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Preface to the Proceedings of the 11th World Congress of the IASS/AIS

Editor-in-chief: Yongxiang WANG
Nanjing Normal University, China

2012 was a special year in that it witnessed an extremely important semiotic event—the 11th World Congress of the International Association for Semiotic Studies was held in China. It was the first time for the World Congress of the IASS/AIS to be held outside of Europe and America. Therefore, it was of great significance to the development of semiotic studies in China and to that of the world as well. On the one hand, China revealed its achievements in semiotic studies to the world; and on the other, the semioticians all over the world focused their attention, for the first time, on China, a very important part of Asia, and had adequate academic exchanges and discussions with Chinese scholars on semiotic issues of mutual interest. With China and other Asian countries playing a more and more important role in semiotics, we can realize the global semiotics and bridge different civilizations!

From October 5–9, 2012, over 400 experts and scholars from 53 different countries and regions of the world convened at Nanjing Normal University, the most beautiful campus in eastern China, to attend the 11th World Congress of the IASS/AIS.

The Congress lasted for five days. Fifteen outstanding semioticians were invited to give plenary speeches and 422 abstracts of papers by authors from around the world were received. Fifty-three round tables and sessions were held related to seven main topics: Part A: Epistemology and Semiotics; Part B: Arts; Part C: Literature and Linguistics; Part D: Culture, Media and Comparative Studies; Part E: Society, History and Religion; Part F: Science and Semiotic Practices; Part G: Areas, each of which provided perfect arenas for scholars of different fields to freely share, exchange and debate their convictions.

Not only that. Just one day before the opening of the Congress, i.e., on October 4, 2012, Nanjing Normal University hosted the 1st Chinese Semiotic Forum & the 10th Biennial National Conference of the Chinese Association for Language and
Semiotic Studies, most of whose participants also attended the following 5-day World Congress of the IASS/AIS, which was just the original intention of the organizer of the Congress. There were over 120 participants attending the Forum & the Biennial Conference. We may very well consider the successful gathering of the Chinese semioticians on October 4 as part of the achievements of the 11th World Congress of the IASS/AIS.

The *Proceedings of the 11th World Congress of the IASS/AIS* are organized according to the seven main topics and the round table topics under them into 3 volumes. Volume 1 covers the first two main topics; Part A and Part B; Volume 2 includes the second two main topics; Part C and Part D; and the last three main topics, i.e. Part E to Part G, are put into Volume 3. And there is a special volume, i.e., Volume 4, which is a collection of Chinese-papers submitted for the 1st Chinese Semiotic Forum & the 10th Biennial National Conference of the Chinese Association for Language and Semiotic Studies.

Part A (Epistemology) in Volume 1 includes the following round table topics:
- Biosemiotics as Global Semiotics
- Tartu Semiotics: Synthesis of Cultural Semiotics and Biosemiotics; Lotman and Uexküll
- Communicology and Semiotics; The Phenomenological Heritage in Cultural Discursive Patterns and Practices
- Cognitive Semiotics
- Interaction between Semiotics and Cognitive Science
- C. S. Peirce; Chains of Signs Bridging Cultures
- Peirce’s Semiotics
- Peirce’s Symbolism; from Gesture to Scripture
- Semiotic Assessment of Language Processing; Efficacy of the Elicited Imitation Paradigm
- Conceptual Modelling of Time and Space

Part B (Arts) includes the following:
- Film Theory and Semiotics; Retrospective & Prospect
- New Semiotics of Spectacle
- Literature and Digital Communication
- Music Signifies; Style, Genre, Narrative
- Visual Arts and Semiotics
- Semiotics and Aesthetics; the Matter of Art

Volume 2 comprises Part C and Part D.

Part C (Literature and Linguistics) includes the following round table topics:
• Narrative and Semiotics
• Semiotics in Africa: the Present State of Affairs and Prospect
• Language and Linguistics: from the Comparative Perspective

And Part D (Culture, Media and Comparative Studies) contains the following:
• Semiotics and Reconstructing Human Science
• Semiotics and Cultural Studies
• Sinology and Semiotics: Theoretical Orientation of the Chinese Humanities
• Comparative Chinese-Western Philosophy and Semiotics
• Media and Semiotics
• Cross-cultural Semiotics
• Semiotics Applied to Marketing Communication and Consumer Culture
• Semiotics, Mediatization and Advertising
• Semiotic Significance, Culture and Literature

Volume 3 consists of three parts: Part E, Part F, and Part G.
Part E (Society, History and Religion) contains the following round tables:
• Social Semiotics
• Ancient History, Archaeology, Textual Criticism, Semiotics
• Semiotics and Religion: Interaction between Faith and Reason

Part F (Science and Semiotic Practices) includes the following:
• Semiotics and Mathematics
• Global Semiotics, Translation, and Encounter among Peoples
• Internet and Semiotics
• Semiotics and Design in the Digital Era
• Semiotics and Computers

Part G (Areas) comprises the following sessions:
• American (USA) Semiotics; Current Trends
• Semiotic Research in the German-speaking Countries: Architecture, Music, Gesture, Picture
• European Radical Ideology, Philosophy and Semiotics; Developments along German and French Directions
• French Semiotics and Its Consequences in Asia
• European Semiotics: Old and New Trends
• Semiotics in Taiwan: Cross-cultural Literature and Arts
• New Trends in Latin-American Semiotics
• Greimas and Semiotics in Lithuania

Volume 4, as is mentioned above, is a collection of Chinese-papers, which cover the following topics:
- Semiotic Theories
- Literary Semiotics
- Cultural Semiotics
- Movie Semiotics and Other Semiotic Studies

The four volumes present us with the latest achievements in various areas of semiotic studies around the world. The publication of the four-volume Proceedings is a good memory of the 11th World Congress of the IASS/AIS held at Nanjing Normal University, Nanjing, China. At the same time, it will promote further communication and dialogue concerning semiotics among scholars from all over the world. We believe that, with the semioticians’ mutual efforts, the globalization of semiotics will continue and that a bridge of understanding will be built between different civilizations.
Introduction to the Proceedings of the 11th World Congress of the IASS/AIS (Vol. 1)

Editor: Hongbing YU
Nanjing Normal University, China

In the development of Semiotics into the first decade of the 21st Century, we have had the privilege of witnessing an impressive array of academic endeavors and theoretical adventures, which have involved an extraordinarily large number of outstanding thinkers and practitioners in this thriving and amazing field. One of the most convincing proofs is none other than the successful 11th IASS/AIS Congress, held at Nanjing Normal University, Nanjing, China. More than 400 delegates from over 50 countries converged at Nanjing Normal University to attend the congress, eager to share all their proudest achievements of semiotic studies. The many fields that were covered by this magnificent event included biosemiotics, cognitive semiotics, film theories, arts, literature, linguistics, culture, media, communication, history, religion, law and so on.

What is truly remarkable about the practice of Semiotics worldwide is that, regardless of the many varied past traditions and current analytical paradigms, there has been a consensus reached between the East and the West about a major function that justifiably defines this common cause: Semiotics is by nature an interdisciplinary methodology, not merely a fancy tool used to analyze many a complicated dispersive socio-cultural phenomena, but a way of thought that not only questions and challenges conventions, but also combines and yields innovations. This function is explicitly manifested by the Proceedings of the 11th World Congress of the IASS/AIS.

The proceedings, in three volumes, take on the task of displaying the most significant and the most comprehensive latest achievements that have been made by the very people working in the front lines of Semiotic research, both in the East and the West. This is trusted to be true, even if we only take into account the sheer but unprecedented numbers of those who came to this event (a good 400 delegates) and the tremendously diversified topics of Semiotics that were discussed and debated at
the roundtables (71 in total). Moreover, it is the topics themselves that have
determined in what look the proceedings will appear. In this light, the very first
volume includes 28 roundtable papers that cover a wide range of subjects from
Biosemiotics to visual arts in the Semiotic view, which originally belonged to the
first two major categories of roundtables; Epistemology (Part A) and Arts (Part
B).

Putting Epistemology and Arts in the same group and treating them as two
parallel will probably evoke our readers’ concern; how do these two seemingly
irrelevant academic categories relate to each other in the same context of Semiotics?
Perhaps suffice it to say that both of them are about “modeling”, or “model-
making”, which is an intrinsic instinctive capacity of organisms to understand and
even shape the niches they inhabit. In a modern sense, as the late master
semiotician Thomas A. Sebeok wisely envisioned and explicitly contended, included
in the multifaceted subject matter of Semiotics is an intensive yet comprehensive
scientific study of how living beings, not just humans but also all the members of the
other organic realms, model their worlds and create the Umwelts in which they live,
interpret and interact. Put another way, the modeling instinct underlies literally
every task they undertake, and this is by far one of the most fundamental cognitive
and behavioristic activities we semioticians have theorized and identified in the
process of semiosis. From this perspective, it is not exaggerating to state that the
essential aim of Semiotics is to study and reveal how the modeling mechanism
unfolds itself, that is, how living beings, in particular humans, build up and make
use of their repertoires of internal and external models, whereby they interpret and
interact with their Umwelts in a species-specific way, as well as in an individually-
based way. Human beings, in their most unique ways of anthroposemiosis, have
created Umwelts that are far more fascinating, diversified and dynamic than any
other known species on this planet. The sections of Epistemology and Arts in
Volume 1 present what contemporary semioticians have achieved in their
contemplations that have knowingly or unknowingly traversed the two essential
aspects of the semiotic process: the interior and the exterior.

In terms of the roundtables, the two parts can be further divided into several
mini-sections, which, however, for the sake of clarity and typesetting, will not be
shown as such. In Part A, the first mini-section is the Tartu-related section,
originally the roundtables of “Biosemiotics as global semiotics” and “Tartu
semiotics: Synthesis of cultural semiotics and biosemiotics. Lotman and Uexküll”,
which include four papers that are thematically relevant to each other. Tartu
semiotics, since Lotman’s time, has played a critical role in the development of
global semiotics and has long enjoyed worldwide fame. What is even more exciting
for us to see is that it is still at its height of influence, especially in the work of
Biosemiotic studies.

Following that mini-section are two papers presented at the roundtable
"Communicology and Semiotics: The Phenomenological Heritage in Cultural
Discursive Patterns and Practices", whereas at two other roundtables that were also
about the same deliberation of human knowing, “Cognitive Semiotics” and
“Interaction between semiotics and cognitive science”, two more papers were read
by their authors. The topics that were covered at these two roundtables include such
important areas of semiotic studies as phenomenology, post-modernity, cognition
and metaphor studies.

A most significant subject matter in modern semiotics is the study on its
founding father Charles Sanders Peirce. During the 11th World Congress of IASS/
AIS, we had three roundtables devoted to this subject matter: “C. S. Peirce: Chains
of Signs Bridging Cultures”, “Peirce’s Semiotics” and “Peirce’s Symbolism: from
Gesture to Scripture”. For these three mini-sections, we have included three papers.

The other two roundtables in Part A are “WATS—the World Association for
Theoretical Semiotics”, and “Conceptual Modelling of Time and Space”, each with
its own interesting topics and unique points of view.

In Part B, we are looking at things that are, under the first impression,
absolutely different from what we have seen in Part A. However, as another
distinctive exemplification of human modeling, the proper subject matters of
semiotic inquiries incorporated in Part B, which have been studied for decades since
the early days of modern semiotics in the 20th century, are essentially about two
same goals: “to understand” and “to make understand”, by means of critical
observations of the external products of the human modeling behavior, in
particular, human cultures and societies. This part has assembled a fair number of
papers presented at some other roundtables of the Humanities and Arts in the
modern days: “Film Theory and Semiotics: Retrospective & Prospect” (two
papers), “New Semiotics of Spectacle” and “Literature and Digital Communication”
Arts and Semiotics” (one paper) and “Semiotic and Aesthetics: the Matter of Art”
(two papers).

However, because of the inconsistency of the numbers of papers presented at the
roundtables, the names of the original roundtables are not shown in this volume, although
the order in which they appear is exactly the same as that of the above-mentioned
roundtables. Instead, the papers are simply categorized into Parts A and B.
Basically, they are about the same theme; to study how humans produce their various artistic signs and sign systems. The papers in Part B have the same significance as those in Part A, for both categories inevitably provide us with a fine glimpse into the intertwined complicated systems that have bestowed upon us *meaning*, which, besides the biological basis of the human body, is another sine qua non of our existence in the world.
Towards the 11th World Congress of the IASS/AIS in China

Eero Tarasti
President of the IASS/AIS

Semiotics lives in historical times. Indeed, what Thomas A. Sebeok meant when he entitled his last book *Global Semiotics* is no longer a utopia, challenge or prophecy: it is the reality in which we dwell in our contemporary, “technosemiotic” stage of societies. Never before in the history of mankind have so many people living on the globe had such extensive access to communication. Never before has the air been so full of messages, flying here and there. A. J. Greimas, as early as at the beginning of his career, stated that man lives from cradle to grave surrounded by signs, and this has become a fact in a manner in which one could not anticipate at that time. Thanks to the Internet, email, Facebook, blogging, Google, Wikipedia and more, not only does information move from one place to another without obstacles, but also a totally new sense of community has emerged. As the Italian newspaper *La Repubblica* recently wrote, we are no longer just world citizens, but “netizens”. Bridging civilizations has become technologically an everyday reality.

But have we also bridged cross-cultural misunderstandings between civilizations? As asked by the pioneer of this topic, Walburga von Raffler-Engel. We may ask, as Jean-Jacques Rousseau did in 1765, does the development of media and technology improve mankind? Are semioticians merely observers, making comments on communication? Or is semiotics still an active force, directing and guiding our sign actions?

When millions of “netizens”, from “old” Europe to China, to Africa, to Latin America daily write Facebook messages to their circle of friends, they do not only report on event in their everyday life; they also express, *What I think, what I feel, what I do, has a meaning. I am signifying myself to others, who may like or dislike it as they please*. In sum, everyone is suddenly brought to the core of semiosis: its center is here, there, or anywhere. No society can yet control or prevent this new type of communication/signification; information and knowledge have become more than ever a common property, belonging to all.

This situation has strong social implications for the structure of societies all over
the world. Values and ideologies have not disappeared, but are made more and more visible and “transparent”, as it is called. Semiotics distinguishes itself from other approaches to communication by remaining in touch with the reality of values; signs are axiological units. Semiotics may not be able to prevent clashes of civilizations, but in crises it can provide analyses and discourse whereby we can discuss them reasonably.

Here we come to the fundamental question of the essence of semiotics: Is semiotics universal? Or is semiotics merely a new form of post-colonial discourse, which tries to dominate the world with its conceptual framework? Responses to these questions will no doubt spring forth at the upcoming congress.

In preparing the Nanjing World Congress of Semiotics, we should note that it is the first time such a global gathering has been organized in the “East”. But there we Westerners do not meet with unprepared soil; we are not like missionaries, for the East has long had its own philosophy of semiotics, as well as an awareness of the classical achievements of Western semiotics research, thanks to the devoted efforts of such scholars as You Zheng Li to bring this tradition into the Chinese language. Moreover, the core problems of communication and signification are of a similar nature to all of us.

Thus, may this encounter be among those creative scientific adventures and discoveries of new worlds on both sides; the history of semiotics will be different after it. Let this be the beginning of further interaction and mutual understanding of diverse cultures. Let it be a lesson in listening to the Other.
Welcome from the Host

Jie ZHANG
Dean of School of Foreign Languages and Cultures, NNU
Director of International Institute of Semiotic Studies, NNU

Dear semiotician friends around the world,

The 11th World Congress of Semiotics will be held in Nanjing Normal University on October 5 to 9 in 2012. As the representative of the host university, I would like to extend my warmest and most sincere welcome to all semioticians and friends who are interested in semiotic studies around the world!

Since the birth of the IASS in 1969, there have been ten World Congresses of Semiotics ever held, all of which were held in the West. It is the first time for this international academic event to take place in the East, in an ancient country with a rich civilization heritage, in the city of Nanjing, which served as a capital city in six Chinese dynasties, and in Nanjing Normal University, which is one of the earliest universities in China. It is a historic breakthrough, an important turning point which marks the unprecedented communication between the East and the West.

Signs are ubiquitous, and they are part of human race. We human beings are animals of signs. Our minds are inseparable from semiosis. Our civilizations are built on signs and their systems. We are living in a net of signs we weave ourselves, communicating with each other via signs. With signs we create we are actualizing ourselves and shaping the outside world. Signs are necessary means by which people’s minds are improved, elevated, and reformed.

Semiotics is a science of signs. It focuses on the structural relations between what a sign appears to be and what it refers to. As an interdisciplinary science, it functions as a tool for other sciences. People’s rational pursuit of precise analysis of semiotic phenomena is strongly indicated in semiotics, which plays an important role in all human undertakings. Today semiotics has become an indispensable part of studies of human race, and it will surely lead to a better understanding of ourselves and develop our overall intelligence.

The theme for this Congress is “Global Semiotics: A Bridge Linking Different Civilizations”. We sincerely hope that this Congress will double as a platform for global communication in the semiotic field. As a matter of fact, semiotics started to
sprout and grow in ancient China in its own way with semiotic ideas and theories put forward by a number of scholars such as Gongsun Long and Xun Zi in a variety of works such as *I Ching*. Semiotics is supposed to be universal, and a better grasp of Chinese semiotic reservoir by international scholars is conducive to the development of global semiotics.

My dear friends, 2000 years ago Confucius said, “it is such a delight to have friends coming from afar”. Now Nanjing Normal University, a school boasting “the most beautiful campus in the Orient” is waiting for you. Let us meet in the golden autumn in 2012 and build a bridge linking different civilizations.
Part A
Epistemology
A Taxonomy and Evolution of Semiosis as Based on the Mechanisms of Learning: Emonic Signs

Kalevi Kull
Tartu University, Estonia

Abstract: We make a distinction between taxonomic and meronomic classification of signs. The Peircean meronomic typology of signs has to be triadic, while taxonomic typology has not such limitation. We add to the taxonomy a new type of signs—emic signs, which are the bases for imitation and social learning, being more complex than indexes and less complex than symbols. Icons are based on trial and error learning, indexes on conditioning, emons on imitating, and symbols on naming.

Key words: sign types; meronomy; icon; index; symbol; mirror neurons; imitation; social learning; sign evolution

As concluded earlier, “the major limitation in today’s biosemiotics (and also in semiotics in general) is the insufficient development of models of semiosis” (Kull 2012a: 21). Our aim here is to make a further step towards a fundamental model of semiosis. This implies the distinction between meronomy and taxonomy of signs. The taxonomic approach makes it possible to connect the types of signs with specific mechanisms of learning. Studying the latter, we can discover a type of signs which is specifically connected with social learning, which we define as emonic signs.

1. The Condition for Semiosis

Life begins with confusion. How so?

All sign relations are acquired by organisms via a process that can be generally called learning. This includes various patterns of behavior that become regular due to the changes in various kinds of scaffolding, or memory, be it genetically, epigenetically, socially or linguistically inherited. All these scaffolds as well as sign relations are built or designed by organisms. Life can create new regularities. These are not physical laws, these are just local non-universal regularities, like habits,
reflexes, and customs.

Since one and the same habit can work in several contexts (not only in the one in which it was initially created), it is possible that in a certain context more than one habit applies. If the different habits that simultaneously apply assume different behaviors, then they cannot be simultaneously executed. This is the situation of confusion. Thus confusion is possible if there are two (or more) relations acquired via learning that tell, in the same situation, a different thing.

The systems of relations can be called codes. Two systems of relations are not the same if and only if these are mutually incompatible (or, as Juri Lotman says about this, non-translatable). Thus the situation of confusion is the situation of multiple codes, or code plurality (code duality being its special case).

The situation of confusion between the relations, i.e. of codes, is obviously called semiosis. This is the situation which asks to be solved—since it is not a stable situation. This implies the tendency to form habits.

Thus, life begins with code plurality, which is the same as confusion. The existence of confusion is what distinguishes an automatic behavior from a non-automatic one, a sentient being from a river, life from non-life. Physical laws, of course, cannot contradict to each other, by definition. They form an algebraic system that would collapse if it included contradictions.

The situation of confusion or incompatibility of codes means that there is no relation that would determine the behavior in the given conditions. This absence of relevant relation (Peirce would call it doubt, Deacon has also used the term confusion) activates semiosis. Umberto Eco calls the latter negotiation. It leads to making a new relation, which can be further kept with the help of memory.

## 2. Meronomy and Taxonomy of Signs

Taxonomy and meronomy (or mereology) are two complementary approaches to classification. Taxonomy joins objects into taxons (taxa), while meronomy divides a whole into merons.¹ For example, in biology, taxonomy deals with classification of species into genera, familia, etc., while meronomy deals with classification of organs of an organism, or functional components of an ecosystem.

As repeatedly stressed by Frederik Stjernfelt, Peirce’s classification of signs is fundamentally meronomic. It deals with the functional structure of a sign (as semiosis) and its components. Its triadic principle is derived from the structure of

¹ About these concepts, see for instance Meyen (1977).
semiosis itself and it cannot be avoided in any of its parts. Since the division into
merons is relational, the resulting classes (merons, or Peircean classes of signs) are
interdependent. In this sense, for instance, there cannot be a pure icon that is not
also an index at least to some extent at the same time.

Therefore, the possibility of a taxonomy of signs is not a trivial question. However, a taxonomy of signs is feasible if what is classified is not pure semiosis
itself but some features of sign relations that can be independently identified.

### 3. Types of Semiosis

There is not much that can be said formally about the situation of semiosis,
because, by definition, this is the situation where, strictly speaking, formal logic
does not apply (Kull 2012b). However, it is possible to classify semiosis (a) on the
basis of the levels of these sign systems, interaction of which has created the
semiosis, or (b) on the basis of the mechanisms of learning that are going to form a
habit as a result of semiosis.

Thus, (a) we can observe confusions of different basic kinds: confusing (1)
similarity, (2) correlates, (3) identity, or (4) conventions. These may correspond
to different types of semiosis, as related to (b) the basic types of learning.

Sign relation assumes earlier learning. As Eco (1976; 222) says: “first of all,
one must learn to recognize imprints (or to fake them)”. All signs are acquired in
the sense that they require a specific process of formation which makes the relation
in memory. Learning, i.e. acquiring a new sign relation, may take place

(1) via trial and error, shifting the recognition window formed by epigenetic
mechanisms;

(2) via conditioning, associative or conditional learning, making a new
connection, conditioned reflex in the neuro-motor system;

(3) via imitation, or social learning, following others’ example with the help
of the mirror neurons system;

(4) via convention, or naming, relating objects in a new way by a language
mechanism.

These correspond to different types of operations, which make a new sign
relation; these are characteristic of different levels of life processes (see also Table
1):

(1) recognition (representing indistinguishability)—iconic signs—vegetative
level, in all living systems;

(2) association (representing correlation)—indexical signs—animal level, in all
animals;

(3) imitation (representing similarity)—emonic signs—emotional level, in vertebrates;

(4) replacement (representing convention)—symbolical—cultural level, in humans.

Thus, we end up with a non-Peircean classification. This is non-Peircean, because this is a taxonomy, not a meronomy. Therefore there is no reason for it to be triadic.

Despite the same names that Peirce is using in a different sense—icon, index, symbol, there is already a tradition of using these names also as names for sign taxa. We have added here the fourth type—emonic signs, a sign type between index and symbol—the existence of which might be the reason for many behavioural differences between invertebrates and some groups of vertebrate animals (mammals, birds). Invertebrates cannot use emons due to lack of the relevant mechanism of learning. Emons are acquired via imitation or social learning, and exist in animals with emotions.

Distinction between icons and emons and introducing the row icon-index-emon-symbol solves the paradoxical usage of the sequence index-icon-symbol (instead of the original icon-index-symbol) in some semiotic theories.

The word emon as proposed here for the name of the sign type can be seen as a derivation from Greek ημιoν (ημiον), meaning ‘company’.

Occasionally, the term emon has been used by Paul Nemirovsky to denote an element of emotional or aesthetic information (Nemirovsky 1999; Nemirovsky, Davenport 2002).

Emon may thus be related to emotions, empathy, and imitation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relation</th>
<th>Motivatedness</th>
<th>Sign type</th>
<th>Taxa of organisms possessing these signs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>arbitrary</td>
<td>motivated</td>
<td>iconic</td>
<td>Semiota①</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>indexical</td>
<td>indexical</td>
<td>Animalia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>emonic</td>
<td>emonic</td>
<td>Vertebrata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-motivated,</td>
<td>symbolic</td>
<td>symbolic</td>
<td>Homo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conventional</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

① This name—Semiota (or Semeota) has been proposed by Terrence Deacon for the highest taxon that includes all living organisms.
4. The Relationship between Semiosis and Codes

This question has been rather difficult to resolve in the discussions during the last decade of biosemiotics. The conclusion, briefly, is this: semiosis has primacy before codes; codes are products of semiosis. However, the question requires a more detailed analysis.

We can define code as a regular correspondence or link between entities that would not form such a regular correspondence on the basis of self-assembly (because, in cases where we have a code, there is an immense number of possibilities to form alternative links). As different from self-assembly, the creating or inheriting of codes requires work; i.e., a code is a correspondence or link that is created or inherited by semiosis (by life).

A code, always built by semiosis, may nevertheless persist for some time without further activity of semiosis—such as in many machines and automatons. Thus, code may exist (temporarily) without semiosis.

One can say that a code (and likewise, a grammar) is a frozen pragmatic, a frozen habit. This is a general feature of artefacts—their pieces are put together, thereby building a code-relation into their body.

Semiosis is what is capable of creating new code-relations. Simultaneously, semiosis also carries on existing codes, rebuilding and inheriting these. Semiosis always includes certain codes. Thus semiosis cannot exist without codes. Code is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for semiosis.

Semiosis always requires a previous semiosis (omne semiosis ex semiosis; omne vivum ex vivo—except at their initial emergence at the origin of life). The capacity of creating a new code implies that semiosis is also a unit of learning from experience. This means that semiosis assumes certain ambiguity, certain indeterminacy, unpredictability—or, as we said above—confusion.

Living cell is a semiotic system. The translation process carried by ribosomes is a code-process, but it is only a part of semiosis. The adaptors (called code-makers by M. Barbieri, like tRNAs in the case of the genetic code) are necessary for building the code-relation, but insufficient for semiosis.

It seems reasonable to say that meaning-making is a feature of semiosis and not of code.

Meaning-making (and semiosis) appears when more than one code is involved, and the codes are mutually incompatible (i.e., code-plurality, or at least code-

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(1) Earlier versions of ch. 4 and 5 have appeared in Kull (2012a: 18–20).
duality, is necessary). Semiosis is the search that appears due to the unpredictability (or, a piece of freedom) that is resulted from an incompatibility situation. This implies the primary intentionality. Therefore, life as ongoing semiosis—ongoing semiosis as challenging incompatibility, or confusion—can be described as the permanent problem-solving.

In computers, or at least in simple calculators, there are built-in codes, but no new codes are created: there are no semioses by itself in the calculators. (However, a calculator in the process of being used by a human is a part of semiosis.) Yet this is not semiosis. However, in a more advanced case, e.g., of independently moving and sensing robot-computers that would try to communicate with each other on the basis of non-identical codes, semiosis may temporarily appear.

There certainly exists a gray zone between semiosis and non-semiosis, at the lower semiotic threshold zone. For example, auto-cells (Terrence Deacon’s concept) would belong to that zone.

Improving these central concepts will be an important task for further biosemiotic research.

5. The Evolution of Semiosis

The semiotic approach has radically changed our understanding of biological evolution. The statement of F. de Saussure that in case of signs, the primary processes that are responsible for their formation are synchronic and not diachronic, also holds more generally for biosemiotics. For biology, this means that the explanations of phenomena, in the first place, have to pay attention to the synchronic (or somewhat more generally, to ontogenetic) mechanisms, and the diachronic (evolutionary, phylogenetic) processes can be seen as their resultants. Here, for the biological theory of evolution, the most interesting discussions will start.

The contrasting theories of evolution can be put very briefly as, either (1) genetic change precedes the epigenetic one, or (2) the epigenetic change is prior to the genetic, in an evolutionary adaptive change.

The neo-Darwinian model of evolution clearly speaks in favour of the first option—the first thing to happen is a new random mutation, which creates a new phenotype, which can or cannot be preserved due to “natural selection”, defined as the differential reproduction of genotypes. The semiotic model of evolution states the opposite—the first thing to happen is the change in phenotype (which includes changes in the usage of the genome, in its expression pattern), which can or cannot
be affixed by random changes in the genome.

