

## 9. THYMIC ANALYSIS

### SUMMARY

Thymic analysis, an elaboration by this author on Greimas and Courtés' axiological analysis, is concerned with evaluations made within the category euphoria/dysphoria, or in less technical terms, positive/negative or pleasure/displeasure. The main elements involved in this sort of analysis are: (1) the evaluating subject, (2) the object being evaluated, (3) the thymic value attributed to the object (euphoria, dysphoria, etc.), (4) the intensity of the value (low, medium, high), (5) the time of the evaluation, and (6) the transformations that may affect thymic elements (a transformation of the subject or object may or may not lead to a change in the value and/or its intensity). For example, in the fable "The Grasshopper and the Ant", the ant (subject) evaluates work (object) positively (value) and pleasure (object) negatively (value) from the beginning of the story to the end.

### 1. THEORY

#### 1.1 THYMIC EVALUATION DEFINED

Thymic analysis, an elaboration by this author on Greimas and Courtés' axiological analysis (see the chapter on figurative, thematic and axiological analysis), is concerned with evaluations made within the category euphoria/dysphoria, or in less technical terms, positive/negative or pleasure/displeasure.

The main elements involved in thymic analysis are: (1) the evaluating subject, (2) the object<sup>1</sup> being evaluated, (3) the thymic value attributed to the object (euphoria, dysphoria, etc.), (4) the intensity of the value (low, medium, high, etc.), (5) the time of the evaluation, and (6) the transformations that may affect thymic elements. For example, in the fable "the Grasshopper and the Ant", the ant (subject) evaluates work (object) positively (value) and leisure (object) negatively (value) from the beginning of the story to the end (time).

NOTE: THYMIC ANALYSIS, AXIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS AND THYMIC DIALOGICS

Greimas and Courtés (1982, p. 21) distinguish between two acceptations for "axiology": The traditional meaning is "the theory and/or the description of value systems – moral, logical, or aesthetic"; in semiotics, it is the micro-system created by the homologation of any opposition with the opposition euphoria/dysphoria, known as the thymic category. ("Thymic" is a term taken from psychology that has to do with mood in general.) For instance, life is to death as euphoria is to dysphoria. The semiotic definition proposed by Greimas and Courtés seems unnecessarily restrictive: A homology between any opposition and the thymic category is only one specific scenario in axiology, and the theory needs to account for semiotic acts in which life and death, for example, are both associated solely with dysphoria, or both with euphoria. For our part, we will speak in terms of thymic analysis rather than axiological analysis, firstly, to avoid possible confusion with axiology as a branch of philosophy, and secondly, to indicate clearly that it is based on the thymic category.

This chapter can be considered an expansion of Greimasian axiological analysis or a simplification of thymic dialogics (see the chapter on dialogics, and Hébert, 2001, pp. 140-166 and 2003a). The evaluating and evaluated actors in dialogics are referred to here as the subject and object, whereas the concepts of universe, world, image, replica, and others are avoided. Formulated in this way, thymic analysis incorporates elements of Greimasian terminology and theory, and it also presents some important additions to axiological analysis as formulated by Greimas and Courtés, which we have presented in the chapter on figurative, thematic and axiological analysis.

#### 1.2 ONTOLOGICAL CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECTS AND OBJECTS

The ontological classes into which thymic subjects and objects may fall are not restricted *a priori*. From the perspective of "natural ontology" (which defines what kinds of entities make up "natural reality"), an object may correspond to: a perceptible element (like the wind), an object (in the restrictive sense, such as a carrot), an action (lying), a state, a situation, an anthropomorphic being (a talking sword, a human being), a collective (society), a class (perfumes in general), an element of a class (a certain perfume), a whole (the rose), a part of a whole (the thorns of the rose), and so on. The same logic applies for the evaluating subject, with one difference: subjects must be equipped with an "awareness" that allows them to make an evaluation (even if it is only awareness bestowed on a machine by men). The subject may be: a member of the animal or plant kingdom (an animal, insect or plant), an anthropomorphic being, a machine (a computer), an abstract entity (morality), a class

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<sup>1</sup> As with all of the analytical tools that Greimas created (the actantial model, the narrative program, the veridictory square, etc.), the term "object" is used in the philosophical and didactic sense: it is the focus of the subject's awareness. Thus, the object can be a thing (an object in the usual sense of the word), but it can also be a person or concept, etc.

(women in general), a part of a whole (the id, the superego, and the ego as parts of the human psyche), etc. Later we will come back to classes and their elements, and wholes and their parts.

### 1.3 THE THYMIC VALUES

Modal values or statuses are highly general characteristics that are limited in number and grouped by category (such as thymic values), attributed by an observing subject to an object being observed (for an examination of the ontological and veridictory categories, see the chapters on dialogics and the veridictory square).

When we map out the opposition euphoria/dysphoria, known as the thymic category, onto a semiotic square (see the chapter on the semiotic square), we obtain several thymic values, the main ones being: euphoria (positive), dysphoria (negative), phoria (positive and negative – ambivalence) and aphoria (neither positive nor negative – indifference) (Courtés, 1991, p. 160).

