

The Binary and the Potential in Roland Barthes's Concept of the Neutral

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1. Introduction: Barthes's concept of the Neutral

In 1977, Roland Barthes inaugurated the chair of Sémiologie Littéraire at the Collège de France. "The Neutral" (*Le Neutre*) is the title of his second series of courses at the Collège (from February to June 1978), and the text of this course was published in 2002.¹ The Neutral is a key concept for better understanding Barthes's later years, that is to say Barthes as an "artist-professor" (*professeur-artiste*, to borrow the term from Thomas Clerc, editor of *The Neutral*).²

At the same time, the theme of the Neutral was not confined to this course.³ Indeed, we can see this theme in Barthes's various texts. For example, the Neutral is represented as degree zero in *Writing Degree Zero* (*Le Degré zéro de l'écriture* [1953]), as an attempt to suspend the system of meaning by means of analyzing the mythical value of signs in *Mythologies* (1957), in the question of "transgression" of the binary order (Barthes's analyses of narrative, above all *S/Z* (1970) and his analysis of Edgar Allan Poe's text⁴), in the "third meaning" (*troisième sens*) that cannot be classified as paradigmatic order (the "obtuse meaning" [*sens obtus*] of visual images),⁵ and so on.

The reason this concept of the Neutral entails such a wide range of applications for Barthes's analyses is that Barthes himself gave a very flexible definition of the Neutral, as discussed in the next section. In his course on the Neutral, Barthes dealt with diverse "figures" as possible appearances of the Neutral ("Benevolence," "Weariness,"

“Silence,” and so on) without any conclusive synthesis. These facts show us that the Neutral is nothing but an evasive concept that is resistant to be theorized.

The publication of Barthes’s course on the Neutral reinforced the importance of this concept. In fact, it leads us not only to the relationship between Barthes and Maurice Blanchot⁶ but also to references on contemporary thought, for example, Emmanuel Lévinas’s notion of “otherness” (*altérité*).⁷ In addition, before the publication of this course, Bernard Comment had already dealt with the different themes of Barthes’s texts in which the Neutral can be detected (theory of text, morality, photography, and so on).⁸ However, little attention has been given to Barthes’s binary thought itself (or precisely speaking, its theoretical basis) despite the fact that it is a prerequisite for his conceptualization of the Neutral.

This paper approaches the core of Barthes’s concept of the Neutral by linking his course on it to his theoretical text in the 1960s. First, we clarify Barthes’s own particular vision of the paradigm on which his concept of the Neutral is based. Second, we examine its theoretical basis. Finally, we show that Barthes’s principle of delicacy, as a way to demonstrate the Neutral, is closely connected to the relationship between the binary and the potential.

2. The system of meaning and the Neutral

The Neutral (*le Neutre*) is derived from Latin *neuter* which means “neither of the two” (*aucun des deux*).⁹ Barthes defines it as follows:

I define the Neutral as that which outplays the paradigm, or rather I call Neutral everything that baffles the paradigm....

The paradigm, what is that? It’s the opposition of two virtual terms from which, in speaking, I actualize one to produce meaning....

Whence the idea of a structural creation that would defeat, annul, or contradict the implacable binarism of the paradigm by means of a third term ... In structural

linguistics, Hjelmslev, Brøndal, and phoneticians: $A/B \rightarrow A + B$ (complex) and neither A nor B: amorphous, neutral term (phonological neutralization), or zero degree. (*The Neutral* 6-7: 31)

The Neutral “outplays” or “baffles” (*déjouer*) the paradigm. It also indicates a specific status pertaining to the binary order (“binarism”), namely linguistic “neutralization.” Barthes explains that, under the particular condition, the binary opposition phonologically (for example, in French *poisson* [pwaʒɔ̃] (fish) and *poison* [pwazɔ̃] (poison)) or semantically (white/black) loses its “relevance” (*pertinence*). This means that, on account of his conceptualization of the Neutral, Barthes deals with the opposition at the same time, both phonologically (*poisson/poison*) and semantically (white/black).

