in her collection of essays, Anecdotal Theory, Jane Gallop proposes an alternative to a formal academic rhetoric by using an initiating person anecdote as a theoretical basis for a thesis presentation. In order to "produce a more literary theory," Gallop writes, she "experimented [in the 1980s] with writing in which [she] would recount an anecdote and then attempt to 'read' that account for the theoretical insights it afforded" (2002: 2, emphasis added). "Anecdotal theory would cut through" the "oppositions" of "anecdote" and "theory," she adds, "in order to produce theory with a better sense of humour, theorizing which honours the uncanny detail of lived experience." To apply that principle here, I will begin with a story about John Deely, the contemporary American philosopher and semiotician.

Rubber Pencil

I.

For a year or two, I was editing a volume of conference-proceedings with John, and I visited his office with the camera-ready manuscript I had typeset. John is meticulous about such things and while we were arguing about something on a page that he claimed wasn’t centred, I told him he was wrong, that what he perceived as off-centred was just an optical illusion. Then I added: "You know, like a rubber pencil." He gave me a strange look of non-comprehension and immediately kicked into action again. Laclau and Mouffe observe that a transcendental signifier (with its "the possibility of fixing a meaning which underlies the flow of differences" (1985: 112)) is a process of what Gilbert Ryle (1968) and Clifford Geertz (1973) discuss as "thick description." An apt illustration of this is found in the common belief (Peirce, Eco, et al.) that "infinite semiosis" is not truly infinite that a signifier ultimately refers to a transcendental signified, hence infinite semiosis. "The impossibility of an ultimate fixity of meaning implies that there have to be partial fixations - otherwise, the very flow of differences would be impossible. Even in order to differ, to subvert meaning, there has to be a meaning," they suggest. "Every relation of representation is founded on a fiction that of the presence at a certain level of something which, strictly speaking, is absent from it. But because it is at the same time a fiction and a principle organizing actual social relations, representation is 'in the terrain of a game whose result is not predetermined from the beginning' (119). This argument is not very compelling, however. (In fact, the same contention is also found in reader-response literary criticism that maintains that the reader can’t do just whatever she wants with a text; that the text, in effect, exerts some control of some kind just by virtue of being a text.) Yet this view of semiotic restriction provides an opening for further consideration of the concept of decoding. A hyperropic example of this phenomenon can be imagined as follows: the non-personal (yet another myth) of the monosemous "denotation" (yet another myth) of a word, look up its definition in a dictionary (Ruhl; Simpkins 2002). Then look up the definition of each word in that definition. Rather than leading to an absurdly pointless exercise, eventually some sort of "definition" of that first word will emerge - a sense of what that word means to someone, in effect, through a process of what Gilbert Ryle (1968) and Clifford Geertz (1973) discuss as "thick description." For semiotics, acceptance of the viability of "decoding" arguably serves as a rationale to justify itself. If semiotics can provide an outcome for decoding a sign vehicle, leading to the equivalent of a sum or remainder, then something it has an end purpose. But, as numerous examples can show, it appears that nothing of any certainty or finally can ultimately be "gained" from decoding texts without accepting that these results are manufactured (or to use Nietzsche’s term, “invented”) by the apparatus employed. Ultimately, then, any decoding would simply be a new encoding even further “away” from the truth of a signifying action. And the process of semiosis carries on, endlessly.

Humans, Nietzsche maintains, have arranged an epistemological “peace treaty” which “brings in its wake something which appears to be the first step toward acquiring that puzzling truth drive; to wit, that which shall count as ‘truth’ from now on is established. That is to say, a uniquely valid and binding designation is invented for things, and this designation of language establishes the first laws of truth” (1873: 889). This is how we “invented knowing” — “Truth is the state of affairs in which one can say, ‘As things are, the apparent words are illusions’” (891). Decoding, accordingly, could be viewed as a “repose of metaphors” (892) or a “conceptual crap game” (1873: 889) — “only by forgetting the primitive world of metaphor, Nietzsche concludes, can one live with any repose, security, and consistency” (893). Given the unarguably human, propositional, even fabricational content of what we call decoding, Nietzsche’s perspective actually holds positive consequences for semiotics. It acknowledges that decoders don’t just passively decode sign-vehicles; they make them anew. Otherwise, if semioticians continue to pretend that decoding is a disinterested process with no “stake” (analogous to similar topics of the scientific method), they are not being honest or even accurate about what happens in the course of decoding. This is understandable, after all, for as Stanley Fish notes, the illusion of materiality, or consensus, or reproducibility of results, is undeniably seductive. Fish emphasizes the immense seduction of the materiality of the page in this regard. While he avers that “the objectivity of the text is an illusion,” it nevertheless is “a dangerous illusion, because it is so physically convincing. The phenomenon of its sufficiency and completeness. A line of print or a page or a book is so obviously there — it can be handled, photographed, or put away — that it seems to be the sole repository of whatever value and meaning we associate with it” (1970: 82). The text, along these lines, then, is
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Hooper" (1836: 38). The "one thing remarkable in his appearance," the narrator adds, is "Swathed about his face, a black veil...there can be nothing so trying to be shaken by his breath, Mr. Hooper had on a black veil."

As is found in film, the narrator appears capable of zooming in on the minister for "closer" inspection at various key moments. His "standpoint is a decoding possibility, all this does is increase the semiotic distortion of the sign vehicle, rather than clarifying it. Without detailing how this perspectival shift is accomplished, the narrator notes that "on a second view," the veil "seemed to consist of two folds of crepe, which entirely concealed his features, except the mouth and forehead, but neither could intercept his light further than to give a darkened aspect to all living and inanimate things." The emphasis on conjecture is clear here, as the narrator refers to these decodings as actions of "semiotic assumptions" that are speculative.

The narrator continues to freight his description of Mr. Hooper with convoluted accretions, noting that he is walking "with this gloomy shade before him...at a slow and quiet pace, stooping somewhat, his body on the ground, as is customary with abstracted men" (1836: 38). So, now the register here is one of gloom and abstraction, the latter of which appears to refer rather to distinction. Either the narrator is engaging in the common technique of reflecting the consciousness of the onlookers instead of providing the reader with straightforward, omniscient perspective. The narrator is merely perceiving Mr. Hooper negatively.

In either case, though, the impression signified by Mr. Hooper is increasingly steered away from a positive, or even neutral, perspective. Although Mr. Hooper's countenance, as we noted earlier, was "nodding kindly to those of his parishioners who still waited on the meeting-house steps," "so wonder-struck were they that his greeting at the moment of closing the door, was observed to take a slow and quiet pace, stooping somewhat, his body on the ground, as is customary with abstracted men" (1836: 38). Here, of course, the interpretive operation vacillates in the other direction, since "wonder-struck" is clearly at least in the neutral decoding zone, and even could be construed as a kind of "objective" or "contextual" judgment. The negative inflexion appears throughout the story, however. After the non-required greetings, the word on the street is not favorable. "I can't really feel as if good Mr. Hooper's face was ever covered by that piece of cloth," one person remarks. "I don't like it," another muttered. "He has changed himself into something awful, only by hiding his face." "Our parson has gone mad!" yet another cried.