For a long time, the neo-Darwinian model has been seen as having no real alternatives for explaining adaptive evolution. However, just in the recent decade, a remarkable shift in this has taken place due to advances in developmental biology (Müller, Newman 2003; West-Eberhard 2003; Kull 2000).

It is thus important that the evolvement of semiosis includes both the diminishing of semiotic freedom, when new codes are introduced in habituation, and an increase of semiotic freedom, when new options appear due to the replacement or abandoning of codes in challenging the situation of confusion.\(^1\)

### References


\(^1\) Acknowledgements. This work is related to the project IUT2-44 (Semiotic modelling of self-description mechanisms; Theory and applications), and the Centre of Excellence in Cultural Theory (supported by the European Union through the European Regional Development Fund).
The Tartu Synthesis in Semiotics Today: Viewed from America

John Deely
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Abstract: By the 20th century’s end, semiotics had definitively emerged as the most historically and theoretically proper name for the study of how signs work in human experience, both in its cultural dimensions and in its inevitable dependency upon the physical environment and universe which extends far beyond cultural influence and which the very existence of culture presupposes. Probably the single most key figure, as it were, “presiding over” this emergence was the Hungarian-American Thomas A. Sebeok. But key to Sebeok’s weaving of the “semiotic web” of a global awareness of sign-action within the intellectual culture of the 21st century was his appreciation and integration within his vision and work of two key background figures, both associated with Tartu University, namely, Jakob von Uexküll and Juri Lotman. I would like to comment on how the heritage of these two figures have proved to be the foundation-stones, in some ways more important even than the so far more widely recognized figures of Ferdinand de Saussure and Charles Peirce for the future of semiotics within university life and intellectual life generally.

Key words: Tartu University; von Uexküll; Lotman; Σημειωτική vs. Σηματολογία; Sebeok

1. Philosophical Background to the Development of Semiotics Today

When we see colors or hear sounds, whenever what the philosophers call “sensation” besets us, we become aware simultaneously of something more than the sensation—a shape, a position, a direction, a movement, etc. Thoughts too enter in, interpreting or at least trying to interpret (“guessing at”, if you will), what the

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1 This text outlines as follows,
1. Philosophical Background to the Development of Semiotics Today
2. The Moves at once Necessary and Inevitable beyond the Boundaries of Modern Philosophy as “Epistemology”
2.1 The case of Jakob von Uexküll
2.2 The case of Juri Lotman
2.3 The intervention of Thomas A. Sebeok
3. The Central Institutional Place of Tartu University in the Development of Semiotics
References
sensation involves—a danger, a delight, or simply something safe to ignore. That sensations, even in their difference from thoughts or “ideas”, bring into awareness more than (“something other” than) themselves, means that sensation already involves the action of signs. This point was analytically demonstrated by John Poinst in his 1632 *Tractus de Signis* (Book I, Question 6). That thoughts or “ideas” are interpretations presenting another as this or that to an animal, a realization commonly attributed today to Charles Sanders Peirce, was a point originally made in 1606 by the Conimbricenses, a group of commentators on Aristotle organized at the University of Coimbra by Pedro da Fonseca.

“Modern philosophy” in the early 1600s, however, broke with all Latin mainstream development to go off rather down the “Way of Ideas”, initiated by reducing ideas as other-representations to objects as self-representations. With this initial move the notion of relation as suprasubjective and constitutive of signs in their formal being was eliminated from consideration. The foundations for realization that the whole of human awareness, from its beginnings in sensation to its farthest reaches in intellectual thought, firmly laid by the premodern Latins, thus came to be covered over and forgotten in the modern period where only idealism—the modern doctrine that whatever the human mind directly knows the mind itself makes—came to prevail. When the American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce, inspired by the Conimbricenses in particular,¹ began his move beyond modern philosophy to explore anew that “Way of Signs”, he found himself, as he put it (c. 1906: CP 5. 488), in the position of “a pioneer, or rather a backwoodsman, in the work of clearing and opening up” the path to semiotics earlier marked out by the Latins but then abandoned and thoroughly covered over by the moderns.

Within this modern climate, of course, it was Immanuel Kant who provided the synthesis of Cartesian Rationalism and Empiricism after Locke, declaring in his *Critique of Pure Reason* the unknowability of things in themselves (“Dingen an sich”) and of anything that went beyond a co-ordination and correlation of ideas of reason with phenomena of sense (“Noemena”).

Yet even within the idealist “bubble of consciousness doctrine”, the truth of human dependency upon an action of signs for achieving any knowledge whatever slow by slow forced itself into the modern consciousness, against all idealist resistance.

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¹ See Beuchot and Deely 1995; “Common Sources for the Semiotic of Charles Peirce and John Poinset”. *Review of Metaphysics* XLVIII.3 (March), 539–566.
2. The Moves at once Necessary and Inevitable beyond the Boundaries of Modern Philosophy as “Epistemology”

Well, as Susan Petrilli (2008: 3) so exactly observed in the address she gave for the occasion of becoming the 7th “Sebeok Fellow” of the Semiotic Society of America, “though there is of course a long history behind the semiotics of today, still there is a sense in which semiotics is, as a widespread intellectual movement, a phenomenon more ‘of our time’ than it is of any time past.” Passing over the case of Hegel (1770 – 1831) who, though he saw through at once to the internal contradictoriness of Kant’s notion of things as unknowable, yet did not at all see that semiotics provides the only systematic remedy to the Kantian ne plus ultra epistemology, we find that the most decisive figure toward what semiotics has become today was a man who did his basic work in Estonia and in connection with the Tartu University.

2.1 The Case of Jakob von Uexküll

Fittingly enough, perhaps, the first decisive breakthrough toward an appreciation of the doctrine of signs came by way of a revolution in modern biological thought wrought by a German-Estonian biologist named Jakob von Uexküll (1864–1944). Von Uexküll realized that while there is indeed a physical environment which is the same for human animals and centipedes, for stars and planets, the meaning of the surroundings is something quite different from this “uniformly common” notion of the physical surroundings. Wood may be food for a termite, but for a dolphin or a human wood is definitely not a delicacy for digestion. Each animal, depending upon its bodily type, has to interpret the surroundings insofar as it becomes aware of them, deciding—rightly or wrongly—what within its awareness is desirable or +, what dangerous or –, what “meaningless” or 0. The resulting “world of meaning” for the animal, thus, is something species-specific and includes only something of while by no means reducing to the physical environment or surroundings. This world, the “world” as meaningful to the animal, von Uexküll labeled Umwelt.

Von Uexküll considered himself philosophically a Kantian, and so suggested that the Umwelt is a “subjective world”, i.e., a world private to each species of animal. But this overlooks the fact that this “subjective world” is anything but “subjective” respecting any given species of animal, but is on the contrary a species-specifically public and objective “world of meaning”. Not only is it fully shared within a species, it also further partially overlaps in meanings with the Umwelt, the
public or objective world, of other species. Thus dogs and humans, to cite a mundane example, live in Umwelts at once different (species-specific) and partially overlapping or shared. In other words, dogs and humans in various measures communicate. This fact that communication itself is something “real” the Kantian philosophy, with its bubble of consciousness, proves unable to account for.

Thus von Uexküll seems to have thought that the “0” factor within the Umwelt meant a factor or factors of the environment of which the animal was unaware, hence took no account of. His son Thure von Uexküll, also a Kantian, reinforced this interpretation.

But von Uexküll also distinguished between the Innenwelt upon which the Umwelt depends, and the Umwelt itself which is common or shared within a species and to some extent across some (though not all) species. This Innenwelt is indeed subjective, being the very psychology (the complex of psychological states) of the individual organism, but it is correlated with what is “other” than the organism, the surroundings interpreted or classified as +, −, 0. Hence the Umwelt contrasts as objective and public with the subjectivity of the private Innenwelt upon which it depends, but the Umwelt cannot be reduced to the Innenwelt. They differ via relation as foundation (Innenwelt) differs from terminus (Umwelt). Thomas Sebeok, at the 12–21 June 2000 meeting of the Nordic-Baltic Summer Institute for Semiotic and Structural Studies held at the Imatra Valtionhotelli, agreed that, from a semiotic point of view, it was far more proper to label the Umwelt an objective world, i.e., the meaningful world as public for or shared among animals of a given species, and to some extent among animals of other species as well.¹ Thus “0” does not at all mean something of which the animal is unaware, but rather something of which it is well aware but has interpreted (again, rightly or wrongly) as “ignorable”, that is, safe to ignore.

We see here then, in the work of von Uexküll, albeit at a higher level, a preliminary restoration of the late Latin semiotic consciousness that both sensations and ideas, themselves subjective and within the organism perceiving or understanding, are not self-representations but other-representations, serving but to found and prove natural suprasubjective relations whose terminus is “other than” the subjective foundations of the relations. In the case of sensation, the terminus are aspects of the physical surroundings as interactive with the physical body of the animal, while in the case of perception (as also intellecing) the terminus are the

¹ The presentation which led to Sebeok’s evaluation on this point is published in Sign Systems Studies (Deely 2001); see also Deely 2004a.
objective interpretations (right or wrong) placed upon or made by the animal respecting that limited dimension of the physical environment of which it has become aware (in contrast with the physical environment in its full extent which no animal, including Stephen Hawking, has been or will ever be able fully to grasp) through the physical interaction of its body with the surrounding bodies.

With von Uexküll’s Innenwelt/Umwelt distinction, therefore, we see not only an unwitting (if partial) recovery of the semiotic foundations established at the end of Latin thought but forgotten in the beginning of modern thought, but also a rejection of the modern view of relations adopted from William of Ockham to the effect that relations, being nothing more than the result of mental comparisons, have no reality independent of awareness. For the relations between Innenwelt and Umwelt are not only suprasubjective (as contrasted with contained within the subjectivity of the animal aware) but also a mixture of relations as awareness-independent and awareness-dependent (for otherwise, of course, there could be no such thing a misinterpretation where the animal loses its life by mistaking a − environmental factor for a 0 or even for a + factor (which also goes far toward explaining prevalence of deception in the biological world).

Neither Jakob nor Thure von Uexküll, it must be said, was as such a semiotician. The father Jakob was a biologist, the son Thure was known mainly for application of his father’s work in psychosomatic medicine, although, through his association with Thomas A. Sebeok in particular, the son did come to involve himself to some extent with what has come to be called “biosemiotics”. Jakob von Uexküll himself belonged to the class of what Sebeok labeled “crypto semioticians”, that is, those who knew nothing of semiotics either in its late modern development (after Saussure) or in its premodern Latin and Greek foundational developments (in Aristotle’s discussion of relation especially among the Greeks, in the post-Augustinian development of a general semiotics culminating in the Conimbricenses and, especially, the Treatise on Signs of Poinsot), but whose work required recontextualization in fully explicit semiotic terms in order for its importance fully to be seen.

2.2 The Case of Juri Lotman

The cryptosemiotic introduction of Umwelttheorie at Tartu University was severely interrupted by events associated with the lead-up to and conduct of the Second World War. A second late-modern development crucial to the full 20th century establishment of semiotic consciousness, however, also took place at Tartu University in Estonia, this time through the work of a Russian-Estonian, Juri
Lotman (1922–1993). By the time Lotman came upon the scene, the work of Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913), suggesting the inevitable development of a general “science of signs” as something which “has its place marked out in advance” even though it “does not yet exist”, had exploded in the intellectual culture of Europe, North and South America, and throughout the Soviet Union.

Saussure himself was a linguist, not a philosopher, and knew nothing of the pre-modern Latin developments between Augustine’s work of 395AD and Poinsot’s Tractatus of 1632. He proposed for the development of a “science of signs” the name semiology, and the adoption of an idealist, exclusively cultural “model” of sign action as consisting in the dyadic relation between (especially) linguistic expressions as signifiants and the corresponding psychological states they evoke as signifiés.

Lotman, however, was aware of John Locke’s earlier proposal in 1690 (1689, actually) for a general “doctrine of signs” under the name of semiotics; and so Lotman, even while adopting Saussure’s signifiant/signifié model of signification, adopted rather Locke’s name for the development, thus initiating a movement that would initially come to be known (see, e.g., Lucid 1977, but esp. the 1988 paperback edition with a new Preface by Thomas Sebeok) as “Soviet Semiotics”. Lotman developed the notion of the “semiosphere”, akin to von Uexküll’s notion of the species-specifically human Umwelt as dependent most distinctively upon linguistic communication which Lotman termed accordingly the “primary modeling system” respecting the anthroposemiotic world of culture as the “secondary modeling system”.

### 2.3 The Intervention of Thomas A. Sebeok

In 1963 Thomas A. Sebeok first exposed the “pars pro toto” fallacy upon which Saussure’s notion of sign depended. Sebeok introduced the notion of zoosemiotics, an action of signs generically animal and hence not restrictable to the cultural domain of human animals. In 1981 he promoted Kramen’s argument that not only animals but also the world of plants depends upon the action of signs. Over this period Sebeok went out of his way to make acquaintance with Lotman, whose work Sebeok considered, along with the cryptosemiotics of von Uexküll, of the first importance for the achievement of semiotic consciousness in an intellectual culture that could only prove to be, respecting the Kantian philosophical synthesis dominative of

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1. Sebeok’s key move was the occasion for the 1986 anthology, *Frontiers in Semiotics* (ed. Deely, Williams and Kruse). On Sebeok’s overall role in the 20th century establishment of semiotics, see: Deely 2010; Cobleby et al. 2011; Deely and Danesi, eds. 2012.
modern philosophy, positively and decisively postmodern (in contrast to the late-
modern work of Derrida and others which, however important in many respects
[particularly with the notion of deconstruction], is falsely called “postmodern”
while being in fact “ultra modern” throughout).

In 1987 Sebeok returned from one of his meetings with Lotman to pose, in a
presentation to that year’s meeting of the Semiotic Society of America, the
question: “Language: How Primary a Modeling System?” It was the beginning of
perhaps the single most important development of semiotic consciousness as a
postmodern phenomenon of intellectual culture, in contrast with the premodern
Latin achievement in the synthetic work of Poinot ignored by the moderns from
beginning to end.

What Sebeok did was to make a synthesis, wholly and explicitly semiotic, of the
Umwelttheorie of von Uexküll with the cultural Modeling System theory of Lotman
(see Deely 2007). Sebeok equated the latter with the Innenwelt, while showing at
the same time that the Innenwelt in its generically animal rather than its species-
specifically human component is in fact the “primary modeling system”, with
linguistic communication secondary and the resultant “world of culture” thus a
“tertiary modeling system” in effect. This assimilation of modeling system theory to
the Innenwelt of Umwelt theory, together with Sebeok’s adoption and promotion of
Krampen’s 1981 demonstration of an action of signs among plants thematized as
“phytosemiotics”, provided the full postmodern foundation in contemporary
intellectual culture for the vast development today of biosemiotics, the investigation
of the action and role of signs throughout the living world (see esp. Favareau 2009).
Just as Poinot was able to show that human understanding depends upon the action
of signs from its origins in sensation to its farthest reaches in intellection, so that the
perception of animals wholly depends upon the action of signs, just so biosemiotics
today has demonstrated that the entire world of living organisms (not only animals)
is a semiosis-dependent phenomenon on our planet—and necessarily also on any
other planet where life has emerged in the physical universe. (Note carefully,
however, the logical fallacy—unfortunately common at the moment among
biosemioticians—committed by inferring from the fact that life is co-extensive with
semiosis the further conclusion that semiosis cannot extend beyond life.)

3. The Central Institutional Place of Tartu University in the Development
of Semiotics

Notice, in all this 20th–21st century development of semiotics as the doctrine of
signs, the central place that has been providentially occupied by the University of Tartu in Estonia—coincidentally (or syncretically!) founded in the same year that Poinset’s *De Signis* was published, 1632. While it took Sebeok to effect the full synthesis of von Uexküll’s and Lotman’s work at Tartu within an explicitly and fully semiotic consciousness (see the 2011 volume edited by Coblentz, Deely, Kull, and Petrilli), it remains that it was the work of von Uexküll and Lotman, more than any other single figures of late modernity besides Sebeok himself, that provided Sebeok the semiotic materials from which to weave his international “semiotic web” and mold this phenomenon of a “global semiotics”.

To be noted in particular is the program in semiotics which Lotman established at the Tartu University, along with in 1964, the journal which originally bore the title $\Sigma\mu\iota\omega\tau\iota\kappa\epsilon\iota$ (exactly Locke’s coinage of the term to properly name the doctrine of signs), along with the title in Russian, *Trudy po Znakovym Sistemam*. This journal continues to the present day, but now with English replacing Russian: *Sign Systems Studies*. Somewhat unfortunately (I say “unfortunately” for the etymological reasons spelled out in Deely 2004), Locke’s stipulated spelling for the term to name the doctrine of signs as $\Sigma\mu\iota\omega\tau\iota\kappa\epsilon\iota$, in contrast with symptomatology as the branch of medicine called in Locke’s day and before $\Sigma\nu\iota\epsilon\iota\omega\tau\iota\kappa\epsilon\iota$, was replaced, for purely linguistic considerations irrelevant to semiotics as such, by the supposed “correct” Greek spelling early in the publication history (the third or fourth issue, as I recall) of *Sign Systems Studies*. ①

Greek purists argue that the epsilon inserted between the mu and the iota is “more correct”, and, from the standpoint of pure linguistic consideration of the Greek language, this is true; but such purist consideration is slightly beside the point when one realizes that Locke was not concerned with the etymology of a term existing within the Greek language, but was concerned rather to provide a distinctive name for a *new division of the sciences* which would include, *for the first time*, a study of “the right use of Signs in order to obtain knowledge” as constituting, alongside the traditional division of the sciences into “speculative” and “practical”. In other words, Locke was originally proposing, exactly as Saussure (incognizant of Locke) would propose two-and-one-quarter centuries later, the study of signs as a “conceivable study” that “does not yet exist” but “has a right to

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① This today the current journal editors <http://www.ut.ec/SOSE/sss/index.htm> inexplicably perpetuate the historical inaccuracy of saying that “The journal *Sign Systems Studies* was established in 1964 by Juri Lotman (initially as *ТРУДЫ ПО ЗНАКОВЫМ СИСТЕМАМ-СИМБОЛОГИЯ*)”, whereas in fact it was not *Σημειολογία* but *Σημειωτική*—as Locke proposed and Lotman well knew in eschewing Saussure’s proposed name “semiology” in favor rather of “semiotics”—that Lotman had originally used along with the title in Russian.
existence, a place staked out in advance”. To name this “new science” Locke was stipulating a term not to be confused with Σημειωτική as symptomatology, an already existing branch of that practical science we call medicine.

The Latin of course for Locke’s (and Lotman’s) Σημειωτική is Semiotica, the very name chosen by Sebeok and others for the first major international journal of the “new science”; and both terms transliterate into English as Semiotics, the name for the study of the action of signs in its full extent, and in contrast to the name Semiology Saussure proposed for the new science exactly when he mistakenly limited the understanding of sign-action to the realm of human culture (or anthroposemiotics). And “semiotics”, as we noted above, was exactly Lotman’s chosen term from the beginning to name the development of human understanding becoming conscious of and thematizing the action of signs wherever that action leads us.①

So we may, and indeed, in justice, must say② that, institutionally considered, the most critical developments toward what is called semiotics today took place at Tartu University. The fact that the first university program in semiotics was founded there, along with the first journal in the new science, and that that program Lotman introduced—transformed and expanded, it is true, in the hands of such international collaborators as Jesper Hoffmeyer, Claus Emmeche, Sören Brier, Mihhail Lotman, Kalevi Kull, Kati Lindstrom, Timo Maran, Silvi Salupere, Peeter Torop (the latter six as co-editors today of Lotman’s original journal), along with the extensive and continuing influence of the late Thomas Sebeok—continues uninterrupted into the present day more than warrants Sebeok’s notion③ that Tartu has become for semiotics something of what Mecca is for Islam.

Speaking for myself, I do not see how Tartu’s program in semiotics can fail to become the most important institutional development of the doctrine of signs for the 21st century. For, as our present century opened, exactly as Lotman presaged, “semiotics” had definitively emerged as the most historically and theoretically proper name for the study of how signs work in human experience, both in its cultural dimensions and in its inevitable dependency upon the physical environment and universe which extends far beyond cultural influence and which the very

① For a complete study of the lexicographical background to the term semiotics, see Why Semiotics? (Deely 2004).

② See Lotman 2000: “A few notes on the philosophical background of the Tartu School of semiotics”; and the large survey/compilation “The institution of semiotics in Estonia” (Kull, Salupere, Torop, and Lotman 2011), and Lotman 2000: “A few notes on the philosophical background of the Tartu School of semiotics”.

existence of culture presupposes.

No doubt the single most key figure, “presiding”, as it were, over this global emergence was the Hungarian-American Thomas A. Sebeok. But key to Sebeok’s weaving of the “semiotic web” into a global awareness of sign-action within the intellectual culture of the new century was his appreciation and integration within his vision and work of those two key background figures, both associated with Tartu University—Jakob von Uexküll and Juri Lotman, as we have seen.

The heritage of von Uexküll and Lotman together have proved to be the foundation stones, in some ways more important even than the so far more widely recognized figures of Ferdinand de Saussure and Charles Peirce, for the future of semiotics within university life and intellectual life generally.

Far beyond “Soviet semiotics”, we find blossoming in the Tartu ground today something inherently interdisciplinary, transnational, and conscious of the singular status of semiotics as studying the ground from which all intellectual disciplines and the boundaries therefore develop in the first place. The Tartu Graduate Program in Semiotics is an international, indeed, a global development, the positive achievement and first establishment of a truly postmodern intellectual culture within the university itself. The Tartu University Program in Semiotics is a synthesis, to be sure, a synthesis especially of the Tartu-Bloomington-Copenhagen “school” personified in Lotman, Sebeok, and Hoffmeyer¹ above all—but with their many colleagues and eventual successors, along with the underlying and crucial cryptosemiotic contribution of Jakob von Uexküll.

References


Thomas A. Sebeok and the doctrine of signs (Berlin; Mouton de Gruyter).


¹ See in particular Favareau, Cobley, and Kull eds. 2012.
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The Back of Mnemosyne: A Cultural-semiotic Analysis of the Forgetting Mechanism of Culture

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Abstract: The construction of culture as a nonhereditary memory of the community is selective, with cultural forgetting functioning as one of its internal mechanisms. Based on the Lotmanian Semiotic typology, cultural forgetting should be divided into such three types as forgetting of the text, forgetting of the rule and forgetting of the code. The main function of cultural forgetting is ensuring the formation and maintenance of cultural memory, which is manifested in three aspects: establishing cultural identity concerning the infusion of new texts, rules and codes, the external function concerning non-culture and anti-culture in the process of cultural interaction and expansion, and the internal cultural function concerning old culture and the past in the process of internal changes in specific cultures.

Key words: cultural forgetting; sign; text; rule; code

1. Introduction

In On the Semiotic Mechanism of Culture, co-written by Yuri Lotman and Uspensky (1978), the authors note that “we understand culture as the nonhereditary memory of the community, a memory expressing itself in a system of constraints and prescriptions” (Lotman & Uspensky, 1978: 213), which has been accepted as one of the most highly-praised criteria for cultural studies. It points out an intriguing yet ingenious perspective, to study culture in terms of combining memory and society. Moreover, it is in this very paper that the authors bring up another equally important yet seemingly opposing concept and treat it as one of the prerequisites for culture, that is, the forgetting mechanism of culture. They hold that culture, as a memory, has presupposed a selecting process, from which forgetting is necessarily derived. Dialectically speaking, the essence of culture is composed of memory and forgetting, which are the very two sides of the same entity, reflecting and defining each other. If a cultural phenomenon is understood by analogy with a mirror, then
“the memory of the community” should be the front side of the mirror, whereas forgetting is the back. Comparatively speaking, the function of forgetting is particularly prominent in that it’s not only a prerequisite for memory but an indispensible mechanism of culture; without the back, the main function of which is to present the front, a mirror can merely be a sheet of transparent glass.

The key questions then are: how does culture forget? What of its typology and functions? How does culture establish its memory and cultural identities? In this paper I will attempt to explore these matters and provide some possible answers from a cultural-semiotic perspective.

### 2. Forgetting and Selecting

Forgetting, an inevitable semiotic phenomenon in the process of cultural interaction and autonomy, involves a subject of forgetting, which could be either socio-cultural or individual and needs to preserve itself and its relative stability by constructing a semiotic subject identity. The socio-cultural construction of the identity of the self is, from beginning to end, based on a selective memory. According to Lotman and Uspensky, selecting is the process of textualizing facts. The text, one of the cores of the Lotmanian cultural semiotics, is the carrier of complete functions or meanings, which in itself has the function of memorizing (Kang, 2005), thus ensuring the realization of the cultural memory. Those non-textual facts, before being acknowledged as part of culture, has to go through a procedure called “translation” to become texts, from which a process of selection inevitably derives, that is, facts to be translated are fixed in the form of texts whereas others are forgotten. Therefore, every text in fact functions as a double-edged sword in that it “furthers not only the remembering process, but forgetting as well” (Lotman & Uspensky, 1978: 216).

As for which fact is selected to become a text and which is lost in the process of selection thus still remains or degrades into a non-text, it depends on the typology of the culture. Generally speaking, for both selecting and forgetting, the range of objects is fairly clear, although it’s not likely to find the original mechanism of absolutely deciding the object from the process of forgetting. In this respect, Lotman and Uspensky, obviously under the influence of Hjameslev who made the division between the content plane and the expression plane, divide culture into two mega-types: the content-oriented and the expression-oriented, the former tending to perceive itself as a system of rules whereas the latter an aggregate of texts (Lotman & Uspensky, 1978: 218). It is based on this division that we can make a
classification as to which facts are forgotten and which are to stay as memory.

3. The Typology of Forgetting

If we only start from the contrast between the expression and the content, that is, the contrast between texts and rules, two main types, based on the Lotmanian typology, can be naturally derived: the forgetting of the text versus the forgetting of the rule. There is yet another type, called “the forgetting of the code”, which relates to the generative mechanism of the meaning of semiotic texts. These three types compose the chief categories of forgetting.

The forgetting of the text is a relatively direct and manifest type of cultural forgetting, exhibited in both the expression-oriented culture and the content-oriented culture. Due to the fact that the text is an organic component of culture, a direct manifestation of cultural change is that texts within the system are constantly renewing and changing, increasing or decreasing in number, vanishing or emerging. For instance, the change of customs and traditions incorporates not only eliminating and forgetting old semiotic texts but substituting, that is, new texts occupy the central and dominant position while old ones are displaced without being destroyed.

Another example concerns one of the Chinese imperial naming conventions, 年号 (niànhào), also known as the Chinese Era Name or Regnal Year, which, from Emperor Wu of Han (Han Wudi) to 1911, used to be a general traditional paradigm for numbering years as well as marking the reign of a certain monarch. A new ruler would always declare a new era name on accession to replace the old one and sometimes even adopted several era names. This is known as 改元 (gǎi yuán), which was of great semiotic significance in imperial times. There were some occasions where the same era names were repeated in different dynasties or reigns of different rulers, but this was mainly because of the semiotic functions, in this case the literary meanings, entailed in these names which were mainly used as auspicious signs to pray for such things as prosperity, peace and perhaps most importantly, a long-lived reign. The semiotic implication of this practice is quite self-evident in that it provides an opportunity of establishing a different identity from the previous reign or dynasty by a process of not elimination but 正名 (zhèngmíng, rectification of the name) as if the previous one was a mistake. In a way, it does make some sense, especially considering all the misdemeanors and misfortunes in the previous dynasty or reign, which the following one was desperate to avoid. The forgetting of the era name, here in the name of the rectification of the name, is actually a process of exclusion and abeyance of the signs (texts in this case) and the identity of the
previous and other era names.

It is quite interesting to note that, apart from the era name, another similar forgetting mechanism was also prevailing in Chinese royal families, 避諱 (bì huì) or even 國諱 (guó huì), that is, the naming taboo. Despite their slight differences, both were obviously against using the superior ones’ names, especially the given names of emperors and their ancestors. For instance, during the Qin Dynasty, Qin Shi Huang’s given name 政 was not permitted to be used in the country, even the first month of the year, 政月 (the administrative month), was changed to 正月 (the upright/proper month) and the pronunciation was also changed, from the fourth tone (zhèng) to the first tone (zhēng). During the Tang Dynasty, Emperor Taizong’s given name was 民 (shì mín), therefore throughout the whole country 代 (dài, generation) was used instead of 世 (generation), 人 (rén, people) instead of 民 (people). This phenomenon, however, was not unseen in some female counterparts, for instance, Empress Lv Zhi (呂雉, lǚ zhì), the powerful wife of Emperor Gaozu of Han, forbade the people to use 雉 for the pheasant, so they turned to 雞 (yē jī).

