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Inna Semetsky

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The Magician's Autopoietic Action, or Eros Contained and Uncontained

**Inna Semetsky, Ph.D.
Monash University,**

i heard there was a secret chord
that david played and it pleased the lord
but you don't really care for music, do you
well it goes like this the forth, the fifth
the minor fall and the major lift
the baffled king composing hallelujah

From *Hallelujah* by L. Cohen

There is a major card in all Tarot decks, called "The Magician". In the Marseilles deck its name is Le Bateleur, meaning the Juggler, or Trickster. Yet Sallie Nichols (1980), in her monumental work on Jung and Tarot, assigns to the card of Magician two, at first sight incompatible, meanings, those of Trickster and Creator (1980: 46). This paper will specifically focus on the creative aspect of the Trickster's autopoietic (see below) actions. Moreover, this paper – by locating the figure of the Magician in the framework derived from philosophical thinking in the tradition of semiotics developed by American pragmatists Charles Sanders Peirce and John Dewey, as well as French poststructuralist Gilles Deleuze (1925-1995) – presents this card as a symbol of creative and communicative action that has its place *in nature* as part of the action of signs, or semiosis. In other words, the symbolism of the Magician bypasses the meaning of the cultural archetype represented by Trickster. The Magician's action is not expressed *in signa data* but *signa naturalia* thereby manifesting itself as a natural, and quite possibly universal, principle. Initiated by a trickster, however, such an action would be implicit and latent, similar to some hidden variable, a.k.a. *arcana*, waiting to be conceptualized so as to take its place among physical laws, the latter, in semiotic terms, presenting themselves in the form of Peircean *habits*.

At the mythical level, the Magician's ancestor, Hermes Trismegistus, was associated with the Egyptian god Thoth and the Greek Hermes, a god of communication and wit, quick action and quick thinking, and the Magician's idea is first and foremost *communicative and interactive*, aiming towards connecting the One (as the number corresponding to this card in the deck) with the Many, discovering unity in diversity and creating diversity out of unity. A

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it naturally follows the spontaneous Fool, a preceding arcanum signified by zero, that is, unnumbered, the Magician card, number one, represents a path to the yet unknown. Being a pure mind, it is— prior to its own action— as yet disembodied: for Peirce, mind has to be entrenched in habits so as to “congeal”, as Peirce says, into matter. The sign of the Magician indicates the first step towards the objects of Secondness— in a way, the Peircean Firstness of Secondness— that is, practical, experiential and experimental, logic which is not confined to syllogistic logic proper.

It is almost ironic how instrumental rationality of modern epoch has separated science and magic into a pair of binary opposites. While acknowledging what the pure reason of modernity considered to be a supernatural action, the former nevertheless attempted to explain the latter in terms of a regular linear method of a direct cause-effect connection, promptly arriving at a conclusion of either anomalous effect (as in magic) or anomalous cause (as in mantic). Even taking into consideration a potential effect of magic [as] a semiotic therapy’ (in Noth 1995: 191), the view remains that within boundaries of “normal communicative acts, magic is based on a semiotic fallacy, [that is] misjudgment of the pragmatic effect of signs and their semantic object relation” (1995: 188). Specifically, the semiotic anomaly of reading cards has been considered to rest on mantic signs being “interpreted as an index of supernatural forces determining the world (1995: 190). What is called magic, however, is a science of hidden relations, the latter capable of producing real effects when a cause in question is not at all obvious. Jung gave a name *synchronicity* to this seemingly acausal order in nature. The world of Nature is full of such magic: in the universe considered to be self-organizing (see Jantsch 1980), the different and new levels of complexity emerge as if from nowhere, by means of spontaneous structuration and the establishing of an autopoietic regime. The classical definition of autopoietic systems is as follows:

“An autopoietic system is organized (defined as *unity*) as a network of processes of production (transformation and destruction) of components that produces the components that: (1) through their interaction and transformations continuously regenerate and realize the network of processes (relations) that produced them; and (2) constitute it (the machine) as a concrete unity in the space in which they exist by specifying the topological domain of its realization as such a network (Varela 1979: 13, italics mine, IS, so as to stress the significance of the number One assigned to the Magician card).

Autopoiesis literally means “self-making” and is effectuated by means of recursive communicative feed-forward and feed-back loops created by way of the Magician’s wand as shown on the card (Fig. 1). The dual aspect of continual and self-referential feedbacks, the processes of folding and unfolding, constitute a network of mutual interactions as if establishing a *conversation* (Varela 1979), or a dialogic communication between the system’s heterogeneous levels. Jantsch (1980) defines *consciousness* as the degree of autonomy a system gains in the dynamic relations with its environment;

thereby even the simplest chemical dissipative structure can be said to possess "a primitive form of consciousness" (Jantsch 1980: 40). The image of the Magician, as a sign of autopoiesis, represents such a trace of consciousness embedded in the material universe, in agreement with Peirc's asserting that mind is not a sole property of us, conscious and evolved human beings, but pervades the natural world in various degrees. Autopoiesis affirms the living systems as essence-less and the world as open-ended albeit not predicated solely on the interference of a subjective human intervention imposed from without.

