

The Semiotics of Fortune-telling

Edna Aphek
Yishai Tobin

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THE SEMIOTICS OF FORTUNE-TELLING

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Edna Aphek and Yishai Tobin

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THE SEMIOTICS OF FORTUNE-TELLING

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This book is dedicated to our best friends

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Introduction

This book presents a semiotic analysis of the linguistic and extralinguistic elements of fortune-telling as part of a larger pragmatic-oriented theory of human communication. Although the particular spoken and literary texts we have employed here were primarily recorded and written in Hebrew, in Israel, similar (although not necessarily identical) linguistic and extralinguistic parallels can be found in other languages and cultures as well. Thus, the ideas and the texts presented here have both larger as well as language and culture-specific relevance.

It is not surprising, however, that we received the original inspiration and impetus for our study of fortune-telling in Israel. Nor did we have any difficulty carrying out our research here. According to Beit Halaxmi (1984:46):

It is possible to point to a tremendous rise in the range of all the forms of legitimate psychotherapy in the last ten years. Israel has reached the world record in the number of psychologists (registered in a professional psychological organization) *per capita*. This is in addition to the growth of unofficial psychotherapy in the form of various kinds of "Institutes", which are the results of the ideas of resourceful and profit-hungry promoters. In the last ten years hundreds of self-help books have appeared in Israel which allow the intelligent reader to solve many of his or her problems with no additional equipment or expenses. Psychological advice has become part of our mass culture with the appearance of a series of popular radio shows including one which is the only radio show in the world which deals with the interpretation of listener's dreams on the air waves. The appearance of a radio program which invites the public to phone in and receive an immediate psychological interpretation of their dreams is an original Israeli contribution to the "institutionalization" of psychology in our culture. Psychology is always, by nature, the sub-culture of a minority. In Israel there has been a rapid and abrupt growth of the "institutionalization" of psychology as a sub-culture, unlike in the United States and Europe where the process has been more gradual...

The growth of this phenomenon (i.e. the "institutionalizing" of this

therapeutic self-oriented sub-culture) is easily attested to by the mass media and the legitimacy they have given to this esoteric “*nonsense-ology*”. Even among the elite in Israeli society, one hears stories of visits to fortune-tellers and various diviners of all kinds. Visits by fortune-tellers and astrologists have become part of the menu served in kibbutzim. A well-known kibbutz in the middle of the Negev desert included in its cultural program a visit by a fortune-teller from the Tel-Aviv area in order that its members could also enjoy this aspect of urban life in Israel... Courses in astrology have become part of a series of self-help courses offered to the members of the National Labour Federation, presumably to help them understand themselves better as national labourers...

The Israel-Lebanon War was the subject of profound astrological analyses in the press, and there is some credence given to the idea that the course of the war was planned with the advice of a leading astrologer. One of the popular left-wing magazines offered its readers astrologically-based analyses of the political reasons for the war and the need to meet with leaders of the PLO, both of which, according to this magazine, should be guided by the most favorable positions of the planets in the solar constellation... It is also perceived as being natural in Israel that leading political leaders of both the left and the right frequently consult with astrologists, particularly before major national elections. (translation ours)

Thus, we found Israel to be a natural place to pursue our study of the semiotics and pragmatics of fortune-telling as a linguistic and extralinguistic system representative of an area of study that TenHouten and Kaplan (1973) refer to as being part of “the mirror image of science”.

The particular analysis presented here is based on the notion we call “dynamic relativism”. This concept of dynamic relativism in human communication rests on the view that:

- (1) The substance underlying various notions, often discussed in fortune-telling sessions (e.g. life versus death, good versus evil, etc.); should not be viewed statically but rather dynamically as part of a relative continuum.
- (2) Human communication, in general, is also dynamic and relative in the sense that it involves a subjective perception and expression on the part of different encoders and decoders. The participants in the act of communication are, *per force*, also constantly changing, and, subsequently, each individual has a specific contextually-dependent perception of what is being, perceived and communicated.
- (3) Therefore, every act of human communication involves the individual participant’s grasping of a complex, dynamic substance

according to his or her particular subjective contextual perception within the larger act of communication. Thus, both what is being communicated, as well as those directly and/or indirectly involved in the communication, are, individually and together, part of a larger multi-dimensional, transcendental, holistic process.

- (4) Furthermore, this concept of dynamic relativism is relevant not only to the substance being perceived and the participants involved, but to the very act of perception itself as an individualized autopoietic process. Both the perceptual encoding and decoding of a communication act are independent; acts of perception in their own right. The encoder perceives himself perceiving and this also becomes part of the chain of communication. The decoder then, in turn, continues this dynamic relative chain of perceptions from his particular point-of-view in the same autopoietic way of perceiving himself perceive as an integral part of the relative dynamic chain of human communication (Maturana and Varela 1980).

Thus, we may view the concept of dynamic relativism from the point-of-view of a multi-dimensional, holistic, transcendental process of human communication involving the autopoietic perception of dynamic and relative semantic substances by individual encoders and decoders. In this book we will examine this notion of dynamic relativism both in the specific framework of the spoken discourse of fortune-telling as well as in literary texts dealing with fortune-telling.

Through the analysis of these spoken and written texts, we will be applying this notion of dynamic relativism to essential questions dealing with:

- (i) the integral connection between language, thought and culture and the structure of language and persuasive communication in general;
- (ii) the structure of discourse in general, and the symbiotic intra- and interpersonal relationships between the participants of fortune-telling sessions in particular; and
- (iii) the interface of the linguistic, visual and textual semiotic systems employed in fortune-telling, (particularly cartomancy, chiromancy (palmistry), coffe and tea reading and astrology).

The very notion of dynamic relative thematic continua perceived and communicated through the sign system of language as part of a chain of the autopoietic contextualized perceptions of encoders and decoders, is, of course, a semiological process *par excellence*. By the same token, the fact that human communication rests upon the perception, creation, and expression of signs and sign systems of all kinds — linguistic and extralinguistic — makes the concept of dynamic relativism an interdisciplinary one. Furthermore, the fact that human communication is interdisciplinary, in turn, makes this book especially relevant to pragmatics as well as semiotics.

In Chapter 1 we present the fundamental linguistic and extralinguistic aspects of fortune-telling as a larger meta-semiotic system and define and describe some of the leading branches of fortune-telling from a semiological and pragmatic point-of-view.¹

Chapter 2 concentrates on the classification of different kinds of fortune-tellers according to specific characteristics of the language they employ. We then proceed to analyze the language of fortune-telling which we define as being a special instance of *omniscopus* (non-precise, non-specific, multi-purposeful) persuasive language.

In Chapter 3 we discuss the linguistic and extralinguistic means by which fortune-tellers build their individual images and attempt to establish credibility with their clients.

Chapter 4 compares and contrasts astrology and horoscopes as complex and simplex semiotic systems respectively.

In Chapter 5 we discuss the interface of the visual and the textual aspects of fortune-telling as exemplified by cartomancy or the reading of cards.²

Chapter 6 compares and contrasts real world fortune-telling sessions with three literary texts (an Old Testament story, the witches scenes in Macbeth, and a modern Israeli short story) containing fortune-telling episodes.³

In our conclusion, we attempt to summarize the basic elements related to persuasive communication (e.g., motivation, intention, imagination) which underlie man's need and search for the mystical, the occult and magic in general, and fortune-telling in particular.⁴

Our initial research in the language of fortune-telling was originally supported by the Ben-Gurion University of the Negev (1979-1980) and the Israel National Academy of Sciences (1980-1982) both of whose generous assistance is gratefully acknowledged here. We would also like to thank our

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Jerusalem and Be'er Sheva

Notes

1. Some of the classic pragmatic and semiotic works which influenced some of our research include: Austin (1962), Joos (1962), Lakoff and Johnson (1980), Levinson (1982), Ogden and Richards (1944), and Coward and Ellis (1977), Eschbach and Trabant (1983), Hervey (1982), Kronaszer (1952), Parret (1983), respectively.
2. This also includes taromancy: Papus (1971), Sadhu (1970), Waite (1959).
3. Some of the classic discourse-oriented literature which has influenced some of our work here and elsewhere (Tobin 1988a, 1989a) include: Coulthard (1977), van Dijk (1978), Dressler (1978), Grimes (1971), Harris (1952), Longacre (1983).
4. Some of the classic dream-magic-occult-symbol and language literature which influenced our research include: Freud (1958, 1976), Levy (1972), Thass-Thinemann (1973), Vygotsky (1962).

Chapter 1

Fortune-Telling as a Semiotic System

1. Introduction

In the past few years we have witnessed an upsurge in the interest of the general public in Israel, and, we believe, in other parts of the world as well, in various kinds of fortune-telling, faith healing and the occult. These fortune-tellers, be they astrologists, coffee or tea readers, palm readers, or cartomantists, uncover the inner world of the client and present him with information regarding his future. Professional or aptitude guidance and counselling by means of palm reading has become an accepted procedure. Visiting an astrologist has become more than merely a casual, entertaining experience. Horoscopes have become part of even the most prestigious newspapers. This phenomenon has steadily encompassed broad and diverse segments within the population of different educational and or professional backgrounds representing various ages and ethnic groups.

This upsurge in the interest in fortune-telling and the occult may be interpreted as a cultural and social symptom of a society questioning the roots of its technological pragmatism, a society in search of its personal and human identity. It might also be viewed in the framework of a society which has lost faith in science and medicine seeking another kind of knowledge and healing. It may also indicate an emphasis on the “ego” and the individual. In the particular case of Israeli society, we feel that this phenomenon in general may also represent a new era focussing on the individual ego as opposed to the more collective values which were formerly prevalent in this country. Whatever the reason may be, this search for emotional and physical healing is apparently on the rise:

According to Philip J. Hilts of the *International Herald Tribune*:

Voodoo healers, spirits, mediums, rootworkers charismatic faith healers — they have no licenses and many don't have a grade school education. But now some psychologists are beginning to accept them openly as colleagues. In New York, Miami, Sacramento, Calif., and other cities, mental health clinics have brought in spiritists, magic users, and other mystical folk healers to help treat patients and an increasing number of psychologists advocate using them on a regular basis.

Folk healing by magic and spirits is 'widespread and is in all ethnic groups, in rural areas as well as in inner cities, the great Midwest as well as the coasts,' says Vivian Garrison, a psychologist at the New Jersey Medical School who has worked with folk spiritists in New York and New Jersey clinics... Rough estimates put the number of folk healers of all sorts in the tens of thousands. About 80 per cent of all episodes of mental and physical illness in the United States are handled not by medical doctors, but with home remedies or folk cures regardless of whether they contradict medical knowledge, she said... The folk healing systems are not limited to minorities. A large number of spiritualist groups, with memberships ranging from a few thousand to tens of thousands, exist around the country.¹

(August 23, 1981, p. 3)

Perhaps the rise in fortune-telling and faith healing may be explained in the following way:

...Jerome Frank, a psychiatrist at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, said: "There is no question that psychotherapy and folk healing have features they share. They provide patients with acceptance... *They create hope.*" (*ibid.*, italics ours)

How does one reach these fortune-tellers? The professional "reader" may advertise in the newspaper, on public notice boards, place a professional sign or shingle where he works or lives, or rely on word of mouth recommendations by his clientele. The prospective client telephones to make an appointment. The session, i.e. the dyadic encounter between the fortune-teller and client takes place either in the home or the "office" of the fortune-teller. As in most human social encounters, language plays an important role in the fortune-teller/client dyad; the exact nature of the role of language was what we originally sought to explore.

The first step in our research was to locate the names and addresses of the fortune-tellers. This was primarily accomplished by scanning the newspaper advertisements as well as by word of mouth information we received from friends and acquaintances. We contacted the fortune-tellers and taperecorded the sessions. In those few sessions in which we were not permitted to tape, we transcribed as close to word for word accounts as possi-

ble of everything that was said as well as certain prosodic and extralinguistic details as well. In every case we took careful note to record the external effects that accompanied the session; i.e. a description of the scene, the ceremony and the personal appearance of the fortune-teller.

We visited some of the fortune-tellers ourselves and sent friends, relatives, students and acquaintances to the same ones and to others as well, in order to learn whether the fortune-tellers speak in the same way with all their clients or whether they change their approach and style according to the individual client. In every case, we, as well as the people we sent, presented ourselves as regular clients. We have more than fifty recordings of fortune-teller/client encounters. We have transcribed all the recorded sessions verbatim and in full carefully noting prosodic elements such as intonation, stress, pauses, hesitations and silences. Our analysis of the transcribed data have been carried out on the discourse level.

Our research over the past years into the language used by various Hebrew speaking practitioners of fortune-telling in general has led to certain insights regarding the necessity of studying this particular language, as well as language in general, within a broader theoretical socio- and ethnolinguistic framework than that provided by linguistic theory alone. We have found that the language of fortune-telling is only one aspect (albeit a major one) of a larger dyadic communication system which includes visual, textual, ceremonial, social, ethnographic, and perceptual semiotic systems. The language employed by fortune-tellers cannot be viewed as a single entity, and linguistic, socio- and ethnolinguistic variables have provided us with a means to classify and categorize the various kinds of fortune-tellers as well as to compare the various branches of fortune-telling.²

2. Fortune-telling as a meta-semiotic system

This chapter introduces our research on the unique function linguistic and extralinguistic sign systems play in the dyadic encounter between a fortune-teller and client.³

In general, we have found that fortune-telling can best be described as an interface of selected elements of persuasive and dyadic communication within the framework of visual, discourse and social semiotic systems.

In particular, we will compare and contrast various visual and textual semiotic aspects of five major branches of fortune-telling:

- (1) cartomancy,
- (2) palmistry,
- (3) coffee and/or tea reading,
- (4) astrology, and, to a lesser extent,
- (5) numerology.

We will specifically deal with these diverse branches of fortune-telling from the point of view of:

- (1) the extralinguistic elements of ceremony;
- (2) the different kinds of signs employed;
- (3) the general themes discussed; and
- (4) the discourse processes of plot building;

all of which are part and parcel of the typical fortune-teller/client dyadic encounter.

Thus, we will postulate and describe a larger generalized “meta-fortune-telling session” which we will discuss from the dynamic relativistic point-of-view of human communication.⁴

Each branch of fortune-telling represents a semiotic system. However the major branches of fortune-telling differ with regard to the signs themselves, the ceremony associated with them, and their specific connection to the client. Fortune-telling is performed through a variety of means employing signs which are both external and internal or integral to the client:

- (i) In cartomancy and coffee or tea reading, the signs themselves, i.e. the cards and the sediments of coffee and tea, are external to the client. They can only be directly related to him during the session through his shuffling or cutting the deck and/or by his drinking of the coffee and manoeuvring the cup.
- (ii) In astrology, numerology and palmistry, on the other hand, the cards are internal to and an integral part of the client’s history and identity. Astrology and numerology are related to the client’s date, place and time of birth and name, respectively, while the signs used in palm reading are part of the client’s body.

In Figure 1 we schematically present the various branches of fortune-telling according to the relationship between the sign and the client.

Every branch of fortune-telling and every encounter between a fortune-teller and client revolves around the individual signs and the larger sign systems related to the individual signs of the branches themselves, be they:

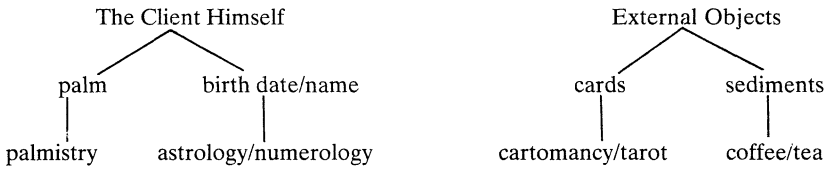


Figure 1. *The main branches of fortune-telling*

- (i) the picture, number, color or suit of the cards;
- (ii) the images or fragments of images found in the residue of coffee or tea;
- (iii) the planets and zodiac signs of the astrological map;
- (iv) the lines, shapes, contours and other attributes found on the client's palm; and/or:
- (v) the numbers used in numerology.

In Table 1 we will present a brief comparative table of the different branches of fortune-telling with regard to:

- (i) the kinds of signs comprising the system;
- (ii) whether these signs are permanent or change with regard to their interpretation; and
- (iii) the role played by the client in determining the signs in the fortune-teller/client session.

Each one of the branches of fortune-telling therefore may be viewed as a unique semiotic system with its own set of signs and sign systems. Fortune-telling in itself, however, may also be viewed as a larger super-system composed of the interface of different semiotic systems functioning simultaneously which include:

- (a) the linguistic and paralinguistic systems of language and verbal communication;
- (b) the specific sign systems of the individual branches outlined above;
- (c) the extralinguistic systems of ceremony and non-verbal communication.

This super-system of fortune-telling is presented schematically in Figure 2.

Cartomancy (or taromancy) is traditionally defined as a branch of divination based on the symbolic meanings attached to the individual cards of

Table 1. *A comparative table the different branches of fortune-telling*

Branch	Sign	Interpretation	Client Participation
Cartomancy	Permanent number color suit	Fixed, but open to polysemous meanings interpretations	shuffles and cuts the deck usually with left hand
Coffee/ Tea	Not-Permanent: vague and fragmentary images	According to the imagination of the reader	drinks and then turns the cup upside down
Palmistry	Permanent: line, shape, length, size depth, color	Fixed: but open to various interpretations	extends his palms, makes an imprint of palm on paper
Astrology	Permanent: color, shape length, direction	Fixed: but open to various interpretations	provides relevant information: date, place, time of birth...
Numerology	Permanent: number	Fixed: but open to various interpretations	provides relevant information: name and date of birth...

a tarot or modern deck of playing cards which are interpreted according to the subject or purpose of a reading and modified by their position and relation to each other, i.e. from their specific location in a "layout" or "spread". Cartomancy is used for personal divination, advice and a study of personality characteristics and events linked to the past, present and future (Martin 1979:31).

Cartomancy has been viewed as a simple semiotic system in which each card represents a sign composed of a symbol or form, i.e. the picture, number and/or the suit by Lekomceva and Uspenski (1962, 1977). These Russian semioticians distinguished the layout of the cards as a mechanism for generating sentences, viewing the cards as a lexicon. They even went

The fortune-teller/client encounter as a super-system

$$a + b + c$$

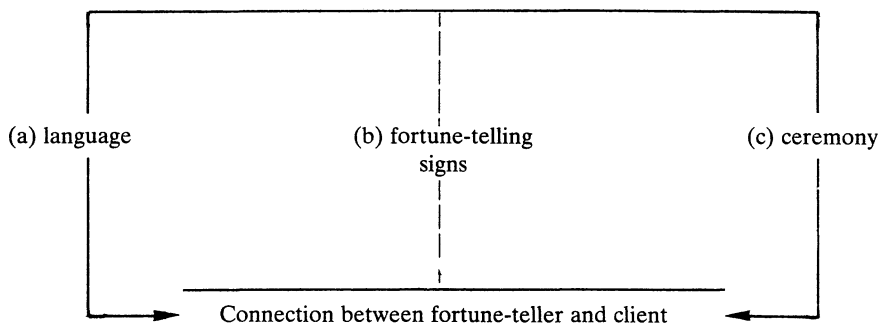


Figure 2. *The fortune-teller/client encounter as a super-system*

further and compared the language of cartomancy to natural languages concluding that it was most similar to a finite state grammar with a restricted semantics and simple syntax, typologically comparing it to an isolating language. We, on the other hand, believe that cartomancy and taromancy represent a complex semiotic system where the meaning part of the card symbol functioning as a sign is oftentimes an index of exhaustive, graded sometimes polysemic meanings which are part of a larger relative dynamic thematic continuum.

The meanings of the cards may be seen as exhaustively classifying a larger thematic continuum if we view the “divinatory” meanings attached to each card as representing most, if not all, the possible semantic, cultural and social attributes of an umbrella term or theme attributed to that particular card. For example, the tarot card *La Force-Strength* (Figure 3) under the rubric of “courage” comprises divinatory meanings which include: fortitude, energy, determination, magnanimity, resolution, strength to endure in spite of all obstacles, physical heroism, virility, confidence, intensity, defiance, fervor, zeal, triumph of love over hate. They cover the seemingly polaric elements of this thematic continuum in that when the tarot card is reversed its “reversed meanings” can be interpreted as an exhaustive polysemous index of the parallel meanings of the original divinatory meanings. The “reversed meanings” of *La Force* under the rubric of “weakness” include: impotency, pettiness, lack of faith, abuse of power, tyranny, over-



Figure 3. XI-*"La Force-Strength"*. (From Kaplan 1970[1980]: 37)

bearingness, discord succumbing to temptation.

The meanings of the regular playing cards can also be seen as comprising a larger relative dynamic thematic continuum as exemplified by the meanings attributed to following:

Ace of Hearts:	love, warmth, romantic and/or domestic happiness, good news;
Ace of Spades:	legal matters, a proposition in love or business;
Ace of Diamonds:	important letter — and/or ring;
Ace of Clubs:	success, particularly financial.

(Brent 1975:44)

Cartomancy has also been viewed as a discourse semiotic, i.e. a modular system creating a syntax or a plot (similar to the literary or folktale discussed by Propp 1970 or Hendricks 1973) which is based on the spread or layout of the cards which may also be affected by the elaborate shuffling or

cutting of the deck. The various discourse semiotic elements of cartomancy based on a simple syntax and plot building were discussed by Egorov (1964, 1977) and the discourse-plot — game-like elements of taromancy were discussed in Corti (1973).

We, on the other hand have also included in our work the notion of the separate and individual plot building of the members of the fortune-teller/client dyad and have extended the discourse plot to include both a visual semiotic system which revolves around the moment of reading: i.e. the line or direction followed by the eye in a particular spread, as well as a broader semiotic of color, since the color of the various suits adds to their meaning and interpretation.

The ceremony involved in the cartomantist/client encounter may also be influenced by the various layouts or spreads used. This and other extralinguistic factors may also depend on whether the client participates in the reading by cutting or shuffling the deck or by actually placing the cards in the spread. It should be rather obvious, however, that the interpretations of the card meanings we have outlined above, are related to the linguistic, extralinguistic, social, cultural and contextual aspects of the dyadic encounter between the cartomantist and client.

The regular cards used today (composed of 52 cards and a joker) are divided into ten numerical cards and four picture cards all of which are divided into two red (hearts and diamonds) and two black (spades and clubs) suits. It is usual, however, to reduce the number of cards to 32 (i.e. cards with the value of seven or higher including the ace) for the purpose of cartomancy.

There are various kinds of tarot decks available, all containing 78 cards, most of which are composed of the same or quite similar symbolic pictures or images. The meanings of the pictorial cards are basically universally acknowledged and accepted. The 78 card deck is further subdivided into 65 regular playing cards known as the lesser or minor arcana divided into four suits (cups, pentacles, swords and wands) which are the forerunners of the modern hearts, diamonds, spades and clubs. The four suits are often linked with astrology, alchemy, and the symbolic, Kabbalistic meanings associated with air, earth, fire, and water. Each of the tarot suits consists of 14 cards, ten numeric and four court cards, (page, knight, queen and king). The page and knight have been combined to form the jack of the modern deck. Tarot cards contain 22 pictorial cards known as the greater or major arcana (also known as trumps, triumphs and touts) which are num-

bered from I-XXII with an additional unnumbered or zero card called *le mat* (“the fool”), the forerunner of the modern joker.

According to Kaplan (1980:12):

Each of the major arcana Tarot cards carries a descriptive title and a symbolic picture. A combination of the card’s title and picture is supposed to call to mind a series of events or ideas to be interpreted. Generally, they represent the physical and spiritual forces affecting man such as strength, power, storms, death and religion. The lesser or minor arcana cards represent occupations, social position, as well as social status: *épées*, swords and spades, represent the aristocracy, upper class and executives; the *deniers*, coins and diamonds, represent the merchant and business class; the *batons* or clubs, represent the peasantry or lower income groups.

Palm reading or palmistry has two aspects:

- (1) Chirognomy - which attempts to analyze a client’s personality according to the physical character of the hands.
- (2) Chiromancy - which is concerned with the past present and future according to symbolic meanings attached to the various lines and markings of the inner surface (usually the palms) of the hands.

Figure 4 shows the general outline of the palm as it appears in palm reading with the basic signs and terminology employed by palm readers.

In palm reading the signs are an integral, i.e. a physical part of the client, taking the form of the lines, contours, shape, color, texture, and size of the wrist, palm, fingers and nails. There are different ceremonies and methods involved in the way the hand is presented to and studied by the palmist which also affects the interpretation of the signs. The ceremonies may range from a simple rubbing or feeling of the palm with or without “mechanical aids” such as paper clips, magnifying glasses, etc., to more elaborate ink or paint impressions of the palms, (in black, gold or various colors) placed on different kinds of paper.

The signs in palm reading have multiple meanings and may be considered as “umbrella terms” whose more specific interpretations are determined contextually from a macrotextual combination with other signs. The signs in palm reading also tend to exhaustively categorize larger relative and dynamic thematic continua.

In *coffee or tea reading* the signs are neither iconically fixed as in cartomancy, where they are printed or painted, nor are they integral, i.e. physi-

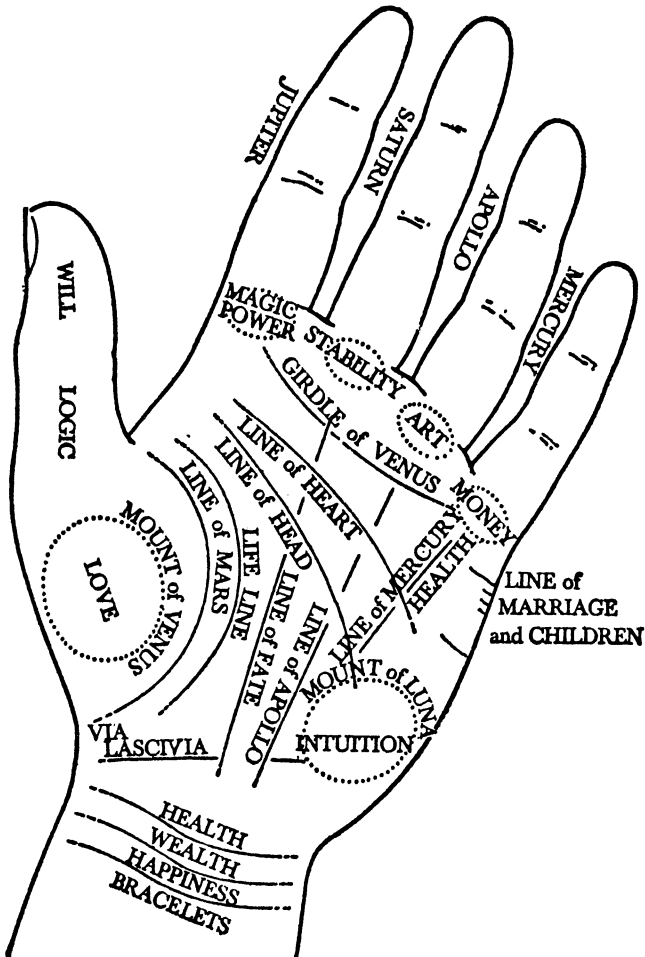


Figure 4. *The hand.* (From Rakoczi 1970:97)

cally part of the client, as in palmistry. In coffee or tea reading the symbols appear in the form of pictures or images, or fragments thereof, in the residue remaining in the cup. The reader chooses or fills in by a process of *pars pro toto* these pictures or images or fragments according to his imagination and will.

The meanings attached to these images form a complex semiotic system within which each meaning can be altered or modified by its position or

place within the cup, its proportion and size, the frequency of its appearance, as well as its connection and juxtaposition or adjacency to other forms which may appear. The ceremony in coffee or tea reading may differ with regard to the participation or role played by the client, i.e. whether he merely drinks or actually reverses the position of the cup to create the signs which are then chosen and determined by the reader.

According to one of the methods of reading coffee or tea, the handle of the cup represents the client. Therefore, signs that appear in proximity to the handle represent events which are close to the client and his home or family and vice-versa. According to another method, the way in which the reader holds the cup will determine the temporal *motif* of the reading: all the signs appearing to the right will represent the future and those to the left, will represent the past. According to another method, the cup is divided into three sections: the brim which represents the near future, the middle area which represents the distant future, while the bottom of the cup represents ill-fortune regardless of time. We would like to add, however, that in coffee and tea reading in particular the client does not see the signs remaining in the cup held by the fortune-teller.

These discourse semiotic elements, e.g. the determination of signs and fragments of signs, their multiple meanings with regard to their position or collocation or size, frequency, etc., may be illustrated in the following examples taken from Brent (1975:16-21):

- (1) The determining of a sign from fragmentary cues:



Baby - A small, imprecise amorphous sign: Many small worries threaten; alternatively there may be an addition to the family.

- (2) Change of meaning based on position of sign:



Anchor - Success awaits. Again, the position in the cup is important:

At the top of the cup: success in business, augmented by the support of a faithful love.

Towards the middle: a voyage ending in prosperity (increased if dots surround the symbol).

At the bottom: good fortune socially. If the symbol is, obscured - anticipate difficulties.

- (3) Polysemy based on position or attitude contributed to the sign:



Dog - Rely on friends. Pay attention to the position and attitude of the dog:
 Running: good news and happy meetings.
 Subdued: you may be slandering a friend.
 At the bottom of the cup: a friend is in trouble.

- (4) Polysemy based on the size of symbol:



Moon - Full: a love affair.
 In first quarter: new projects.
 In last quarter: a decline in fortune.
 Obscured: depression.
 Surrounded by dots: marriage for money.

- (5) The frequency of the appearance of the symbol affects its meaning:



Egg - Prosperity, success, fertility.
 The more eggs the better.

- (6) The sign's collocation with other signs affects its meaning:



Forked line - Decision must be taken.
 (Whether these will be successful or not depends upon the attendant symbols).

It may be said that the non-iconically fixed fragmentary nature of the symbols of coffee or tea reading allow the reader more room for exploiting his or her imagination through the process of *pars pro toto*.

Even the most cursory examination of the symbols of coffee and tea reading immediately call to mind the symbols used in the Rorschach test whose function is to stimulate the imagination as well (Figure 5).

The common visual denominator of the pictures of the Rorschach test and the images found in the residue of coffee or tea is primarily in their vagueness and non-discreteness, i.e. they have no clear contours or delineation. They resemble ink-blot or stains as opposed to demarcated drawings. The second major feature they share is that they both can be perceived as fragments of larger images which can be completed through the process of *pars pro toto* as may be seen in Figure 6 from a Rorschach test.

Thus, the interpreters of the fragmentary images, be they coffee or tea readers or the subjects of a Rorschach examination, must use his imagination to complete the image, give it content, construct its contours and

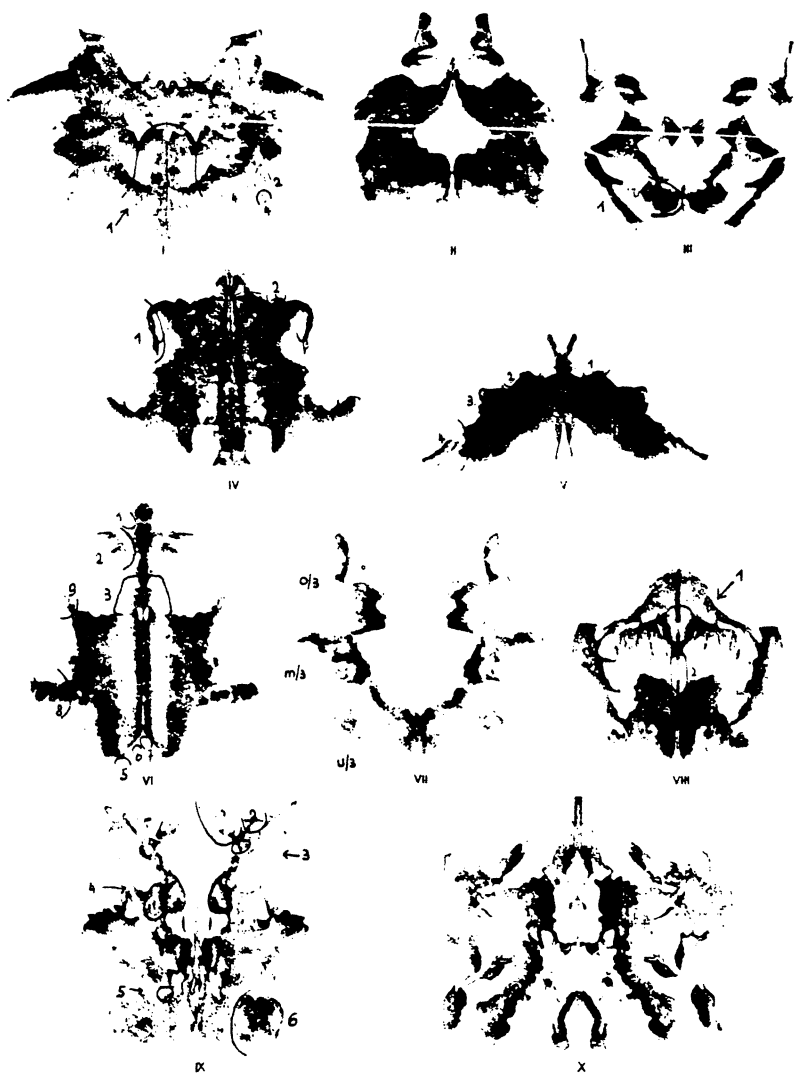


Figure 5. *H. Rorschach*, Psychodiagnostik

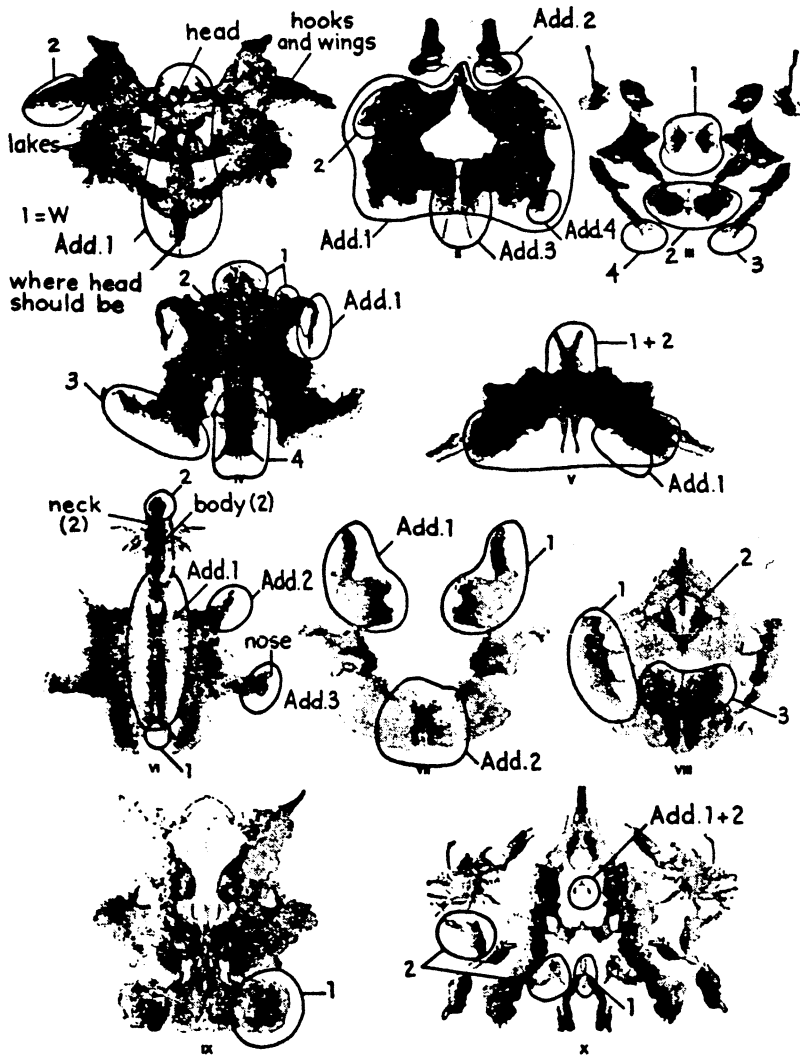


Figure 6. *B. Klopfer et al.*, *Developments in the Rorschach Technique II*, *New York*, 1970, p. 418.

delineate its delimitations. This is a semiological act of semiosis *par excellence* simultaneously involving both the creation of form and meaning.

In addition to the visual similarities of the coffee and tea reading signs in the fortune-teller/client encounter and the Rorschach test, there are also others: They both represent dyadic encounters between a “professional” (fortune-teller or psychologist/counsellor) and a “client” (patient/subject). Both encounters comprise two major activities: the postulation and creation of a completed form and a meaningful interpretation to a fragmentary image.

There are also some very basic differences between these two dyadic encounters as well: the fortune-teller/client encounter is carried out face-to-face and a larger text is created by the coffee or tea reader who is also the interpreter of the signs. In the Rorschach test, on the other hand, the subject may be seated with his back towards the examiner and therefore there may not be any eye-contact or conversation between them at all (Back 1944:2). Each picture in the Rorschach test is an independent context-free entity which is interpreted on a one-to-one basis. Thus, the Rorschach examination might be likened to the construction of a lexicon while the fortune-teller/client encounter serves to generate larger texts.

Both the Rorschach examination and the coffee or tea reading session (as well as all fortune-teller/client encounters in general) share one fundamental assumption: all human beings have a reservoir of memory and imagination based on their physical and social experience which can be stimulated visually. This may explain how fortune-tellers in general and coffee or tea readers in particular throughout the world are able to use the same means and processes to tell fortunes and describe the personality, character and emotional state of a client.

Astrology may be defined in the following way:

A form of divination which might be defined as the calculation, schematic representation and interpretation of the pattern of the solar system in the zodiak as ‘viewed’ from, and related to, a specific place on earth at a given point in time. The sole requirements for the erection of a full astrological chart are the date, time and place of the event for which the chart is to be erected. From the date the astrologer is able to calculate the position of the planets (a term which is used loosely in astrology to include the sun and the moon as well as the planets proper) in the zodiak by consulting an ephemeris which lists their positions day by day. Knowledge of the time allows him to refine allows him to refine his calculation in respect of the faster-moving planets; while date, time and place together allow him to

calculate the degree of the zodiak rising on the eastern horizon (→ ascendant) from a table of houses. This information is the horoscope (although the term is now used in a much wider sense) which is then transferred on to a chart somewhat resembling a wheel in which the hub represents the earth, the outer rim the zodiak and the spokes (twelve in number) the boundaries of the twelve houses.