The forgetting of the rule, i.e. the loss of the regulative function of semiotic signs, akin to the forgetting of the text, is related to the change of the nature and relatively conspicuous in the content-oriented culture. A relevant example brought up by Lotman is the taboo. He has pointed out that culture is a marked-off sphere with its boundaries, which exist not only between different cultures but with the same culture. Taboos can serve as a fine representative of such boundaries. One of the most basic ways of living, taboos may be considered a criterion for differentiating “civilization” and “barbarian”. Take for instance, the taboo of diet, a cultural regulation which can be seen in most human civilizations. In Islamic religious teachings, pork is forbidden and the fast is practiced to its most exquisite extent. Hinduism, in a way, equals vegetarianism. Judaism is particularly well-known for being careful and pious when preparing food. In different regions of China, when people worship their ancestors, they perform variably rigid rituals featuring restrictively regulated offerings.

Taboos mark off a sphere of culture, beyond which it means not only the denial of cultural texts but the contradiction to cultural rules. Therefore, in the content-oriented culture, rules like taboos guide and constrict people’s behavior and the forgetting of such rules will directly lead to the change of a certain behavioral mode. The loss of rules, in terms of behavior, creates a cultural chasm which disables the reoccurrence of a certain behavioral text in the descendent cultures. This is exactly why nowadays we are not seeing those ritual formulae of the etiquette
and dress codes performed in the Zhou Dynasty and recorded in 禮記 (lǐ jì), the Book of Rites. In this sense, the recent phenomena of making cultural sacrifices, in the name of “imitating and representing”, to 黃帝 (huáng dì, Huangdi or the Yellow Emperor), 比幹 (bì gān, the noble yet unfortunate uncle of the last Shang king), 孔子 (Confucius) and 屈原 (qū yuán, the great poet and royal minister of Chu during the Warring States Period) are no more than a delusional cultural performance in that what we see now is not what it used to be like in the times of those who are expected to enjoy the offerings. Likewise, many of the dress codes, behavioral modes and especially speeches depicted in the TV series featuring the ancient life are mostly concocted products of imagination and reconstruction, because what people in different cultures possess and identify with are rules, signs and texts specifically in accord with the culture to which they belong. Time travel, in the semiotic sense, doesn’t exist and seems increasingly absurd and impossible as the time-span grows.

The forgetting of the code is closely associated with the generation of the meaning of semiotic texts. Lotman and Uspensky (1978) used “superstition” to demonstrate this type of forgetting. Superstitions, as a special cultural phenomenon, “can be seen as elements of a text of an old culture whose code is lost” and “posterity could never decipher the language of its ruins” (Lotman & Uspensky, 1978: 215). Therefore, the forgetting of the code happens when the text still exists but has lost the original generative mechanism of meaning. Moreover, we can also see a witty commentary in their journal paper On the Semiotic Mechanism of Culture that “a continuous reorganization of the coding system which, while remaining itself in its own consciousness and conceiving itself to be continuous, tirelessly reforms separate codes, thus ensuring an increase in the value of the memory by creating ‘non-actual,’ yet potentially actualizable, reserves” (Lotman & Uspensky, 1978: 215–216). That is, the forgetting of the code, often in the form of reorganization, i.e. new codes replacing old ones, has a sort of self-consciousness as well as continuity and can constantly lead to the transformation of other codes.

The possible consequence of the forgetting and change of the code is either the change of meaning, thus the possibility of polysemy, or naught, thus the inability of interpretation. For instance, in ancient China, for quite a long time the crow was used as a symbol of good fortune and considered a sacred bird. Poets even coined a fancy name 金烏 (jīn wū, the golden crow) for the Sun. This good image of the crow is seen extensively in a large number of ancient Chinese documents and legends. In the great Chinese etymological dictionary 說文解字 (Shuòwén Jiězì), the crow is interpreted as a “filial and grateful bird” as in this dictionary it is
believed to feed its parents when they grow too old to find food for themselves. “In his 鳥賦序 (wù fù xù, Prologue to Ode to the Crow), Lord Cheng of Jin state writes that “夫鳥之為瑞久矣，以其反哺養，故為吉鳥” (the crow has long been conceived of as a propitious bird because it feeds its parents when they get old in gratitude and return for their love)” (Yi, 2005: 233). It’s evident that no derogatory implication is seen in the meanings generated by these semiotic codes of interpretation. Once the code changes to what we are familiar with nowadays, however, the old meanings are gone. In fact the semiotic code of interpreting the crow has somehow gone to the other end, completely contrary to what it used to signify. Many a culture has identified the crow with something ominous, often connected to death and revenge with an implication of an eerie atmosphere. The literary works and films that have contributed to this result are just far too numerous to mention.

4. The Functions of Forgetting

Forgetting, whether it be of the individual or of culture, is always a normal state of being and in both cases can be seen a highly consistent function of forgetting; ensuring the possibility of forming and maintaining the cultural memory. This main function is represented in two motile aspects: affirming and reaffirming of the memory. By motile we mean not that external and alien signs and texts are absolutely rejected in cultural forgetting, but that it is a process accompanied by interactions between cultures, autonomy within a culture and even spontaneous selection. The function of affirming exists in the selective memorizing of signs and texts and corresponds to the formation of the cultural memory. After the cultural memory has formed, forgetting continues and keeps performing the reaffirming function in the self-maintaining process of the cultural memory, excluding and denying the anti-culture and the non-culture. It is in fact an extension of the affirming function.

5. Cultural Forgetting and Cultural Identity

The forgetting, i.e. exclusion, estrangement or abeyance, of “other” cultural memories seen in such cultural sub-parts as texts, rules and codes is, for individuals and culture alike, a prerequisite of maintaining the integrity of the semiotic identity and sustaining further development. The reason is that culture and the individual exist in an intriguing relationship: they create, mould and define each other. Therefore, culture, as a result of the human memory mechanism, has acquired a
kind of “personality”, which needs to be constantly renewed, modified, increased and decreased, forming and maintaining new identities through forgetting. In this sense, forgetting has become an inner logic of culture. As Geertz has proposed, “culture is best seen not complexes of concrete behavior patterns—customs, usages, traditions, habit clusters—as has, by and large, been the case up to now, but a set of control mechanisms — plans, recipes, rules, instructions (what computer engineers call ‘programs’) — for governing of behavior”, and “man is precisely the animal most desperately dependent upon such extra-genetic, outside-the-skin control mechanisms, such cultural programs, for ordering his behavior” (Geertz, 2000: 44). It is natural and sensible to conclude that human acts are in fact the acts and results of culture. On the other hand, the fulfillment of the forgetting of culture is in every detail based on the forgetting of individuals in a community as a whole. It is therefore safe to say that cultural forgetting is a predetermined inner mechanism of civilization.

In the Gospel According to Matthew, Jesus once quoted; “the stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.” Likewise, if a cultural system is understood as an edifice, then its foundation is composed of those invisible forgotten elements of culture. It is on the debris or basis of the previous generations that posterity founds their own culture, in the same way new archaeological layers cover the old ones. Moreover, every brick of the edifice of culture undergoes a process of selection to be part of the building and thus it’s a result of forgetting. When this edifice has to be refurbished, new materials, that is, new cultural memories, will have to be incorporated. This is also a process of selection and only the suitable elements that are needed can be accepted, although they may even come from other edifices, whereas the other elements that are unfit will be forgotten and won’t become part of the cultural memory. In a certain sense, the existence of a culture itself is a Declaration of Independence, with forgetting at its core.

A good example can be found in the history of the United States of America. In the six-part PBS television series hosted by Bill Moyers, Joseph Campbell, to illustrate his idea of myth, uses a historical anecdote of George Washington, which is in effect consistent with the issue of cultural identity. After the American Revolutionary War, in his Farewell Address to the American people, Washington once left a warning to his successors that it was an independent revolution that rid America of the turbulence and chaos plaguing Europe at the time, therefore America must not ally itself with any country and should also break away from the original cultural system in the U.K. This piece of dictated warning is in essence a kind of forgetting. There is a good reason for Washington to command so: the act
6. External Cultural Forgetting

This mainly refers to the type of forgetting that occurs in the interaction between different cultures. Throughout the history of human civilization, there have always been complex interactions between different cultural semio-spheres, in the form of either communication or competition. The result, for some cultures, is expansion but for some others, contraction. In Lotman’s theory, expansion is typical of the content-oriented culture, to which all external elements appear as a “non-culture”, whereas the expression-oriented culture tends to establish and maintain the boundary, which marks off its antitheses as an “anti-culture”. However, the expression-oriented culture does not exhibit any characteristics of expansion (Lotman & Uspensky, 1978: 221), as it is content with being the way it is and recognizing but excluding, at its best, other external elements without damaging or destroying them. Therefore, it is fairly understandable that in the process of cultural interaction, these two distinct cultures will have just as distinct ways of forgetting.

In the case of the content-oriented cultural system, interaction features conquest, acculturation and even annihilation of the “non-culture”, a classic example of which is the Westward Movement in the history of America. Soon after the Revolutionary War, the government abolished the British Proclamation of 1763, thus initiating the start of a hundred years of massive migrations of the population, with a new tide of people flooding to the West for land and prosperity (Westward Movement, 2012). This reshaping of the history of the continent was at the huge and devastating expense of the Indians, whose cultural systems were shocked to the core and exterminated without leaving much significant trace. In this Westward
expansion of the white culture, the indigenous culture was perceived as a “non-culture” to be destroyed or acculturated. Those Indians who survived the massive slaughters of their race were forced to go through a population transfer and “driven westward along the Trail of Tears” to live in the Indian Reserves, which had long been their own territory before the white settlers came to the continent (United States, 2012). Although nowadays we can still see in parts of the U. S. some scattered residential areas of the Indian descendants, they are entirely different from what they were like a hundred years ago and many have been, to varying degrees, “Americanized”, which reflects nothing but the disappearance of the genuine Indian culture. Apart from destroying and acculturating the “non-culture” of the Indians, acculturation of other “non-cultures” also enjoyed quite a lot of popularity at the time. Agriculture, industrial development and even the Gold Rush greatly spurred the boom of the American economy. Barren lands were cultivated, livestock, grain and cotton flourishing, and territory continuously expanding. The American culture constantly performed the reaffirming function of the cultural memory, i.e., forgetting the “non-culture”.

The expression-oriented cultural system, however, does not tend to expand and conquer, not least after they have taken form and established relative stability, a “balanced metabolism”, with little or minor fluctuation. Instead, if new external cultural elements, such as texts, rules and codes, are to enter this system, they are often modified or indigenized, rather than gulped, through the filter of forgetting. Take Buddhism for instance. When it first came to China in the beginning of the first millennium A.D., Buddhism underwent a process of forgetting in the form of indigenization, which is particularly evident in the change of the local image of 觀世音菩薩（guān shì yīn pú sà），Avalokiteśvara or Bodhisattva. The original asexual and later the male images of this enlightened being failed to identify with the early Chinese believers for its abstract primitive feature, and instead was feminized, which better and more naturally suits the need of the receptive culture adoring the image of an affectionate goddess. “When interpreting signs coming from different cultures, we inevitably go through the filter of our own culture, which defines and determines a certain sign we receive and the way of interpretation” (Jia, 1997: 214). This is precisely in accord with Lotman’s translation between cultural semiospheres. In between every two semio-spheres there is a boundary, which in nature is “represented by the sum of bilingual translatable ‘filters’, passing through which the text is translated into another language (or languages), situated outside the given semiosphere” (Lotman, 2005: 209). The filter, in this case, is in effect synonymous with forgetting, assimilation of the “anti-culture” so as to preserve
inner homogeneity and individuality, i.e., cultural identity, of the cultural system.

7. Internal Cultural Forgetting

Forgetting is also quite prominent in the internal change of a specific culture, both content-oriented and expression-oriented, and particularly represented in the many attitudes people take towards old cultural memories and the past as well as the various ways they deal with them. Every culture, similar to a living creature, undergoes an incessant process of metabolism, despite its intrinsic inertia. In fact, the internal cultural forgetting is quite like the external cultural forgetting in that when a new cultural identity is being constructed, apart from the existing inert texts, rules and codes, all the other external and old internal elements will be turned into external elements.

Cultural forgetting in socio-cultural change concerns the self-renewal of culture, i.e. the substitution of archaic cultural texts, rules and codes. A typical example is the destiny of the Tungusic language of the Manchu in the Qing Dynasty. After they controlled and put down all resistance in China, the Manchus forbade inter-racial marriage between the Han and the Manchu. They also forbade their Tungus-speaking Jurchen people to adopt Han customs. In education, strict laws were passed to protect and enhance the status and promotion of the Tungusic language, in an attempt to offset the influence of the Chinese language. All these efforts, however, were literally made in vain. The Chinese language, together with its unique culture, was not substantially interrupted. For the Manchus, however, it means otherwise. “Although they came speaking their own language, and it remained an official written language of the Chinese state until the end of the dynasty in 1911, it had died out in speech even in Manchuria itself, a curious victim of its people’s successful takeover of China and its way of life” (Ostler, 2005: 144). It is not sufficient or convincing to interpret this destiny of the Tungus as one of the invader’s language being conquered or assimilated by the invaded, because the Tungusic language obviously held an absolutely dominant position, although it was quite the opposite in terms of the population. The real cause is the self-forgetting of the Tungusic culture, which is not alone in the Chinese history. In 500, the ruler Xiaowen of Wei outlawed by decree the native Turkic language of Tabgach, their costume as well as customs, to take up the local forms of the Chinese (Ostler, 2005: 140).

Meanwhile, we can also refer to the succession of Chinese dynasties and the many events described in the Bible. Particularly in this aspect, in light of what Jan...
Assmann (Assmann, 2007) has written about how the Hittites understood the history and represented the past, we can conclude three different manifestations of the internal cultural forgetting.

A. *imputation-judgment-punishment*: also known as direct active forgetting

The succession of Chinese dynasties or reigns was always accompanied by various scales of semiotic movements, such as stating the feats and faults of the ruler and ministers of the previous dynasty or reign, awarding supporters and punishing dissidents. The treatment of dissidents varies, from deposition to exile or even the execution of the entire clan. Symbols, such as the previous 風水 (fēng shuǐ, Feng Shui) arrangements, costume and amenities, would also be changed, although some practices might endure, for instance, polygamy for the ruler, with one chief wife (empress or queen) presiding over all his other consorts.

Assmann uses an example of the Hittite king Muršili II praying and sacrificing in an attempt to avert further calamities after 20 years of plague. The king blamed the epidemic on a mistake his deceased father Šuppiluliuma once made and pleaded with god to grant him mercy and stop the disease but punish his father for his own mistake instead, which is exactly what the present king denied and needed to forget and forsake (Assmann, 2007: 48). It’s not just a succession of power but the descendant cultural system’s direct and active forgetting of the precedent one.

B. *self justification-concealment-neglect*: also known as indirect passive forgetting

Imputation of the previous ruler and others was not the only form of forgetting in the succession of power. Self justification, concealment and neglect also played an important role. In almost every Chinese dynasty, officially documented biographies of the first ruler are often characterized by amazing depictions of fierce weather like thunderstorms, miracles and legends. It is quite common to see an emperor’s mother once copulated with a dragon, or strange aroma filled up the delivery room (although not at a hospital) when he was born, or the mother had a dream of eating the Big Dipper the night before labor, etc. All lead to one conclusion that the ruler was a son of the heavenly dragon, thus the son of god or heaven. The elements unfit for establishing his semiotic identity were neglected to the utmost extent.

In the Hittites, King Telipinus and King Hattušili III, after they had usurped the throne, declared that it was god who was accompanying their reign, which was the only way to bring peace and prosperity to the people as the former kings had failed the god and thus were deposed. The biblical kings, Saul, Solomon and the
legitimately dubious David, were also no exception in this aspect and were extremely fastidious about their ruling reports in justifying their reigns (Assmann, 2007: 49).

The act of forgetting and even tempering the unfavorable elements, as a certain way of reaction out of specific needs, however, is not to be taken as the same as the direct active forgetting.

C. retrospection-identification-connection: recollecting the common past

It is represented in the forgetting of negative memories, thus eliminating discreteness, and is particularly important in oath-taking and alliance formation between neighboring countries. During the Spring and Autumn Period (春秋時代 Chūn-Qiū Shídài) of China, wars between states were quite peculiar and, in a way, dramatically amusing. Before war, both states would follow a complicated routine of arranging the legions, giving the background information of the commander of the army, and notifying each other of the incoming event by offering a written statement of challenge. After war, which in most cases was only for show and not of a large scale, the lords would converge and trace their family lineages to identify with each other, based on positive information that had been found or concocted, such as good ancestral relationship and/or a shared bloodline. This act of identification and connection would lead to the forgetting of the earlier grudges and hatred and thus the formation of alliance.

The same goes for the Hittites. When allying themselves with other nations, Hittites would “go through a prolonged recollection of the shared past, in order to let each other know the alliance would be based on their friendship and mutual support, thus giving both parties enough reason to believe in the stability of the tie and their ally’s loyalty” (Assmann, 2007: 48).

8. Conclusion

Both the external cultural forgetting and the internal cultural forgetting represent the same theme; culture is not only a memory but the result of forgetting. On the other hand, as an innate mechanism of culture, forgetting is the direct derivative of selective memorizing, ensuring internally the formation, renewal and self-preservation of culture. The content-oriented culture and the expression-oriented culture are characterized by different types of forgetting, the function, however, remains the same. In the interaction between cultures, the external cultural forgetting enables the birth of new texts, rules and codes while the internal cultural forgetting makes it possible for culture to overcome inertia and renew itself.
In a nutshell, without forgetting, culture won’t exist; provided there is culture, forgetting is bound to work in its most vigorous state.

References


Lotman’s Legacy in Modelling of Semiosis

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Abstract: Juri Lotman (1922–1993) established the Tartu (and Tartu-Moscow) school of semiotics in the 1960s. In addition to his pioneering work in semiotics of culture, he developed the theory of general semiotics. We attempt to extract some principles from Juri Lotman’s formulations that characterize the core aspects of semiosis. These include: (1) the principle of code plurality (that one code is insufficient for semiosis, at least two codes are necessary for it; that semiotic dualism is the minimal form of organisation of a working semiotic system); (2) the principle of incompatibility, or nontranslatability (that meaning-making requires an incompatibility of codes; the incompatibility is the source of indeterminacy, non-predictability, and semiotic freedom); (3) the principle of autocommunication, or translation (that autocommunication is the most general form of communication, it must be present for sign interpretation; autocommunication underlies the ability to qualitatively restructure and translate; the primacy of autocommunication is also assumed by Jakob von Uexküll); (4) the principle of semiotic inheritance (that every sign comes from another sign; this is a version of Redi’s rule); (5) the principle of semiosphere (or the principle of the relationality of semiotic systems—that semiotic space may be regarded as a unified mechanism; semiosis cannot exist outside of the semiosphere); (6) the principle of non-gradual evolution (in the development of a semiotic system, explosive or disrupted and continuous or orthogenetic processes alternate and co-occur); (7) the principle of modelling (semiotic systems are themselves modelling systems).

Thus, Lotman’s model of semiosis can serve as a main one for the contemporary semiotics, since it includes the most fundamental general aspects of sign processes, both for biosemiotics and cultural semiotics.

Key words: non-translatability; code plurality; autocommunication; semiotic inheritance; semiosphere; punctualism; sign evolution; modelling systems

There are a couple of fundamental questions that every contemporary approach to semiotics has to consider. One of these concerns the logic of semiosis (the general meaning-making process as a logic)—which is in a fundamental way different from classical logic. Another concerns the limits (origins and scope) of semiosis, and the relatedness of sign processes to non-semiotic world.
Last 30 years have shown a considerable progress in the research and understanding of these questions. This is very much related to the development of semiotics as the general basis, theory and methodology for humanities, cultural and life sciences.

What is remarkable in Juri Lotman’s work is the depth of his understanding of communication and sign processes as modelling processes, which makes it possible to use his models as a basis for the 21st century semiotics. Semiotics, according to Lotman (and the whole Tartu Semiotic School), is the study of modelling systems. More precisely—semiotics is such a study of modelling systems, in which the aspect of modelling or meaning-making is explicitly described. Modelling of semiosis is thus the theoretical core of semiotics.

I focus this brief analysis on two aspects of Lotman’s work—his communication model, and his views on non-cultural semiosis. These include some core aspects of his theoretical understandings.

Lotman’s communication model has brought attention by several researchers (Andrews 1999; 2003; Andrews, Maksimova 2008; Grzybek 1994a; 1994b; Lepik 2008; Maciocco; Tagliagambe 2009; Semenenko 2012; Shukman 1977, and others). I focus on some fundamental aspects of Lotman’s model that is in a good concordance with the further development of the modelling of semiosis.

The second part of the article, describing Lotman’s views on non-symbolic semiosis, uses an earlier article on the topic (Kull 1999) as well as some related works (e.g., Mandelker 1994; 1995). It will demonstrate that Lotman’s views are well compatible with the view on semiosis as the general basis of cognition that characterises all living systems.  

1. Lotman’s Model of Communication

Lotman’s theorizing as well as his analysis of examples is based on his view on the general mechanism of meaning-making. We can trace it already in his early works, but a most clear formulation of his model of communication can be found in his last books. For instance, the basis of his model is described in Ch. 1 of *Universe of the Mind* (Lotman 1990: 11–19), and Ch. 1 and 2 of *Culture and Explosion*.

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1 We can see this interpretation of Lotman as an aspect of the development of “New Tartu Semiotics”—the semiotic research in Lotman’s school that started with the establishment of the Department of Semiotics in the University of Tartu in 1992 (Bernard *et al.* 2000; Kull, Lotman 2012) and that has established the connections with the views of semiotics groups in Bloomington and Copenhagen, in addition to the earlier co-work with Moscow semioticians (Deely 2010: 32; 41–42; 85–97).
Lotman’s view on semiosis includes three basic principles (which are mutually related to each other, or which can be seen as certain aspects of the same model):

1. principle of code plurality; it states that more than one language or sign system (at least two) is required in order to have semiosis;

2. principle of incompatibility; it states that there should exist at least a partial nontranslatability in order to have a meaningful communication;

3. principle of autocommunication; it states that autocommunication is the most general type of communication.

1.1 Principle of code plurality
The principle that one code is insufficient for semiosis is a statement that may look paradoxical, however this is perfectly the formulation that stands for the core tenet of Lotman’s model. The depth of the statement may not be understood at once from each explanation given by Lotman himself, although it appears clearly in connection to the other two principles.

Initially, Lotman described this aspect as a necessary requirement for a semiotic system to have different types of signs, like conventional and representational, or symbolic and iconic, etc. For instance, he wrote (Lotman 1981: 4): “a message to be defined as ‘text’ should be at least dually coded”, and elsewhere (Lotman 1990: 124), “that semiotic dualism is the minimal form of organisation of a working semiotic system”.

He also says (Lotman 2009 [1992]: 2): “The idea of the possibility for a single ideal language to serve as an optimal mechanism for the representation of reality is illusion. [...] The idea of an optimal model, consisting of a single perfect universal language, is replaced by the image of a structure equipped with a minimum of two or, rather, by an open number of diverse languages, each of which is reciprocally dependent on the other, due to the incapacity of each to express the world independently.”

With the multiplicity of codes, thus, the Kantian epistemological problem becomes to be solved. Lotman has stated (2009 [1992]: 2):

“[...] two levels of objectivity may be surmised; one relates to the world of languages (this is objective from its point of view) and one relates to the world outside the borders of language. One of the key problems is that of the translation of the world of the content of the system (its internal reality) to the reality that lies outside, beyond the borders of language. Out of this, two specific issues arise:

1. the necessity that more than one language (a minimum of two) is required in
order to reflect a given reality;
2. the inevitable fact that the space of reality cannot be represented by a single
language but only by an aggregate of languages.”

1.2 Principle of incompatibility

One may argue against the principle of code plurality via an idea to construct a
supercode that would include as subcodes the two or more codes about which Lotman
is speaking. However, this turns out to be impossible due to, as Lotman states,
“their mutual untranslatability (or limited translatability)” (Lotman 2009 [1992]:
2).

Indeed, two codes are two codes and cannot be seen as just parts of one bigger
code if and only if these two codes are mutually incompatible.

Thus, what is stated by the principle of code plurality is actually the necessary
condition for semiosis—the existence of incompatibility. Incompatibility, here,
should be understood in a general sense, including, for instance, logical
inconsistency, noncongruent categorization, and homonymy. The incompatibility,
for Lotman, and for our model of semiosis in general, appears to be the source of
indeterminacy, and of semiotic freedom.

Lotman (1990: 14–15) writes: “[in case of] artistic translation […] transmitter and receiver use different codes […] which overlap but are not identical.
[…] The asymmetrical relationship, the constant need for choice, make translation
in this case an act of generating new information and exemplify the creative function
both of language and of the text. Particularly indicative is the situation where it is not
simply difference which exists between codes, but mutual untranslatability (for
instance, in the translation of a verbal text into an iconic one).”

Lotman compares this situation with the case of artificial languages which may
work in machines. Since the requirement in the building of formal (mathematical)
languages is the avoidance of internally contradicting situations, these languages
lack the internal untranslatability, and therefore, they lack the mechanism of
meaning-making and creativity. However, on the other hand, a logically concise
formal (mathematical) language can suit perfectly for the description of non-
semiotic world—as the effectiveness of application of mathematical language by
physics has utterly proven.

Thus, semiosis is the process that occurs in the situation of incompatibility
between codes. ¹ In such a situation, the future of the system is indeterminate. This

¹ Cf. Peregrin (2011), who proves a statement about the fundamental status of incompatibility for logic.
is the situation of confusion. Also, this is the situation of freedom, or explosion, in Lotman’s terms. It will be resolved via making a decision (by an organism, or a culture), thus introducing a regularity (a habit) into the system.

This (logical) kind of incompatibility between codes is something that cannot occur in a non-living system. This is because codes are always built by living systems, they are products of life. Codes are relationships that do not persist or reappear otherwise than being made by living systems.

### 1.3 Principle of autocommunication

Thus, semiosis requires at least two (incompatible) codes, and life process is required to produce these. On the other hand, living organism means the coexistence of code processes. If defining autocommunication as a translation that takes place within an organism (or any other semiotic system), then it implies that autocommunication is the most general form of communication. There can be autocommunication without heterocommunication, but there cannot be heterocommunication without autocommunication.

Andrews and Maksimova (2008; 262) write: “The inevitability of translation at all levels of semiotic space is one of the central operating properties of Lotman’s theory. In fact, the importance of translation for the generation of meanings and as a fundamental part of perception itself are tenets common to both Lotman’s anthroposemiotic theory and Uexküll’s biosemiotic theory of the umwelt¹”.

Both for Jakob Uexküll and for Juri Lotman, autocommunication is where the communication starts (see Kull, Lotman 2012). This is also related to the understanding that translation is the process where meaning arises.

A leading Lotman’s biographer Edna Andrews writes (Andrews 2003; 63): “There is an interesting point of coincidence between von Uexküll’s theory and Lotman’s modelling of the semiosphere; in both, auto-communication must be present for sign interpretation. Lotman’s model of autocommunication […] defines the mechanism of meaning generation as a combination of two modelling types: I-I (or auto) communication and I-s/he communication. All cultural spaces rely on these modelling systems for the production and transference of information. […] For Lotman, autocommunication underlies the ability to qualitatively restructure and translate what is never less than a double-version of code and

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¹ Uexküll, J. 1982.
² Lotman 1990; 21–35.
message in the creation of meaningful texts. For Uexküll, the primacy of autocommunication provides the backdrop for any metaintepretation that may be formulated. Given the structure of each umwelt, it becomes clear that in Uexküll’s modelling system, all meaning is created through translation— a process that necessarily provides the outcome in the form of a metaintepretation."

The role of the concept of autocommunication in the Tartu School has also been described by Peeter Torop (2008: 394): “That which on one level of culture manifests itself as a process of communication and a dialogue between addressee and addressee can be seen on a deeper level as the autocommunication of culture and a dialogue of the culture with itself.”