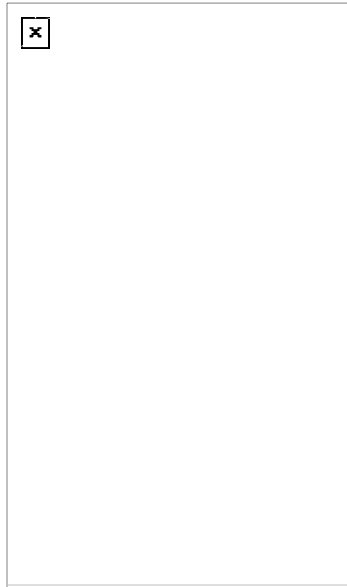


Fig. 1 "Illustration is from Rider-Waite Tarot Deck, known also as the Rider Tarot and the Waite Tarot. Reproduced by permission of US Games Systems Inc., Stamford, CT 06902, USA. Copyright 1971 by US Games Systems, Inc. Further reproduction prohibited"

Autopoiesis describes the feature of a continual renewal and self-organization pertaining to living, as well as social (see Luhmann 1995), systems so as to maintain the integrity of system's structures, the latter arising as a result of multiple interactions— or, using Dewey's stronger term, transactions— between many processes. The notion of transaction considers all human activities including behaviors and knowings as activities not of man alone but as processes belonging to the full situation of an organism-in-the-environment. As such, all transactions are embedded in the organization of space and time prefigured in every course of a developing life-experience' (Dewey 1934/1980: 24) and extend beyond the spatio-temporal boundaries of the sole organism. Indeed, order is not limited to being imposed from without— which would be an intervention from the

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outside of the system thus making the system's functioning allopoietic— “but is made out of the relations of harmonious interactions that energies bear to one another. Because it is active (not anything static because foreign to what goes on) order itself develops.... Order cannot but be admirable in a world constantly threatened with disorder” (Dewey 1934/1980: 14-15).

Gilles Deleuze's neopragmatic philosophy is mostly concerned with the creation and invention of new non-preexistent concepts. A novel concept as a product of active thinking becomes an emergent property. Such a creative act is a prerogative of the Magician— the archetype of, in terms of contemporary discourse, neogenesis or the process within which “the properties that appear during the origin of the new set are not the simple sum of the components that make up the set” (Grobstein in Juarrero 1999: 12) but establish different and new relations between components. An autopoietic system is organized around “environmental perturbations/compensation” (Varela 1979: 167f) effecting transversal communications across the levels. The very act of communication is capable of establishing different and new relations between components because it triggers a compensatory operation, the *inside* of the system, which itself is part and parcel of the environmental perturbation, the *outside*. In this way, old boundaries are crossed and traversed and new boundary conditions of the system, or its external structure, is being established meanwhile sustaining the integrity of its internal structure, or what Deleuze aptly called the fold of “the inside of the outside” (Deleuze 1988: 97).

The communicative action of the Magician is expressed in the coordination, or the Peircean relation of Thirdness, that this sign establishes between the noumenal and phenomenal realms, and may be considered to be a precursor to neo- or morpho-, genesis, that is, emergence of this or that phenomenon of Secondness as contingent on Thirdness. So, the sign of the Magician is an indication of how mind, or Firstness, may become embodied in matter, or Secondness, through the Thirdness of an evolutionary process, which serves as a “mediation, whereby first and second are brought into relation. ... Mind is First, Matter is Second, Evolution is Third” (Peirce CP 6.7). From the perspective of the logic of explanation, this card may be considered as representing the functioning of “another kind of causation” (Peirce CP. 6.59). The Magician becomes the index of a *self-cause* disregarded by a science of modernity the latter having “succeeded” in reducing the four Aristotelian causes, including formal and final, to a single efficient causation, while at the same time “retaining his prohibition against that unknown form of causality” (Juarrero 1999: 48), a self-cause. Jung, commenting on a possibility of some unexpected correlations, pointed out that it is the very quality of an archetype to be able to “order” itself. Peirce asserted that growth, evolution, and complexity represent basic facts in the universe. He further noticed that from these facts we may infer “that there is probably in nature some agency by which the complexity and diversity of things can be increased” (Peirce CP 6.58). The mechanical law alone would not explain the magic of diversification. The Magician, number One, indeed *unity* that gives rise to

diversity, is not a symbol of identity: for Peirce, the infallible mechanical laws are insufficient. “How can the regularity of the world increase, if it has been absolutely perfect all the time?” asks Peirce (CP 1.174). Difference is needed, and such a difference in fact is what makes anautopoiesis functional. Gilles Deleuze has ingeniously addressed this concept:

“difference is not diversity. Diversity is given, but difference is that by which the given is given. . . . Difference is not phenomenon but the noumenon closest to phenomenon. . . . Every phenomenon refers to an inequality by which it is conditioned. . . . Everything which happens and everything which appears is correlated with orders of differences: differences of level, temperature, pressure, tension, potential, difference of intensity” (Deleuze 1994a: 222).