On the one hand, as Barthes notes, in principle, the paradigm consists of potential terms (“the opposition of two virtual terms”). In this sense, the paradigm cannot be reduced to the relation of opposition since it involves the relation of similarity (for example, see/watch/observe). Barthes deliberately pays attention to the characteristic of paradigm as a gathering of potential terms. On the other hand, in order to produce meaning, one of them needs to be actualized in the spoken chain. In this case, the important aspect of the paradigm as potential terms (so to speak, its potentiality) withdraws to the background, for what is at stake, seems to be whether one of them is actualized or not, in other words present or absent. This, then, is obviously the binary thought. In this way, we can perceive the paradigm as a binary system. One might well suppose that binary oppositions generally take forms such as white/black, high/low, and nature/culture. However, the opposition between presence and absence is also binary.

In fact, Barthes focuses on the “choice” of potential terms. The act of choice is founded on the binary thought:

... the paradigm is the wellspring of meaning; where there is meaning, there is

paradigm, and where there is paradigm (opposition), there is meaning ... meaning rests on conflict (the choice of one term against another), and all conflict is generative of meaning.... (*The Neutral* 7: 31)

The choice of meaning is bound to the notion of conflict to the extent that the former is “the choice of one term against another” (*le choix d’un terme contre l’autre*). In this sense, we can say that the paradigm as a “wellspring” (*ressort*) of meaning depends on the relation of opposition. This opposition is nothing but the binary relation between one term and another. Barthes also describes it as follows: “to choose *one* and refuse the *other*” (*choisir un et repousser autre*) (*Ibid.*, italics by Barthes). Though we need to draw attention to whether the term “*autre*” means “another” or “the other” (we return to this in the next section), here it is sufficient to confirm the importance of the act of choice.

The notion of paradigm in question is therefore the system of opposition (based on binary thought) rather than the one of similarity. Moreover, Barthes adds an ethical value to this system of meaning:

... injunctions addressed by the world to “choose,” to produce meaning, to enter conflicts, to “take responsibility,” etc. → temptation to suspend, to thwart, to elude the paradigm, its menacing pressure, its arrogance → to exempt meaning → this polymorphous field of paradigm, of conflict avoidance = the Neutral. (*The Neutral* 7: 32)

We can see that at the level of ethics the paradigm contains a negative value as “arrogance,” because the system of meaning forces us to choose one of its potential terms. For Barthes, it is crucially important to become free of the notion of opposition that concerns both linguistic systems and social relations. The Neutral appears as the avoidance of arrogance in which we can see Barthes’s well-known theme, “exemption of meaning.”¹⁰

On the whole, through his course, Barthes describes the Neutral not only as what he

calls “nuance,” namely the “difference,” which cannot be reduced to binary oppositions, but also as a phenomenon that suspends the system of meaning as well as the arrogance of social relations.

3. Paradigm, binarism, and neutralization

As we have seen, Barthes regarded the paradigm as a relation of an opposition based on binary thought. However, we must reconsider whether the paradigm can be reduced to the relation of opposition, or precisely speaking, we need to focus on Barthes’s theoretical basis of his own vision of paradigm. To do so, we refer to Barthes’s *Elements of Semiology* (1964).¹¹ In this text, Barthes explains the notion of paradigm as follows:

The system constitutes the second axis of the language. Saussure has seen it in the shape of a series of associative fields, some determined by an affinity of sound (*education, saturation*), some by an affinity in meaning (*education, upbringing*). Each field is a store of potential terms (since only one of them is actualized in the present discourse)... The terms of the field (or paradigm) must at the same time be similar and dissimilar, include a common and a variable element: this is the case on the plane of the signifier, with *education* and *saturation*, and on the plane of the signified with *education* and *upbringing*. (Italics by Barthes, *Elements of Semiology* 71-72: 681-682)

In using Ferdinand de Saussure’s terminology, “associative fields” (*champs associatifs*), Barthes describes the paradigm (whereas paradigm is one of the axes of language, another axis is, of course, syntagm or the spoken chain) as a “store of potential terms” (*réserve de termes virtuels*). These potential terms are classified in the system of paradigm to the extent that they have both resemblance with and difference from one another, not only at the level of sound (“education” and “saturation”) but also

at the level of content (“education” and “upbringing”). The notion of paradigm indicates potential differences (and resemblances) of language. Barthes’s vision of paradigm is therefore devoted to Saussure’s linguistic heritage.¹²

What kind of view on the binarism has Barthes taken then? It is in this point that the link between paradigm and binarism is revealed:

... Saussure himself never did conceive the associative field as binary.... It is phonology which has focused attention on the binarism of language (only at the level of the second articulation, it is true) ... according to him [Roman Jakobson], the phonetic systems of all languages could be described by means of a dozen distinctive features, all of them binary, that is to say, either present or absent, or, as the case may be, irrelevant. (*Elements of Semiology* 81-82: 689-690)

In shifting attention from Saussure’s terminology to phonology, Barthes explains that the phonetic system depends on the binary principle in the sense that each “distinctive feature” (*trait distinctif*) is present or absent. At the same time, it is necessary to keep in mind that as Barthes notes, the binary principle serves as a basis of the paradigm “only at the level of the second articulation,” that is to say at the level of the phoneme. Barthes deliberately notes that “the universality of binarism is not certain” (*Elements of Semiology* 82: 690).