The work to this stage, although time-consuming, is relatively simple and provides a schematic representation of the pattern of the solar system at a given moment which must be then interpreted. Interpretation is a much more complex undertaking but requires no extra sensory powers and can be learned by anyone who is prepared to devote time and effort to it. Stated in very simple terms, interpretation requires knowledge of:

- (1) the principles, urges, emotions, etc., symbolically associated with each planet.
- (2) The way in which these are conditioned by the positions they occupy in the zodiak.
- (3) The effect of the specific angular relationships (aspects) which exist between planets in the chart and thus modify their basic meanings.
- (4) The areas of personality or life most likely to be affected by 1-3 above through their relationship to the twelve houses of the chart.

(Martin 1979:23)

An example of an astrological chart is found in Figure 7.

We have limited our study to an analysis of dyadic encounters between predictive astrologers and their clients in particular.⁵ The following is Martin's definition of *predictive astrology*:

Drawing conclusions about the future of a subject (often a person) of an astrological chart by consideration of the current planetary positions and their relationship to the basic positions in the chart and also by symbolic means. Predictive astrology forms the basis of the only type of astrology with which most people are familiar, namely the 'stars' features in newspapers and magazines. It is often proved to be inexact but this is not necessarily through its indications but rather through its over-interpretation; for while it may be possible to distinguish certain general trends (e.g. periods of expansion or limitation, periods of high or low vitality) the way these trends will manifest themselves in a particular life is often guesswork, since all the circumstances of the subject can seldom be known in sufficient detail for a studied assessment to be made.

(Martin 1979:97)

Lastly, *numerology* the last branch of fortune-telling dealt with in Table 1, and one which is relevant to the sub-system of numbers in cartomancy, has been defined in the following way:

הסופס לחאור אסטרוגראפיק ערוב ביד

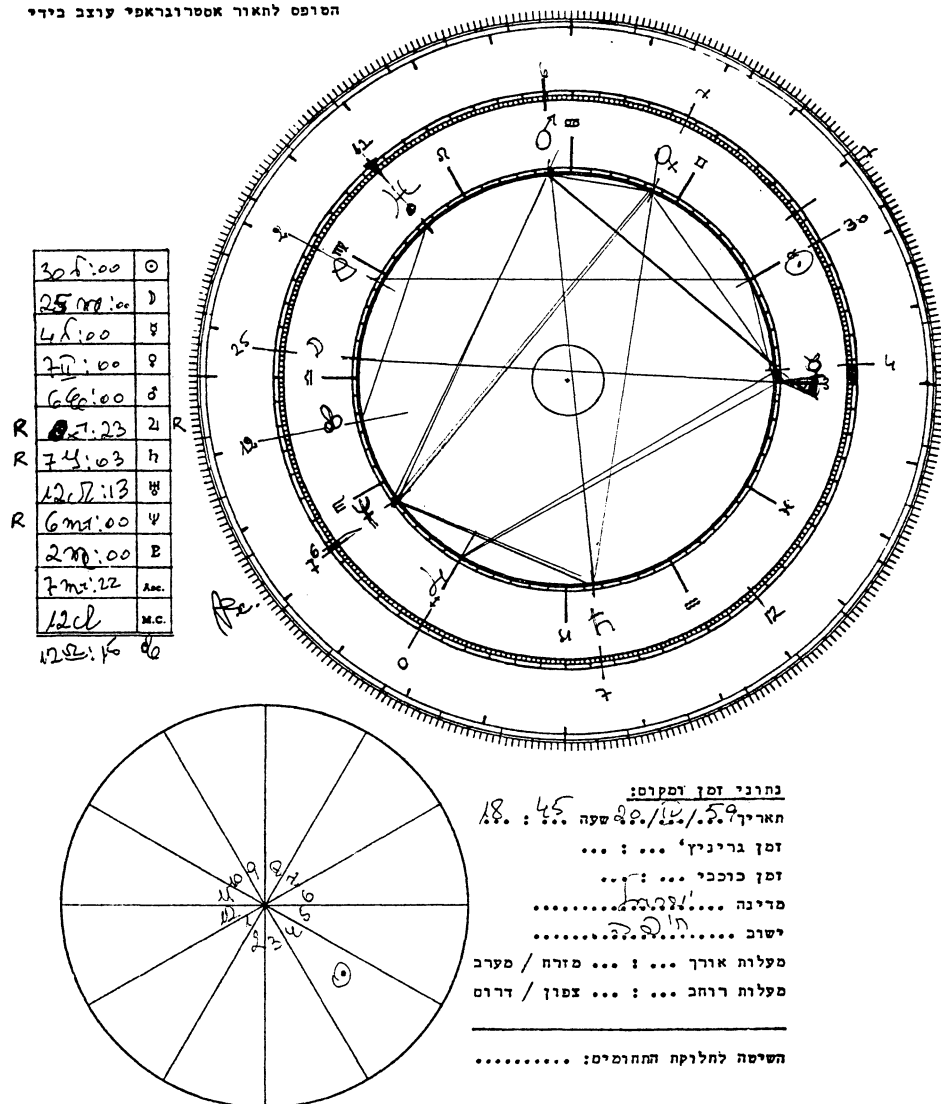


Figure 7. Astrological chart

A branch of divination which, in its simplest form, is based upon the symbolic meanings attached to the numbers 1-9 and the interpretation of those meanings in relation to a particular subject. It is mainly used for personal divination, and the information required is the full name of the person, together with the date of birth...

The total for the birth date will indicate, by interpretation, something of the likely circumstances of the subject's life, while the total for the whole name will indicate something of the type of person the subject is.

(Martin 1979:82)

Despite the individual differences of the various branches of fortune-telling we have described above, we have found that the fortune-teller/client encounter may be studied as a complex dynamic relative meta-system with regard to:

- (i) the subjects or themes usually discussed in most fortune-telling sessions;
- (ii) the various stages and interactions between the fortune-teller and client during a session;

We have found that fortune-tellers consistently discuss similar basic themes, all of which can be viewed as holistic and dynamic relative thematic continua. The broad contexts that men are most interested in and therefore, those discussed by fortune-tellers revolve around a trinity composed of three basic desires. According to Rakoczi (1970:8):

What are the things men most want to know about? What are the fundamental impulses that stimulate man's desire? They fall into a trinity — a trinity of desire. They wish for:

- (1) Food - the acquisition of riches, power achievement of the dreams of ambition.
- (2) Love - sexual fulfillment, the esteem and envy of others.
- (3) Beauty - good health, mental powers, long life and immortality, descendants

Furthermore, the fortune-teller/client encounter may usually be divided into the following nine steps, which, from the point-of-view of dynamic relativism, reflect the subjective, dynamic relative perceptions of the participants in this particular kind of human encounter. Thus a meta-fortune-telling session generally proceeds in the following way:

- (1) The client enters;
- (2) The fortune-teller appraises the client;

- (3) The fortune-teller chooses a representative card, prepares coffee, requests the relevant information regarding the client's birth and/or name, or examines the client's hands.
- (4) The client shuffles the deck, drinks the coffee or tea, or makes a print of his hand on paper.
- (5) The client cuts the deck (usually with his left hand which represents intuition or the subconscious) (Rakoczi 1970:29), or turns the cup upside down. The astrologer or numerologist prepares the map or chart, the palm reader extracts the symbols from the imprint of the hand.
- (6) The cartomantist lays out the deck, looks at the signs in the cup, examines the astrological or numerological chart, or collocates the symbols related to the hand and palm.
- (7) The fortune-teller interprets the signs and creates an external plot or text usually soliciting additional information from the client in the form of "yes" -"no" questions and responses or normal conversation.
- (8) The client constructs his own inner plot or text supplying his own specific information based on the possibilities presented in the external plot of the fortune-teller.
- (9) Client affirms story or events.

Furthermore, fortune-tellers aim to develop a particular image and establish credibility in the eyes of their clients. The notions of image building and the establishment of credibility are related to linguistic, paralinguistic and extralinguistic factors. The judgement of credibility is made by the listener or client. The various criteria, be they verbal or non-verbal, usually center around the notions of self-confidence, authority, and the possible identification between the fortune-teller and the client, i.e. the dynamic relative manner in which they choose to view each other.

In the following chapters we will define and discuss the three categories of fortune-tellers we have postulated: the "classic" fortune-teller, the "western specialist or expert" and an "intermediate" or "middle" group spanning the opposition between the two. It may very well be, however, that there are three categories of clients as well:

- (1) the "non-believer" or sceptic who (if he or she actually visits a fortune-teller) has either come to be "unimpressed" or possibly "catch" the fortune-teller at his bluff. Such a client will usually not find the fortune-teller credible, unless the latter manages to

create a “breakthrough” by correctly uncovering one or more instances in the client’s past. This kind of client is predisposed *not* to find the fortune-teller credible.

- (2) the “believer”, who is predisposed to perceive the fortune-teller as being credible; and has expressly come for advice and answers, and
- (3) an intermediate category between these two extremes, neither predisposed to believe or not to believe, more or less a “*tabula rasa*” who is most open to the verbal and non-verbal effects of the fortune-teller’s attempts to build an image and establish credibility.

Bearing in mind the specific roles played by both the fortune-teller and client in the dyadic encounter between them, we will now proceed to briefly discuss the general attributes of the discourse of fortune-telling as a meta-system.

3. The discourse element of the meta-system of fortune-telling

The dyadic encounter between a fortune-teller and client cannot be defined as what is usually termed in the discourse and linguistic literature as a conversation in either a formal or informal sense of the word but is more similar to a monologue for several reasons:

- (a) the participants in this face-to-face dyadic encounter, i.e. the fortune-teller and the client, have specific roles and have usually not met each other previously and have not (as yet) established a “relationship” of any kind. In this respect the encounter between them can be likened to the professional encounter between a client and a professional or expert (a doctor, psychologist, counsellor, etc.)
- (b) It is presupposed and expected that one party (the fortune-teller) will do most of the talking while the client will remain passive or answer certain questions, usually with a “yes” or “no”, or provide certain basic information or verification regarding himself or ask for further clarification.
- (c) The members of the fortune-teller/client dyad may not be seeking each other’s approval, although the fortune-teller will be trying to establish credibility in the client’s eyes and possibly, but

not necessarily develop a long-term “relationship” between the client and himself, once again, in a similar way to that of any professional or expert.⁶

All of the above affect the encounter between the fortune-teller and client in general and the language used in this encounter in particular.

The language used by fortune-tellers in general should be viewed more as a monologue, perhaps even a “professional monologue” as opposed to a conversation. This particular kind of “professional monologue” between fortune-teller and client is also heavily laced with elements of persuasive communication whose goal is to influence people’s behavior by appealing to or influencing their reason as well as their emotions (Bettinghaus 1972, Hoveland et al. 1957, Jamieson 1985, Lee 1972, Roloff and Miller 1980, and Sandell 1977).

Usually studies in persuasive communication deal with the language of advertising, salesmanship, political speeches and propaganda, describing both the rational and the emotive use of language (Brown 1963, Ellul 1973, Packard 1962, Sargant 1957). The persuasive element of a fortune-teller/client dyad uses selected aspects of persuasive communication in general on a one-to-one, face-to-face basis as opposed to a one-to-many, oftentimes impersonal basis, found in the other branches of persuasive communication.

Some of the basic characteristics of persuasive language we have found relevant in the fortune-teller/client encounter include:

- (i) the order, arrangement, and presentation of themes;
- (ii) the order, arrangement and presentation of positive versus negative information;
- (iii) the use of frame or omnibus words (also referred to as “umbrella terms”);
- (iv) the use of commonly believed, well-known proverbial truths known as “plain folk’s device” or what we will refer to as “two-bit philosophy”;

as well as familiar rhetorical devices such as:

- (v) the use of specialized terminology, jargon, metaphor, repetition, the mixing of registers, hedging, hesitations, dangling sentences, silence, and others.

In addition, we have found that the language of fortune-telling is not what is referred to in the linguistic and semantic literature as “vague” or “ambiguous”, because the utterances themselves are not necessarily ambiguous but rather represent a non-specific, non-precise, multi-purposeful, *omniscopus* use of language which is applicable to a certain population in a given situation or set of situations.⁷

The role of persuasive language in general and the *omniscopus* use of language in the language of fortune-telling in particular have very fundamental visual, textual and social semiotic implications:

- (i) First, the above-mentioned linguistic and communication-oriented phenomena are manifested in both the micro- and the macrolevels of language, i.e. on the level of words, phrases, sentences, utterances, or discourse within the fortune-teller/client encounter.
- (ii) Secondly, although the fortune-teller is doing most of the talking, both the fortune-teller and the client are simultaneously building individual and independent plots (in conjunction with each other) during the fortune-teller/client encounter.

These two parallel plots are based on two independent semiotic systems. The “external” plot, i.e. that of the fortune-teller, is based on the semiotic system of the established signs of the particular branch of fortune-telling involved. The fortune-teller then uses the semiotic system of language to build his text or plot based on the particular signs at his disposal. He is using these semiotic systems to create a *broad context* based on a *generalized content* through the use of emotional and persuasive language in a non-specific, non-precise, multi-purposeful, *omniscopus* way. This, of course, makes supreme sense when we consider the fact that the fortune-teller usually maintains a rather lengthy monologue, and is trying to create an image and to establish credibility in the eyes of a specific client whom he has not previously met and who has come for personal advice regarding his own life.

If, as we have just suggested, the fortune-teller is providing a *generalized context* and *broad content* in his “external” plot based on the semiotic system of a specific branch of fortune-telling, then the *specific information* sought by the client must be provided by the “internal” plot carried out independently, but in conjunction with, the fortune-teller’s “external” plot. This internal plot woven by the client is primarily based on the

semiotic system of language since he is usually not aware of the established meanings of the signs of fortune-telling.

The client, therefore, is performing an internal verbal or linguistic self-schemating process wherein he is searching within his own experience, beliefs and memory in order to provide *specific content information*. He is therefore becoming both the *source* and the *destination* of the message. An additional given is that both the fortune-teller and the client share certain social and moral values and beliefs which are part of their society and culture and which are manifested in the social aspects of the semiotic systems they are using in their individual plot building.

Thus, we may describe a fortune-teller/client dyadic encounter as a "chain-activity" composed of four basic stages which we will exemplify here with a meta-session in astrology:

- | | | |
|-----------------|---|---|
| sign
system | { | (1) The client supplies basic information such as date and hour of birth. |
| | | (2) The fortune-teller provides the semiotic basis for the construction of his "external" plot: the astrologist constructs a chart containing the twelve zodiac signs, the planets, and their position at the exact time of birth, lines connecting the different elements in the individual chart. The chart is embellished by the lines in various colors, providing a basis for a semiotic of color in the analysis of astrology charts. The chart is also based on various mathematical calculations and elements of astronomy giving the impression of a scientific basis to a chart, and, therefore, to this particular branch of fortune-telling in particular. ⁸ |
| outer
system | { | (3) The fortune-teller then decodes the chart. In astrology the signs are fixed, yet each sign is part of a dynamic relative continuum and is presented in non-specific, non-precise, multi-purposeful and <i>omniscopus</i> language which is context dependent. Thus, the astrologist may interpret signs as a "story" unraveled through a complex symbolic language system. The reading of an astrological chart may take from one hour to even five or six hours. The fortune-teller is usually willing to answer any <i>specific</i> question asked by the client although the answer may be given in <i>non-specific</i> language. |
| | | |

- inner system { (4) Based on the above, the client creates his own inner plot and interpretation. In stages (1) and (4) the client opens and closes the cycle of the encounter by initially providing the essential facts of his identity and then details from his experience which are known only to himself.

The fortune-teller (in this case an astrologist) then uses a language known only to himself or to a sub-group of professional or amateur astrologists. The client usually has very little to no knowledge of the signs and depends almost exclusively on the astrologer's interpretation, in a way similar to a patient's dependence on a physician's diagnosis.

Our analysis of the fortune-teller/client dyadic encounter supports other research done in the fields of interpersonal communication (e.g. Goffman 1970, Gumperz 1964, Hymes 1978); dyadic communication (e.g. Siegman and Pope 1972); and persuasive communication in general (e.g. Perloff and Brock 1980, Greenwald 1968, Petty 1977); and the notion of self-schemating processing in particular.

By presenting the client with persuasive and *omniscopus*, multi-purposeful, non-specific, non-precise language exhaustive possibilities to choose from, as well as qualified statements, utterances containing frame words, omnibus words and umbrella terms, a scale of relativity as well as general truths, the fortune-teller supplies *general contexts* and *broad content* slots by varied linguistic means which permit the client to supply the *specific content information* from his own mind. Such self-generated information and messages tend to be more exhaustively processed and better retained than non-self-related or associated information (Markus 1977), or responses provided by another party.

Our data also strongly support work done in psychology (Hyman 1977, 1981) in the field of psychic and "cold" readings in particular, i.e. in situations where an individual is unknowingly both the source and the destination of a message. This is most relevant for the use of language by fortune-tellers which deals, for the most part, with personality descriptions and the "Barnum effect", (i.e. the phenomenon where people willingly accept interpretations of characteristics of their personality comprised of vague statements which have a high base rate occurrence among the general population) (Snyder, Shenkel and Lowery 1977).

According to Hyman (1981):

“...The client has to supply flesh to the skeleton. He retrieves from memory incidents and examples to instantiate the more general things being described.”⁹

The key role of non-specific and non-precise statements that can be suited for any individual in “cold readings” has also been experimented with successfully for computer programs which permit client-computer “conversations” along the lines of Rogerian psychotherapy (Weizenbaum 1976). Our data seem to parallel many of the linguistic aspects of these computer conversation communication strategies, particularly with the use of non-specific, non-precise, multi-purposeful and *omniscopus* language.¹⁰

Similar notions of unclear or imprecise language, (as well as lack of readability, double talk and meaningless communication), have been shown to have a high acceptability rate if received from a seemingly legitimate or prestigious source (e. g. the “Dr. Fox Hypothesis”, (Armstrong 1980), applied to academic lectures and articles in the field of management research, particularly those containing technical terms and argot.

This “Dr. Fox” principle also seems to function in ways similar to those we have outlined in our description of the use of non-specific, *omniscopus* and persuasive statements in the fortune-teller/client communication, on the condition that the fortune-teller appears to be reliable and credible in the client’s eyes. This may explain why we have found the greatest incidence of the use of *omniscopus* and persuasive, non-specific, non-precise, multi-purposeful language in the language of those fortune-tellers we will classify as belonging to the category of the “western specialist or expert” in the next chapter.

The underlying assumption behind our research is that the use of language in its social context, as well as the linguistic and non-linguistic devices used to establish credibility, play an important role in the degree to which the fortune-teller will influence his client. It may very well be that we are dealing with phenomena that are highly intuitive in nature. It is also important to remember that the meeting between the fortune-teller and client is a one-to-one, face-to-face encounter, where the roles of the participants are usually clearly defined:

- (a) the fortune-teller, who does most of the talking, is the all-knowing “clairvoyant”, as it were, and
- (b) the client, who is in reality applying what is being said to himself or to his own specific personal situation, is seemingly the “naive” or “unknowledgeable” member of the pair.

In practice, however, these roles become reversed and the client becomes his own fortune-teller (i.e. he becomes both the source and the recipient of the specific information whose generalized thematic framework was introduced and presented by the real fortune-teller).

Thus, in conclusion, we view our work in the language and communication of fortune-telling as part of a larger interdisciplinary, semiotic research framework resting upon the principle of dynamic relativism which may provide insights into the ways people use verbal and non-verbal means to communicate in various kinds of social encounters where the participants involved have well-defined roles.

Notes

1. In a similar article in the Hebrew daily *Ha-Aretz* (D. Oren, "Secrets of the Crystal Ball", (January 21, 1983) a rough estimation of the number of people visiting fortune-tellers in the State of Israel was a quarter of a million (out of an approximate overall population of four million).
2. Our classification of fortune-tellers into three categories: the "classic" fortune-teller, the "western specialist or expert", and an "intermediate" category comprising elements of both the "classic" and the "western specialist or expert" will be discussed in Chapter 2.
3. Our research (Aphex and Tobin 1981c-f, 1982a-c, 1983c-d, 1984e, 1986d) represents a study of Hebrew speaking fortune-tellers working in the State of Israel. We have seen, however, that many of our conclusions hold for English, Spanish, French and German speaking fortune-telling data recorded in the United States, Mexico, Great Britain and Europe which have been brought to our attention.
4. We would like to point out that we have not been concerned at any point in our research, or in any of our published or unpublished, material with the question of the objective or subjective reliability or authenticity of the various branches of fortune-telling or the specific fortune-tellers themselves. Our research has focused on the investigation of aspects of the paralinguistic, linguistic, extralinguistic and semiotic elements of the interaction between fortune-teller and clients.
5. Of all the branches of fortune-telling, astrology, perhaps, has been the one most widely studied, researched and developed. An excellent review of the research done in astrology can be found in Dean (1986) and analyses of astrology from a semiotic point-of-view can be found in Budd (1983) and Douglas (1983).
6. It is our contention that the language used in initial encounters between fortune-tellers and clients will differ from that used in meetings of the same fortune-teller and client if and when a long-term relationship may develop between them. We would also like to note that certain fortune-tellers, after they have completed their monologue, may ask the client to talk about himself.
7. This larger *omniscopus* use of language as well as the persuasive elements found in the discourse of fortune-telling will be discussed in the following chapter(s).

10. Years of Study _____
11. How do you spend your leisure time?
 - (a) television
 - (b) cinema, theater, concerts
 - (c) reading
 - (d) sports
 - (e) other _____
12. Do you have any hobbies? _____
13. What kind of books do you read?
 - (a) suspense-mystery
 - (b) science fiction
 - (c) literature
 - (d) professional literature
 - (e) non-fiction
 - (f) read very little
15. Which newspaper do you usually read? _____
16. What magazines or journals do you usually read? _____

B. Attitudes regarding fortune-telling

1. Have you ever visited a fortune-teller? yes/no
 (If your answer to question 1 was 'no' proceed to questions 4-6)
 - (a) How many times have you been to a fortune-teller? _____
 - (b) How did you get the address? _____
 - (c) What kind of fortune-teller did you see?
 - i. a card reader
 - ii. a coffee or tea reader
 - iii. a palm reader
 - iv. an astrologist
 - v. another _____
 - (d) Why did you go? _____
 - (e) How much of what the fortune-teller predicted came true?
 - i. everything
 - ii. most
 - iii. part
 - iv. very little
 - v. nothing at all
 - (f) Would you visit a fortune-teller again? yes/no
 (If yes, would you go to the same one or a different one and why?)

2. Do you recall any particular words, phrases, or expressions that the fortune-teller used. If yes, what were they:

3. Describe the fortune-teller and the ceremony involved in the fortune-telling session. (clothing, place, actions, etc.)

4. If you have never visited a fortune-teller:
 - (a) why not? _____
 - (b) have you ever thought of visiting one?
5. Classify the following branches of fortune-telling according to their degree of reliability. Place the number 1 next to the branch you view as the most reliable, 2 the second most reliable, and so on:
 - (a) astrology
 - (b) card reading
 - (c) coffee or tea reading
 - (d) palm reading
 - (e) other _____
6. Who in your opinion is more likely to visit a fortune-teller?
 - (a) men/women
 - (b) educated people/ uneducated people
 - (c) religious/traditional/secular
 - (d) older people/younger people
 - (e) married/unmarried
 - (f) blue collar workers/white collar workers/artists
 - (g) others _____

Chapter 2

The Language of Fortune-Telling

1. The classification of fortune-tellers

In this chapter we will discuss the elements of the language used in the discourse of fortune-telling from the point-of-view of the concept of dynamic relativism. As we have previously stated, our research into the language used by various Hebrew speaking practitioners of fortune-telling has revealed certain insights regarding the necessity of studying this particular language, as well as human communication in general, within a broader interdisciplinary theoretical framework than that provided by linguistic theory alone. We have found that the language of fortune-telling can best be described as an interface of selected elements of persuasive and dyadic communication within the framework of a larger visual, discourse and social semiotic system.

From a linguistic, sociolinguistic and ethnomethodological point-of-view, we also have found that the language of fortune-tellers cannot be viewed as a single entity. The data from more than fifty tape-recorded sessions between male and female fortune-tellers from the different major branches of fortune-telling and male and female clients of different ages and backgrounds have provided us with means to:

- (i) classify the various kinds of fortune-tellers, as well as
- (ii) to compare and contrast the different branches of fortune-telling.

We have seen that the Hebrew speaking fortune-tellers can be classified into three major categories:

- (1) The “classic” fortune-teller whose language is sub-standard, informal in register, and interlaced with fixed formulae although quite “picturesque” at times. We have also noted a marked use of Arabic loan words in their Hebrew (which are markers of col-

loquial speech in general), as well as a tendency to shorten long words of both Hebrew and foreign origin, the use of malapropisms, and the deletion or supplementation of relative pronouns and certain syntactic markers as well as commonly heard and familiar grammatical errors in number and gender agreement morphology. Our research reveals that this category primarily includes female cartomantists and coffee readers as well as both male and female astrologists.

- (2) The fortune-teller who exhibits all the effects of a “Western specialist or expert”, whose language is educated standard, usually of formal register, sometimes merging on the “scientific”. We have also noted a marked use of English loan words and “technical” terms (often of Latin or Greek origin) in their Hebrew, which are markers of professional and formal educated speech. Our research reveals that this category primarily includes male palm readers and astrologists of both sexes.
- (3) Between these two extremes there is a third category, an intermediate or middle category which best can be described as a combination of the the classic fortune-teller and the Western specialist or expert. The language of this category is usually educated standard, but of informal register. The discourse of the members of this intermediate category is particularly characterized by the use of professional symbols and predictions regarding the time of future events. We have also noted a frequent use of both Arabic and English loan words in their Hebrew depending upon the client with whom they are communicating and the type of impression or message they wish to convey. Our research reveals that this middle category includes cartomantists, coffee readers and astrologists of both sexes, who often combine more than one branch of fortune-telling in a single session.

Astrology	Card Reading	Coffee Reading	Palm Reading	
				Western Specialist
				Intermediate or Middle-Group
				"Classic" Fortune-Teller

Figure 1. *A graphic view of the language of fortune-tellers*

2. The data

The following excerpts should serve to illustrate the discourse of the different branches of fortune-telling as well as the different categories of fortune-tellers we have outlined above.

Excerpt 1. The "classic" fortune-teller: Female coffee reader

R. is representative of the "classic" fortune-teller. She was born in the Sudan and is about 50 years old. R. works primarily as a beautician, but reads coffee for paying clients in addition to her regular work. R. tends to mix Arabic and English words in her Hebrew conversation which is typical of Jews originally from the Sudan. It should be noted, however, that these Arabic and English lexical items are generally familiar to most speakers of Israeli Hebrew. Her loan calques are composed mostly of individual lexical items or idioms superimposed on sentences with Hebrew syntactical patterns. R. receives her clients in the same room in her apartment where she works as a private beautician.

R. reading coffee to a female client (C = client)

R: You have¹ a fish². This fish, you'll be happy.

There's money — you'll get.

C: Money always makes me happy.

R: I swear on my life.³ You're a good girl. You have a good heart. You're very gentle. Some little thing is 'naying you, 'derstand?⁴ Everything will be good for you. I swear on my life. Near future — you'll be happy. You'll be very happy.⁵ One of the children has, you'll make a birthday? What d'ya want to make him something, a little party.

C: I wanted to take my daughter on a trip abroad.

C: I think towards the morning... something like that... the morning of the twentieth... I think.

G: Then you're Aries.

C: Yes.

G: O. K. then, there's no problem...

(They discuss the client's personality and love life, according to her palm and then return to astrology)

G: When were you born, on the twentieth? The twenty-sec... The twentieth, right?

C: Right, the twentieth.

(pause)

G: You have to put an end to the whole thing.

C: How?

G: I advise you; it'll be good if you get married.

(pause, George consults some books)

G: Uh... it looks like your planet crosses the planet of a man; that's your problem. And you like to dominate a man. That's why you don't get along with him. You want that you be the man. You wear the pants: he wears the dress. 'derstand? If he wears the dress then I advise you marry him. It's not yours, it comes out that way, you're strong. And he's afraid of you, every man will want you, but he has a reckoning to make. He's afraid, he's afraid of the "domnation" (domination) you'll have on him. You got to, you try, you'll have *ya'ani* more or less a different situation. Completely. You, your constellation is the sun.

C: What does that mean?

G: Your planet is the sun, 'derstand?

C: What does that mean? My planet is the sun?

G: You, you have a strong planet, *ya'ani* not bad.

(George consults his manuals)

C: And is there any direction about what I should learn or what I should do?

G: I'll tell you what to do. Uh... you, Uh... you're, Uh, you're... you're, uh... you're not an easy person. I mean, what, even if you need, it doesn't mean anything. You know what's good and what's bad for you. You, you care about honor. You, you have, everyone who sees you, likes you. Before they know you.

Excerpt 3. The "Western specialist": Male palm reader

M. is representative of the fortune-teller who exhibits all the effects of a modern Western expert or specialist. He is 35 years old, was born in India, and has lived in Israel since childhood. There are no traces of foreign elements in his speech. M. supports himself entirely from his work in what he calls "chirology". A session with M. is very ceremonial in nature. He receives his clients in a professional apartment which includes an office, a waiting room, and a secretary. Appointments have to be made well in advance. M. makes an imprint of his client's hands on pieces of white paper, records careful notes using both words and symbols, and then opens with a lengthy monologue. He refers to the notes he has taken without explaining the meanings of the professional symbols to the client. After his lengthy monologue, he asks the client (C) to respond to what has

been said. The following are selected passages from a session where M. is talking to a male client.

M. You're a very competitive person. I think you know that you're very competitive. And someone who is competitive has to pay interest.⁷

C: What do you mean by "interest"?

M: Interest, uh, emotionally, interest in tension, interest in that in many times he acts according to logic and not perhaps do what he really wants to in his heart. And the interest that you pay is that you are overly tense, you're a very uncalm person and you, uh... are in the midst of too many conflicts, the, that's the interest. (...)

Look, if you want to get ahead in a successful way, eh, you have to be a more harmonious person. What does it mean to be a more harmonious person? Look, there are things which perhaps aren't worth coping with. There may be some other kind of life style. You understand, you want everything and you want it quickly. You also want money; you also want a mate. Eh, that eh, you have a lot of demands in that area, eh, of a mate, as well.

That is to say, you want everything, and you have to be a more h-a-r-m-o-n-i-o-u-s person. Otherwise you'll get things, but it won't give you very much. I, perhaps you didn't think in this direction before, or you never considered yourself as a person with internal disharmony, but, eh, you'll see yourself from this angle.

(a long pause)

You have an extraordinary amount of energy; you are a man who is capable of working hard. A great, great amount of energy, but you're also not efficient, eh, enough, and you waste energy.

(a long pause)

Yes, eh, you're in good physical health. But, once again, overly tense, and that surely isn't healthy.

Eh, you actually could have studied many things. I'm not just trying to say that "you could have studied anything". No, your structure is such and your intelligence is constructed in such a way that you could have learned many things and worked in many fields. That's your structure... There are some people who are more specific, there are people who, at most, can know about some three fields, but there are people with a structure like you, that they can try their hand in all kinds of things.

You have an exceptionally good imagination. Most people do not have a creative imagination. For most people the quantity of their imagination is limited. Yes, the quantity of your imagination is exceptionally good; that can help you in all the areas of life.

There is no area in life where you can't decide to exploit your imagination. None. None. And, therefore, that's one of the reasons that you can work in so many fields. You can take ten different jobs in some industrial plant because of your

imagination and because your talent. You can try ten different things in some specific field because of your imagination... There's almost no... There's a fantastic imagination here quantity-quality- and comprehension wise. Yes, you could even take nothing, that is to say you could even start from scratch and create something.

Excerpt 4. The "Western specialist": Female astrologist

G., who gives "psychological and astrological" advice, is also representative of the "Western specialist or expert". She is a professional psychologist of Swiss-Jewish extraction. The meeting was held in her home which also serves as her office. The male client (C) had previously spoken with her on the phone and provided her with the essential details for his astrological chart. The client found the chart ready on G.'s desk upon his arrival. The session took place in her office which was lined with bookcases filled with psychology and astrology books.

- C: ...Exactly, uh... a week before the war... I went to the United States.
 G: Yes.
 C: I was there for two weeks.
 G: Yes?
 C: Then I returned to Israel.
 G: Before the war?
 C: Yes, exactly before the war, some... only a few days... then the war and then, uh... two weeks and I came back.
 G: Did you return as a consequence of the war?
 C: No, I had to come back anyway.
 G: uh... anyway.
 C: It was to...
 G: (interrupting in a loud voice) Did it influence you somehow in the... Did this war influence you in any special way?
 C: I wasn't here so that it could influence me.
 G: You weren't here?!!
 C: No, I was after that...
 G: It had ended?
 C: Yes.
 G: But that year... It was a year that was very... Did you lose someone? Or what...?
 C: Um...
 G: You didn't?
 (a brief pause)
 C: Actually it was a very quiet year.
 G: Very quiet? (Slightly surprised, and in a quiet and pensive tone) "Very strange indeed" (said in English). I had...
 C: Why that...
 G: No, because, look uh...here there's some... there's a certain something... a rather difficult constellation for you... During... that year, actually primarily in September-October 1973, uh...
 C: Actually, in February it was um... uh...

- G: In February '73?
- C: Then, it might have been uh... uh... something happened, I was... I was in... I mean... something big... I was in a traffic incident.
- G: Incident, uh...
- C: A traffic incident.
- G: Uh... Uh...
- C: In a car...
- G: Oh, you mean uh... uh... a traffic accident.
- C: An accident, yes.
- G: Ah, ah, February '73 (rustles papers, a brief pause, she murmurs something to herself) Yes (brief pause) uh...yes, absolutely, in addition to, but
- C: No, explain, I absolutely don't understand... uh... about this... what is this constellation.
- G: (interrupting) You, actually, what can I explain? Look, but it's difficult for me to explain if you don't understand uh... astrology. Uh, however...
- C: But no, you, you're focusing in on the... those months, it interests me.
- G: No. No, I'll be giving you some other months straightaway, but, uh, I'll tell you what, your sun is in the beginning of Libra.
- C: Uhum...
- G: Correct? Your sign is Libra. Because... Why is your sign Libra? Because the sun is in the sign of Libra.
- C: Uh huh...
- G: Everyone knows that, uh... what sign he is (raising her voice) as it were (lowering her voice) because... it's always the sun that determines the sign.
- C: O. K.
- G: Now, here the... planets con... continue their orbit, correct?
- C: Um...
- G: You have a specific constellation the moment you were born.
- C: mm hmmm.
- G: That's it. It's "fixed". Now, the planets continue their orbit. Right? So the day has its own special constellation and influences the constellation of... (lowering her voice) the horoscope of your birth.
- C: Uh huh.
- G: Now, there are a few slow planets that... some planets are faster, that means, such as the Sun, the Moon, Mercury, Venus they orbit rather quickly and... not that much, they have a slight influence, but not that much. Then there are those that are slow. They orbit slowly (raising her voice). And also... uh their influence is very strong. (Lowering her voice) Now, that, that year that I'm talking about, '73, Pluto eclipsed with your sun.
- ...
- Saturn made a "square" (in English) (raises her voice). This, by the way, also that which, after all the *Yom Kippur War* was predicted, it was predicted, they said in advance.
- C: According to the birth date of the country!
- G: Ye-es, according to the astrological map of the country.

Excerpt 5. The “intermediate category”: Female cartomantist and coffee reader

H. is representative the middle category combining aspects of the “classic” fortune-teller and the “western specialist or expert”. H. is thirty years old, Israeli born, and holds a masters degree. Her major field of interest is in the arts and she studied cartomancy during the period she did her graduate work abroad. H. mixes card reading with the reading of coffee. H. also carries on a lengthy monologue, but periodically stops to ask the client brief questions which he is expected to respond to with either “yes” or “no”. H. is reading coffee and cards to a male client (C).

- H. Today, or at the present, you are standing at the threshold of a change in life in the sense of work, in the sense of a career, uh...

(a long pause)

Uh the most outstanding characteristic of yours is that you do not mix friendship with either business or money affairs. You have this on one side, and this on the other. Uh... if you don't understand, ask me, I'll explain it more.

This change, I estimate it in a “unit of time”, that is to say, it could be a week, a month, a year. I'll wager on a month.

.....

Look, it's coming back again. Your card of fate,⁸ again... and this change of yours is in the area of your work or what you are doing. Once again, it can be because you change a lot. But also in what you're doing there's a change that will bring you a very big income⁹ and you aren't used to it, and this change of yours is in the area of your work or what you are doing. Of course, everything is relative.

Excerpt 6. The “intermediate category”: Male palm and coffee reader

M., who also is representative of the middle category,¹⁰ is approximately forty years old and is Israeli born. He works as a clerk in a government office. S. is a well-known graphologist and palm reader who occasionally will read coffee by special request for certain clients. The excerpt to follow consists of a long monologue transcribed from a recording of S. reading coffee to a female client (C).

- S. Uh... I see it like this now, pay attention, I've focussed my vision on the period of the next three years. I'll try to look a little further ahead. Uh, I'm incapable at the moment. I can't. Perhaps... more to see things on a more long-term range. And what is also interesting in the area of the, the professional area, things will happen. Here, what I suggest to do, to the degree that it depends on you, is be more dynamic, more alert, and you'll be more open to changes. I even recommend it and it will be worth it for you. Uh, even though that here as well I'm telling you to wait a bit, a few months perhaps, two or three, until the period of the end of winter, and I, uh, you'll do things.

Uh, ... I see a chain, a chain which is very linked with your past. It doesn't let you develop, sort of. I don't understand why your past appears in a sign like that, it doesn't allow you to soar beyond where you are today.

.....

What is interesting, if we talk about painting, if we talk about an image, there is an upside down “V” here. That means a revision or change can lead to victory. You see, the sign is like this. Only an upheaval can lead to your personal victory over those things.

(a very long pause)

There is another very interesting form, (pause), a “key”, (a long pause). This key is a symbol of a dream or an expectation of something in the future...