In other words, the unity, or wholeness, is given not in “a property which it possesses . . . [but only] . . . by a pervasive and internally integrating quality” (Dewey 1998a: 194-195) as Firstness, exemplified in number One. The mind itself is part of nature: there is continuity, that Peirce called synechism, as opposed to materialism or idealism alike. The categories of Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness are “conceptions of complexity” (Peirce CP 1. 526). Properties as seconds arise from the act of communication that involves what Deleuze dubbed *differentiation*, when the differences in intensity establish a flow of information: “The pervasive quality is differentiated while at the same time these differentiations are connectèd (Dewey 1998a: 209), the process of connection— or local integrations— being described as *differentiation* in terms of it “being like the second part of difference” (Deleuze 1994a: 209) thereby itself capable of producing a difference of the second-order. Such a double process of differentiation, as the Magician’s communicative action, appears to border on a magical art indeed, an act of wonder:

“of all affairs, communication is the most wonderful. When communication occurs, all natural events are subject to reconsideration and revision: they are re-adapted to meet the requirements of conversation, whether it be public discourse or that preliminary discourse termed thinking” (Dewey 1925/1958: 166),

or, we add, the interleveled communication, the semiosis in nature, when the Magician *intervenes* between the heterogeneous levels, lifts up his wand and enables the “events [to] turn into objects, things with meaning” (Dewey 1925/1958: 166).

The act of an intervention makes Magician an autocatalytic element building the mutualist feedback of circular causality and representing “kinetics effective in this moment at each spacial point” (Jantsch 1980: 34). Performing tricks, creating a momentous “negentropy as semiotic information” (Spinks 1991: 71) in the various acts of practical magic based on creative imagination, Magician in its dual aspect as Trickster trans-codes the analog continuum of *one* into the digital organization of *particulars*: functioning as a principle of

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continuity and harmony, it has to practically intervene in the world of everyday affairs. The fact of immanent *intervenience* and not *supervenience* affirms the autopoietic versus allopoietic structure in the system's parts-whole organization. In the traditional reading, the function of the Magician is to establish rapport between one's personal effort and the natural world via the depth of spiritual life. The postmodern Magician reconstructs the premodern (Platonic) Oneness, that is, a unity between the beautiful, the good, and the harmonious by taking it out from the supernatural realm and while still maintaining this unity as a system's integrity—bringing it down to earth and into the midst of the flesh-and-blood human experiences. The actual experience, full of contingencies, thus provides conditions resulting in structural couplings as “a chain of interlocked... *communicative interactions*” (Varela 1979: 48f) embedded in the process of shared (dia)logic.

The intensity of difference is a function of yet another fundamental Deleuzian concept, *desire*. The desire that enables Magician to practically perform miracles by means of the acts of creation, is the *human eros*, that is, the passion to create what is good for humans: indeed, the wise Magician “*knows what is good and spontaneously does it*” (Varela 1999: 4) combining therefore a sensitive perception with an ethical action. The evolution of signs from each preceding to the consequent arcana, from the card numbered zero, the Fool (see Semetsky 2000) to the Magician/One, to the High Priestess/Two [1] and so on, is a matter of contingency: the Fool's growth and its continuous reconstruction of experience based on integration of many connections between an organism and environment in the phenomenal world depends on the Fool's spontaneous act of “*veritable becoming-mad*” (Deleuze 1990: 1). As for *phronesis*, or the Magician's intelligent—inspired by “the striving to make stability of meaning prevail over the instability of events” (Dewey 1925/1958: 50)—method, it wouldn't be possible if not for the element of madness, namely, the birth of Eros, embedded in it and in fact having originated this very method.