2. Lotman’s View on Organic Semiosis

Amy Mandelker (1994: 385) has made a remarkable point:

“The evolution in semiotic theory during the 1980s might be compared to the shift from Newtonian to relativistic physics. Semiotics of the Moscow-Tartu school evolved from a theory rooted in Saussurean linguistics and in mathematical procedures to a biological, organismic approach. In a series of largely untranslated articles from the 1980s, Juri Lotman, the leading figure of the Moscow-Tartu school, proposes the model of the semiosphere, a metaphor based on principles of cell biology, organic chemistry, and brain science, to map cultural dynamics.”

If this statement proves to be true, i.e., if there was an organic turn in semiotics, centered in Tartu in the 1980s, which may put the relationship of semiotics and biology on a new basis, then it makes a closer view of this situation intriguing.

A sentence by Vyacheslav V. Ivanov (whom J. Lotman regarded very highly), the last paragraph from his “From the next century” (Ivanov 1994: 490), is remarkable and unforgettable for our topic: “I think that Lotman’s plan to make all semiotic fields of knowledge into a mathematically exact science, closely connected to natural science (biology and history) will be achieved next century, to which Lotman belongs with all his testament of thoughts.”

Agreeing with the latter, we can still observe that Lotman, who was a strong supporter of exact definitions and clear formulations, nevertheless accepted and

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1 Lotman 1990: 22.
3 About translation between umwelten, see Kull-Torop 2011.
understood the difference between physical and semiotic sciences. The latter implies the deep difference between application of mathematical modelling in physics and semiotics.

Lotman’s first period was definitely structuralist. However, at least since the early 1980s, his approach was so dynamic and processual that it could no longer be seen as semiology. This was strongly emphasised, for instance, by Amy Mandelker (1994; 1995), who sees in the ‘organic turn’ made by Lotman the greatest achievement of semiotics in the 20th century.

Some other Lotman scholars reveal a more gradual development of Lotman’s views, emphasising the processual and dynamic aspects already in his works of 1970s. Still, the main conclusion is the same—his model of semiosis that is described in *The Universe of Mind* and in *Culture and Explosion* (Lotman 1990; 2009 [1992]) represent a deep understanding of the underlying general processes of meaning-making characteristic to the post-structuralist stage of semiotics.

Mandelker adds (1994: 390, 392):

“The spatialized and biologized concept of the semiosphere enhances the earlier Moscow-Tartu school notion of inner and outer cultural perspectives. […] The sphere also invites the borrowing of some suggestive topics from biophysics and cell biology: enclosure and disclosure, resistance and responsiveness to penetration, and the assimilation of intruding and extruding elements. […] Lotman’s sphere of silence embraces, encloses, and embodies the utterance just as the biosphere […] embraces all life and lies passively open to men’s husbandry.”

In his article “On the dynamics of culture”, Lotman (1992: 5) speaks with a straightforward irony about the approaches that do not include animal communication into the field of semiotics, i.e., which place the ‘semiotic zero’ (the semiotic threshold) above the animal life. Without making very strict statements about the exact position of the lower semiotic threshold, Lotman (a) is very clear in stating the existence of non-semiotic world, and he also (b) states clearly that animal communication is of semiotic nature. In some occasions (in the later period of his life) he has accepted that semiosis covers the whole of life: “But it may well be that cognition is, in fact, life itself. That they are not two isomorphic things, but essentially one and the same.” (J. Lotman, in an interview with K. Kull. June 1992—see Kull 1999)

These views had their roots in Lotman’s earlier works and interests. For instance, he has compared the functional structure of literary text and living organism already in Lotman (1967: 97):

“Relationship between the artistic idea and the construction of a literary work
reminds one of the relationship between life and the biological structure of a cell. In
biology, there is no vitalist any more who would investigate life outside the real
organization of matter, its carrier. In the science of literature they still exist. Also,
a listing of the material ‘inventory’ of a living tissue cannot unlock the secrets of
life; the cell is given as a complex functioning self-accommodating system.
Realization of its functions turns out to be life. A literary work is also a complex
self-accommodating system (indeed, of an other type). The idea represents the life
of a literary work, and this is similarly impossible in a body dissected by an
anatomist or outside this body. Mechanism of the former and idealism of the latter
should be replaced by the dialectics of functional analysis.”

In 1978, a large conference “Biology and linguistics” was organised in Tartu.
The conference was focused on the relationship between semiotics and biology, thus
being probably the first international conference in biosemiotics. This connected
Lotman and several other members of Tartu-Moscow semiotic school with the
leading biological thinkers of the region (Russia, and Baltics), that could help in
making what Mandelker has called the “organic turn”.

In a small paper, ‘Culture and the organism’ (1984), Lotman lists some
general features, which are common to the organism and to culture, at a certain
level of abstraction—memory, the symmetric mechanism of homeostasis and
asymmetric mechanisms generating the new information, the explosive growth of
information content in certain stages of development, etc. Some of these ideas could
already be found in his early semiotic papers (Lotman 1970: 105): “Culture
demonstrates features typical of such organisations, as a living organism and a piece
of art”. Also, Lotman (1984: 216) remarks here; “Similarly to the living organism,
whose normal contact to the insentient nature means the prevenient ‘translation’ of
information into the structural language of biosphere, also the contact of every
intellectual being with outward information requires its translation into the sign
system.”

2.1 Principle of semiotic inheritance, and principle of semiosphere

A remarkable step in semiotic theory has been made by the formulation of the
concept of semiosphere. This concept draws on an analogy with Vladimir I.
Vernadsky’s concept of biosphere. In his letter to Boris Uspensky, written in March
19, 1982, Lotman first outlines his position:

“While reading Vernadsky I was seized by one of his assertions. As you know,
one in our Moscow seminar [...] I dared to declare that a text can exist (e.g. can
be socially comprehended as a text) if another text preceded it, and that any
developed culture must be preceded by a developed culture. And now I have discovered in Vernadsky’s writing a thought, deeply substantiated by his vast experience in studying cosmic geology, that life can only spring into existence from life, i.e. it is preceded by life. [. . .] Obviously, just as all forms of living activity belong to life, from the actions of anaerobic bacteria to the most complex forms, so thought (semiosis) has both simple and complex forms. [. . .] Only the pre-existence of a semiotic sphere makes a message become a message. Only the existence of consciousness explains existence of consciousness” (Lotman 1997; 630).

One of the first meetings where he gave a lecture on the concept of semiosphere (on May 7, 1982), was the 8th Estonian Spring School on Theoretical Biology, which was devoted on theory of behaviour. The theory of semiosphere demonstrates (and conceptually develops) a deep connection between cultural and other forms of life on the semiotic basis (see also Kotov, Kull 2011).

As developed by Lotman in his theory of semiosphere (Lotman [1984]), we could point out the existence of even two important principles for general semiotics:

(1) Principle of semiotic inheritance; it states that the semiotic sphere is causally self-dependent; every sign is coming from other sign—*omne signum ex signum*—semiosis assumes earlier semiosis (except only the primary origin of semiosis);

(2) Principle of semiosphere; it states that the qualitative diversity being completely the result of semiosis is also a general condition for semiosis; or, otherwise, it states that the meaningful (i.e., meaningfully plural) forms a region in space (which covers the sphere around the Earth).

From these only the first one, strictly speaking, establishes the relationship with the Vernadsky’s concept of biosphere. This self-dependence of both semiosis and life (this principle called also Redi’s rule—*omne vivum ex vivo*) is where Lotman saw a deep similarity.

The principle of semiosphere, although formulated in many different ways,\(^1\) can be seen as a coherent principle that describes the ontological specificity of semiosis.

**2.2 Principle of non-gradual evolution, and principle of modelling**

There are two more important principles to be pointed in Lotman’s approach.

(1) Principle of non-gradual (punctuated) evolution (that in the development

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\(^1\) See for a list of definitions of semiosphere in Kull 1998; it would also be reasonable to state that there is no real difference between Lotman’s and Hoffmeyer’s (1997) view on semiosphere.
of a semiotic system, explosive or disrupted and continuous or orthogenetic processes alternate and co-occur).

The principle of non-gradual evolution means that the development of a semiotic system includes two very different periods or stages. Namely, in the evolution of semiosis, explosive or disrupted, and continuous or orthogenetic processes alternate and co-occur.

Lotman wrote (in the book “Unpredictable mechanisms of culture”, 1992): For the Tartu-Moscow School the shift from gradual processes to disjunctive moments was determined when the center of scholarly attention was relocated from the field of linguistics to the semiotics of art. Art is the child of disjunction. The work of art is born in a moment of disjunction and cannot be understood without taking into account the very nature of that birth.

Does cultural evolution take place gradually and principally as a process devoid of the unexpected, or as a chain of unpredictable disjunctions? […] Before us lie two aspects of one inseparable unity. They can be separated only in pure abstraction or as a result of illness in a dying society. Neither a system made up of disjunctions alone nor a system devoid of disjunctions can exist as a healthy organism. This has never been possible. […] Gradual evolution and a shift to unpredictability must form a complex whole. It is appropriate to remember that unpredictability experienced in the realm of art can be carried over into reality in a form free of catastrophes, similar to the way an injection provides an organism with immunity.

(2) Principle of modelling states that semiotic systems are themselves modelling systems.

For instance, Lotman writes; “Systems that have a natural language as their basis and that acquire supplementary superstructures, thus creating languages of a second level, can appropriately be called secondary modelling systems” (Lotman 1967b: 131).

As a certain summary of Lotman’s views, let us give here a longer quotation from his interview in 1990 (see Kull 1999: 124–125):

“When we are communicating, ‘you’ and ‘I’, we are interested, in a way, in maximum translatability. When I think, non-translatability becomes a useful factor. Let us assume—we create two ideal persons. They understand each other perfectly and fully, as we might imagine two identical bowling balls. What are they going to talk about? To talk. I do not need a perfect copy of myself. I need another person. I need a difficulty, since the difficulty means the creation of the new, a new thought. Only an old thought can be translated ideally. […]

Semiotics of animals researches such aspects as, for instance, sexual
communication, eating, and breeding; these are traditional forms and animals acquire and transmit them. Such behavior is a language similar to our language of folklore. It is repeated as the same, and every time created anew. Humans, however, consider the repeated forms of behavior to be secondary, and promote unexpected behavior. Evidently, man when he appeared resembled a mad animal, and I suppose that was the reason why this relatively weak creature could survive and kill much bigger animals. They were not able to predict his behavior.

In such a way I would speak about the semiotics of mammals, which to me seems real. This is another semiotics, another type of language—but we are not only humans, we are also mammals, and therefore we also have mastery of that language. It could be suppressed, or more dynamic, or less dynamic.  

The appearance of language in our sense of the word was an upheaval, perhaps a tragic one, but a groundbreaking upheaval which created a fundamentally new situation. This is one aspect of the approach of semiotics to animals, which allows us to penetrate into the world of semiotic constants, invariable situations and inheritable behavior. On the whole, I think that zoosemiotics should become part of linguistics, or linguistics part of zoosemiotics; let us not argue about the priority, but it seems to me that a zoologist ought to be a linguist, and maybe a linguist ought to be a zoologist.”

Thus, we have pointed to these aspects of Lotman’s legacy that can be effectively used for integrative development of semiotics in the 21st century. Indeed, Lotman’s biographer, American semiotician Edna Andrews, has noted that “it is clear that Lotman’s system is in harmony with the models presented by Sebeok, Jakobson, and von Uexküll” (Andrews 2003: 24).

Lotman’s humanitarian approach together with his view on the study of culture as science (see Schreider 1993) and as an organic semiotic system resulted in the establishment of semiotics of culture, which is rich enough to be studied and developed in the next century, in other times, and in other cultures.

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1 See Lotman 1988, in which he describes animal movements as sign systems.
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On the Idea of Human Semiotics: Bridging the Subjective Universe of the Self with the Intersubjective Life-World of Community

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Abstract: In this paper confronting the biological view of Umwelt with the anthropological specifications of Lebenswelt and/or Eigenwelt des Menschen, the concept of the semiotic self, initially referred to an organism which subsumes the signals from its environment and emits them to its environment as significant, will be extended by the concept of the signifying and communicating self as an observable person who sends and receives the sensorially perceivable meaning bearers and as an inferred subject who processes and interprets these mentally apprehensible meaning bearers for the sake of collective understanding. In such a viewpoint, the interpersonal life-world of an outer self who produces and receives concrete signs as meaning bearers will be considered as a counterpart of subjective universe of an inner self formed by the sensual knowledge coming from individual experiences and consensual knowledge of the meaning being derived from the contents of collective communication. Respectively, the theories of personal-subjective constructs and social construction of reality, with special reference to radical constructivism, will be taken into consideration in order to elucidate the concept of the broadly understood semiotic self as a social being whose contacts with external environments are mediated by verbal and nonverbal means of signification and communication and to expose the fact that it is the language which “objectivates” the shared experiences of signifying and communicating selves making them available to all members belonging to a given speech community, who become in such a way both the source and the tool of interpersonal communication and intersubjectively comprehensive knowledge. In consequence, the epistemological perspective of solipsism being as a rule opposed to collectivism will be discussed here under the label of human semiotics in terms of collective solipsism. From the viewpoint of individual and social selves, the human-nature- and culture-centered conception of subjective significance will be juxtaposed to the conception of intersubjective understanding. It is assumed that, in the investigative field of human semiotics, the subject matter of a scientist’s interest encompasses types of sign- and meaning-related properties of signifying and communicating selves which are relevant for the fulfillment of their purposes or the satisfaction of their needs, considered on the one level as the real selves and on the other as participants of social communication. It has to be noted that the
semiotic properties of signifying and communicating selves being realized in signs as observable meaning bearers belong to the physical domain of investigation. However, there are such semiotic properties of signifying and communicating selves, which are inaccessible to observation, standing, namely, in relation to the referential meaning understood in terms of conceptual and propositional contents of communication. As far as they cannot be directly tested, they may be only inferred through the intersubjective knowledge of communication participants.

**Key words:** linguistic semiotics; human semiotics; the Self; significance; subjective universe; human life-world

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1. Meaning in the Subjective Universe of an Organism

To begin with, this paper departs from the assumption that the semiotics of culture may be also highlighted with the use of terminological distinctions of the semiotics of nature, in accordance with the statements of representatives of the so-called *Umwelt-Forschung*, who adhere the biological concept of meaning introduced by Jakob von Uexküll to explain the biological endowment of man. Jakob von Uexküll investigated how living organisms perceive their environment and how this perception determines their behavior. He called his investigative method *Umwelt-Forschung*. In 1926 he founded the *Institut für Umweltforschung* at the University in Hamburg. The term *Umwelt*, in the sense of the subjective world of an organism, was coined in his book of 1909, *Umwelt and Innenwelt der Tiere*, and the idea of functional circles (Germ. *Funktionskreise*, which lately used to be translated into English as “functional cycles”) Uexküll added in the 2nd edition of it in 1921. As Kalevi Kull points out (1999: 390), “in his article of 1907, he still uses the term *Milieu*, as different from *Außenwelt*”. Worth mentioning here is the term *die Eigenwelt des Menschen* proposed by Hans Petersen (1937). Interesting is the comparison of *Umwelten* to “soap bubbles” (Uexküll, T v. 1982: 3) in the context of “environmental pipes” (Germ. *Umweltröhren*) introduced by Jakob von Uexküll (cf. 1928/1920/; 70, 108). The first one refers to the environment of a living organism at a given moment as a circle (*Funktionskreis*), and the latter is meant to illustrate the sequence of all environmental circles that the individual has to pass throughout his whole life being understood as a determined journey.¹ The investigative method of pursuing and reconstructing this journey through invisible worlds is illustrated in Uexküll & Kriszat 1970 [1962/1934/] (translation in Uexküll.

¹ Research into this topic may be found in the articles of Barry Smith, “Social Objects” and Patrick Horvath, “Jakob von Uexküll: Von Mückensonnen und Umweltröhren”, under the address of the Jakob von Uexküll Centre, Estonia: www.zbi.ee/~uexkull.

The foundations of biosemiotics may be described as in the following statements: (1) All living systems take part in the process of creating and utilizing meanings; even the simplest forms of life, the unicellular systems, have the ability to respond to external impulses through species-specific reactions characteristic of each individual being; (2) All living organisms, because of their capability of meaning creation and meaning utilization, are to be treated as autonomous, while non-living entities, including our products, commodities and machines, must remain heteronomous (Cf. Uexküll, T. v., 1982b: 7).

Plants and animals share the capacity to sort stimuli encoding them as signs. Self-regulating processes, called homeostasis, play an important role in their individual development, which ends in death. Living systems tend to maintain their internal stability through interactions with the environment, owing to the coordinated response of their parts to any situation or stimulus that might disturb their normal condition or function. Thus, from a biological perspective: “A sign is something that signifies to the activity of a living system something that has significance for the maintenance of the structure, the homeostasis of this system (its system needs)” (Uexküll, T. v., 1984: 188).

The structure of semiotic processes looks different in the realm of plants, described by phytosemiotics, from the way it looks in the realm of animals, which belongs to the descriptive domain of zoosemiotics. In comparison with animals, plants do not have a nervous system for processing signifiers and they have no specialized effectors for acting on something that is signified. So, the structure of phytosemiotic processes should be described, as Thure von Uexküll (1984: 188f) points out, in terms of cybernetic relations. In accordance with these relations, any change in the homeostasis of the system caused by its environment or its own metabolism, which deviates from the reference value, means for the system a need for activity to restore the substances necessary to maintain its homeostasis. In the realm of zoosemiotics, living systems have specialized receptors for receiving signs, a nervous system, that processes them, and specialized effectors, which exert an

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influence upon something that is signified. Hence, within the functional circle of animals “A perceptual sign (e. g., a smell of food)” can be defined as “something that signifies to the living system the need for an activity—its behavior—that has significance for its hunger-needs (e. g., obtaining a food object)” (quoted from Uexküll, T. v., 1984: 189).

According to Thure von Uexküll (1984), the organisms of animals possess such a level of complexity that simple phytosemiotic sign-processes are included in the zoosemiotic ones. This means that when a food object appears within the subjective universes of animals, it only creates the conditions for phytosemiotic processes within their bodies. The grasping and eating of a food object create in the gastrointestinal tract the conditions for the activation of the phytosemiotic processes that signify to the intestinal cells that they must absorb the needed substances. The object “food” contains carbohydrates, fats, and proteins—the signified “something” for these phytosemiotic signs.

Discussing the biosemiotic conception of meaning in its relation to the anthrosemiotic theory of culture, the interest sphere of this paper is restricted to the so-called Umwelttheorie of Jakob von Uexküll, in the light of which certain objects can be said to possess an “ego quality” (Ich-Ton). In this subject-oriented theory, the understanding of what the meaning is, with reference to the role of a meaning-receiver and/or meaning-utilizer, receives primary attention. Accordingly, the sign is described as something that has a meaning for someone because of something. Certain objects in the environment of subjects become “carriers of meaning” when they contribute to the satisfaction of the subjects’ needs, claims Thure von Uexküll (1984: 188) in his analysis of Bedeutungslehre written by Jakob von Uexküll. They can be “meaning carriers” for the fulfillment of subject-related needs because they possess the qualities which are significant for the subjects, as, e. g., “drinking-quality” (Trink-Ton), “eating-quality” (Fress-Ton), “sitting-quality” (Sitz-Ton), “obstacle-quality” (Hindernis-Ton), “climbing quality” (Kletter-Ton), etc. (Cf. Uexküll, J. v., 1982: 28ff)

2. On Subjective Meaning and Intersubjective Understanding from a Constructivist Perspective

Considered against the background of the European heritage of phenomenology,①

① Consulted have been here, especially works of Edmund Husserl (2000/1970/., 2008), Alfred Schutz and Thomas Luckmann (1973).
constructivism, as an investigative perspective or a set of concatenated perspectives taking the notion of construct as a point of departure within the framework of epistemology, is seen as a cognitive attitude of a knowing subject which manifests in a certain semiotic system understood in terms of behaviors and products of signifying and communicating selves who transmit and interpret pre-constructed meaning bearers.

In the present from, highly developed under the influence of cognitive sciences, constructivism, as an investigative perspective, is founded upon the generalized assumption that people create their own view of the world they live in on the basis of reflections of their individual experiences and the contents of interindividual communication. Constructivists expose the role of the individual self as a cognizing subject and maker of meanings. Each individual is regarded as generating his or her own mental model which allows him or her to understand or to make sense of the world by selecting and transforming information, formulating hypotheses, and coming to decisions that rely on his or her personal cognitive structures. Cognitive structures provide the basis for meaning creation and deciphering through mental schemata or models organizing the experience of an individual, which allow going beyond the information provided to him or her by sent and received meaning bearers.

Constructivism which constitutes the interest core in relation to the communicating self as a maker and utilizor of meaning, has assumed two positions, first, as the personal construct theory in psychology, and second, the social constructivism in sociology. But according to its applicative distribution in science and education it started to turn from a general moderate investigative standpoint to that of a radical constructivist attitude.

2.1 Personal constructs in the perception of reality

The term personal construct was coined by George Alexander Kelly in his book The Psychology of Personal Constructs of 1955, who suggested that “man looks at his world through transparent patterns or templates which he creates and then attempts to fit over the realities of which the world composed” (Kelly, 1955; 8–9). The main point of PCP deals with the person’s perception of the world, which depends on his mental frame of reference. Thus, a construct is a subjective depiction of some event in the person’s environment, a way of looking at something which is then tested against the reality of the environment.

Among the most crucial consequences taking place in the application of constructs to the interpretation of the world in human communication to be
mentioned are:

Patterns—People anticipate future facts and/or events according to their own interpretations of recurrent reality.

Individuality—People have different experiences and therefore construe facts and/or events in different ways. (i.e., persons differ from each other in their constructs.)

Range—Constructs are limited to a particular range of appropriateness, called the focus of convenience, that is, they are not relevant to all situations.

Comparability—To the extent that people have had experiences similar to others, their personal constructs tend to be similar to the construction systems of those other people.

Commonality—People are able to communicate with others because they can construe typical constructions.

The mere notion of personal construct or, more precisely, personal-subjective constructs, understood as a frame of reference or a scheme for the interpretation of reality, suggests that every individual, as a cognizing subject, subsumes concrete objects to certain classes of objects with regard to their meaning. It was supposed that interpersonal communication can lead to creating intersubjectively similar personal constructs in the minds of people interacting within the same culture.

Following a recent climate of intellectual opinion, personal constructivists’ stance might be reduced to the assumption that the process of cognition is based on the interpretation of cognized phenomena and the ascription of meanings to them in steadily changing contexts and situations of social, physical and psychical world manifested in the mind of an individual human being. Any person’s interpretation of any event is relative; there are no absolute, correct frames or preferential frames.

2.2 Subjectivity of solipsistic signification and intersubjectivity of collective communication

Personal-subjective constructs form the basis not only for a similar perception of the world but also for unified behaviors against the objects evaluated with respect to their utility. Personal constructs, expressing subjectively defined referential meanings, constitute the most important factors which determine all forms of social behavior, including the verbal form of communication.

When similar schematic constructs come into being in the minds of members of a certain linguistic community, as a result of recurring interactions, it is understandable that they find reflections in the commonalities of the expressions of
meaning bearers. One can assume that people integrate with each other individually on the basis of observable verbal means of expression and in accordance with inferable comprehension of meaning bearers.

Elaborated in the domain of sociology, the idea of social constructivism rooted in philosophical theories dealing with the relationships between the inner world and outer world of man. Social constructivism has expanded, however, beyond the theory of cognition, explaining the way in which human individuals accumulate their knowledge about the outer world, the investigative questions of which are focused around the theory of perception. Accordingly, the foundation of sociological constructivism constitutes an assumption that social reality is shaped by information gained by particular human beings as organisms in interaction with their environment.

As pointed out by Peter Ludwig Berger and Thomas Luckmann, the authors of *The Social Construction of Reality*, originally published in 1966, man is a social being and his contacts with external environments are mediated by signs. In the opinion of Berger and Luckmann knowledge, related in a certain way to reality, is incessantly connected with certain contexts and social situation, insofar as it is always created by society and transmitted among its actual members. However, apart from social factors, this knowledge is determined in nature by historical, psychological as well as biological factors.

In society constituting a sphere of objective facts which consist of externalized products of human activity, the cognized phenomena and states of affair become internalized and thus personified through subjective meanings. Hence, it is; language which “objectivates the shared experiences and makes them available to all within linguistic community, thus becoming both the basis and the instrument of the collective stock of knowledge.” (Berger and Luckmann, 1966: 68)

Following the conviction of social constructivists, society is the creator of knowledge, although an individual human being, as an organism, experiences, de facto, the reality while receiving various kinds of information from the environment. The stock of everyday knowledge is created due to social interactions; this knowledge is—as one can say after Berger and Luckmann—negotiated and approved among particular members of society (cf. 1966: 19-46).

A certain kind of a social construct is the reality of everyday life or the world of life, which comes into being as a result of communicational activities. The reality of everyday life or the world of life is considered as one of many realities, albeit a basic one. But it is not identical with the really-existing objective world. As a result of interactions it becomes an intersubjective world, that is, the world which is
shared by an individual with other individuals.

As Berger and Luckmann state: “The reality of everyday life further presents itself to me as an intersubjective world, a world that I share with others. This intersubjectivity sharply differentiates everyday life from other realities of which I am conscious. I am alone in the world of everyday life without continually interacting and communicating with others as it is to myself. Indeed, I cannot exist in everyday life without continually interacting and communicating with others” (1966: 23).

An individual can have access to the subjectivity of other individuals. As Berger and Luckmann argue; “Human expressivity is capable of objectivation, that is, it manifests itself in products of human activity that are available both to their producers and to other men as element of a common world. Such objectivations serve as more or less enduring indices of the subjective process of their producers, allowing their availability to extend beyond the face to-face situation in which they can be directly apprehended” (1966: 34).

Human expressivity manifests in products accessible both to their creators and to other people; These real objects, which are observable and which become symptoms of actions—or their meaning bearers, Berger and Luckmann consider as elements of the common world.

Noteworthy, among such elements are, e. g., bodily symptoms, gestures, postures, certain movements of hands, legs, etc., which are accessible to signifying and communicating selves in immediate contacts.

In the communication by voice, the sound waves are objectivated as elements of common world: “A special but crucially important case of objectivation is signification, that is, the human production of signs. A sign may be distinguished from other objectivations by its explicit intention to serve as an index of subjective meanings. To be sure, all objectivations are susceptible of utilization as signs, even though they were not originally produced with this intention” (Berger and Luckmann, 1966: 35).

2.3 Sociology of knowledge on subjective constructs and intersubjective comprehension

One of the examples of social constructivism constitutes the so-called sociology of knowledge in the domain of science and education, having been conceptually applied by James Moffett (1983, 1987), Margaret D. Roblyer, Jack Edwards, Mary Anne Havriluk (1997), claiming that: (1) The personal constructs of signifying and communicating selves are distributed in the form of reported speech and may
contribute to common understanding processes only as types of intersubjectively shared experiences; (2) Mutual comprehension belief is based on the assumption that when one communicator employs a mental construction reflecting his own experience, which is similar to that employed by another, then they both may understand each other effectively; (3) Supposing that his or her construction processes appear as mentally similar to those of the other communicator, then he or she may play a role involving that particular individual in the social process as a communication participant.

2.4 Knowledge and meaning from the perspective of radical constructivism

For radical constructivists, Ernst von Glasersfeld (1995, 1988, and 2001), Alexander Riegler (2001) and others (1999), working in the fields of science and education, it is useless to think about the knowledge as representing external reality independently of a knowing subject. In the view of radical constructivists, knowledge depends upon the activity of cognizing individuals who strive towards a subjective organization of their experiential domains and not to the discovery of an objective world that exists beyond their capacities of cognition.

Perceived as a mind-dependent entity, the cognizing subject appears as an epistemological solipsist being unable to transcend the domain of his individual experience. The scientific or unscientific theories he encounters or construes, on his way to apprehending knowledge as sets of propositional contents, appear only as conceptual models that help him only to manage his experiential domain.

From the position of epistemological constructivism, the meaning bearers as semiotic means of communication are detached from the meaning equalized with the extra-semiotic reality. Reality, in turn, is defined either as observable data or as inferable constructs. Being independent from the cognizing subject, data usually appear as immediate objects of perception accessible in direct or indirect experience, i.e., through senses or their instrumental extensions.