.....

This form of the key is a symbol of a new house, another place, another time (pause) and this key will give you the way to the future.

3. The *omniscopus* language of fortune-telling

One of the principal, possibly intuitive markers of the language used by fortune-tellers is the non-specific, non-precise, multi-purposeful, or *omniscopus* use of language. This non-specific, non-precise use of language does not merely exemplify what is traditionally referred to in the semantic and linguistic literature as “vagueness”, i.e. “an uncertainty, approximateness, lack of shared contours, elasticity, as well as *differentia* of the sense, or heterogeneousness, or a certain variety of aspects and values which are disruptive of sense unity” (Ullman 1957:92-106, 107-108). Nor does it exemplify “ambiguity”, i.e. a single “surface structure” with two or possible “deep structures” allowing for more than one “semantic interpretation” of a given sentence.

On the contrary, the utterances in our data are neither “vague” nor “ambiguous” in themselves, but rather represent an *omniscopus* use of language, which can be likened to the formularized language used in the pre-prepared messages of telegrams or greeting cards which are applicable to a certain population in a given situation or set of situations. It is, in fact, a primary example of dynamic relativism. This non-precise, non-specific, *omniscopus* use of language allows fortune-tellers to introduce holistic and multi-dimensional thematic continua which form the general content of an external dialogue which is contextually perceived in the individual internal dialogue or plot of the client.

The non-specific, non-precise, *omniscopus* use of language found in our data is manifested on both the micro-and macrolevels of language, i.e. on the level of words, phrases, sentences, utterances, or discourse. It manifests itself both in the larger semiotic systems of the various signs and sign

meanings of the different branches of fortune-telling and in the semiotic system of language. Since it is often part and parcel of the standard meanings of many of the signs themselves in the different branches of fortune-telling, it can therefore be found in the language of almost every fortune-teller.

This *omniscopus* use of language is of particular importance to the language used by fortune-tellers that fit into the category of “western specialist or expert”, and, subsequently, in the intermediate category as well. The particular combination of:

- (a) the educated standard formal register bordering on the scientific,
- (b) elements of persuasive communication, and
- (c) the *omniscopus* use of language,

all together, help these kinds of fortune-tellers build up their image and establish credibility in the eyes of the client.

The following are brief instances of the non-specific, non-precise, *omniscopus* use of language which we have placed for the reader’s convenience into four basic categories:

- (1) The Exhaustive Presentation of a Theme:
 - (a) Utterances which present a wide range of possibilities within a dynamic relative thematic continuum:

“You either did it a long time ago or you are about to do it...after it happened or before it will happen...”

In this case the utterance covers a wide range of time: “did it” or “are about to do it”; “before” or “after”. It provides the possibilities; the client has to personally choose the most suitable one. (There is also a third possibility, i.e. the client will not do it at all.) This aspect of the exhaustive presentation is illustrated in Figure 2.

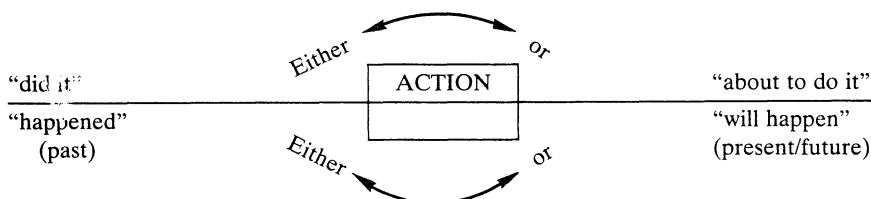


Figure 2. *The exhaustive presentation of a theme*

- (b) Utterances containing qualifiers such as “usually”, “often”, “maybe”, “perhaps”, “possibly”, “either - or”, “also”, “both”, “as well”, etc.:

“You are *usually* quite easy to get along with, but you can *also* be a prima donna.”

“You can strive to succeed in two main areas and *both* of them can be good for you. One of them is related to the social sciences: *either* psychology *or* social work. *Both* professions are very suitable for you, but you can *also* strive towards the arts. You can *also* succeed in these two areas within a very broad range of activities: For example, if you became involved in the theater, you could *either* act, *or maybe* even write a script, *and perhaps* organize, *or* produce, *or even* direct as well.

This aspect of the exhaustive presentation of a theme is illustrated in Figure 3.

In this case the speaker expands the number of more specific possibilities within the thematic continuum, the listener narrows them down until they suit her best. Examples 1 (a) and (b) above, are taken from a session with a male palm reader of the category “Western specialist or expert” and a female client. The wide range of possibilities is explicitly provided by the fortune-teller, and the client only has to select the one she feels (for whatever reasons) is most applicable to herself.

- (2) Utterances which contain “frame” or “omnibus” words which serve as “umbrella terms”:

“*Something* is holding you back.”

“You have a *certain problem* with an *older man*, or *someone* who may be *somewhat* of an authority figure for you.”

The listener will have to draw from his or her own experience, an event, incident, and person that is most suitable to the “frame word” supplied by the speaker.

These aspects of utterances which contain “frame” or “omnibus” words or “umbrella terms” are illustrated in Figures 4 and 5.

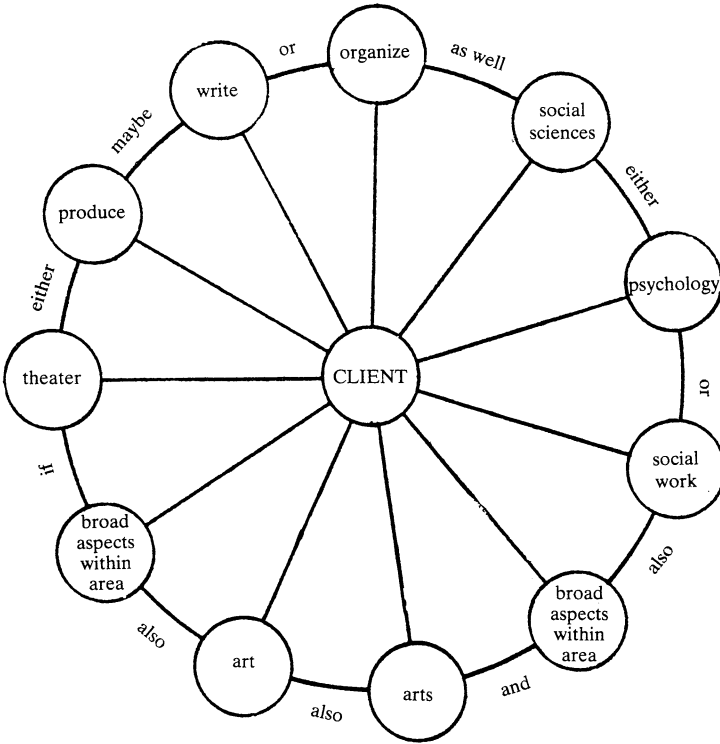


Figure 3. *The exhaustive presentation of a theme*

(3) Utterances containing a “scale of relativity”

“You should be *happier*.”

“You should be *more* careful of and sensitive to others.”

The thematic continuum and the notion of scale are provided by the speaker, the listener only has to perceive his individual position on the scale.

Aspects of this scale of relativity is illustrated in Figure 6.

(4) Utterances containing a general truth:

“Criticism should be constructive.”

“Hastes makes waste.”

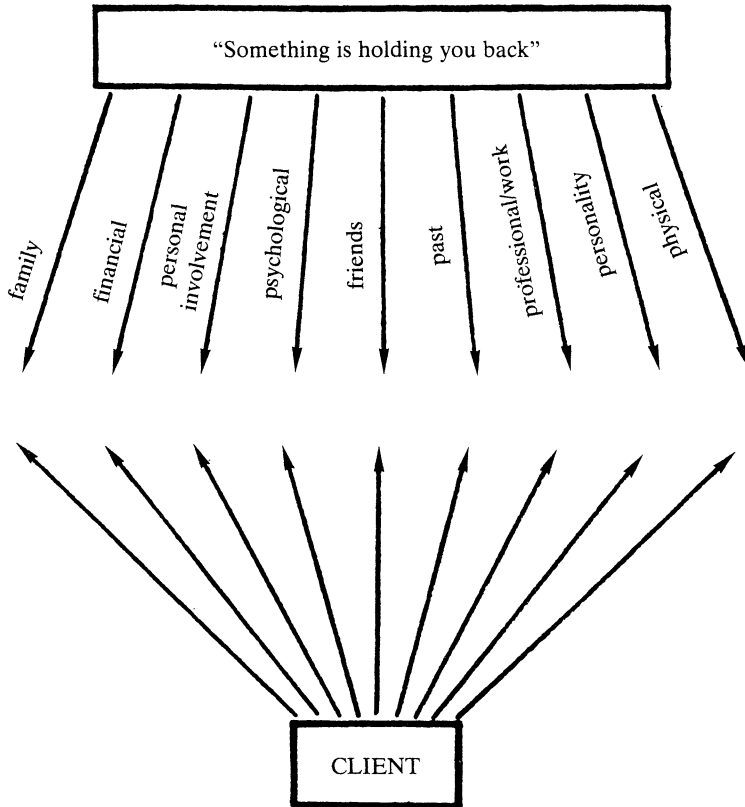
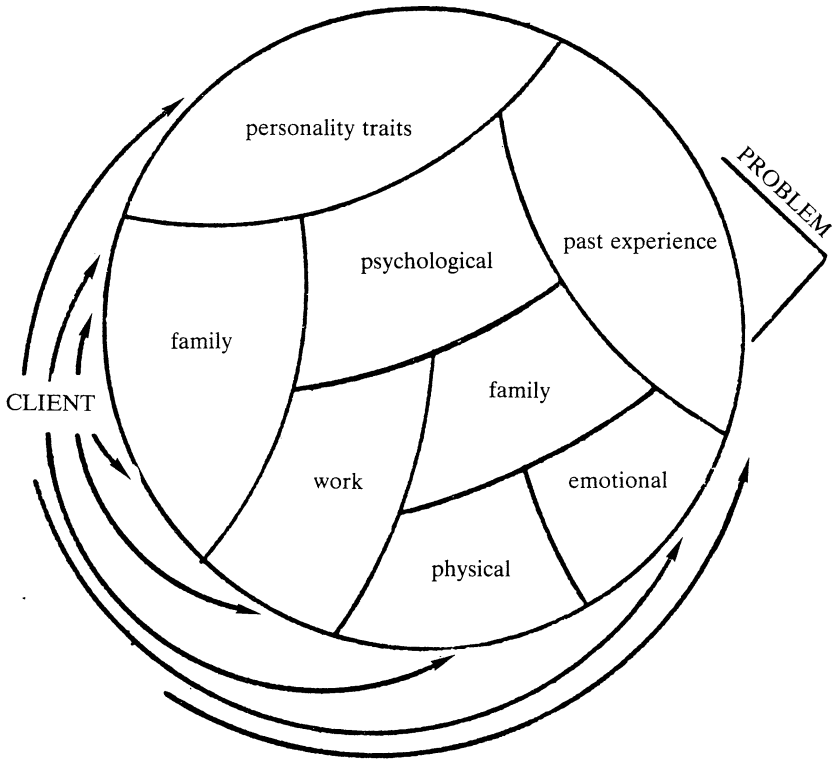


Figure 4. Utterances containing "frame" or "omnibus" words

These examples are "axiomatic" and applicable to almost everyone in most situations.

We will now illustrate how the dynamic relative notion of *omniscopus* language manifests itself both in:

- (i) the larger semiotic systems of the various signs and sign meanings of the different branches of fortune-telling (using signs of coffee and tea reading and a written passage from a popular astrology book)¹¹, and
- (ii) the semiotic system of language used by the various categories of fortune-tellers (using Excerpts (1-6) above).



“You have a certain problem”

Figure 5. *Utterances containing “frame” or “omnibus” words*

Some examples of this non-specific, non-precise, *omniscopus* use of language which we have found in the meanings of some of the signs used in coffee and tea reading (Brent 1975: 16-21) include:

- (1) the exhaustive presentation of a thematic continuum:

<i>Acorn:</i>	Good fortune in health and/or finances;
<i>Anchor:</i>	Success in business, and/or love, and/or a journey, and/or social success;
<i>Bee:</i>	Success both social and financial; and/or good news;
<i>Cross:</i>	Suffering, and/or sacrifice, and/or tribulation;
<i>Fish:</i>	Good luck in everything (cf. excerpt 1);
<i>Rat:</i>	Treachery and loss, and/or deceitful friends, and/or resourceful enemies.

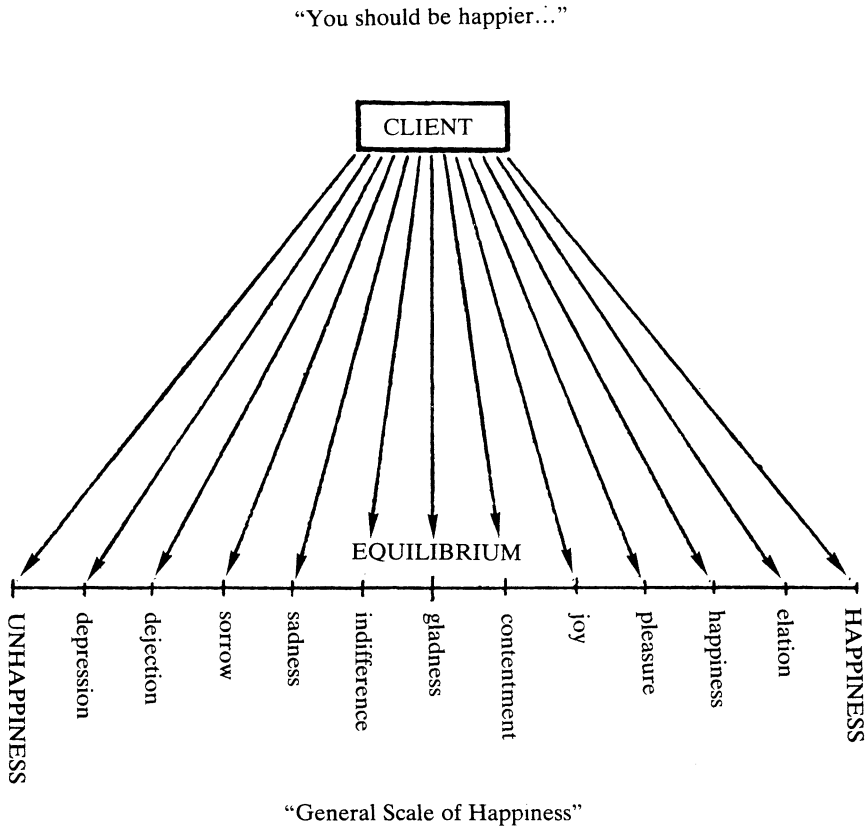


Figure 6. *Scale of relativity*

In these examples the contextually specific interpretations often depend on the position of the sign in the cup. The various possible degrees or nuances are open to further individual interpretation by the fortune-teller and/or the client as part of the external and internal plots they construct and may be influenced by the linguistic, paralinguistic, and extralinguistic cues they may be conveying to each other during the session.

- (2) The use of qualifiers and quantifiers or “frame” words as what is referred to in the language of persuasion as “omnibus” words and “umbrella” terms:

- Bridge:* Opportunity to be seized for short-cut to success
Cat: Someone lies in treacherous ambush, probably a false friend;
Saw: Outsiders will threaten domestic tranquility;
Vulture: Loss, perhaps through theft possibly from an enemy;
Zebra: Adventures overseas.

Various individual interpretations can be made for each of these with regard to: (a) what kind of opportunities, adventures and/or successes? (b) what kind of treachery and/or deceit and/or loss and by which traitors, false friends, and/or enemies?

(3) Utterances containing a scale of relativity:

- Eye:* Take care and be watchful (be more careful and watchful);
Fire: Avoid over-hasty reactions (be more in control);
Frog: Avoid self-importance (be more modest, or unassuming);
Hare: Overtimidity (be braver, show more courage);
Jester: Avoid frivolity (be more serious);
Tortoise: Over-sensitivity to criticism (be less sensitive, have "thicker skin");
Yoke: Domination threatens (avoid being too submissive.)

The client has to evaluate himself with regard to the specific quality placed on the relative scale and his particular perception of it.

(4) Utterances containing a general truth, or what is referred to as "plain folk's device" in the literature of persuasion, or what we refer to as "two-bit philosophy":

- Ant:* With perseverance, success will arrive;
Bat: Beware of plots and of false friends;
Cabbage: Jealousy entails complications;

<i>Clock:</i>	Avoid delay and hesitation; "The early bird catches the worm";
<i>Fern:</i>	Unfaithfulness is possible in a lover;
<i>Monkey:</i>	Flatterers represent danger and may be mischievous;
<i>Spade:</i>	Hard work brings success;
<i>Toad:</i>	Beware of flattery and flatterers.

This kind of general advice often seems to "ring true" and is potentially applicable to almost everyone sometime in his or her life.

In each of the cases above, the client is choosing among "internal possibilities" that are known only to himself. Since the meeting between a coffee reader and client is a dyadic one, the client may very well assume that the reader is an all-knowing clairvoyant, i.e. the fortune-teller shares this specific internal knowledge as well.

These *omniscopus* utterances may be compared to a linguistic puzzle. The coffee-reader using these omniscopic signs is providing the client with general external semantic, syntactic or contextual boundaries, while the client fills the puzzle in with his own specific contextually appropriate pieces of personally relevant information. In this way, the client is unwittingly both the source and the receiver of the specific aspects of the message.

Although the coffee reader is doing most of the talking, both members of this particular communication dyad are simultaneously building individual and independent plots during the fortune-telling session. These two parallel plots are based on two independent but symbiotic semiotic systems both of which employ the dynamic relative concept of the use of *omniscopus* language:

- (i) The "external" plot of the coffee reader is based on the semiotic system of the signs or the fragments of the signs (*pars pro toto*), and their size, position, frequency, or collocation with other signs (whose meanings may be non-specific, non-precise, multipurposeful, and *omniscopic*) found in the residue of the cup. The coffee reader then uses the semiotic system of language to build his text or plot.
- (ii) The "internal" plot represents the client's individual reactions and associative responses to the possibilities presented in the

omniscopus use of language in the “external” plot. The client is performing an internal self-schemating processing which might also be based on the principle of *pars pro toto* wherein he is searching within the fragments of his own experience, beliefs and memory in order to provide specific content information in response to the plethora of possibilities provided by the “external” plot of the coffee reader.

This same principle of the use of *omniscopus* language also appears in written versions of what may be referred to as the fortune-telling genre. The following passage is taken from a passage in a popular astrology book (Goodman 1980:390-391) describing the relationship between a Gemini man and a Pisces woman. It illustrates the use of the exhaustive presentation of a theme, the relationship between the couple, exploiting the use of qualifiers and quantifiers, frame words, a scale of relativity, and much of the advice and the situation seems quite familiar. It also, despite its brevity, includes elements of the trinity of topics typically discussed by fortune-tellers: food (acquisition of wealth, power, achievement), love (sexual fulfillment, esteem and envy of others) and beauty (health, mental powers):

She can decide love isn't worth the demands a Gemini man makes upon her delicate psyche — and leave him. Just slip away *some* morning when he's not around. *Or* she can decide that the *pleasure and happiness*, the *contentment and peace* of loving him — *and receiving the love and devotion* of *at least one* of his *Twin* selves in return — are worth a *few adjustments here and there* in the relationship. If the *latter* is her choice, she'll simply make it work. *It may take some intricate planning, but she'll manage.*

Perhaps visiting her friends when he feels she should be spending her time in a *more profitable* way. *Maybe* keeping an appointment with the beauty parlor. Why should he frown on that? Because he thinks she's beautiful just the way she is — and *besides*, the money she spends on personal beautification could be *better* spent by the two of them travelling *somewhere* together. To Gemini, the *absolute ultimate* of ecstasies is a *change of scene* — going *somewhere* — *anywhere* at all that's different and away from daily routine.

The *very qualities* that drew her *close* to him in the beginning *may later* grow to be *extremely* wearing and wearying *to her* more placid nature. His mind is full of little surprises, and this delights her.

Although it may be claimed that popularized published versions of fortune-telling (such as horoscopes) may be especially prone to exploit the *omniscopus* use of language, let us now examine the recorded Excerpts (1-6) representative of the various categories of fortune-tellers for their use of non-specific, non-precise and *omniscopus* language. It should also be remembered that they include both male and female fortune-tellers of different social, economic, educational and ethnic backgrounds representing coffee reading, astrology, palm reading, and cartomancy.

- (1) The exhaustive presentation of a theme and the use of qualifiers and quantifiers: Each excerpt has at least one passage which exhaustively categorizes a theme and exploits the use of qualifiers and quantifiers in so doing.

In Excerpt (1), representative of the “classic” fortune-teller, the theme is the general happiness of the client as it expressed in money, family relationships, a trip, and work. This particular excerpt was prompted by the sign of the fish which is “one of the best omens, (which) ... indicates good luck in everything” (Brent 1975:18):

“You have a fish. This fish, you’ll be *happy*. There’s *money* — you’ll get.

I swear on my life. You’re a good girl. You have a good heart. You’re very gentle. Some little thing is ’noying you, ’derstand? Everything will be good for you. I swear on my life. Near future — you’ll be *happy*. You’ll be very *happy*. One of the *children* has, you’ll make a *birthday*? What d’ya want to make him something, a little *party*.

Yes, you have a *trip*. Then you don’t have enough *money*. Then, I see you have a good *trip*. You’re *travelling*. You’ll have a *surprise*. You’ll be very happy at *work*. You’ll get more *money*. They like you very much, but there’s one big person, someone wanted to ’noy you. It’s nonsense, ’derstand. (Excerpt 1)

In Excerpt (2), also representative of the “classic” fortune-teller, the theme is the female client’s domination over men and the implications of this in her relationships.¹² The male astrologist introduced the theme based on the “crossing of planets” and finishes it with discussing the client’s particular constellation of the sun.

“Uh... it looks like your planet crosses the planet of *a man*; that’s your problem. And you like *to dominate a man*. That’s why you don’t get along with him. You want that you be *the man*. *You wear the pants: he wears the dress*. ’derstand? If he wears the dress then I advise you marry him. It’s not yours, it comes out that way, *you’re strong*. And *he’s afraid of you*, every man will want you, but he has a reckoning to make. *He’s afraid, he’s afraid of the “domnation”* (domination) you’ll have on him. You got to, you try, you’ll have *ya’ani* more or less a different situation. Completely. You, your constellation is the sun. (Excerpt 2)

Excerpt (3), representative of the category of “western specialist or expert” is particularly rich in the exhaustive categorization of themes and the use of qualifiers and quantifiers. The particular themes being categorized are: the different possible kinds of “interest” the client will have to pay for being competitive; his intellectual structure and creative imagination; and his resultant ability and talent to be successful in many and diverse fields of endeavour.

“*Interest*, uh, emotionally, *interest* in tension, *interest* in that in many times he acts according to logic and not perhaps do what he really wants to in his heart. And the *interest* that you pay is that you are overly tense, you’re a very uncalm person and you, uh... are in the midst of too many conflicts, the, that’s the *interest*.” (Excerpt 3)

Eh, you actually could have *studied many things*. I’m not just trying to say that “*you could have studied anything*”. No, your *structure* is such and your *intelligence is constructed* in such a way that you could have *learned many things* and *worked in many fields*. That’s your *structure*. There are some people who are more specific, there are

people who, at most, can know about some three fields, but there are people with a *structure* like you, that they can *try their hand in all kinds of things*.

You have an *exceptionally good imagination*. Most people do not have a *creative imagination*. For most people the *quantity of their imagination is limited*. Yes, the *quantity of your imagination is exceptionally good*; that can help you in *all the areas of life*.

There is no *area in life* where you can't decide to exploit your *imagination*. None. None. And, therefore, that's one of the reasons that you can work in *so many fields*. You can take *ten different jobs* in some industrial plant because of your *imagination* and because your *talent*. You can try *ten different things in some specific field* because of your *imagination*... There's almost no... There's a *fantastic imagination* here *quantity-quality- and comprehension wise*. Yes, you could even take nothing, that is to say you could even start from scratch and create something." (Excerpt 3)

Excerpt (4), despite the fact that it, too, is representative of the category of "western specialist or expert", resembles more of a conversation than a professional monologue until the astrologist (reluctantly) describes some of the principles of astrology to the client upon his explicit (and insistent) request. Thus, here, (as in the other astrology session in Excerpt 2), one of the themes being exhaustively categorized is astrology itself:

- G: Ah, ah, February '73 (rustles papers, a brief pause, she murmurs something to herself) Yes (brief pause) uh...yes, absolutely, in addition to, but
- C: No, explain, I absolutely don't understand... uh... about this... what is this *constellation*.
- G: (interrupting) You, actually, what can I explain? Look, but it's difficult for me to explain if you don't understand uh... *astrology*. Uh, however...
- C: But no, you, you're focussing in on the... *those months*, it interests me.

G: No. No, I'll be giving you some *other months* straightaway, but, uh, I'll tell you what, your *sun is in the beginning of Libra*.

C: Uhum...

G: Correct? Your *sign is Libra*. Because... *Why is your sign Libra? Because the sun is in the sign of Libra*.

C: Uh huh...

G: Everyone knows that, uh... *what sign he is* (raising her voice) as it were (lowering her voice) because... *it's always the sun that determines the sign*.

C: O. K.

G: Now, here the... *planets con... continue their orbit*, correct?

C: Um...

G: You have a *specific constellation the moment you were born*.

C: mm hmmm.

G: That's it. *It's "fixed"*. Now, *the planets continue their orbit*. Right? *So the day has its own special constellation and influences the constellation of...* (lowering her voice) *the horoscope of your birth*.

C: Uh huh.

G: Now, *there are a few slow planets* that... *some planets are faster*, that means, *such as the Sun, the Moon, Mercury, Venus they orbit rather quickly and... not that much, they have a slight influence*, but not that much. Then there are *those that are slow*. *They orbit slowly* (raising her voice). And also... uh *their influence is very strong*. (Lowering her voice) Now, that, *that year* that I'm talking about, '73, *Pluto eclipsed with your sun*.

Saturn made a "square" (in English) (raises her voice). This, by the way, also that which, after all the *Yom Kippur War was predicted, it was predicted*, they said *in advance*.

C: According to the *birth date of the country*!

G: Ye-es, according to the *astrological map of the country*. (Excerpt 4)

In Excerpt (5), representative of the intermediate category, the exhaustive categorization of a theme is represented by a brief “either-or” categorization regarding the client’s ability to separate personal and professional aspects of his life, followed by a lengthier passage discussing the time and essence of a future change, stimulated by his “card of fate”.

“Uh the most outstanding characteristic of yours is that you do not mix friendship with *either* business *or* money affairs.” (Excerpt 5)

“Today, or at the present, you are standing at the threshold of a *change in life* in the sense of *work*, in the sense of *a career*, uh...

“This change, I estimate it in a “*unit of time*”, that is to say, it could be *a week, a month, a year*. I’ll wager on *a month*...

Look, it’s coming back again. Your card of fate again... and this *change* of yours is in the area of your *work or what you are doing*. Once again, it can be because you *change* a lot. But also in ‘what you’re doing there’s a *change* that will bring you a very big income and you aren’t used to it. Of course, everything is relative.” (Excerpt 5)

In Excerpt (6), also representative of the intermediate category, we have two brief examples of the use of qualifiers and quantifiers (“perhaps”, “either-or”, “sort of”) one of which is related to the symbol of a “chain”; and two exhaustive classifications of themes, one based on an upside down “V” (fairly obvious, but not listed in conventional handbooks of coffee or tea signs) and the other triggered by the “key”: “intelligent appraisal can see and seize new opportunities” (Brent 1975:19):

“Uh, even though that here as well I’m telling you to wait a bit, a few months *perhaps*, two *or* three, until the period of the end of winter, and I, uh, you’ll do things. (Excerpt 6)

“Uh, ... I see a chain, a chain which is very linked with your past. It doesn’t let you develop, “sort of”. (Excerpt 6)

“What is interesting, if we talk about painting, if we talk about an image, there is an upside down “V” here. That means a *revision or change* can lead to *victory*. You see, the

sign is like this. Only an *upheaval* can lead to your personal *victory* over those things. (Excerpt 6)

"There is another very interesting form, (pause), a "key", (a long pause). *This key* is a symbol of a *dream* or an *expectation* of something in the future...

.....

This form of *the key* is a symbol of a *new house*, *another place*, *another time* (pause) and *this key* will give you *the way to the future*." (Excerpt 6)

- (2) The use of frame words and omnibus words ("someone", "something", "someway", etc.) is also found in the discourse of fortune-tellers of all the different categories and branches. The following examples are taken from Excerpts (1), (4), and (6):

"*Some little thing* is 'noying you, 'derstand?" (Excerpt 1)

"They like you very much, but there's *one big person*, *someone* wanted to 'noy you. It's nonsense, 'derstand." (Excerpt 1)

"Did it influence you *someway* in the... Did this war influence you in *any special way*?" (Excerpt 4)

"No, because, look uh...here there's *some...* there's a *certain something*... a rather difficult constellation for you... During... that year, actually primarily in September-October 1973, uh..." (Excerpt 4)

"But that year... It was a year that was very... Did you lose *someone*? Or *what...*?" (Excerpt 4)

"There is another very interesting form, (pause), a "key", (a long pause). This key is a symbol of a dream or an expectation of *something in the future...*" (Excerpt 6)

- (3) The use of what we have called placing a theme on a scale of relativity ("more" or "less", "better", "enough", "too much", etc.) is also found in the discourse of fortune-tellers of all the different branches and categories. The following examples are taken from Excerpts (1), (2), (3), and (6):

“Yes, you have a trip. Then you don’t have *enough money*. Then, I see you have a good trip. You’re travelling. You’ll have a surprise. You’ll be very happy at work. You’ll get *more money*. (Excerpt 1)

“You’ll have *ya’ani more or less* a different situation.” (Excerpt 2)

“Look, if you want to get ahead in a successful way, eh, you have to be a *more harmonious person*. What does it mean to be a *more harmonious person*?...

That is to say, you want everything, and you have to be a *more h-a-r-m-o-n-i-o-u-s person*. Otherwise you’ll get things, but it won’t give you very much. I, perhaps you didn’t think in this direction before, or you never considered yourself as a person with internal disharmony, but, eh, you’ll see yourself from this angle.” (Excerpt 3)

“You have an extraordinary amount of energy; you are a man who is capable of working hard. A great, great amount of energy, *but you’re also not efficient, eh, enough*, and you waste energy. (Excerpt 3)

“There are some people who are *more specific*, there are people who, at most, can know about some three fields, but there are people with a structure like you, that they can try their hand in all kinds of things.” (Excerpt 3)

“Perhaps... *more* to see things on a *more* long-term range. And what is also interesting in the area of the, the professional area, things will happen. Here, what I suggest to do, to the degree that it depends on you, is be *more dynamic, more alert*, and you’ll be *more open* to changes. I even recommend it and it will be worth it for you. (Excerpt 6)

- (4) The notion of general truths, or “plain folk’s” device, or two-bit philosophy is also found in the discourse of all branches and categories of fortune-telling. The following examples are taken from Excerpts (2), (3), and (5):

“(You’re) overly tense, and that surely isn’t healthy.”
(Excerpt 2)

“You know what’s good and what’s bad for you.”
(Excerpt 2)

“Most people do not have a creative imagination.”
(Excerpt 3)

“Of course, everything is relative.” (Excerpt 5)

Thus we can clearly see that the discourse of fortune-telling — both in popularized written form and in the dyadic face-to-face encounters between fortune-tellers of the three different categories we have postulated representing all the major branches of fortune-telling, and their clients — relies heavily on a non-specific, non-precise, multi-purposeful, i.e. an *omniscopus* use of language.

This particular use of language may initially be inherent in the semiotic system of fortune-telling itself, i.e. as an integral part of the meanings of the specific signs of the various branches of fortune-telling. We have also seen, however, that it is not limited there. Much of the discourse of fortune-teller/client sessions may be indeed described as an interface of *omniscopus* and persuasive language. This makes supreme sense in that these two kinds of languages are most suitable for the roles played by the fortune-tellers and the clients, and the kinds of “external” and “internal” plots they are respectively creating. The professional fortune-teller’s monologue and the client’s internal self-schematic processing should be viewed as part of a larger theory of dynamic relativism wherein holistic, multi-dimensional thematic continua are presented in specific contexts which are perceived independently and individually by the participants of the dyadic fortune-telling/client encounter.

Notes

1. R. uses the Hebrew idiom “there is to you” - *yesh lax*” for “you have”, replacing the Hebrew word *lax* with the equivalent Arabic form *lik*, resulting in the hybrid expression *yesh lik* throughout the entire session.
2. The “fish” which R. sees in the coffee residue is an omen for “good luck in everything”.
3. “I swear on my life” is our translation of the Hebrew idiom *be-xayai* - “on my life”, which is used here where where an equivalent English speaker might say “I swear it”.

4. We have attempted in our translation to indicate that R. has dropped certain syllables in rapid colloquial conversation.
5. The word “happy” here is an Arabic-Hebrew hybrid *mabsutit* (*mabsut* Arabic for “happy”, *-it* Hebrew fem. sg. suffix), quite commonly used by most Israelis in everyday conversation. It is preceded by the standard Hebrew *smexa* which appears twice in the text. In the half hour 549 word session, the word *mabsutit* appears ten times.
6. Here R. replaces the standard Hebrew word *nesiya* with the English word “trip”.
7. The fortune-teller is “putting the ball in the client’s court”, i.e. the responsibility is now the client’s. In this way, he induces the client to think about specific information or instances from his life. The use of a metaphor such as “interest” is open to individual interpretation, therefore it can be considered as part of the non-specific, non-precise, multi-purposeful or “*omniscopus*” use of language we will be discussing further on.
8. H. uses professional terminology such as “card of fate” “unit of time”, etc. Similar use of professional terms can be found in the sessions with palm and coffee readers as well.
9. H. uses the English word “income” here, which is not that uncommon among educated Israelis.
10. S. also appears in our data as a “western specialist or expert” as well as in the intermediate or middle category (between the “classical” versus the “western specialist”). S. prefers to be known as an expert graphologist and palm reader, does not present himself as a coffee reader, and even attempts to conceal his talent for coffee reading.
11. We are using signs of tea and coffee reading and an astrological text to exemplify a general phenomenon. The use of *omniscopus* meanings in cartomancy will be discussed in Chapter 6 on the interface of the visible and the textual in cartomancy.
12. We will not deal here with the specific issues related to the sex of the fortune-tellers and clients and the implications of this important issue in our data. We feel that this question, as well as others, such as the social, economic, educational, ethnic, etc. variables and their implications in fortune-telling in general and the discourse of fortune-telling in particular are all topics worthy of further research.

Chapter 3

Image Building and Establishing Credibility in Fortune-Telling

1. Introduction

In this chapter we will discuss various aspects of the discourse and ceremony used by selected fortune-tellers of the second and third categories, (the “Western specialist or expert” and the intermediate group combining elements of the “classic” fortune-teller and the “Western specialist or expert”), from the point-of-view of their creating an image and establishing credibility in the eyes of the client. This chapter is relevant to the concept of dynamic relativism in that the establishment of credibility and the creation of an image is directly related to both the relative dynamic aspects of the persuasive discourse of fortune-telling as well as the reciprocal and the individual self-perceptions of the encoder and decoder in the context of the fortune-teller/client encounter.

As we have previously stated, the dyadic encounter between a fortune-teller and client in general, and especially those fortune-tellers purporting to be “Western specialists or experts”, are similar to monologues, particularly professional monologues, for several reasons:

- (a) Both the fortune-teller “expert” and the “naive” client have specific roles and have not previously met. An appointment has been made and a fee will be exchanged, but a potential professional relationship has not yet been established. In this respect the encounter between the “expert” fortune-teller and client can be likened to the professional encounter between a patient and a doctor, psychologist, psychotherapist, marriage counsellor, etc.
- (b) It is presupposed and expected that one party (the “expert”) will do most of the talking while the client will remain passive or

answer certain question, usually with a “yes” or “no”, or provide certain basic information or verification regarding himself or ask for further clarification.

- (c) The members of the fortune-teller/client dyad may not be seeking each other’s approval, although the fortune-teller will be trying to establish credibility in the client’s eyes and possibly develop a long-term professional relationship.

The above factors naturally affect all of the elements associated with the the encounter between “expert” fortune-tellers and clients in general and the texts they create in particular. We have also previously established that the language used in this particular kind of “professional monologue” between fortune-teller and client is heavily laced with elements of persuasive communication whose goal is to influence people’s behavior by appealing to or influencing their reason as well as their emotions.

Some of the basic characteristics of persuasive language we have found relevant in the fortune-teller/client encounter include:

- (i) the order, arrangement, and presentation of carefully chosen themes in a way that they have the most influence on and be maximally retained in the client’s memory (known in the literature of persuasion as the “primacy-recency” phenomenon;¹
- (ii) the order, arrangement and presentation of positive versus negative information as well as what we call the mitigation of negative information in such a way that the client will be maximally receptive to the fortune-teller;
- (iii) the frequent use of “frame” or “omnibus” words in order to provide a wide potential of subjects with which the client can identify;
- (iv) the use of commonly believed, well-known proverbial truths known as “plain folk’s device” in the literature of persuasion in order to establish a bond between the fortune-teller and client based on shared experiences and beliefs;

as well as familiar rhetorical devices such as:

- (v) the use of specialized terminology, jargon, metaphor, repetition, the mixing of registers, hedging, hesitations, dangling sentences, silence, and others traditionally used in order to influence people.

The role of persuasive language in general like the *omniscopus* use of language with which it partially overlaps, has very fundamental textual implications in that:

- (a) it appears in both the micro- and the macrolevels of language, and
- (b) it is part and parcel of the development and motivation of the “external” and “internal” plots created by the fortune-teller and the client respectively.

Furthermore, as we have previously stated, our data have shown that the notions of image building and the establishment of credibility is particularly marked in the second, and to a lesser extent, the third categories of fortune-tellers. We have also found that it is especially prevalent in palm reading and astrology which are also generally considered by the Israeli public to be the most “reliable” or “serious” of the branches of fortune-telling we have discussed.