Let us recall the myth: Eros indeed was conceived in a foolish, bordering on a pre-conscious, act that has occurred in the middle and muddle of “a sort of groping experimentation... that... belong to the order of dreams, of pathological processes, esoteric experiences, drunkenness, and excess” (Deleuze & Guattari 1994: 41). Yet, as a culmination of desire sparked between two deities, Eros itself is embedded in the relational *triadic* process. It is Thirdness that governs Secondness because, according to Peirce, it “brings information, [...] determines an idea and gives it body” (Peirce CP. 1. 537) thereby creating the objects of cognition as Seconds as if anew. Eros, the magical son of Poros and Penia, is itself a symbol of union that came into existence as an effect of the activated Jungian archetype of *Coniunctio*, that is, the conjunction of opposites. Eros-the-Magician, wears red (see Fig.1) as the color of passion, over white as the color of sincere and serious intentions, and his practical skill—*techne*—is to unite the opposites. Being *form-less* in itself, Eros's purpose is nevertheless *to-in-form*, that is to create negentropy contained in a surplus of information, or novelty, arising in the creative act of the Magician that demands “at every turn, every bend, every alternate possibility a

decision to be made' (Kvelson 1999: 15). While the preceding arcanum, the Fool, conveys the imagery of an uncontained Eros literally bordering on the edge of Chaos, the second card brings an element of organization into the semiotic process because Chaos itself is resourceful and is 'seen as Creative' (Hoffmeyer and Emmeche 1991: 162). Indeed, the Magician's predicament, or sign-function, is to ensure an operational closure— a series of structural couplings— hence correcting and ordering the course of events.

The Magician/Trickster, in a somewhat Neoplatonic fashion, reconstructs Eros by taking it away from the domain of the philosopher-kings and, while still practicing both poetry and prophecy, bringing Eros into the actual world of interaction and dialogue that 'provides the laboratory for the experimentation of 'the good' in things and in thought' (Kvelson 1999: 188). The creation itself is a continuous dialogue, an interaction as an ongoing event represented by means of the two indices on the Magician's picture. While the Magician's right hand (Fig. 1) holding the wand points up-wards, to the skies, his left hand is pointing to the earth enacting thereby the Hermetic maxim *above so below*. For it is the second verse of the Hermeš Emerald Table (*Tabula Smaragdina*) that proclaims the ancient formula of analogy: That which is above is like to that which is below and that which is below is like to that which is above, to accomplish the miracles of (the) one thing. This active principle indicates a possibility that what happens in human thought may be analogous to the Magician's action. Thinking, when being *embodied* in action, becomes an active "deliberation [which] is a dramatic rehearsal (in imagination) of various competing possible lines of action. Deliberation is an experiment in finding out what the various lines of possible action are really like" (Dewey 1922/1988: 132). Thought thus may extend itself spatially, but not only: it also "runs ahead and foresees outcomes, and thereby avoids having to await the instructions of actual failure and disaster" (Dewey 1922/1988: 133), therefore extending itself in a temporal sense too, hence constructing a multidimensional, "both extensive and enduring" (Dewey 1925/1958: 279) hyperspace, a manifold.

The many potentialities in a manifold follow the singular direction of the Magician's wand. The magic wand actualizes this or that of Secondness, and the Magician embodies the reality of Peircean would-be-ness. Therefore some, albeit as yet indeterminate, consequences would inevitably take place following the

"imaginative rehearsal of various courses of conduct. We give way *in our mind*, to some impulse; we try, *in our mind*, some plan. Following its career through various steps we find ourselves in imagination in the presence of the consequences that would follow" (Dewey 1932/Hickman & Alexander 1998, 2: 335).

The word "magic" has a common root with "imagination". The Magician's active imagination provides the opportunities to see the possible in the actual and, respectively and because of code-duality (cf Hoffmeyer and Emmeche 1991), to increase the number of degrees of freedom in the space of

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potentialities. The imagination is active indeed, and deliberation carries the creative power of the genesis of new forms; it “terminates in a modification of the objective order, in the institution of a new object . . . It involves a dissolution of old objects and a forming of new ones in a medium . . . beyond the old object and not yet in a new one” (Dewey 1925/1958: 220), but within a zone of indiscernibility between the two. The Magician’s autopoietic function (First) is complementary to the spontaneously emerging, and relatively stable, structure (Second) within the totality of the process (Thirdness) in the overall triadic sign-system. The relative stability is a sign of *emiosis*: a new regime of signs is part of the overall dynamics reflected in the evolutionary process represented in each subsequent card in a deck.

The Magician/Trickster’s imagination completes “the intercourse of the live creature with his surroundings” (Dewey 1934/1980: 22). Because of such an interactive and communicative action, the information represented by the potential collection of archetypal meanings, which are as yet dormant in the overcoded (cf. Varela’s “*surplus signification*”, 1999: 56) collective unconscious, posited by Jung, becomes activated. Those meanings are realized in a process of carrying over the past into the present together with the imaginative anticipation of the future, all three syntheses of time implicit in the collective unconscious [2]. Meanings thus find their way into a here-and-now of the present experience. The Magician’s mode of communication may be described by the Jungian transcendent function that includes in itself an act of imagination thus bringing the unconscious material to the level of conscious awareness. In other words, what we have here is the construction of logic “from the basic intuitive act of making a distinction and two fundamental arithmetical acts: (1) making a mark to signify the distinction and (2) repeating the mark” (Noddings and Shore 1984 in Semetsky 2000: 489; cf. Spencer-Brown 1979). The semiotic language this sign “speaks” in a process of creating a work of art, is

“not an agency [but] a release and amplification of energies that enter into it, conferring upon [human beings] the added quality of meaning. The quality of meaning thus introduced is extended and transferred, actually and potentially, from sounds, gestures and marks, to all other things in nature. Natural events become messages to be enjoyed and administered, precisely as are song, fiction, oratory, the giving of advice and instruction” (Dewey 1925/1958: 174).