In the epistemology of sciences, constructs are considered as sets of cognized or assumed properties of the objects as they appear in the mind of the knowing subjects. Constructs can be conceived or generated on the basis of mental inductive abstraction and deductive composition. The heritage of constructivists’ positions to the personal property of meaning, which result from a collective character of culture realized in human signification and communication systems, may be summarized as follows:

(1) Meaning is a personal construct that depends upon an individual who makes it;
(2) Meaning does not reside in non-verbal or verbal means which individuals produce and transmit for communicating about their emotional and conceptual contents; for that reason.

(3) Meaning cannot be passed on as an entity in the same manner as meaning bearers; hence

(4) Language and culture as semiotic systems have to be regarded as composed of meaning bearers which trigger communicating activities within the cognitive domains of particular signifying and communicating selves; and

(5) Communicating in a given semiotic system is based on the continuous mental processing and interpreting of meaning bearers, which are being produced and received; whereas mutually shared meanings happen only to be assumed.

Cognitive models may be, in the span of human life, replaced by others based on inferential, slightly altered or entirely innovative, constructs when the experiential domain of a cognizing subject expands as a result of his/her subsequent searching explorations. Replacement of models depends on the expressions of the individual’s attitudes towards the life world in which he or she functions.

To sum up, one can notice that there is a link between a subjective universe of meaning developed in the biosemiotic Umwelt theory and the personal-subjective construct theory elaborated by representatives of modern cognitivism and radical constructivism. What has to be extended in the approach to the solipsistic view of the inner self is the theory of the social construction of reality. Human individuals develop through the perception of the things and states of affairs being reflected in their mental spheres as images of iconic nature. Another kind of solipsistic knowledge is related to the concept formation on the basis of collective communication. Important is here to bear in mind the distinctions between an “imagery psychologistology”, which pertains to the mental activity of visualizing the shape of cognized and perceived phenomena and events as individual tokens and a “conceptualist psychology”, which exposes the mental recalling of characteristic (or similar) features of phenomena and events formed and concluded as general types (i.e., containing the minimal mass of differential features). As far as the only empirically accessible object of cognition is the signifying and communicating selves, the whole world of communication participants is to be viewed in the light of collective solipsism.
3. The Monolingual Self in the Perspective of Collective Solipsism

In pursuit of empirical approachability of what the object of human-centered semiotics is, it might be relevant to examine the epistemological positions of Sydney MacDonald Lamb’s cognitive theory of language as expressed in some of his representative works (cf. Lamb, 1984, 1991, as well as Halliday, Lamb, & Regan 1988, and Regan, Lamb, Cobb, Jr., Griffin, & Basu, 1987/1982/). Primary attention is given to highlighting the cognitive aspect of language against the other manifestation forms of language. Respective views of Lamb are also confronted with the conceptions of those linguists who stress the importance of individualism vs. collectivism and monolingualism vs. multilingualism in their theoretical modeling of language.

3.1 The minds of individuals as parts of a general human mind

Lamb’s theory of language is formulated against the background of a subjectivist view that the reality does not exist independently of cognition, and that language is only partly accessible in speech being embedded as a whole within the consciousness of a speaking individual. However, his subjectivism is flavored also with a solipsist belief assuming that the mental contents of the “Self”, which are considered to exist really, constitute a genuine object of empirical study. At the same time, Lamb speaks in favor of panmentalism being convinced that the minds of individuals constitute parts of a general human mind, which is exposed through communication. The followers of Lamb advocate this attitude, labeled as “collective solipsism” (cf. Sebeok, Lamb & Regan, 1988; 12 and 18–19). They call for investigating language as a mental system located within the brain of individuals by describing their verbal performances to find out how this overall human mind in question works. Lamb’s cognitive approach to language along with his collective view of Mind, God and the individual Self is especially apparent in his extensive discussion with Thomas A. Sebeok (cf. Sebeok, Lamb & Regan, 1988; 19).

The only thing we experience directly is mental activity. Anything else is hearsay. It is faith. There are hardheaded scientists who do not want to believe in God, because we do not have direct evidence. But they do want to believe in the world, because they think they do have direct evidence of that. They really only have direct evidence of their own mental activity. In what I consider the more sophisticated religious views, God is nothing but Mind. The only thing that we have direct evidence of, therefore, is God. Anything other than that is hearsay. That is one way to look at it.
Now I am going to go as far as Professor Sebeok and say I am a solipsist and proud of it. From my point of view, my own mind is more directly present than his, and yet if you take the religious point of view I was just referring to, that there is nothing but Mind, then Tom’s mind and my mind are parts of the overall Mind in which we all share. This view might perhaps be called collective solipsism, if that term is not self-contradictory.

How to appreciate Lamb’s contribution to human semiotics, one has to ask for the ontological status of his conceptual and methodological apparatus with reference to the multidimensionality of language manifested in concrete speech products in relation to its mental existence forms.

3.2 Formalist connectionism in the domain of cognitive semiotics

Lamb’s theory of language has been developed within the broader context of the sign-and-meaning-oriented theory of cognition. David R. Griffin points out that Lamb is in the first instance interested in the mind, i.e., “how the mind interacts with the brain, and with the rest of the body, and how meanings are structured within those levels” (see Regan, Lamb, Cobb, Jr., Griffin, & Basu, 1987/1982/; 12). For Lamb assumes that (see Regan, Lamb, Cobb, Jr., Griffin & Basu, 1987/1982/; 6);

(... our thinking about the world is based upon our internalized models of that world. We all go around with these cognitive systems, these mental relational networks, that mediate between us and the world. When we think we are dealing directly with the “world” that appears to be out there, we are deceiving ourselves. We are dealing directly only with our internal microcosms, the mental representations that we have of the world. (... We find the view that the most direct source of knowledge we have is sensory experience is mistaken. That experience is not direct at all; it is indirect. There is something more basic than sensory experience, namely, our mental experience. What we think of as our direct sensory experience of the world has actually been filtered through our conceptual and perceptual systems, which are networks of relations and it is the processing that goes on within these cognitive networks, which we call our minds, that is, the only direct experience. Indeed, to a large extent, what we naively think of as our knowledge of the world gained through perception actually turns out to be false, that is, out of correspondence with reality, because the filtering process of our conceptual system has distorted the information as it filters through.
Thus, the objects to be investigated by cognitive linguistics belong in Lamb’s specification to the domain of cognitive semiotics. And the domain of semiotic objects, as he maintains, encompasses the whole sphere of human knowledge and the network of relationships between language and other means with which humans memorize, think, learn and make meaning. Such a sign-and-meaning-oriented discipline studying human knowledge, is to be divided, according to Lamb, into descriptive semiotics which deals with the processing of extraorganismic information structures as they involve signs of facts and events of the world and cognitive semiotics which focuses upon the mental information structures developed within individuals in the form of (con)nections between the exponents of signs and their conceptual counterparts. Introducing his students into a semiotic view of the world as made of information and not of things, “the essence of information being relationships”, Lamb (see Sebeok, Lamb & Regan, 1988; 10) argues in the first instance that:

The knowledge that individuals have in their processing systems about social institutions, the world, and the ways of behaving makes up a culture, an information system.

In the second, he makes them aware of the educational modifiability of cognitive structures in the minds of the billions of people in our planet stating that (Sebeok, Lamb & Regan, 1988; 11-12):

In cognitive semiotics, we study the individual semiotic systems people have that are their internal representations of the world. It is these we are most concerned with in the field of education. They are constantly changing especially during childhood. Any adult who reads a book is getting new information, and, thus modifying his or her information system. (...) So, an important principle of cognitive semiotics is that every cognitive system is constantly changing. In education we are concerned with trying to make those changes as effective as possible. We would like those who are being educated to build internal information structures that are more or less in correspondence with reality.

In an attempt to figure out how the human mind works by investigating the extensions of verbal capabilities of individuals, Lamb defines his subject matter as a continuous mental phenomenon. In other words, he specifies it as a cognitive system that exists within the brain of an individual human being.

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1 Contemporary views of what cognitive semiotics is are best summarized in an exhaustive paper of Jordan Zlatev (2011).
3.3 Language as a oneness in the world of shared means of communication

Taking for granted a monolingualist position, Lamb (1991) treats language as a oneness abstracted from all the individual and composite linguistic systems of the world. In Lamb’s depiction, the fully collective sense of “Language” is to be seen in the totality of the linguistic systems of the planet. (Not to be omitted is also the possibility of an extraterrestrial language.) As he (Lamb, 1991: 65) maintains, there are three possibilities of dividing the object of linguistic studies:

First, Language can be divided into all of the individual linguistic systems of the planet, one for each person. Second, we can conceive of breaking it down into parts based on groups of people. (…) The third method (…) is to partition Language on the basis of linguistic signs.

However, for Lamb language in the collective sense appears to be an illusory object, except for the whole world. As he maintains, the “Composite Linguistic Systems”, encompassing all the particular languages of the world, which speakers/hearers of different levels command—“depending on the sizes of the groups of people”—“have no clear boundaries” (Lamb, 1991: 65). Moreover, individuals, described as “language knowers”, “language doers” and “language users”, are believed to communicate on the basis of shared verbal means being located on different levels of social, ethnic, national or international organization.

4. Human Semiotics as the Study of Signifying and Communicating Selves

Having extended the biological concept of the semiotic self, as defined by Thomas Albert Sebeok (1991a [1989/1977], and 1991b/1989), and Norbert Wiley (1994) through the inclusion of the concepts of life-world of an individual human being defined as Lebenswelt by Edmund Husserl (2008/1916–1937, and 2000/1970/1913/1901/1921/1901), and as Eigenwelt des Menschen Hans Petersen (1937), and subsequently the reality of everyday life, by Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann (1966), we have proposed to specify the subject matter of the domain studied by human semiotics in terms of sign-and-meaning processing and sign-and-meaning interpreting activities of signifying and communicating selves who utilize the objects found in their personal and subjective universe as functional tools or valuable goods of culture. The roots of those person- and subject-oriented conceptions of sign and meaning could be traced in praxeological-instrumental, i.e., function-and purpose-oriented or the axiological-utilitarian, i.e., value and

### 4.1 On praxeosemiotic and axiosemiotic spheres of human culture

Considered against anthropological and biological conceptions of meaning, the problems of function or value of significant objects and the needs or purposes of living subjects appears to constitute a link between the semiotics of culture and nature. The subject matter of human semiotics comprises in consequence those relevant properties of cultural objects which are distinguished in sign-and-meaning processing and interpreting activities of signifying and communicating selves as functional tools or valuable goods.

Accordingly, to be distinguished are two manifestation forms of semiotic-nomination and semiotic-subsumption of natural and/or cultural objects, on the one hand, from the viewpoint of praxeology, and on the other, from the viewpoint of axiology. With reference to the distinctions made by Stanisław Pietraszko (1980) and Umberto Eco (1979/1976/), as well as against the background of Jakob von Uexküll’s (1982 [1940]) biological conception of subjective meaning, culture is defined, in the following approach, as a set of regularities occurring between the signs of functions or the signs of values that become realized in nonverbal and verbal products of the activity and attitudes of human beings which co-determine and condition the modes of their life and behavior. Exposed in such a human-centered theory of culture is the role of a subject who acts as a meaning-utilizer or meaning-evaluator, i.e., who nominates and subsumes the objects of nature and/or culture either as signs of his/her purposes or as signs of his/her needs.

In the semiotic activity of human beings, who interchangeably play the role of senders or receivers of messages, the particular nominations and subsumptions of natural and/or cultural objects from the viewpoint of praxeosemiotics are connected with the ascription of functions to the objects hitherto being not useful for certain purposes. In turn, the nominations and subsumptions from the viewpoint of axiosemiotics result in the transfer of products and behavior of people to the realm of cultural objects, which begin from that time on to be utilized as valuable for satisfying someone’s needs.

However, there is no contradiction between a function-and-purpose-oriented approach and a value-and-need-oriented approach to the semiotics of language and culture. Both praxeological and axiological formulations of sign and meaning (as subjective significance), as one may deduce from the constituents of the action-
oriented model of human culture, reveal only an aspectual difference between the same cultural objects which are significant for the subjects of culture either from the viewpoint of their function or value.

Having in view the analytical applicability of the praxeology- and/or axiology-oriented models of the semiotic spheres of culture, practitioners of semiotic studies may investigate all semiotic systems of culture either from the viewpoint of instrumental function they execute in fulfilling communicational purposes of the subjects of culture or from the viewpoint of utilitarian value they exhibit for satisfying their respective needs.

4.2 The investigative object of human semiotics between physical and logical domains

In human semiotics, the investigative object of a scientist’s interest encompasses the sign- and meaning-related properties of signifying and communicating selves that come into being in the realization of their communicational purposes or the satisfaction of their needs considered on the one level as the real selves and on the other as participants of social communication. From such a viewpoint, the sign-vehicles of semiotic objects belong, according to the distinctions made by Victor Huse Yngve (1996: 209–210), to the observable relational properties of signifying and communicating selves as concrete persons within the physical domain.

However, when the concrete objects hitherto belonging to the scope of physical domain, start to be subsumed by subjects of culture in accordance with their abstracted features under potential tools or goods as signs of functions or values, they are immediately placed within the boundaries of the logical domain. Accordingly, the concept of the physical domain (based on sensible perception) must be counterpoised to that of the logical domain (based on intelligible association). It seems obvious that, in the investigative field of human-centered semiotics, scientists are not in a position to study the semiotic properties of signifying and communicating selves as inferred subjects, which are unobservable. The logical domain appears to be indispensable as a counterpart of the physical domain, as far as the content of intentional communication cannot be directly tested. It may be inferred through the intersubjective knowledge of communication participants as a set of dispositional properties that may be activated in observable products and behavior of people.

Thus, the subject matter of a scientist’s interest in human semiotics encompasses those inferable properties of cultural objects that are relevant for the realization of communicational purposes or the satisfaction of needs of cultural subjects. Thus, the
concrete objects, hitherto belonging to the scope of physical domain, start to be subsumed in accordance with their abstracted features under potential tools or goods as signs of functions or values they are immediately placed within the boundaries of the logical domain.

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Education between Postmodernity and Globalization: towards Irony as a Semiotically Based Educational Goal

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Abstract: A contemporary education has to face the challenges of a globalized world. With reference to increasing globalization and its consequences for education, it is possible to put forward a thesis that globalization is a totalizing worldview which replaces postmodern narration schemes. From a semiotic point of view the article discusses the possibility to introduce “irony” as an epistemological strategy. Such an epistemological strategy could provide coping strategies and thus enable a critical perspective on “globalized education” and the normative pressure a globalized education might effect. Via a semiotic analysis the article discusses the possibility of “irony as an educational goal”.

Key words: postmodern education, globalization, irony, semiotics

1. Introduction

It is becoming possible to observe a paradigm shift in education. This shift is less a programmatic one than a subtle discursive phenomenon. As a discursive phenomenon it is observable in the implications of utterances and policies which describe the new challenges facing a contemporary education. Such a contemporary education has to face the challenges of a globalized world. With reference to increasing globalization and its consequences for education, it is possible to put forward a thesis that globalization is a totalizing worldview which replaces postmodern narration schemes. Although globalization is seemingly (not yet) discursively considered a designation of an epoch, globalization appears to affect and determine macrostructures including the worldwide policy of nations as well microstructures such as lifestyles and self-narrations of individuals. This paradigm shift can be analyzed from a semiotic point of view: In the course of the analysis the code as a sum of elements, which determine and enable communications, takes on a

1 In this context, narration signifies a linguistically based structuring process which provides meaning.
crucial meaning. The way a phenomenon such as education is addressed, the dichotomies which are used to structure questions, the knowledge which is necessary to decipher an utterance or a written text, are subjected to a crucial change. This change can be viewed as a substitution process which leads from a postmodern to a globalized understanding of education.

Firstly, the different thematizations of education will be outlined and their semiotic implications analyzed. In the conclusion, the possibility of irony as a semiotic practice applied to educational issues will be discussed.

### 2. Problematization

Education emerges into an increasingly complex environment. It is embedded in a world undergoing a multiplicity of economic, cultural and political changes.

The French philosopher Lyotard developed the concept of a postmodern understanding of the world both as an epistemological strategy and a narration pattern to cope with this complexity. To live in a postmodern world means, according to Lyotard, living in a world where individuals have lost a “transcendent and universal truth” (for the complex background to the idea of postmodernity cf. a. o. Peters & Wain 2002, p. 57 ff):

“Simplifying to the extreme, I define postmodern as incredulity toward metanarratives (…) The narrative function is losing its functors, its great hero, its great dangers, its great voyages, its great goal. It is being dispersed in clouds of narrative language (…) Where, after the metanarratives, can legitimacy reside?” (Lyotard 1979, p. xxiv).

A metanarrative can be conceptualized as a scheme that constitutes a totalizing meaning. That means that a metanarrative offers some kind of a totalizing explanatory model to order and schematize…

…the diverse phenomena which appear and
…the social processes which take place in a society.

Within a metanarrative the constitution of meaning extends over history, manifests itself in tradition and provides thus a heritage. Metanarratives construct the legitimation of a society or group. Christianity, Enlightenment and Marxism can be understood as famous examples of metanarratives. They all provide an explanatory model which encompasses the micro- and macro-structures of living.

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1. Within this article the whole complexity of postmodernity will not be discussed and a more standardized understanding of postmodernity will be used.
They can be applied as a research strategy, *e.g.* to understand history, and likewise as an individual explanatory model on micro-structure. This might be in order to appropriately understand the problems posed by living a proper life in a perverted society (which could be a Marxist life in a “Non-Marxist” society, a Christian life in a “Non-Christian” society or on enlightened, rational life in a “Non-Enlightened Society”). From this point of view metanarratives always have a tendency to totalize the complexity of social reality as well as history and at once occupy the future; Future is what a metanarrative makes out of it instead of recognizing future as something indeterminate and open. From this perspective the future seems to be “imperialized” by the anticipations, predictions and prophecies of metanarratives. (As a consequence, philosophers like Nietzsche and authors like Büchner began by embracing epistemological nihilism as a rejection of an imperialized future, when de-legitimating a metanarrative; Christianity in the case of Nietzsche, enlightened history in the case of Büchner).

### 3. Postmodern Education

One aspect of Lyotard’s understanding of postmodernity therefore focuses on ideological criticism. The ideological criticism of a postmodern epistemological strategy has implications for educational concepts and can be outlined as follows.

Metanarratives are normative and make—more or less explicitly—a truth claim. The truth claims of metanarratives are called into question by postmodern criticism. Due to skepticism towards the idea of totalizing unity and truth claims, postmodern education fosters pluralism;

“Pluralism is a feature of postmodernism. Educationally, the art of creating and choosing is more important than ordering and following” (Koo Hok-chun, 2002, p. 58).

The legitimacy of other experiences of reality, the equivalent appreciation of other narration of rites and other myths, are among the goals of postmodern education:

“As public intellectuals, educators need to recognize the partiality of their own discourse, be open to engaging other positions as part of a wider dialogue and struggle over reconstructing public life (…) “(Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991, p. 110).\(^\d\)

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\(^\d\) From this point of view, the current pedagogical concept of inclusion seems to invert this strategy and can be understood as a postmodern construct when it stresses that the unifying factor is the tolerant acceptance of immutable differences (cf. Kergel, 2012).
Acceptance of diversity makes it possible to enter into a tolerant dialogue with other narratives—as long as an interlocutor considers the dialog partner, and their understanding and experience of reality as equivalent to his own.

A tolerant self-reflexivity, a positive appreciation of the self-narrative—maintaining awareness of its relativity—can be seen as one of the basic educational goals of a postmodern education program. The values that constitute postmodern education are those of empowerment in the most profound meaning of the term. “(Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991, p. 22). Postmodern education would mean a mutual empowerment (cf. Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991, p. 109). But this empowerment means permanent critical challenging of all prefigured and seemingly indisputable meaning, as Lyotard remarked with reference to the modern development of art:

“What, then, is the postmodern? What place does it or does it not occupy in the vertiginous work of the questions hurled at the rules of image and narration? It is undoubtedly a part of the modern. All that has been received, if only yesterday (…) must be suspected. What space does Cézanne challenge? The Impressionists”. What object do Picasso and Braque attack? Cézanne’s. What presupposition does Duchamp break with in 1912? (…) In an amazing acceleration, the generations precipitate themselves. A work can become modern only if it is first postmodern” (Lyotard, 1979, p. 79).

According to Lyotard, modernity as a state of a critical dialogue needs the epistemological bases of a critical postmodernity, which ensures the non-dogmatism that can be understood as an essential feature of modernity.

From a pedagogical point of view, postmodern education fosters a self-critical empowerment of the individual. Such a self-critical empowerment must be able to recognize and critically acknowledge its own presuppositions, prejudices and narrative patterns. These have to be critically appreciated with the same value as the narrative patterns and presuppositions of other cultural circles (cf. Kergel, 2012).

This particular aim of postmodern education can be described in the terms of a semiotic analysis: The individual is “thrown into a symbolic order” with its specific codes and—partly unconscious—epistemological, anthropological and ontological presumptions (to describe this partly “unconscious presumption” appropriately, Foucault provided a redefinition of the concept of episteme, cf. Foucault 1989). In course of the socializing process, the individual internalizes the semiotic code of a symbolic order. The individual acts and reflects according to the provided pattern of meaning, in which the symbolic order is metonymically inscribed. (Butler, in
addition to Lacan and Foucault, describes this process as subjection, cf. Butler 1997). The symbolic order re-produces itself performatively through the socialization process, inscribing the code within the individuals in course of subjection. Therefore the educational process, as a specific and guided form of socialization (cf. Durkheim 1972), is tasked with overseeing a successful subjection process (for the historical development of such an understanding of education cf. Aries 1962 and Foucault 1975). The crucial achievement of postmodern epistemology has been to develop a strategic distance to the mediated and internalized symbolic order and its code. Postmodern education mediates/teaches postmodern skepticism and implements epistemological skepticism within intercultural encounters. In this sense postmodern education is more of a meta-learning project, in which both teacher and learner develop epistemological awareness of their applied narration patterns in the course of the educational process. Subsequently, postmodern education is less about the specific skills or the professional knowledge which has to be gained, than about the way in which such a professional knowledge is acquired. This can be operationalized through a critical handling of the code of a symbolic order. But such an elaborate program for a postmodern education seems to be making way for a discursive thematization of education which can be termed “globalized education”.

4. Globalization as Metanarrativ and globalized Education

In a typical problem of semantics, it seems impossible to conclusively fix the concept of “globalization” and develop a lasting definition. Al-Rodhan and Stoudmann (2006) provide an overview of the diverse definitions and suggest their own, which seems not to thematize the discursive and semiotic effects of globalization:

“Globalization is a process that encompasses the causes, course, and consequences of transnational and transcultural integration of human and non-human activities” (Al-Rodhan, Stoudmann, 2006, p. 2).

From an analytical point of view it might be possible to consider globalization as an effect of worldwide socio-economic re-structuring processes. One crucial aspect is the international division of labor. The electronic and here especially the digital media make it possible to offshore tasks and jobs to elsewhere in the world (cf. Kupfer 2012). Besides this process a worldwide and seemingly boundless flows of capital change the structure of the labor market profoundly. In consequence, individuals have to deal with the associated socio-economic changes. One task
relates to how these socio-economic changes are to be accepted, adapted and integrated into worldviews/narratives. In other words, these changes must make sense and possess a meaning. For these changes to be accepted, a meaningful discursive structure is needed: *how is it possible to narrate such socio-economic changes in such a way that affected societies, nations, individuals can deal with them?* A narrative of globalization accompanies these changes “(...) which puts people in north-western countries under increasing pressure” (Kupfer, 2012, p. 5). Basic topoi of these narratives “perform” globalization like a natural force which societies, nations and individuals cannot escape. Globalization is narrated like a new “world order” and “empire” (cf. Hardt & Negri 2000). With reference to Lyotard’s concept of mini- and metanarratives one could suggest that globalization might be understood as a post-postmodern metanarrative. To elaborate on this thesis, the dichotomy between the market and education will be analyzed.

### 4.1 The Market and Education as a Basic Dichotomy

Bridges and Jonathan (2003) point out that “(...) in most contexts market principles have been applied against a backdrop of an established public education service managed in some way through the apparatus of the state” (Bridges & Jonathan, 2003, p. 127). According to this binary oppositional dichotomy, market principles represent the discursive counterpart to the public education system. From this perspective “(...) the application of market principles is nearly always at the expense of a nationally or locally administered state bureaucracy which (...) was subject to national and local forms of democratic accountability” (Bridges & Jonathan, 2003, p. 127). Within the discursive frame of globalization, the relationship between market principles and (public) education is re-structured. Instead of a binary opposition, education and market seem inextricably linked within the globalized thematization of education. To think of education in terms of market principles enables it to be positioned as a potential surplus value and competitive advantage within the competition of globalization. Market principles have to be used to ensure an education which assures the competitive power of the nation. This national competitive power in turn assures the social security benefit; the social stability of the nation has to be assured in the globalized market. Economic stability is the source of social stability. Education as a potential surplus value and competitive advantage is an important element in global competition. Regarding the meaning of education it may be possible to speak about a “shift of paradigm” (cf. Pârgaru 2009, p. 248) which makes education a central part of globalization as a new metanarrative which coins also policies;
“The European Union is confronted with a quantum shift resulting from globalization and the challenges of a new knowledge-driven economy. These changes are affecting every aspect of people’s lives and require a radical transformation of the European economy. The Union must shape these changes in a manner consistent with its values and concepts of society and also with a view to the forthcoming enlargement.” (European Council, 23 and 24 March 2000 presidency conclusions, Lisbon)

4.2 Globalization and Education

According to this conception globalization is an inevitable process resembling a natural force, which the EU has to face. The (re-)positioning of Europe is dictated by the transformation of the labor market due to technological progress and the impact of globalization. Emerging economic powers like China and India are challenging Europe as a business location. The basic thesis which constitutes and legitimizes a “Creative Economy” (cf. Peters 2009) could be summarized as follows: when other nations are able to produce less expensive goods and services, the “content creation” which ensues (when Europe is faced with such an economic challenge) has a possible competitive advantage for Europe.

According to this idea, education serves as basis to enable “content creation”-“(…) the industrial economy is giving way to the creative economy based on the growing power of ideas and virtual value-chain—the turn from steel and hamburgers to software and intellectual property” (Pårgaru et al., 2009, p. 45).

In addition, a competitive and appropriate handling of new technologies provides a locational advantage; “In a world of evolution, of technological know-how, education plays an essential role” (Pårgaru et al., 2009, p. 647).

Therefore education policy is linked with the economic field and economic policy: “In the society of the future, education will play the key part in the way of life” (Pårgaru et al., 2009, p. 646).

Especially in a society which considers itself a knowledge-based society, education plays a crucial role. As early as 1995, Töffler stated that the new power structure that “kept the world together” was replaced by knowledge as a new power structure, which affects human society on all levels (cf. Töffler 1995).

A knowledge-based society follows an inherent logic. With this logic factual

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1 “The link between the knowledge-based society and society itself is made by combining four interlaced elements: the build-up of knowledge, its transmission via education and training, its dissemination as information via media and its utilization in technological innovation.” (Pårgaru et al., 2009, p. 648)
constraints emerge:

“...In the knowledge-based economy, the individuals need to be trained across the various levels specific to the professional forming system, adapting to the demands of the knowledge-based society. The knowledge-based economy and society have changed the political, economic, social and moral background of the world. The new society is a certainty and is one of organizations, where the primary resource is knowledge” (Pârgaru et al., 2009, p. 647f).

The relationship between globalization and education can be summarized as follows: Changes in the global economy have consequences for the national labor market as well as labor and educational policy. In response to these changes, the educational sector must provide “creative resources”. It has to lay foundations for a resilient, knowledge-based society which is hence able to generate content and assure its competitive ability within the global economy. Knowledge is considered a competitive advantage in the course of this process. This perspective influences both national discussions about education as well as EU educational policy.

“The Union has today set itself a new strategic goal for the next decade: to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion” (Lisbon European Council 23 and 24 March 2000 presidency conclusions).

Among other things, the public discussion following the results of the PISA survey reveals the relevance of this discourse. The “(…) focus on creativity has exercised strong appeal for policy-makers who wish to link education more firmly to new forms of capitalism, emphasizing how creativity must be taught, how educational theory and research can be used to improve student learning in mathematics, reading and science, and how different models of intelligence and creativity can inform educational practice” (Peters, 2009, p. 46).