The notions of image building and establishing credibility are related to linguistic, paralinguistic and extralinguistic variables and are part of the larger super-semiotic systems of fortune telling we have previously described. In the first set of tables we will first present an analysis of the sessions of three male palm readers, M. (cf. Excerpt 3 in the previous chapter), Y. and S. (cf. Excerpt 6 in the previous chapter), who are representative of the second category of fortune-teller and openly view themselves as “western specialists and experts”.

This will be followed by a second set of tables covering the same set of variables for H. and S. (cf. Excerpts 5 and 6 in the previous chapter), two coffee readers, both of whom do other “readings” as well. Both H. and S. combine more than one branch of fortune-telling in a single session. H. usually reads cards and coffee and S. is primarily a palmist and graphologist. The second set of tables represent data taken from recorded sessions with H. during a cartomancy session and S. during a coffee reading session.²

The first set of tables is divided into three sections which will cover:

- (1) the extralinguistic elements of the ceremony involved with each palm reader;
- (2) the elements taken from persuasive communication (e.g. order of presentation, primacy-recency, mitigation, image building and what we refer to as “image displacement”, “plain folk’s device”;

- (3) other elements of discourse (e.g. the exhaustive presentation of a theme, selected rhetorical devices such as repetition and emphasis, the use of metaphor, the mixture of registers, dangling sentences, professional terminology, unambiguous statements, defensive statements or “hedging”.

The second set of tables will cover the same three areas: (1) extralinguistic, (2) persuasive communication and (3) discourse for the middle category of fortune-tellers. It will be interesting to note that the “exhaustive presentation of a theme” appears to be less relevant for this particular group which tends to specifically state “time predictions” for future events, which makes them appear to be closer to the stereotyped version of “fortune-tellers” generally held by the public.

We would like to remind the reader that the judgement of credibility is made by the client. The various criteria, be they verbal or non-verbal, usually center around the notions of self-confidence, authority, and the possible identification between the fortune-teller and the client, i.e. the dynamic relative manner in which they choose to view each other. As we have previously stated, it may very well be that there are three categories of clients as well:

- (1) the “non-believer” or sceptic who (if he or she actually visits a fortune-teller) has either come to be “unimpressed” or possibly “catch” the fortune-teller at his bluff. Such a client will usually not find the fortune-teller credible unless the latter manages to create a “breakthrough” by correctly uncovering one or more instances in the client’s past. This kind of client is predisposed *not* to find the fortune-teller credible.
- (2) the “believer”, who is predisposed to perceive the fortune-teller as being credible; and has expressly come for advice and answers; and
- (3) an intermediate category between these two extremes, neither predisposed to believe or not to believe, more or less a “*tabula rasa*” who is most open to the verbal and non-verbal effects of the fortune-teller’s attempts to build an image and establish credibility.

Many of the relevant verbal and/or non-verbal variables involved in the fortune-teller’s building of a professional image and establishing of credibility have all been discussed, empirically tested and reported in the literature

of persuasion previously cited as well as in the psychological literature (Dickinson and Kelly 1985). The concept of identification and the establishment of trust has also been widely discussed in the literature of persuasion (Sandel 1977: 252, Simons et al. 1970). We have also added the notions of "image displacement" and the "mixture of registers" (e.g. the simultaneous use of the "inclusive we" together with slang and colloquialisms) as one of the discourse devices used to gain the client's trust and a feeling of identification. All of the linguistic and extralinguistic factors we have outlined above work conjointly in the fortune-teller/client session to help the fortune-teller present an image and establish credibility in the eyes of the client.

2. The data and analysis

Table 1 describes the ceremony surrounding the "Western specialist or expert" palm readers. In the term ceremony we include the entire procedure involved in the fortune-teller/client encounter: i.e. from making the initial contact and/or appointment, to the actual palm reading itself including the possibility of receiving a detailed written report of the session for an additional fee. Table 1 will illustrate that the ceremony differs with each individual palm reader and that M. makes the most conscious attempt to create the image of a "Western specialist or expert". The sex of the client male (m) and/or female (f) will be indicated on each table.

Table 1 shows a relative continuum of a professional image: M. (well-groomed, wearing casual, but tasteful expensive clothes) has all the external trappings of a successful young private doctor or psychologist-psychotherapist which is expressed in the procedures for making appointments, the payment of fees, the physical surroundings of his office, and the attempt to continue the relationship. Y. (a heavy set, carelessly dressed white-haired man in his sixties) gives the impression of being an eccentric old professor-type who is oblivious to his surroundings; while S. (thin, balding conservatively dressed) appears to be a simple and unassuming type who takes his work seriously. We would like to add that it is very common in Israel for professionals such as doctors, psychologists and counsellors (particularly those working for state-supported clinics) to receive their clientele at home in the way that S. and Y. do.

Table 2 indicates the order in which the various themes were presented

Table 1. *A comparative table of ceremony*

	M. palm reading (m)(f)	Y. palm reading (f)	S. palm reading (m)
<i>Making the appointment</i>	M. advertises with an impressive street sign (similar to that of a physician); Appointments are made in advance over the phone, thus a lack of flexibility with regard to the date and time of the appointment. The client is warned that if he cancels or does not appear for the appointment, he will be charged. M.'s secretary calls the client on the day of the appointment to remind him of the hour. M. demonstrates a willingness to be taped.	Y. advertises in the newspaper. Appointments are made over the phone. Y. demonstrates a flexibility regarding the date and time and a reluctance to be taped.	Appointments are made over the phone. S. demonstrates a readiness to meet client on the same day, flexibility regarding date and time of appointment and a willingness to be taped.
<i>Description of apartment or reception room</i>	An apartment arranged in the style of a clinic. The front door is left open so as not to disturb the "specialist" at his work. A waiting room filled with old magazines. M.'s office is elegantly and impressively furnished. M. sits behind a huge and elegant desk.	A regular apartment which is totally unkempt, and terribly untidy. Stacks of old newspapers almost to the ceiling. Piles of dust, enormous cockroaches and layers of dirt. Y. sits at large table filled with newspapers.	A regular apartment. S. receives clients in a closed-off balcony with very few accessoires. The furnishings and atmosphere are quite simple.
<i>The palm reading ceremony itself</i>	Client's hands are covered with a black liquid. Prints of the palms of both hands are made on white pieces of paper. Several prints of both hands are made. The client then washes his/her hands with a special soap. M. proceeds to write various signs and symbols on the prints and on specially prepared printed forms. M. informs the client of the possibility of receiving a detailed written report based on the printed form and the signs for an additional fee.	Y. examines the client's hands with the help of an ordinary paperclip. Y. examines the entire palm and hand (including the "protrusions" on the palm with a clip and his fingers without writing anything.	S. quickly notes certain signs which appear on the palms of both hands on an ordinary piece of paper. The entire procedure is quite simple with hardly any ceremony.

Table 2. *The order of presentation of themes*

Subject	M. palm. (f)	M. palm (m)	Y. palm (f)	S. palm (m)
Past	2	4	5	1 specific dates from the past
Professional matters	1	8	9	2
Future	7		3 (6-8 years)	3,5
Wavering from past to future			7	
Emotional life**				4,6
Character traits	1,3	1,3	1	
Personal characteristics at present time	5 tension	6,10 internal disharmony		
“ego-trip”	8	2,14,9		
Social relations**		13		
Health problems			2,6	
Studies (education)			4,8	
Plain folk’s device	6	12	10	

by the individual palm readers. M. (for both a male and a female client) and Y. (female client) open with personality traits and then proceeded to discuss various themes in what appears to be a random order with M. ending the sessions with what we have identified as an “ego-trip”, i.e. inundating the client with complimentary and positive statements about him or herself. S. followed a different order of presentation, but the palm reading session was preceded by a graphological analysis. The two themes marked with a double asterisk (**) represent topics which the clients specifically inquired about.

It is interesting to note that only S. made specific reference to times of the past, while Y. made more general predictions regarding the future and mixed the past and future. M., consistent to his image of the “professional counsellor” type, spoke the most about the character and personality traits of the clients at the present. He is also the only one of the three who introduced the “ego-trip” (more for the male than the female client), while Y.,

the older, professor-type concentrated more on health problems and education. It is also worthy to note that when one of these dynamic relative continua was chosen by the palmist, it appeared more than once in the session, almost like a recurrent *leitmotif* in a literary text.

The data in Tables 1 and 2, indicate a direct connection between the extralinguistic elements of the ceremony and the thematic organization of the fortune-telling/client session which, together, function simultaneously to create a specific image for each fortune-teller and help him to establish credibility in the client's eyes. It will also be interesting to note that M.'s use of persuasive language in general and the specific linguistic and extralinguistic devices directly connected to the creation of a image and the establishment of credibility is the most prevalent both quantitatively and qualitatively as can be seen in all the tables.

Table 3 illustrates the order of presentation of positive and negative information in terms of the primacy-recency phenomenon:

- (a) Does the positive information precede the negative information in order to make it easier for the client to listen and more readily accept what the expert has to say?
- (b) If negative information precedes positive information, is it then mitigated in the same sentence or discourse unit: (M.'s use of contrastive conjunctions such as "but")?
- (c) Is negative information presented exclusively without any expression of mitigation: (Y's use of the formula "a tiny, tiny, X too + negative quality");
- (d) Is negative information presented exclusively without mitigation? (Y's final statement)

Once again, the order, arrangement and presentation of these negative statements fit in with the image being aspired to by M. and Y.:

- (i) M. builds a case for the positive aspects of the client, even to the point of a possible "ego trip", followed by a reasonable qualification, thus, possibly appearing objective and professional. He adopts the following formula: "You are/have X negative qualities, *but* mitigation", sometimes followed by general advice.
- (ii) Y., on the other hand, the older professor type, allows himself the prerogative of not always mitigating his negative statements or qualifying them in such a way that he may appear to "talk down" to the client. He follows the formula: "You are/have a tiny drop of X negative qualities and that isn't good".

Table 3. *A comparative table of positive and negative information*

<i>Order of presentation</i>	M. palm. (f)	M. palm. (f)	Y. palm (m)
<i>Positive first and reservation</i>	The most out- standing trait in your character is ambition. You're extraordinarily ambitious. (pause) Very, very strong motivations to advance to the top, to develop... but you're not systematic enough, you're not patient enough.		
<i>Positive reaches level of "ego-trip" followed by mitigated negative qualities</i>	You're worth more than others... <i>But</i> oftentimes it can can be like an un- processed diamond because (pause)... it's not certain that you really use this quality the way it should be used.		
<i>Only negative aspects (but qualified) followed by general impersonal statement</i>	A tiny, tiny drop too nervous, a tiny, tiny drop too impulsive, A tiny, tiny drop of too much appetite. It isn't desirable.		
<i>Presentation of negative without mitigation</i>	It's as if I must tell you I'm doubtful whether you know what you want, desire, aspire to.		

- (iii) S. concentrates less on the personality characteristics of the client and more on the past and future. (This is indicative of the difference between chiromancy and chirognomy.) Whatever negative statements he makes are more general and/or directly connected to the signs or other aspects of the chart he has written.

Table 4. *Image building and establishing credibility*

M. palm. (m)	M. palm. (f)	Y. palm. (f)	S. palm (m)
...Look, the most outstanding trait in your character is ambition.	That is to say in a practical and realistic way... That is to say with such an ego it is impossible to do a mediocre thing.	You understand. You understand It's clear. Look, madame. Look, madame: We... Do you understand what I'm saying... Do you know what that is?	Here there are things connected to your past.
Look, all of this, but you're not systematic enough.			Here I have something connected to (your) age
From every point-of-view there is a very strong ambition.	Undoubtedly, (slight hesitation) there was uh, a trend here, or there was a situation here...	I wish to say, we refer to it as rigidity we refer to it as a tiny drop of inflexibility.	There are signs that you will confront a situation...
Look, uh... I think that you were very, very, very.	I don't want to sound dramatic.	We generally say, We see something. We have a slight fear here, madame	But there's a very basic point and it exists in you really in both palms of your hands.
In my opinion, Uh, you are a very competitive person, I think you know that.	One can see that there was a loss of self-confidence.	Look,	And I can't know what it is and from what it was
What does it mean a more harmonious person? Look, these are priorities... There may be another way... you understand... That is to say...	And one sees that you regarded your self-confidence... ...We see, the question is merely how much you've worked on yourself until today. The question is how much you've worked on yourself with a view towards removing these imperfections.	We cannot say.	
Perhaps you didn't think in this direction before, or you never considered yourself as a person with internal disharmony.	I believe that in addition to the strong ego here, there is another major problem here which says that you, it isn't sure that you know how to take the best opportunities for yourself in life.	I, at diagnosis am very strong, I'm like a professor, or a physician.	
That could definitely be of interest to you.			
then we said...			

It may be... it could definitely be.	It isn't that you know how to ride on your success, it isn't sure that you know... uh, how to really build on things in a good enough way.
You understand. So, for this point I would say yes get counselling.	I don't like to talk in the tone of predicting the future.
Yes, to arrange all your desires ...yes.	I don't want this to sound too general.
Uh, you're not a very patient person. You don't have patience, yes, that isn't good. Yes, you do not have enough patience...	Yes, there's enough data here to make it possible to quickly reach all those things that are disturbing you.
I might even say more than spontaneous.	Look...According to what I think...
I want you to understand, I'm not being critical of you, I'm telling you about yourself, I don't want you to take this as criticism.	You understand.
Look, I've told you your basic characteristics and traits, now, ah, so that I'll be able to endow you with something more, I merely suggest that you now bring up certain things.	Uh, look, once again, what I would like to hear now is what you've done with yourself.

Table 4 presents some of the expressions used by the palm readers to strengthen their professional image in the eyes of the client and to create and foster a feeling of credibility and trust. The utterances we have chosen range from modest and almost self-effacing, to authoritative and condescending. They include:

- (a) Decisive statements such as: M. to (f) client: "That is to say in a practical and realistic way", — the statement of a self-assured man who knows what he is talking about and is confident about what he says and how he says it.
- (b) Didactic, explanatory and/or authoritative statements: "you understand", "you see", "look here", dispersed generously in the discourse of both M. and Y.
- (c) Condescending or authoritarian statements made by the self-declared professional: "We see here", "I, at diagnosis, am very strong, ... I'm like a professor or a doctor".
- (d) Modest or self-effacing statements expressing reservation (which also create a possible image of honesty) S.: "I can't know what that is".

Once again, the expressions consistently used by these palm readers match the images they aspire to create:

- (i) M. "does not like to talk in the tone of predicting the future", nor does "he want to sound too dramatic", or "too general". On the contrary, he wants to sound scientific: he has "enough data", he refers to himself as "we", "one". His discourse is spiced with academic qualifications: "I believe", "I might say", "In my opinion", "it could definitely be". He reinforces his statements with rhetorical questions, repetition, affirmations, and lectures the client at times.
- (ii) Y. refers to the client as "Madame". He lectures to her, refers to himself as "we", and verifies that she understands by attempting to talk down to her level. His discourse may be viewed as that of the stereotypical self-confident professor-type, using the following formulae: "It's clear", "we refer to it as rigidity"; "we generally say"; "We see something"; "We have a slight fear here, Madame"; "We cannot say".
- (iii) S. on the other hand consistently refers to and relies on the notes he made consistently speaking about the "signs", the "things connected to (your) past", "in both palms of your hands". He is the unassuming professional who admits that he doesn't always "know what it is" or "from what it was caused".

In the examples found in Table 5 there is a certain deviation from the prevalent pattern of discourse between the "expert" and his client. This

Table 5. *Image displacement: Personal "I", inclusive "we"*

M. palm reading (m)	M. palm reading (f)
Uh, and here we cannot stop, we can stop our feelings, but not our imagination. It's like we can't ignore a beautiful woman, a beautiful woman, if we love women. It's impossible to ignore a beautiful rug, yes, if you have an aesthetic sense, that is to say, feelings you can stop. You can say that regarding that same beautiful woman you, you avoid developing feeling but the imagination is working.	Yes, here take for example if today they would test my musical ability, today they would say I hardly have any musical ability, no pitch, no rhythm, no, no, no. I'm sure that if I would want to be a superior accordionist, I'll succeed. It depends, you understand, it, depends on... It's a person's motivation, for many people crown themselves as kings in different kingdoms even if it doesn't always hit the target.

deviation is expressed by the expert no longer speaking exclusively about things related to the client, but rather about things related to himself as well in such a way that the "personal I" stands out as opposed to the "professional I". He is, following the Hebrew expression, "descending from Olympus for a moment".

This "personal I" is found in the sessions with M., who is making the most conscious attempt to maintain a professional image. He is using his own experience to aid him in pointing something out to the client about him or herself. This "personal I" is found in the passage of M.'s discussing his lack of musical talent with the female client. In the passage with the male client, the expert suddenly speaks in terms of the "inclusive we", where he includes both himself and the client within the same potential group of "men who like (beautiful) women", as opposed to an "authoritarian", "editorial", or "royal" "we". (This interpretation is further supported by a change in intonation.) These examples show that the professional expert has a more personal side as well, thus possibly instilling a feeling of trust and/or identification in the client and possibly may serve as an inducement for further professional contact.

In Table 6 we will present additional examples of the exhaustive presentation of a theme. It is interesting to note that the theme for the female client once again revolves around the notion of "dominance" (cf. G. the "classic" astrologer in the previous chapter). (The particular areas in life being discussed, however, as well as the two female clients themselves are different.)

Table 6. *The exhaustive presentation of a theme*

M. palm reading (m)	M. palm reading (f)
The most outstanding trait in your character is ambition. You're extraordinarily ambitious, (pause) very, very strong motivations to advance to the top, to develop, to be outstanding. It's very important for you to be outstanding, and... Not only a desire to be outstanding, but a desire to get there quickly in a purposeful and rational way. And... you also have a strong desire to become famous. You have an excellent ability to express yourself verbally. And you know how to use language very well... And you know how to get things, to apply pressure, to get things. You know how to be diplomatic. You know how to express yourself verbally and in writing. You may very well work as a writer, even in a creative way.	You're a very dominant type.³ You're a very dominant type. With a very strong ego, a very strongly felt ego... With such a strongly felt ego one must find a way of expressing this strong ego. That is to say in a practical and realistic way which is both dominant and in a way which provides optimal expression. That is to say, it is impossible to do a mediocre thing with such an ego, a thing which doesn't give expression to your character. For then life becomes very disappointing. And that is one of the central points in the essence of your character. The problem with the strong ego is that your parents didn't let your strong ego express itself.

Table 7. *A comparative table of selected rhetorical devices*

M. palm. (m)	M palm. (f)	Y. palm. (f)	S. palm (m)
Very, very, very strong motivations to advance to the top, to develop, to be outstanding. It's very important for you to be outstanding and... Not only a desire to be outstanding, but a desire to get there quickly in a purposeful and rational way. And... you also have a very strong desire to become famous.	It isn't sure that you know how to take the best opportunities for yourself in life. It isn't sure that you know how to ride on your success, it isn't sure that you know ...how to really build on things in a good enough way.	A tiny drop of laziness, not of idleness, a tiny drop of too much spontaneity, and a tiny drop too fast, a tiny, tiny drop too nervous, a tiny, tiny drop too impulsive, a tiny, tiny drop of too much appetite.	You haven't reached your peak, your professional peak, the peak of your ability.

I think that you were very, very, that you very much wanted to be independent, you very much wanted to act alone, to perform alone...

You want everything, and you want it quickly; you also want money, you also want a mate...

You have an extraordinary amount of energy; you are a man who is capable of working hard. A great, a great amount of energy.

...and you know how to get things, to apply pressure, to get things. You know how to be diplomatic. You know how to express yourself verbally, and in writing. You may very well be a writer, even in a creative way. That may very well be. Because you're always tense, because you have too many conflicts, because you're not happy...⁴

There is no area in life where you can't decide to exploit your imagination. None. None.

You have luck in life. You have luck in life.

...with a very strong ego, a very strongly felt ego, one must find a way of expressing this strong ego. That is to say in a practical and realistic way which is both dominant and in a way which provides optimal expression.

That is say with such an ego it is, impossible to do something mediocre. This is impossible with such an ego.

I've already said you're very, very talented.

A little tiny drop more flexible, a little tiny drop inflexible.

First of all, a little tiny drop of spiritual rest, to watch your health a tiny drop...

It's not that lacking, a little tiny drop.

The use of the exhaustive presentation of a theme is quite recurrent in M.'s monologue with the male client which can be viewed as a series of consecutive relative dynamic themes following each other in a chain-like series without necessarily having a coherent thematic connection between them. The "dominant ego" theme in the monologue with the female client func-

tions more as a *leitmotif* or a common denominator providing a sense of coherence, and even serving as a bridge, between the various themes.

Tables 7-12 exemplify the role of elements of persuasive communication. Table 7 will illustrate examples of repetition and emphasis which are found at both the microlevel of lexical items and the macrolevel of entire almost formulaic-like phrases and utterances. Note:

- (i) M.'s reliance on the formulae "very, very, X", "very strong X", "you are/have/want/ know/can do X, and also Y, and you are/have/want or know/can do also Z", "It isn't sure that X, it isn't sure that Y, it isn't sure that Z";
- (ii) Y's recurrent use of: "a tiny drop too much of X", "a little tiny drop too much of Y", "a tiny, tiny drop of Z"; and
- (iii) S.'s repetition of "peak": "You have reached your peak, your X peak, your peak of Y".

Other recurrent formulae such as "look, you understand, the recurrent use of "yes, you are X and Y, yes", the use of "we", "one", etc., have already been mentioned.

Table 8 presents examples of the use of metaphor which generally adds an emotional and more abstract element to the practical and realistic depiction the palm reader is trying to convey: "You are now in a period of troubled waters"; "you had your back against the wall", "it can be like an unprocessed diamond".

Table 9 illustrates the mixture of different registers within the same palm reading sessions. It is possible that the use of the higher register is designed to strengthen the image of the modern "western specialist or expert" while that of the lower register is functions to create a feeling of familiarity between the palm reader and client.

The more colloquial register: "There are no slip-ups", are particularly noticeable in juxtaposed collocation with M.'s more professional sometimes even literary (Biblical) register within the single utterance: "For many people crown themselves as kings in different kingdoms, even if it doesn't always hit the target".

Table 10 illustrates the use of dangling sentences,⁷ unambiguous statements, defensive statements or "hedgings", and the use of signs and professional terminology. All of these together further enhance the palm readers' image and the establishment of credibility:

Table 8. *The use of metaphor*

M. palm reading (m)	M. Palm reading (f)	Y. palm reading (f)
You had your back against the wall.	But oftentimes it can be like an unprocessed diamond.	You are now in a period of troubled waters.
And people who are competitive have to pay interest.	Here there is also part of the cake that you'll take for yourself.	
You have a knife like this where you cut wherever you want to cut.		

Table 9. *The mixture of registers*

M. palm reading (m)	M. Palm reading (f)	Y. palm reading (f)
In that oftentimes he acts according to his reason and not according to what he really might have wanted in his soul to do.	The question is how much you've worked on yourself with a view towards removing these, imperfections.	Worry about yourself and not about your head.
It's just like we can't ignore a beautiful woman, a beautiful woman, if we love women.	You are head and shoulders above ...	
That is to say you can be a buddy ⁵ with someone, you can be nice with people.	For many people crown themselves as kings in different kingdoms even if it doesn't always hit the target.	
Since you're not happy ⁶	This is also a problem one must work on because when a man has difficulty believing his fellowman then a man's belief in himself diminishes.	
Once again everything is tied-in together, if a man is courageous, if he has a strong ego, if he's competitive, you understand everything ties-in together. There are no slip-ups.		

Table 10. *The use of dangling sentences, unambiguous statements, defensive or hedging statements, professional signs and terminology*

	M. palm. (f)	M. palm. (m)	Y. palm. (f)	S. palm (m)
<i>Dangling sentences</i>	But often times it can be like an unprocessed diamond because...	You didn't win and you didn't lose it remained in the middle and...	As if there were no alternative, as if... To do as little as possible, not to want to grow, to expand, to gather dust, not your own and not of others, the most important thing that it's not...	
<i>Unambiguous statements</i>		Psychology, social work that definitely can be of interest to you. There is no area of life where you can't decide to exploit your imagination. None. None.		But there's a very basic point and it exists in you in both palms of your hands. I find that your point of emotional life has a weak point
<i>Defensive statements (hedging)</i>	That this sentence or statement could also be correct for others isn't essential at the moment since I've said you're head and shoulders above, way above. But that means that you should, uh ...should know how to build your life.		I have the impression the right eye - the left is weaker than the right- In every organ the right is weaker than the left, and this is the opposite - That's right - usually it's the opposite.	

<i>Signs</i>	I say this cautiously, I don't like to talk in the tone of predicting the future. One can work, yes there's enough data here to make it possible to quickly reach all those things that are disturbing you.	It's as if you have periods, in your hand, here, here. According to your hand I wouldn't say...	There are signs that you'll confront a situation where you'll have to make decisions in the area of your profession.
<i>and</i>		Here, there too, there are two, but here it's shorter, deeper, but shorter	But there's a very basic point, and it exists in you really, in both palms of your hands.
<i>professional</i>		If I find a line like this that isn't here at the age of 20 or 30 and its only passive and not active ...a plan, a weakness, empathy for a particular person, active if in both, of them. In one it's only hope, a desire, a plan, an ambition, and it won't always be realized if it isn't active. Here, it's wider, but here it's longer, in exactly the same place... But it won't be tomorrow. Once again, according to your hand, I this is my advice from the hand that I see.	I find that your point of emotional life has a weak point.
<i>symbols</i>		I count on what I see. I see this and I see that, I believe in my eyes more than my ears. The hand of one of the parents, in order to influence, a line should have been here.	

- (i) The dangling sentences allow the client to complete the missing information and thus participate more actively in the encounter.
- (ii) The unambiguous statements show that the palm readers “know what they’re talking about” and “are not afraid to take a stand”.
- (iii) The defensive or hedging sentences complete the picture: “they’re not afraid to admit it when they don’t know for sure”. This may be viewed as a display of frankness and honesty, possibly inspiring trust in the client.
- (iv) The use of professional signs may be viewed as a way of showing their expertise in their particular branch of palmistry.

Table 11. *A comparative table of selected elements of persuasive communication: qualifiers, quantifiers, omnibus words, scale of relativity*

M. palm. (f)	M palm. (m)	Y. palm. (f)	S. palm (m)
Here ther’s an overshadowing of your parents, or at least one of your parents on your ego, either because, because he himself, or she herself, or both of them themselves had a strong ego, or because of approaches of raising children which weren’t right... or there was a situation where they put your strong ego in the shade during your childhood, and maybe even a little today... but it could be part of your past.	It can also be some other problem, but... but there were some other things at home... You may very well work as a writer, even in a creative way, that’s definitely possible. You may very well work as a writer, even in a creative way, that’s definitely possible. You’ll already find another place to take out your emotions. What is another place? It’s writing, uh... another place is to take walks in nature, but you’ll already find that other place.	Too much pressure. Too much inconsistency. A little drop of laziness... A tiny drop of too much spontaneity, a little drop too fast... A little drop of too much appetite. You either did it a long time ago or you’re about to do it. Do you understand? It doesn’t matter if you’ve already done it. That means that after it happened or after it will happen you won’t be especially pleased. It’ll take time before you become used to it.	Its connected with a certain change in character, even the entire way way of relating to things. But there’s also something in your personal life, that’s a weak point or you’re running away from it, or it’s a certain hardship that you’ve resigned yourself to. You must not be conservative when it comes to making decisions.

You can strive to succeed in two main areas and both of them can be good for you. One of them is related to the social sciences. either psychology or social work. Both professions are very suitable for you, but you can also strive towards the arts. You can also succeed in these two areas within a very broad range of activities: For example, if you became involved in the theater, you could either act, or maybe even write a script, and perhaps organize, or produce, or even direct as well.	your mental structure is such and your intelligence is built in such a way that you could have learned many things and worked in many fields. That's your structure...
	One area that could very well interest you is psychology or social work. That could very definitely interest you. Law is another area that could interest you.
	You have too many conflicts.
	You do not have enough patience.
	You're not systematic enough.
	You should be a more harmonious person.

Tables 11 and 12 further illustrate of the use of qualifiers, quantifiers, and “omnibus” words (Table 11) and plain folk’s device” (Table 12) which we have also included in the *omiscopus* use of language in the previous chapter. The very frequent and prevalent use of these discourse devices allow the fortune-teller and client to successfully execute their communicative roles in this particular kind of dyadic encounter. First, they form the basis of the “external” plot created by the fortune teller, providing the general thematic areas and frameworks that will then form the basis of the “internal” plot of the client who will fill in the specific contextual information relevant to him or herself. Thus, the chain reaction created in fortune-teller/client *omniscopus* discourse, may be viewed as a symbiotic communicative relationship where each member provides the other the opportunity to achieve the goal of their meeting. The entire process is one which reflects all the aspects of dynamic relativism.

Table 12. *Plain folk's device*

M. palm reading (m)	M. palm reading (f)
I think that in general criticism should be constructive. You explain things to someone in an overall context, one thing is connected to another, yes, so it isn't criticism, it's simply guidance.	Alright, I'll tell something that sounds philosophical. A person has to know, has to live in a way that's best for him, and to know how to always evaluate the situation in such a way that it will be right, the best. Of course, everything in life and every situation in life stand, that is to say, as if they're trying to stand in a man's way from succeeding in it.
We can stop our feelings, but not our imagination.	...when a man has difficulty believing his fellowman then a man's belief in himself diminishes.
It's simple. These things could have very well gone together. They can go together. For example, there were people, there are people who worked in law, in business as well, they also worked at... yes, that is to say there are people who can do many things.	
Everyone is built differently. Everyone has his own amount.	
There are some people who are more specific there are people who, at most, can know about some three fields, but there are people with a structure like this that they can try their hand at all kinds of things.	

Table 13. *A comparative table of ceremony*

S. Coffee (f)	H. Cards (m)
The client is asked to drink coffee from a cup which must be white. Afterwards the client turns the cup over and the coffee reader examines it. Other details about S. appear in Table 1.	Appointments are made in advance over the phone. H. shows a willingness to be taped. The session takes place in the livingroom of a regular apartment. The client mixes and cuts the deck. H. spreads them on the floor barely looking at the client and after a few moments of silence begins to speak.

Tables 13-20 compare H. and S. who are representative of the intermediate or middle category. The particular data presented here are taken from recorded sessions of H. during a card reading session and S. giving a private coffee reading session.

By comparing these tables with the equivalent tables made for the male palm readers representing the “Western specialist or expert”, certain differences between these two groups can be found:

- (1) H. and S. maintain a certain ceremonial simplicity often, but not always, found in this category (Table 13).
- (2) The most outstanding differences can be found in the smaller number and the greater generality of the themes being discussed by the intermediate group, and in the order and manner of their presentation (Table 14).
- (3) The intermediate category in general devotes less time on complicated character analyses or personality traits. The negative information they present is usually related to outside events that may have deleterious effects on the clients. The general impression they give is one of “fate” being in control instead of the more rationalist view of “man” being in control of his destiny of the “western specialist or expert”.. In this way, they may be more similar to the “classic” fortune-teller (Table 15).
- (4) The members of this group tend to speak more about the future, rely less on developing themes in an exhaustive manner, and their discourse is distinguished by their frequent use and reliance on professional signs and symbols and their accompanying terminology. (The terminology used by palm readers is more generally scientific with heavy borrowings from psychology and medicine as opposed to terms related to their specific branch of fortune-telling.) Their use of discourse techniques to build their image and establish credibility as well as their use metaphor often are directly or indirectly motivated by their heavy reliance on the specific signs of their particular branch of fortune-telling (Tables 16-18).

Table 14. *The order of presentation of themes*

Subject	S. Coffee (f)	H. Cards (m)
The past	4	
Profession	2	1
The future	Included in every area	3
Feelings and emotions	1	4
Personality traits	3	2

Table 15. *A comparative table of positive and negative information*

	S. Coffee (f)	H. Cards (m)
<i>The order of the presentation of positive and negative and the mitigation of the negative</i>	Eh, that means that there should be some very important developments with a figure who will be central to your life, eh...even though, this means, there aren't any signs here that it will reach its peak and and will be clear cut when it comes to the view of married life. It may be that you'll confront a period of a dead-end or a lack of certainty afterwards. I see something leap forward, but it could be so great, even a thrust in life, changing cities, countries, even greater. ...to a figure that you will love, but there's a sign here of a large concession on your part, that I don't know what it is, or a low period.	Look, the family unit fell apart. But despite the fact that there's a sign that it fell apart as it were because of something bad, but it wasn't people who were involved in it, or the way it happened. It didn't happen. It didn't happen in an ugly way. That means dirty things and things that weren't part of it.

Table 16. *Image building and establishing credibility*

S. Coffee (f)	H. Cards (m)
I can't tell you this in all certainty. That I don't know what this is...	I know that it will bring you money. At the moment I know that it will bring you money.
I can't know that from the rest of the signs.	Let's say that people are involved especially women.
Look carefully, I've focused my vision on the period of the next three years. I'll try to look a little further ahead, uh, I'm incapable at the moment. I can't.	It isn't true Look, the family unit fell apart.

It's very difficult to answer.	Do you understand?
I even recommend it, it'll be worth your while. In my opinion it's something mysterious.	Do you know what I mean?
	Look, I see a fair woman, I see two children. I see another man.
	I know you have two more. So, I'll tell you something in a moment. I'll tell you something in a moment.

Table 17. *Time predictions*

S. Coffee (f)	H. Cards (m)
For you the course of your emotional life is a process that begins in the period of the years, the year 1980.	This change, I estimate it in a unit of time. That is to say it could be a week, a month, a year. I'll wager on a year.
Things will happen to you in 1980.	There's a physical separation resulting from a trip, or because of a trip, really in the range of... soon.
This coming year...	
During this period...	
The period of 1980.	
The closer you get to the age of 40.	
A few months, two or three.	
After 40...	
That will begin within six or seven months.	
When you'll be 39, 40...	
Now ... During this period	

Table 18. *The use of metaphor*

S. Coffee (f)	H. Cards (m)
A period of a dead-end...	A threshold of change...
A stone in the well...	
A barrier of uncertainty...	
It (a chain) doesn't allow you to soar beyond where you are today.	
It isn't a magic key... This key will give you the way to the future.	

Table 19. *The use of unambiguous statements, defensive or hedging statements, professional signs and terminology*

	S. Coffee (f)	H. Cards (m)
<i>Unambiguous statements</i>	(It) will certainly happen to you, even though I see something new during the period of 1980, uh, it won't be the peak-year in your life, certainly. And I even recommend it, it'll be worth your while.	I know you have two more. (Children, the client came with his daughter.) S. (the daughter who accompanied him) is the fairest of them. No joke, it came up twice.
<i>Hedging statements</i>	I can't tell you this in all certainty, I can't know that from the rest of the signs even though here as well, I'm telling you to wait a bit, a few months, maybe, I don't know how it works. you, in your subconscious, but, uh... I think so. It's very difficult to answer.	Of course, everything is relative: I mean, once again, you can say that's the way it is with everyone. It isn't true, this is very characteristic of you.
<i>Professional signs and terminology</i>	There aren't any signs here that it will recur at its peak. There's a sign of an obstacle for you...	The card of fate... A unit of time... But even though there's a sign that it fell apart...

There are signs of a
struggle. No.

I see signs of an anchor,
as if you've reached some shore.

I see a chain. I don't know
why your past appears in a
sign like this...

If we talk about an image,
there's an upside down "V"
here.

Do you see the sign?

There is another very
interesting form, a key.
The key is a symbol of a
dream or an expectation of
something in the future...

This form of the key is a
symbol of a new house,
another place, another time
and this key will give you
the way to the future.

- (5) The discourse of the intermediate category also contains a high frequency of unambiguous statements particularly with regard to time predictions of future events more rarely found in the discourse of the second category. These particular unambiguous and/or hedging statements are also more directly related to the signs of fortune-telling for the intermediate group rather than the "Western specialist's expertise" in psychological or medical matters (Table 19).
- (6) The register of the discourse of this category is more informal but still educated standard. Therefore, the mixing of registers with colloquialisms and slang is less noticeable and less highly marked than in the discourse of the "Western specialist or expert". Their use of "plain folk's device is also less noticeable and is more suitable or natural to the more conversation-like quality of their discourse (Table 20).

As we have previously pointed out, our analysis of the fortune-teller/client dyadic encounter supports other research done in the fields of interpersonal communication (e.g. Goffman 1970, Gumperz 1964, Hymes

Table 20. *A comparative table of selected elements of persuasive communication: qualifiers, quantifiers, omnibus words, scale of relativity, plain folk's device*

S. Coffee (f)	H. Cards (m)
Some big leap forward...	The beginning of this was during some trip...
Now, during this period... I don't recommend that you do anything unusual in the emotional area, because it won't help. I think you have to let things happen naturally.	You know a lot of women. A lot of women. Many women.
Don't get too involved. Something is holding you back.	That means something that you'll earn your living from or you are making your living from. Something that brings you your income.
You'll use this key or someone will use this key.	Once again it can be because you change a lot.
We'll say this or that on this or that day.	Of course everything is relative.
It's very hard to know.	
The possibility that very important and very significant things for you will happen is great.	
Don't get too involved.	
You're very attached to the past.	

1978); dyadic communication (e.g. Siegman and Pope 1972); and persuasive communication in general (e.g. Jamieson 1985, Sandell 1977); and the notion of self-schemating processing in particular.

By presenting the client with persuasive and *omniscopus*, multi-purposeful, non-specific, non-precise language; exhaustive possibilities to choose from, as well as qualified statements, utterances containing frame words, omnibus words and umbrella terms, a scale of relativity as well as general truths, the fortune-teller supplies *general contexts* and *broad content* slots by varied linguistic means which permit the client to supply the *specific content information* from his own mind. Such self-generated information and messages tend to be more exhaustively processed and better retained than non-self-related or associated information (Markus 1977), or responses provided by another party.

Our research in fortune-telling is most relevant and closely parallel to

the research done on the Barnum effect, which has been defined in the following way:

The psychological phenomenon whereby people accept general personality interpretations (Barnum profiles) as accurate descriptions of their own unique personalities has been given the name 'the Barnum effect' after P. T. Barnum, a famous circus owner whose formula for success was always to have a little something for everybody (Snyder and Shenkel 1976), (Dickson and Kelly 1985:367).