#### NOTE: THE SEMIOTIC SQUARE AND THYMIC VALUES

Besides the four basic categories (positions 1, 2, 5 and 6), the traditional semiotic square predicts some other possibilities (positions 3, 4, 7 and 8 on the square). We have also added the metaterms in between the contradictory elements (positions 9 and 10) on the semiotic square. However, these six values seem to be less useful than the first four.

Phoria and aphoria are compound values (the "metaterms" of the semiotic square) made up of two simple values, and require some explanation. If we manipulate our conception of time and how we identify the object being evaluated, a simple value can turn into a compound value.

For example, if you like spinach one day, hate it the next day, and like it again the following day, one might consider this as:

(1) a transition from euphoria to dysphoria back to euphoria

if the reference time is a day, or

(2) phoria,

(3) phoria, but with euphoria being dominant,

(4) euphoria, by ignoring the minority judgment,

(5) attenuated euphoria, if the dysphoria is figured into the intensity of the euphoria, and so on

if the reference time is the overall three-day period.

Now we will change how the object is defined: If you like apple pie, and at the same time you hate cream pie, one can consider this as (1) two units, each with a value assigned to it, or (2) a single unit, pie in general (a type), with a compound valued (complex term) assigned to it. To take another example from the Christian philosophies, death is either (1) positive overall, or (2) negative in one aspect (such as the ending, often in suffering, of temporal life) and positive in another (the beginning of spiritual existence, which is positive for the righteous).

### 1.4 THYMIC INTENSITY

Unlike other evaluations, such as veridictory ones (true/false), thymic evaluations are often quantified. Then they no longer belong to categorial logic (where something is either euphoric or not), but to incremental logic (where something is a little bit euphoric<sup>2</sup>). We will represent intensity by words or expressions (or even numbers, like 40%, etc.). These may be: descriptive (*low, normal, high*, for instance) or prescriptive (*not enough, enough, too much*, for instance); comparative or relative (*less than, as much as, more than*); or superlative (*least, most*). Within one text, there is nothing to prevent a single subject making use of categorial values at times, and incremental values at other times: all the more so if two subjects are involved.

To give an example of intensity applied to a thymic value, consider the following quotation: "And I had no such defense as Parapine's total indifference" (Céline, 1983, p. 371). Note that a very high intensity is attributed to indifference or aphoria ("total indifference") in the context of "defense", which is not the same as an indifference to everything.

<sup>2</sup> Although "a little bit euphoric" seems paradoxical in everyday language (by definition, euphoria is a feeling of great intensity), this does not apply to its usage in semiotics, which is how we are using the term.

### 1.4.1 INTERACTIONS BETWEEN VALUE, INTENSITY AND QUANTITY

With our example of spinach, we pointed out that a succession of different values (euphoria, dysphoria, and euphoria in the example) can be equivalent to a single value marked with the appropriate intensity (attenuated euphoria in our example). This is how a change of perspective can be applied to one thymic evaluation. There are cases where a variation in intensity may bring about a change in value: If the intensity associated with a value is "excessive", it can turn into another value, especially an opposite value. An example of this phenomenon can be found in this verse by Alain Grandbois (in Mailhot and Nepveu, 1986, p. 180), where too much of a theoretically euphoric element causes a decidedly intense dysphoria: "There were those women who were too beautiful, their foreheads too embellished with rubies." This example helps us to address the issue of the possible impact of quantity – and not just intensity, strictly speaking – on the thymic values. "Too embellished with rubies" can be interpreted in quantitative terms: a few rubies are nice; but you can have too much of a good thing, as the popular wisdom goes.

The following diagram shows a scale of intensity/quantity divided into three sectors. As one moves to the right, the evaluated object's intensity/quantity increases from low to medium to high. This increase has two possible effects: either it does not change the value (cases 1 and 5) or it changes the value (the other cases). We will give some examples of the second possibility. Case 4 can be used to illustrate the law of the happy medium, which has been adopted by ancient scholars, the Buddha, the classicists (of every age), and the middle class: a little bit is good; too little or too much is not good. Case 8 is the opposite of this: what is good is excess, and moderation is dysphoric. One can no doubt find an illustration in Romanticism (considering how very torn it is between ascetic deprivation and debauchery).

*Values and the scale of intensity/quantity*

	intensity / quantity of evaluated object		
	—————→		
	low	medium	high
Case 1	+	+	+
Case 2	-	+	+
Case 3	+	+	-
Case 4	-	+	-
Case 5	-	-	-
Case 6	+	-	-
Case 7	-	-	+
Case 8	+	-	+

NOTE: OTHER INTERACTIONS BETWEEN VALUE AND INTENSITY

Thymic intensities are often used to create a hierarchical structure out of what would otherwise be just a straight inventory of evaluated objects, where, for instance, there would be no distinction between the euphoria experienced from a delicious food and the euphoria in the presence of a beloved being. When dealing with an ideology (in the more general sense of the word, not the meaning in Greimasian semiotics), the most strongly evaluated elements will correspond to the fundamental "values". Competing ideologies often evaluate the same objects, but with different values and/or intensities. For example, in a fairy tale, if the ogre and the knight both covet the Princess as their bride, the first one brutally kidnaps the maiden to make her his wife by force, whereas the second one will earn her hand (and the rest). The ogre overvalues the marriage, thymically speaking, at the expense of morality. Moreover, contrastive evaluation of a general opposition seems to apply to the specific oppositions included within the general opposition, through the use of the intensities. Consider the following three oppositions, which are very common in French-Canadian rural legend, in which the first term is euphoric and the second is dysphoric: spiritual world/temporal world, heaven/hell, countryside/city. Since the spiritual has primacy over the temporal in this textual genre, the four specific spaces are sequenced in the following way, from most euphoric to most dysphoric: /heaven/, /countryside/, /city/, /hell/ (for the complete analysis, see Hébert, 2000 a).