Nevertheless, the binary model of phonology has a great influence on Barthes’s thought of the relation of opposition. For instance, the opposition between *bière* (beer) and *pierre* (stone) shows the fact that “an approximate sound between *b* and *p* cannot in any way refer to an intermediate substance between *beer* and *stone*; ... the opposition is still [*toujours*] in the *all-or-nothing* category” (italics by Barthes, *Elements of Semiology* 74: 684). The “all-or-nothing category” (*régime du tout ou rien*) obviously indicates the difference between presence and absence. The opposition between *bière* and *pierre* depends on the presence or absence of “mark,” that is to say in this case, the presence or absence of voice as distinctive feature.

The basis of binarism therefore consists of the difference between presence and absence. The “privative oppositions” correspond to the differences based on “mark” (marked/unmarked opposition). We also need to draw attention to another type of opposition. The oppositions such as white/black and high/low are called “equipollent oppositions” whose logic in principle differs from privative oppositions (“equipollent oppositions,” have nothing to do with the presence or absence of a mark).¹³

However, what is essential here is that these oppositions are subsumed into the binary principle in the sense that they rest on the relations of two terms. The oppositions in question, whether privative or equipollent, are the relations between two terms. Thus, whenever Barthes problematizes the paradigm in order to seek the Neutral, we need to pay attention to the fact that the relation of two terms has an important role as a prerequisite for his conceptualization of the Neutral.

Barthes’s vision of paradigm is, as we saw in the previous section, closely connected with the “choice” of potential terms (according to Jakobson’s terminology, the “selection” of terms). The choice of meaning is founded on the binary principle, since the presence of one term ineluctably accompanies the absence of others. Here, as a matter of fact, we face the relation of *one versus other* (in other words, the presence or absence of a term). Barthes’s vision of paradigm depends on the relation of this one versus other whose binary principle is applied not only to the phonetic system (presence or absence of distinctive features) but also to the choice of terms (presence or absence of terms).

Thus, as far as the “choice” of potential terms is in question, the binary principle can be symbolized as the relation one versus other that includes some variants, that is to say, one term versus another (for example, *see* versus *watch*), one term versus the other (*she* versus *he*¹⁴), one term versus some others (*see* versus *watch*, *stare*, *observe*, etc.), and one term versus the others (*see* versus *watch*, *observe*, *she*, *sea*, etc.).

Indeed, we can see that the relation of one versus other appears in Barthes’s description of the notion of “neutralization”:

... in French, there is normally an opposition between *é* [e] and *è* [ɛ] when one of these terms is at the end of a word (*j'aimai* / *j'aimais*); this opposition ceases to be relevant anywhere else: it is neutralized.... In this case the two neutralized features are reunited under a single sound which is called *archiphoneme*, and which is written with a capital letter: *é / è = E*....

.... Fashion, ... which has polysemic (and even pansemic) tendencies, admits numerous neutralizations: whereas in one case *chandail* [pullover sweater] refers back to the seaside, and *sweater* [cardigan sweater] to the mountains, in another case it will be possible to speak of a *chandail ou un sweater* [sic] for the seaside; the relevance *chandail / sweater* is lost: the two pieces are absorbed into a kind of 'archi-vesteme' of the 'woollen' type. (Italics by Barthes, *Elements of Semiology* 83-84: 691)

Phonologic and semiologic oppositions consist of two terms (e. g., *j'aimai* / *j'aimais*, *chandail* / *sweater*). Although it is possible that neutralization occurs in the case of more than two phonemes, in Barthes's explanation, the model of oppositions is the relation of two terms, that is to say the relation of one versus other. The notion of neutralization here means that binary oppositions (temporarily) lose their relevance, in other words, they are made to be (temporarily) canceled. In this way, phonologic neutralization is applied to the field of fashion (this semiologic application is, of course, connected with Barthes's well-known analysis of fashion discourse published in 1967, namely *The Fashion System* [*Système de la mode*]).