The Magician’s language of expression is “always a form of action” (Dewey 1925/1958: 184). It creates its own and new, non-representative, language exemplified in what Deleuze called a performative or modulating – that is, always in the making – aspect of language existing as poetic undertaking. For the Magician/Eros such an organic form of action is both forward-looking and cooperative, oriented toward the *good*, so that

“Response to another’s act involves contemporaneous response to a thing as entering into the other’s behavior, and this upon both sides. . . . It constitutes the intelligibility of acts and things. Possession of the

capacity to engage in such activity is intelligencē (Dewey 1925/1958: 179- 180).

In other words, what becomes a prerequisite of an intelligent activity is a structural coupling which is always common and ‘mutual: both organism and environment undergo transformation’ (Maturana and Varela 1992: 102) as a necessary condition of autopoietic systems’ information exchange and creation of meanings.

The syntax of a language in such a conjoint autopoietic undertaking goes through a process of its own becoming-other and undergoes a series of transformations giving birth to a new, as if foreign, language. Such a language within language functions on the margins like any other becoming, that is, in a form of “*the outside of language, not outside of it*” (Deleuze 1994b: 23), or as a limit case of language modulations. The language becomes effective as long as the form of content supplements the form of expression: both exist in assemblage. The relationship between the two is derived from the Peircean triadic semiotics or “a different logic of social practice, an intensive and affective logic of the included middle” (Bosteels 1998: 151) which defines them “by their mutual solidarity, and neither of them can be identified otherwise” (Deleuze & Guattari 1987: 45). In its most effective mode the distinction between content and expression becomes blurred, leading to the emergence of a new property: a highly expressive, passionate language, in which an utterance affected by a play of forces becomes the Magician’s enunciation.

At the ontological level this indicates, for Deleuze, the univocity of Being – exemplified, we add, in the number *one* corresponding to The Magician – that is, the highest possible affirmation of its dynamical structure. As though referring to a magical craft, Deleuze and Guattari use somewhat alchemical terms to describe the evolution inscribed in dynamics as

“a transformation of substances and a dissolution of forms, a passage to the limits or flight from contours in favor of fluid forces, flows, air, light and matter, such that a body or a word does not end at a precise point. We witness the incorporeal power of that intense matter, the material power of that language. A matter more immediate, more fluid, and more ardent than bodies of words. In continuous variations the relevant distinction is no longer between a form of expression and a form of content but between two inseparable planes in reciprocal presupposition. ... Gestures and things, voices and sounds, are caught up in the same ‘opera’, swept away by the same shifting effects of stammering, vibrato, tremolo, and overflowing” (Deleuze & Guattari 1987: 109).

As a marker of in-between-ness Deleuze uses his brilliant metaphor of *stuttering* which seems to exemplify what Varela would have called an

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“apparent paradox of nonlocalization” (Varela 1999: 60). The Magician’s philosophy of life is different from a rational consensus: “It is not a question of intellectual understanding... but of intensity, resonance, musical harmony” (Deleuze 1995: 86). Its rationale is pragmatic, and the thinking it produces is experimental and experiential, creating a paradox of bringing the element of non-thought into a thought, the former making the Magician to think the unthinkable, to address the paradoxical possibility of the impossible and to see borders, therefore “to show the imperceptible” (Deleuze 1995: 45). It is when expressed by stuttering that thesecondness of the new form of content becomes manifest: the intensity of stuttering “a milieu functioning as the conductor of discourse brings together the quaver, the whisper, the stutter, the tremolo, or the vibrato and imparts upon words the resonance of the affect under consideration” (Deleuze 1994b: 24). The metaphoric stuttering, which itself in an autoreferential manner “ushers in the words that it affects” (Deleuze 1994b: 23), is part and parcel of a semiotic process. Stuttering, as a poetic modulation, is always creative because the subtle variations of the refrain tend to destabilize language, thus creating “a condition of tensional distribution of energies” (Dewey 1925/1958: 253).