4.3 Semiotic Perspective on Postmodern Education

Referring to Lacan, one can conceptualize globalization as a metanarrative which generates the semiotic effects of the so-called “big Other”:

“The big Other designates radical alterity, an otherness which transcends the illusory otherness of the imaginary because it cannot be assimilated through identification. Lacan equates this radical alterity with language and the law, and hence the big Other is inscribed in the order of the symbolic. Indeed, the big Other is the symbolic insofar as it is particularized for each subject. The Other is thus both another subject, in his radical alterity and unassimilable uniqueness, and also the symbolic order which mediates the relationship with that other subject” (Evans,
According to Lacan’s conception of the big Other, globalization is a permanently discursive point of reference. It appears as a “vital necessity” which determines macro-and microstructures, affects EU policies and “particularizes each subject”. But despite to its impact and meaning, globalization cannot in the end be conceptually defined. Fulfilling a crucial attribute of the big Other, globalization cannot be conclusively fixed. It provides a totalizing interpretation of the “world as a village”, an interpretation of the past as a teleological process which leads to a fully globalized world. This process also determines perspectives on the future.

One factor which is essential to an EU nation mastering the challenges of a globalized world adequately is education. Education has to mediate and generate skills which provide a competitive edge. Implicitly, the other is not conceptualized as an equal interlocutor. The encounter with other cultural circles is mostly defined by a measurement of the different competitive advantages.

5. Conclusion: Irony as an Educational Goal

The power of the big Other can be deconstructed with the help of irony: Irony as epistemological strategy plays with truth claims. Irony employs the strategy of affirming truth claims of a symbolic order and subversively undermining them all at once. From this point of view, the sentence “Brutus is an honorable man” in Shakespeare’s Julius Caesar is the most famous of ironic sentences. From a semiotic point of view, irony plays with the truth claims of a code; it acknowledges and dismisses them at the same time. The subversive effect may explain why irony is so often used in genres which criticize the ruling power, the state of a society, or claims to power. Moreover, irony often appears in parodies, cf. as an example Tieck’s play “puss in boots”, as a theoretical analysis cf. Bachtin 1984). Using irony as an epistemological strategy, the subject introduces distance between themselves and the truth claims which are inscribed within the code. Thus irony emerges, as Hegel stated, within the act of negation.

“True, irony implies the absolute negativity in which the subject is related to himself in the annihilation of everything specific and one-sided (...)” (Hegel, 1988, p. 160). Hegel criticized the irony concept of early romantics like Schlegel, when they define irony as “(...) the clear consciousness of eternal agility, of an infinitely full chaos” (...) (Schlegel, 1958, p. 263).

Knowledge of the complexity and disorder of a world, and the attempt to cope with this chaotic complexity with the help of a “clear consciousness”, can be defined
as a manifestation of irony as epistemological strategy. According to Hegel, such an approach has the implication that no truth claim of a symbolic order can be finally acknowledged due to the ontological disorder of being. For Hegel, irony always undermines every common ground for communication and consequently becomes a relativistic and self-referential play. The meaning of irony lies in calling the code into question. Irony fails to provide a discussion of what is really worthwhile; “(…) irony which likes to pass itself off as the highest originality, especially when it treats nothing seriously and carries on the business of joking merely for the sake of joking” (Hegel. 1988, p. 296).

The lasting heritage of irony as a play with codes and its inherent truth claims can be observed when one refers to Habermas’s criticism of postmodernism (for the relation “romantic/postmodernism” cf. Jameson 1993).

Similarly to Hegel’s critique of the early romantics, Habermas formulated a critique of “the young conservatives” and their (postmodern) criticism on modernity.1 According to Habermas, these young conservatives “(…) claim as their own the revelations of a decentered subjectivity, emancipated from the imperatives of work and usefulness, and with this experience they step outside the modern world. On the basis of modernistic attitudes, they justify an irreconcilable anti-modernism. (…) To instrumental reason, they juxtapose in manichean fashion a principle only accessible through evocation, be it the will to power or sovereignty, Being or the dionysiac force of the poetical. In France this line leads from Bataille via Foucault to Derrida.” (Habermas, 1981, p. 13).

To question the meaning of enlightenment is to abandon the “project of modernity”. Consequently, one loses the concept of a rationally based world and its democratic implications. According to Habermas, the postmodern criticism would lead into a relativistic worldview similar to early romantic irony, and postmodern skepticism would end in useless self-referentiality (for the meaning of irony in postmodern epistemology cf. Hassan 1985, p. 124). Although there will be no final word in this debate, with reference to globalization one might apply both perspectives on irony at once; applied to globalization, one might state that

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1 Habermas’ understanding of modernity as part of the “project of enlightenment” is defined through ratio, progress and social optimism. The prefix “post-” represents to Habermas the abandonment of the project of “Enlightenment”. That is why Habermas criticizes modern French philosophers like Foucault. Derrida etc. as “young conservatives”. Thinkers like Derrida and Foucault are conservatives because the ethical, political and social implications of their techniques, such as genealogy, deconstruction, etc. mean a denial of the possibility of social optimism and social progress towards an extension of freedom and democracy. They therefore share, in the eyes of Habermas, the positions of “archetypical” conservatives. Thinkers like Derrida and Foucault are young because they “(…) recapitulate the basic experience of aesthetic modernity” (Habermas. 1981. p. 13).
globalization is a metanarrative one cannot escape from. But one could play with the
code of this metanarrative and question its claim to truth. With reference to
postmodern education, educational goals could be used to implement irony as an
epistemological strategy when pupils and teacher are confronted with narrations of
the “globalization discourse”. In other words, one cannot escape the paradigm shift
in education but one could deal with it ironically. From this point of view it may be
ture that the “project of modernity” (in Habermas’s terms) has become lost;
globalization cannot be thematized like an unfolding of Western rationality (cf.
Hegel’s “phenomenology of spirit” as model of such an understanding of a global
unfolding rationality). Instead, the discursive thematization of globalization, as
described above, could be considered a global challenge for all parties involved; to
emancipate themselves from the totalizing metanarrative of “globalization”. It may
be possible to preserve the basic values of enlightenment (critical self-
determination) with “postmodern irony” (calling truth claims into question) and
thus to escape at least partly from a “self-imposed nonage” and the social pressure
(cf. Kupfer, 2012, p. 5) which globalization might cause. Kant’s requirement,
formulated in his Essay on Enlightenment “Dare to Know”, can be deconstructed
and formulated as an educational goal with the phrase “Dare to be ironic”.

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Linguistic Markers of Detachment: A Cognitive Approach

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Abstract: Detachments from the discursive situation have been formalized in the enunciative theory of Culioli, taking into account the possible interactions among them and their history from the beginning of the event. For that, they were considered as adding to one another; and qualified in terms of their changes of position on Culioli’s double bifurcation diagram. In this paper, we present a cognitive interpretation of Culioli’s approach of detachments in terms of two sets of micro-cognitive processes, agreeing with classical cognitive frameworks, but providing a dynamic view on them. The first set concerns the processes of internalization and of externalization; two different points of view on the same event can be seen either as independent, or as integrated, or as simply stuck together; the detachment itself can be either at its beginning, as a simple stretch, or at its end, as a complete break, or achieving a return toward the situation, as a compression. The second set concerns means-end analysis and qualifies steps in the understanding of the constraints of the task (such as their only existence, or their more or less complete identification and control on the solving process), and in the expectation of coming events like a dead end or something already done. Finally, some examples illustrate these analyses.

Key words: cognitive processes; cognitive representation; problem solving; modal markers; starting terms; enunciative operations

1. Introduction

The present research takes part in a larger study about the analysis of verbal reports produced during the solving of a cognitive task (Caron-Pargue & Caron, 1989, 2000; Caron-Pargue & Fièvre, 1996). The classical framework initialized by Ericsson and Simon (1980, 1984, 1993) was enriched by current cognitive linguistics, notably Culioli’s enunciative theory (Culioli, 1995)¹, and by a cognitive interpretation of enunciative operations (Bégoin-Augereau & Caron-Pargue, 2009, 2010a, b). Indeed, enunciative operations model the processes involved in the

reconstruction of notions within the discursive situation. So, their cognitive interpretation makes possible the characterization of some micro-cognitive processes. Then, we postulated that such micro-cognitive processes can be considered as being at work in the actualization of knowledge in the contextual steps of a cognitive task.

In our previous research, we began to characterize, from linguistic markers, several micro-cognitive processes operating in the identification of internal constraints of the task (Bégoin-Augereau & Caron-Pargue, 2010b). Indeed, those internal constraints imply a process of detachment from the ongoing action before being generalized to another situation. Therefore, their identification may rely on the markers of the enunciative operations of detachment at the linguistic level, notably the operation of bifurcation. Furthermore, their denominations were expressed as some specifications of classical cognitive processes, notably of the processes of internalization and externalization, and of Simon’s means-end analysis (Caron-Pargue, Bégoin-Augereau, Metta, Penny-Leguy & Caron, 2013). In this paper, our intent is to go over our previous cognitive interpretation of two markers of bifurcation, the starting terms and the modal terms (Bégoin-Augereau & Caron-Pargue, 2010b).

### 2. Linguistic theoretical background

The key point for understanding our approach stands in Culioli’s double bifurcation (see Figure 1a), where $p'$, $pp'$, and $p!$ mark successive degrees of detachment from the situation $p$, also considered as the interior $I$. The detachment $p'$ means everything other than $p$, and constitutes a first exterior $E$. The detachment $pp'$, detached from both $I$ and $E$, is the first point of bifurcation and constitutes the second exterior $IE$. The detachment $p!$, detached from $pp'$, is the second point of bifurcation toward a reconstruction of $p$ or $p'$ at level $pp'$ and constitutes the high degree. Furthermore, the superposition of the double bifurcation (Figure 1a) with the “cam” (Figure 1b) gives rise to all the possible paths among these different detachments: double paths between $p'$ and $pp'$, and between $pp'$ and $p!$; simple path between $p$ and $p'$, and between $pp'$ and $p$. Finally, a square configuration, shown in Figure 1d, shows some other links, given

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1. The cam is the earlier graphic representation of Culioli for the double representation.
by means of six possible oriented foldings: horizontal folds give the superposition\(^1\) either \(p-p!\) and \(p'-pp'\) or \(p!-p\) and \(pp'-p'\); vertical folds give either \(p-p'\) and \(p!-pp'\) or \(p'-p\) and \(pp'-p!\); diagonal folds give either \(p-pp'\) and \(p'-p!\), or \(pp'-p\) and \(p!-p'\). Then each oriented folding gives rise to two opposite superpositions.

![Diagram of orientations](image)

\(p\): the situation; \(p'\): everything other than \(p\); \(pp'\): detachment from both \(p\) and \(p'\); \(p!\): the high degree.

In fact, the interesting points stand in the processes of reorganization of the separation between \(p\) and \(p'\) along the progressive reconstruction of \(p\) at level \(pp'\). The consecutive bifurcations add to one another along the history of the process, and so modify their own effects according to the context of the situation. Then, several strange loops\(^2\) can be shown according to the consecutive foldings. It is only when the situation \(p\) is completely reconstructed at level \(pp'\) that the stability of these reorganizations is achieved.

Then, in what follows, the kind of fold involved in these reorganizations will be cognitively interpreted in terms of the superposition of two decision processes, both relevant to the current state of the situation: the initial decision process, before any modification and the final modified decision processes, modified by detachments and by the history of the situation. That leads to refine classic cognitive processes in terms of micro-cognitive processes.

The detachments considered in this paper are marked by modal terms and starting terms. For Culioli, modal terms mark the existence of a gap and of a design (Fr. *une visée*) between the position of the subject and the situation. More specifically, interjections mark the high degree. By definition, a starting term is an argument extracted from an oriented predicative relation giving rise to an empty

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\(^1\) The superposition \(p-p!\) results from a folding of \(p!\) toward \(p\), and the superposition \(p'-p\) results from the opposite folding of \(p\) toward \(p'\).

\(^2\) A strange loop arises when moving through a hierarchical system, one eventually finds oneself at the point when one started (Hofstadter, 1979).
place, marked by an anaphora. Its function is to contextualize the predicative relation which becomes located relative to itself, and to regulate the reconstruction of notions, i.e. of knowledge, in its empty place. In other words, the starting term marks a regulation of the actualization of notions in the contextual discursive situation. For example, in disk 1 I put it on peg A, the anaphora it marks that disk 1 has the status of starting term.

### 3. Cognitive theoretical background

First of all we considered that knowledge is always reorganized when actualized within the situation, and that the case where the reorganization is not apparent is only due to specific contexts or results from the processes of decontextualization. So the processes of reorganization, mentioned above in a discursive situation, may open the way to the characterization of the cognitive processes involved in the actualization of knowledge. Besides, the present research relies mainly on our previous data (Bégoin-Augereau & Caron-Pargue, 2009, 2010b; Caron-Pargue et al. 2013), concerning notably the construction of the cognitive units, and the identification of the internal space as opposed to the external one.

Elementary cognitive units, called aggregates, mark the integration of two successive actions or events as one mental action or event. Moreover, this integration is associated with a specific decision process, the kind of decision that we will consider in the present study. The linguistic criteria to recognize them are the repetition of the denominations involved in the considered actions or events. For example in the verbalization I put disk 2 on peg A — I put disk 1 on disk 2, marked by the repetition of disk 2, the two successive moves of disk 1 and of disk 2 are integrated as one mental action.

Modal terms are interpreted as the markers of a strategic access to memory in opposition to an automatic one. This strategic access marks the evaluation of difficulties and of critical steps in the planning. In this paper, two kinds of modal terms will be distinguished, the modal evaluations and the interjections, notably the interjections opening the verbalization of an event, like well, or occurring in the context of an action. Starting terms are considered as the markers of the internal space in opposition to the external space. They mark the access to abstraction, but for this access becoming operative, it is necessary that they are associated to the construction of an aggregate. Then, three kinds of aggregates can be differentiated:

— *External Aggregates*: aggregates without starting term, see examples given above;
—*Categorized Aggregates*: aggregates with at least one starting term. Its function is to categorize occurrences at one level (external for internalization, internal for externalization) and to reconstruct them at the other level (internal for internalization, external for externalization). For example, in *next I take disk 2 and I will put it on peg C—next I take again disk 1 which I put on disk 2* (see lines 13–14 for *Subject A* in Table 1), the two external moves of disk 2 and of disk 1 are categorized as one move. The case of internalization or of externalization depends on the context of the ongoing process.

—*Internal aggregates*, with starting terms, but involving an anticipation of the following step or a repeat of the previous step. For example, in *I take disk 2 [Exp... I take again disk 1 which I put on disk 4—I take disk 2 which is on peg C and I put it on peg B* (lines 6–7 for *Subject A* in Table 1), the verbalization *I take disk 2* at the beginning of the move of disk 1 anticipates the following move of disk 2.

Then, the order of apparition between a categorized aggregate and an internal one can be interpreted in terms of either internalization, with the reconstruction of an external representation at the internal level, or externalization, with the reconstruction of an external representation at the external level. The categorized aggregate has a main role in the passage from a level to the other.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject A, trial 1</th>
<th>Subject B, trial 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I1 432/−/1 I put it on peg C</td>
<td>I15 12/4/3 the pink one to the first one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I2 after I take disk 2 and... I</td>
<td>I16 12/54/− no rmnstacen never mind the yellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exp, one at a time—you can’t take two disks at the same time you should take them one at a time</td>
<td>I17 2/134/− the pink one to the second one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>432/1/− oh I know I put it back—I take disk 11</td>
<td>I18 /134/2 number two or the green one to the last one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I3 43/1/2 next I take disk 2 and I will put it on peg C</td>
<td>I19 2/134/− but what am I doing or I put back the green one to the first one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I4 43/−/21 next I take again disk 1 which I put on disk 2</td>
<td>I20 12/34/− the pink one to the first one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I5 4/3/21 after disk 3 I put it on... on peg B</td>
<td>I21 12/4/3 yes the yellow one then to the last one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I6 I take disk 2 exp: you cannot—I told you that you must take one at a time</td>
<td>I22 2/14/3 the pink one to the second one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41/3/2 I take again disk 1 which I put on disk 4</td>
<td>I23 /−/14/23 the green one to the last one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I7 41/32/− I take disk 2 which is on peg C and I put it on peg B</td>
<td>I24 /−/4/123 the pink one to the last one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I8 4/32/− I take disk 1 and I put it on peg b</td>
<td>I25 1/4/23 it doesn’t make a big difference I think well then the pink one to the first one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I9 /−/321/− and I take disk 4 I put it on peg C</td>
<td>I26 1/24/3 the green one to the second one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I27 /−/124/5 well the pink one to the second one</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I28 3/124/− the yellow one to the first one</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These verbalizations are produced during the solving of the Tower of Hanoi (see below for more information on the puzzle). 432/−/1 means that disks 4, 3, and 2 are on peg A, that there is nothing on peg B, and that *disk 1* is on peg C.
4. Method

4.1 Linguistic markers

Two series of linguistic forms are considered. One is linked to the processes of internalization and of externalization. Decision processes \( D_{ext} \), \( D_{cat} \), \( D_{int} \) are respectively defined as associated to each kind of aggregates, external or categorized or internal one. Furthermore, the order \( D_{cat} \) followed by \( D_{int} \) marks a process of internalization, while the opposite order \( D_{int} \) followed by \( D_{cat} \) marks a process of externalization. The other set of linguistic forms concerns notably positive and negative modal evaluations or interjections, and is linked to means-end analysis.

4.2 Positions on the bifurcation diagram (cf. Figure 1c)

Two positions are attributed to each decision process and constitute two simultaneous statuses for it. The first position is attributed according to the definition of the aggregate associated to the decision process; the decisions \( D_{ext} \), \( D_{cat} \), and \( D_{int} \) are respectively positioned in \( p \), \( p' \), \( pp' \). The second position takes into account the other detachments involved in the current action or event, and the history involved in it. Therefore, the superposition of these two statuses can be interpreted in terms of modified decision processes and analyzed by means of the six kinds of folding allowed by the square diagram of the bifurcation (cf. Figure 1d).

5. Cognitive interpretation

5.1 Vertical fold

The modifications \( p-p' \) and \( p'-p \) stand respectively in an opposite position to \( pp'-p' \) and \( p'-pp' \).

1. The modification \( p-p' \) marks a move from \( p \) toward the otherness \( p' \). Therefore, it marks the understanding that the current decision takes the status of otherness, i.e., that it is not the right one. In the other orientation, the modification \( p'-p \) marks the understanding that the other decision is the right one, and that there is no other solution.

2. The modification \( pp'-p! \) marks a move from \( pp' \) toward \( p! \). Then, an internal component of an aggregate, positioned in \( pp' \), gains the status of an high degree. It can be interpreted as becoming free from its material parts and as a broken part, independent of context. It gains its power of generalization. This case
The orientation implies that \( t > t_0 \). Then, something similar between

\[ \text{Figure 2} \]  

separation between the coming time, and the past time for the parameter \( T \), e.g., separation between what the subject has done, not for the parameter \( T \), and the separation of two internalized conscious items, and \( t > t_0 \), giving each the separation on the current state of the situation. This interpretation can be referred
to the situation \( d \). That marks a process of expectation or of
defence \( d \), and \( d \) introduces a tension, due to the high

\[ d, d \]

of \( d \), and \( d \) stand in an opposite position to both and

5.3 Horizontal fold

\[ d \]

leads to a reorientation of the broken part with material elements,

\[ d, d \]

and \( d, d \) add to each other. Nevertheless
categorized agricultural remains more or less linked to the external space, then,
the agricultural characterized remains more or less linked to the external space. Then,\nthe two effects of \( d \) add to each other. Nevertheless
categorization of a process of expectation or categorization of an component of a

5.2 First diagonal fold

\[ d, d \]

other,

\[ d, d \]

(see below in § 5.2). If not, they will only be stuck to each
the broken part with the external part if there is an articulation with the
context, it is all work. Moreover, this articulation is a complete reorientation of
aggregate during process of expectation. The categorized agricultural remains another
material, which remains links with one or another possible
free from material context, which remains links with one or another possible
The reversed modification, can be interpreted as an internal component,
in categorization.
The orientation $p' \rightarrow p$ implies that $t_{0} > t'_{0}$. Then, something situated between $t_{0}$ and $t'_{0}$ is already done but considered as not yet done by the subject $S$. That is an expectation.

The orientation $p \rightarrow p'$ marks an extension of this control toward $p$. The control of constraints becomes better oriented toward the achievement of the goal than it was before.

The orientation $pp' \rightarrow p'$ gives the status of otherness to any possible occurrence. The control of constraints has been deficient. Some new conditions have to be taken into account.

\[\text{Figure 2} \quad \text{Parameters } S \text{ and } T \text{ as a function of two infinitesimal times } t_{0} \text{ and } t'_{0}\]

\[\begin{array}{c}
\text{S, done, } T_{a} \text{, coming} \\
S \quad (t_{0}) \quad T_{a} \quad (t_{0}' ) \\
\text{S', past, } S_{c} \text{ not yet} \\
S_{c} \quad (t_{0}') \quad T_{c} \quad (t_{0})
\end{array}\]

(2) The modifications $p' \rightarrow pp'$ and $pp' \rightarrow p'$ concern the superposition of a categorized status with an internal one without any break from material elements. That allows a monitoring of the adequacy of decisions toward the goal.

5.4 Second diagonal fold
The modifications $p \rightarrow pp'$ and $pp' \rightarrow p$ stand in an opposite position to $p \rightarrow p'$ and to $p'$. That implies a superposition of the set of possible occurrences $p$ with the set of all other possible occurrences $p'$.

The orientation $p \rightarrow pp'$ gives an extension of the current set of possible occurrences toward otherness. That can be interpreted as the understanding of the existence of not yet identified constraints.

The orientation $pp' \rightarrow p$ gives rise to a reduction of the set of all possible occurrences $pp'$ to the situation $p$. Then $p$ has been demarcated within $pp'$. All the constraints have been identified.
The goal is to put all disks on peg C in the same order one disk at a time, and not a big disk on a smaller one.

6. Examples

Two examples are presented below, both extracted from verbalization produced during the solving of the Tower of Hanoi puzzle (cf. fig.) by 10-year-olds: one for a Subject A, trial 1; the other for another subject, Subject B, trial 2. The verbalizations are presented in Table 1 for these two subjects.

6.1 Analysis of Subject A, trial 1 (cf. Tables 1 and 2) ①

6.1.1 Lines l2-l4

The succession of decisions $D_{int}(1, 2)$ and $D_{ext}(2, 1)$ marks a process of externalization, characterized only by a partial reunification, due to the juxtaposition of the two aggregates associated to them. In fact, at the beginning, in l2, the component 1, marked by the modification $pp'-p!$, is broken from its material part. The component 2 has two independent levels of detachment, at level $pp'$ and at level $p'$. Furthermore, the decision $D_{ext}(2, 1)$ brings only a better control on the solving, marked by the modification $p'-pp'$. Then, the broken part remains only stuck to its material part, without being completely re-unified with it. The complete externalization will appear only later in lines 16-19.

6.1.2 Lines l6-l9

The succession of decisions $D_{int}(1, 2)$ with $D_{ext}(1, 4)$ and with $D_{ext}(1, 2)$ marks a recovery of the component 1 in order to completely reunify it with its material part, marked by the modification $p'-p!$ in both lines l6 and l8. That achieves the process of externalization started in line l2. One can notice an interesting structure for the four successive moves of this sequence: with the integration of the three aggregates of this sequence, each associated with the

① For more information see: Caron-Pargue et al. (2013, in press).
decisions involved in the externalization; while the two levels of detachment, already seen before for the component 2, remain independent.

<p>| | | | | |</p>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>43/1/22</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>$D_{cat}(2, 1)$</td>
<td>$p'^{-}pp'$ $p'^{-}p$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>43/-/211</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>Better control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>41/3/21</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$D_{cat}(1, 4)$</td>
<td>$p'^{-}pp'$ $p'^{-}p'$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>41/32/-2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>$D_{inst}(1, 2)$</td>
<td>$p'^{-}pp'$ $p'^{-}p'$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>4/321/-1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$D_{cat}(2, 1)$</td>
<td>$p'^{-}p'$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>4/-321/44</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>Re-unification</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.2 Analysis of Subject B, trial 2 (cf. Tables 1 and 3)\(^1\).

6.2.1 Lines 15–21

This sequence shows a progressive identification of constraints between disk 2 and disk 3. There is a first identification of constraints, in line 116, bearing on disk 3, marked by the modification $p{-}pp'$ and modal terms (modal evaluation, interjection).

Then, in line 118, with the decision $Dext(2, 3)$, without modal term, but with the modification $p{-}pp'$, there is only the understanding of the existence of new constraints, without any identification of them. Then, in line 119, there is the understanding that the ongoing process is a dead end, marked by $p{-}p'$ and the negative exclamation *what I am doing*! Then, in line 121, the positive interjection *well* and the modification $p{-}p'$ mark the anticipation that the process is already done.

<p>| | | | | |</p>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>115</td>
<td>21/4/3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>116</td>
<td>21/43/-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>$&lt;ev&gt;&lt;int&gt;$</td>
<td>$pp'$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>117</td>
<td>2/431/-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>ident. constraints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>118</td>
<td>4/321/2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>$Dext(2, 3)$</td>
<td>$p{-}pp'$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>119</td>
<td>2/431/-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>$&lt;int&gt;&lt;0&gt;$</td>
<td>$p{-}p'$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120</td>
<td>12/43/-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$Dext(2, 1)$</td>
<td>$p{-}p'$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>121</td>
<td>12/-4/3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>$&lt;well&gt;&lt;0&gt;$</td>
<td>$p{-}p'$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>122</td>
<td>12/-4/31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>already done</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>125</td>
<td>1/432</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$&lt;ev&gt;&lt;int&gt;$</td>
<td>$pp'$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>126</td>
<td>1/243</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>$Dext(2, 1)$</td>
<td>$pp'$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>127</td>
<td>1/-421/3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$&lt;well&gt;&lt;0&gt;$</td>
<td>$pp'$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>128</td>
<td>3/-421/-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>already done</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\) For more information see: Bégoin-Augereau & Caron-Pargue (2010b).
6.2.2 Lines 25–28

This sequence very similar to the previous one marks the identification of the constraints between disk 2 and disk 3 in the context of the move of disk 3 to its right place. In fact, one can see the identification of constraints bearing on disk 1, in l25, with \( p-pp' \) and the modal terms, then the understanding of the existence of constraints with \( p-pp' \), but without any modal term, and finally the anticipation that it is already done with \( p-p! \) and the positive interjection \( well \).

7. Conclusion

The originality of this paper stands in a renewal of the semiotico-cognitive interpretation of Culioli’s approach of the enunciative operations of detachment, notably in what concerns the double bifurcation (Bégoin-Augereau & Caron-Pargue, 2010b; Caron-Pargue et al., 2013 in press). More specifically we tried to express this interpretation in terms of a refinement of classical cognitive processes at work in a problem solving task. This approach relies on two successive semiotic levels of interpretation: one already done by Culioli and the other at the cognitive level. The articulation of these two semiotic levels allows an access to the cognitive level independent from the idiosyncrasy of the subject’s language.

Our interpretation leads to the identification, from linguistic markers, of two series of micro-cognitive processes intervening in the actualization of knowledge in the situation. A first series is linked to the processes of internalization and externalization and marked by the presence, or not, of starting terms, and by the repeat of some denominations allowing the characterization of elementary cognitive units (aggregates) and of decision processes. These micro-cognitive processes are stretch of material element (superposition \( p'-p! \)), and break from material elements (superposition \( pp'-p! \)). The other series is linked to means-end analysis and marked by positive or negative modal terms, notably interjections. That characterizes: the kind of evaluation of the current decision (right or not, with the superposition \( p-p' \)), and of the planning as a dead end or as already done (superposition \( p'-p! \)); a lower or better control than before on the situation (superposition \( p'-pp' \)); a progressive process of generalization of constraints with the understanding of their existence (superposition \( p-pp' \)) or their identification leading to a reorganization (superposition \( p-pp' \)).

This approach remains exploratory and needs a better interdisciplinary collaboration, including semiotics. Notably some improvement can be done by taking into account the prosodic aspects. Finally, the use of monologues in our
analyses must not lead to forget the intersubjective nature of language, which is basically at work in Culioli’s enunciative theory. That allows our approach being extended to the case of interactive intelligent agents.