Furthermore, it is important that neutralization, whether phonologic or semiologic, accompanies a certain category (in this case, archiphoneme and "archi-vesteme," the latter is Barthes's neologism). Neutralized elements are subsumed into this kind of *type*. Indeed, "archi-vesteme" is especially described as a class of clothing ("a kind of 'archi-vesteme' of the 'woollen' type"). It is in this point that we can see a relation based on categories, that is to say the conceptual link between the upper class and its subcategories, for pullover and cardigan both belong to the sweater class of clothing.

This sort of relation (the relation between *genre* and *espèce*) supports neutralization to the extent that a certain abstract class conceptually includes neutralized elements.

Thus, it seems that the conceptual link between the upper class and its subcategories allows us to approach the core of Barthes's concept of the Neutral. In the next section, we return to his course on the Neutral and discuss this point.

4. The potential and the *Principe de délicatesse*

From the beginning of his course on the Neutral, Barthes was well aware of the difficulty of conceptualizing this theme. As we have seen in the second section, the Neutral in principle not only cannot be classified into the system of meaning but also resists the arrogance of social relations. The Neutral as sidestepping the paradigm, once emerging clearly, would take a risk of being reduced to paradigmatic ideas. For instance, if we attempt to theorize the Neutral in relation to arrogance, we cannot help postulating a paradigmatic model of *the Neutral versus arrogance*. Barthes explains this aporia as follows:

... all “planning” (thematic grouping) on the Neutral would fatally lead to an opposition between the Neutral and arrogance, that is, to reconstituting the very paradigm that the Neutral wants to baffle: the Neutral would become discursively the term of an antithesis: in displaying itself, it would consolidate the meaning it wanted to dissolve. (*The Neutral* 11-12: 37)

In addition, according to Barthes, the affirmation of the Neutral leads to arrogance insomuch as the act of affirmation depends on the assertive function of language. Barthes does not say what the Neutral is so that he would be able to avoid the “definitional dogmatism” (*dogmatisme définitionnel*) (*The Neutral* 45: 76). Indeed, at the beginning of his course, Barthes notes that he does not speak of the Neutral but rather “The Desire for Neutral” (*Le Désir de Neutre*) (*The Neutral* 1: 25). How can we

conceive any positive value of the Neutral without affirming it?

In the face of this aporia,¹⁵ Barthes adopts what he calls the “principle of delicacy” (*principe de délicatesse*) as a way of describing the Neutral. The point is Marquis de Sade’s discourse. The Marquise, having asked the imprisoned Marquis to hand his dirty linen to her, of course in order to wash it, Sade wants to see another motive of her request. It is that she wants his dirty linen itself. Sade says, “[c]harming creature, you want my dirty linen, my old linen?” (*The Neutral* 29: 58) This motive is, of course, nonsense. However, Barthes detects in Sade’s response the “principle of delicacy” (in the English version, *principe de délicatesse* is translated as “principle of tact” because Sade’s response is based on tact):

Sade’s very utterance exposes what the principle of tact is: a pleasure in analysis, a verbal operation that frustrates expectation (the laundry is dirty in order to be washed) and intimates that tact is a perversion that plays with the useless (nonfunctional) detail: the analysis generates minutiae ... and it’s this cutting and rerouting that is the source of pleasure.... (*The Neutral* 29-30: 58-59)

This principle of delicacy consists of baffling the expectation through playing with the useless detail. It can be called “perversion” (this is also a term of psychoanalysis as well as desire), which resists foreseeable reality. In this passage, “cutting” (*découpage*) corresponds to the act of analysis, and “rerouting” (*détournement*) is linked to the suspension of expectation. The importance of the useless detail depends on the fact that it has no actual power, so that it is exempt from arrogance. In other words, Barthes (and Sade) can make use of the potential meaning even though it is imaginary or fantastic. In this way, the “principle of tact” serves as a way to demonstrate the Neutral.

It seems that this function of potential elements offers a key to approach the Neutral as long as it maintains its specific status as the potential. We need therefore to consider the links between some figures of the Neutral and functions of potential elements.