In terms of Peircean logic, stuttering would symbolize a momentous discontinuity as part and parcel of the continuum, that is, density permeated by infinitesimal[3]. Consequently, by having produced a state “of uneasy or unstable equilibrium” (Dewey 1925/1958: 253) – a rupture that allowed the difference to intervene and be repeated– “the transfer from the form of expression to the form of content has been completed” (Deleuze 1994b: 26): indeed, it is the “recurrence [that] makes novelty possible” (Dewey 1925/1958: 253). Pertaining to language in its diagrammatic richness, “content is not a signified nor expression a signifier, rather both are variables in assemblage” (Deleuze & Guattari 1987: 91) the latter described by a distributed– non-representational and a-signifying– semiotic process. The Magician’s language of expression is taken broadly, that is, as everything, which “says something, to those who understand it” (Dewey 1938/Hickman & Alexander 1998, 2: 80). The language may be subtle, sometimes even “like silence, or like stammering... something letting language slip through and making itself heard” (Deleuze 1995: 41), or appearing in the extra-linguistic mode as the language of signs.

The Magician’s mode of communication as the heterogeneous regime of signs is indirect and operates in order “to bring this assemblage of the unconscious to the light of the day, to select the whispering voices, to gather the tribes and secret idioms from which I extract something I call my Self(*moi*)” (Deleuze & Guattari 1987: 84). Such a self, when extracted from experiential happenings and occurrences as “a serial course of affairs” (Dewey 1925/1958: 232), becomes itself a sign-event– that is, not a substantive but a relational entity – going by the name *moi*. Indeed, “among and within these occurrences, not outside of them nor underlying them, are those events which are denominated selves” (:232). The emergent and multiple selves defy the habitual “feeling of ‘I’ as a true center” (Varela 1999: 61) because at each and every moment those as yet “selfless” (Varela 1999: 61) selves enact (Varela’s

expression) and re-enact the totality of an experiential and interactive situation. And because “experiential structures ‘motivate’ conceptual understanding and rational thought” (Varela 1999: 16), the cognitive selves indeed emerge in the midst of situational transactions.

The expressionism of an artist in the Magician's trade complements the constructionism of a craftsman: the functioning of this sign conforms to the triadic “logic of artistic construction” (Dewey 1998a: 199). A transformation into a new form takes place at the limit, and the limit in the extreme case is a line of horizon, or vanishing line, which is— never mind its being a purely symbolic concept derived from projective geometry and Poincaré's mathematics— nevertheless visible and accessible to the Magician's expanded perception (cf. Merrell 1998: 115-117). The imaginary line is a line on which all parallel horizontal lines, as in perspectival composition, would converge provided they are extended indefinitely— as they do, in the Magician's paradoxical archetypal world, situated on a complex plane (see Semetsky 2003), which is ruled by Riemann's metric tensors and where imaginary numbers are combined with real thus forming complex numbers describing the world. The complex plane that includes an imaginary axis as one of its coordinates is non-representational: for the objects of cognition to emerge, the information must become active and imaginatively enacted through the “*embodied action*” (Varela 1999: 17) so as to “trace a sort of line of flight” (Deleuze 1995: 41).

The Deleuzian lines of flight then acquire meaning of an escape, or indeed flight, from some old and fixed frame of reference (a horizontal plane) within which the flight (a vertical plane) is yet a sort of incorporeal vanishing beyond its event horizon. But because the Magician's wand “reaches down into nature ... it has breadth ... to an indefinitely elastic extent. It stretches” (Dewey 1925/1958: 1). This stretch, as Thirdness, expands the event-horizon and contributes to overcoming the limitations of empirical reality available to senses by fine-tuning the perception *per se*: indeed, “[t]hat stretch constitutes inference” (Dewey 1925/1958: 1) [4]. In a process of stretching beyond limits and inventing new concepts, the Magician produces “cutting and cross-cutting... [so the concept] has no reference: it is self-referential, it posits itself and its object at the same time it is created” (Deleuze 1988: 87). Among conflicting experiences situated among many critical junctures the Magician arcanum represents a potential “tendency to form a new [habit]” (Dewey 1925/1958: 281); as such it indeed “cuts across some old habit” (:281). Self-reference, though, is inscribed not in a dyadic but triadic relation: function and structure are related through stuttering— the latter functioning as a symbol of fluctuation leading to a higher level of organization.

The Trickster's work is a pure chance, but his alter-ego, the Magician, is already a necessity, and both indeed exist in assemblage as a complementary pair of that what has been traditionally, and within boundaries of formal logic, considered binary opposites. That is, a minute stuttering, a fluctuation or instability, leads to order (see Dewey above) not because of the action of the law of large numbers as statistical averages but because of the active inner