Indeed, the language employed in Barnum profiles is quite reminiscent of the language we have found in fortune-telling sessions:

Barnum profiles consist of a variety of statements: 'Vague, e.g., 'you enjoy a certain amount of change and variety in life'; Double-headed, e.g., 'you are generally cheerful and optimistic but get depressed at times'; Modal characteristics of the subject's group, e.g. 'you find that study is not always easy'; favorable, e.g., 'you are forceful and well-liked by others'. (Sundberg 1955). (Dickson and Kelly 1985:367)

Much of the empirical research (Forer 1949, Marks and Kammann 1980, Snyder and Shenkel 1977, Weisberg 1970) have shown that these vague and generalized personality assessments are considered to be highly accurate and reinforce both the subject's faith in the validity of the assessment device and, subsequently, the clinician's production of more generalized as opposed to specific assessments of personality characteristics. Our own research in the discourse of fortune-telling show that fortune-tellers, particularly of the second as well as the third categories, are indeed functioning in similar ways in their attempts at building professional images and creating credibility in the eyes of their clients.

It has generally been accepted (Forer 1949, Gauquelin 1979, O'Dell 1972, Weinberger and Bradley 1980) that the Barnum effect is overwhelmingly accepted due to the high base rate of occurrence of these personality characteristics in the general population. Our own work on the discourse of fortune-telling, however, also tends to concur with the research of others (Dean and Mather 1977, Hyman 1977, 1981, Marks and Kammann 1980) which strongly suggests that the high acceptability of Barnum profiles (and fortune-telling) is due to the fact that they allow the subject (or the client) to project their own specific personal interpretations within the larger generalized framework. This, of course, may also be reinforced by the fact that many of the characteristics have a high base rate in the population making them appear to be universally valid.

It is also significant to note that Barnum profiles often tend to be presented in a favorable light accentuating the socially desirable characteristics of the subjects. Favorable interpretations of socially desirable personality characteristics subsequently have been found to be more readily accepted by subjects as well (Sundberg 1955, Halperin et al. 1976, Mosher 1965, Weisberg 1970, Weinberger and Bradley 1980). This may also be the case in the discourse of fortune-telling, particularly in the order, arrangement and presentation of positive versus negative statements, and the fairly prevalent mitigation of negative statements on the part of the fortune-tellers we have recorded. It has also been found that unfavorable interpretations may be more readily accepted when delivered by people with a higher perceived status. A similar phenomenon is found in the higher frequency of negative statements made by fortune-tellers of the second category, particularly by those who openly compare themselves with professional psychologists and physicians.

Empirical research examining the variable of the "clients' level of sophistication" (Forer 1949, Schroeder and Lesyk 1976) tend to show contradictory results. Although the subjects with a "higher level of sophistication" generally accepted Barnum statements less readily than more naive subjects, this is far from a hardfast rule. Our own preliminary questionnaire data also indicate a more general skepticism on the part of more "sophisticated" subjects, but this is certainly not always the case with regard to (a) the decision to visit a fortune-teller (or a particular kind of fortune-teller) and (b) the acceptance or rejection of what the fortune-teller may say.

As we have previously mentioned, similar notions of unclear or imprecise language, (as well as lack of readability, double talk and meaningless communication), have been shown to have a high acceptability rate if received from a seemingly legitimate or prestigious source (e. g. the "Dr. Fox Hypothesis", Armstrong 1980), applied to academic lectures and articles in the field of management research, particularly those containing technical terms and argot.

This "Dr. Fox" principle also seems to function in ways similar to those we have outlined in our description of the use of non-specific, *omniscopus* and persuasive statements in the fortune-teller/client communication, on the condition that the fortune-teller appears to be reliable and credible in the client's eyes. This may explain why we have found the greatest incidence of the use of *omniscopus* and persuasive, non-specific, non-precise,

multi-purposeful language in the language of fortune-tellers in the second and third categories.

Our research also reinforces the work done on other variables which might contribute to the acceptance of the validity of Barnun-like statements, particularly "cold reading effects" (utilizing the extralinguistic behavior of clients) (Hyman 1977, 1981) that we have previously mentioned. Other potential variables include selective memory effects, hindsight bias, and situational dependency (Hyman 1977, 1981, Marks and Kammann 1980). It has also been found (and our own research seems to support this) that the subjects (and clients) may readily accept everything said in a session if they had been extremely impressed by the remarkable accuracy of one or two statements (Grange 1982, Marks and Kammann 1980).

As we have previously stated, the underlying assumption behind our research is that the use of language in its social context, as well as the linguistic and non-linguistic devices used to establish credibility, play an important role in the degree to which the fortune-teller will influence his client. It may very well be that we are dealing with phenomena that are highly intuitive in nature. It is also important to remember that the meeting between the fortune-teller and client is a one-to-one, face-to-face encounter, where the roles of the participants are usually clearly defined:

- (a) the fortune-teller, who does most of the talking, is the all-knowing "clairvoyant", as it were, and
- (b) the client, who is in reality applying what is being said to himself or to his own specific personal situation, is seemingly the "naive" or "unknowledgeable" member of the pair.

In practice, however, these roles become reversed and the client becomes his own fortune-teller (i.e. he becomes both the source and the recipient of the specific information whose generalized thematic framework was introduced and presented by the real fortune-teller).

There is a great deal of research left to be done on the connection between personality characteristics and the well-defined roles played by the fortune-teller and the client. The relationship between the kind of client (the "non-believer", "believer", or an intermediate category) and their willingness to accept Barnun-like statements. The personality of the fortune-teller most probably also plays a significant part in how the material is received (cf. similar research in psychology: Halperin et al. 1976, Kelly and

Renihan 1984, Snyder et al. 1976, Mosher 1965, Sundberg 1959, Weisberg 1970).

Finally, the most interesting notion of patients and clients taking on the personality characteristics attributed to them (what we shall later refer to as self-fulfilling prophecies in Chapter 6) has already begun to be studied with regard to astrology (Delancey and Woodyard 1974) and more research is definitely needed in this area. The particular personality characteristics of the examiner (or fortune-teller) and the subject (client) which allow the former to be perceived as having high status and thus being possibly more credible in the eyes of the latter (Halperin et al. 1976, Kelly and Renihan 1984) may also provide a potential field for interesting and fruitful research.

Notes

1. The primacy-recency dichotomy and the role of memory in persuasive communication are explained in greater detail in Bettinghaus (1973:152-154), Burgoon and Bettinghaus (1980), Hunter (1964), Jamieson (1985) and Sandell (1977:216-217).
2. S. appears both as a "western specialist and expert" as well as in the intermediate category. S. prefers to be known as and advertises as an expert graphologist and palm reader. He does not usually present himself as a coffee reader and even attempts to conceal his ability for reading coffee. In the course of our research, however, S. admitted to having talents in this area to a specific client and subsequently held several coffee reading sessions with her. The data are taken from these particular sessions.
3. M. uses the word *dominanti* in Hebrew which can be interpreted as either "dominant" or "domineering".
4. M. uses the Arabic word *mabsut* (cf. Excerpt 1 in the preceding chapter) which is commonly used in colloquial speech.
5. The word here used for "buddy" or "pal" is the colloquial Arabic word *sahbi* "my friend" frequently used in Israeli slang.
6. Here once again M. uses the Arabic word *mabsut* "happy". It should be noted, however, that he uses this word restrictively only when he departs from his professional register.
7. We have only included unfinished sentences in this category of dangling sentences. This does not include sentences with hesitations and pauses before the speaker completes his thought. Erickson (1976:277) includes dangling sentences, the use of metaphor, folk language, and partial remarks as different means to depotentiate the left hemisphere (Haley 1983).

Chapter 4

A contrastive analysis of astrology and horoscopes*

1. Introduction

In this chapter we will compare and contrast astrology and horoscopes as meta-semiotic systems. In particular, we will view horoscopes as a simple semiotic system which has been viewed as a sub-system within the more complex system of predictive astrology (Martin 1979:97). We will specifically examine both of these related branches of divination from the linguistic and extralinguistic points of view of human communication and present and analyze recorded and written astrological texts and horoscopes.

For the convenience of the reader we will repeat here the definitions of astrology and predictive astrology we originally presented in Chapter 1:

Astrology may be defined in the following way:

A form of divination which might be defined as the calculation, schematic representation and interpretation of the pattern of the solar system in the zodiac as 'viewed' from, and related to, a specific place on earth at a given point in time. The sole requirements for the erection of a full astrological chart are the date, time and place of the event for which the chart is to be erected. From the date the astrologer is able to calculate the position of the planets (a term which is used loosely in astrology to include the sun and the moon as well as the planets proper) in the zodiac by consulting an ephemeris which lists their positions day by day. Knowledge of the time allows him to refine his calculation in respect of the faster-moving planets; while date, time and place together allow him to calculate the degree of the zodiac rising on the eastern horizon (→ ascendant) from a table of houses. This information is the horoscope (although the term is now used in a much wider sense) which is then transferred on to a chart somewhat resembling a wheel in which the hub represents the earth, the outer rim the zodiac and the spokes (twelve in number) the boundaries of the twelve houses.

The work to this stage, although time-consuming, is relatively simple and provides a schematic representation of the pattern of the solar system at a given moment which must be then interpreted. Interpretation is a much more complex undertaking but requires no extra sensory powers and can be learned by anyone who is prepared to devote time and effort to it. Stated in very simple terms, interpretation requires knowledge of:

- (1) the principles, urges, emotions, etc., symbolically associated with each planet.
- (2) The way in which these are conditioned by the positions they occupy in the zodiak.
- (3) The effect of the specific angular relationships (aspects) which exist between planets in the chart and thus modify their basic meanings.
- (4) The areas of personality or life most likely to be affected by 1-3 above through their relationship to the twelve houses of the chart.

(Martin 1979:23)

The following is Martin's definition of *predictive astrology*:

Drawing conclusions about the future of a subject (often a person) of an astrological chart by consideration of the current planetary positions and their relationship to the basic positions in the chart and also by symbolic means. Predictive astrology forms the basis of the only type of astrology with which most people are familiar, namely the 'stars' features in newspapers and magazines. It is often proved to be inexact but this is not necessarily through its indications but rather through its over-interpretation; for while it may be possible to distinguish certain general trends (e.g. periods of expansion or limitation, periods of high or low vitality) the way these trends will manifest themselves in a particular life is often guesswork, since all the circumstances of the subject can seldom be known in sufficient detail for a studied assessment to be made.

(Martin 1979:97)

Martin (1979:66) views horoscopes in the following way:

A term which originally meant the calculation of the ascendant in accordance with the time of birth of the subject of the chart and which was sometimes extended to include the calculation of the position of the planets and other factors necessary for the erection of an astrological chart. In popular usage, however, it includes the interpretation of the chart particularly in relation to future trends and is often implied as a synonym for predictive astrology or even for astrology itself.

For the purpose of this chapter we will use the term horoscope in the familiar way signifying the written astrological predictions most usually found in popular newspapers and magazines.

Astrology (including and particularly in the form of horoscopes) is unquestionably one of the most popular and accessible branches of fortune-

telling.¹ According to D'vorah Ben Shaul of the *Jerusalem Post* (September 2, 1983):

Astrology is considered to be probably the oldest of the parapsychological sciences; it has been practiced without interruption since the system was first worked out by the Babylonians 4,000 years ago. Without the aid of telescopes, but blessed with cloudless summer skies of the Middle East, the ancients mapped the heavens and developed a clear and logical picture of the movement of the heavenly bodies. At about the same time, a theory was developed on the presumption that the stars had certain inherent characteristics, and that these characteristics exerted an influence on a person at the moment of birth. The course of life, as seen through astrology, was 'written in the stars.' The English language clearly shows the popularity of this belief in such expressions as 'born under a lucky star,' 'an ill-starred event' or 'star-crossed lovers'. (p. 8)

There may be several reasons for the extreme popularity of astrology over the centuries:

According to Eliade (1976:61-65):

The discovery that your life is related to astral phenomena does confer a new meaning upon your existence... The horoscope reveals to you a new dignity, it shows how intimately you are related to the entire universe ... This cosmic predetermination of your existence constitutes a mystery; it means that the universe moves according to a preestablished plan; that human life and history itself follow a pattern and advance progressively toward a goal... Following the instructions of your horoscope, you feel in harmony with the universe and do not have to bother with hard, tragic, or insoluble problems. At the same time, you admit, consciously or unconsciously, that a grand though incomprehensible cosmic drama displays itself and that you are part of it. (61)

The new interest in occult — a revolt against any traditional Western religious establishment (63)... a rejection of Christian tradition in the name of a supposedly broader and more efficient method for achieving an individual and, by the same stroke, a collective *renovatio*. Even when these ideas are naively or even ludicrously expressed, there is always the tacit conviction that a way out of the chaos and the meaninglessness of modern life exists and that this way out implies an *initiation* into, and consequently the revelation of, old and venerable secrets. It is primarily the attraction of a *personal* initiation that explains the craze for the occult. (64) ...

It confers a new status on the adept. He feels that he is somehow "elected", singled out from the anonymous and lonely crowd. (65)

Horoscopes may be viewed as a popularized, commercialized and even computerized version of predictive astrology which has, therefore, become

suitable for everyone. We have become witnesses to an astrological “explosion” in the past few years:

- (i) Five million Americans plan their lives according to astrological “prophecies” and one thousand two hundred (1,200) out of one thousand seven hundred and fifty (1,750) daily newspapers in the United States publish horoscopes.
- (ii) Astrology has turned into a new American “industry” that can support ten thousand (10,000) full-time and seventy-five thousand (75,000) part-time astrologists.
- (iii) This giant American “zodiak industry” has reached an annual fiscal turn-over of over two hundred million dollars (\$200,000,000) a year.
- (iv) At the present time, there is a fairly large number of computer horoscopes, one of which, for example, is programmed to print out a ten thousand (10,000) word horoscope in a matter of minutes for the sum of twenty dollars (\$20). Another computer provides 24 hour “horoscope” service in college and university campuses throughout the United States. There is another computer in Grand Central Station which prints out approximately five hundred (500) horoscopes a day. (*ibid* p. 87)

Thus, it is possible to view horoscopes as a “homogenized”, watered-down or diluted kind of predictive astrology.

2. Horoscopes as a simple semiotic system

The most familiar branch of horoscopes usually is comprised of an impersonal encounter (usually in the popular press) between an oftentimes anonymous astrologist and an anonymous reader who represents *omni-homo* — any or every man. Since the printed encounter is designed to suit anyone and everyone, it can be viewed as a simple, unidimensional semiotic system usually containing the lowest common astrological denominator in the form of the most stylized, almost folk-etymologically oriented, symbols of the zodiak birth signs.

The linguistic implications of these qualities of horoscopes are the following:

- (i) The language of horoscopes is usually quite ordinary and neutral. It has to be maximally readable and acceptable to all the readers of a given newspaper or journal.²
- (ii) The language of horoscopes is usually maximally concise, clear, and laconic in the presentation of as generalized, multi-purposeful, and omniscopic themes as possible. Due to the limitations of the written medium and the scant space allotted for horoscopes, the language of horoscopes has a tendency to be slightly more direct and relatively more specific than the language of extended face-to-face dyadic encounters found in most fortune-telling sessions.
- (iii) The discourse of horoscopes is laced with a frequent use of “umbrella” words. Positive items usually proceed negative ones which, in turn, are often mitigated. Plain folk’s device or what we have referred to as “two-bit philosophy” also plays a rather prevalent role in the language of horoscopes.
- (iv) Time predictions are generally an integral part of weekly horoscopes which often refer to the beginning, middle, or end of the week.

This simplex semiotic system of horoscopes is presented in Figure 1.

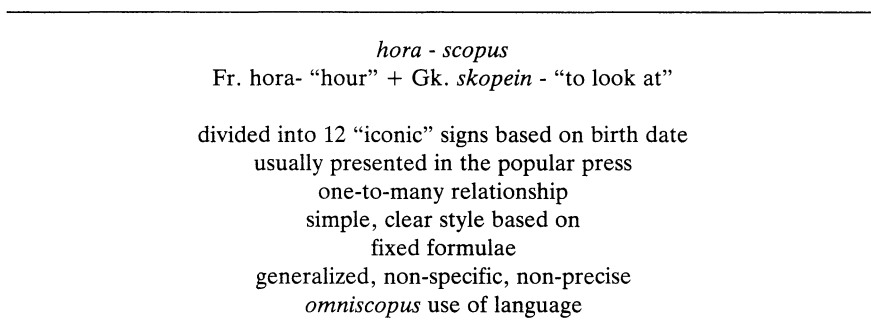


Figure 1. *The simplex semiotic system of horoscopes*

3. An example of a horoscope

Aquarius (21 January - 19 February)

This week your power of attraction, particularly to the opposite sex, will be stronger. There may be a certain amount of pressure, but happy and enjoyable days are expected for you. It will be worth your while to quickly execute important tasks in order to get them out of the way — at the end of the week interesting social engagements are awaiting you. (*Ma'ariv* 2/12/83)

In general, we see that the language is laconic, clear and rather multi-purposeful revolving around the major themes of love (specified), with the possible themes of money and health also being applicable. Positive information precedes negative information, and is then immediately mitigated, and followed by additional positive information. The use of the future tense, impersonal phrases, infinitives, and generally unmarked forms allows the reader to concentrate on the content as opposed to the language which may be perceived as being applicable to every- and anyone. The language of horoscopes may be likened to the language of the classical fortune-tellers as well as that of the intermediate category.³

The opening sentence is a direct statement addressed to the reader allowing him/her the possibility of wishful thinking: i.e. relating the external plot to his internal wishes and desires. It is focused or at least delimited in time (“this week”), positive in connotation on a relative scale, (“your power of attraction = attractiveness = will be stronger”) and may be interpreted generally as well as specifically (“particularly with the opposite sex”) to fit in with the personal preferences and proclivities of the individual reader.

The following sentence presents the possibility (“There may be...”) of a general negative phenomenon (“a certain amount of pressure”) in the form of “umbrella-like” terms which neither specify the amount of pressure nor the kind of pressure (emotional, social, economic, professional, familial, sexual, spiritual...), which is then immediately mitigated in a promising but generalized way (“but happy and enjoyable days are expected for you”).⁴

Thus, different individual interpretations of the degree of the possibility and of the amount of (negative) pressure taking place, as well as the specific kind of pressure, its detrimental effects, and the subsequent kind and type of mitigation (“happy and enjoyable days are expected for you”) are all left for the internal personalized plot created by the reader.

The next sentence (“It will be worth your while to quickly execute important tasks in order to get them out of the way...”) appears in the form of general advice applicable to every- and anyone at all times. This is what we have referred to as “two-bit philosophy” or plain folk’s device”, in this example with the message: “Don’t put off for tommorrow what you can do today”. Once again, the specific kind of “important” tasks and the way to execute them “to get them out of the way” is left for the individual interpretation of the reader.

The end of the sentence (“at the end of the week interesting social engagements are awaiting you”) promises prospective positive (“interesting”) social events within a more delimited time period (the weekend!) which can be directly related to the first part of the sentence and/or to the rest of the horoscope according to the reader’s personal internal plot building. All the possibilities, however, are still open and the thematic continuity or coherence of the horoscope is reader-dependent.

We can see, therefore, that the discourse of horoscopes (and of popular newspaper horoscopes in particular) contains many of the representative characteristics of the discourse of fortune-telling in general, but in a reduced and condensed form which is suitable for the channel and means of communication in which these horoscopes appear. Newspaper horoscopes thus may even be compared to astrological sessions in a way similar to that of popular abstracts to larger scientific articles.

4. Astrology as a complex semiotic system

Astrology, as we have previously mentioned, is, in itself, an “umbrella term” spanning the oppositions found in the popular media, storefronts and fairgrounds on the one hand, to the most serious consulting rooms, academic halls and scientific journals on the other.

According to Dean (1986a:2), one of the leading researchers in the field:

We have to go beyond the *popular* astrology of fairground tents and newspaper columns and seek out the *serious* astrology of consulting rooms and learned journals. It is not hard to find. In Western countries roughly 1 person in 10,000 is practising or studying serious astrology (Dean and Mather 1977:7), which is about the same as for psychology. In Western languages serious astrology is currently the subject of over 100 periodicals and about 1,000 books *in print* (1 in 2,000 of all books or about the same as for

astronomy), of which about half are in English. Since 1960 the annual output of new titles has doubled every ten years, at which rate the year 2,000 will enjoy ten new astrology books every week including almanacs and sun-sign books.

The popularity of astrology is not limited, however, to the printed word. In comparison to the other branches of fortune-telling specifically dealt with in this volume, astrology is certainly the most advanced and developed, and may be viewed as being the most "scientific" as well, or at least as having the most complex external trappings of a science: namely, the typical astrological chart containing approximately 40 interacting factors with hundreds and thousands of possibilities of combination and interpretation.

Astrology may also be considered as the prime example of meta-fortune-telling in that it is the branch of fortune-telling *par excellence* which includes and combines all the diverse variations of fortune-teller - client encounters from mail-order marital advice (Sechrest and Bryan 1968) and sun-sign astrologers, usually gypsy ladies in storefront windows, (parallel to our "classic" fortune-teller), to large-volume astrologists found at parties, resorts, fund-raising events, and kitchen astrologers, housewives and moonlighters, (often parallel to our "classic" and "intermediate" fortune-tellers), to the professional consultant (parallel to our "western specialist or expert"), including the flamboyant and expensive astrologists serving celebrities and the wealthy (Larner 1974).

Astrology is also the branch of fortune-telling that has entered the field of psychological and other kinds of therapeutic counselling in the most intensive way.⁵ According to Rosenblum (1983:33-44), a proponent of astrological consultations, and, indeed, a psychologist who uses astrology in his practice (Dean 1986a:9), different kinds of astrological counselling can be classified in the following ways:

- A. Chart reading. Usually 1 session only, astrologer talks, client listens.
- B. Counselling. One or several sessions, client participates in a dialogue. Involves inquiry into client's life, addresses minor short-term problems.
- C. Therapy. Regular ongoing sessions, client has major long-term problems and requires help to regain control of life. Astrologer has (or should have) orthodox qualifications in psychotherapy. (taken from Dean 1986a:4)

This hierarchical gradation of various kinds of therapeutic astrological sessions forms a theoretical and methodological continuum which can also

be viewed semiotically as a hierarchy of simple to complex linguistic, paralinguistic and extralinguistic sign systems. We have already shown a direct connection between the extralinguistic sign systems of the various branches of fortune-telling with the linguistic aspects of the discourse of fortune-tellers along a similar, if not parallel continuum ranging from: (a) the "classic" fortune-teller on the one extreme, to (b) the "Western specialist or expert" on the other extreme, with (c) an "intermediate category" spanning the opposition between these extremes.

Thus, we also find that:

- (a) "classic" fortune-tellers tend to have single sessions often centering on predictions;
- (b) fortune-tellers of the "Western specialist or expert" variety often view themselves more as counsellors and even therapists, and thus strive for extended, therapy sessions centering on the client's longterm personal problems; and
- (c) fortune-tellers of the "intermediate" group tend to straddle both ends of Rosenblum's hierarchical scale listed above, ranging from single predictive sessions to several counselling sessions dealing more with the client's immediate problems.

Moreover, it should also be pointed out again that astrologists, in particular, are found in all three categories of fortune-tellers, and, astrology itself, in a parallel manner, can be further divided into predictive astrology, often associated with the Eastern tradition (Perinbanayagam 1981), as well as the more rapidly developing Western tradition (Rudhyar 1979), which concentrates more on the notions of counselling and psychological therapy.

Furthermore, this particular "Western" kind of personal counselling in astrology is often reminiscent of other "modern sciences of mental health" (such as scientology) (Hubbard 1950/1973, 1956/1972) which have been transformed into religious-like institutions.

Dane Rudhyar (1979), for example, who, according to Dean (1986a:3), "is recognised as the leading U.S. proponent or "guru" of humanistic (person-centered) astrology, says:

I am only interested in *astrology* as a *means to help human beings to give a fuller, richer meaning to their lives...* I see no value in the prediction of exact events or even of precise character analysis. (italics ours)

This statement can be compared with the following statements made by Ron Hubbard (1956/1972), the founder of Scientology in his book: *The*

Fundamentals of Thought, the basic book of the theory and practice of scientology for beginners:

Give this book to a man or woman in trouble, a man or a woman with an inquiring nature, a man or a woman with associates who need a better life, and let that man or woman study this volume carefully and apply it. *Change and a better life will result.* (p.7) (italics ours)

OR:

The end object of Scientology is not the making into nothing of all of existence or the freeing of the individual of any and all traps everywhere. The goal of *Scientology* is the making of the individual capable of *living a better life* in his own estimation and with his fellows, and the *playing of a better game.* (p.87) (italics ours)

Budd (1983) has analyzed astrology as a semiological system according to Saussure's fundamental oppositional concepts of *langue/parole*, diachrony/synchrony, syntagmatic/paradigmatic, signifier/signified and has related the last to the work of Jung and Lacan as well.⁶

Thus, according to Budd (1983:3.1):

An astrological chart is a structure of signs. The Planets, Signs of the Zodiac, and Houses, are thought of by the vast majority of astrologers as signs which have meaning, and the chart is treated as such, not as something representing physical influences of a merely mechanical kind. Significant relations rather than physical relations are the subject matter ('object') of astrology — i.e. judicial astrology as practised — whether physical relations exist or not.

The astrologer's work is to interpret charts, that is, to produce texts (written or spoken), and *a text is also a structure of signs.*

Astrology has its own sets of rule for re-structuring the actual celestial configurations to produce the chart which is thus man-made, according to astrological conventions, so that the chart, extracted from the actual sky, has a place in the context of the astrological language: another frame of reference other than the physical stellar system. The chart having been drawn, then can be *read*. It can be read, because it conforms to the rules and the structural relationships which are part of astrology as a whole, just as a text can be read if it conforms to the rules of grammar of a language. The chart can be thought of as a kind of text.

How do astrologers make the leap from the 'text' of the chart to the 'text' of the interpretation? To 'read' an interpretation directly from a chart gives the impression of some transparency of meaning of the chart, as if the chart were a window to the reality, or as if it were in effect the same as a piece of written prose. But really there is an incommensurability between

the two, because the text of the interpretation is produced in and with the framework of the astrologer's (and client's) discourse: that is, the language, concepts, theories, etc. at the astrologer's disposal, and there is nothing in the chart or in the sky which says this particular discourse is adequate in a translation of the significant content of the chart.

As we have previously stated, we view astrology, as opposed to horoscopes, as a complex semiotic system, a branch of fortune-telling often thought of as a "science" or even a "religion", i.e. a "philosophy of life", which has developed in a way parallel to Western thought. Eliade (*op cit.*) and others have pointed out that the interest in astrology primarily revolves around a search for values. He views the renewed interest in the Occult in general and astrology in particular as a reaction to the existentialist philosophy of Sartre, Camus and others: i.e. a renewed connection between Man and the elements which can give meaning to life.

Astrology represents a complex, three-dimensional semiotic system expressed, in part, by an astrological chart illustrated by signs and symbols of the planets, signs of the Zodiac, the houses, etc., which can also be related to numerology, palmistry and card reading. This connection between the astrological signs and the other branches of fortune-telling is presented schematically in Figures 2, 3, and 4 respectively, while astrology as a complex semiotic system in its own right appears in Figure 5.

As we have stated in Chapter 1, the fortune-teller/client dyadic encounter may best be described as a "chain-activity" composed of four basic stages which we illustrated with a meta-session in astrology:

- | | | |
|----------------|---|---|
| sign
system | { | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) The client supplies basic information such as date and hour of birth. (2) The fortune-teller provides the semiotic basis for the construction of his "external" plot: the astrologist constructs a chart containing the twelve zodiac signs, the planets, and their position at the exact time of birth, lines connecting the different elements in the individual chart. The chart is embellished by the lines in various colors, providing a basis for a semiotic of color in the analysis of astrology charts. The chart is also based on various mathematical calculations and elements of astronomy giving the impression of a scientific basis to a chart, and, therefore, to this particular branch of fortune-telling in particular. sign system |
|----------------|---|---|

<i>The Card</i>	<i>The Sign</i>	<i>The Planet</i>	<i>The Element</i>
CLUB/KING	ARIES/RAM	MARS	FIRE
CLUB/QUEEN	LEO/LION	SUN	FIRE
CLUB/JACK	SAGGITARIUS/ARCHER	JUPITER	FIRE
HEART/KING	CANCER/CRAB	MOON	WATER
HEART/QUEEN	SCORPIO/SCORPION	MARS	WATER
HEART/JACK	PISCES/FISHES	JUPITER	WATER
SPADE/KING	LIBRA/SCALES	VENUS	AIR
SPADE/QUEEN	AQUARIUS	SATURN	AIR
	WATER CARRIER		
SPADE/JACK	GEMINI/TWINS	MERCURY	AIR
DIAMOND/KING	CAPRICORN/GOAT	SATURN	EARTH
DIAMOND/QUEEN	TAURUS/BULL	VENUS	EARTH
DIAMOND/JACK	VIRGO/VIRGIN	MERCURY	EARTH

Figure 4. *Cards and astrology*

astr- + logia
 Gk. “star” + “word”/“knowledge”
 exemplified by complex Astrological Map
 illustrated with multi-dimensional
 signs of planets in the Zodiak
 (including the sun and moon),
 the calculation of date, time, place,
 the degree of the Zodiak arising
 on the eastern horizon (ascendant);
 one to one relationship
 expressed from “classical”
 to “Western specialist” discourse
 similar to therapeutic discourse

Figure 5. *The complex semiotic system of astrology*

- | | | |
|-----------------|---|--|
| outer
system | { | (3) The fortune-teller then decodes the chart. In astrology the signs are fixed, yet each sign is part of a dynamic relative continuum and is presented in non-specific, non-precise, multi-purposeful and <i>omniscopus</i> language which is context dependent. Thus, the astrologist may interpret signs as a “story” unraveled through a complex symbolic language system. The reading of an astrological chart may take from one hour to even five or six hours. The fortune-teller is usually willing to answer any <i>specific</i> question asked by the client although the answer may be given in <i>non-specific</i> language. |
| inner
system | { | (4) Based on the above, the client creates his own inner plot and interpretation. In stages (1) and (4) the client opens and closes the cycle of the encounter by initially providing the essential facts of his identity and then details from his experience which are known only to himself. |

The fortune-teller (in this case an astrologist) then uses a language known only to himself or to a sub-group of professional or amateur astrologists. The client usually has very little to no knowledge of the signs and depends almost exclusively on the astrologer’s interpretation, in a way similar to a patient’s dependence on a physician’s or a therapist’s diagnosis.

5. Examples of astrological sessions

The following excerpts (repeated here from Chapter 2 for the reader’s convenience) are representative of the categories the “classical” and the “Western specialist or expert” of astrologists.

Excerpt 2. The “classic” astrologist

George, who is also representative of the “classic” fortune-teller, is primarily an astrologist who sometimes reads palms. He is a bilingual speaker of both Hebrew and Arabic and supports himself from his astrology. He advertises weekly in the newspapers “personal” columns. The session was held in a private apartment in the fashionable section of North Tel-Aviv. G. received the female client (C) in the livingroom which was furnished in “Oriental - Middle-Eastern” style.

- G: What exactly did you want? To see the future, yeah?
 C: Yes, the future.
 G: What sign are you?
 C: I’m half Aries, half Taurus. I mean...
 G: How can that be...

- C: It depends on... the newspaper. In one paper its Aries, according... something like that. It's the twentieth of April and it comes out right in the middle.
- G: Yeah? In the middle?
- C: I mean, that's apparently what happens...
(Pause)
- G: I... Do you study?
- C: Yes.
- G: How are you in your studies?
- C: All right.
(a long pause)
- G: Ya wanna get married...*ya'ani* ("I mean" in Arabic slang)
- C: Sometime, perhaps. It's not so urgent.
- G: *Ya'ani* (you're) young?
- C: Yes, I guess.
(pause)
- G: So, you're Aries *ya'ani*, the twentieth...
- C: The twentieth of April is Aries? If you say so, Aries or Taurus?
- G: The twenty-second from April.
- C: The twentieth of April.
- G: The twentieth of April?
- C: Yes...
- G: (mumbling to himself) The twentieth of April... twenty-first of March... (pause) ... twenty-first of March, twenty-second of March until the twentieth of April, until the twentieth that's: Aries. Now until the twenty-first then Taurus enters. You were born exactly on the...
- C: I don't know the hour, but I think it's the twentieth, I think it's still the twentieth.
- G: Were you born during the day or the night?
- C: I think towards the morning... something like that... the morning of the twentieth... I think.
- G: Then you're Aries.
- C: Yes.
- G: O. K. then, there's no problem...
- (They discuss the client's personality and love life, according to her palm and then return to astrology)
- G: When were you born, on the twentieth? The twenty-sec... The twentieth, right?
- C: Right, the twentieth.
(pause)
- G: You have to put an end to the whole thing.
- C: How?
- G: I advise you; it'll be good if you get married.
(pause, George consults some books)
- G: Uh... it looks like your planet crosses the planet of a man; that's your problem. And you like to dominate a man. That's why you don't get along with him. You want that you be the man. You wear the pants: he wears the dress. 'derstand? If he wears the dress then I advise you marry him. It's not yours, it comes out that way

you're strong. And he's afraid of you, every man will want you, but he has a reckoning to make. He's afraid, he's afraid of the "domnation" (domination) you'll have on him. You got to, you try, you'll have *ya'ani* more or less a different situation. Completely. You, your constellation is the sun.

C: What does that mean?

G: Your planet is the sun, 'derstand?

C: What does that mean? My planet is the sun?

G: You, you have a strong planet, *ya'ani* not bad.

(George consults his manuals)

C: And is there any direction about what I should learn or what I should do?

G: I'll tell you what to do. Uh... you, Uh... you're, Uh, you're... you're, uh... you're not an easy person. I mean, what, even if you need, it doesn't mean anything. You know what's good and what's bad for you. You, you care about honor. You, you have, everyone who sees you, likes you. Before they know you.

Excerpt 4. The "Western specialist or expert" astrologist

G., who gives "psychological and astrological" advice, is also representative of the "Western specialist or expert". She is a professional psychologist of Swiss-Jewish extraction. The meeting was held in her home which also serves as her office. The male client (C) had previously spoken with her on the phone and provided her with the essential details for his astrological chart. The client found the chart ready on G.'s desk upon his arrival. The session took place in her office which was lined with bookcases filled with psychology and astrology books.

C: ...Exactly, uh... a week before the war... I went to the United States.

G: Yes.

C: I was there for two weeks.

G: Yes?

C: Then I returned to Israel.

G: Before the war?

C: Yes, exactly before the war, some... only a few days... then the war and then, uh... two weeks and I came back.

G: Did you return as a consequence of the war?

C: No, I had to come back anyway.

G: uh... anyway.

C: It was to...

G: (interrupting in a loud voice) Did it influence you somehow in the... Did this war influence you in any special way?

C: I wasn't here so that it could influence me.

G: You weren't here?!

C: No, I was after that...

G: It had ended?

C: Yes.

G: But that year... It was a year that was very... Did you lose someone? Or what...?

C: Um...

- G: You didn't?
(a brief pause)
- C: Actually it was a very quiet year.
- G: Very quiet? (Slightly surprised, and in a quiet and pensive tone) "Very strange indeed" (said in English). I had...
- C: Why that...
- G: No, because, look uh...here there's some... there's a certain something... a rather difficult constellation for you... During... that year, actually primarily in September-October 1973, uh...
- C: Actually, in February it was um... uh...
- G: In February '73?
- C: Then, it might have been uh... uh... something happened, I was... I was in... I mean... something big... I was in a traffic incident.
- G: Incident, uh...
- C: A traffic incident.
- G: Uh... Uh...
- C: In a car...
- G: Oh, you mean uh... uh... a traffic accident.
- C: An accident, yes.
- G: Ah, ah, February '73 (rustles papers, a brief pause, she murmurs something to herself) Yes (brief pause) uh...yes, absolutely, in addition to, but
- C: No, explain, I absolutely don't understand... uh... about this... what is this constellation.
- G: (interrupting) You, actually, what can I explain? Look, but it's difficult for me to explain if you don't understand uh... astrology. Uh, however...
- C: But no, you, you're focusing in on the... those months, it interests me.
- G: No. No, I'll be giving you some other months straightaway, but, uh, I'll tell you what, your sun is in the beginning of Libra.
- C: Uhum...
- G: Correct? Your sign is Libra. Because... Why is your sign Libra? Because the sun is in the sign of Libra.
- C: Uh huh...
- G: Everyone knows that, uh... what sign he is (raising her voice) as it were (lowering her voice) because... it's always the sun that determines the sign.
- C: O. K.
- G: Now, here the... planets con... continue their orbit, correct?
- C: Um...
- G: You have a specific constellation the moment you were born.
- C: mm hmmm.
- G: That's it. It's "fixed". Now, the planets continue their orbit. Right? So the day has its own special constellation and influences the constellation of... (lowering her voice) the horoscope of your birth.
- C: Uh huh.
- G: Now, there are a few slow planets that... some planets are faster, that means, such as the Sun, the Moon, Mercury, Venus they orbit rather quickly and... not that

much, they have a slight influence, but not that much. Then there are those that are slow. They orbit slowly (raising her voice). And also... uh their influence is very strong. (Lowering her voice) Now, that, that year that I'm talking about, '73, Pluto eclipsed with your sun.

...

Saturn made a "square" (in English) (raises her voice). This, by the way, also that which, after all the *Yom Kippur War* was predicted, it was predicted, they said in advance.

C: According to the birth date of the country!

G: Ye-es, according to the astrological map of the country.

Let us now briefly analyze a portion of the excerpt culled from the astrologist of the category of the "Western specialist or expert" which deals specifically with astrology:

- (1) The astrologist-therapist presents herself as an expert or specialist in the field in what may be considered an attempt to establish and reinforce this particular image in the therapeutic encounter. This particular statement is the response to a direct question by the client demanding an explanation of astrological terms such as "constellation". She opens with a direct appeal to the client:

G: *Look*, but it's difficult for me to explain if you don't understand uh... astrology.

(In the end, she succumbs to his direct demand, albeit somewhat reluctantly):

Uh, however...