Barthes writes of the figure of the androgyne as follows (English translators adopt the “Neuter” for *le Neutre* as far as the third term between genders is concerned):

... the Neuter, the Neuter about which we have spoken, the Neuter extended to discourse (to texts, to behaviors, to “motions”) is not that of the Neither ... Nor, it’s “both at once,” “at the same time,” or “that alternates with” ... And thus the Neuter is not what cancels the genders but what combines them, keeps them both present in the subject, at the same time, after each other, etc. → Here, we open up into a great myth: the androgyne. (*The Neutral* 190-191: 239)

The androgyne avoids the binary opposition in, for example, male/female. The process of this avoidance shows that the Neuter as the androgyne does not designate annihilation but combination of the difference between genders. Strictly speaking, this figure of the androgyne is not a dialectic of man and woman but a mixture of virility and femininity, since the status of the androgyne indicates the “merger [*réunion*] of virility and femininity insofar as it connotes union of contraries” (*The Neutral* 192: 240).

We can see, in Barthes’s view on the androgyne, the relation based on categories, for a class “humans” includes both virility and femininity. In other words, three subcategories (androgyne, man, and woman) are subsumed into the upper class “humans.” In this sense, we can say that this class “humans” serves as a certain archetype such as “archiphoneme” and “archi-vesteme.”

The most important point is that, whereas the androgyne as subcategory is present, the upper class “humans” remains *potential*. This category (the class “humans”) is not absent but potential. Whether it emerges from the potential depends on our view (or attention). This class “humans” therefore avoids the binary opposition in terms of presence/absence. In other words, the abstract class as upper type is potential in the opposition between subcategories. As a result, in this case, the upper class “humans” conceptually transcends the binary opposition between man and woman.

Barthes's vision of paradigm, as we saw in the previous section, is closely associated with the model of one versus other (the presence or absence of a term). The potential is not reduced to the opposition between presence and absence. Thus, this characteristic of the potential helps to approach the Neutral.

Let us demonstrate another example. In reference to Paul Valéry's *Monsieur Teste* and Charles Baudelaire's *Artificial Paradise*, Barthes deliberately elaborates the notion of "hyperconsciousness" (*hyperconscience*). It is concerned with "intensity," that is to say the difference of degree that is difficult to be reduced to paradigmatic binary oppositions (for example the gradients of odor and luminosity). Moreover, this notion of "hyperconsciousness" generates the following paradox:

... the combination of consciential [sic] hyperesthesia and emotivity, the sharp consciousness of the pathos seems to me to constitute an imaginary type (a formant [sic]): the self as imaginary, the unending coalescence of an affect and the awareness of it.... (*The Neutral* 101: 138)

This paradoxical status of hyperconsciousness ("the unending coalescence of an affect and the awareness of it") means that we can be simultaneously emotional and intellectual. In other words, we are able to perceive our emotional state clearly while we give ourselves over to our various emotions. Barthes calls this hyperconsciousness the "[c]onjunction of intellect and affect," "emotive hyperconsciousness," and "emotive lucidity" (*The Neutral* 101-102: 139-140). This combination of intellect and affect leads to the Neutral to the extent that it goes beyond the binary opposition in terms of intelligence/emotion.

We can see here the relation based on categories mainly because the upper class as "the sensitive man" (*l'homme sensible*) (*The Neutral* 102: 140) includes two subcategories of man, namely the intellectual person and the emotional person. The abstract class offers an "imaginary type" of man. Moreover, we can say that this conceptual link between the upper class and its subcategories is potential in the sense

that the abstract class in question here, so to speak *implicitly*, transcends the binary opposition between the intellectual person and the emotional person. This function of generalization is not necessarily a truism (at least it needs our attention).

This upper class “sensitive man” is visible in view of the fact that it is definitely noted by Barthes himself. In this sense, it seems that the upper class itself is present in front of us. Nevertheless, we can say that this abstract class is *potential* in the opposition between subcategories. In other words, the upper class cannot be situated at the same level of the semantic system as subcategories because we are well acquainted with the very difference of generality between the upper class and its subcategories. The upper class conceptually transcends the binary opposition between subcategories.

5. Conclusion

We have presented the two points that clarify the specificity of Barthes’s concept of the Neutral. First, it rests on Barthes’s own vision of the paradigm in which the difference between presence and absence is embodied as the relation of one versus other. What Barthes aspires to avoid is precisely the binary opposition in terms of presence/absence. Second, the conceptual link between the upper class and its subcategories (the relation between *genre* and *espèce*) helps us focus on the potential aspect of the paradigm, which is not reduced to the presence/absence opposition. Barthes’s concept of the Neutral seems to be inseparable from the potential dimension of language.