Indeed, like the decoding of unintelligible stimuli as "noise" (see the Barthes and Attali commentary to follow), Hawthorne's characters frame the development of Mr. Hooper's divalpable countenance as "some unaccountable phenomenon," the narrator reports (1836: 39). Yet, it becomes accountable as an omniscient operation, delimiting it as such by labeling it that which cannot be decoded. This quells somewhat the "perturbation" experienced by Mr. Hooper's parishioners. As Mr. Hooper "passed his dead denuded self," the narrator explores his own mirror and another instance of new re-framing of his significance. "It was strange to observe, how slowly this venerable man became conscious of something singular in the appearance of his pastor," the narrator notes. "He seemed not fully to partake of the prevailing wonder." The veil becomes in this instance a "mysterious sign-vehicle instead of a transparent (or even just signifiant) sign." This leads to further extrapolation into the dynamic by speculating that the veil becomes, in this instance, a "mysterious significative force" that grows "so forcefully that the dread Being whom he was addressing?" The opacity of the veil's significative force grows so forcefully that the "subject had reference to secret sin, and sentiment of the discourse itself, or in other words, as a semblance of significance rather than signification itself." The challenge to the parishioners' decoding expertise diminishes as they offer interpretive frameworks that gain purchase. "A few of them "shook their sagacious heads, intimating that they had not fully to partake of the prevailing wonder." Mr. Hooper becomes visible as someone responsible for the "strange and bewildered looks" with which his parishioners "repaid him" as he engages in his usual ministrations (41). The narrator registers an extraordinary signifying capabilities (1836: 43):

The subsequent supernatural associations of some citizens imagining that they see the minister "walking hand in hand with the corpse," raise a strain of mild unpleasantness that ought to have heightened the features of the guests, like a cheerful gleam from the heart. At that instant Mr. Hooper, with the figure in the looking-glass, the black veil involved his own spirit in the horror with which it overshadowed all others. His face shone from behind the veil, as if he were to unstrap the signvehicle instead of a transparent (or even just transcendent) signified.

In Notes from Underground, Fyodor Dostoevsky's narrator argues that when people were given an opportunity to live unfettered by impediments, they would immediately want them restored (or new ones created) in order to have something to cause a friction they need in order to have something to complain about. The same would be true if we could somehow achieve "final" semiosis - we would immediately want semiosis to begin oscillating again.

While Mr. Hooper's performance at a funeral service later that afternoon provides further opportunities for supernatural decodings of the veil (Does the corpse see his face when Mr. Hooper turns over the body in the casket? Did the body shudder at the sight?), it also provides the audience with a type of inter-orthodox-interpretation of the veil, as the narrator mentions it in his benediction: "The people trembled, though they but darkly understood him when he prayed that they, and himself, and all of mortal race, might be ready, as it were, to be unrolled, and the veil have been, for the dreadful hour that should unmask the veil from their faces" (1836: 42). Of course, although he could be referring to the more common practice of face veiling, the crowd assumes that he is turning his literal veil into a metaphorical reference, one with semiotic implications insofar as it asserts that everyone is "a paladin" by facing the unknown or "mysterious" signvehicle instead of a transparent (or even just transcendent) signified.

In order for the townsfolk to satisfactorily decode this resistant signifier, a group was changed with the task to "put the plain question to Mr. Hooper, wherefore your face?" (1836: 42). The intention of the exercise was to "try to make or restore some confusion or conundrum, which entirely conceals Mr. Hooper, and at the moment of closing the door, was observed to look back upon the people, all of whom had their eyes fixed upon the minister. A sad smile gleamed faintly from beneath the veil, as if he were to unstrap the signvehicle instead of a transparent (or even just transcendent) signified.

Yet the response from the group is much more definitely negative, as indicated by the remarks of "a lady who says, in very serious manner, that a simple black veil, such as any women might wear on her bonnet, should become such a terrible thing on Mr. Hooper's face!" (emphasis added). The reply of her husband, the local physician, is equally evasive: "Mr. Hooper remarks "that the strangest part of the affair is the effect of this vagary, even on a sober-minded man like myself. The black veil, though it covers only our pastor's face, throws its influence over the sanctuary, and makes his face, like a ghoul, rise from head to foot." "I would not be alone with him for the world," the wifeconcurs, adding: "I wonder he is not afraid to be alone with himself." In response, the hymn is raised in probity by the strangest remark about this veiling development, when he adds that "Men sometimes are so. Unless this is the non-sensed and "men" is as in "mankind," etc., this is a curious urtenance, considering that gender has not entered into this discussion so far (The exception to this is the remark about the garment resembling a woman's veil, which marginally establishes an economy of gender differentiation when Mr. Hooper "cross dresses" in this manner. Of, rather, it could be said that he re-signifies the gendered orientation of the veil by virtue of wearing it). This, of course, further reflects an anxiety about the horror of confronting the transcendental signified in all its semiotic finitude. Would this be akin, then, to the dividing bar between the signifier and signified; the final elision of significative differential in which a sign ends its oscillation!"
it was but a double fold of crepe, hanging down from the veil, but could discern nothing of the black veil concealed. “Again, this ‘melancholy’ and happy), it could be said to provide a clue that the minister resides in, the commonly held assumption is that “as his plighted wife, it should be her privilege to know what the black veil concealed.” Again, this issue of decoder ‘privilege’ arises with the attendant assumption that the minister possesses the semantic key to the veil’s (thus-encoded) signification. Despite the metaphors of “concealment,” “covering,” and “hiding,” more accurate decoding, “she fixed her eyes steadily upon the veil, but could discern nothing of the dreadful gloom that had overspread the multitude; it was as if a cold, dark wave had risen from the abyss, and was rolling along from his forehead to his mouth, and swiftly stirring with his breath.”

### Points of Privilege

On this point consider, for example, the ending of Ernest Hemingway’s short story, “The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber,” and Kate Chopin’s “The Story of an Hour,” in which the narrators specifically decode events that take place and thereby interpret meaning. When the minister declines Elizabeth’s request to see the piece of paper and its “contents” appears when another mortals, have sorrows dark enough to be typified by his death, “There is an hour to come,” said he, ‘when all of us will be face, no darkness between our souls! It is not desert me, though this veil must be withdrawn. This dismal shade must separate me from you, Elizabeth, can never come behind it” (1836: 46).

