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In this moment, we deal with two key ideas.

Two mysterious ideas.

Ideas that reveals us one of the secrets of everything that is language.

We deal with colour, but in a special way: an approach that puts us closer to Goethe and – in a first moment – far from Newton and scientific classifications. This happens because here our amazement operates an aesthetical universe.

Certainly, the great discussion we have lived in the last five hundred years has been the conflict of opposites between *form* and *content*, *figure* and *ground*, *perception* and *concept*, *concrete thing* and *idea*, *appearance* and *essence*, *mind* and *matter*.

This conflict, of apparent differences, is an illusion of language. A logical illusion emerged from Gutenberg's revolution. If we pay attention to the logical nature of movable types press, that standardizes, in a radical way, the nature of the phonetic alphabet, we will clearly understand how such illusion revealed itself as one of the most fascinating hallucinogenic phenomenon of Western civilization.

Phonetic alphabet translated the ear by the eye, formalising the sound as discrete unities. Each discrete unity is equivalent to a sound that, by its own nature, belongs to a continuous spectrum. Then, in verbal language, sound lost any ambiguity.

What was manifested while the importance of the context in the cuneiform writing is no longer valid in the Greek world. Gradually, each thing passed to be in *its place*. It is here that the difference between *morphé* and *eidos* appear.

And it is in such universe that Aristotle would synthesize what he called *essence*. «When, as reference to a human being, it is said that he is a man or an animal, the essence is understood as substance», argued Aristotle, «but, when, taking as reference the white colour, it is said that it is white, the essence is understood as quality. Equally, if it is made reference to the size of an ell, it is understood that the essence is a quantity».

Curiously, Aristotle gave the key for the deconstruction of the conflict established between the *appearance* and the *essence* – key that would only be fully used in the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century by Charles Sanders Peirce in his famous General Theory of Signs.

Aristotle, surprisingly, reveals the surpassing of the whole Western binary universe when launching roots into the ancient Sumerian world. In his affirmation, *symbol*, *quality* and *quantity* seem to be oriented to the idea of *essence*, which could not be differentiated from *perception*. Being a *continuum*,

the meaning of a sign would be unveiled by other sign, of different nature, inside a complex chain, forming a wonderful dynamic and interactive network.

But, the intensification of use of the phonetic alphabet would build a barrier between *perception* and *essence*. A barrier projected through the centuries. And Aristotle himself was not alien to such process, making a differentiation between two types of *essence* and declaring: «What is a substance is it, even considering aside its material aspect» – an affirmation that would influence the future of the question.

This process, still not so hard inside classical universe, is, in a certain measure, forgotten during medieval times.

Already at the end of the Roman world, the stoics defended that the thing was known through *its signals*. But, soon, the signals of the thing passed to be understood as ways to reach the *essence* of the thing, an inaccessible thing, divine ideal, eternal light, divine unity.

Jesus certainly caused a tremendous impression in his time when he affirmed to be the *truth* – an incomprehensible statement for the stoic mind.

After all, what *truth* is?!

The medieval monasteries, even plunged inside a still primitive literature, would increase the barrier between *essence* and *perception*, *form* and *content*.

It is this binary logical universe that will characterise great part of Renaissance, working as an imaginary bridge to the Classical world. And here Gutenberg appears, dramatically intensifying the phonetic alphabet's effect.

A conflict that Goethe would show us, genially, some centuries later. A conflict especially clear when Mephistopheles replies to Faust, this asking about his name: «The question seems to be of a low category for you whom, scorning all appearance, searches for the essence, plunged into deepness».

When we deal with aesthetical questions, are we doing it while *essence* or while *appearance*?

It is a *synchronic* or a *diachronic* universe?

Ear or eye?

The word *aesthetics* appears from the Greek root *aisth*, which means the idea of *perception*. Curiously, this root is related to the Latin *audire*, which means *to listen, to understand*.

The 20<sup>th</sup> century art, and mainly after the Second World War, intensely dealt with this old question. The names are the same, because they are closer to us. Joseph Beuys, John Cage, Merce Cunningham, to remind only three.

But, there are other personages who participate in this swirl of ideas – personages who, so many times, represent the true base for the main actors. People who make art by other means, through the artists' hands.

Until today, in our universities, we look for first personages, we give name to those who were able to design a *vanishing point* of an epoch, we create the imaginary world of heroes.

But, as if we would recall the question of *essence* and *appearance*, our world, nowadays, unveils us a nature for which everything is interconnected.

A true artist is no longer, exclusively, who establishes one or more elements of mutation at a metalinguistic level, but yes who participates in this action – because *intelligence*, as concept, is no longer privilege of a single individual.

Freud defended that culture is an efficient tool of defence against Nature's design. If not, crime wouldn't exist.

By this way, what we understand as art reveals, in its root, a permanent criticism to culture, without which we would live imprisoned inside a set of immutable laws and rules.

The other mysterious idea, *key idea*, to decipher the enigma - like a detective investigation – is the word *colour*.

*Colour* appears from the Latin root *col* – which means the idea of *to cover*, *to hide*. From this we also have the words *occult* and *cellule*.

All this happens because the phenomenon colour unveils its own occultation while concept.

Would it be *appearance* or *essence*?

In this element of such complex and dynamic nature many of the discussion around aesthetics in the last thousand years is based.