## 1.5 DECIDABLE/UNDECIDABLE VALUES AND INTENSITIES

Thymic values and their intensities may be decidable (if they can be determined: for a certain subject, a certain object is euphoric), undecidable (if they cannot be determined, as in a subject who tries to evaluate an object thymically, but cannot manage to give it a value) or undecided (namely, an object that has not (yet) been evaluated or is no longer being evaluated, such as a book that a literary critic has not yet read).

NOTE: THE SEMIOTIC SQUARE AND UNDECIDABLE / UNDECIDED ELEMENTS

With respect to the thymic square's basic opposition (euphoria/dysphoria), undecidable elements might appear to represent aphoria. But in fact, undecidability resides in a *marked* universal non-position: the object cannot be conclusively assigned to any position on the square. The undecided realm is an *unmarked* universal non-position: the subject has not (yet) attempted to assign the object to a position on the square. This logic also applies to undecidable and undecided intensities.

## 1.6 THYMIC EVALUATIONS AND TIME

### 1.6.1 SEQUENCES OF EVALUATIONS AND CHANGES IN EVALUATIONS

Sequences of different or repeated thymic evaluations occur in correlation with changes in temporal position, as do changes in the value or intensity of a single object (or a transformed object) as evaluated by a single subject (or a transformed subject). Modal values and intensities attributed to an object can appear (change from undecided to decided), be transformed (e.g., change from euphoric to dysphoric), or even disappear (e.g., go from decided to undecidable or even undecided). In other words, any evaluation (thymic or otherwise) and any element of this evaluation are associated with a temporal interval within which they are valid. We will give an example involving object and subject transformations: As a character ages (a transformed subject), he becomes indifferent (a change in value) to what pleased him when he was young; a status-seeking character may no longer want to marry a woman who has fallen into disgrace (a transformed object), whereas another character who is pure of heart will only want to marry her more (a change of intensity).

### 1.6.2 TIME IN THE STORY AND TACTICAL TIME

Thymic analysis, like our other analytical tools, can handle two fundamental kinds of time, and it is useful to distinguish between them: (1) the fictional time of the story, which is how the states and events of the story are sequenced; (2) what we call tactical time (from the Greek "*taktikhê*", "the art of ordering or arranging"), which is created by the sequencing of the "real" units of the semiotic act (words, syntagms, sentences, groups of sentences, etc.). These two kinds of time may or may not coincide (for instance, the second event in the story may be presented in the first sentence and the first event in the second sentence). Consider an example that shows the distinction between the two kinds of time: "When I was young, I liked the pink candies and hated the blue ones." Time as represented in the story consists of only one temporal position in which two evaluations occur, but tactical time puts them in succession.

### 1.6.3 TEMPORAL SEGMENTATION

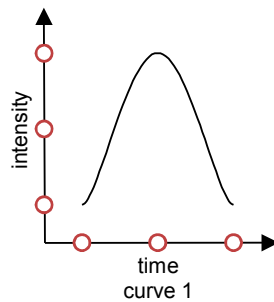
Temporal segmentation may be based on various criteria. In thymic analysis, the most pertinent criterion for demarcating temporal intervals is a change in one or more key thymic values (for instance, time interval T1 would last until a change in the thymic value initiates interval T2). Naturally, one can establish relations between this temporal segmentation and some other segmentation based on some other criterion, such as time in the usual sense (thymic interval T1 might last from Monday to Wednesday; T2 from Wednesday noon to Thursday evening), or actions (T1 might last from action 1 to the beginning of action 3; T2 from the middle of action 3 to action 7) or the scenes in a play, and so forth.

### 1.6.4 THYMIC RHYTHM

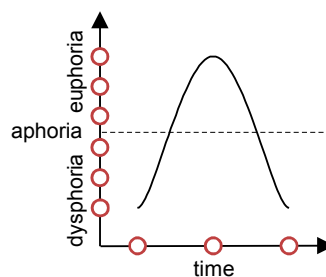
Any kind of the element may be used rhythmically. Rhythm is traditionally understood as the effect of an element's recurrence in a different temporal position. In the broad sense, thymic rhythm is defined by the recurrence of some thymic element: a value, an intensity, a subject, an object, etc. For example, the four nouns "Writer or hack, Thoroughbred or Percheron?" (Julien Gracq) create an alternating thymic rhythm (A, B, A, B): euphoric, dysphoric, euphoric, dysphoric.

### 1.6.5 TEMPORAL REPRESENTATION

As a way to represent variations in thymic intensity over time, we can use the curves of aesthetic euphoria presented in the chapter on the tensive model. If we place one of the intensities (low, medium or high) in each of the temporal positions (initial, intermediate and final) we obtain a typology of 27 curves. For example, the first curve of our typology, shown below, strings together a low intensity (beginning), a high intensity (middle) and another low intensity (end).