The potential conceptually transcends the binary. Barthes’s Neutral does not indicate the annihilation but rather the possibility of meaning. For instance, the androgyne that resists binary opposition not only deliberately avoids annihilating the difference between genders but also implicitly refers to another meaning, namely the upper class “humans.” This function of generalization is, of course, founded on the relation of inclusion.¹⁶ Thus, it seems reasonable to conclude that Barthes’s literary semiology reveals the conceptual link between the relation of inclusion and the

potential dimension of language.

Notes

1. Roland Barthes, *The Neutral: Lecture Course at the Collège de France 1977-1978*, trans. Rosalind E. Krauss and Denis Hollier (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005) [*Le Neutre: Notes de cours au Collège de France 1977-1978*, texte établi, annoté et présenté par Thomas Clerc, (Paris: Seuil/IMEC, 2002)]. English translators adopt “The Neutral” for *Le Neutre* (see the translators’ preface). In this paper, the title is abbreviated to *The Neutral*. Page references to French edition follow the English page references.
2. As a fundamental commentary on Barthes’s course on the Neutral, we can refer to the following work: Thomas Clerc, “Roland le neutre,” in *Revue des sciences humaines*, no. 268 (2002): 41-53.
3. For Barthes’s method of the use of capitalization such as the Neutral (*le Neutre*), see Jean-Claude Milner, *Le pas philosophique de Roland Barthes* (Lagrasse: Verdier, 2003), pp. 25-33.
4. Roland Barthes, “Analyse textuelle d’un conte d’Edgar Poe” (1973), in *Œuvres complètes*, t. IV (1972-1976), nouvelle édition revue, corrigée et présentée par Éric Marty (Paris: Seuil, 2002), pp. 413-442.
5. Roland Barthes, “Le troisième sens: Notes de recherche sur quelques photogrammes de S. M. Eisenstein” (1970), in *Œuvres complètes*, t. III (1968-1971), nouvelle édition revue, corrigée et présentée par Éric Marty (Paris: Seuil, 2002), pp. 485-506.
6. See Éric Marty, “Maurice Blanchot, Roland Barthes, ‘une ancienne conversation,’” *Les temps modernes*, no. 654 (May-July 2009): 74-89.
7. See Augusto Ponzio, “Le Neutre et l’écriture *ante litteram*,” in Sémir Badir and Dominique Ducard (dirs.), *Roland Barthes en Cours (1977-1980): Un style de vie* (Dijon: Éditions Universitaires de Dijon, 2009), pp. 127-144.
8. Bernard Comment, *Roland Barthes, vers le neutre* (Paris: Christian Bourgois, 1991).
9. See *Dictionnaire historique de la langue française* (1992; reprint, Paris: Le Robert, 2006), p. 2369.

10. Roland Barthes, *Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes*, trans. Richard Howard (1977; reprint, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1989), p. 87.
11. Roland Barthes, *Elements of Semiology*, trans. Annette Lavers and Colin Smith (1967; reprint, New York: Hill and Wang, 1980), [“Éléments de sémiologie” (1965 [1964]), in *Œuvres complètes*, t. II (1962-1967), nouvelle édition revue, corrigée et présentée par Éric Marty (Paris: Seuil, 2002)]. Page references to French edition follow the English page references.
12. This vision of paradigm is connected with Barthes’s notion of “system.” For its theoretical implications, see Jean-Jacques Thomas, “System vs. Code: A Semiotologist’s Etymology,” in Steven Ungar and Betty R. McGraw (eds.), *Signs in Culture: Roland Barthes today* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1989), pp. 49-62.
13. For more details of these oppositions, see *Elements of Semiology*, pp. 76-78.
14. Strictly speaking, we have to add the pronoun *it*, however the point is not the grammatical system but rather our linguistic usage.
15. For the implications of this aporia (above all the question of writing), see Anne Longuet Marx, “Des paradoxes du neutre: de la déprise à la prise,” *Communications*, no. 63 (1996): 175-184.
16. For the theoretical perspectives on the relation of inclusion, see Gérard Genette, “Des genres et des œuvres,” in *Figures V* (Paris: Seuil, 2002), pp. 39-133.