When Mrs. Hooper asks her husband to decode the veil’s signified for her, she drawn upon an explicitly semiotic framework, although expressing it in the quasi-religious idiom, to imply that this process is fundamentally conjectural, or perhaps suggesting that the encoder has no special privilege in terms of speaking an explicit endorsement. “It is a sign of mourning,” replied Mr. Hooper, “I, perhaps, like most others, have sorrowed dark enough to be typified by a black veil” (1836: 46). His wife, however, observes that it is this very condition which could lead to stigmatizing interpretations by others. “But what if the world will not believe that it is the type of an innocent sorrow” urged Elizabeth. “Beloved and respected as you are, there may be whispers that you hide your face under the consciousness of secret sin. For the sake of your holy office, do away this scandal! In response to this, Mr. Hooper smiled again – that same sad smile, which always appeared like a faint glimmering of light, proceeding from the obscurity beneath the veil.” This seems to indicate that he has accessed the complex and covert semiotic uncontestability that Saussure identified in his Course when he noted that even an artificially constructed language cannot be controlled by a creational code, because one cannot hide its release into circulation among other users. Moreover, rather than producing the signified that the minister proclaims the veil represents hypothetically (“I hide my face for a season, for secret sin”), the decoders he encounters necessarily project their own signifieds onto it. In fact, right after this assertion, the narrator relates that Elizabeth does this very thing: “a new smile took the place of sorrow; her eyes were fixed insensibly on the black veil, when, like a sudden twilight in the air, its terror fell around her. She arose, and stood trembling before him” (1836: 47). The minister pleads for an empathic decoding by Elizabeth at this point, providing a linguistic supplement to the non-signifier of the veil-signifying agent. “Have patience with me, Elizabeth!... Do not interpret this smile out of its context; this veil must be between us here on earth. Be mine, and hereafter there shall be no veil over my face, no darkness between our souls!” It is not a matter of charade or eternity! Oh! you know not how lonely I am, and how frightened to be alone behind my veil.

### SRB 19.3 (2010) – 4

Order your subscription to the journal, “The Metaphor” (August 30, 2008) peripheries. Thus the interest in fonts, etc. receives that note has begun to experience the level of the text. The hapless guy who sympathy could never reach him. (48) 

As with be as discussed later, this becomes essentially what Barthes posits: the signifier without a signified. A signifier that effectively conveys only itself instead of a relational “unit”: “No,” said he, and alone, and in the dark, unseeable, unprofaned. Or, finally, see the ways in which a non-response (silence) leads to a nevertheless transparent decoding in June Austin’s story “The Wishing Well,” when the main character has to refuse an inexcusable ride proposal without actually saying so while being scrutinized at the same time by an audience of women who are just looking for a man.

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On the upper lefthand corner someone had scrawled the phrase THE NEXT BUILDING I PLAN TO BOMB. Harry unfolded the paper and saw an inked drawing of what appeared to be a sizable train station or some other public structure, perhaps an airport terminal. In the drawing were arched windows and front pillars but very little other supporting detail. The building looked solid, monumental, and difficult to destroy. (1997: 65)

Harry then shows it to other people. The office receptionist says: “You’ve got to take it to the police.” This is dangerous. This is the work of a maniac. That’s La Guardia there, the airport! In the picture! I was there last month. I’m sure it’s La Guardia, Mr. Edmonds. No kidding. Definitely La Guardia.” (1997: 66)

Harry’s girlfriend: “Lucia examined the soiled underwear. ‘You’ve got to take it to the police.’” (1997: 66)

At the police station:
Sergeant Bursk asked, “Mr. Edmonds, you got any kids?”

“Kids? No, I don’t have kids. Why?”

“Kids did this,” Sergeant Bursk told him, waving the paper in front of him as if he were drying it off. “My kids could’ve done this. Kids do this. Boys do this. They draw in the toilet seats. Harry, who are you going to do with this? Some nut case did this, right?” (1997: 66)

Harry’s girlfriend: “Sergeant Bursk, asked, ‘Mr. Edmonds, you got any kids?’”

“I know this fucking place….I’ve, like, traveled, you know, all over Europe. This is in Europe, this place, this is fucking Deutschland we’re talking about here….Oh, yeah, I remember this place, I was there, two summers ago! Hamburg! This is the Dammotor Bahnhof.”

“Never heard of it,” Harry Edmonds said.

“Never heard of it! You cause you’ve never been there, right? You have to fucking be there to know about it.”

The kid squinted his eyebrows together like a professor making a difficult point. “A bahnhof, no, it’s a train station, and the Dammotor Bahnhof is, like, one of the stations there, and this is the one that the Nazis rounded up the Jews to. And, like, sent them off from. This place, man. Absolutely. It’s still standing. This one, it fucking deserves to be bombed. Just blow it totally the fuck away, off the face of the earth. That’s just my opinion. It’s evil, man.” (1997: 68-69)

And, finally, Harry’s therapist: “This building!….Oh, it’s the Field Museum, in Chicago. And that’s not a theory. It is the Field Museum!” (1997: 70).

The decoding convention in these semiotic assessments of the text is implicit in all but the last, in which the therapist’s follow-up comment draws attention to that feature of the previous ones, and employs the “lastword” technique to draw out this implication in the other.

Significantly, Harry never offers his own interpretation of the found text except to make his own drawing – and this is clearly anticipated by the process of semiotic deferral characterized by some semioticians: “In the case of paper and no. 2 pencil. At the top of the pad, Harry writes, ‘The next place I plan to bomb,’ and then very slowly, and with great care, begins to draw his own face, its smooth clear shaven contours, in courteous halfsmile” (1997: 71).

It is revealing, too, that Harry reconceives the original drawing and recensions of his own drawing emphasizing the personal, contributory, constructed nature of decoding by submitting himself for the building in the original drawing and alternately titling his own drawing as “The Next Place I Plan to Bomb,” thereby turning the unspecified link between the original’s drawing and linguistic text into, in this case, a personal decoding rendition signified by “titaling” (Simpkins 1980). This is exactly what happens in decoding as well.

Harry is the only respondent, however, who acknowledges this reality of the process of decoding while the other characters seem to (or explicitly say) “objectively” draw upon their personal experience to determine what the drawing represents, injecting biographical frames into the process without acknowledging this. The while of other presumably similar texts that are blowing about haphazardly at the end of the story (just as they were at the beginning) virtually parallels the endless referral slippage of semiosis in which one of them may again attach itself to yet another decoder, setting off the operation of semiotic interpretation yet again. Additionally, Baxter’s narrator has only limited omniscience, as is suggested by the drawing description, and more importantly the open conjecture about Harry’s subsequent actions at the end where the narrator suggests several possibilities of his next step.

One way that the “communal” decoding standards that Fish discusses can be realized through public rule dissemination based on the presumption that all institutionally sanctioned decoders agree to act in accordance with these rules. Nevertheless, this is only an artificial distinction and in no way consistent with reality, as Harry discovers when no two decoders offer the same decoding of the text he shows them. As Harry’s actions reveal, it is only when boundaries are constructed and agreed upon that they have any sort of real force. Culler used as an illustration of this in a graduate course on semiotics, the airport security signs that at one time (pre-9/11 in the US) declared that even any apparent jokes about having a bomb, etc. would be decoded as serious utterances. This creates an institutionally constructed and regimented form of what Hodge and Kress call a “reception regime” (1988) which, among other things, delegates the ability to decide whether something is considered offensive to the decoder but not the reader.