By splitting up the axis of intensity, we can describe the transition from euphoria to dysphoria as a function of time, as well as the variations in their respective intensities. The middle of the axis represents aphoria, or indifference, which is not quantified in this representation. Above that, we have euphoria, which increases in intensity as we go up the graph. Below that, we have dysphoria, which increases in intensity as we go down the graph. For instance, the curve below shows strong dysphoria (beginning) followed by strong euphoria, followed again by strong dysphoria.



We should point out that aphoria can vary in intensity. In *The Red and the Black*, Madame de Renal believes that Julien Sorel feels "passionate indifference" toward her (Stendhal, 1952, p. 344). Although this is not the only possible interpretation, one could see this as indifference of a strong intensity. In order to represent this intensity, we can transform the zone of aphoria from a straight line to a two-dimensional surface, as for euphoria and dysphoria. The closer we get to the center of the zone, the stronger the indifference would be.

## 1.7 THYMIC EVALUATION AND VERIDICTORY EVALUATION

### 1.7.1 ASSUMPTIVE EVALUATIONS AND REFERENCE EVALUATIONS

Whether stated explicitly or not, thymic evaluations are always marked for veridiction, that is, a status within the category true/false (see the chapters on dialogics and the veridictory square). For example, the thymic evaluation "Wolves like blood" is true, at least for its enunciator.

Note the difference between the veridictory status attributed to the thymic evaluation and the veridictory status that may be attributed to the object being evaluated. In the evaluation "Art appraisers love genuine Picassos", the object is marked for veridiction ("genuine"). A change in the veridictory status is often accompanied by a change in thymic value (and/or a change in its intensity): and in fact, art appraisers do not like counterfeit Picassos (especially when they appear in the inventory due to an error).

To return to the veridictory status attributed to the overall thymic evaluation, a reference evaluation is one that the text deems to be accurate, that is, its veridictory status agrees with what is. An assumptive evaluation is one that is subject to contradiction by the reference evaluation. For example, Paul thinks that Mary is great (assumptive evaluation), whereas Andy thinks she is obnoxious (assumptive evaluation); the narrator settles the question: she really is nice (reference evaluation). Paul is right (technically, because his assumptive evaluation corresponds to the reference evaluation) and Andy is wrong.

#### NOTE: THYMIC EVALUATION AND ONTOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Whether explicitly stated or not, thymic evaluations are always marked for ontology, that is, a status with respect to the actual (real) / counterfactual (unreal or impossible) / possible realms. Unless otherwise stated, the ontological status is "real". To use a previous example, as a thymic evaluation, "Wolves like blood" is true and real. An ontological status may also apply to the object being evaluated. *One in the hand is worth two in the bush*, goes the saying, to illustrate

that it is better to have one object in actuality than two of the same object, but only as a possibility. The sentence for an attempted murder is less harsh than that for a successful, real murder. For more details on ontological status, see the chapter on dialogics. These modal categories play an important role in describing actions. Indeed, often an action is undertaken from weighing up the possible desirable and undesirable consequences of accomplishing or not accomplishing it. The possible consequences may or may not turn into real ones. For an explanation of the semiotic concepts of manipulation (the actional component in which the possible consequences are evaluated) and retribution (where the consequences are manifested, theoretically as foreseen during the manipulation stage), refer to the chapter on the canonical narrative schema.

### **1.7.2 EVALUATIVE CONFLICT AND CONSENSUS**

Whether or not the protagonists or the observers are aware of them, conflict and consensus over thymic and/or veridictory evaluations tend to follow three phases: appearance, maintenance and resolution. The possibility of an evaluative conflict arises only when there is a logic of mutual exclusion rather than a logic of complementarity between different evaluations. Exclusive logic derives from absolutism: it chooses one and only one evaluation as the right one. Complementary logic derives from relativism: it gives equal credence to several evaluations, or even all of them (absolute relativism).

The little story that we gave as an example above is based on exclusive logic, in that the two contradictory opinions cannot be true at the same time. In some other case, the contradictory thymic evaluations might be true simultaneously, in which case Mary could be really great with Paul and really obnoxious with Andy, for instance. In another example of contradictory evaluations coexisting, one character thinks that apple pie is euphoric, while another thinks it is dysphoric, without any reference evaluation to settle the issue. This situation illustrates the popular saying that we all have our likes and dislikes – we would say our thymic evaluations. ("There is no accounting for taste", as they say.)

For each subject involved, an evaluative conflict moves toward consensus only if there is a total or partial conversion, which may be unilateral or reciprocal (or ironically, total and reciprocal on occasion, when both parties change their minds) or if there is a movement toward complementary logic. A "conversion" may or may not be preceded by doubt, introducing the ontological category of possibility, during which the evaluation and the counter-evaluation are set in opposition, or by verification, whose purpose is to select one evaluation according to specific tests and criteria.