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dynamics symbolized by the “divine intervention” of the Magician. The Magician’s magic wand establishes directedness, that is, “a vector [that] already indicates in which direction the new structure may be expected” (Jantsch 1980: 46): that’s why, and as Peirce said, Thirdness is indeed governing Secondness [5]. The Magician is a Juggler, indeed. He juggles time and space creating new patterns in the fabric of matter. The function of cutting and cross-cutting by means of the Magician’s wand establishes multiple becomings in a mode of “a new threshold, a new direction of zigzagging line, a new course for the border” (Deleuze 1995: 45), together with the “emergence of unexpected and unpredictable combinations” (Dewey 1925/1958: 281) functioning as ideas along many transversal lines. Yet, the Magician itself is an *Idea*, a virtual tendency, just musing and subsisting *in potentia* in the Jungian collective unconscious; still— as an archetype of creative artist, poet and prophet— it is capable of generating ever new ideas in accord with Peirce’s semiotics (cf. Peirce CP. 1.216), every new actualized idea being a manifestation of a newly created possible. The Magician possesses this peculiar “feeling of the direction and end of various lines of behavior [as]... the feeling of habits working below direct consciousness” (Dewey 1922/1988: 26) because by itself *it is* one such organic *habit* immanent in the collective unconscious; it *inhabits* the latter.

Varela has acknowledged Dewey’s emphasis on the power of habits in terms of practical reasoning: “We may be said to *know how* by means of our habits” (Dewey 1922 in Varela 1999: 19). The functioning of habits, when described in terms of Deleuze’s poststructuralist conceptualizations, takes place through a diagram, that is an abstract and informal, yet powerful and intensive machine, a multiplicity which is positioned between discursive and non-discursive formations, and— like the functioning of the sign of Magician— “makes others see and speak” (Deleuze 1988: 34). So Being is *univocal* indeed, but “because the diagrammatic multiplicity can be realized only and through the differential of forces integrated only by taking diverging paths” (Deleuze 1988: 38) it necessarily becomes *plurivocal* when, due to the immanent difference, digitized, articulated and enacted in its actual manifestations Deleuze has stressed the a-personal and collective nature of this univocity by introducing his novel concept of the forth person singular as the specific language expressing the singularity of the event. The “language [is] considered as an experienced event” (Dewey 1925/1958: 173). The Magician, as a sign-event, speaks in the forth person singular, the paradoxical subject of which is the plural “they” of the collective unconscious, that is, subject-less (i.e., collective) by definition. The multiplicity of “they” functions “in the form of undetermined infinitive. ... It is poetry itself. As it expresses in language all events in one, the infinitive expresses the event of language— language being a unique event which merges now with that which renders it possible” (Deleuze 1990: 185).

The heightened perception of a poet allows Magician to prophetically envisage the *difference* between “what may be and is not” (Dewey 1998b: 225). For the Magician, “the action and its consequence... [are] joined in perception” (Dewey 1934/1980: 44). Because “to *perceive* is to acknowledge unattained possibilities, ... to refer the present to consequences” (Dewey

1925/1958: 182), the Magician is able to creatively– that is, “in an unprecedented response to conditions” (Dewey 1998b: 225) – re-organize the “change in a given direction” (:225). Creativity is what characterizes the process of actualization. The Deleuzian *outside* as an ontological category is an overcoded virtual space that “possesses a full reality by itself.. it is on the basis of its reality that existence is produced” (Deleuze 1994: 211). However,

“in order for the virtual to become actual it must *create* its own terms of actualization. The *difference* between the virtual and the actual is what requires that the process of actualization be a creation... The actualization of the virtual... presents a dynamic multiplicity [...] a multiplicity of organization... Without the blueprint of order, the creative process of organization is always an *art*” (Hardt 1993: 18).

In a pragmatic sense, what is defined as potentiality represents a departure from the classic Aristotelian *telos* that, unless thwarted by the interference of unforeseeable accidents, asserts the success in actualization and assigns to *matter* a status of a passive receptacle for essences. Indeed, “potentialities must be thought of in terms of consequences of interactions with other things. Hence potentialities cannot be *known* till *after* the interactions have occurred” (Dewey 1998b: 222). But, and this is critical, for Magician-the-chemist, *matter* is never inert: it is an active and intensive multiplicity capable of self-organization precisely because of the Magician being immanent in its capacity of the “virtual governor” (Juarrero 1999: 125). Being virtual, the function of such a “governor” is inherently non-local, that is it may be considered as distributed in the transactional field of action that includes itself in the environment, and is both *inscribed* in the dynamics of self-organization and can be *described*, topologically, as an attractor– a mathematical notation for the archetype of chaotic Eros- functioning as “a rudimentary precursor of final cause” (Juarrero 1999: 127), fractal by its very definition and therefore necessarily vague.