A related illustration of this type of decoding strategy is found in Roland Barthes’s apparent assertion that some sign vehicles can only be decoded as signifiers without a signified. Essentially, though, he breaks the magicians’ code of maintaining professional secrecy where he explains the illusion behind decoding by revealing how something that appears to be non-signifying can be hardly translated into the realm of the intelligible through the process of artful decoding. Barthes’s paired decodings offer a striking example, however, in that the concluding punctuation does not establish an either/or opposition (e.g., a case of this or that?), but rather, an oscillation around mutually inclusive possibilities, with only two among many other decoding options. Additionally, the placement of this example at the end of Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes with no apparent ligature is also puzzling. What exactly is the reader supposed to make of this paratext (if that is what it is)? Is it like the abrupt codas to Herman Melville’s “Bartleby the Scrivener” in which the narrator offers a satisfactory although tenuous and at best, decoding of Bartleby’s malady? Or, is it like Poe’s narrator (discussed earlier) when he finally comes up with a reading that crystallizes a decoding, yielding a sharp focus that renders intelligible the otherwise inscrutable stranger?

This article will be continued in the next issue of the SRB 20.1 (2013).
In 1977. Important also, in this connection, is the Victoria Lady Welby Significs: The Correspondence between Charles S. Peirce and correspondence with Peirce, published in the open community of investigators" (15). Of special "conducting research in the form of cooperation among Welby manifested the model she shared with Peirce by not be totally clear in Welby's conception, either. Sonesson (2000) points out, the limit between ego and subjectivity involves the idea that it is dialogical in a polemic with positivism advocated a relational and is critical towards the word as used by, for instance, Ferdinand C. S. Schiller, George Bernard Shaw William James, Charles K. Odgen, Bertrand Russel, Sanders Peirce, Henri L. Bergson, Michel Bréal, within contemporary philosophy such as Charles Earle Welby. Lady Welby lacked formal education. after Queen Alexandrina Victoria, who was her mother as well. Lady Welby's research areas were wide and other Dimensions

Significs and Language: The Articulate Form of Our expressive and Interpretative Resources. Many of Welby's essays are published conference papers. Although she was not connected to any academic institution, she was a member of distinguished academic bodies like the Aristotelian Society, Anthropological Institute, and the Sociological Society. Petrelli has meritoriously included some of Welby's unpublished lectures, which deal with issues relating to mental evolution and cognition, and are thus important for the history of modern semiotics, as well as for the study of "mental Evolution?" (Sept. 1890) and "An Apparent Paradox in Mental Evolution" (Dec. 1890). Welby also anticipated a specific field of modern semiotics, namely biosemiotics, or "global semiotics" (the latter paper contains references to Darwin, among others), with "her studies on the relation between signs and Communication" (1929), and she anticipated the branch of 'semiotics' of the Bari school, introduced by Petrelli and Augusto Ponzio.

Another genre important for Welby's mode of expression was poetry. Several of her writings are included in Petrelli's volume. They were short and privately printed. Apart from the major monographs mentioned earlier, Welby wrote two books on reflection (texts published in Petrelli's chapter on "Consciousness, Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness as follows:"

For we begin with a vague "sense" which is a response to stimulus. This becomes gradually more conscious, coming to that level which we call "feeling," and involving more and more definitely that which we call "mind," a word which in its turn suggestively connotes in popular usage, will, desire, intention, memory [i.e. some sort of General in Peirce's sense; terms; my note." (in Petrelli, 23, n.1)

Welby's triad indicates three levels of meaning:

These levels indicate a progressive increase, quantitative and qualitative, in the capacity for interpretation, significance, and expression, therefore in practical import, capacity for incisiveness and relevance in the ever more complex dimensions of life, whether in the intellectual spheres or in everyday life. The term "sense" has different meanings: those two terms reference to the world of the senses understood in biological terms, the world of sensual perception, perceptual experience, to the properly biological, the world of significance and in connection with values, ideology, and social programs; "meaning" is the general term for signifying processes, as well as the second term in Welby's triad indicating meaning intention; while "significance" indicates the overall effect, import and value of signifying processes. (in Petrelli, 264)

Ferre himself reviewed What is meaning? paying special attention to "the three orders of signification" (1892), viewed within the frames of logic. The review was the starting point for an exchange of letters between the two of great value for semiotics. And a letter dated 19 Nov. 1906, in which Ferre states 'Sense, Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness as follows:

Firstness is the mode of being of that which is such as it is, with respect to a second but regardless of any third. Secondness is the mode of being of that which is such as it is, with respect to a second but regardless of any third. Thirdness is the mode of being of that which is such as it is, in bringing a second and third into relation to each other. (in Petrelli, 396).

In the early essays "Meaning and Metaphor" (1893) and "Interpretation" (1896) that preceded What is meaning? Welby was specifically occupied with the problem of language, meaning and interpretation:

In any case, meaning – in the widest sense we can understand it – is the only value of whatever "fact" presents itself to us. Without this, to observe and record appearances or occurrences would become an unprofitable and wearisome task. Significance is the one value of all that consciousness brings, or that intelligence deals with; the one value of life itself. (in Petrelli, 429)

As can be seen, the problem of the context's (which

Welby defined in comprehensive terms) significance for conveying meaning to any word (or in broader sense, any sign), is at stake throughout these writings. As Petrilli (441) writes:

"Significs" brooks the verb "to signify" as an extension of the dual semantic valency of the concept of meaning; linguistic and valuable; and different from "semantics," it is completely free from technical associations.

However, we have seen, Peirce viewed Welby's triad as part of logic but Welby insisted (in a letter to Peirce on the 18th Nov. 1903) that "Significs", as a philosophy
of ‘significance’ (the third level of her meaning), was to be regarded as a ‘practical extension’ of the previous level of ‘ideality’, and it was the ‘ideological dimension of human sign activity’ in contrast to what she thought to be a ‘purely descriptive approach to studies on language, knowledge and expression’ (Petrilli, 397), initiated by the latter’s review of What is Meaning? in 1904. She found a proof of this in language, a point that Petrilli highlights in his letter to her dated 20 Nov. 1904. He writes:

> It seems to me that the “common meaning” that time is a derivative from space?

In fact, Petrilli criticizes Welby for not including thirdness within her conception of time, thus excluding an important aspect of the triad, and yet even more so, as HJemer Wennerberg brings forth in his outline of Peirce’s philosophical system:

> “One reason for regarding laws as thoughts is that a law like a thought is general in referring to all possible things.”

Am I right in saying that the only definition of the principle of reversibility forms the base of the triad, and thereby in connection with the former to “common meaning.”