### **1.7.3 THE SUBJECT OF VERIDICTORY EVALUATION AND THE SUBJECT OF THYMIC EVALUATION**

In some cases the subject of the veridictory evaluation and the subject of the thymic evaluation are not the same. For example: If Paul (the subject of the veridictory evaluation) says that Mary (the subject of the thymic evaluation) loves chocolate, then "Mary loves chocolate" is a proposition that Paul considers to be true, although he could be right or wrong.

### **1.7.4 SET RELATIONS AND MEREOLOGICAL RELATIONS**

Set relations, that is, relations established within a class (defined by a type, or model) and the elements that they include (the tokens or manifestations of the type) may have an impact on thymic description. The same goes for mereological relations, that is, relations that exist between a whole and its parts.

For example: "He usually prefers blondes, but he really likes that brunette". The first evaluation applies to blonde women as a class (and to the type it defines, the generic blonde woman). The second one applies to an element in the class of brunette women, one specific brunette (who is a token of the type, the generic brunette). In "Americans prefer blondes", the evaluating subject is itself a class (which defines a type: the generic or typical American). To take another kind of example, in *The Little Prince* by Saint-Exupéry, the Prince's rose gets an overall evaluation as a whole and individual evaluations for its parts. As a whole, the rose is evaluated positively by the Little Prince, even though he evaluates some of its physical parts (the thorns) and its psychological parts (its character) negatively.

The overall judgment is made by taking the individual judgments into account, but this is not necessarily a matter of simply "adding up"; there may be a hierarchy assigning different weights to different evaluations. In a case where different values are attributed to the parts, the overall value can be compound (such as phoria) or be resolved into a simple value, possibly by weighting the intensities (the object would be judged as slightly positive, for instance, if there were one dysphoric part that attenuated the positive value of another part without entirely overwhelming it).

### **1.7.5 SUBJECTS AND AGENTS OF COMMUNICATION**

In a text, and *mutatis mutandis* in other kinds of semiotic acts, we will single out the following agents of production and reception:

- (1) the empirical author (the real author),
- (2) the invented or implied author (the impression that the empirical or implied reader receives of the empirical or implied author from the text),
- (3) the narrator (on various levels, if there are embedded narratives),
- (4) the narratee (on various levels, if there are embedded narratives),
- (5) the invented or implied reader (the image that the empirical or implied author and/or the text conveys of its average, marginal or model (ideal) reader, as he/she takes form in the text), and
- (6) the empirical reader (the real reader).

These agents correspond to semiotic roles that are combinable in various ways: For instance, an empirical author is also his own first (and sometimes most critical) empirical reader.

NOTE: THEMATIZED AND NON-THEMATIZED AGENTS

Any of these agents may be given a thematized, fictive status. In a text, one might find an invented, thematized image of the thematized reader to whom a thematized text is addressed. For example, in *The Red and the Black*, by the content and the style of Madame Renal's letter to the jury in the trial of Julien Sorel, one can discern the image that she (as a textual function, not as a pseudo-person) has constructed of them.

Thymic disagreements may emerge between evaluations originating from different agents. For example, in *A Modest Proposal Concerning the Children of Poor People in Ireland ...* by Jonathan Swift, although the narrator proposes eating the babies of indigent people as a way of fighting poverty and famine, as long as one grasps the caustic irony of this text, one understands that the real author does not find this idea euphoric. Advertising, unfortunately, also provides some excellent examples of discord in promotional texts, where the narrator raves about the advantages of a product that the empirical author knows is mediocre. Conversely, evaluations originating from different agents can be congruent. When Roquentin, the narrator-character in Sartre's *Nausea* exclaims: "I am going to read *Eugénie Grandet*. It isn't that I get any great pleasure out of it: but I have to do something" (1964, p. 47), the direct reference to pleasure (or rather, the lack thereof) is to a thematized pleasure, a pleasure on paper, belonging to Roquentin, but one can also attribute this thymic judgment to the implied author, and, unless we are mistaken, to Sartre himself, who sought in Balzac a foil for the modern novel, and whose displeasure upon reading this particular work may have been real.

### 1.7.6 SOURCE AND RELAY SUBJECTS, DIALECT/SOCIOLECT/IDIOLECT

To enhance our analysis of the agreement / lack of agreement between the thymic evaluations of various agents of communication, it can be helpful to distinguish between the subject to whom the thymic evaluation is ascribed and the subject from which the evaluation actually originates. The first is the relay subject; the second is the source subject.

The importance of this distinction becomes clear when we add the following subjects to our typology of agents of communication. According to Rastier (1994, pp. 222 and 224 and 1997, pp. 27-29), the subjects associated implicitly with the three general systems governing any text are: the dialect (the language system), the sociolect (the particular usage of a dialect specific to a differentiated social practice with its own discourse organized through genres), and the idiolect (a given author's distinct usage of a language and a sociolect). For example, the dysphoric evaluations of Baudelaire's narrators concerning *spleen*, women (real ones, at least) and nature actually come from the dialect, the sociolect and the idiolect, respectively. *Spleen* is a pejorative word by definition in French; the disparagement of real women (as distinguished from ideal, or idealized women) was quite common at the time, especially in literary discourse; and the devaluing of nature is more unique. In the first two evaluations, the narrator is a relay evaluator for the source evaluators implicitly associated with the dialect and the sociolect. However, there is a theoretical question concerning the idiolectal subject: is it the same as the implied author? We do not think so. The implied author, at least by our definition, is developed within a single text, whereas the subject of the idiolect can be, and generally is, developed through a group of texts by the same author. Moreover, the idiolect deals solely with patterns of writing (themes, clichés, etc.), whereas the implied author incorporates inferences about the physical appearance and the psychology of the text's author.