References


A Dimension of Iconicity in Metaphor Variation—I Insist

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Abstract: This paper proposes a dimension of iconicity in metaphor variation at the level of linguistic instantiation, which would be novel in respect of Kövecses’ (2005) “kinds of variation in the linguistic expression of the same conceptual metaphor”. Such a criterion of iconicity is taken from Hiraga’s (2005) understanding of the interplay of metaphor and iconicity in metaphorical signification. When Hiraga (2005) re-examines the Peircean ternary account of iconicity (i.e. “image”, “diagram” and “metaphor”), it is her aim to clarify the continuum amongst the three “hypoicons”, a continuum which is based on a degree of conventionality and abstraction, in the sense of “being more or less directly tied to our sensory experiences”. Concerning a criterion of sign-object immediacy, I hold alongside Hiraga (2005) that “the image content of metaphor (…) is an iconic moment involved in metaphor” (p. 6). In this sense I propose a dimension of iconicity in metaphor variation which observes the mapping from the sensory perception onto the source concepts image content. The prominence of the “imagic mapping” marks to what extent this “iconic moment” in the metaphorical signification is foregrounded. A review of cases of metaphor variation between English and Chinese studied by Ning Yu (1995; 2001; 2003) enlightens us about the interest of looking at this dimension. I discuss the pertinence of my proposal within Grady’s (1997) theoretical framework. Some cases of metaphor variation between Spanish and Chinese are briefly analysed, according to the prominence of the “imagic mapping” (cf. Hiraga, 2005).

Key words: iconicity; metaphor variation; imagic mapping; embodied experience; experiential correlation; primary metaphor; primary scene; subscene; image content

An exquisite Chinese erotic poem by 李圗 李圗 from the Song Dynasty (960–1279) shows a flirting scene:

(1) 晚 妆 初 过,

wand zhuāng chū guò,

① The original version of this paper (“To draw a bow”), A dimension of iconicity in metaphor variation at the level of linguistic instantiation”) will appear in Elleström, L. O. Fischer and Ch. Ljungberg (Eds.). (2013). Iconic investigations [Iconicity in Language and Literature 12]. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
evening make-up newly finished
“Evening make-up newly done,”

深 檀 轻 注 些儿个。
chén tán qīng zhù xiē’ér-ge.
depth sandalwood softly apply a bit to
“Dark sandalwood stain is softly applied.”

向 人 微 露 丁香 颗，
xiànɡ rén wēi lù dīnɡ xiānɡ kuò，
to lover slightly show clove grain
“Her tongue slightly shows the top of a clove to her lover.”

一 曲 清 歌，
yī qǔ qīnɡ gé，
one melody clear song
“A melody of clear song”

暂 引 樱桃 破。
zàn yǐn yīng.táo pò.
temporarily induce cherry split
“Temporarily induces the cherry to split in halves.”

(…)①

It appears that she slightly half-opens her mouth to show her tongue to her lover. For a Chinese woman to be appealing her lips should be shut so her mouth resembles a cherry. However, when the clear song induces her to sing, her mouth opens inducing the tiny cherry to part.

But you may say what such a Chinese erotic poem has got to do with semiotics? I will try to explain.

The Chinese word 引 yǐn, which expresses the meaning of “to induce”, is polysemous, its original meaning being “to draw a bow”. When the Chinese character (引) is carefully considered, one can see that it is formed by the pictograph of a bow and the pictograph of a string, which reinforces visually the

① Translation by Mahe Avila, 高之涵 and César Reigosa.
metaphoric nature of the semantic extension. As in the case of the dent in a new car, discussed by Raymond Gibbs (2005, pp. 56–57), we do not perceive a drawn bow as a static pattern, but infer a force that may have acted on the object by virtue of its distorted shape, its transient tautness; a “cause” is then understood in terms of a “force”.

We can find Spanish counterparts of this figurative semantic extension, but there are differences at the level of its linguistic realization. One would say in Spanish, for instance:

(2) a. Eso arrastró una serie de calamidades.
   that pulled a series of calamities
   “That caused [lit, ‘pulled’] a series of calamities.”

b. La pequeña del sueldo le moverá a buscar otro empleo.
   the smallness of salary him will-move to search other job
   “The low salary will move him to search for another job.”

What kind of metaphor variation are we dealing with?

It appears that those expressions are equally licensed by the causes are physical forces primary metaphor (Gibbs, 2005, p. 117). However, it seems that the Chinese one evokes more “clearly” a possible real-world event in which the subjective judgement of “achieving results” co-occurs with the sensorimotor perception of a force or even with the exertion itself, in this case, a force exerted on a bow string.

What dimension of metaphor variation could account for this?

The title has already answered: a dimension of iconicity in metaphor variation (it even adds: I do insist).

I could say now: I am going to develop in your presence as fully and freely as I can the train of thought which led me to think about this. But I’ve been changing the order of pieces from the beginning. The poem has not necessarily been the first wagon in the train of thoughts that I’ve come to couple again here. This talk is not necessarily the first one in which such a train has been wagon by wagon assembled.

So, I prefer now to take the liberty of choosing from the set of seven flat shapes at random; to take the liberty of seeing if the uncertain pieces fit to form again and again the same square; or if the new pattern has one foot too much or too little.

Let’s take up the thread.

I repeat: What kind of metaphor variation are we dealing with? —I do insist.
The contemporary theory of metaphor (e.g. Johnson, 1987; Lakoff, 1987; 1993; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) has stressed from the beginning that metaphor is an issue of systematic patterns of thought with an experiential basis, rather than an issue of isolated novel uses of language. Ning Yu (cf. 1995; 2000; 2001; 2003; 2004) has carried out some cross-linguistic studies, precisely in order to empirically support the cognitive status of metaphor and its embodied grounding.

In at least three of his comparative analysis of metaphorical expressions from English and Chinese, the difference in the ways in which metaphorical conceptualization is actually manifested in each language persists.

In his (1995) first comparative study of metaphorical expressions of anger and happiness in English and Chinese, specifically in the case of the conceptualization of anger, he finds that only “head” and “vessel” are specified in two of the 15 English examples, whereas all 17 Chinese examples do specify one or two body parts, e.g. “face” (four times), “eyes” (five times), “lungs”, “belly skin” and “temples”.

In 2001 when Yu proposes a semantic analysis of metonymic and metaphor expressions involving body-part terms for the face, he also concludes that “Chinese seems to have much more conventionalized expressions, in the form of compounds and idioms, involving the body-part terms for the face” (Yu, 2001, p. 26)

For instance, English *blush* and *flush* are semantically equivalent to *liàn-hóng* (face-red) or *hóng-liàn* (redden-face) in Chinese. Having conflated the semantic component of location, the English words mean “become red in the face”. (p. 27)

In the fourth section of his later study on Chinese metaphors of thinking (2003), just before beginning the core of the discussion, one can find an extremely suggestive peripheral remark. In both languages, thinking of something in the past is conceptualized as the thinker “turning around” for “looking at” or “going back” for what he is trying to remember. 回首 *huí shǒu* [turn around-head] “look back, recollect”; 回眸 *huí móu* [turn around-eye] “look back, recollect, recall”; 追溯 *zhuì sù* [chase-trace] “trace back to, date from” are instances of a large set of Chinese compounds which start precisely with the verbs 回 *huí* “turn around” and 追 *zhuì* “chase”. In contrast, this cross-domain transfer from the spatial to the mental is found in English, apart from in look at, in some words constructed with the prefix re-, such as *recall, recollect, review*, etc. Yu (2003) concludes:

At the linguistic level (...) it seems that the conceptual metaphors and the bodily experiences in which the metaphors are grounded are more clearly and richly manifested in Chinese than in English in this particular case. (p. 158, my italics).

As far as “this particular case” is concerned, there doesn’t seem to be any remarkable point in such a consideration. On the one hand, it seems that his
criterion of “richness” largely conforms to Kövecses’s (2005) “degree of linguistic elaboration”, as a dimension of cross-linguistic variation regarding the extent of the repertory of linguistic expressions which arise from a given mapping or metaphorical entailment. On the other hand, it could be the case that his criterion of “clearness” tells us little beyond what we already know about the semantic opacity of morphosyntactic encoding.

However, if we ignore the constraints of “this particular case”, we may immediately realize that a novel proposal underlies the criterion of “clearness”. Firstly, couldn’t the variation displayed by the Chinese and English body-part terms repertoires involved in conceptualization that were mentioned earlier be understood as a difference in the degree of “clearness” of such metaphorical expressions? For instance, doesn’t the explicit mention of “face” in Chinese 脸红 liăn-hóng [face-red], relative to its implied reference in English “blush”, have as a result that the first one manifests more “clearly” the conceptual metonymy and the bodily experiences in which it is grounded?

Following this line of thought, we may claim, therefore, that the criterion of “clearness” brings out a dimension of cross-linguistic variation in the ways conceptual metaphors are instantiated linguistically. Such a dimension would deal with how “clearly” metaphorical expressions manifest the conceptual metaphors and, above all, the bodily experiences on which they are based.

But, what’s missing, I wonder as I hear myself? At first glance, it appears that such a remark is “self-sufficient”. But at second sight, to say “clearly” does not seem “clear” enough any more.

What does such a criterion of “clearness” account for?

Even in a later article, “Image schemas and perception” (2005), Joseph Grady still reacts against the early category of “ontological metaphors” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), he argues:

(….) the patterns that can clearly be identified as metaphoric involve a more specific mapping—we think of, e.g., ideas as things we can grasp or see, or in terms of properties like fuzziness or slipperiness. We don’t simply conceptualize them as objects, full stop, without further context. (Grady, 2005, p. 49, my italics)

Grady’s major point is precisely that metaphorical conceptualization does not emerge from the level of construal, but rather from “primary scenes”. In his view (1997), “primary scenes” are: “minimal (temporarily-delimited) episodes of
subjective experience, characterized by tight correlations between physical circumstance and cognitive response” (p. 24). The entrenched metaphoric association between “affection” and “warmth”, for instance, would arise in earliest childhood from the recurrent experienced scene of being held in one’s parents’ arms regularly triggering the subjective response of “affection”, via the sensory-motor input of “warmth” from the environment.

Such strong correlations between co-occurrent dimensions of embodied experience or “subscenes” (the perceptual and the cognitive one) build up the “primary scenes” from which the “primary metaphors” result. The image content of primary source concepts, that is, mental representations of sensory-motor stimuli, maps onto primary target ones, since, as Grady (1999) suggests:

(... we are more efficient at the conscious manipulation of images ...) in order to manipulate [cognitive functions] at the conscious level it may be necessary to tie these elements of mental experience to specific sensory images. (p. 87)

Notice once again that “experiential correlation as a basis for metaphor is quite distinct from such traditional motivations as similarity and “ground”, which refer to shared properties as opposed to a shared context” (Grady, 2003, p. 536). Quite different concepts such as “knowing” and “seeing” become linked in “primary metaphors” in virtue of numerous contexts where they are experienced as correlated (such contexts are instances of “primary scenes”). The direct “mark” of the anchorage to context in the emergence of metaphor is precisely the image content of primary source concepts from sensory-motor domains. It can thus be said that mental imagery is a crucial moment in metaphor generation.

If one assumes that perception is anchoring cognition, that metaphorical expressions are somehow “anchored” to the possible contexts in which a “primary scene” could be instantiated through the “image content” triggered by the perceptual subscene, this asks one to wonder what such an “anchoring” function of perception could imply for the licensing of metaphorical linguistic expressions, this asks one to wonder how “clearly” metaphorical expressions across languages manifest such embodied experiences in which they are grounded.

The criterion of “clearness” would be proposing a dimension of cross-linguistic and within-culture variation, which would consider to what extent metaphorical expressions that are based on the same conceptual metaphors evoke the possible experiential scenarios in which they are rooted. Such a criterion could distinguish:
(1) between those expressions that are licensed by primary mappings, and those that conjure up “images” with no direct motivation in experience; (2) amongst the former group of expressions, between those ones that “clearly” evoke the possible experiential scenarios from which they stem, and those that do it “unclearly”.

In every respect, there lies an all-pervading question. When Hiraga (2005) re-examines the Peircean ternary account of iconicity (i.e. “image”, “diagram” and “metaphor”), it is her aim to clarify the continuum amongst the three “hypoicons”, a continuum which is based on a degree of conventionality and abstraction, in the sense of “being more or less directly tied to our sensory experiences”.

Concerning a criterion of sign-object immediacy. I can hold alongside Hiraga (2005) that “the image content of metaphor (…) is an iconic moment involved in metaphor” (p. 6). In this sense I can state the issue my proposal is concerned with is the interplay of metaphor and iconicity in metaphorical signification.

It is important to bear in mind that to look at such a dimension of “clearness” implies observing the mapping between the sensory perception and the image content of the source concepts, because if we take into account that Hiraga (2005) understands such mappings of the motor-sensory images evoked by linguistic expressions as “iconic moments in metaphor”, then we could refine our first criterion of “clearness” as the prominence of the imagic mapping —insofar as linguistic expressions call-up more “clearly” their experiential motor-sensory base, the “imagic mapping” will be more foregrounded. In this way, we could say that such a dimension introduces a criterion of iconicity in metaphor variation at the level of metaphorical linguistic expressions.

In Spanish one usually expresses the meaning of “agreement, congruity” through the metaphorical semantic extension of the verb encajar “to fit”. For instance:

(3) a. Lo-que se dice no encaja con lo-que se hace.
    what one says not fits with what one does
    “What one says doesn’t fit with what one does.”

    b. Él no encaja con los demás.
    he not fits with the rest
    “He doesn’t fit in.”

An interesting Chinese counterpart, equally based on the primary metaphor, interrelatedness is physical interconnectedness (Grady, 1997, p. 283), is the
archaism 齲齻 jūyǔ “disagreement, incongruity”, which literal meaning is “upper and lower teeth don’t meet properly”. In Chinese one would say:

(4) a. 言行 齲齻。
    yánxíng jūyǔ.
    words. deeds disagree [lit. “upper and lower teeth don’t meet properly”]
    “What one says doesn’t fit with what one does.”

    b. 他 与 世 多 齲齻。
    tā yǔ shì duō jūyǔ.
    he with the-rest at all disagree [lit. “upper and lower teeth don’t meet properly”]
    “He doesn’t fit in.”

What dimension of metaphor variation could account for this? Teeth are a complex physical structure. Like “swallowing” (cf. Grady, 1997, pp. 82–86), “biting” (as in “bringing the upper and lower teeth together”) is a basic automatic act, that is just “experienced”, in the phenomenological sense giving us a strong feeling of discomfort or displeasure. The mapping between “physical interweaving” and “interrelatedness” could plausibly arise from a scene in which the experience of an unfitted bite leads us to form a mental representation of “incongruity” or “disagreement”, as a subjective response.

In accordance with that, I wonder to what extent the reference to “upper and lower teeth” in the Chinese expression, as a specification of the “physical arrangement”, must be understood as an “ungrounded” image with no direct motivation. Couldn’t our experiences of “relationships” be plausibly connected to our real-world experiences with “unfitted bites”?

The dimension of metaphor variation we proposed here observes the mapping from the sensory perception onto the source concepts image content. The prominence of the “image mapping” marks to what extent this “iconic moment” in the metaphorical signification is foregrounded (cf. Hiraga, 2005). Would it not be significant to look at such a dimension of iconicity to account for this case of metaphor variation?

I want to say with regard to metaphorical expressions what has been said once about fiction from a room of one’s own; metaphor is like a spider’s web, attached ever so lightly perhaps, but still attached to life at all four corners. Often the
attachment is scarcely perceptible; I would add, often the attachment vibrates against the eye instead.

References


The Dynamic Object and the Role of Rhetoric in Peirce’s Philosophy of Representation

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Abstract: The paper addresses the problem of relations holding between two branches of Peirce’s general semiotics, from the formal, impersonal nature of speculative grammar to the sign-user’s intended communicative purposes which constitute the scope of speculative rhetoric. In particular, it examines cases where speculative rhetoric is required to explain differences between the logical structure of the sign’s dynamic object and the structure of that sign as it is perceived and interpreted.

Key words: dynamic object; speculative grammar; speculative rhetoric; metaphor

1. Introduction

This paper exploits Peirce’s conception of semiotics as a logic which covers not a single discipline but, rather, a veritable philosophy of sign-action, of which the most familiar branch, speculative grammar, is only the first of three. More precisely, it investigates a particular relation holding between two of Peirce’s important logical concepts, namely the dynamic object and his theory of rhetoric as defined within this ‘philosophy of representation’.

The dynamic object—that is, the object outside the sign as opposed to its representation within the sign, this being the sign’s immediate object—is important for the simple reason that in all the definitions to be found of signs and semiosis the dynamic object is what determines the sign in its specific structure. On the other hand, speculative rhetoric—Peirce’s “theoretical” version as opposed to the traditional discipline that can be traced back to the Sophists and probably even earlier—can be shown to offer a satisfactory solution to problems involving signs which seem to deviate from the form extended by the dynamic object and for which

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1 I have benefitted from discussion of certain points in the paper with Mats Bergman. The ideas expressed herein are, of course, my sole responsibility.
a strictly formal approach turns out to be insufficient.

Background information enabling the reader to understand the broader context of the problem discussed in the paper is introduced first. This provides an overview of how Peirce conceived logic at the time of the Lowell Lectures of late 1903. This is followed by a discussion of his speculative grammar and the importance of the dynamic object within this formal branch of the general theory. The paper then introduces and discusses three cases which exemplify the limits of a strictly formal analysis of certain classes of signs. At this point, a description of Peirce’s speculative rhetoric is introduced as the necessary solution to the problem.

1.1 The Background

This is how Peirce introduces the important concept of the philosophy of representation in 1903:

Now it may be that Logic ought to be the science of Thirdness in general. But as I have studied it, it is simply the science of what must be and ought to be true representation, so far as representation can be known without any gathering of special facts beyond our ordinary daily life. It is in short the Philosophy of Representation. (Peirce 1931–58 [CP] 1.539)

The theoretical implications of a specific philosophy of representation are considerable, for this posits logic in the broad sense as that branch of the sciences of discovery which would theoretically regulate the way in which new scientific knowledge leaves the laboratory and encounters the real world and its users. It would prescribe protocols for the representation of data and the methodology of “scientific writing” (see, for example, selection 23 of The Essential Peirce, Volume 2 [EP2] 325–30). The sources for Peirce’s reasoning in the quotation above are to be found both in various drafts of his Lowell Lectures on logic scattered through the Collected Papers and in the sundry drafts and published sections of the Syllabus which were intended as an accompaniment to this same series of lectures. In spite of their bewildering genealogy these fragmentary sources constitute a rich and virtually inexhaustible treasure-trove of Peirce’s semiotic wisdom at that time. However, while I believe that Peirce conceived this wisdom as a means of regulating the communication of scientific information, in this paper I shall put it to a less exacting

1 Unlike the CP formulation the original manuscript (MS465; 27. 1903) has capitals and no commas. I have retained the manuscript punctuation.
and less exalted purpose, namely the interpretation of signs of a non-scientific nature.

Peirce’s philosophy of representation thus comprises the three cenoscopic sciences common to all forms of representation—speculative grammar, which corresponds closely to Peircean semiotics as it is generally understood (see, for example, EP2 272–88, 1903), critic and speculative rhetoric, and to this extent constitutes Peirce’s “speculative”, i.e. theoretical, version of the old trivium of grammar, logic and rhetoric. At the same time, Peirce gives us two distinct definitions of logic; the general, which is his entire philosophy of representation—logic as semeiotic—, and critic, which is logic in the particular and more traditional sense. It seems intuitively sound to expect all three branches to participate in a fully Peircean analysis of signs, verbal or otherwise. However, in what follows I shall limit my discussion principally to two branches of the general logic, namely speculative grammar and speculative rhetoric, with only a passing reference to critic. My intention is to show that in a variety of cases, speculative grammar is unable to account for the forms we encounter.

1.2 Speculative Grammar

The fundamental tasks of speculative grammar are now relatively well understood and include at least the following. ①

- The definition of semiosis and the identification of its ‘core’ elements, namely the sign, the two objects and the three interpretants (although Peirce only developed the scope of the object and the interpretant during the year following the Lowell Lectures (CP 8.335, 1904)).
- The establishment of the various trichotomies, taxonomies of signs, and the classes they yield. In this case, too, the extension of the number of trichotomies from the initial three to six and ultimately to ten occurred after the Lowell Lectures.
- And, most importantly for present purposes, the establishment of the role fulfilled in semiosis by the sign’s object, as can be seen from the following definition:

I define a Sign as anything which is so determined by something else, called its Object, and so determines an effect upon a person, which effect I call its

① I say “relatively” as Peirce exegesis is a lively area of enquiry and it is fair to say that there are many semiotic issues, the difference between sign and representamen, for example, on which Peirce scholars might not necessarily agree.
Interpretant, that the latter is thereby mediately determined by the former. My insertion of “upon a person” is a sop to Cerberus, because I despair of making my own broader conception understood. (Peirce & Welby-Gregory 1977 [SS] 80–81, 1908)

As Peirce’s reference to the “sop to Cerberus” shows, speculative grammar is an empty, prescriptive formalism which constrains the sorts of entities that can function as signs. In doing so it excludes such reference or appeal to human agency and psychology as “an effect upon a person”, which Peirce reluctantly refers to on this occasion in order to convey his ‘broader conception’. Critic—logic in the narrow sense—is confined to more specialist studies. Speculative rhetoric, on the other hand, although it has received much critical attention recently (see, for example, Santaella 1999, Liszka 2000, Colapietro 2007 and Bergman 2010) requires further investigation into the nature of its articulation with the other two branches of the philosophy of representation. This is the problem addressed in this paper, and my starting point, as the many definitions of the sign show, is the principle that the sign and its structure are determined by what came to be defined as the dynamic object.

1.3 The Dynamic Object

In his correspondence with Lady Welby Peirce further defines the sign “in the widest sense [as] any medium for the communication or extension of a Form (or feature)” (SS 196, 1906). Now the motivation of the form of a verbal sign is described by Peirce in terms of the constituent structure of its dynamic object, namely the “partial objects” which the sign represents, as he suggests in the following statement: ‘Thus the partial objects of an ordinary transitive verb are an agent and a patient. These distinctive characters have nothing to do with the form of a verb, as a sign, but are derived from the fact signified’ (EP2 408, 1907).

Since the structure of verbal signs is determined by that of the “fact” represented it follows that any partial objects involved must determine the form which is extended in the sign. In other words, these partial objects determine what we can, for the nonce, call the sign’s “logical form”. However, while a sign’s logical form is determined solely by the set of partial objects it represents, its perceived “final form” may not necessarily correspond to this logical form. This is the case in the three case studies to follow. The first two are verbal, the third multimodal.
2. Problem Signs

Case study 1

Consider the following utterance, one of Peirce’s own examples:

1) Cain killed Abel.

As the definition from EP2 408 above states, the structure of a linguistic sign is determined by that of the ‘fact’ represented. It follows, therefore, that any partial objects involved in that fact determine the form which is extended in the sign. In the present case, we have two partial objects (in fact, three, as Peirce suggests that the ‘killing’ is also a partial object (CP 2.230, 1910), but I have simplified to two), namely the referents Cain and Abel, and, in the sign, the two referring expressions Cain and Abel. These latter are proper nouns and therefore indexical, although it should be noted that in non-verbal, pictorial signs the term ‘referring expression’ is problematic. In a photograph the ‘referring’ element, namely the section of rays projected from the object, exists but is not immediately perceivable (cf. CP 2.320, 1903, for a discussion), while in a captionless non-photographic image such as a sketch or a painting—these are icons—there are no referring elements at all; Captionless sketches and paintings simply do not have ‘referents’ in the linguistic sense of the term.

The form extended by the object is identical to the transitive agent + patient form evident in utterance (1), a configuration which is represented as Figure 1 where the ellipses stand conventionally for object, sign and interpretant. In this case, the two partial objects are associated by a line indicating the ‘killing’ action, with Cain as agent and Abel as patient in both sign and object; and the representation of this dyadic relation in the interpretant is a way of showing that the utterance has functioned correctly as a sign. Utterance (1), then, is a straightforward case where the logical form of the object and the final, perceived form in the sign are identical.

![Figure 1: Semiosis in a simple transitive sentence](image)

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Consider now:

(2) *It was Abel that Cain killed.* (cleft)
(3) *What Cain did was kill Abel.* (pseudo-cleft)

The syntactic structures displayed here are quite striking departures from the structure of the simplex form (1) and although all three represent the same fact, namely the killing of Abel by Cain, speculative grammar is devoid of concepts which might explain the reorganization of the information involved. To account for the discrepancies between the simplex form and the two types of clefts analysts usually take a short cut and proceed directly to linguistics. Not a truly Peircean approach, although it must be admitted that there are no doubt thousands of linguists at large who are working on clefts, nominal clauses and sentence structure generally without the slightest knowledge of Peircean semiotics. We return to the problem raised by the clefts below.

**Case study 2**

Now consider the following apparently simple utterance:

(4) *Man is a wolf.*

Clearly, this utterance displays the hypoiconic structure of metaphor as defined in the following passage, at which point Peirce is submitting the icon to his familiar categorial analysis: Images are composed of First Firstnesses, diagrams of Second Firstnesses—relations or reactions—while metaphor partakes of Third Firstness, namely mediation, representation, synthesis.  

Hypoicons may be roughly divided according to the mode of Firstness of which they partake. Those which partake of simple qualities, or First Firstnesses, are images; those which represent the relations, mainly dyadic, or so regarded, of the parts of one thing by analogous relations in their own parts, are diagrams; those which represent the representative character of a representamen by representing a parallelism in something else, are metaphors. 

(CP 2.277; EP2 274, 1903)

Utterance (4) is an attempt to judge the behaviour of human beings by comparing it with an example from the animal kingdom, and the resulting parallelism informing the object and “synthesized” in the sign is composed of the partial objects represented in two distinct “facts”, (5) and (6). One is culturally

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1. See, for example, an early formulation in CP 1.378, c. 1890.
determined, is assumed to be unproblematic and well-known, and forms the agent + patient fact in what we might call, following the conceptual metaphor tradition initiated by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), the ‘base’ or ‘source’ domain, the conceptual domain which supports the basis or reference point of the comparison: 

(5) *The wolf preys on other animals.*

The other domain holds the fact ‘targeted’ by the metaphor:

(6) *Man % other humans.*

Here the symbol % simply stands for the particular problematic agent + patient relation to be characterized, judged or assessed by the speaker by means of the metaphor. While the hypoiconic structure of Figure 1 is, of course, that of the diagram, we can represent the sign-action which results in the parallel domain structure of utterance (4) by Figure 2.

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 2** The structure of semiosis in a metaphorical utterance

Note that the bracketed elements on Figure 2 identify counterpart participants in the original parallelism which are *not* represented in the sign. These have literally been bracketed off; In the object, *wolf* maps to its target counterpart *man* as does the expression (*other animals*) to (*other humans*). However, we find that while the relation between the wolf and other animals in the unproblematic fact from the source domain is fully specified in the object this is not the case in the sign. Similarly, the targeted fact concerning man and other humans is specified in the object but is not specified in the sign. Hence the bracketed items in the parallelism in the object on Figure 2 which are absent from the sign, and hence, too, the two diagnostic features of signs structured hypoiconically by metaphor. First, all

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1 Peirce seems never to have had time to flesh out his innovative conception of metaphor and identify its components, hence my recourse to conceptual metaphor terminology.
metaphorical signs are underspecified with respect to the structure of their dynamic objects. That is, the perceived final form in the sign is considerably less complex than the logical form in the object. The two-tiered parallelism has been reduced to a vector. Second, all metaphorical signs are “congenitally” incongruous: *man* and *wolf*, for example, belong to distinct conceptual and zoological domains. At this point too, then, it has to be noted that recourse to speculative grammar can take us no farther. This simply defines what a metaphorical sign is and how it is structured but can tell us no more. For example, it cannot explain why either “domain” should be problematic or otherwise, or which should stand as a reference for comparison with the other.

**Case study 3**

Consider, finally, Figures 3 and 4.

![Figure 3 Pedestrian locomotion](image1)

![Figure 4 Vehicular locomotion](image2)

Figure 3 shows two people in jeans walking towards their destination in the pedestrian area of a big city, and thus features an ecologically sound form of
locomotion. Although not as complex as a verbal sign—it is a sign—a photographic fact. This photograph has propositional structure and is therefore dicent and constitutes what we might call a “photographic fact”.

