



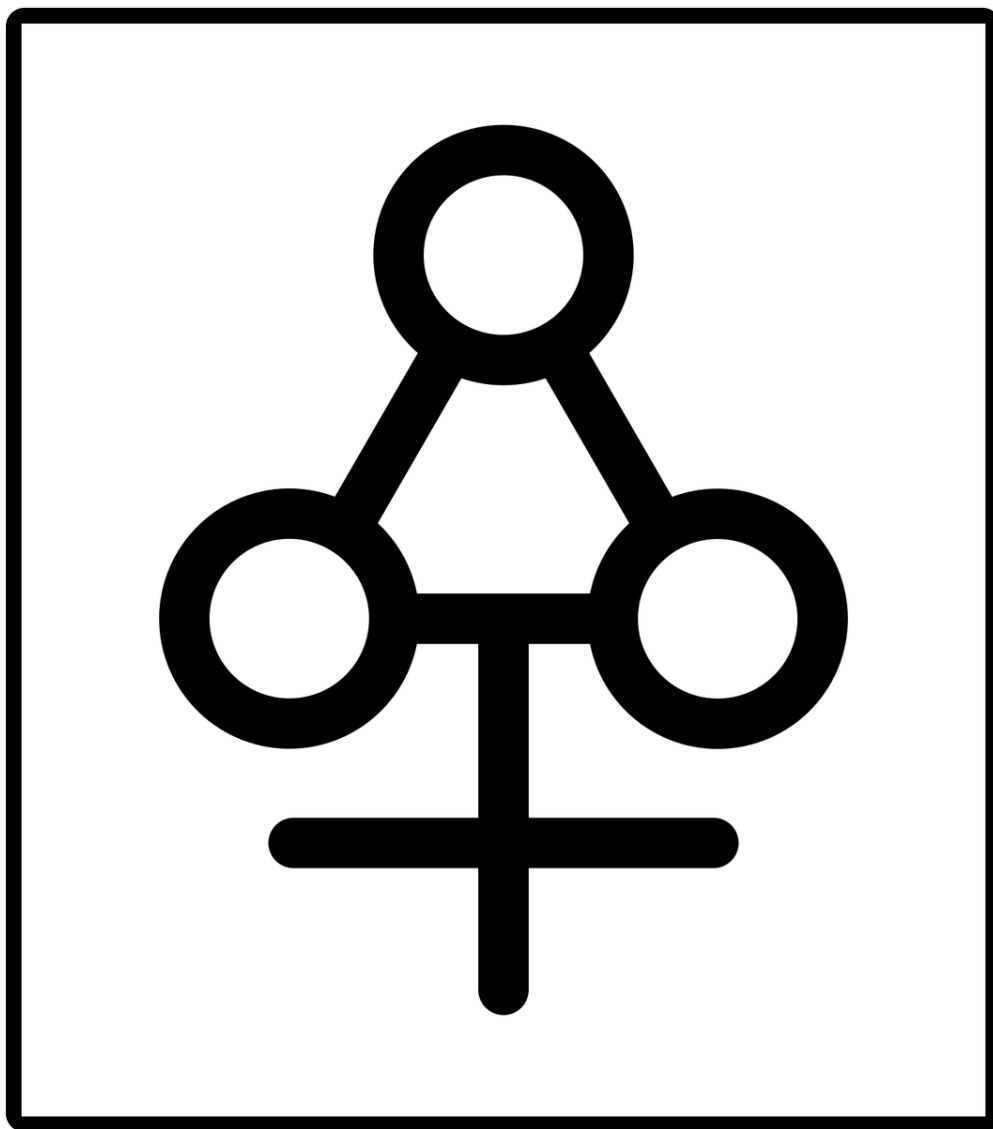
**Christophe Rigon / Soto<sup>2</sup>** - Scybernethician @ki\_cog

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[ Knowing - Cognitive Sciences - Trends and Perspectives, Varela, 1989 ]

### 1. Information

"Information, I would say, is like a modern phlogiston that would explain the structure of knowledge by relying on a pre-existing order of things. The keystone of cognition is precisely



The keystone of cognition is precisely its capacity to express meaning and regularities; information must appear not as an intrinsic order but as an emergent order of cognitive activities themselves.

If this is true, our naive understanding of the relationships we have with this world will change dramatically."

## 2. Science

"First, an epistemological remark. Each era of human history produces an imaginary structure through its daily social practices and language.

Science is a section of these social practices, and scientific theories of nature represent only one dimension of this imaginary structure. Modern historians and philosophers since Alexandre Koyré have clearly shown that scientific imagination is radically transformed

from one era to another, and that science is more of an epic than a linear progression. The human history of nature deserves to be told in more than one way."

## 3. Nature and Self-Knowledge

"What is generally less obvious is that this human history of nature corresponds to a history of theories of self-knowledge. Thus, Greek physics and the Socratic method, or Montaigne's essays and early French science, are an interdependent pair.

Reflecting each other, the self and nature evolve over time, like partners in a dance. The natural history of self-knowledge in the West remains to be written, but it is fair to say that there have always been precursors of what we now call cognitive science,

insofar as the human mind is the primary source and most accessible example of cognition and knowledge."

## 4. Socio-politics

"The second point is of a socio-political nature, as to anyone who has ever looked closely at a scientific discipline, cognitive science seemed to me to be a mosaic of more or less compatible perspectives, and not a homogeneous domain.

It is however clear that, as a social activity, science is crossed by currents of power that give some of its voices more authority than others. While Europe, the epicenter of science until the time of the great wars,

it is indisputable that this role now falls to the United States. In fact, most of my European and South American colleagues consider the United States as the reference for all that is quality, reputation and honor.

This is even more true in the fields of cognitive science, insofar as the modern cognitive revolution was largely influenced by the research carried out on the East Coast of the U.S.A. and more particularly at MIT.

This so-called cognitivist tradition has become the orthodoxy of the community (...). Reading the spokesmen of this tradition, it would seem:

a. that the computational approach is the only way to grasp cognitive issues,

and b. that nothing that precedes the advent of this technology deserves to be preserved,

even in a transformed way."

He then goes on to talk about the European and Japanese tradition.

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