- (2) In the following part of the discourse the astrologist now takes on a rather didactic or perhaps even a condescending tone as she explains the elementary facts of astrology, limiting herself to what she assumes should be known to everyone. She opens with familiar rhetorical and pedagogical devices such as the use of rhetorical questions and repetitions similar to what is often heard in the classroom:

G: *Correct?* Your sign is Libra. *Because...* Why is your sign Libra? *Because* the sun is in the sign of Libra.

This pedagogical-rhetoric line is then reinforced with paralinguistic or suprasegmental effects such as the raising and/or lowering of her voice at appropriate points in the discourse. The lowering

of the voice then appropriately elicits a brief verbal response from the client as an indication of his understanding of what is being said and an invitation for her to continue:

G: Everyone knows that, uh... what sign he is (*raising her voice*) as it were (*lowering her voice*) because... it's always the sun that determines the sign.

C: O.K.

The astrologist-therapist then reverts to and continues her teacher-like stance with the same or similar pedagogical and rhetorical devices:

G: *Now, here the... planets con... continue their orbit, correct?*

This is followed by general statements of fact, punctuated by the most minimal "verbal" responses by the client. This "dialogue" is also reinforced with variations of the previously employed pedagogical and rhetorical; devices both linguistic and paralinguistic:

C: Um...

G: You have a specific constellation the moment you were born.

C: mm hmmm.

G: *That's it.* It's "fixed". *Now*, the planets continue their orbit. *Right?* So the day has its own special constellation and influences the constellation of... (*lowering her voice*) the horoscope of your birth.

C: Uh huh.

- 3) The third part of this "therapeutic dialogue" becomes more specific and is laced with more detailed explanations employing the familiar professional terminology associated with astrology as well as the *omniscopus* language of fortune-telling in general. At the end of her explanation the client interjects a statement indicating his understanding of what was said which she then "corrects" with a more appropriate professional term:

G: Now, there are a *few slow planets* that... *some planets* are *faster, that means, such as the Sun, the Moon, Mercury, Venus* they orbit rather quickly and... *not that much*, they have a *slight influence, but not that much*. Then there are

those that are *slow*. *They orbit slowly* (raising her voice). *And also... uh their influence is very strong*. (Lowering her voice) Now, *that, that year* that I'm talking about, '73, *Pluto eclipsed with your sun*.

* * *

Saturn made a "square" (in English) (raises her voice). This, by the way, *also that which*, after all the *Yom Kippur War* was *predicted*, it was *predicted*, *they said in advance*.

C: According to *the birth date* of the country!

G: Ye-es, according to *the astrological map* of the *country*.

As we have previously pointed out (Chapter 2), both the "classical" as well as the "Western expert" astrologists use the various elements of *omnis-copus* language which typifies fortune-telling discourse:

- (1) The exhaustive presentation of a theme and the use of qualifiers and quantifiers: each excerpt has at least one passage which exhaustively categorizes a theme and exploits the use of qualifiers and quantifiers in so doing.

In Excerpt (2), representative of the "classic" fortune-teller, the theme is the female client's domination over men and the implications of this in her relationships. The male astrologist introduced the theme based on the "crossing of planets" and finishes it with discussing the client's particular constellation of the sun.

"Uh... it looks like your planet crosses the planet of *a man*; that's your problem. And you like *to dominate a man*. That's why you don't get along with him. You want that you be *the man*. *You wear the pants: he wears the dress*. 'derstand? If he wears the dress then I advise you marry him. It's not yours, it comes out that way, *you're strong*. And *he's afraid of you*, every man will want you, but he has a reckoning to make. *He's afraid, he's afraid of the "domnation"* (domination) you'll have on him. You got to, you try, you'll have *ya'ani* more or less a different situation. Completely. You, your constellation is the sun. (Excerpt 2)

Excerpt (4), despite the fact that it is representative of the category of "Western specialist or expert", resembles more of a con-

versation than a professional monologue until the astrologist (reluctantly) describes some of the principles of astrology to the client upon his explicit (and insistent) request. Thus, here, (as in the other astrology session in Excerpt 2, one of the themes being exhaustively categorized is astrology itself:

G: Ah, ah, February '73 (rustles papers, a brief pause, she murmurs something to herself) Yes (brief pause) uh...yes, absolutely, in addition to, but

C: No, explain, I absolutely don't understand... uh... about this... what is this *constellation*.

G: (interrupting) You, actually, what can I explain? Look, but it's difficult for me to explain if you don't understand uh... *astrology*. Uh, however...

C: But no, you, you're focussing in on the... *those months*, it interests me.

G: No. No, I'll be giving you some *other months* straightaway, but, uh, I'll tell you what, your *sun is in the beginning of Libra*.

C: Uhum...

G: Correct? Your *sign is Libra*. Because... *Why is your sign Libra? Because the sun is in the sign of Libra*.

C: Uh huh...

G: Everyone knows that, uh... *what sign he is* (raising her voice) as it were (lowering her voice) because... *it's always the sun that determines the sign*.

C: O. K.

G: Now, here the... *planets con... continue their orbit*, correct?

C: Um...

G: You have a *specific constellation the moment you were born*.

C: mm hmmm.

G: That's it. *It's "fixed"*. Now, *the planets continue their orbit*. Right? *So the day has its own special constellation and influences the constellation of...* (lowering her voice) *the horoscope of your birth*.

C: Uh huh.

G: Now, *there are a few slow planets* that... *some planets are faster*, that means, *such as the Sun, the Moon, Mercury, Venus* they orbit rather quickly and... *not that much, they have a*

slight influence, but not that much. Then there are *those that are slow. They orbit slowly* (raising her voice). And also... uh *their influence is very strong*. (Lowering her voice) Now, that, *that year* that I'm talking about, '73, *Pluto eclipsed with your sun*.

Saturn made a "square" (in English) (raises her voice). This, by the way, also that which, after all the *Yom Kippur War* was *predicted, it was predicted*, they said *in advance*.

C: According to the *birth date of the country*!

G: Ye-es, according to the *astrological map of the country*.

(Excerpt 4)

- (2) The use of frame words and omnibus words ("someone", "something", "someway", etc.) is also found in the discourse of fortune-tellers of all the different categories and branches. The following examples are taken from Excerpt (4):

"Did it influence you *someway* in the... Did this war influence you in *any special way*?"

"No, because, look uh...here there's *some*... there's *a certain something*... a rather difficult constellation for you... During... that year, actually primarily in September-October 1973, uh..."

"But that year... It was a year that was very... Did you lose *someone*? Or *what*...?"

- (3) The use of what we have called placing a theme on a scale of relativity ("more" or "less", "better", "enough", "too much", etc.) is also found in the discourse of fortune-tellers of all the different branches and categories. The following examples are taken from Excerpt (2):

"You'll have *ya'ani more or less* a different situation."

- (4) The notion of general truths, or "plain folk's" device, or two-bit philosophy is also found in the discourse of all branches and categories of fortune-telling. The following examples are taken from Excerpt 2:

“(You’re) overly tense, and that surely isn’t healthy.”
 “You know what’s good and what’s bad for you.”

It is possible to even further contrast these two extreme kinds of astrologers from the point-of-view of their discourse:

- (1) Despite the fact that both sessions are generally conversational in register, George’s speech is more informal, replete with slang laced with Arabic loan words while G. the “Western specialist or expert” is more formal, didactic and even condescending in tone, relying on English loan words and scientific terminology. From Excerpt (2) (George):

G: Ya wanna get married...*ya’ani* (“I mean” in Arabic slang)

C: Sometime, perhaps. It’s not so urgent.

G: *Ya’ani* (you’re) young?

C: Yes, I guess.

(pause)

G: So, you’re Aries *ya’ani*, the twentieth...

G: ...you’ll have *ya’ani* more or less a different situation.

G: You, you have a strong planet, *ya’ani* not bad.

From Excerpt (4):

C: Actually it was a very quiet year.

G: Very quiet? (Slightly surprised, and in a quiet and pensive tone) “*Very strange indeed*” (said in English). I had...

Saturn made a “square” (in English) (raises her voice). This, by the way, also that which, after all the *Yom Kippur War* was predicted, it was predicted, they said in advance.

- (2) George’s speech, like those of the other “classic” fortune-tellers we have studied also displays a tendency to shorten long words of both Hebrew and foreign origin, contains malapropisms, and is marked by the deletion or redundant repetition of pronouns and other syntactic markers, and commonly heard syntactic errors:

G: Uh... it looks like your planet crosses the planet of a man; that’s your problem. And you like to dominate a man. That’s why you don’t get along with him. *You want that you*

be the man. You wear the pants: he wears the dress. 'derstand?...

He's afraid, he's afraid of the "domnation" (domination) you'll have on him. *You got to, you try, you'll have ya'ani* more or less a different situation. *Completely. You, your constellation is the sun.*

G: Your planet is the sun, 'derstand?

C: What does that mean? My planet is the sun?

G: *You, you have a strong planet, ya'ani* not bad.

(George consults his manuals)

C: And is there any direction about what I should learn or what I should do?

G: I'll tell you what to do. Uh... you, Uh... you're, Uh, you're... you're, uh... you're not an easy person. I mean, what, even if you need, it doesn't mean anything. You know what's good and what's bad for you. *You, you care? about honor. You, you have, everyone who sees you, likes you. Before they know you.*

- (3) While G., the "Western specialist or expert" reluctantly gives her client a lesson in astrology and displays expertise in her field, George, the "classic" fortune-teller, on the other hand, can barely remember the client's birthday and displays little interest or expertise in astrology:

G: *What exactly did you want? To see the future, yeah*

C: Yes, the future.

G: *What sign are you?*

C: I'm half Aries, half Taurus. I mean...

G: *How can that be...*

C: It depends on... the newspaper. In one paper its Aries, according... something like that. It's the twentieth of April and it comes out right in the middle.

G: *Yeah? In the middle?*

C: I mean, that's apparently what happens...

...

(George immediately changes the subject from the client's problematic "sign" to whether she is a student or whether she wants to get married.)

...

G: *So, you're Aries ya'ani, the twentieth...*

C: The twentieth of April is Aries? If you say so, Aries or Taurus?

G: *The twenty-second from April.*

C: The twentieth of April.

G: *The twentieth of April?*

C: Yes...

G: (mumbling to himself) *The twentieth of April... twenty-first of March... (pause) ... twenty-first of March, twenty-second of March until the twentieth of April, until the twentieth that's: Aries. Now until the twenty-first then Taurus enters. You were born exactly on the...*

C: I don't know the hour, but I think it's the twentieth, I think it's still the twentieth.

G: *Were you born during the day or the night?*

C: I think towards the morning... something like that... the morning of the twentieth... I think.

G: *Then you're Aries.*

C: Yes.

G: *O. K. then, there's no problem...*

(They discuss the client's personality and love life, according to her palm and then return to astrology)

G: *When were you born, on the twentieth? The twenty-sec... The twentieth, right?*

C: Right, the twentieth.

(pause)

G: You have to put an end to the whole thing.

C: How?

G: I advise you; it'll be good if you get married.

(pause, George consults some books)

G: *Uh... it looks like your planet crosses the planet of a man; that's your problem. And you like to dominate a man. That's why you don't get along with him. You want that you be the man. You wear the pants: he wears the dress. 'derstand? If he wears the dress then I advise you marry him. It's not yours, it comes out that way, you're strong. And he's afraid of you, every man will want you, but he has a reckoning to*

make. He's afraid, he's afraid of the "domnation" (domination) you'll have on him. You got to, you try, *you'll have ya'ani more or less a different situation*. Completely. *You, your constellation is the sun*.

C: What does that mean?

G: *Your planet is the sun, 'derstand?*

C: What does that mean? My planet is the sun?

G: *You, you have a strong planet, ya'ani not bad.*

(George consults his manuals)

- (4) Furthermore, George, unlike G., the psychologist-astrologist "Western specialist or expert", is very free about giving direct advice to his client and in telling her exactly what to do and how to behave:

G: *You have to put an end to the whole thing.*

C: How?

G: *I advise you; it'll be good if you get married.*

...

G: If he wears the dress then *I advise you marry him... You got to, you try, you'll have ya'ani more or less a different situation...*

...

G: *I'll tell you what to do.* Uh... you, Uh... you're, Uh, you're... you're, uh... you're not an easy person. I mean, what, even if you need, it doesn't mean anything. You know what's good and what's bad for you. You, you care about honor. You, you have, everyone who sees you, likes you. Before they know you.

Thus, we can see that astrology, perhaps more than any of the other branches of fortune-telling, spans the opposition from the "classic" to the "Western specialist or expert" in fortune-tellers. As has also been clear from this chapter, astrology, itself, is probably the most popular, widespread and commercialized branch of fortune-telling, which, nevertheless, simultaneously (and, perhaps pretentiously) purports to be the most scientific. It is certainly the branch of fortune-telling which is most frequently used for therapeutic or psychological counselling. It is not surprising, therefore, that astrology has been, and remains, the subject of a longstanding

controversial debate regarding its reliability. In this chapter we have merely “scratched the surface” in our comparison of astrology and horoscopes from the point-of-view of their functioning as semiotic systems in human communication.

Notes

- * We would like to express our gratitude to Martin Budd, Geoffrey Dean, Graham Douglas, Ray Hyman, and Ivan Kelly who showed interest in our previously published and current work and who were kind enough to send us copies of their own.
- 1. Astrology (including horoscopes) in general and its reliability and possible relationship to psychology in particular, is one of the most intensely studied and researched branches of fortune-telling, e.g.:
Askren 1984, Best 1983, Brau et al. 1980, Budd 1983, Carter 1925, 1954, Clark 1961, Fourie et al. 1980, Culver and Ianna 1979, Dean 1986a,b, Dean and Mather 1977, Delancey and Woodyard 1974, Dobyns 1986, Dobyns and Roof 1973, Douglas 1983, Eysenick and Nias 1982, Fichten and Sunerton 1983, Fullam 1984, Gauquelin 1979, Hamblin 1982, Hyman 1977, 1981, Kelly 1982, Kelly et al. 1986, Kelly and Krutzen 1983, Lackey 1981, Larner 1974, Laster 1975, Lester 1982, Levy 1982, Parker 1970, Perinbayanagam 1981, Randi 1979, Rosen 1975, Rosenblum 1983, Rudhyar 1979, Sechrest and Bryan 1968, Skafte 1969, Smith 1975, Startup 1984, Stearn 1972, Steiner 1945, Truzzi 1979, Tyson 1982, Wedow 1976, Weimann 1982.
A brief glance at these references clearly reveals that publications about astrology span the opposition from the most popular, often found in quite remote and esoteric magazines and journals, to the highly theoretical and empirical, found in respected scholarly and academic journals, masters theses and doctoral dissertations in various interdisciplinary fields as well as specialized encyclopedia devoted to astrology.
- 2. It is interesting to note that there are certain stylistic and syntactic differences among the horoscopes found in different papers. In the Israeli press, for example, the language of the horoscopes of the more popular newspapers is stylistically and syntactically simpler than that of the more sophisticated or specialized press. Furthermore, Hebrew is a gender-marked language and a clear example of this may be found in the almost exclusive use of the marked feminine forms found in the horoscopes in women’s magazines.
- 3. The use of the future tense in Modern Hebrew is in opposition to the regular imperative forms and may be viewed as a “mitigated” kind of imperative and as a possible invitation for prospective future action (cf. Tobin 1988c, 1989b).
- 4. It is also interesting to note that the particular Modern Hebrew form — *ax* “but” — used here, is (a) in opposition to at least three other “but”s in Hebrew and (b) its particular meaning indicates a higher degree of possibility, (cf. Tobin 1986a), thus giving the reader a hint that “happy and enjoyable days” are really to be expected.
- 5. Astrology in its therapeutic forms has been discussed in Askren 1980, Laster 1975, Lester 1982, Mayer 1978, Rosenblum 1983, Skafte 1969. In our own work, (Aphek and Tobin 1988, Chapter 9) we have dealt with family therapy sessions and have discussed the notion of therapeutic discourse from various points of view including those of Bendler and Grin-

der 1975a,b, Labov and Fanshell 1977, Pittenger, Hockett and Danehy 1966, Riskin and Faunce 1972, Rossi and Rossi 1956, Spence 1979, Watzlawick et al. 1979, Wodak 1981, 1987.

6. Budd's basic tenets follow a similar "sign to text" approach that we have espoused as well in text analysis in general, and in fortune-teller and family therapy texts in particular (Aphek and Tobin 1981a-f, 1982 a-c, 1983a-d, 1984a-e, 1986a-e; Aphek, Tobin and Bergman 1982a,b; Minuchin 1976, Satir 1967, Tobin 1983a, 1984a-f, 1985a,b, 1986a-c, 1987a,b, 1988a-c, 1989a-d; Tobin and Aphek 1985, 1986).

Chapter 5

The Visual and the Textual in Cartomancy

1. Introduction

In this chapter we will discuss the interface of the visual and the textual semiotic systems underlying cartomancy.¹ It is our contention that a card reading session, from a semiotic point-of-view represents a complex system of systems. Three of the major sub-systems of this larger system of cartomancy include:

- (1) a dyadic encounter between people of unequal status: i.e. a professional “clairvoyant” and a naive client;²
- (2) The relationship and interaction between the human participants and the cards from the point-of-view of both the cartomantist and the client. This, in turn, involves three sub-systems
 - (a) the sub-systems of the cards including number, suit, shape, color and their respective meanings;
 - (b) the handling of the cards both by the cartomantist and the client;
 - (c) the interpretations of the layout or spread of the cards by the cartomantist;
- (3) The third sub-system represents the interaction between the human factor and the sub-system of the cards with the semiological system of language.

2. The cartomantist-client encounter as a semiotic system

The encounter between a cartomantist and a client may usually be divided into the following steps as originally presented in Chapter 1:

- (1) Client enters;
- (2) Cartomantist appraises client;
- (3) Cartomantist chooses a representative card symbolizing the client;
- (4) Client shuffles deck;³
- (5) Client cuts deck (usually with left hand which represents intuition or the subconscious) (Rakoczi (1970:29);
- (6) Cartomantist lays out and simultaneously reads deck;
- (7) Cartomantist presents the client with a larger “external” plot; possible interchange between the two;
- (8) Client simultaneously fills in specific information from his life (usually known only to him) as part of the “internal” plot;
- (9) Client affirms story or events, etc.

This encounter between the cartomantist and the client can best be described and understood from the point-of-view of an integral visual and textual semiotic system composed of three major parts — the client, the cards and the cartomantist:

- (a) the client to whom we shall refer as an *arché-client*. This *arché-client* is then represented symbolically by a single card of a particular number and suit (cf. step 3 of the cartomantist-client encounter outlined above) thus becoming one-quarter of an *omni-homo*, the multi-faced “every” or “any” man. The choice of the representative card by specific suit is usually determined by the sex, age and external appearance of the client coordinated to the four suits of the regular playing cards. In this way, each client may be viewed as a specific species of a biological family.⁴
- (b) The cards which can be viewed semiologically from the point-of-view of their color, number, suit (shape), and/or picture image on the paradigmatic level and their special layouts or spreads on the syntagmatic level.
- (c) The cartomantist who may be viewed as a fortune-teller, diviner, or clairvoyant.

There are certain elements which most cartomancy sessions share. These include the semiotic systems of language and discourse and the resultant texts obtained from the cartomantist-client encounter. We have already discussed the systematic, underlying relationship between the use of language and the creation of texts in what we have referred to as the

omniscopus use of language. This as well as the use of persuasive language form the basis of the creation of *omni-texts* for the general or *arché-client* in his role of “any” or “every” man, i.e. *omni-homo*.

It is precisely the shared potential content and contexts found in the interaction of all of these shared elements which may be viewed as an *omni-text* composed of *omniscopus* (non-specific, non-precise, multi-purposeful) language for *omni-homo*. The *arché-client* represents every or any man’s desires, wishes, fears and hopes and is therefore presented with an *omni-text* which revolves around what we have previously referred to as a trinity of dynamic thematic continua. According to Rakoczi (1970:8):

What are the things men most want to know about? What are the fundamental impulses that stimulate man’s desire? They fall into a trinity — a trinity of desire. They wish for:

- (1) Food - the acquisition of riches, power, achievement of the dreams of ambition.
- (2) Love - sexual fulfillment, the esteem and envy of others.
- (3) Beauty - good health, mental powers, long life and immortality, descendants

If we examine the meanings of the cards (Tables 1-3, this chapter), we see that they all revolve around these three fundamental criteria. Each card, in turn, presents a different aspect or connotation (positive or negative) of one of these underlying themes. The cartomantist merely presents the basic theme and connotation or nuance directly associated with it as part of a larger associative context. The client, on the other hand, is in possession of the specific factual information pertaining to his own life, his past and his present, as well as his hopes, desires, fears, and intentions for the future. Much of this information, however, varies according to the age, sex, ethnic background, familial, economic, social, etc. status of the client.

Not only do the cards present most (if not all) the major potential elements of life in the form of the dynamic relative thematic continua found in their potential meanings, but they also present a potentially infinite combination of these elements which constitutes the *omni-text*. Each individual card is a mini-representation of one-quarter of *omni-homo* symbolizing the *arché-client* with an external semiotic system of color, number, shape, form, or picture image (by virtue of its belonging to one of the four suits) all of which is visible to both the cartomantist and the client.

It is only the cartomantist, however, who holds the key to generate the various possibilities contained in each of the cards individually and in their

various potential combinations. This is because the internal systems of the meanings of each of the external manifestations related to the cards are known only to the cartomantist. Thus, both the cards and the client represent two independent individual intrinsic systems which are combined syntagmatically through the cartomantist. This is represented schematically in Figure 1.

Therefore it may be said that the cartomantist is the key motivating factor of the client-card-cartomantist triad which bridges and integrates the other two. The cartomantist integrates the visual and the textual semiotic systems by verbally expressing the external systematic visual elements related to the individual cards and their layouts or spreads. This is realized by the expression of the external visual system of the cards spread out before the client through an external-verbal-textual system of each card individually and in collocation and opposition with all the other cards in a potential *omni-text* suitable for *omni-homo* in the form of an *arché-client*.

The *omni-text* is created by interpreting the cards in relation to each other according to their order and position as they appear in specific spreads in a larger semiological system composed of their associative value relationships to each other and to the various syntagmatic relationships found within the spread. The cartomantist's reading is based on the potential multi-layered linguistic expression of each individual card as a word/a phrase/a sentence/an utterance/a speech act/an episode/ and perhaps even a chapter or an entire text or plot. This is represented schematically in Figure 2.

Throughout this entire multi-layered interaction, the cards function as a system of signs composed of a complex signal and interlocked meanings for the client (in principle) and the cartomantist (in principle and in practice). In addition, the specific client (one-quarter of *omni-homo*) who, for the cartomantist, may represent *arché-client*, also functions as a system of signs composed of a set of complex signals with interlocked meanings. Thus, for the cartomantist, the card and the client are both viewed as specialized semiotic systems. This multi-directionality of the semiotic elements of the card reading session — the triad: cartomantist-client-card — is shown schematically in Figure 3.

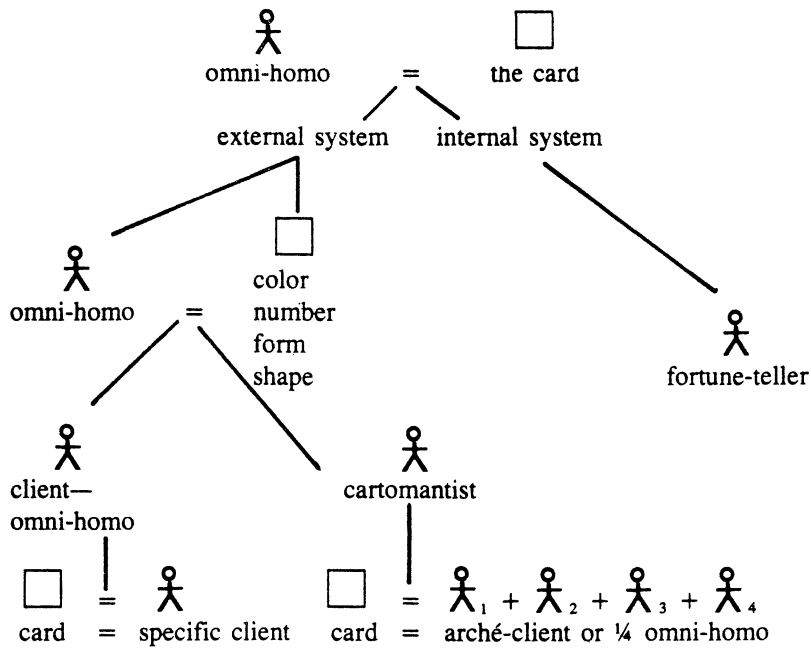


Figure 1. *The semiological system of cartomancy*

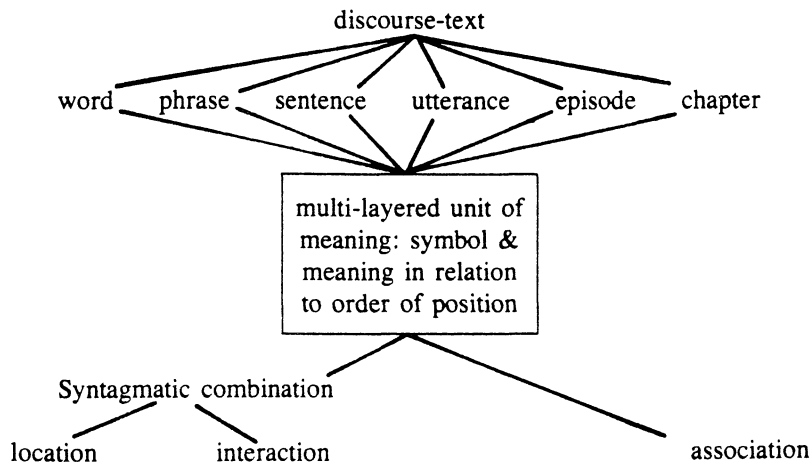


Figure 2. *The linguistic potential of the system of cards*

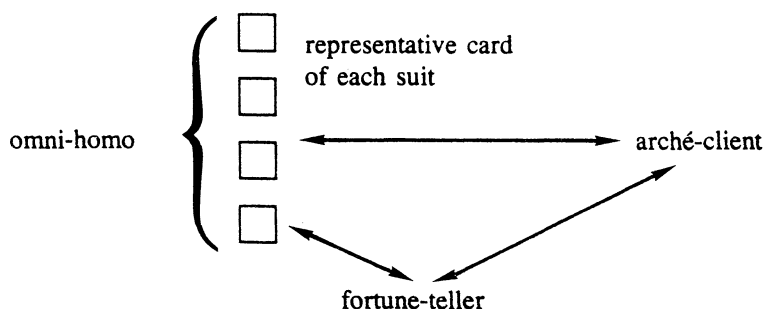


Figure 3. *The multi-directionality of the card reading session*

3. The semiology of cards

Both the *arché-client* and the cards (according to each suit) are representations of what we have termed as *omni-homo*. The specific client enters and represents the equivalent of a potential “computer card or print-out”, or a possible encyclopedic entry of “man and his development” divided into four basic sub-entries each functioning as part of relative dynamic thematic continua embodied in one of the four suits of the playing cards. These potential “computer print-outs” or encyclopedic entries are based on fundamental biological classifications such as sex, age, and superficial physical characteristics. It is the combination of these characteristics which leads us to a representative card selected by the cartomantist for the client in the following two steps:

- Step 1: Biological classification of client: The representative court card.
- Step 2: After the basic biological classification the client to the representative card, the cartomantist can further develop an encyclopedic entry from the suit and the cards themselves, i.e. according to the sub-entries of color, form and shape.

We will now present Step 1 — the biological categorization of the client — schematically in Figure 4.

Step 2 involves the role played by the additional semiotic elements found in the cards such as color, form, shape, number, an opposition of two primary colors: red and black. We do not believe that all the historical and inter- and intra-cultural meanings and associations attributed to these col-

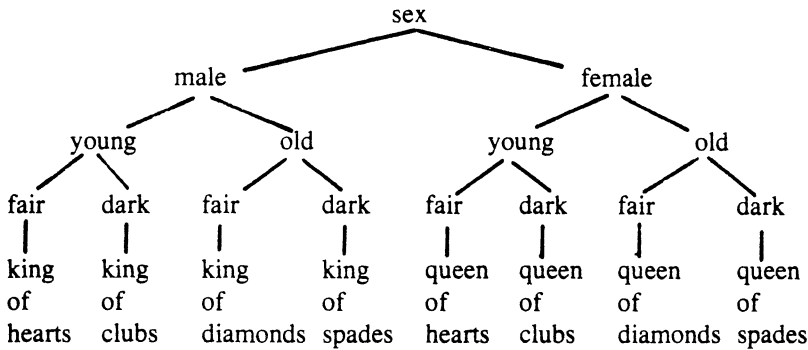


Figure 4. *The biological classification of client:
The representative court card*

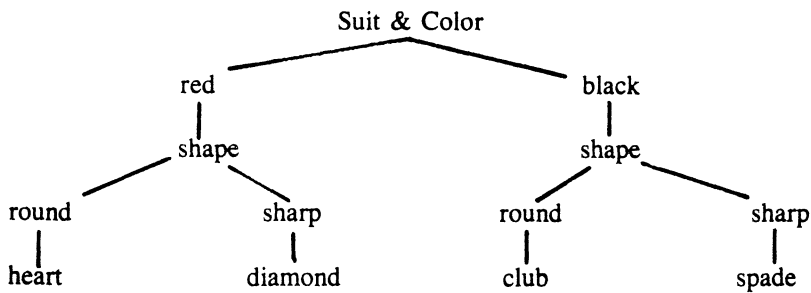


Figure 5. *The system of cards: suit and color*

ors as part of the larger color spectrum (cf. Cirlot 1960:50-52) are necessarily embodied in this particular value opposition. What we have found, however, is that the red cards tend to represent positive associations in contrast to the black cards which tend to have more negative associations. The shapes of the suits, if reduced to the fundamental oppositions of “round” versus “sharp”, can be systematically be distributed between the two color oppositions of red and black as is schematically presented in Figure 5.

Thus we can view each suit as a complex sign which is suitable for expressing specific messages for both *circumstances* and *emotions*. We have also found that those suits representing the *young* are primarily skewed for *emotions* (hearts and clubs) while those representing the *old* are primarily skewed for *circumstances* (diamonds and spades). The specific contextual messages are the result of the interaction between the suits and the number

heart	diamond	club	spade
red	red	black	black
young	old	young	old
fair	fair	dark	dark

Figure 6. *The suit as a complex sign*

and/or picture images of the of the individual cards on the paradigmatic level as well as their position and arrangement in the various layouts or spreads on the syntagmatic level. All of these, together, create the larger semiological system of cards. The notion of each suit as a complex sign may be viewed schematically in Figure 6.

A third major semiological system in the semiotics of cartomancy deals with the numbers of the individual playing cards. With regard to the system of numerals, we are aware of the many diverse historical and inter- and intra-cultural interpretations of numbers as signs and their potential associative relationships and interrelationships (cf. Cheiro 1980:35, Cirlot 1962:220).⁵ We have been unable to find an ordered and unified systematic relationship with regard to the role of the numerals and their interaction with the systems of color and shape and form of the various suits of cards.

Thus we can contrast the various systems of cartomancy in a hierarchical order:

- (1) The suits are in a well-ordered semiological system symmetrically opposed to each other in color and shape and form;
- (2) The colors, due to their different specific historical and cultural histories, associations and interpretations, represent what we view as a partially-ordered semiological system; and
- (3) the system of the numerals appears to be the most unsystematic or the least ordered system of the larger semiotic system of cards.

To illustrate these various degrees of consistency or internal order within the sub-systems of cartomancy, and particularly the lack of apparent consistency within the number system (including the fundamental shapes of the numbers like the suits — round versus sharp), we present Tables 1 and 2. Each table presents the meanings for the numerals 1-10 for each suit as presented by Rakoczi (1970:22-26) and Ben Dov (1982:27).

In Tables 1 and 2 we present two almost antonymous or contrary number systems in cartomancy. In Table 3 we present a reduced number system (consisting of the number cards 7-10) (Brent 1975:44) which partially corresponds to Rakoczi (1970:22-26) presented in Table 1.

We view the card semiologically as a complex and interlocked unit, i.e. a complex sign integrated into the interlocked systems of color, suit and number. There is a basic meaning for each card, yet a cartomantist might add or insert a new meaning to each card idiosyncratically and/or intuitively. This we may view the semiological system of cards in the same way as we view all semiological systems: i.e. fundamentally there are signs with attached meanings which in different situational and linguistic contexts can be inferred to produce different specific messages. However, unlike language and many other semiological systems, the signs in cartomancy (as in other branches of fortune-telling) might not always be invariantly paired signals and meanings shared by all cartomantists (e.g. the number system).

In many semiotic systems, such as language, "the patron general" of all semiological systems, the systems of the signals and meanings are shared by both the encoder and decoder as part of a collective system through the process of mutual convention. In the cartomantist-client interaction, however, it is usually only the cartomantist who is cognizant of the card system. Moreover, not all the members of the community of cartomantists attach the same meanings to the same signs, since (a) there may be several systems of cards, and (b) it is possible for any cartomantist to generate a totally unique and idiosyncratic system. This apparent deviation from mutual convention on the cartomantist-client as well as the cartomantist-cartomantist levels is what may distinguish the semiology of cards from other more conventional semiological systems.

Table 1. *A comparative table of meanings of the numbers 1-10 in cards*
(Rakoczi 1970:22-26)

	Hearts	Spades	Diamonds	Clubs
(1)	Love, passion, warmth. The health and home. Domestic bliss but only under certain circumstances. A lover's tryst, even an illicit love affair. or death.	The death card (The seer must use discretion in reading this card). It can hold the meaning of misfortune, bad news, broken relationships as well as illness	A letter with important news. A gift. Above all, an engagement ring.	Great wealth. Business success. Artistic renown. Social ambitions realized. A goodly company of friends.
(2)	Success. Good fortune. Expectations to be fulfilled. Abundance.	Disunion, separation and change. Loss of friends, break up of a home. A journey to a far country. The card of the wanderer or refugee.	A deep or tragic love affair that will put all other matters in the shade.	Be a lone wolf for a while. There is much opposition to be overcome.
(3)	Unwise choices. Lack of decision. Unthought out action. Impetuosity.	The card of tears. A broken love affair or the separation of lovers through no fault of their own. Failure.	Possible divorce or separation. Ruptures in business. Political unrest. Quarrelling.	A long partnership resulting in marriage or remarriage.
(4)	Celibacy. Marriage delayed or indefinitely postponed. Anxiety.	Illness, loss of property, sudden poverty. Jealousy and envy destroy success.	A broken or neglected friendship. Irritation with the family. Interference from neighbours.	An accident threatens. Danger ahead. Be careful whom you trust.
(5)	Change of environment. Difficulties of choice. Lack of decision.	Great achievements and a happy marriage or the true partner found after a long delay. Avoid being discouraged. Patience is rewarded.	Splendid business relationship. Honesty pays. Prosperity for the home. A life-long friendship. A happy family and joy in children.	If care is taken and the pros and cons weighed, then a h/wealthy? marriage will result. Be diplomatic where political associates are concerned.

(6)	Bodily or character weakness. A too generous nature. Intrigue.	After a serious set-back, careful planning brings ultimate reward but first hand work with little gain.	An early and romantic marriage that may end in failure. An unlucky card for those contemplating a second marriage. The cautious wait and see.	Excellent for business. Employers and employees work together for mutual success. The political scene begins to clear.
(7)	Broken promises, disappointments, betrayal, but joy through sorrow.	Tears fall. There is sorrow and suffering. Make peace with difficult relatives or neighbours. Avoid quarrel with true friends.	Bad luck for the gambler. False words hurt. Gossip and criticism do harm. Keep quiet for a while.	Beware of the opposite sex if ambitions are to be fulfilled.
(8)	Gay company. Good cheer. Rejoicing. A flirtation.	Read carefully any legal document before signing it. Check errors. Overcome resistances. Traitors must be unmasked. Opposition.	A journey brings a new relationship spelling future happiness. A good card for the traveller or the explorer.	Do not ask for a loan. Avoid gamblers. Friends will come to your aid.
(9)	Peace and success. Hopes fulfilled. The wishing card of good luck.	The card of great misfortune. War or strife can break body and mind. Perseverance will triumph if intentions are of the best.	An unexpected loan or gift makes a journey of adventure possible.	Bad luck. This is not the moment to quarrel with friends or to break partnership. Do nothing until a change of luck is indicated.
(10)	Unexpected good fortune, success, returning strength. News of a marriage.	Beware of false prophets. Trust no one until better cards are turned.	Evil influences have passed away. Good luck indeed and in the present. The client may spread his wings without fear of harm. Change old habits.	An inheritance that was not expected. Illness averted. A successful journey. Reunion with a long lost friend.

Table 2. *A comparative table of meanings of the numbers 1-10 in cards*
(Ben Dov 1982:27)

	Hearts	Spades	Diamonds	Clubs
(1)	A period of happiness	A turning point	Practical Initiative	A new direction
(2)	Love	Cease-fire	Two Possibilities	Expectations for the future
(3)	Celebration	Sorrow	Appreciation	Cooperation
(4)	Rejection	Dead-lock	Joining Together	Harvest
(5)	Desparation	Downfall	A difficult period	Competition
(6)	Things from the past	Assistance	Generosity	A Victorious campaign
(7)	Delusions	Slyness	Disappointments	Defensiveness
(8)	Abandonment	Chains	Work	Haste
(9)	Realization of one's wishes	Concern	An expected gain	Being on guard
(10)	Happiness	Destruction	At peace	Failure

Table 3. *A comparative table of meanings of the numbers 7-10 in cards* (Brent 1975:44)

	Hearts	Spades	Diamonds	Clubs
(7)	Contentment, especially in marriage.	Quarrels, turbulence, and the receipt of boring advice.	An unexpected gift, or alternatively, hurtful criticism.	A small child, perhaps associated with money.
(8)	Invitation. Perhaps a journey or a visit often.	Sorrow, usually caused by the receipt of bad news.	a short, happy journey. (In summer, perhaps a picnic.)	A dark girl or woman, who brings joy and good fortune.
(9)	Fulfillment of hopes. A happy outcome.	Failure and misfortune.	News, probably concerning money and associated with some new enterprise.	Financially good marriage.
(10)	Success. Good	Worry, begun by a letter. Perhaps a or even - imprisonment.	A Change, probably a journey.	Sudden money, as in an unexpected legacy.

