

Ivan Kasabov,
New Bulgarian University
Sofia

Section I

SHAPE, FORM AND IMAGE OF THE SIGN' OBJECT

Summary

The *symbol* is the maker of types, genres and species of a mental content (or words' meanings). Relations in signs are deeply symbolic – obligatory, essential, cognizable and interpretative (theoretical), but necessarily contain iconicity and indexicality as constitutive or sign-forming. There are no objects without their corresponding ideas and names. Together, these three form the linguistic sign which is a symbol, for the relations between them are symbolic. Therein lies the symbol's value, that it serves for “*giving rationality to thought and behavior and enables us to predict the future*” (Peirce, EG).

The symbol is closely connected to the *figure* of the object (of the word) or *image* - the central element of this presentation. The term ***image*** means at the same time *silhouette and external shape, as well as figure*. Maybe the most suitable term for an essential clarification of the image-figure under consideration is the old concept of ***eidōs***, which means at the same time ‘*external shape*’ of the object and ‘*its pure essence, idea*’. An eidetic image as symbol supplies the transition from a concrete sensible object to a mental generalization and vice versa (especially in an artistic image). It is double-sized, which allows the fusion of heterogeneous essences in a whole entity: *real* with *ideal* in cognition and *vice versa* (in creative work), *objectual* and *sensible*, *word-signed* with *implied* (*what is meant by*). It combines the subjective with the objective, the *essential* with the *possible*, the *individual* with the *general*, the *ideal* with the *real*. An eidetic image permanently strives to *trans-form-at* the object, to *transform* it into something different: complex into simple and vice versa, preserving all the sensitive tension between its poles and demonstrating a diffusion between the different essences that constitute it.

* *
*

In this paper we shall discuss the term *image*, which means at the same time *silhouette and external shape, as well as form and figure*. Maybe more suitable term for an essential clarification of the image-figure under consideration is Peirce's term *icon* (as internal, mental invariant image in differentiation to external visual image or picture). Or maybe the most exact term would be the old concept of *eidōs*, which means at the same time 'external shape' of the object and 'its pure essence, idea'.

1. First of all, we can assert that the structure on the base of any distinctive wholeness, regarded as *form* or *schema* (silhouette, skeleton, or shape) is, in minimal quality determination, positive ("+" or in harmony) or negative ("–" or in contradiction). That is the basic characteristic of any structure: in works of art, as well as in biological and physical structures. *Schemas* and *forms* are necessary and sufficient conditions for the formation of any solid object, artefact, paragon of beauty, as well as any other representation of the imagination – and of objects and any other beings, including humans – from real to fictional or mythic.

A schema is a clearly drawn "visible" shape or silhouette with a specific "internal" skeleton or carcass of the object, dividing it, first of all, from the background of the others – all things left as a something whole and also from the background of the others' different silhouettes and, finally – as a representative of all others like it. On a purely logical level, *the schema* is equal to a unit or a *numerically distinct thing (con)figuration (formation)* with (external and internal) boundaries, but still without determined qualities.

Such a distinct thing can be regarded as a geometrical point in space. Mathematical theory of sets (*Cantor*) deals exactly with the problem of unit-formation, with creating or constituting limited distinct (objects) entire units.

Such units in some correlations are regarded as the *structure* (of some existing or hypothetical) system. Quality indetermination makes it possible for attention to be directed only to its organization, i. e. to structural correlations. It is a purely deductive mathematical approach which does not deal with the applicability in a given real system. Correspondence to any possible system is enough.

Form and logical **quality**, in closest interrelation, determine the object not only individually, but also as characteristic. The main question here is: what exactly characterizes a given object, or which are its constituents, as well as its necessary and sufficient essential properties. *Gestalt* psychology and mathematical *topology* (*Klein's groups*), or *invariants* theory deal with this problem, examining the unchangeable or constant features of the object, which are its essential characteristics, constitutive of its form. (e.g. radius for circle).

For example, we can take the simplest natural (solid) formation like crystal. Crystals are characterized with absolutely one and the same **structure** of generating. Probably it is the 'universal' and 'archetypal' model of each and every structure (or texture) as such – a structure known as the *crystal grid*. This model is a spatial periodic arrangement of atoms, ions or molecules in crystal in its elementary cage, which can completely reproduce it (through successive translations). I. e., There is a so-called compositional symmetry of crystals as atoms (internal form), whereas the external form and qualities of the crystals, are that crystals can coincide with themselves and are reproducible. Crystal structures are in only 6-7 groups (in 14 types possible) *shapes* or symmetric forms – *polygonal, lamellate, needle-shaped, skeleton-shaped, dendrites, pen-shaped...* They are “radial” of course (or needle-shaped as a simple snow-flake) or “chain-like” (if they are regarded as dendrite or skeleton-shaped formations) but they are never unconnected. It suffices to consult any encyclopedia. In other words, in the crystal as (stone) natural formation we can observe real simultaneous coincidence of *shape, form and figure*.