In this sense, the Magician, albeit not being able to know potentialities until its act is performed, nonetheless *knows how* to perform the action and thus *quasi-causes* a qualitative transformation of what Dewey dubbed a problematic– indeed making us *baffled* (see epigraph)– situation, thereby becoming a second-order constraint, or a self-cause, within the newly organized context. The interleaved causal relations flow in the mode of heterarchy (see Juarrero 1999: 130), that is, as a “two-way movement between levels: ‘upward’ with the emergence of properties from the constituting elements, and ‘downward’ with the constraints imposed by global coherence on local interactions” (Varela 1999: 61). The presence of the Magician, “like a *virtual interface*” (Varela 1999: 61), enables, in accord with Peircé’s pragmatic maxim, the production of real effects on the actual plane of manifestation. The four semiotic tools on the Magician's table (see Fig.1) are the signs not of instrumental rationality, but of *phronesis*, that is, practical wisdom. They correspond to four suits in a deck or, respectively, four Jungian functions comprising the Magician’s intelligence: thinking, feeling, sensing/intuition. Or, alternatively, these are four elements available to Magician in his alchemical

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laboratory: fire, earth, water and air, all the elements of nature brought together to serve the aim of freeing a human spirit from the constraints and limitations of the material world, that is, to effectuate a conjunction of opposites by creating a semiotic bridge between the worlds of mind and matter. Those connections are enacted in “a continual rhythm of loss of integration with environment and recovery of union” (Dewey 1934/1980: 15), the sign of rhythm— as a cycle of eternal respiration of life— being expressed by a mathematical symbol of infinity, which appears on the Magician icon (Fig. 1) and is also repeated in the shape of the hat that LeBateleur, in the Marseilles deck, wears.

The Magician’s creative “will is thus not something opposed to consequences or severed from them. It is a *cause* of consequences” (Dewey 1922/1988: 33). The newly created process-structure is in fact a decision made, or a direction taken by means of the autocatalytic web built by the Magician’s double-pointed wand (see Fig. 1), that is, a change described by a novel probability distribution of parts acting within an overall dynamics of a complex adaptive system. Systems-theoretical thinking considers *part* as always “already a part-of-a-whole...conditioned by the contingent, although itself a [necessary] condition of the full determination of the latter” (Dewey 1925/1958: 65, brackets mine). The Magician “bring[s] to awareness meanings hitherto unperceived, thereby constituting their ideas... [T]o get a new meaning is perforce to be in a new attitude” (Dewey 1925/1958: 316). New boundary conditions serve as a container, albeit expanded, for the Magician’s erotic, “free, moving and operative, ... living spirit” (1925/1958: 294). Such firstness in thirdness, the Magician/Eros, was envisaged by Dewey as a vital— and not mechanical— organization recognizing “the empirical impact ... of the mixture of universality and singularity” (Dewey 1925/1958: 48) in the relation of a whole to its parts.

In a reading, the Magician’s arcanum sometimes appears as an indication of the presence of the wise teacher, a guidance counselor, or a healer— always a practitioner of the ethics of care (see Noddings 1984) who gains its knowledge in practice as an art of continuing learning. The Magician in us strikes this resonating *chord* (see epigraph) which, when played, brings forth “the tenor of existence, the intensification of life” (Deleuze & Guattari 1994: 74) and the previously unknown creative potential expressed by “the manner in which the existing being is filled with immanence” (Deleuze 1997: 137). The Magician’s method, *phronesis*, cannot but create the conditions of freedom specified as “efficiency in action, ... capacity to change the course of action, to experience novelties. And again it signifies the power of desire and choice to be factors in events” (Dewey 1922/1988: 209). The autonomy of the self is never “given”: it requires work to be done and is contingent on the shared and transversal communication capable of crossing levels and thresholds in the process of what Jung dubbed individuation. The precursor to “autonomy is that a living system finds its way into the next moment by acting appropriately out of its own resources” (Varela 1999: 11), such a richness and availability of resources in the otherwise uncertain world being signified by the card of the Magician. When this card comes up in a reading, it brings reassurance and the feeling of security, the awareness of order, which is just

about to emerge from chaos: the help is here, within oneself, the 'magical' work has been done! Indeed – and as we noted earlier citing Dewey – order cannot but be admirable in a world constantly threatened with disorder. Thus the mode of being as *filled* with immanence means becoming necessarily *fulfilled* due to one's acquired capacity to act freely and independently precisely because of having learned to experience the connectedness and the reality of mutual interdependence as the ethical lesson of the Magician.

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Notes

[1] Cf. Jung's saying "one becomes two, two becomes three..." (CW: 12, par 26).

[2] See my paper "Memories of the past/memories of the future: Semiotics and the Tarot " <http://www.chass.utoronto.ca/french/as-sa/ASSA-No13/Article6en.html>

[3] This is a pure speculation of mine. The entire analysis of Peirce's notion of infinitesimal and its bearing on his concept of continuity is said to have been awaiting meticulous scholarly discussion. See, e.g., <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/peirce>

[4] In Semetsky (2003), I suggest a model of Peirce's abductive inference as a

graph on a complex plane.

[5] Ibid.