Let us conclude by mentioning that one can integrate other kinds of source subjects, such as those associated with a specific social group or a specific culture. In the statement "I like hamburgers", professed by someone from North America, one can detect the presence of a source subject tied to a specific culture: mainstream North America.

## 1.8 COMMON THYMIC CONFIGURATIONS

A thymic configuration includes at least two related thymic evaluations, which may or may not fall within the same temporal interval. For example, a minimal thymic conflict or consensus is triangular, and it entails two subjects with a single evaluated object at a single position in time.

The following table presents some of the more common thymic configurations. Below it is a legend giving the thymic elements involved<sup>3</sup>. The examples in the table are of many kinds: phrases, quotations and references to literary texts. The table makes it easy to show dialogic configurations that are attested, or simply foreseeable.

*Common thymic configurations*

	ABSTRACT FORMULATION	TEXTUAL EXAMPLE	EVALUATION 1			EVALUATION 2		
			SUBJECT	VALUE	OBJECT	OBJECT	VALUE	SUBJECT
1	For a single evaluated object, the subject changes his evaluation (here the subject has been changed)	Swann, who no longer loves Odette (Proust)	S	+	O	O	± or -	S'
2	The same object evaluated differently depending on a variable of the context, in this case, the place	<i>No man is a prophet in his own land</i>	S1	+	O	O	- or ±	S2
3	The classic conflict between two subjects	<i>One person's misfortune is another's gain, "a bad good deed" (Balzac, Cousin Bette)</i>	S1	+	O	O	-	S2
4	The classic agreement	The cheese, for the fox and the crow (La Fontaine)	S1	+	O	O	+	S2
5	Identical intensities for opposite evaluations, creating consensus about the significance of the evaluated object	Laertes hates Hamlet – before his final repentance – for causing the death of his father and sister as much as Ophelia loves him (Shakespeare)	S1	+↑	O	O	-↑	S2
6	The object changes, but not its value	Colin still loves Chloé, even in her most wretched state (Vian, <i>L'écume des jours</i> )	S	+	O	O'	+	S
7	The object changes, and is evaluated differently	"You're letting yourself go" (Charles Aznavour)	S	+	O	O'	-	S
8	The object takes a different form due to a change in ontological-veridictory status, and the thymic value changes as a result	The falsely pious Tartufe, unmasked (Molière)	S	+	O	O'	-	S
9	Ambivalence: opposing values attributed simultaneously by a single subject	"For his one source of happiness on this Earth / He found in his tears" (Le Gascon, anonymous French-Canadian patriot). "In this world we spend our time killing or adoring, or both together. "I hate you! I adore you!" (Céline	S	±	O			
10	The objects are evaluated identically (as slightly euphoric), and are therefore completely interchangeable in this respect	<i>Trade a dollar for four quarters (Québec) or It's six of one and half a dozen of the other</i>	S	+↓	O1	O2	+↓	S
11	The value of the whole does not match the value of a specific part	The rose and its thorns in <i>The Little Prince</i> (Saint-Exupéry)	S	+	WO	pO	-	S
12	A type (subject) evaluates another type (object) (here, according to the enunciator)	Men prefer blonds	St	+↑	Ot			
13	A class is devalued, but an element of the class is valued	The kind parish priest finds favor with the "fanatical anticlerics" in " <i>La messe au pendu</i> [Mass for a hanged man]" (songwriter Georges Brassens)	S	-	Ot	Oo	+	S
14	Neutral value (ontological status in this example: possible)	"I'll take to the open sea neither sad nor happy, like an animal, with no idea of what I might have lost" (trans. from <i>Tit-Coq</i> by playwright Gratien Gélinas)	S	±	O			

<sup>3</sup> Some useful thymic factors appear in the legend, although they are not included in the table. We can make endless lists of possible thymic configurations if we so desire. Gaudreault (1996, p. 367), for instance, proposes the following configurations of values: "an example of paired values, where one value exists only because of the other; an example of a string of increasing values, where an initial low value leaves room for larger and larger successive values; and finally, some examples of indirect values, where certain beings take on a value for a specific being only through the intervention of one or more beings."



## LEGEND:

### AGENTS

S: evaluating subject  
O: object being evaluated

### THYMIC VALUES

+: euphoria (positive)  
-: dysphoria (negative)  
±: phoria (positive and negative)  
+ -: phoria, with the positive dominant  
- +: phoria, with the negative dominant  
¬±: aphoria (neither positive nor negative)  
#: undecidable  
∅: undecided (not evaluated)

### VALUE INTENSITIES

↓: low intensity (for example: O+↓)  
↑: high intensity (for example: O- ↑)

### MEREOTOLOGICAL AND SET RELATIONS

W: whole (for example: WO or WS) (such as the rose as a whole)  
p: part (ex: O2p1 = object 2 part 1) (such as the thorns as a part of the rose)  
t: type or class (ex: Ot or St) (such as perfumes in general, men in general)  
o: token or occurrence within a class (ex: Ot1o2 = type 1 token 2) (for instance, this specific perfume, this specific man)

### THYMIC PROCESSES

→ transformation (ex : O1 → O1')  
' : transformed element (ex: O' or S')

## 2. APPLICATION: "THE DOG AND THE PERFUME" BY CHARLES BAUDELAIRE

\* \* \*

The Dog and the Perfume  
Baudelaire, *The Parisian Prowler*

"– My good dog, my handsome dog, my dear poochie-woochie, come sit by me. Come here and breathe this excellent perfume purchased of the best parfumeur in town."