The context of the letter from Welby to Peirce (dated 20 Nov. 1904) is particularly easy to form a terminology for which special parts could be pointed out by gesture. It would therefore be particularly easy to find at a terminology for spatial relations. [...] If you do not assume a dependence of Time on Space as a ‘practical extension’ of the term from the biological sciences. Petrilli again: “The term ‘transformation’ by underlining its broad scope, may be used by Petrilli elsewhere. In order to elucidate her ideas on translation and time, Welby presented as an experiment: a translation of Dr. Hughlings Jackson’s “Lecture on the Nervous System” (1884) in which physiology is turned into religious language. She also made an intervention in the realm of religious discourse and transposing religious language into a physiological one. These experiments fit well with Welby’s general idea of translation as an intellectual process. As Petrilli puts it: “Translating things such as emotions and semiotic processes at large, in which something stands for something else, its meaning, which is generated in fact through the translation of signs into other signs, into different types of signs and different sign systems” (Petrilli, 528). The latter indicates what Welby coined the “homologous method” (along with the ‘analytical’ method), which is a way of relating to texts, according to her, by translation in a broad sense, things that might seem very distant from each other. Welby borrowed the term from the biological sciences. Petrilli again: “Beyond surface resemblance and surface similarity, the homological method searches for profound general, structural, functional and dynamical relationships among the terms of reference in question [...]” (Petrilli, 552). Often enough this process implies a multiplying of signs, for instance, the number of words increases along the way. For Welby, the word “mother-sense” is “a priori community” generating differences and relations, for the principle of “proposition” and Welby’s “pictorial symbol” and “representative action,” all being “signifying units” (541). Petrilli reads Welby’s theory of translation in the light also of Ferruccio Rossi-Landi’s (1921–1985) works. Notably develop the method of translating Welby’s concept of “common language” (from What is Meaning?), also expressed in terms of “common sense” or “common meaning” and Rossi-Landi’s concept “common speech” later developed in the term “social reproduction” (542–3). Petrilli relates “common language” to the notion of “semiotic material” to underline the idea that different languages are part of and form a “single language” as well as the different historical-cultural natural languages, cultures and sign systems (544–5). “Common meaning” implies a redefining of reference in a more sense universal, “an a priori community” generating differences and variations through expression. It seems to me that the “common meaning” used by Welby might be connected to another fundamental term in her work, namely, “mother-sense” or “primarsy sense,” as her publishers preferred. And it is via Peirce that we may not only explain Welby’s terms mother-sense, as the former is indebted to Peirce’s notion of ‘primarsy sense’ (572), but also the connection of the former to “common meaning.” Petrilli produces an example that Welby might be further explored in the light of Feuerbach’s three categories (discussed above), and thereby in connection with his notions qualisense, molition, and habit. Welby writes in a paper entitled “Primal Sense and Significs,” dated 15 April 1907:
The connection between Mother-sense and Significs may be put like this: Primal Sense is what takes up and supplies to us the material of immediate awareness, conscious and interpretative. It is thus at once primordial and universal, at all stages of human development [...]. (in Petrilli, 574)

However, as Welby stresses in the same paper, “the greatest of all special gifts, the rationalising Intellect: which has not only to criticise, but also to reason out and construct from, the donnés of Mother-sense - its warnings, its insights and insights, its revelations, its swift reading of worth, its penetrative reality” (in Petrilli, 574). If we look at Peirce’s discussion in an undated manuscript published in *Collected Papers* with the title “Forms of Consciousness,” we may establish some possible links to Lady Welby.

Feeling is the momentarily present contents of consciousness taken in its pristine simplicity, and might be called primisense. Alternous is the consciousness of a directly present other second, withstand-ing us. Malisense is the consciousness of a thirdness, or medium between primisense and altersense, leading from the former to the latter. It is the consciousness of a process of bringing to mind. [...]. Alternous has two modes, Sensation and Will. Malisense has three modes, Abstraction, Suggestion, Association. *(CP 2:551 in Petrilli, 577)*

One is tempted to connect Welby’s notions of mother-sense and common meaning through Peirce’s definition of attension, and in doing so, establish a link (at least in some respects) between the former term, in its turn, to this triad of Peirce (as mother-sense gives rise to the “rationalizing Intellect,” also called “father reason,” with which it is in a dialectical relation). Petrilli, on the basis of the correspondence between Welby and Peirce, extends these connections, when writing: “Opening the consciousness of a direct-ly present process of bringing from the former to the latter. It is the consciousness of a process of bringing to mind. [...]. Alternous is the consciousness of a directly present other second, withstand-ing us. Malisense is the consciousness of a thirdness, or medium between primisense and altersense, leading from the former to the latter. It is the consciousness of a process of bringing to mind. [...]. Alternous has two modes, Sensation and Will. Malisense has three modes, Abstraction, Suggestion, Association. *(CP 2:551 in Petrilli, 577)*

*“Mother-sense” and “father reason” are also valid in evolutionary terms. However, mother-sense does not exclusively exist in women (although it finds its most elaborate expression in women), but is present in both sexes, as is father reason analogously (574). Petrilli concludes: “Original, primal, mother-sense con-veys the capacity to engender signifying processes at the highest degrees of otherness, creativity and responsibility [...]. From this point of view, Welby’s signica with its special focus on the conjunction between life, language and sense in all senses, prefigures present-day trends in the sign sciences, which now at last come together with the life sciences and ethics.”

Petrilli has also included some interesting hitherto unpublished manuscripts that Lady Welby wrote between 1903 and 1910 dealing with the issue of selfhood. Petrilli shows that Welby took a similar position in this question as Peirce by regarding the self as consisting of “sign material, verbal and nonverbal” which entails that the subject is in a constant state of becoming, as a result of its signcharacter and therefore in “an ongoing process in the tri-angulational interdependence and interpersonal dialogic interrelationship with other signs” (610).

In conclusion, Petrilli achieves her aim in this book of giving an outline of Lady Welby’s “thought system” (with a specific focus on Welby’s studies on Signics) on the basis of her selected writings. At the same time, Signifying and Understanding will greatly assist and inspire those who would like to extend this line of inquiry. Petrilli’s work in the archives is priceless for the research field, not only concerning Signics, but also of semiotics and semantics. However, Petrilli’s outlining of Welby’s “thought system” might have gained from a more rigorous editing, as the reader is from time to time interrupted by the many appended texts within Petrilli’s compelling discussions. These appendices might have been assembled at the end of the chapters, or preferably perhaps at the end of the book.

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References


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**2010 McLAREN-LAMBART AWARD**


The journal is delighted to be acknowledged as the publisher of this prize-winning essay. It may be found online in the SRB Archives at http://projects.chass.utoronto.ca/semiotics/.

This article renews the idea of animation as a precursor to the cinematic form, drawing on research into the works of one of its historical progenitors, Emile Reynaud. This is a deconstructionist text that references related arguments from the author, providing a deeper excavation of the contention that ‘cinema is animation,’ while offering a detailed account of Reynaud’s pre-film work. The selection committee was comprised of Tom Klein (Chair), Richard Stamp, Chris Carter, Adam de Beer, and Romana Turina. Dr. Cholodenko is former Head of Department and Senior Lecturer in Film and Animation Studies at the University of Sydney, where he now holds the title of Honorary Associate.

The McLaren-Lambart Award is an annual honour bestowed by the Society for Animation Studies (S.A.S.) to one of its members, recognizing an outstanding contribution made to animation studies in the previous 2 years. Tracing the origins of this prize to a collaborative award with Canada’s National Film Board, it is named for NFB animators Norman McLaren and Evelyn Lambart.
Information Enough
By Inna Semetsky

This review essay is a series of musings inspired by a recent review essay of Cybersemiotics: Why information is not enough (2009). It is almost trite how instrumentality rationality in the modern epoch has reduced human and historicism into a pair of binary opposites. While acknowledging what the pure reason of modernity considered to be a supernatural act, any attempt to exploit was made in the form of science from the perspective of the logic of explanation and causality. Naturally enough the term natural has been habitually taken in its reductive sense of a linear direct cause-effect connection pertaining to a dualistic science of personal existence and its effects as if describing the whole of Nature. The "prompt" conclusion arrived at by means of syllogistic reasoning was simple: either anomalous effect or anomalous cause. Brier’s volume not only problematizes this logic by bringing biosemiotics into discourse in science, but also breathes life into science per se.

