structure, inducing moreover phenomena of vicariance, that is to say that a different structure can come to make up for the functions of any other structure under certain conditions. Even at the behavioural (cultural) level, a stimulating environment can reverse the physiological effects and the negative attitudes generated by stress, as is observed in mice or in the case of certain cancers. The different forms of learning and memory, illustrating particular pre-established functional cerebral activities (sense, action, attention, evaluation, intellection...), fall under this expression of the genes under the effect of molecular modifications resulting precisely from stimulations coming from the cultural objects, from the events and from the laws that orient these activities in an alternating movement, objects of an active perception of experience, a learning already invested or to be invested in these things.

231- By composing a sentence through procedural memory in order to emit an opinion on an object, one also calls at the same time upon semantic and autobiographical memory, and one states the idea that this object is matched to the situation: the objects are invested with an experience of reality and, by designating it, they renew and regulate the expression of the genes. Memory does not correspond to engrams isolated in the brain (for example the verb " to match "), but rather to the manifestation of certain gradients of the functions required by this experience and by the corresponding emitted opinion: " Things carry words along ", says Cicero (our autobiographical memory is encrypted in our very corporeality, and through the modification of specific regions of the DNA). Then, invested in the objects through their very materiality, the forms of memory such as the sensation of grip and of movement

corresponding to the cerebral function of handling, determine the gesture of the natural or artificial hand: “ Things seize the mind ”, as it was understood before Plotinus, before a certain autonomy of the intellect was attributed to it through the expression of the One reflecting itself at the “ Omega point ” of consciousness.

232- It is important to specify clearly what the expression of the genes means. A telling metaphor can come to our aid. “ Imagine a celestial cook such as Epimetheus, the brother of Prometheus, was, charged with distributing the characters throughout living nature. He decides to proceed first of all to the elaboration of a magic sauce. In his pan, he places first of all the multitude of “ gene ” ingredients that he intends to have expressed in this sauce, in such a way that they tint its taste buds in turn. This play of possible harmonies which he now masters with his fingertips is his “ genotype ” keyboard, with which he will conduct his work by modifying the temperature, the stirring, the maturing, the decantation, the reduction of the “ acquired characters ”. To summarize: the character of an individual is constituted by the ingredients of the sauce, which are the genes, by the sauce, which is the genotype, and by the action of the cook, which is represented by the acquired characters. There is indeed a biological and social evolution of physical subjects and, consequently, an evolution of the organization of societies. The mastery of fire, cooking (“ The Raw and the Cooked ” of Claude Lévi-Strauss) may have contributed to increasing the cerebral volume and, particularly, the volume of the frontal lobes. Being at the same time and in parallel involved in the intellective activities and capacities (that is to say bodily and linguistic ones); these are the ones which establish relations to the real through this mastery, but also the ones which constitute a detached reality through the evaluation of the stimulations designated as conventional, “ the memory of an experience ”, through their emotional content, by holding them as signs, and what is more, verbalized, instituted into strategies, above all when it comes to anticipating and planning actions ensuring living and surviving. One understands thereby the place and the role of a God of fire in culture, the Heraclitean logos and the collective consciousness determining the essence of our practical and technical activities. The definition of the verb “ to forge ” says that formerly, in Antiquity, this word had the meaning of “ to create ” and, figuratively, of “ to imagine, to invent ”. The current meaning of “ to work a metal ” is likewise attested around the same period within the fold of the alchemists. It comes from classical Latin fabricare through phonetic evolution and can evoke the fabrication of oneself.

233- The fable of the sorcerer's apprentice wanting to recreate life, so dear to the West, is attested for the first time in European literature in the second century of our era with Lucian of Samosata, and automata are already present in Homer, in close association with Hephaestus. In the Greek world, indeed, the divine smith plays a fundamental role in the fabrication of living and artificial creatures. Not only does tradition place itself under his patronage for pyrotechnics and the arts of metals, but the texts perceive him as the demiurge par excellence, the god of fire capable of creating quite singular works of art. In this, he is joined by the architect Daedalus, presented sometimes by the ancient authors as his descendant or his hypostasis. These creations do not belong to myths alone, however.

Sources evoke, on many occasions, notably in the Hellenistic and Roman eras, the presence of statues symbolizing animated automata, robots, automatic mechanisms during religious feasts and processions or, more generally, serving the cult of the smith God. At the same time, with the arrival of the geochemist Vladimir Vernadsky on the scientific scene as early as 1937, we hear the first stirrings of a discourse in the direction of Promethean prevention (the transmitter of the power of fire to men), on the reality of a technosphere which may prove to be deadly for humanity.