And the dog, wagging its tail, a sign, I believe, among those poor creatures corresponding with the laugh or the smile, he steps up and lays his damp nose curiously beside the open bottle of perfume; then, shrinking suddenly with fright, he bays at me. This is a reproach.

"– Ah! miserable dog, if I had offered you a sack of dung you would have sniffed it with delight, and probably eaten it. Thus, you, unworthy companion of my sorry life, in this you resemble the public, to whom one must never offer delicate perfumes – these will just exasperate them. For them, only the most meticulously selected rubbish." (Adapted from K. Dixon's translation, 6/98)

\* \* \*

In this text by Baudelaire, the narrator, *I*, seeks to have his taste confirmed by that member of the animal kingdom who, like himself, has the ability to exercise great olfactory skill. Indeed, the best scent goes with the best perfume in town, meaning the perfume that can give the most pleasure. The wagging tail – associated with the human smile<sup>4</sup> – indicates that the dog evaluates the compliments, his master's call and/or the prospect before him positively. So the dog is "happy". The cognitive gratification and the compliments made to the dog are aimed at inducing him to evaluate the perfume positively. When the dog perceives that he has been completely misled by his master, his anticipated pleasure is transformed into displeasure and he communicates his anger to the master, which is a form of punishment. Disappointed, the master admonishes the dog in return, and brings up a hypothetical scenario in which the dog would evaluate dung positively – which is only too likely. The "rubbish" also takes on a metaphorical sense by suggesting adulterated art (art with a small *a*), which the general public favors (cf. the society that "revels in excrement" in *Mon cœur mis à nu* (Baudelaire, 1975, p. 698)). The narrator is associated by homology (Art is to art as the narrator is to the public) with those who appreciate fine perfumes and true poetry. Since Baudelaire's narrators often correspond to an implied author (as distinguished from the historical Baudelaire), we will narrow down art in this context to literature or even poetry. *I* represents (in a sort of synesthesia) the counterpart of the great poet Baudelaire in the matter of odors, or the best parfumeur.

The following table shows the primary thymic evaluations in Baudelaire's text, whether directly expressed or inferable (deducible). An evaluated object that is capitalized (except for *I*) represents the element most highly valued by the narrator within a given class of elements, whereas the word *standard* designates a type associated with a class. For example, we distinguish between *perfume* (good or appalling), *Perfume* (excellent) and *standard perfume* (perfumes in general).

The reference thymic evaluations are the assumptive evaluations made by *I*. One can ascertain the adequacy of evaluations by other subjects by comparing them with the reference evaluations. (For example, in this case, the dog is wrong to dislike the perfume and *I* assumes – and no one contradicts him – that the dog likes excrement.) To avoid cluttering up the table, we chose to use the opposition euphoria/dysphoria (+/-) rather than showing differences in intensity or aphoria. For additional analysis, read the study on the same text in the chapter on narrative programs.