Importantly, as Brier notices at the outset, his book is an extended and updated synthesis of many previously published articles from as early as 1992 and supersedes all of them. He is motivated by the desire to create a knowledge paradigm independent from ideological concerns (I leave it to readers to decide whether it is ever possible or even desirable). Brier begins his "quest for semioscience" (3) by revisiting cognitive revolution and the birth of research programs in information science against which he proposes to formulate a new transdisciplinary framework that combines "Peirce’s semiotics, second-order cybernetics, Luhmann’s systems theory, cognitive semantics, and language game theory" (4). This is an ambitious project, and understandably my brief essay won’t be able to offer a fair review of and/or critique of all the areas addressed in the book.

My argument is that, contra Brier, information is very much enough – but if and only if we will have recontextualized its very nature! In support of this I will invoke the cutting edge science of coordination dynamics (Kelso and Engstrom 2006) as well as the current program of transdisciplinarity developed and conducted by physician and philosopher Basarab Nicolescu. I think that both sources not only can but should inform contemporary research in semiotics. Brier freely fluctuates between different discourses (social science, natural science – especially biology, philosophy – especially phenomenology but with a twist of metaphysics – linguistics etc.) under the following motto: “I am presenting a new theory; clearly, then, I am not fully satisfied with earlier ones. Yet each of these older theories provides useful concepts that have helped me in my search for a framework broad enough to encompass our present experience and knowledge” (5).

The blend of old and new theories is seen in the titles of the book’s nine chapters, which occupy nearly 500 pages and include the following (slightly paraphrased for brevity): “The Problem of the Information-Processing Paradigm as a Candidate for a Unified Science of Information”; “The Self-Organization of Knowledge”; “An Ethological Approach to Cognition”; “Bateson’s Concept of Information in Light of the Theory of Autopoiesis”; “Von Foerster’s Cybernetic Semiotics”; “Derrida’s ‘Deconstructible Metaphors’”; “Integration of Uwitheelof, Ethology, and Peircean Biosemiotics”; “An Evolutionary View on the Threshold between Semiosis and Information Exchange: The Role of the Logos of Information, Signification, Cognition, and Communication”; “The Five-Level Cybersemiotics”. In addition, Brier offers a chapter on the practical problem of information and documentation that, in Brier’s own words, can be solved by means of cybersemiotics.

The overall paradigm that arises in Brier’s developing new theory is Peirce's triadic semiotics; but the sources are many. Here are the few: Bertalanffy, Bion, Denny, Emmecher, Gadamer, Heidegger, Hoffmeier, Hesse, Husserl, Jarnach, Lakoff and Johnson, Lorenz, Merleau-Ponty, Noth, Popper, Ruesch, Sebeok, Spencer-Brown, Suzuki, Varela, Wiener, Wittgenstein.

Among Brier’s extensive endnotes I would like to single out one that adds time contours to the human Hesse’s masterpiece Magister Ludi also known as the Glass Bead Game and which is a mode of playing with the total contents and values of the whole of culture not unlike the organ playing pipes on the organ. However the range of this magisterial ‘organ’ is the entire intellectual cosmos and, hence, is capable of reproducing, at least in theory, the full intellectual content of the universe.

The game is played with ‘ideas’ like with musical notes in a fugue and partakes of the new symbolic language that can simultaneously represent the structure immanent to the ideas it expresses; as well as having its own means of symbolic, albeit hierarchically, expression. Brier concludes that “Magister Ludi” is a manifesto for the reintegration of intellectual life with the ‘real’ world, of intellectual and mystical enlightenment with practice… “We are in serious need of a broader global view of knowledge and enlightenment to individuals as well as in society” (443).

The word ‘enlightenment’ in this context seems, however, to be slightly problematic. Rather than using a specific word that traditionally highlights reason as the over-rational paradigm of modern thought, I think that creative intuitions will illustrate Brier better. Indeed, Peirceographer will have certainly been making trouble for philosophers for centuries (2006: 253). A self-referential relation is what establishes that self-referring correlations between/across the different levels constituting a complex system.

Different disciplines have their own complementary pairs that, rather than being alien to each other in the manner of Cartesian dualism, are connected via what Kelso and Engstrom specify and present as coordination dynamics. Among complementary pairs in which the terms are related, or coordinated in a bipolar interdependent manner are the following: cause/effect; so-called external, rationalism and empiricism; science humanities; organism environment; immunity transcendence body mind; nature nurture; yin yang being becoming certainty uncertainty; material spiritual; and so on ad infinitum.

Different “selfother” (self not-self pairs) do belong to the variety of discourses; their commonality derived from the same relational dynamics, which is “contained” in the logic of the included middle. Brier’s one chief “enemy” is logic – but I think we should be careful here not to confuse the logic of the excluded middle that continues to haunt us since the time of Aristotle with the creative logic of the included middle (cf. Semenov 2008) as foundational for semiotics understood as the science of signs; notwithstanding the fact that the same logic was also a province of mystical experiences (even if unknown to mystics per se).

The included middle is grounded in the relational dynamics enabled by likeness; sympathy; correspondence; or something more subtle that is established between different levels of reality, Peirce, for example, emphasized the utility of likeness to mathematicians and compared an algebraic formula to an iconic sign, rendered such by the rules of communication, association and distribution of the symbols. Such an unorthodox logic as semiotics (really, a contradiction in terms within a strictly analytic reasoning) is akin to what contemporary mathematician Lois Kautzmann calls virtual, or archeic, logic “that goes beyond reason into a world of beauty, communication and possibility” (Kautzmann 1996: 293) as well as beyond given signs into a world of interpretable symbols, meanings and values. The emphasis on communication indicates that there is an interdependent network in which each level speaks to each other, desperately trying to model the other’s “expressive language”, thus creating shared meanings along the communicative link expressed by the tilde.

Mind and nature therefore cease being binary opposites and truly coordinate complement a theoretical episteme with practical phronesis resulting from the feedback between knowledge and action. The apparent dichotomies and antinomies of ‘ether’ or ‘habitual thinking’ are transcended and traversed by virtue of the “both-and” science of coordination dynamics equally applicable to natural and social-cultural systems that together are embedded in a flow of semiosis. The infamous ‘observer’ (one or many) comprising the
human experience per se, would be "located" precisely at this included middle-in-between what appears to us as two disparate Cartesian substances of body and mind.

As Deely points out, "at the heart of semiotics is the realization that the whole of human experience and action, fact and fiction, shape and substance, structure mediated and sustained by signs" (Deely 1990: 5). The levels in the complex semiotic system are not immediately connected with each other but mediated by the intermediary level of the third category: the great "interPreparation", either human or non-human; and, it is the very mediation or interpretation that enables the emergence of consciousness, of understanding of information for the interpreter in the form of meaning. As Peirce said, signs are in fact signs only when interpreted. Still, the information is always already here, embedded in its semiotic whole of its implicit, potential, virtual form. Meaning is "alterego virtual ... [it is] contained not in what is actually thought, but in what this thought means: becomes signification" (Deely CP 5: 289). Being virtual, it does not make its potential informational content less real (cf. Deleuze, 1994).