2. Symmetric forms of crystal structures correspond to **symmetric types** as such – in nature and art (aesthetic), in mathematics (structural), as well as cultural types: (*mirror*) *axial* and *central-radial* (or concentric). Solids' symmetry is their main invariant characteristic, founded in the so-called “physical law of preserving”. Viz, symmetry exists between different points, between figures and (solid) bodies and between internal

and external form and structure, as well. Just as in crystals – it is a kind of “grammar” of nature.

Symmetry is the “measure” or creative, developing and visual (or, at least, in aesthetic evaluation) qualitative-quantitative integral unity of any unit. Together with relations that are constantly repeating themselves, as the so-called ‘*golden ratio*’, they are based on *proportionality* – functional and determined parts of the whole unit of the simplest type. Symmetry and proportionality are the main characteristics of any spatial and objectual **form**, as well as of any linear and temporal **formation**. These are not structural but compositional characteristics of any given unit.

Any formation has *compositional* and/or *(con)textual* characteristics, as far as “compositional characteristics do not transfuse from one to another, but are compositional factors namely because of their clear distinction”. (Con)textual factors, on the contrary, transfuse each other in two directions, as shown by Mukarzhovsky:

a	b	c	d	e	f	g
	a	b	c	d	e	f
		a	b	c	d	e
			a	b	c	d
				a	b	c
					a	b
						a

from which appears then with finalization of the whole sequence (gradually given before) accumulate simultaneously in the opposite order.... As long as context is incomplete, its complex sense is still undetermined, but the striving for integral contextual sense is accompanies it from the first word. Attention is directed to the whole, in the context, as well as in the form.

For example, a given (poetic) work of art can be regarded both as compositional and (con)textual, but even in any of its fragments, its structure appears as a pure correlation (with hierarchization) between its elements. In the case of literary works of art, it is language as a sign system, as in the plastic it can be the (natural) structure of the stone material.

3. The integral (ideal) *objectual image* or *figure* of the object is the image of what is typical in the object with the necessary and sufficient characteristics for grasping it.

In this paper we discuss the term **image**, which means at the same time *silhouette and external shape, as well as form and figure*. It was mentioned above that the old concept of **eidos**, which means at the same time ‘*external shape*’ of the object and ‘*its pure essence, idea*’ would be preferable in this context. Eidetic image as symbol supplies the transition from a concrete sensible object to a mental generalization and vice versa (especially in an artistic image). It is double-sized, which allows the fusion of heterogeneous essences in a whole entity: *real* with *ideal* in cognition and *vice versa* (in creative work), *objectual* and *sensible*, *word-signed* with *implied (what is meant by)*. It combines the subjective with the objective, the *essential* with the *possible*, the *individual* with the *general*, the *ideal* with the *real*. An eidetic image permanently strives to *transform*-ate the object, to *transform* it into something different: *complex* into *simple* and vice versa, preserving all the sensitive tension between its poles and demonstrating diffusion between the different essences that constitute it.

This is characteristic for an image in art. A word-image as a symbol has its own specific. It is not as visible-clear as a plastic art-image, but instead adds unity, reality and self-meanings of the word, nearly equal to its object.

Intimately closely connected with the *figure* of the object (of the word) or **image** – the central element of this presentation – is the symbol.

The **symbol** is the maker of types, genres and species of a mental content (or words’ meanings). Relations in signs are deeply symbolic – obligatory essential, cognizable and interpretative (theoretical), but necessarily contain iconicity and indexicality as constitutive or sign-forming components. There are no *objects* without their corresponding *ideas* and *names*. Together, these three form the linguistic sign, which is a symbol, for the relations between them are symbolic. Therein lies the symbol’s value, that it serves for “*giving rationality to thought and behavior and enables us to predict the future*” (Peirce, EG).

4. What is specific about the **figure of the hero** is that it is formed in combination with a narrative about him. A typical representative model is added to the typical formation in a typical (con)text. Images of the object and the hero are formed through the **representative model**.

The role of the representative model is of extraordinary importance for understanding how objects are constituted from classes which are non-existing in reality and only possible-probable – fictional and miraculous as: *fairies, witches, griffins* or very rare or endemic-exotic species.

Schelling (1859) identifies works of art as symbols, because these are **hypotyposes**, modeling by means of their paragons. These figure are “exemplars of genus’ which are not from series of common type” by public presentation.

In the object’s structure there is no principal distinction between real and fictional heroes, between the hero’s biography and the autobiography of an ordinary man, or between human beings and things.

5. The idea of the object (or of the hero-person) is the form of the adequate, truthful (cognizable) understanding of the objectual essence of the sign-word. In the crystallization of the form of the idea the role of the representative model develops into a **stereotype** or **ideal**. The core around which ideas crystallize is the **motive**, which fulfils a sense-formatual function of perceptible reality.

From a logical point of view, the idea as concept crystallizes on the base of *number* and *quality*, through *term* and *category* to the *proper name*. All these terms strictly correspond to schema and form, through the representative model and figure-eidos to the animated image (hero) in idea as an intuitive objectual essential image. They are both expressed by means of a language **symbol**. Thus **idea** is equivalent to *adequate, truthful (cognizable) meaning-understanding of the objectual essence of the sign-word* in opposition to common word-meanings of language as veritable understandings of the objects or doxa. Beyond the idea, only an **absolute** (absolute idea) is possible.