4. The system of language

Our research into the language of cartomantists reveals that, like the language of fortune-telling in general, it, too, may best be described as an interface of selected elements of persuasive and dyadic communication within the larger framework of a visual, social and discourse semiotic. We would now like to briefly review and expand the ten basic principles related to the language of fortune-telling in general and the discourse of cartomancy in particular that are relevant to the or textual system of cartomancy:

- (1) Cartomancy has been viewed as a simple semiotic system in which each card represents a sign (Lekomceva and Uspenski 1962, 1977). These Russian semioticians distinguished the layout of the cards as a mechanism for generating sentences, viewing the cards as a lexicon. They even went further and compared the language of cartomancy to natural languages concluding that it

was most similar to a finite state grammar with a restricted semantics and simple syntax, typologically comparing it to an isolating language.

- (2) We, on the other hand, believe that cartomancy represents a complex semiotic system where the meaning part of the card symbol functioning as a sign is oftentimes an index of exhaustive graded sometimes polysemic and “reversible” meanings which are part of a larger relative dynamic thematic continuum. The meanings of the cards may be seen as exhaustively classifying a larger thematic continuum if we view the “divinatory” meanings attached to each card as representing most, if not all, the possible semantic, cultural and social attributes of an umbrella term or theme related to that particular card.
- (3) Cartomancy has also been viewed as a discourse semiotic, i.e. a modular system creating a syntax or plot (similar to the literary or folktale discussed by Propp 1970 or Hendricks 1973) which is based on the spread or layout of the cards which may also be affected by the elaborate shuffling or cutting of the deck. The various discourse semiotic elements of cartomancy based on a simple syntax and plot building were originally discussed by Egorov (1964, 1977) and the discourse-plot game-like elements of taromancy were discussed in Corti (1973).
- (4) We, on the other hand, have also included in our work, the notion of the separate and individual plot building of the members of the fortune-teller/client dyad and have extended the discourse plot to include both a visual semiotic system which revolves around the moment of reading: i.e. the line or direction followed by the eye in a particular spread, as well as a broader semiotic system of color, shape, form and number, since these elements of the various suits of the regular playing cards add to their meaning and interpretation.
- (5) It also should be rather obvious that the interpretations of the cards’ meanings are related to the linguistic, extralinguistic, social, contextual and cultural aspects of the dyadic encounter. We would like to expand our conception of cartomancy as a visual and textual semiotic system where a series of meanings is attached to the card symbols to form an index of meanings which may be exhaustive, polysemous, graded, reversible; meanings

that are open to various interpretations in different cultures and societies, or within different social groups or classes, or even the same social group or class within the same society, or even the same individual at different times within the same or different contexts.

- (6) The language of cartomancy functions in the specific contexts of various layouts and spreads very similarly to the way lexical items, or various other micro- and macrotextual linguistic elements, function within specific contexts in the framework of a larger discourse, and, like natural languages, the language of cartomancy is socially and ethnologically conditioned.
- (7) The encounter between a cartomantist and client cannot be defined as what is usually termed in the discourse and linguistic literature as a conversation in either a formal or informal sense of the word, but is more similar to a professional monologue for several reasons:
 - (a) the participants in this face-to-face dyadic encounter have specific roles and have usually not met each other previously and have not (as yet) established a “relationship” of any kind. In this respect the meeting between them can be likened to the professional encounter between a client and a professional or expert (a doctor, psychologist, counsellor, etc.)
 - (b) It is presupposed and expected that one party (the cartomantist) will do most of the talking while the client will remain passive or answer certain questions, usually with a “yes” or “no”, or provide certain rudimentary information or basic verification regarding himself or ask for further clarification.
 - (c) The members of the cartomantist-client dyad may not be seeking each other’s approval, although the cartomantist will be trying to establish credibility in the client’s eyes and possibly, but not necessarily, develop a long-term “relationship” between the client and him or herself, once again, in a similar way to that of any professional or expert.
 - (d) All of the above affect the encounter between the fortune-teller and client in general and the language used in this kind of dyadic encounter in particular.

- (8) We also contend that the cartomantist-client encounter represents a process, a step by step development of two systematic plots which are created independently, but in conjunction with each other, on the parts of the cartomantist and the client, whereby the cartomantist provides the general thematic continua and overall range of potential contexts while the client fills in the specific meanings within the larger dynamic thematic continua from his own personal point-of-view and experience.
- (9) Our data indicate that some of the basic characteristics of the persuasive and discourse elements used in these cartomantist-client plots include: the order, arrangement and presentation of themes and negative versus positive information from the point-of-view of primacy and recency in memory retention, the exhaustive presentation of a theme, the use of qualifiers, quantifiers, omnibus words, a scale of relativity, plain folk's device, the establishment of credibility, as well as familiar rhetorical devices such as metaphor, repetition, dangling sentences, and prosodic elements such as hesitations, pauses, intonation and silence. Furthermore, we have also discovered that the language employed by cartomantists is not what is traditionally referred to as being vague or ambiguous, but rather represents a non-specific, non-precise, multi-dimensional or, in short, an *omniscopus* use of language which can be likened to the formularized language used for pre-prepared messages in telegrams or greeting cards which are always applicable to a certain population in a given set of circumstances or familiar situations.
- (10) In the readings of the different layouts of the cards in cartomancy, the separate external and internal plots of the cartomantist and the client converge on the basis of the *omniscopus* and persuasive uses of language of the cartomantist. The cartomantist is presenting the framework so that the client can express himself to himself. The layout or spread of the cards and their index of exhaustive and graded relative meanings form the basis or the building blocks of these plots. The cartomantist builds a plot from reading the layout or spread (not always seen by the client). The cartomantist then unravels the plot to the client, step-by-step using persuasive and *omniscopus* language. The client then fills in the missing information from his own experi-

ence either to himself and/or to the cartomantist via internal and/or external dialogues. Therefore, the client may be both the source as well as the receiver of the message.

In cartomancy, the layout or spread of the cards forms the base of the textual level of discourse. The formation of the layouts or spreads and their reading or readings have both visual and textual ramifications. The visual aspect revolves around the movement of the reading, i.e. the lines or direction followed by the eye in a particular spread. Most readings are based on the number of cards found of each suit within a spread: i.e., how many spades? diamonds? hearts? clubs?, and is directly related to the meanings of the suits (Brent 1975:44-45). Many of the readings are based either on a layout of a full deck of 52 cards or on 32 cards only. Some of the various spreads and their readings can be briefly summarized in the following ways:

- (1) The eye can be guided from left to right in a text where each card is a polysemous sign which are combined in a plot and/or story. (See Plate 1)

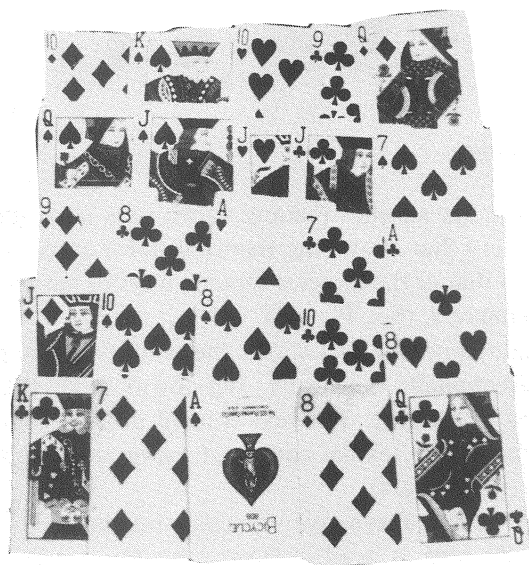


Plate 1. *Guiding the eye from left to right*

- (2) There is a reading where the cards are placed in rows and are read vertically in an up and down linear direction creating a *textus*, (Barthes 1979), i.e. a textured weaving of a text. (See Plate 2)

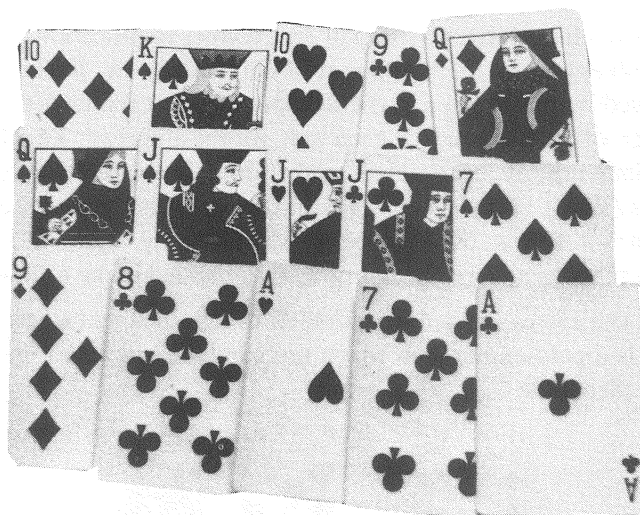


Plate 2. *A linear reading*

- (3) There is an another reading which runs from the center to the periphery that allows the reader to form a text on a similar pattern to that of the larger discourse units of paragraphs, episodes, and chapters. (See Plate 3)
- (4) An additional reading allows the reader to read groups of cards unidirectionally vertically (up-down) and then horizontally across (left-right). The text created in this reading can also be likened to the textual coding of paragraphs, episodes, or chapters. (See Plate 4)
- (5) There is an alternative selective reading, i.e. every fifth or seventh card is read, followed by the reading of the entire spread. Textually speaking, this process is reminiscent of the notion of “leading words” or *Leitwörter* (Buber 1964), the basis of word systems (Aphék 1979, Aphék and Tobin 1981a,b, 1983a,b, 1984a,c,f, 1986a,b, 1988). (See Plate 5)

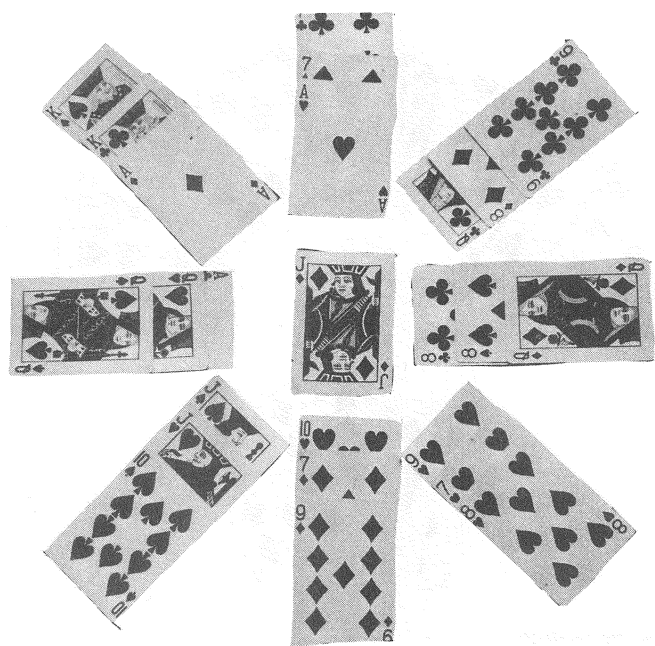


Plate 3. *A center to periphery reading*

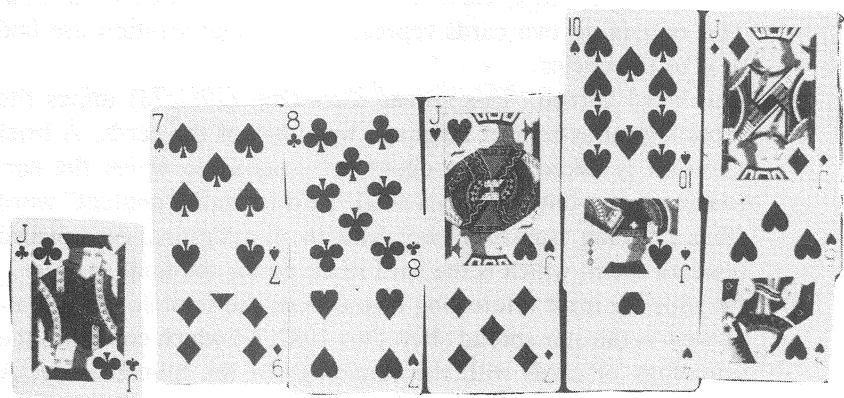


Plate 4. *A unidirectional reading (vertical and horizontal)*

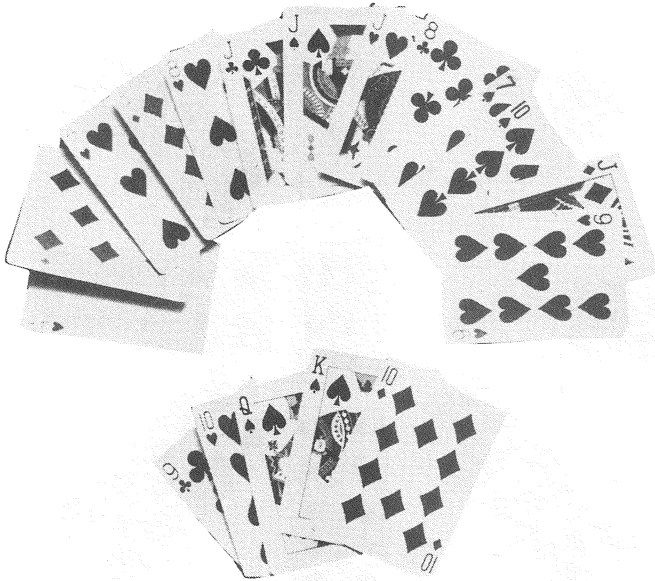


Plate 5. *A selective reading*

- (6) A further reading involving only 32 cards is that of the "six circles". The cards are arranged from left to right in six circles composed of five cards, each read in a counter-clockwise fashion. The remaining two cards representing a final solution are laid next to the circles.
- (7) The word spread: This spread Ben Dov (1982:78) unites the semiological system of language with that of the cards. A brief question is asked by the client in response to which the cartomantist lays out in a row a single card for each "content" word (thus excluding "function" words) with an additional card placed beneath them, which is the card reserved for the final answer.
- (8) Perhaps the most interesting layout from the semiological point-of-view is the star spread (Ben Dov 1982:79) which combines the semiology of cards with the semiology of the human body. A court card representing the client is placed in the center of the spread. Five cards are then placed in a pentagram shape with the sixth card representing the heart placed over the court card. Card no. 1 represents the head, 2 and 5 represent the legs and 3 and 4, the hands.

At this point we would like to present a longer excerpt (no. 7) which is representative of a cartomancy session between H. representing the “middle category” and a female acquaintance whom she had originally met socially (albeit in a non-professional capacity). From the discourse itself, one readily sees that H. is quite familiar with certain intimate and personal facts about this acquaintance-client which she frequently refers to quite openly and freely during the session.

Therefore, this particular passage, unlike the previous ones we have presented, may be more representative of the particular language used in fortune-telling sessions of a recurrent nature, i.e. where the fortune-teller and client know each other and have already established a working relationship.

However, despite the obvious familiarity between the fortune-teller and the client, we can still see that this particular session, (just like all the previous ones presented), is heavily laced with, and, indeed, relies on the frequent use of *omniscopus* and persuasive language. We have underlined what should be the familiar elements of fortune-teller discourse (e.g., the exhaustive presentation of a theme, the use of qualifiers, quantifiers, frame and omnibus words, umbrella terms, relative words, and plain folk’s device, etc.) for the reader’s convenience in order to indicate their frequency and density in the rather lengthy monologue in this reading session:

Excerpt 7. The “intermediate category”: Female cartomantist and coffee reader

H. is representative of the middle category combining aspects of the “classic” fortune-teller and the “Western specialist or expert”. H. is thirty years old, Israeli born, and holds a master’s degree. Her major field of interest is in the arts and she studied cartomancy during the period in which she did her graduate work in a major European capital. H. sometimes mixes card reading with the reading of coffee H. carries on a lengthy monologue, but periodically stops to ask her client brief “yes-no” questions. H. is doing a card reading session with a client (C.) whom she has known personally for an extended period of time.

- H. I see here a *problem* that’s connected with *money* and with a *young man*. A young man can be *your own age*, that means not *someone* who is *much older* than you. *Someone that you have had or are still having an affair with.*

(long pause)

There’s some kind of problem with a woman older than you.

(long pause)

I’ll ask you something and answer me in general with “yes” or “no”. Does *some sort of separation* exist between (your) father and mother? I’m not talking about the kind of separation, but *some separation* exists.

C: Yes.

H: I still haven't pointed it out. What the reason is for it. I do know *something* about it already.

Your ex-husband isn't in Jerusalem now?

C: He is in Jerusalem.

H: *At this very moment?*

C: Yes, definitely.

H: As I told you in the beginning, *there's some kind of money problem that's connected to a man and another thing I can tell you is that it's connected with some woman. The gestation of an affair that's having some difficulty.*

C: The separation between my parents...

H: *Or because of an illness.*

A trip by your ex-husband or out of Jerusalem that will separate the two children. One of them is going to go and one of them is going to stay. Everything (in the cards) is family or men with a romantic connection, not friends. Not friends in the broader sense of the word.

Your card of fate generally points to success in the area of your emotional life as well as your career.

Generally, (in the cards) yes. That's the general line of success, (indicated by the spread), it's not falling. Generally, yes. It isn't a straight line (in the spread) from the beginning to the end.

But the characteristic thing about it (the spread) is a line of success. Very few fateful events clouded your life. There were a few. One of them (is your) parents. What exactly is with your parents?

In New York, everything is connected.

Diversification — It (the spread) splits into very many directions. What's interesting here is that this fragmentation comes from a very strong residue from things that have accumulated. Let's say they're tendencies, I can't say they're clearly childhood tendencies that each one of them went off into different directions.

Someplace.

Spirits of energy, or certain spirits that showed themselves at a later date.

In some of the areas there were crises along the way: that is to say they were cut off; it was a direction for several of them, not for all of them. At least two that began perhaps, they began perhaps as one thing that branched out.

There's a great deal of imagination. If I say that it isn't banking and... nor to be a driving instructor, you understand. So there are things that resemble each other, at least two of them.

And along the way certain strong things that pulled you down or pulled you back.

I also think, if I'm not mistaken, that also today, in the present, two things have a certain significant "halt", and I don't know where it's leading to. It's coming to an end at this very moment, it exists.

Eh, ... You're very, very ambitious. And it's always that way at the top. (She points upwards to the ceiling.) It's really like mountain climbing.

By the way, this ambition grew with time. It didn't exist. It began very small and then developed very very much. It developed very very much.

What else is interesting here (in the cards), I can't point to with any certainty.

There's some area where there is still a vacuum. A vacuum that initially, that you never touched, that didn't, didn't develop at all. What I can't point to is whether it's in the area of your activities, or your relationships. That's what I can't point out. There's really a deep vacuum. Here and there there were contacts, but it (the vacuum) hasn't been exhausted, not half of it. It hasn't been corrected at all. There's some sort of crossroads.

What comes next (in the spread) isn't exactly clear. Except for the *minor inner conflicts* that all of us have: "What'll I be doing next year?" Something that will be O.K.

What next?

Some sort of — being hurt. Today. By men.

I see the past and the present here (in the cards).

I don't see the future here (in the cards). I don't see the future of plans that may have been clear in the past. But not today. This line (in the spread) is really sealing things off here. That should continue. They break off here in the middle. There should be some sort of continuity and there's a halt...

To change gears, you know what I mean?

Together with this, that deviation to strive upwards is there all the time (in the spread). Again it's interesting that before the accumulation, before that residue... before that it had been kind of flat. Very un... Even as a child, there aren't very many clear things.

There isn't very much indecisiveness. You're generally very quick to decide things. At least when you make decisions. you decide, you don't don't skip from one to another all the time.

You're going to have a third child. That is to say, you, it will come at the same as with the other things. It's interesting that the two areas that I told you have some sort of, at least two areas — have some sort of halt. Well, actually, in one of them, there were... I'll define myself, there were several areas, I see a lot here (in the cards)...

Two of them come to a halt somewhere, and one of them, despite everything, was with (birth) pangs of creation, with (birth) pangs of formation. With some of the others there weren't any hesitations whatsoever. It simply sprouted.

There's a problem with your son. It exists. He's a very happy child.

A money problem with a man.

Generally. Generally not.

It's solved by means of trips. It isn't a problem of debts or giving money.

All the future is in the sign of trips. Short trips.

At the moment, I'm talking about what exists and the future. The very near future. I see that man. In the last connection I see a son. His son. And I see your daughter here (in the cards), I think. And here, I'll try to speak about the notion of time. It will be in the period when the boy won't be around.

Above and beyond the *omniscopus* themes about a problem with a man possibly related to a financial problem with a woman, separations, divergences, trips to solve this problem, problems with a son, a daughter,

another child, etc., which are quite pervasive and recurrent in many fortune-telling sessions, there are several additional characteristics of H.'s discourse which is typical of fortune-tellers of the intermediate category:

- (1) H.'s speech is clearly educated standard, but of informal register.
- (2) H.'s monologue is characterized by the use of professional symbols and predictions regarding the future.
- (3) There is a rich use of additional rhetorical devices which are often exploited to help fortune-tellers of the "Western specialist or expert" and intermediate categories in their image building and establishing credibility: the use of metaphor, repetition, hedging juxtaposed with unambiguous statements, etc.
- (4) H. seems to be "thinking out loud" at times, in what might be interpreted as an attempt at approaching the client and sharing her experiences with her.

Some examples of these discourse phenomena characteristic of fortune-tellers of the second and third categories in general (cf. Chapters 2 and 3) and in this particular session with H., include:

I'll ask you something and answer me in general with "yes" or "no". Does some sort of separation exist between (your) father and mother? I'm not talking about the kind of separation, but some separation exists.

I still haven't pointed it out. What the reason is for it. I do know something about it already.

As I told you in the beginning...

The gestation of an affair...

Everything (in the cards) is family or men with a romantic connection...

Your card of fate generally points to success in the area of your emotional life as well as your career.

Generally, (in the cards) yes. That's the general line of success, (indicated by the spread), it's not falling. Generally, yes. It isn't a straight line (in the spread) from the beginning to the end.

But the characteristic thing about it (the spread) is a line of success. Very few fateful events clouded your life. There were a few. One of them (is your) parents. What exactly is with your parents

Diversification — It (*the spread*) splits into very many directions. What's interesting here is that this fragmentation comes from a very strong residue from things that have accumulated. Let's say they're tendencies, I can't say they're clearly childhood tendencies that each one of them went off into different directions.

Spirits of energy, or certain spirits that showed themselves at a later date. And along the way certain strong things that pulled you down or pulled you back.

I also think, if I'm not mistaken, that also today, in the present, two things have a certain significant "halt, and I don't know where it's leading to. It's coming to an end at this very moment, it exists.

It's really like mountain climbing.

By the way, this ambition grew with time. It didn't exist. It began very small and then developed very very much. It developed very very much.

What else is interesting here (*in the cards*), I can't point to with any certainty.

There's some area where there is still a vacuum. A vacuum that initially, that you never touched that didn't, didn't develop at all. What I can't point to is whether it's in the area of your activities, or your relationships. That's what I can't point out.

There's really a deep vacuum. Here and there there were contacts, but it (the vacuum) hasn't been exhausted, not half of it. It hasn't been corrected at all.

There's some sort of crossroads.

What comes next (*in the spread*) isn't exactly clear.

I see the past and the present here (*in the cards*).

I don't see the future here (*in the cards*).

I don't see the future of plans that may have been clear in the past. But not today. This line (*in the spread*) is really sealing things off here. That should continue. They break off here in the middle. There should be some sort of continuity and there's a halt...

To change gears, you know what I mean

Together with this, *that deviation to strive upwards is there all the time (in the spread)*. Again it's interesting that *before the accumulation, before that residue...*

You're going to have a third child. That is to say, you... it will come at the same as with the other things.

I'll define myself, there were several areas, I see a lot here (in the cards)...

Two of them come to a halt somewhere, and one of them, despite everything, was with (birth) *pangs of creation*, with (birth) *pangs of formation*. With some of the others *there weren't any hesitations whatsoever. It simply sprouted.*

All the future is in the sign of trips. Short trips.

At the moment, I'm talking about what exists and the future. The very near future. I see that man. In the last connection I see a son. His son. And I see your daughter here (in the cards), I think. And here, I'll try to speak about the notion of time. It will be in the period when the boy won't be around.

5. Conclusion

In this chapter we have attempted to show the interaction between the visual and the verbal aspects of the cartomantist-client encounter by pointing out the homologies and points of convergence between these two modalities as part of a larger dynamic view of human communication. This has been done by viewing cartomancy in general as a larger semiological system composed of various sub-systems comprising elements of dynamic relative thematic continua, the particular realization of these thematic continua in the meanings of the cards themselves, as well as the well-defined roles played individually and in tandem by the cartomantist and the client linguistically, textually and extralinguistically. We have further tried to emphasize that the visual and the textual systems constantly converge as part of the cartomantist-client encounter. In the following chapter we will compare and contrast recorded fortune-telling sessions with literary texts depicting fortune-telling episodes.

Notes

1. In this chapter we will present a representation of a “generalized” or “meta-card reading session” using the cards of a regular modern playing deck. We will not deal with the specific methods and techniques employed by different cartomantists using Tarot (Kaplan 1970/1980, Ouspenski (1976) special, or regular types of cards, but rather concentrate on an idealized version of the interaction between a professional cartomantist and a naive client in order to describe and explain the various semiotic elements comprising cartomancy.
2. The cartomantist as well as the client can be examined from diverse viewpoints, both visual and verbal: e.g. by their use clothing, physical appearance, gestures, use of language, etc. As we have already pointed out, the scene of the encounter and other extralinguistic variables we have included under the rubric of “ceremony” can also be viewed as semiotic systems.
3. We would like to point out that there are various various possibilities and methods of shuffling and cutting the deck with regard to the chronological order of the shuffling and which of the parties (the card reader and/or the client) actually performs the specific actions of shuffling and cutting.
4. We would like to add that that there are other types of reading where the representative card may be a regular or numerical card and not a court card chosen through intuition as opposed to biological criteria (Ben Dov 1982:77).
5. Ben Dov (1982:24-25) claims that the number system of the modern playing cards primarily has been influenced by the Kabbalistic system of the numerals one to ten as representative of The Spheres (*Sephirot*: Crown (10), Wisdom (9), Intelligence (8), Loving Kindness (7), Power (6), Beauty (5), Eternity (4), Majesty (3), Foundations (2), and Kingdom (1)).

Chapter 6

Fortune-Telling in Literature and the Real World

1. Introduction

In this chapter we will compare and contrast the real world fortune-telling sessions we have analyzed with three literary texts containing episodes dealing with fortune-telling. The literary texts include:

- (1) the Old Testament dialogue between King Saul and “a woman who divineth by a ghost at En-Dor” about an approaching battle with the Phillistines shortly after the prophet Samuel’s death (*I Samuel* 28:3-25);
- (2) the dialogue between the Three Witches and Macbeth with regard to Macbeth’s future (*Macbeth* Act 1, Scenes 1-3);
- (3) the modern Israeli short story “The Fortune- Teller” by David Shahar.

In particular, we will discuss the interplay between:

- (a) the symbols and language used in the creation of an “internal” and “external plot”;
- (b) the ceremony, scene, gestures, costume and sound effects associated with the setting and the atmosphere of the encounter;
- (c) the contribution of (a) and (b) to the notion of a “self-fulfilling prophecy”.

2. The literary texts

The Old Testament text was chosen because of:

- (a) the compelling events which led up to Saul’s consulting the woman diviner:

- (i) the death of the prophet Samuel,
 - (ii) the approaching battle between Israel and the Philistines,
 - (iii) his banishment of those “who divined by ghost or a familiar spirit”,
 - (iv) his rising fears which were not allayed by a sign from God either by symbol, dreams, or prophecy, and
 - (v) his thus being forced to disguise himself and visit an “illegal” diviner to ask her to raise the spirit of the prophet Samuel; together with:
- (b) the highly emotional language found in the subsequent encounter between the spirit and the King.

The following is an excerpt from the text (with the passages relevant to fortune-telling italicized):

Excerpt from *I Samuel* 28:1-25 (According to the Masoretic Text)

And it came to pass in those days, that the Philistines gathered their hosts together for warfare to fight with Israel...

Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had lamented him, and buried him in Ramah, even in his own city. *And Saul had put away those who divined by a ghost or a familiar spirit out of the land.* And the Philistines gathered themselves together, and came and pitched in Shunem; and Saul gathered all Israel together and they pitched in Gilboa. And when Saul saw the hosts of the Philistines, he was afraid and his heart trembled greatly. And when Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets. Then said Saul unto his servants: *‘Seek me a woman that divineth by a ghost, that I may go to her, and inquire of her.’* And his servants said to him: *‘Behold, there is a woman that divineth by a ghost at En-Dor’.*

And Saul disguised himself, and put on another raiment, and went he and two men with him, *and they came to the woman by night;* and he said: *‘Divine unto me, I pray thee, by a ghost, and bring me up whomsoever I shall name unto thee.’* And the woman said unto him: *‘Behold, thou knowest what Saul hath done, how he hath cut off those that divine by a ghost or a familiar spirit out of the land; wherefore then layest thou a snare for my life, to cause me to die?’* And Saul swore to her by the Lord, saying: *‘As the Lord liveth, there shall no punishment happen to thee for this thing.’* Then said the woman: *‘Whom shall I bring up unto thee?’* And he said: *‘Bring me up Samuel.’* *And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice; and the woman spoke to Saul saying: ‘Why hast thou deceived me? for thou art Saul.’* And the king said unto her: *‘Be not afraid; for what seest thou?’* *And the woman said unto Saul: ‘I see a godlike being coming up out of the earth.’* And he said unto her: *‘What form is he of?’*

And she said: 'An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a robe.' And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he bowed with his face to the ground, and prostrated himself.

And Samuel said to Saul: 'Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up?' And Saul answered: 'I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams; therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do.' And Samuel said: 'Wherefore then dost thou ask of me, seeing the Lord is departed from thee, and is become thine adversary? And the Lord hath wrought for Himself, as He spoke by me; and the Lord hath rent the kingdom out of thy hand, and given it to thy neighbor, even to David. Because thou didst not hearken to the voice of the Lord, and didst not execute His fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore hath the Lord done this thing unto thee this day. Moreover the Lord will deliver Israel also with thee into the hand of the Philistines; and to-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me; the Lord will deliver the host of Israel also unto the hand of the Philistines.'

Then Saul fell straightway his full length upon the earth, and was sore afraid, because of the words of Samuel; and there was no strength in him; for he had eaten no bread all the day, nor all the night. *And the woman came unto Saul, and saw that he was sore affrighted, and said unto him: 'Behold, thy handmaid hath hearkened unto thy voice, and I have put my life in my hand, and have hearkened unto thy words which thou hast spoken unto me. Now therefore, I pray thee, hearken thou also unto the voice of thy handmaid, and let me set a morsel of bread before thee; and eat, that thou mayest have strength, when thou goest on thy way.'* But he refused, and said: 'I will not eat.' But his servants, together with the woman, urged him; and he hearkened unto their voice. So he arose from the earth, and sat upon the bed. And the woman had a fatted calf in the house; and she made haste, and killed it; and she took flour, and kneaded it, and did bake unleavened bread thereof; and she brought it before Saul, and before his servants; and they did eat. Then they rose up, and went away that night.

The witches' scene from *Macbeth* illustrates the interaction between:

- (a) the extralinguistic semiotic elements of the encounter:
 - (i) the thunder and lightning,
 - (ii) the barren Scottish heath, and
 - (iii) the unusual attire of the witches;

together with:

- (b) the rich symbolic imagery and the reciprocity of the "echo effect" found in the language used by the witches, and
- (c) the strong verbal and non-verbal reactions and responses of Macbeth.

The following is an excerpt from the text (with the passages relevant to fortune-telling italicized):

Excerpt from *Macbeth* Act 1, Scenes 1 and 3

ACT I

SCENE I. *A desert place*

Thunder and lightning. Enter THREE WITCHES

FIRST WITCH

*When shall we three meet again
In thunder, lightning, or in rain?*

SECOND WITCH

*When the hurlyburly's done,
When the battle's lost and won.*

THIRD WITCH

That will be ere the set of sun.

FIRST WITCH

Where the place?

SECOND WITCH

Upon the heath.

THIRD WITCH

There to meet with Macbeth

FIRST WITCH

I come, Graymalkin.

ALL

Paddock calls: — anon!

Fair is foul, and foul is fair.

Hover through the fog and the filthy air. [Exeunt]

ACT I

SCENE III. *A heath*

Thunder. Enter the THREE WITCHES

FIRST WITCH

Where hast thou been, sister?

SECOND WITCH

Killing swine.

THIRD WITCH

Sister, where thou?

FIRST WITCH

*A sailor's wife had chestnuts in her lap,
And mounch'd, and mounch'd, and mounch'd.*

'Give me,' quoth I:

'Aroint thee, witch!' the rump-fed ronyon cries.

Her husband's to Aleppo gone, master o' the Tiger:

But in a sieve I'll thither sail,

*And, like a rat without a tail,
I'll do, I'll do, and I'll do.*

SECOND WITCH

I'll give thee a wind;

FIRST WITCH

Thou'rt kind.

THIRD WITCH

And I another.

FIRST WITCH

*I myself have all the other;
And the very ports they blow,
All the quarters that they know
I' the shipman's card.
I will drain him dry as hay:
Sleep shall neither night nor day
Hang upon his pent-house lid;
He shall live a man forbid:
Weary se'n nights nine times nine
Shall he dwindle, peak, and pine:
Though his bark cannot be lost,
Yet it shall be temptest-tost.
Look what I have.*

SECOND WITCH

Show me, show me.

FIRST WITCH

*Here I have a pilot's thumb,
Wreck'd as homeward he did come.* [Drum within]

THIRD WITCH

*A drum, a drum!
Macbeth doth come.*

ALL

*The wierd sisters, hand in hand,
Posters of the sea and land,
Thus do go about, about:
Thrice to thine, and thrice to mine,
And thrice again, to make up nine.
Peace! the charm's wound up.*

Enter MACBETH and BANQUO

MACBETH

So foul and fair a day I have not seen.

BANQUO

*How far is't called to Forres? What are these?
So wither'd and so wild in their attire,
That look not like the inhabitants o' the earth,
And yet are on't? Live you? or are you aught
That man may question? You seem to understand me.*

*By each at once her choppy finger laying
Upon her skinny lips: you should be women,
And yet your beards forbid me to interpret
That you are so.*

MACBETH

Speak if you can: what are you?

FIRST WITCH

All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, thane of Glamis!

SECOND WITCH

All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, thane of Cawdor!

THIRD WITCH

All hail, Macbeth! that shalt be king hereafter!

BANQUO

Good sir, why do you start, and seem to fear
Things that do sound so fair? *I' the name of truth.*
Are ye fantastical, or that indeed.
Which outwardly ye show? My noble partner
You greet with present grace and great prediction
of noble having and of royal hope,
That he seems rapt withal: to me you speak not:
If you can look into the seeds of time,
And say which grain will grow and which will not,
Speak then to me, who neither beg nor fear
Your favours nor your hate.

FIRST WITCH

Hail!

SECOND WITCH

Hail!

THIRD WITCH

Hail!

FIRST WITCH

Lesser than Macbeth, but greater.

SECOND WITCH

Not so happy, yet much happier.

THIRD WITCH

Thou shalt get kings, though thou be none:

So all hail, Macbeth and Banquo!

FIRST WITCH

Banquo and Macbeth, all hail!

MACBETH

Stay, you imperfect speakers, tell me more:
By Sinel's death I know I am thane of Glamis;
But how of Cawdor? the thane of Cawdor lives,
A prosperous gentleman; and to be king
Stands not within the prospect of belief,

*No more than to be Cawdor. Say from whence
You owe this strange intelligence? or why
Upon this blasted heath you stop our way
With such prophetic greeting? Speak, I charge you.*

[WITCHES *vanish*]

BANQUO

The earth hath bubbles as the water has,
And these are of them: *whither are they vanish'd?*

MACBETH

*Into the air, and what seem'd corporal melted
As breath into the wind. Would they had stay'd!*

BANQUO

Were such things here as we do speak about?
*Or have we eaten on the insane root
That takes the reason prisoner?*

MACBETH

Your children shall be kings.

BANQUO

You shall be king.

MACBETH

And thane of Cawdor too: went it not so?

BANQUO

To the selfsame tune and words. Who's here.

Enter ROSS and ANGUS

ROSS

The king hath happily received, Macbeth,
The news of thy success: and when he reads
Thy personal venture in the rebel's fight,
His wonders and his praises do contend
Which should be thine or his: silenced with that,
In viewing o'er the rest o' the selfsame day,
He finds thee in the stout Norweyan ranks,
Nothing afeard of what thyself didst make,
Strange images of death. As thick as hail
Came post with post, and everyone did bear
Thy praises in his kingdom's great defence,
And pour'd them down before him.

ANGUS

We are sent.
to give thee, from our royal master, thanks;
Only to herald thee into his sight,
Not pay thee.

ROSS

And for an earnest of a greater honour;
He bade me, from him, call thee thane of Cawdor:

*In which addition, hail, most worthy thane!
For it is thine.*

BANQUO

What can the devil speak true?

MACBETH

*The thane of Cawdor lives: why do you dress me
In borrow'd robes?*

ANGUS

*Who was the thane lives yet,
But under heavy judgement bears that life
Which he deserves to lose. Whether he was combined
With those of Norway, or did line the rebel
With hidden help and vantage, or that with both
He labour'd in his country's wreck, I know not;
But treasons capital, confess'd and proved,
Have overthrown him.*

MACBETH

*[Aside] Glamis, and thane of Cawdor:
The greatest is behind. — Thanks for your pains. —
Do you not hope your children shall be kings,
When those that gave the thane of Cawdor to me
Promised no less to them?*

BANQUO

*That, trusted home,
Might yet enkindle you unto the crown,
Besides the thane of Cawdor. But 'tis strange:
And oftentimes, to win us to our harm,
The instruments of darkness tell us truths,
Win us with honest trifles, to betray's
In deepest consequence.
Cousins, a word, I pray you.*

MACBETH

*[Aside] Two truths are told,
As happy prologues to the swelling act
Of the imperial theme — I thank you, gentlemen. —
[Aside] This supernatural soliciting
Cannot be ill; cannot be good: if ill,
Why hath it given me earnest of success,
Commencing in a truth? I am thane of Cawdor:
If good, why do I yield to that suggestion
Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair
And make my seated heart knock at my ribs,
Against the use of nature? Present fears
Are less than horrible imaginings:
My thoughts, whose murder yet is but fantastical,*

*Shakes so my single state of man that function
Is smother'd in surmise, and nothing is
But what is not.*

BANQUO

Look, how our partner's rapt.