The transference of information between levels is what enables the evolution of signs, the very process of semiosis: a complex system grows, indeed, because it 'learns' by virtue of making the information meaningful. As Peirce points out in neutral network terminology, would be qualified as unsupervised learning (1998:100), which is contrasted with the information-processing model that is "not enough" and with which he engages in shadow-boxing. It is the included third of the interpretation (in any guise) that, by creating a self-referential feedback, expands the boundaries of what he is calling 'it with information' as that which acquires meaning. Signs are the patterns of coordinated, interpretive activity comprising "embodied cognition" (Kelso and Enstrom 2006: 89) analogous to that invoked by Brier (referring to Lakoff and Johnstone). However, as Peirce pointed out, coordination in signs, dynamics is that the interaction (the included third, the interpretant in the Peircean triad) is a priori information, and the dyadic (or sign) systems are "informationally based" (Kelso and Enstrom 2006: 9). Information is what establishes psychophysical unity thereby confirming what Peirce was saying more than a century ago: "The old dualistic notion of mind and matter, so prominent in Cartesianism, as two radically different kinds of substance, will hardly find defenders today" (Peirce CP 6.24, quoted in Brier, 203).

What is not surely enough is our perception of information as solely quantitative or measurable. It is meaningless in a pragmatic, Peircean sense as productive of observable effects. Hence, according to Peirce's pragmatic maxim, what is real, is useful, and a justification for the process of communication. Language is a type of functional information: it can change the coordination patterns. Functional information is, in short, the very interaction used by a sign to function (Kelso and Enstrom 2006: 101), to-self-organize. A sign is not a sign unless it is interpreted; but so is the fundamental stuff in the physical universe, even the actually observable, empirical Secondness – universe: "a photon is not a photon unless it is measured [and] exists information" (Bied, 101; italics in original).

Applying this "bit (pun intended)" of information in our practical life at the level of action – by using it – makes this information meaningful. But the field of potential meanings was always already implicated at the different level of order, which is virtual or implicit. In this sense, it is not that "information is not enough:" rather, it is more than enough. The semiotic codeability (cf. Hoffmeier and Emmeche 1990) seems to be better patterned on, "the fifth of all things: words a dance of particles falling back on themselves" (Deleuze 1995: 157): analog (virtual) – digital (measured) – and analog again at the level of human actions (actual).

The reference to Leibniz brings to mind yet another of Brier's targets: algorithmic cognitive science (Brier 2004/2007) posited the "transpersonal" in consciousness research (Ibid., 68). This information signifies "a field that [that] produces effects, and these can be perceived" (Laszlo, 2004/2007:7), italics mine) in a Peircean pragmatist sense as a field of the observable, sensible, world in which we live.

Brier asserts that "[j]information... becomes the organizational aspect of nature" (354), but notes that with regard to information "a fullledged metaphysics" is undervalued. (Deely 2004/2007) refers to the expression of the "information field [that] produces effects, and these can be perceived" (Laszlo, 2004/2007:67). This information signifies "a subtle connection between the two different locations in space and events in different points in time. Such connections are... "nonlocal" in the natural science and "transpersonal" in consciousness research" (Ibid., 68).

Physicist David Bohm emphasized that in holomovement there is no direct causal connection except for the relational values within the field being interwoven into a whole by means of the interconnected network of quanta. Semiosis as such is this interconnected network between the two different locations, the information field full of implicit information that continuously change their mode of expression in fluctuating between polar opposites. Thereby, among bipolar supplementary there should also be a relation described as novelty confirmation. The structural coupling of ‘matter-energy describing the physical world is necessarily grounded in the logic of the included middle representation and in its complementary counterpart. In what we can state with certainty that ‘information is not enough’. Information is just right: It is on the basis of this information that the universe comprises its own dynamical evolution and in its perpetual state of utilizing real potentiality as the computation proceeds. In the universe per se, with signs "information and computation are everywhere: it is all there. The information is potentially active everywhere, yet 'it is actually active, only where and when it can form to give 'it'... energy" (Bohm and Hiley 1993: 30). The complex semiotic universe must express itself in a dual mode of matter and energy. Lloyd points out that "most information is implied in both and it takes the form of information to compactify it, in a way, that is, to make it relatively visible at the level of physical observable world. The basic material elements such as ‘Earth, air, fire, and water...’ are made of energy, but the different forms they take are determined by information. To do anything requires energy. To specify what is done requires information. Energy and information are by nature complementary: energy implies informational potential (keeping in mind that the flow of semiosis is unlimited) with the Peircean trite sign. Noth (1995: 90/94) presents a synopsis of a trite sign tracing its definitions and disparate terminology from Plato, to Stowe, to Feyer, to Peirce, to Ogden and Richards and notices that in order to construct a concrete triotic connecting in the
generic terms, signvehicle, sense, and referent, the path of mediation, represented by a dotted line between a signvehicle and a referent, must be present.

The coordinating relation (akin to the dotted line) is ubiquitous. Kelso and Engstrom, however, point to a lack of basic laws of coordination, like physical laws in general, are matter-independent, they are function- and context-dependent: they govern (hence make relatively predictable) "the flow of functional information and interaction at its inorganic. It is the coordination that produces meaning (or sense) in Norrl's triple). This means that, unusual, Platonic, 'equation' or 'dualism' denotes self-reflectional to the framework of science of coordination dynamics; it is expressed in the form of another complementary pair, unity-diversity. Kauffman (2010) gives an example that unites one of these series to the band, which appears to be a paradoxical structure if not for understanding that it is the perspective of an observer and context that produce a paradox.

This also means that our very sentence is an emergent property and not rule-based, that is, it cannot be founded on merely propositional thought and logocentrism. Perhaps this is what Brier is getting at when he argues against algorithmic computation. The attention to different regimes of signs becomes imperative and Leibniz's unfinished project must be completed. Kelso and Engstrom indicate the non-epistemic origins of intentional action. The project begins by Leibniz reflects the interconnection of knowledge representations. In analytic philosophy the representational system presupposes a class of things represented which are not representations themselves, hence 'outside' language and outside the mind, or body. On account of this, poetic or personal, metaphorical language, which 'represents' symbolically or indirectly via mediation, cannot be 'objective' in describing reality. But the reality is habitually taken as the empirically observable physical reality induced as such to the level of the Planer Seconde understanding the fact that:

The Universe as an argument is necessarily a great work of art, a great poem - for every fine argument is a poem and symphony - just as every true poem is a sound argument. But let us compare it rather with a painting - with an impressionistic seashore piece - then each person has a Quality in a Premise in one of the elementary coloured particles of the Painting...The total effect is beyond our ken: but we can appreciate in some measure the resultant Quality of parts of the whole (Peirce, CP 5. 1.99 quoted in Brier, 384).

The make the total effect "our ken" we will have to realise Leibniz's project and to learn the signs' 'silent discourse' (Semetsky 2010a).