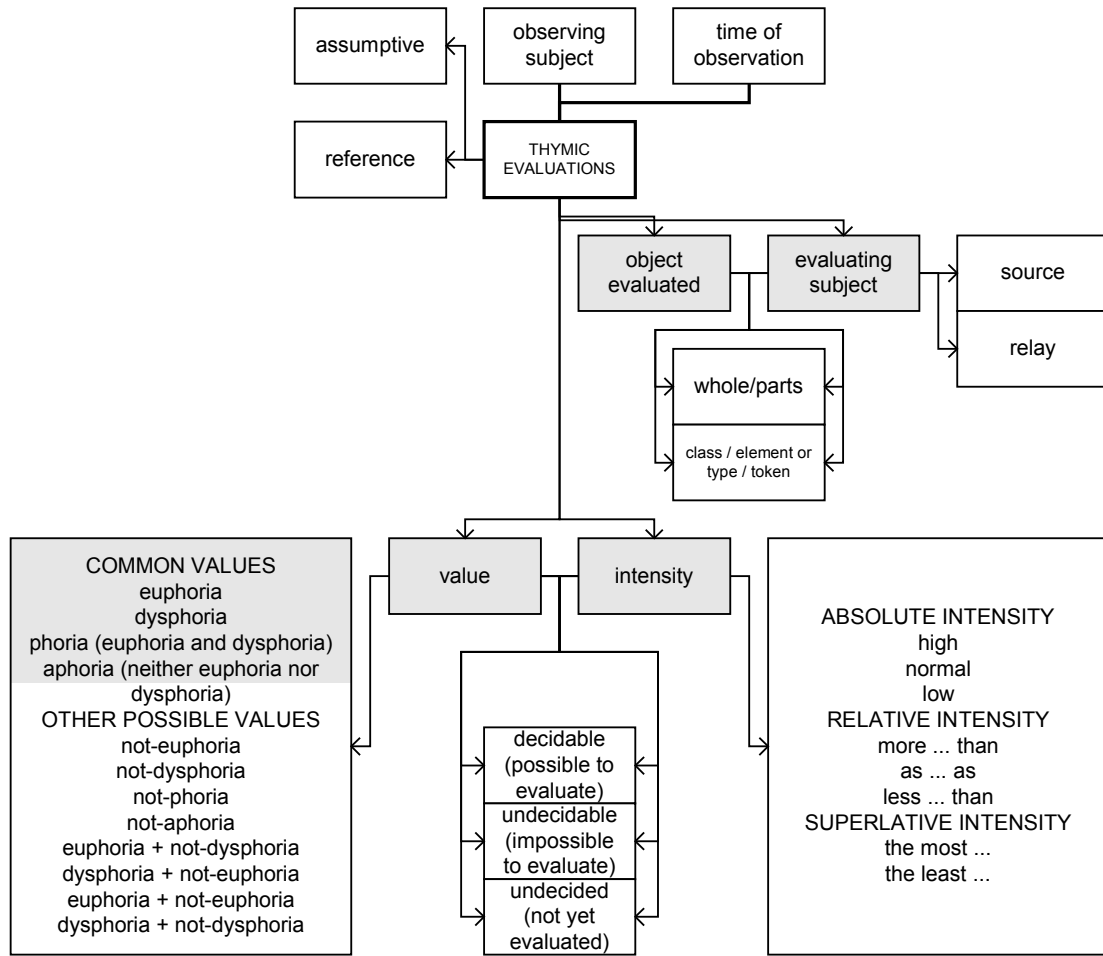
<sup>4</sup> This may be a *topos*, see Hugo: "A dog's smile is in its tail" (Claude Gagnière, *Entre guillemets: petit dictionnaire de citations*, Paris: Robert Laffont, 1996, 392 p.).

## Thymic analysis of "The Dog and the Perfume"

No	SUBJECT	OBJECT	THYMIC VALUE	THYMIC VALUE time 2 (if different)	JUSTIFICATION, COMMENT
1	dog	Perfume	+	-	The object held out to the dog has a positive value for him initially, since he approaches with his tail wagging and lays his curious nose on the bottle.
2	dog	standard perfume	+	-	<i>I</i> is disappointed. The new belief is founded on a paragon ( <i>excellent</i> ) perfume, and can be extended to include all perfumes.
3	dog	dung	+		hypothesis of <i>I</i> is unconfirmed, but plausible and uncontested. <i>I</i> seems to advance two hypotheses on the intensity of the evaluation, the second one being less certain: the dog likes the dung so much, he "would probably have eaten" it. Since he likes dung, the dog is inferior, even to the masses.
4	dog	<i>I</i>	+	-	The dog barks at his master.
5	<i>I</i>	standard perfume	+		As the opposite of dung, the perfume is valued. However, mediocre perfumes are devalued relative to excellent perfumes (Perfumes).
6	<i>I</i>	dung	-		
7	<i>I</i>	Poetry	+		
8	<i>I</i>	poetry	-		<i>Rubbish</i> in the figurative meaning.
9	<i>I</i>	poet	-		
10	<i>I</i>	Poet	+		
11	<i>I</i>	dog	+	-	First compliments, then reproaches. The initial evaluation may be qualified, since <i>I</i> describes dogs as "poor creatures", unless this is a retrospective evaluation made by the narrator from the final temporal perspective telling of his disappointment.
12	<i>I</i>	standard dog	-		"poor creatures"
13	<i>I</i>	standard parfumeur	+		Same reasoning as for standard perfume.
14	<i>I</i>	populace ( <i>public</i> )	-		
15	<i>I</i>	parfumeur	-		Relative to Parfumeur.
16	<i>I</i>	Parfumeur	+		
17	<i>I</i>	his life	-		"my sorry life" ..
18	populace	dung	-		<i>Rubbish</i> in the literal sense.
19	populace	poetry	+		Rubbish in the figurative sense. <i>Meticulously selected</i> indicates a ranking by modal intensity.
20	populace	Poetry	-		The counterpart of excellent perfumes.
21	populace	Poet ( <i>I</i> )	-		The <i>topos</i> (common place) of the misunderstood poet, by assimilation of narrator with author. Worse yet, the narrator is even betrayed by his companion.
22	populace	poet	+		
23	populace	Parfumeur	-		Implicitly, an excellent parfumeur could not be valued according to his true worth. The mediocre parfumeur is more highly valued.
24	populace	parfumeur	+		

### 3. SUMMARY DIAGRAM

Diagram summarizing thymic analysis



**LEGEND**

- 1. Vertical arrows: components (for ex., a thymic evaluation is composed of a subject, an object, a value and its intensity)
- 2. Horizontal arrows: classifications (for ex., values and intensities are classified as decidable, undecidable, and undecided)
- 3. Bold-face link with no arrow: other relation

The results of the analysis depend on the time and the observer whose point of view is being reported.