MACBETH

*[Aside] If chance will have me king, why, chance may
crown me,
Without my stir.*

BANQUO

New honours come upon him,
Like our strange garments cleave not to their mould
But with the aid of use.

MACBETH

*[Aside] Come what come may,
Time and the hour runs through the roughest day.*

BANQUO

Worthy Macbeth, we stay upon your leisure.

MACBETH

Give me your favour: my dull brain was wrought
With things forgotten. Kind gentleman, your pains
Are register'd where everyday I turn
The leaf to read them. Let us toward the king.
Think upon what hath chanced, and at more time,
The interim having weigh'd it, let us speak
Our free hearts each to other.

BANQUO

Very gladly.

MACBETH

Till then, enough. Come, friends.

[Exeunt]

We chose the story "The Fortune Teller" by David Shahar for several reasons:

- (a) The fortune-telling element is clearly schematic and thematic throughout the entire text and is not limited to a single passage or episode.
- (b) The story presents a double message:
 - (i) it both indirectly criticizes fortune-tellers, and
 - (ii) points to the fundamental need for fortune-tellers and their possible service to a troubled soul.

The text deals with the uncle of the narrator who moved into his family's basement apartment which had formerly belonged to a fortune-teller.

The uncle never bothered to remove the fortune-teller's sign. As a result, clients who used to visit the real fortune-teller continued to come and visit the uncle. The latter informed them that he was not a fortune-teller but they refused to listen. Some of his "regular" clients include an old Bucharian woman who wants to know about a letter, and Old Nehemia, the Stonecutter, who is worried about his manhood and virility. However, the story focuses towards the end on an exceptional client, a doctor's wife who arrives for a single visit. The woman's son is dying of cancer and, despite the fact that she knows there is no hope, she chooses to go to the "fortune-teller as a last resort.

We will be dealing with three different literary texts representing three different historical periods and three different cultures: Biblical-Old Testament; European-British-Scottish; and modern Israel. The element common to all three is fortune-telling.

3. The real world fortune-telling sessions

The particular fortune-telling sessions we have chosen for this chapter are representative of the three categories of fortune-tellers: the "classic", the "Western specialist or expert", and the intermediate category combining elements of both the classic and the Western specialist or expert. These particular fortune-teller sessions were chosen because of the frequent use of professional symbols, metaphor and predictions regarding the time of future events of some of the fortune-tellers and the particular colorfulness and elaborateness of the setting in which these sessions took place.

We will begin with fortune-tellers of the first category, the traditional stereotyped "classic" fortune-teller, who seem to be the kind one usually finds in literature and most generally associates with fortune-telling. In the preceding chapters we have concentrated more on the discourse of the second and third categories and will now present excerpts of the "classic fortune-teller". We will begin by repeating Excerpt (1) and then present an additional Excerpt (8) of a second female coffee reader, Rg.

Excerpt 1. The "classic" fortune-teller: Female coffee reader

R. is representative of the "classic" fortune-teller. She was born in the Sudan and is about 50 years old. R. works primarily as a beautician, but reads coffee for paying clients in addition to her regular work. R. tends to mix Arabic and English words in her

Hebrew conversation which is typical of Jews originally from the Sudan. It should be noted, however, that these Arabic and English lexical items are generally familiar to most speakers of Israeli Hebrew. Her loan calques are composed mostly of individual lexical items or idioms superimposed on sentences with Hebrew syntactical patterns. R. receives her clients in the same room in her apartment where she works as a private beautician.

R. reading coffee to a female client (C = client)

- R: You have¹ a fish². This fish, you'll be happy.
There's money — you'll get.
- C: Money always makes me happy.
- R: I swear on my life.³ You're a good girl. You have a good heart. You're very gentle. Some little thing is 'noying you, 'derstand?⁴ Everything will be good for you. I swear on my life. Near future — you'll be happy. You'll be very happy.⁵ One of the children has, you'll make a birthday? What d'ya want to make him something, a little party.
- C: I wanted to take my daughter on a trip abroad.
- R: Yes, you have a trip. Then you don't have enough money. Then, I see you have a good trip.⁶ You're travelling. You'll have a surprise. You'll be very happy at work. You'll get more money. They like you very much, but there's one big person, someone wanted to 'noy you.! It's nonsense, 'derstand.

Excerpt 8. The "classic" fortune-teller: Female coffee reader

Rg. was born in Israel and is of Kurdistan extraction. She is about fifty years old, a housewife, and receives her clients in her home in a working class Jerusalem neighborhood. According to Rg. she learned "the profession" at home. During this particular coffee reading session between Rg. and a female client, (C), a male friend of the client, (U.), was present. The reader should note that the interview begins in the third person ("she") and then Rg. immediately moves into the second person direct form of address. Rg.'s language may be considered to be sub-standard, is mostly informal, and replete with fairly common "grammatical errors" (usually lack of number and gender agreement), malapropisms, Arabic loan words, and is, above all, quite "picturesque": In short, Rg., like R., is representative of the "classic" fortune-teller.

- Rg: She's worried, like depressed. She has a way, and this way sometimes says "I'll go here"; "I'll stay here"; sometimes you say: "I don't want to stay here"; you have a thought, sometimes you want to stay in place; sometimes you don't want to stay if it's not in your head; that'll come with time; d'ya un'erstand, sweetie?
Did you understand me or ... U. will translate.
Now, disappointments you had, twice? And if not, there will be twice. That's what I mean, disappointments. Twice, a disappointment you had, from a man.
- C: More than twice.
- Rg: Here there's twice, before two spots, either two months ago, or two weeks ago, you had a separation.
- C: Or two years ago.

- Rg: But a separation... That's two spots, that's also can be two years. Ya un'ertsand? Two spots, If I'll say'em they are also two months, or two days too, or also two years.
Do you have a business, Madame?⁷
(Client shakes her head indicating "no")
Then you will have a business.
You're taking something like a course, like somebody wanting to take a course. Ya un'erstood what a course is? Or should I say exactly what it is.
- U: No, she knows.
- Rg: No, She don't know. She...
You thought about having something in your hands, this thing, like as if you gotta travel somewhere, or they told you to go, or to take this course? Like somebody got a job and he's gotta do it, if he succeeds or not?
Un'erstand? It'll be. It'll be, but you're worried, you're worried it'll be, it won't be, it'll be. Un'erstand?
Did ya make some request?
- C: Yes,... or... Yes, eight months ago... Yes....Yes...
- Rg: Then that, that'll be gotten, you'll get an answer, a letter of announcement, you'll be happy,⁸ you'll be a boss.⁹ Ya know what a boss is? You'll be a "mistress"¹⁰ soon. You'll own a business. You say I don't and I say you will. It can be an office, that'll be your business. You can't believe it, now you say "where (will it come) from?", but it will be. You're nervous but don't show it in front of everybody, ya un'erstand? You're nervous, but ya don't show it, un'erstand? You laugh, but only with your eyes, but your heart, pardon me, is crying. *fehamt*?¹¹ And if ya don't you can tell me so.
- C: *fehimtu, fehimtu*.¹²
- Rg: She's terrific!, (*'al ha-kefak*) Wonderful! (*sebababa*) What a sweetheart! (*metuka*).¹³

We will first compare and contrast (Table 1) R. and Rg., with the figure of the uncle fortune-teller in the Shahr story for the following criteria:

- (i) means of advertising;
- (ii) the setting or place
- (iii) appearance;
- (iv) the reasons for visiting the fortune-teller;
- (v) selected aspects of discourse;
- (vi) the need filled or the psychological role played by the fortune-teller.

We will then more briefly indicate (Table 1) certain discourse cues found in the language of M. and Y. (the male palm readers who represent the "Western specialist or expert) with those of the Uncle/Fortune-Teller which might serve to induce a dependency on them on the part of the client.

In general, we found that the women fortune-tellers in the third category were the most suitable for comparing and contrasting with the witches in Macbeth and the diviner from En Dor. This has to do with both the linguistic and extralinguistic characteristics of the sessions they held with clients. In Table 2 we will compare aspects of the extralinguistic and linguistic semiotic elements of the Witches of Macbeth and the Woman Diviner of En-Dor with H., whom we have already presented as being representative of the third category, and N., a female cartomantist and astrologer who is also representative of the third category and was, without doubt, the most colorful, elegant and exotic fortune-teller we have encountered.¹⁴

4. The comparison and contrast of fortune-telling in literature and the real world

We will compare and contrast both aspects of fortune-telling from the point-of-view of the semiotic systems of each encounter, showing how the ceremony, setting or place, gestures, costumes and sound effects affect the situation and the atmosphere of each, and how these extralinguistic semiotic elements interact with the language, symbols and imagery used in each to form an “external” and “internal” plot which may (in the literary texts at least) lead to a “self-fulfilling prophecy”.

We would like to point out that in all these encounters there is a self-enclosed circle of motivation, interpretation and realization of the future prophecies on the part of the addressee. It is he who is in a state of change or in a particular situation which makes him either susceptible to prophecy or divination, or even actively seek it out. It is he who builds the specific inner plot connecting the past, present and the future from the external plot (usually generalized), the *omni-text*, of the diviner. He is then using the diviner as a “talking sounding board”, or device through which the hearer chooses what he wants to hear and relate to himself through the words of the diviner. The hearer then fulfills the prophecies that he initiated, chose, and executed, and says: “The Diviner was right!”

We will now present two tables in which we compare and contrast real world fortune-telling sessions with literary texts.

In Table 1 we will compare and contrast two real female coffee readers of the “classic” fortune-teller type, R. and Rg., with the description and

behavior of Uncle Kalman from David Shahar's short story "The Fortune-Teller". We will deal specifically with the manner of advertising, the setting of the session, the clothing, the reason for the session, the discourse, and preconceived notions of fortune-telling (Table 1).

In the following comparative Table 2, of two female fortune-tellers, H. and N., the witches in *Macbeth*, and the woman diviner at En-Dor, we will compare the three encounters for the following criteria:

- (i) the scene;
- (ii) the participants involved;
- (iii) the accessories used for divination;
- (iv) the clothing and appearances of the women;
- (v) the clothing and appearance of the male clients;
- (vi) the circumstances of the meeting;
- (vii) the setting/atmosphere;
- (viii) the images used;
- (ix) the specific reasons given for future occurrences;
- (x) the specific time of future occurrences;
- (xi) the specific events themselves; and
- (xii) the use of language.

Table 1. *A comparative table of R. and Rg. ("classic" coffee readers) and the story "The fortune teller" by David Shahar*

	Rg.	R.	"The Fortune-Teller"
<i>Means of Advertising</i>	Word of mouth	Word of mouth	A sign with the inscription "Fortune-Teller" with classical printed letters similar to prayer books, a picture of a man with stylized eyes wearing a turban... the picture is faded but the letters are still legible. (55)
<i>The Setting</i>	An ordinary room in a regular apartment.	A workroom in an ordinary apartment also used by the fortune-teller in her work as a cosmetician.	A room which is reached by descending a seven-step staircase. The room "cannot be called a basement since its windows were still two measures above street-level." (62)

<i>The Appearance of the Fortune-Teller</i>	Ordinary	Ordinary	A description of the of the fortune-teller by a child: "It's impossible for the fortune-teller to be an ordinary man, he is a dwarf, who therefore sits in the middle of his wife's large bed, sipping Turkish coffee from a tiny cup and tells his clients their futures in a thin and hoarse voice. (56)
<i>The Reason for visit</i>	Research	Research	The regular clients to both the "real" fortune-teller and the Uncle: Old Nehemia, the Stone-cutter, worries about his potency; the old Bucharian woman, the arrival of a letter, the Doctor's wife, her son's illness.
<i>Discourse</i>	You have a fish. This fish you'll be happy. There's money — you'll get. Everything will be good for you. I swear on my life. Near future - you'll be real happy. You'll be very happy. Yes, you have a trip. ... I see a good trip. You'll have a surprise. You'll be very happy at work. You'll get more money.	Here, there's twice, before two spots, either two months ago, or two weeks ago, you had a separation. That's two spots, that's also can be two years. Two spots... they are also two months, or two days too, or also two years. You'll get an answer, a letter of announcement you'll be happy. You'll be a boss... You'll own a business.	The letter (to the old Bucharian woman) will arrive in another seven days and seven nights and seven hours and even seven minutes and seven seconds. (63) I will show it that at the present... (The Uncle to Old Nehemia) The verification will be soon. The thing will stand fortified and its strength will become hard when an uplifting will arrive. (A change in style in order to break the image) Nor do I believe in all of them (fortune-tellers) (Uncle Kalman to Doctor's wife) I am not a fortune-teller. That is not my profession. It is an error. A lie. A fortune-teller once lived here, but he ran off, he fled. Tomorrow, I will take down the sign. (65)

<i>The Need for and the Psychological Role of the Fortune-Teller</i>	Research	Research	...there wasn't even a single person in the whole neighborhood who didn't come to hear about his future from him (the "real" fortune-teller) at least twice or three times. (56) When Uncle Kalman settled into the fortune-teller's room, he himself was transformed into a fortune-teller. The first day he opened his eyes and found himself in that room, the old Bucharian woman happened in... she wasn't surprised at all to see that the fortune-teller had changed and had taken on a new face and claimed that he was no longer himself. It only gave her sufficient pretext to retell the entire letter incident in greater detail. (62) Kalman listened to her words (of the old woman) and decided that the first thing he had to do was remove the sign on the window facing the street. Later it became clear to him that, actually, it wouldn't make any difference. (62) Her coming (the Doctor's wife) to the fortune-teller had only one meaning, that was so clear that it didn't have to be interpreted — all hope had fled. (64)
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	M. male palm reader	Y. male palm reader	
<i>The Development of Dependence on the Fortune-Teller in a Way Similar to a Physician</i>	I'm better than any psychologist. In six sessions I can...	In diagnosis, I am like a doctor or a professor. I, at diagnosis, am very strong, like a profesessor or a physician.	...there wasn't even a single person in the whole neighborhood who didn't come to hear about his future from him at least twice or three times. In this way the fortune-teller was like old Dr. Levenstein, who knew the pain and distress of everyone in the neighborhood at first hand, and like him, his four or five formulae worked for everybody, and like him, he had two or three regular clients, who needed to visit him every two or three days. (56)

Table 2. *Comparative table of fortune-tellers, the witches in MACBETH, and The woman diviner at En-Dor*

	H. and N. of the Intermediate Category	Witches in <i>Macbeth</i>	Woman Diviner at En-Dor
<i>Scene</i>	Home: H. simple N. extravagant, red, black, white velvet carpets and upholstery- a dog in matching colors. H. coffee/cards N. cards/astrology and feeling of objects, usually gold jewellery worn for at least 24 hours prior to visit.	A desert place, thunder and lightning (Scene I) A heath, thunder, drum. Outside	By night, woman's home (assumed indoors not specifically stated).

<i>Participants</i>	Fortune-teller/ client, friend may accompany client.	Witches only Scene I Witches present, then vanish, Macbeth, Banquo, question the existence of witches.	Woman, Saul accompanied by two men. The ghost of Samuel divined by woman. Two men play a role at beginning and end, not during actual divination.
<i>Accessories</i> <i>Used in</i> <i>Divination</i>	H. cards/coffee N. rings, cards, astrology charts.	Unspecified, often appear before large cauldron.	Unspecified, ¹⁴ bakes bread and cooks fatted calf at end of scene after divination.
<i>Clothing and</i> <i>Appearance of</i> <i>Female</i> <i>Fortune-Tellers</i>	H. simple, embroidered long dark dress. Crouches when reading the cards without looking at client. N. extravagant hairdo, long dress — red ribbon in hair. A fan arrangement of cards, 3 rows.	Withered and wild in their attire, That look not like inhabitants of the earth. Choppy fingers on skinny lips, you should be women, and yet your beards...	No specific information
<i>Clothing and</i> <i>Appearance of</i> <i>Male Clients</i>	Regular, informal attire.	Assumed to be in full battle dress after successful battle.	Saul disguised himself and put on other raiment.
<i>Circumstances</i> <i>of</i> <i>Meeting</i>	Client seeks out fortune-teller; pre-arranged	“Chance encounter” “Coincidence” Macbeth surprised.	Saul seeks out diviner, forced to disguise himself because of his own decree. Saul forced to lie and conceal his identity. Diviner is surprised.
<i>Setting</i> <i>and</i> <i>Atmosphere</i>	H. slow development of suspense contingent on information supplied. N. mystical, tense atmosphere — possibly even creating anxiety.	Heath, lightning, thunder, drums, rain. Darkness versus light.	Night Darkness versus light.

<i>Images</i>	H. unit of time 2 days, 2 months, 2 years.	Fog, filthy air, killing swine, scurrying rats without tails, wind, sea, port, shipman's card, dryness vs. stormy sea, pilot's thumb, sea versus land, the numbers: 3, 9 15	God-like, prophetic being coming out of the earth — the ghost of Samuel — old man dressed in robe. ¹⁶
<i>Specific Reason for the Encounter</i>	None	None	Saul did not hearken to the Lord's voice, <i>I Samuel</i> : 28:18
<i>Specific Time of Future</i>	H. unit of time N. within a three year period — a wall of three cards.	give chain of events without specific time, but with a fixed order of sequence.	Tomorrow
<i>Specific Future Event</i>	H. non-specific: today or in the present; a change in work. Specific: If you go abroad you will take one child and leave the other with its father. (led to self- fulfillment).	specific: Macbeth will rise to noble rank: Thane of Cawdor and then king.	specific: And tomorrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me.
<i>Use of Language</i>	non-specific, non-precise, <i>omniscopus</i> , <i>pars pro toto</i> , persuasive language: Maybe in a week, a month, a year - I wager a month. monologue laced with explanations and "yes-no" questions.	repetitious rhythm and lexical pattern — echo effect — — slot fillers — All hail Macbeth! Hail to thee Thane of Glamis...Cawdor, Thou shalt be king hereafter - monologue- greeting to Macbeth & Banquo, develops between witches; poetic and picturesque.	develops between Saul and Samuel — Samuel dominant descriptive and explanatory.

The data we have found in the fortune-telling sessions as well as in the witches' scenes of *Macbeth* and the encounter between Saul and the woman diviner at En-Dor are all examples of what we feel to be "self via other elicited prophecies". The diviner, the witches, and the fortune-tellers are only instruments through which we externalize in the world the internalized conclusions of the internal plot that we maintain within ourselves. Thus, we end up doing what we originally and subconsciously wanted to do or feared would happen in the first place.

This is possible for the following reasons:

- (1) The circumstances under which the encounter between the female fortune-tellers, witches or the woman diviner, and the male participants, and of the male fortune-teller, the uncle in the short story by David Shahar, takes place, as well as the language, ceremony, or various other semiotic effects, place the fortune-tellers in the encounter in the role of an all-knowing clairvoyant: i.e. he/she possesses the "knowledge" of what will take place in the future, which very often parallels the clients' latent desires, wishes, and/or fears. All of the above are further strengthened by the tense or unusual atmosphere which is created during the encounter. This is further enhanced by the fact that the clients are usually already in a state of emotional stress, tension or fear. All of these elements provide the integral background for the dynamic relative communicative encounter between the fortune-teller and client.
- (2) Although the fortune-teller him/herself, or through the images he/she conjures, is doing most of the talking, both parties are building individual and independent plots in conjunction with each other. This, of course, is part and parcel of the dynamic relativistic aspects of human communication in general and the discourse of fortune-telling in particular. These plots are, in turn, affected by the entire circumstances of the encounter which (as we have shown in the comparative tables) can be divided into various semiotic systems based on linguistic and extralinguistic variables.
- (3) These encounters are means by which the clients can have their own specific hopes, desires, wishes, or fears regarding their own future "revealed" to them in unusual and even "occult" circumstances. Much of the actual information is already present in

their own minds. This kind of self-generated information or message tends to be more extensively processed and better retained than non-self-related or associative information (Markus 1977).

- (4) The particular circumstances and the language used in these encounters can also be related to the "Barnum effect" (Dickinson and Kelly 1985, Hyman 1977, 1981, Snyder and Shenkel 1975, Snyder, Shenkel and Lowery 1977) where people appear to accept willingly personality interpretations comprised of vague statements which have a high base rate occurrence among the general population. Thus, the participants are willing to accept their own predestined fate or future because of the information they themselves possess about their own wishes, desires, hopes and fears for themselves.

Thus, the real world of fortune-telling as well as the literary renditions of such encounters between male and female diviners and clients of various kinds, show how the diviner is being used as an instrument through which the client can allow himself to either "make" or "accept" the fate of his future as he himself has subconsciously internalized it, as part of a self-enclosed circle of motivation, interpretation and realization of future prophecies while playing his part as the "passive" addressee in the fortune-telling encounter.

Notes

1. R. uses the Hebrew idiom "there is to you" - *yesh lax* for "you have", replacing the Hebrew word *lax* with the equivalent Arabic form *lik*, resulting in the hybrid expression *yesh lik* throughout the entire session.
2. The "fish" which R. sees in the coffee residue is an omen for "good luck in everything".
3. "I swear on my life" is our translation of the Hebrew idiom *be-xayai* - "on my life", which is used here where an equivalent English speaker might say "I swear it".
4. We have attempted in our translation to indicate that R. has dropped certain syllables in rapid colloquial conversation.
5. The word "happy" here is an Arabic-Hebrew hybrid *mabsutit* (*mabsut* Arabic for "happy", *-it* Hebrew fem. sg. suffix), quite commonly used by most Israelis in everyday conversation. It is preceded by the standard Hebrew *smexa* which appears twice in the text. In the half hour 549 word session, the word *mabsutit* appears ten times.
6. Here R. replaces the standard Hebrew word *nesiya* with the English word "trip".

7. Literally: "Do you have a business, *Respectable Lady*"? (a very formal means of address usually used in written salutations of formal letters.)
8. Rg. uses the word *mabsutit* as well (Cf. note 5).
9. Here Rg. uses the feminine form of the colloquial English borrowing: "boss" = *bossit*.
10. Here Rg. uses the Yiddish-Hebrew hybrid word *balabustit*, the bastardized feminine form of *ba'al ha-bayit* = "the master of the house". It is used colloquially in Modern Hebrew (with this Yiddish pronunciation) to mean a "good house keeper", and is being used here incorrectly.
11. Arabic for "did you understand", commonly used in colloquial Israeli speech.
12. Arabic for "I understood". The client, an Ashkenazi Jew, may be replying in Arabic for the same reason Rg., of Kurdish abstraction, chose to use the Yiddish: *balabustit*. It might be a way of recognizing the other's identity and attempting "to connect" with each other. The reader should also note that Rg. first refers to the client as "sweetie" (Heb. *moteke*) a familiar intimacy in colloquial Hebrew as well at the very beginning of the session. The client's response in Arabic had a positive effect on Rg. as seen in her ecstatic reply.
13. Rg. is obviously overjoyed by the client's response in Arabic and is now showering her with a string of colloquial Arabic compliments, (*'al ha-kefak!*, *sebaba!*) also frequently used in colloquial Israeli speech, followed by the Hebrew for "sweet".
14. These "unspecified" accessories have been specified as a wine-skin filled with the blood of a sacrifice which was then poured over the grave or on the ground (possibly in a catacomb) within which the diviner would enter and speak. Thus, the diviner is believed to be out of the hearer's sight (Turchiner (Tur Sinai) 1935:75).
15. According to Cirlot (1962:222-223):

Three: Three symbolizes spiritual synthesis, and is the formula for the creation of each of the worlds. It represents the solution of conflict posed by dualism. It forms a half-circle comprising birth, zenith and descent. Geometrically it is expressed by three points and by the triangle. It is the harmonic product of the action of unity upon duality. It is the number concerned with basic principles, and expresses sufficiency, or the growth of unity within itself. Finally, it is associated with the concepts of heaven and the Trinity.

Nine: The triangle of the ternary, and the triplication of the triple. It is therefore a complete image of the three words. It is the end-limit of the numerical series before its return to unity. For the Hebrews it was the symbol of truth, being characterized by the fact that, when multiplied, it reproduces itself (in mystic addition). In medicinal rites, it is the symbolic number *par excellence*, for it represents triple synthesis, that is, the disposition on each plane of the corporal, the intellectual and the spiritual.
16. Nowhere is it specified that Saul actually saw the ghost of Samuel; it is the diviner who describes the image. This is in contrast to Banquo's doubting the existence of the witches.

Concluding Remarks

Motivation, Imagination and Magic

We have not attempted here to present *the* definitive model of fortune-telling in general or of any of the individual branches of fortune-telling in particular. We have merely tried to present many of the major linguistic and extralinguistic aspects of the broad phenomenon of fortune-telling from a pragmatic and semiological point-of-view. In particular, we have concentrated on fortune-telling as a specific instance of persuasive dyadic human communication, one which is becoming increasingly popular in our modern technological world.

Very often studies of persuasion have concentrated on the negative aspects of advertising in the mass media, political propaganda, and the shaping of people's minds, emotions and behavior which have, in turn, raised very basic moral and ethical questions (Brown 1963, Packard 1962, Sargant 1957). The pragmatic aspect of what we have found as the the persuasive aspects of fortune-telling may be reflected by what has been most clearly stated by Jamieson (1985:2):

Any discussion of persuasion raises ethical issues concerning the content of the messages and their form of presentation. Persuasion concerns real events in a particular social milieu, and in the minds of individuals who evaluate and apportion emotive judgements according to their particular moral standards. *Persuasion in practice is not abstract, it can only be fully explored by abstracting for study the variety of structures which lie at the bases of human life; such bases are manifest in the psyche of the individual, the social behaviour of the individual, and the semiological means by which man communicates within himself and within others.* (Italics ours)

The modern science of semiotics, in our opinion, is probably the most appropriate framework in which to study the phenomenon of fortune-telling for the following two reasons:

- (1) The various branches of fortune-telling are contingent upon and employ various signs and symbols which serve as the basis of the fortune-teller/client communication.
- (2) The persuasive elements of the fortune-teller/client communication may also be described and explained as a larger semiological-oriented process based on *signs and symbols*, *recognition*, *bias or selective attention*, and *motivation*.

These fundamental semiotic aspects of fortune-telling in particular and human communication in general as we have presented them here in this book have also been basically defined by Jamieson (1985:22-28):

Symbols (and fortune-tellers signs!) (A.E./Y.T.) as recognition aids can reduce information into a more compact form and thus speed up the process of communication. (*ibid* p. 22, italics ours)

Recognition, like all the forms that memory takes, is *selective* as through *past experience* and through *motivation* the individual creates *biases* which orient him to recognize more intently certain things, people or places, rather than others. (*op cit.* italics ours)

Bias or selective attention is a normal process in our lives, with the word *bias* carrying a more emotive 'ring' than *selective attention*, but be that as it may, whichever term we select, the tendency still exists. (*ibid.* p. 22, italics ours)

The search for meaning in terms appropriate to the receiver and in terms not envisaged by the sender calls attention to the possibilities of modifications that messages may undergo 'in transit', thus producing discrepancy between what the message originator intended, and what the receiver actually interpreted. (*ibid.* p. 24, italics ours)

Learning and retention of meaningful information is strongly affected by *motivation*; motivation provides the *energy*, psychologically speaking, for the efficiency of both processes... The *effectiveness of persuasion* is also dependent upon the extent to which it can enlist *motivational support*... (*ibid.* p. 30, italics ours)

Motivation has, metaphorically speaking, extensive sinews in the fabric of human thought and behaviour; it has bases in both man's innate and learned behaviour; it operates, or so it appears, at *both conscious and unconscious levels*. (*op cit.*, italics ours)

Fortune-telling as a specialized form of human communication which deals with people's personality traits as well as with their future is decidedly on the rise and becoming more and more accepted. It is, therefore, essen-

tial that it be studied and analyzed. As D'vora Ben Shaul writes in the *Jerusalem Post*, (February 12, 1983):

From earliest times people have wondered about their future. Most of us, at one time or another, are concerned, thoughtful or sometimes even frightened as we ponder our unknown tomorrows. The desire to know the future has resulted in myriad forms of fortune-telling, fortune-seeing and prediction practice.

Throughout history many systems have developed for this purpose, employing countless oracles such as entrails of animals and birds, mirrors, pendulums, crystal balls, coffee grounds, tea leaves and dice.

Some of these systems have faded into the past, while others are still around and enjoy a wide following. Among them, the parapsychological sciences of astrology and palmistry, the reading of the Tarot cards and the *I Ching* oracle and the readings of psychic seers are by far the most widely available today for people who feel they must know what lies in store for them.

Nor are the clients of the parapsychological practitioners limited to the ignorant and the superstitious.

As president of the United States, Franklin Delano Roosevelt consulted psychic seer in late 1944.¹ The president wanted her to tell him how much longer he would live. Dixon, at the time America's most famous psychic reader, broke her lifelong rule of never answering that question. The president explained to her the importance of this knowledge to himself and to his 'mission for mankind'.

Dixon told FDR that he would not live more than six months. He died just five months and one week later.

On the other side of the Atlantic during World War II the British War Office maintained the services of a full-time astrologist not so much to tell them what the stars said about themselves, but to keep them informed on a daily basis about what the astrologists employed by Hitler, Mussolini, Goebbels and Goering would be telling them.

Never, perhaps, have so many people read the horoscopes of others, and both *The Times* of London and a number of prestigious American newspapers carried the horoscopes of Hitler, Roosevelt and Churchill and of leading Axis and Allied generals in a weekly column.

Today in Israel it is estimated that more than 50 percent of the adult population have at one time or another consulted a practitioner of one of these parapsychological sciences. A not insignificant number do so on a regular basis, and one psychic in the Tel Aviv area showed me her VAT (Value Added Tax) receipt book. It was full of receipts issued to some of Israel's largest and most important corporations, which use her services as a graphologist, as a psychometrics tester, and on occasion, as a seer.

One astrologist I visited for the purpose of this article was recommended to me by a man who served in the two last Labour cabinets. (p. 8)

Undoubtedly, the reasons for the ever-increasing popularity of fortune-telling, the occult, a return to fundamentalist religious views, etc. may be attributed to a vast array of numerous and diverse human *needs*: social, psychological, economic, historical, spiritual, etc. People have a *need* and a *desire* to understand themselves better and reach a spiritual and emotional equilibrium between their most fundamental needs and desires. Perhaps, this may explain the ubiquity of fortune-telling and related phenomena. There is, of course, a direct connection between these fundamental *needs* and *desires* and the *motivation* for seeking out the advice of fortune-tellers. According to Jamieson (1985:31):

A concept basic to the study of *motivation* is that of *need*. *Need*, or in its less extreme form, *desire*, produces instability in the relationship between an individual and the environment. It is this *instability* which is presumed to have *motivational properties*, that is, properties which can be brought into play to reduce *need or needs*, and thereby restore *stability and equilibrium*. (Italics ours)

Indeed, it may very well be that fortune-telling is not only one of the most efficient means for people to fulfill these basic human needs and desires, but because of its almost “mystical” relationship to the future, it also becomes exceedingly “attractive” as well:

The general *power* or *motivational potency* of persuasive communication (i.e. fortune-telling!) (A.E./Y.T.) appears to reside in the awareness that individuals do not merely desire to satisfy needs and produce a steady-state according to the homeostatic model, *but that individuals seek stimulation* (Getzels 1964, p.254) wrote, ‘[an individual] is clearly often intrigued and challenged by what is new and will go out of his way to encounter, explore and master that which is intriguing and challenging. (Jamieson 1985:33)

Or, to be more direct:

The question that remains is: just what sends so many people to seek the assistance of the parapsychological practitioners? Gail Klein, a psychologist who is very familiar with the parapsychological sciences, and who practices clinical psychology in Tel Aviv, believes that the most widespread underlying reason is fear and sense of helplessness.

‘The world in which we live often seems alien to us, even hostile,’ she says. ‘We have rejected, for the most part, the consolation of organized religion, yet we seek reassurance. When we can predict, or think we can predict the future, we feel that we are less likely to be victimized by blind chance.’ (Ben Shaul 1983:9)

The existence of a direct connection between *motivation*, *need* and *desire* on the hand and the *future* on the other is, in our opinion, the key to the phenomenon of fortune-telling. More important to the understanding of this phenomenon, however, is the intrinsic role human imagination plays in the creation of our ideas regarding the future, be it in organized religion, the occult, magic, and, of course, in fortune-telling itself.

Motivation, through the existence of *desire*, is bound up with the *future*, a *future* which can be grasped as a *visionary experience*, an experience to which the expression *imagination* is given. Through *imagination*, *that which is absent can be made present, and that which is desired can be possessed, figuratively speaking.* (Jamieson 1985:44, italics ours)

This experience, or better said, process of imagination or imaginatory thinking, is, however, a highly personal and self-motivated and self-generated *transcendental* process:

Nevertheless, although imagination is a visionary experience it does have its roots in lived experience, a foundation which gives it an origin from which it can *transcend* and thus become 'other worldly'. This *transcendence* offers *unlimited possibilities for thoughts or fantasies which may bear no real connection with practical realities; they may be self-generated without the intervention of others, or they may be subject to then influence of others.*

Indeed, it is this transcendental aspect of the interconnection between motivation and imagination and the future which explains why fortune-telling seems "to work" for so many people. However, whether one chooses to believe in fortune-telling or not, one cannot deny the central role these transcendental persuasive elements play in the discourse of fortune-telling. We are, of course, referring to the notion of *omniscopus* language, which, in our view, definitely represents one of the most effective examples of dyadic persuasive communication to be studied today.

According to Ben Shaul:

...Although in times past the seers often used mirrors and crystal balls as props in their readings, the moderns do without these aids and address themselves to the subject directly. Some of them are highly intuitive, good practical psychologists and well experienced in both sizing up people and, in that sense, really seeing them.

It was here, however, that the use of mystically couched language and the tendency to speak in generalities while waiting for cues from the subject seemed most prevalent. After a few attempts to consult with them, and finding that I wasn't, apparently, playing the game as they wished, I sent a friend, a young woman with a Ph.D. in psychology, armed with a

small taperecorder, to have a psychic reading. I would then try to analyse the seer's method.

To my great surprise, my friend returned an hour later raving about how the woman had 'told me the most amazing things, things that she could not possibly have known.' Together, we sat down and reviewed the tape, analysing every statement and response. To her amazement, my friend realized that the woman had actually told her nothing. She herself had been a victim of that great human failing, suggestibility, and in every case she had herself supplied the cues that enabled the seer to proceed.

This does not mean that I am claiming that there are no psychic seers. As scientist Carl Sagan says, 'The absence of evidence is not evidence of absence.' (*ibid.* p.9)

The connection between *fortune-telling* and *magic*, indeed with any imaginatory semiologically-oriented internal thought process related to the *future* is fundamental to the most "existential" elements of our lives:

The importance of *imagination* for an understanding of *persuasive communication* lies in its potential for involvement with the *future*, its ability to connect, *albeit in an illusory way, with that which is to be, or if not to be, then that which is desired...*

The *act of imagination* underpins man's concern with *magic*; without *imagination* the concept of *magic* could not arise. Sartre (1972) saw the connection when he described the act of *imagination* as '... an incantation destined to produce the object of one's thought, the thing one desires in such a way that one can take possession of it.' Likewise, we can see the relevance of studies in *mythology*, particularly *magic*, for an understanding of certain *advertising techniques*. For example, Gossage (1967) shows the relevance of the concept of *contagious magic to advertising*; *contagious magic* is a process whereby it is believed that *transference of a quality can take place from one object to another, or from one person to another merely by association*, hence the term *contagious*. This, like all ideas of *magic*, requires the existence of *imagination to make the necessary leap across the divide which separates the rational from the irrational*. (Jamieson 1985:46, italics ours)

Furthermore, the actual self-generating *pars pro toto* process of the external and internal dialogues created by the fortune-teller and the client which we have discussed may also be related to the notions of motivation and imagination as outlined by Sartre:

One of Sartre's basic tenets regarding the *imaginative consciousness* is that it possesses *intentionality*; that although it can be free-ranging, it obtains *resolution* only through *intention*. This concept of *intention* is perhaps one of the most powerful, if not the most powerful, in the whole discussion about *persuasion*, and it is central to the concept of *imagination*.

Intention is a kind of *focusing device in the imaginative consciousness*, it *concentrates* and thus it *excludes*; it is a *selective device*, selecting an image to be raised into *consciousness* from a *range of alternatives*. Without *intention*, nothing has *prominence*, therefore one has to *intend* when one *imagines*; for example, one only has a *mental image* when one *intends* to put it there. Sartre gave an illustration of the importance of *intention* for imagination by reference to schematic drawings which the viewer is called upon to *complete or fill-in* by the *act of imagination*. This *filling-in* requires an *intention* on the part of the viewer to make the necessary completion. (Jamieson 1985:49, italics ours)

As we have shown throughout this book, this concept of “contagious magic” is applicable not only to advertising, one of the “classic” examples of persuasive communication, but, in light of our research, to the *omnis-copus* language and the internal and external plot building of fortune-telling as well. Thus, in conclusion, whether fortune-telling is “rational” or “irrational”, “reliable” or “illusion”, “real” or “false”, it exists, and will most likely continue to exist as long as human beings will continue to have needs, desires, motivations, intentions, and imagination. We view our study as a first step in classifying this phenomemon of fortune-telling pragmatically and semiotically in order to understand it. and ourselves, better.

NOTE

1. Roosevelt, of course, was not the only American President to have been publicly linked with a seer or an astrologist. It has also been alleged that Mrs. Nancy Reagan may have influenced or directed President Ronald Reagan's schedule, activities and perhaps even policies according to the advice of a well-known California astrologist whom it is believed she frequently has consulted.

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