To conclude, I would like to refer to the project of transdisciplinarity addressed by Basarab whose book Manifesto of Transdisciplinarity was published in 2002. The Centre for Transdisciplinary Research at Nicolaescu's University for Transdisciplinary Research should become a valuable complement to any research project in semiotics. Nicolaescu advocates overcoming the split between sciences and humanities and creates that the term 'transdisciplinarity' was initially coined by Jean Piaget in 1970 to indicate something across and between the disciplinary divides. Transdisciplinary knowledge belongs to what Nicolaescu specifies as knowledge that exceeds scientific knowledge of the external world as independent from the subject. Bound to the internal world of human subjectivity, it necessarily includes a system of values and meanings exceeding objective facts alone. Yet, transdisciplinary knowledge does not reject science; what it rejects is scientism. Below is a Table 1 addressing disciplinary and transdisciplinary in the use of knowledge:

Table 1. Disciplinary and transdisciplinary knowledge. Adapted and considerably developed in the context of this paper from Nicolaescu at https://www.metamesh.net/conference2005/pdfs/nicolescu.pdf (accessed 15 November, 2010).

Disciplinary and transdisciplinary knowledge stay in a complementary relation to each other. Disciplinary, in short, knowledge is based on the classical logic of the excluded middle that induces a separation between subject and object and reduces the meaning of knowledge to knowing merely the facts of the external world. The new transdisciplinary or in vivo knowledge is founded on the premise of the included middle so that subject and object correspond to each other. They are in a triadic contra dicta relation; they are in correspondence (Nicholas Varela specified such a correspondence as a separation between different domains, between a complex, autopoiesis, that is, self-referral, system structured, sure enough, as a network of signs; Brier indeed acknowledges the importance of Varela's contribution to his cybersemiotics; see Index on p. 470).

Transdisciplinary knowledge is based on the logic where terms form a bipolar entity/elementary pair versus being binary opposites. In vivo knowledge is not a static knowledge of the facts per se but a dynamic understanding of meanings that by necessity brings in the dimension of values which is traditionally (in vino) considered ‘subjective’, that is, located outside ‘normal’ science. Epistemology and ethics alike transcend the confines of an individual Ego or Cartesian Cogito and cannot be separated from the collective, social, domain: the individual society, too, is a complementary pair in which the terms of the triadic relation sustain each other by the reconciling symbol ‘3’. In the latest issue of the journal Transdisciplinarity in Science and Religion, Nicolaescu (2009: 240) points out that a “new system of values can appear only through the dialogue between different domains of knowledge, between different cultures and different religions. This system does yet not exist.”

I think that this ethical dimension should now become the core of semiotic research so in establishing what Norrl has recently called ‘intercultural competence’ (2010: 19) and which is an urgent matter in our present time. In account of this, the poem is a sound argument and the arts at the University of Newcastle, Australia. Her Web site <http://www.innasense.org> contains a wealth of material about her recent activities. 

"Interpreting the signs of the times: beyond the ken: The Universe as an argument is necessarily a great work of art, a great poem - for every fine argument is a poem and symphony - just as every true poem is a sound argument. The later project of semiotics, between different cultures and different religions. This system does yet not exist.”

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References


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The Future of Wikileaks

By Gary Genosko

Wikileaks provides a familiar glimpse into the future of networked knowledge. It is an effect of the slow erosion of the distinction between classified and declassified information. This erosion is the consequence of the manner in which documents are stored and accessed and the inability of their keepers to make guarantees about their security once digitally archived and networked. This is both familiar and startling at the same time.

Danish cultural expert Geert Lovink (2010) per it until last August. Wikileaks is more of a quantitative leap than a qualitative game changer. It provides the leaked materials as content source of this data-driven wave in US Army intelligence Bradley Manning, charged in May 2010 with leaking the Afghan War documents (after the hacker-informant Adrian Lamo turned him in; see Goldstein 2010), and does a reasonable job at presentation by offering a few pointers about the characteristics of the kinds of documents at issue, such as the difference between layers of classification, etc. It may edit these documents in some manner, and attempt to verify them, but it doesn’t generate a discourse or context of interpretation; it does provide access to original documents, however, which deepens reportage. For much of this it relays, rather than established journalist partners, especially The Guardian, Der Spiegel, El País, Le Monde, and on-and-off again The New York Times.

Make no mistake, Wikileaks is putting its shoulder squarely into the mountain of classified documents, and raises a few storms of dust, at least momentarily. Recent attempts to estimate the extent of classification of documents suggests that it outstrips declassification by three to five times (Galison 2004). Wikileaks cannot possibly catch-up and right this democratic deficit or keep pace in any serious way, despite its impressive stock of captured materials. Its success as documents are quantitatively arresting, but not in the context of what it is measured against, especially over time.

The fact that Wikileaks is so readily reducible to the policy of non-editor-in-chief Julian Assange is one of the reasons why an organization it is vulnerable. Certainly, Assange has made some deals with blue chip mainstream news corporations and has a group of hackers - Anonymous - to defend his interests and counteractivate (via what they call a LOIC Low Orbit Ion Cannon type of DDoS attack under the rubric of ‘Operation Payback’) against the financial sector players like MasterCard, Visa, and PayPal that have closed its accounts (and the blocking of the site for Library of Congress staff). Wikileaks’s counterassay that credit card companies like more stable revenue streams from porn and gambling is acute. Still, this is a risky maneuver, and understandably so because use of the LOIC is traceable and, as has been recently shown, not ‘anonymous’ for hacktivists at all (Peau et al 2010). Either this is a bad mistake and everybody downloading LOIC should have been warned about the violence it exercises. Rather, he is using the LOIC for shooting civilians. But in the action of solidarity, complicity and collaboration between independent part-timers, between cognitive workers of various kinds: hardware technicians, programmers, journalists who work together and share the same goal of destabilising totalitarian power. From this, the rebels find their way to self-organization of the general intellect.

Recourse to a revised Marxism concept of “general intellect” underlines how general human semiosis is mobilised by a self-organizing cognitariat, otherwise exploited within the extensive electronic networks of post-Fordist production, in defence of Wikileaks. The traits of these semiotic modalities are heterogeneous and scattered across the cybersphere, yet compact narratives like encyclopedia entries. Wikileaks’s counter-attack that credit card companies like more stable revenue streams from porn and gambling is acute. Still, this is a risky maneuver, and understandably so because use of the LOIC is traceable and, as has been recently shown, not ‘anonymous’ for hacktivists at all (Peau et al 2010). Either this is a bad mistake and everybody downloading LOIC should have been warned about the violence it exercises.

The lesson of Wikileaks is not revealed in the content; we knew that diplomats are paid to lie and that the military get paid for shooting civilians. But in the act of solidarity, complicity and collaboration between independent part-timers, between cognitive workers of various kinds: hardware technicians, programmers, journalists who work together and share the same goal of destabilising totalitarian power. From this, the rebels find their way to self-organization of the general intellect. WikiLeaks collaborates with self-entrepreneurial whistle-blowers. Yet as cybertheorist Franco ‘Bifo’ Berardi (2010) has recently stated, there is a growing constructive intelligence at work in support of Wikileaks.


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