Figure 4 features cars and other motor vehicles heading towards their destinations in a reputedly polluted urban landscape. Although virtually unavoidable in our day and age, this is uncontrovertially considered to be a less environmentally friendly form of locomotion. “Literal” facts such as these and some of their various partial objects inform the pictorial metaphor on Figure 5. Like the man-wolf example above, the metaphor displayed by the advertisement on Figure 5 is both underspecified and incongruous: it “synthesizes” incomplete partial objects and structure to be found in facts similar to those represented by the photographs on Figures 3 and 4. We have part of one partial object, the bottom of a human leg clad in jeans, and this is the remaining element from the unproblematic, socially valued source domain of ecologically acceptable locomotion. However, as a second partial object we have, instead of a foot and shoe, a small car minus its driver, and this forms the problematic target the publicist is seeking to render consensual. While for most western readers the text is impenetrable we nevertheless understand that the advertisement vaunts the ecological merits of what the publicist posits as an environmentally friendly make of cars, although there is nothing in speculative grammar to explain how this striking parallelism was established in the first place. For this, and for an explanation of the metaphorical utterance and the clefts examined above, we are obliged to refer to speculative rhetoric.

![Cropped advertisement for an environmentally friendly vehicle](image)

Figure 5  Cropped advertisement for an environmentally friendly vehicle

3. Speculative Rhetoric

Liszka (2000) is an important source of information concerning the evolution of
Peirce’s conception of speculative rhetoric. We learn that this branch of the grand logic received many different titles over the years, from pure/general/formal/universal/speculative rhetoric, for example, to objective logic and, ultimately, methodeutic. There are also upwards of thirty different definitions of the discipline (p.440). Unlike the two branches coming earlier in the general philosophy—speculative grammar and critic—this branch of the grand logic was clearly left in an inchoate and ill-defined state. Nevertheless, the following two definitions offer a useful entry into the concept: “[Speculative rhetoric] is the doctrine of the general conditions of the reference of Symbols and other Signs to the Interpretants which they aim to determine” (CP 2.93, 1902). The importance of this first statement is that rhetoric concerns not only the traditional field of verbal communication but must be extended to include indices and icons, the “other Signs” of the definition: Captionless photographs and paintings, for example, also fall within the scope of speculative rhetoric.

The second definition makes a similar claim; “[Speculative rhetoric]’s most essential business is to ascertain by logical analysis, greatly facilitated by the development of the other branches of semiotics, what are the indispensable conditions of a sign’s acting to determine another sign nearly equivalent to itself” (EP2 328, 1904). It also states that the rhetoric benefits from the two branches coming earlier in the general philosophy of representation.

Moreover, Peirce elsewhere makes a crucially important distinction between speculative rhetoric and speculative grammar: “In coming to Speculative Rhetoric, after the main conceptions of logic have been well settled, there can be no serious objection to relaxing the severity of our rule of excluding psychological matter, observations of how we think, and the like” (CP 2.107, 1902). In other words, while speculative grammar is an empty formalism free from human bias, there is absolutely no theoretical reason why its rhetorical counterpart should not explicitly exploit the human factor in communication. Among other things, it authorizes us to consider the speaker’s communicative purpose in the production of utterances such as (2), (3) and (4), and, of course, the advertisement on Figure 5.

Speculative, “theoretical” rhetoric differs from the traditional “art” in a number of ways:

A proposition of geometry, a definition of a botanical species, a description of a crystal or of a telescopic nebula is subjected to a mandatory form of statement that is artificial in the extreme. Evidently, our conception of rhetoric has got to be generalized; and while we are about it, why not remove
The restriction of rhetoric to speech? (EP2 326, 1904, emphasis added)

The originality of this suggestion can be seen in this extract from Peirce’s heterogeneous sample of the variety of intentional signs susceptible of rhetorical treatment; “... every picture, diagram, natural cry, pointing finger, wink, knot in one’s handkerchief, memory, dream...” (EP2 326). In other words, Peirce is suggesting, there is no aspect of human communication which does not involve some form of rhetorical processing, this being the field of application of both common (cenoscopic) rhetoric and its special (idioscopic), traditional predecessor, a field which deals with metaphorical signs such as utterance (4) and Figure 5.

Interestingly, Peirce defined the first of three special “modes” of rhetoric in at least two different but complementary ways. In his Carnegie application of 1902 he considered it to be the study of individual manifestations of the mind, whether these are permanent works, e.g. paintings, sculptures, buildings, etc., or actions, all falling within the purview of art criticism (CP 1.201, 1902). Furthermore, in the article “Ideas, Stray or Stolen, about Scientific Writing” published two years later, he refined this scheme. Following from the more theoretical discipline of speculative rhetoric, the first special mode of rhetoric was to be organized into three increasingly complex branches; first, according to the special nature of the ideas to be conveyed, a species of rhetoric of fine art which deals principally with feeling; second, according to the special nature of the type of signs “into which the interpretation is to take place”, this being a rhetoric of practical persuasion and its purpose being to produce a resolve or change of habit; and, finally, a rhetoric “where the matter is science” (EP2 329, 1904). As a scientist, Peirce would have been concerned principally with the last of the three purposes of this redefined version of traditional rhetoric, while the cases examined above—the simplex form, the clefts and the two metaphorical communications—fall more modestly within the scope of the second.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The data examined above call for three remarks. First, explanations of how the information conveyed by utterance (1) is reorganized contextually as in (2) and (3) usually ignore or underestimate the rhetorical dimension; Linguists proceed immediately to discussion of context and speaker perspective without realizing or stipulating that these are rhetorical concerns. And yet, any contextual re-working of the information content of (1) is necessarily a function of the speaker’s
communicative purpose and is therefore necessarily rhetorical in nature (as, indeed, are all realizations of human communication from the humble phatic grunt to the hieratoc-scientific texts of the astrophysicists). Moreover, it is noteworthy that the examples of readjusted information that we find in (2) and (3) involve presupposition. Utterance (2) It was Abel that Cain killed. involves the presupposed fact; (2′) Cain killed someone. Similarly, the pseudo-cleft (3) What Cain did was kill Abel. similarly presupposes the following fact: (3′) Cain did something. Clearly, at this point Peirce’s critic branch of the general philosophy enters the picture, since presupposition is essentially logical in nature, and such logical relations as hold between clefts and their presupposed facts also merit investigation.

Second, while it is possible within speculative grammar to establish just how the pairs of distinct facts in both utterance (4) and the pictorial metaphor on Figure 5 can be related to the final form of each sign—in each case the original parallelism is “reduced” to a vector—speculative grammar cannot account for the placing of such pairs of facts in parallel, for this is the function of speculative (and traditional) rhetoric. In order to account for the way the perceived structure of the sign deviates from that of the object which determines it we cannot avoid considering the communicative purpose of the sign and what Peirce calls the “rhetorical evidence” revealed, for example, by the interpretant (s) it occasions. In placing the two domains in parallel in the case of utterance (4), for example, the speaker is presumably aiming to determine a specific interpretant:

(7) Yes, aren’t human beings horrible to one another!

However, it is not inconceivable that this same utterance should have produced the unintended reaction:

(8) Actually, I think you’re being unkind to wolves!

Both, of course, are valid interpretants of utterance (4) and have clearly integrated the complex parallelism of the object’s logical structure from the sign’s underspecified perceivable form, while in the case of Figure 5 the interpretant targeted by the sign is surely the unrestricted purchasing of the car in question.

Finally, it is important to realize that, contrary to much received opinion, the underspecified and incongruous nature of metaphorical signs is not a rhetorical problem at all, but rather one that involves the relation between the sign and the medium through which it is transmitted—in other words, an ecology of signs. ¹ Within the philosophy of representation hypoiconicity is pivotal between speculative

¹ See Jappy (in press, Ch. 5) for a discussion.
grammar, the two rhetorics and Peirce’s category theory. Peirce did not invent or discover metaphor, of course. Aristotle, for one, had already defined it in both the Poetics and volume three of the Rhetoric and he was followed by a host of Classical, Renaissance and later scholars. What the terse definition in paragraph 2.277 does, however, is explain the sign-ecological universality of metaphor, while Peirce’s category theory offers one explanation of how it occurs. Orators, poets, fabulists and allegorists through the ages have simply exploited the rhetorical possibilities made available by the peculiar structure of metaphorical hypoiconicity which Peirce’s uncompromising formula identifies and defines. As a consequence, metaphor has found its way as a central concept in the manuals and treatises of rhetoric theorists from Aristotle onwards.

This paper, then, is a plea for the further study of the relation between speculative grammar and speculative rhetoric, and, in particular, of the oft encountered discrepancies between the logical structure of the dynamic object and the sign’s perceived form. It also draws attention to the need to establish a clear relation between Peirce’s theoretical rhetoric and the specialized version inherited from the tradition and to show how they complement each other.

References


Peirce’s Iconism: From Gesture to Scripture

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Abstract: Peirce’s analysis of signs offers many elements to treat the theme of gestures in human cultures, although he rarely directly dealt with the subject. It can be easily shown an iconic and metaphoric root in any kind of gesture, or simply an indexical and symbolic nature in it. In any case, gestures represent a synthesis of a larger semiotic process, mixing analogical and conventional elements of signification.

Yet, the most significant gesture in any culture is the act of writing; an inscription that schematizes the practices of human existence and the need of communication, operating through iconic, indexical and symbolic means. The “Agency of Scripture”, in Peirce’s terms, is in any culture a precise gesture of ‘miniaturing’ the world and substituting reality, extraordinarily endowed with pragmatic efficacy.

I will make reference to Existential Graphs and Peircean long-life research on iconism, understanding them as an ideal bridge between Western and Eastern thought.

Key words: Peirce; icon; existential graphs; pragmatism; gesture; diagram

Gesture works as a true world openness, inasmuch as it inscribes a primeval nucleus of praxis, that in-cises the real and de-cides the course of experience. The gesture is an emergence which changes the surrounding horizon, by tracing in it the furrow of a path. It is the pragmatic unity par excellence. The word “gesture” can be derived from the Latin gerere, agere—“bring forth” “execute”. You cannot do justice to gestures if you only consider them from a linguistic perspective, although languages emerge for sure from gestures, hands’ gestures, in particular. Gestures synthesize at best the pragmatic and the semiotic perspective.

The gesture—wrote George Herbert Mead—is not “someone’s gesture”; and this is especially true regarding the vocal gesture, that arises and explodes in every

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1 “Experience” stems from the Latin word ex-perior, meaning “finding a way which leads out of”. Within the theme survives the Greek word poros, which stands for “path”, “itinerary”, “stratagem”. To decide, from the Latin de-cidere (from caeduo) literally means “to cut off”.

direction, that it is not mine or yours, but belongs to all, to the whole community. In its opening itself up, the gesture calls for an answer; it lays out the harmonic threshold of the responding and of the corresponding, so allowing the syntony, the shared resounding of the living beings. The gesture, then, is initially the simple incentive that triggers a social response. It is the gesture that enables the reciprocal adjustments between different individual organisms, which ‘pro-voke’ an appropriate response, within which a second organism performs its own part so contributing to the constitution of the act in its wholeness and producing a behavioral analogy. Act—with its incorporate habit—is first and original; each and every behavior stems from a gesture, which is to be considered as the germinal nucleus of the act

There is no evidence, then, to postulate the existence of states of consciousness vibrating beyond and before the expressive gestures. No gesture is given as exteriorization of a process of thought; simply, the act is the whole and it is also the primum from which one must start.

Any gesture is then, I would say, a “grapheme”, a writing of the body and, all together, of the world or, better, the birthplace of these two polarities. The gesture means that “there is something to do, e.g. there is to respond and to correspond to what happens”. In this sense, any gesture has an iconic ground; it contains something that can only be experienced in a mimetic reenactment.

We’ll come in short to this. Let’s add, yet, that the most significant gesture in any culture is the act of writing; an inscription that schematizes the practices of human existence and the need of communication, operating through iconic, indexical and symbolic means. The “Agency of Scripture”, in Peirce’s terms (cf. CP 4.552), is in any culture a precise gesture of ‘miniaturizing’ the world and substituting reality, extraordinarily endowed with pragmatic efficacy. The role of the writing images is that of the infinite translation of the world into gesture, sign and figure.

Peirce’s analysis of signs offers many elements to treat the theme of gestures in human cultures, although he rarely directly dealt with the subject. It can be easily

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1. Ibid.
2. On this regard, nearly all pragmatists agree: from Peirce of Some Consequences of Four Incapacities (“We have no power of introspection”) to James in his Radical Empiricism (“Does consciousness exist?”). Consciousness exists as a mere result, an effect of the work of signs, a pure function useful for some life’s needs.
3. C. Sini. Gli abiti, le pratiche, i saperi. Jaca Book. Milano 1996: 20. “The gesture is the happening of that border, of that threshold, so that there is something to do, that is, there is something to respond and correspond to what happens”.
4. Ibid.
shown an iconic and metaphoric root in any kind of gesture, or simply an indexical and symbolic nature in it. In any case, gestures represent a synthesis of a larger semiotic process, mixing analogical and conventional elements of signification.

I wish to clear, first of all, that the theme of iconism, in Peirce, has a categorial and phenomenological foundation (cf. CP 2.228), that is coincides with the problem of the possibility of thinking of the analogy between two entities, of seeing the one as a measure to the other. Put more precisely, the problem of iconism is first and foremost the problem of the relation between an Object and its Substitute, the problem of the assimilation between a datum and a significatum, the theme (addressed with concern also by Wittgenstein) of knowing as ‘seeing as’. Iconism is, therefore, more a transcendental and constitutive place than a particular aspect of the working of the sign. To use Eco’s words: “The icon is a phenomenon that founds all possible judgment of likeness, but it cannot be founded on likeness itself”¹.

Peirce resumes with his theory of the icon the mimetic hypothesis, surveyed by Plato in the Cratylus, underlining in some passages the position of iconism as a position of “mimicry” between sign and object, that is, not of ‘naturalism’, but, more properly, of tuning, of substitution-constitution between the one and the other. Any signification has an iconic-mimetic foundation;

“That icons of the algebraic kind, though usually very simple ones, exist in all ordinary grammatical propositions is one of the philosophic truths that the Boolean logic brings to light. In all primitive writing, such as the Egyptian hieroglyphics, there are icons of a non-logical kind, the ideographs. In the earliest form of speech, there probably was a large element of mimicry. But in all languages known, such representations have been replaced by conventional auditory signs. These, however, are such that they can only be explained by icons. But in the syntax of every language there are logical icons of the kind that are aided by conventional rules” (CP 2.280). And note the following lines: “Many diagrams resemble their objects not at all in looks; it is only in respect to the relations of their parts that their likeness consists. Thus, we may show the relation between the different kinds of signs by a brace, thus:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Icons} & \quad \text{Signs} \\
\text{Indices} & \quad \text{Symbols}
\end{align*}
\]

This is an icon. But the only respect in which it resembles its object is that the

brace shows the classes of icons, indices, and symbols to be related to one another and to the general class of signs, as they really are, in a general way. [...] In fact, every algebraical equation is an icon, in so far as it exhibits, by means of the algebraical signs (which are not themselves icons), the relations of the quantities concerned” (CP 2.282).

Let’s then consider every algebraical equation as a gesture of writing, with its iconic and indexical (CP 2.338) characters. Of course it is also a complex symbol that calls for an interpretation in practice. “As for algebra the very idea of the art is that it presents formulae which can be manipulated, and that by observing the effects of such manipulation we find properties not to be otherwise discerned [...] and no application could be made of such an abstract statement without translating it into a sensible image” (CP 3.363).

Any inscription is first of all a gesture that opens a world, as we said in the beginning, it exhibits a path, it is a grapheme that acts, that shows that something has to be done in an operative sense. Every thought has then an iconic root, and every icon takes shape as a graph with concrete features susceptible to experiment, “that renders literally visible before one’s very eyes the operation of thinking in actu” (CP 4.6). Rather than being the same as the “mental images” of empiricist memory, these icons are “external” signs, in other words scriptures, graphs, diagrams that, as Peirce says, have to be formulated, constructed and experimented on in the imagination or on paper so that, through a process of invention, new iconic figures and, thus, new significative truths can be confirmed.

Every new theory—especially in mathematics—is grounded in this seeing in a different way, that is translated in writing in a different way (think of the passage from ideographic to alphabetic scriptures), which in turn is equivalent to a practicing in a different way.

Now, having said this, I think it is clear why what Peirce himself called the icons of algebra at a certain point turned out to be unsatisfactory. Iconism had to be radical, fully figural, corporeal, pictorial; the alphabetical system was an impediment, nothing more than a historical form of expressing symbolic thought. We don’t need to go beyond the material quality towards the abstract and conventional meaning, but to find the logical and symbolical content in the iconicity itself of the sign, to find, so to say, pictured in the forms of expression the logical forms themselves. And, in fact, once he had abandoned algebraisms and also Euler’s circles, held to be devoid of the vital power of growth, Peirce arrived at his system of Existential Graphs. “It greatly facilitates the solution of problems of Logic, not by any mysterious properties, but simply by substituting for the symbols in which
such problems present themselves, *concrete visual figures* concerning which we have merely to say whether or not they admit certain describable relations of their parts. Diagrammatic reasoning is the only really fertile reasoning.” This passage is in a text I would recommend as an introduction to the Existential Graphs; the *Prolegomena to an Apology for Pragmaticism*, published in the *Monist* in 1906 (CP 4.530 ff.). The content (the latent schematism, in a Baconian sense) of the logical form seems to be precisely the iconism of graphic and diagrammatic scripture. The same, you may recall, thought Wittgenstein in the *Tractatus* with his *Abbildungstheorie*; In every assertion, in every logical form is contained an icon. From this perspective, there can be nothing unusual about Peirce’s anxious desire to dedicate his best energies to constructing many different kinds of logical and mathematical notation, as well as a system of ideographical scripture able to reproduce perfectly the movement of thought “in actu”. He had in fact an enormous fascination towards ideography and his palpable, bodily, sensuous, context-dependent characters.

For Peirce every concept is expressed pragmatically in a habit and graphically in a scripture. Existential Graphs and pragmatism are, in short, the answer to the same question: where are the places of ideas? What are ideas? I propose to interpret Peirce’s thought in this way; there is no difference between *grammata* (scripts) and *pragmata* (habits); both exist *in nuce* as gestures. As I said in the beginning, gestures are scriptures of the world in form of acts.

Thought resides in the “palpable” signs that it uses, in the sensible traces that support it; it is constructed not in the interiority of consciousness but out there—still using these traditional metaphors—where it measures its effects, exerts an action, exhibits the acts that bear witness to a living understanding. And those acts need always an inscription, to be fixed and recognized. No inscription, no culture at all, no object, or at least social objects, at all. In conclusion, any pragmatic expression of some significance assumes the modes of an iconic, alphabetic or ideographic, scripture and, for Peirce, the pragmatics of experience becomes a complex and refined pragmatics of scripture. In the graphs thought in fact becomes practice, experiment, habit of behaviour; to reason signifies to manipulate scriptures. Thought does not think, our philosopher seems to say, unless starting from this practice; mind and its signs are not prior to and not anywhere other than in diagrammatic space. Following the Italian philosopher Giambattista Vico, Peirce could then say that every diagram is only *gramma*; any kind of human or physical trace, and so any gesture, the nucleus of any germinal act.
References

An Application of Peirce’s 66 Classes of Signs

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Abstract: Peirce defines semiotics as “the science of the necessary laws of thought”. The study of signs begins with the observation of the sign characteristics that are explicit and continues in a process of abstraction and inferences, which elaborates a more comprehensive general system of all possible types of signs. From innumerable observations, Peirce came up with a classification of ten classes of signs, which he described and exemplified in such precision that it eventually became his best-known classification. However, in his later years, when developing the sign process in much greater detail, Peirce proposed a classification of no less than 66 classes of signs. I have been researching on the 66 classes of signs for a good number of years. Five years ago I proposed a visual model that represents the 66 classes of sign, which I called Signtree. The purpose of the visual model was to provide a detailed graphical representation of the 66 classes and to show that all these classes of signs create a complex system. The Signtree visual model aims to contribute to a better understanding of the expanded sign classes system. Visual diagrams are very useful in making complex and abstract conceptual systems clearer. They streamline the work with a large number of classes that are related to each other in many different ways, because in the visual model one can see the whole set of classes at the same time.

In this paper I will show how the Signtree can be used as a tool for semiotic analysis and support that any application of Peirce’s classes of signs should be based on a system of classes to achieve a better understand of semiosis, that is, the semiotic process. Analyses that take individual sign classes to categorize an aspect of a sign do not agree with semiotics being the study of sign in action. The application of the 66 classes of signs is a complex process of logic that can be used to better comprehend semiosis as a process. The analyses I propose reveal the Signtree as a powerful tool not only to describe the sign in detail, but also to show the expansion of meaning in the signs. The analysis will focus on a particular typeface designed to create a new experience on writing and reading texts. The unusual form of its characters requires some exploration to recognize the alphabetic letters and understand its texts. The typeface proposes new rules for the written text and the semiotic analysis, as a method of inquiry, will show how the meaning of typeface and of written text can grow through a chain of signs.

Key words: semiotics; C. S. Peirce; 66 classes of signs; semiotic analysis; semiosis
This paper presents a semiotic analysis using the system of 66 classes of signs. The purpose of this paper is to show that considering a great number of classes of signs it is possible to depict the semiotic process and see how signs grow. Although few people are familiar with the system of 66 classes of signs, I will not discuss the model itself, neither its construction, the analysis itself will show the method adopted. It is important to emphasize that although the classes of signs will be distinguished, they are not used to classify the sign as being of one or other type. The sign classes show a method of analysis that go through most of the classes of this system. The omnipresence of Peirce’s categories is present in this semiotic analysis that highlights the relation among the classes of signs.

A semiotic analysis might begin by the experience with the sign. The sign that will be analyzed is a typeface designed by Ji Lee that is called WENS (Picture 1). Although it doesn’t look like, this is a Latin alphabet typeface. The design of its characters was based on the Latin alphabet, but this is not evident just by looking at the typeface. The WENS characters are not similar to the Latin alphabet, at least not in a first look. This is the most intriguing characteristic of this sign. Furthermore, the typeface allows reading and writing in four directions: west, east, north, and south. That explains the typeface name. This particular ability is given by the typeface composition mode. The WENS characters are composed by a Latin alphabet letter repeated four times in the four directions. The character space is a square, divided in four equal parts, in which each letter will be placed. As we will see, this typeface has some visual characteristics similar to diagrammatical languages. How to decipher this sign without any further explanation, how to read these texts and how the qualities of this sign modifies the reading and writing of a Latin alphabet text are questions that will be clarified in this paper.

The qualities of this sign are fundamental for its understanding as a sign. We can say that its quality works as a sign. Because of that this sign can be a Qualisign, which is a sign in so far as it represents its own qualities. The visual qualities of this sign have an important role in this semiotic process; they are fundamental for the written language. Although a language does not depend on visual signs, the written text depends. And this typeface stresses the relationship between visual and verbal languages in written texts.

When we talk about qualities as Qualisigns, we are talking about the possibility of these qualities (or features) to appear in sign of experience. This sign of experience is called Sinsign. Sinsigns refer to a particular sign in a determined time and space. For example, the typeface used in a determined text, or the typeface presented in a software as a typeface to be used in a text. But a typeface is not only
a possibility of qualities, neither a particular sign isolated from other instances of it. Each instance of it is governed by some laws that ensure that the typeface will continue to be the same typeface no matter its instances. We call this sign a general law or type a Legisign.

This overview shows that Qualisigns, Sinsigns and Legisigns are omnipresent, as Peirce’s categories. We might now distinguish the different classes of Quali-, Sin- and Legisigns that appear in the system of 66 sign classes (Picture 2). In the system of ten classes there is only one class of Qualisign, but, in the larger system, the Qualisigns are of six different types. The Sinsigns that are distinguished in the system of ten classes in three classes; Iconic Sinsign, Rhematic Indexical Sinsign and Dicent Sinsign. In the 66 class system, they are divided into 24 sign classes. The Legisigns that are divided in the smaller system as Iconic Legisign, Rhematic Indexical Legisign, Dicent Indexical Legisign, Rhematic Symbol, Dicent Symbol and Argument, in the larger system, are divided into thirty-seven classes of signs. By this number it is evident that the system of 66 sign classes considers more aspects of the sign than the system of ten classes. While the smaller system considers only the sign in itself, the relation between sign and object and the relation between sign and interpretant, the larger system considers the two types of objects, the immediate and the dynamical, and the three types of interpretant, the immediate, the dynamical and the final, as well as the relationships between these constituents.
of the sign.

![Diagram](image)

**Picture 2** The 66 classes of signs in the SignTree model designed by Priscila Borges

I am not going to depict each class of the 66 class system, but I will try to point the most important sign classes for this sign analysis and show their relation in the semiotic process.

**Qualisigns**

The six types of Qualisigns results from the object division in Immediate and Dynamical Objects. Peirce, in a letter to lady Welby from 1908, while analyzing the relation between the Immediate Object and the modes of possible presentation of the Sign (the sign in itself), asserts that “The proper way to pursue the inquire is to start from the definition already given of the triadic relation of Sign-Object-Interpretant. We thus learn that the Object determines (i.e. renders definitely to be such as it will be,) the Sign in a particular manner. Now it is of the essence of the Signs to determine certain Ideas, i.e. certain Possibilities; and it is the essence of any Tendency to determine Occurences.” (EP 2: 487; CP 8. 361 [1908]) While
carefully considering these relations, Peirce shows that the Object determines the Sign. So the mode of being of the objects will affect the mode of being of the Sign. It is important to stress that, because the different types of objects distinguish the six Qualisigns that are fundamental for all the other classes of signs (Picture 3).

![Picture 3](image)

**Picture 3** The qualisigns in the Signtree model of 66 classes of signs

The simplest Qualisign we can find is the one that is determined by objects of the nature of firstness: Abstraction Dynamical Object and Descriptive Immediate Object. Abstractives are not particular objects, but a general one. What is the most general and abstract idea that this sign represents and what is the most fundamental thing to the possible manifestation of the sign? If we are dealing with a typeface, then we are talking about signs of the visual and verbal language. It is fundamental for a written text to be determined by the visual and verbal language, than this is the Abstraction Dynamical Object of this sign.

Natural or conventional languages are complex and abstract systems that can only be perceived in signs. The sign gives a hint about its own language structure. The hint is the Immediate Object, which is descriptive in this class. The descriptive Immediate Object assigns a quality, that is, the hint given by the sign is of the order of a quality. The visual language has qualities that can be visually perceived. The verbal language, on the other hand, is a mental process that depends on logical reasoning. To become manifest, the verbal language needs a sign, that can be visual if we think of the written language, or of the type of a sound considering the spoken language. For the analysis of the typeface, I will consider only the written language that is manifested in visual signs. Then, visuality is the most general characteristic
of this sign, the one depicted by this class of sign.

From the first to the second Qualisign, the Dynamical Object passes from abstractive to concretive and the Immediate Object continues to be descriptive. Concretives are particular occurrences in any period of time (past, present, or future). These occurrences characterize the abstract qualities to which the first Qualisign made reference to. We can say that the visual qualities of this sign have particular characteristics such as the line style that composes the characters of the typeface; the thickness of the lines, the right angles, the defined outline, accurate lines, and squared space with no height variation. These are qualities of the WENS characters and also of the particular capital letters that are used to compose the WENS characters, which will be called “basic characters”. These qualities appear first in the “basic characters” and then in the WENS typeface and they give identity to the group of characters. At this point of the analysis the only relation between the “basic characters” and the WENS characters is given by its similar qualities. A relation based on similarity is weak, it suggests, but it does not indicate the relation between both. The similarity of qualities can make possible a common visual sensation, which is vague and imprecise, no letter is recognized in the characters. The visual qualities only suggest a possible relation between the “basic characters” and the WENS characters.

Similar qualities are only possible if a law regulates the appearance of it. The Collective Dynamical Object in the third class of Qualisign calls for this laws. The most abstract laws for visual signs might be the ones that allow the visual perception. These laws can vary according to the media (paper, screen, analogic or digital). In addition, we might consider that typefaces and written texts might follow a great number of rules to work as a text. First of all, the characters might be similar to a general form of the letters of an alphabet. Secondly, texts written in Latin alphabets go from left to right, from top to bottom. However, the direction of the text may vary depending on the language in which the text is written. The similarity to the Latin alphabet is not directly manifested in WENS character because the composition mode of its character makes a new figure that is very different from the forms of the Latin alphabet. Its squared shape is much more similar to ideograms than to Latin letters, for example. The visual qualities of the WENS typeface suggest a particular way to write, but it is impossible to understand it until one has noticed how the characters were built.

Until now, we have seen that a common visual sensation, vague and imprecise, relates the WENS characters to a Latin alphabet. The vague sensation depicted in the second Qualisign is not enough to indicate how to use the typeface. Their
relation might be pointed out. That is what happens in the fourth Qualisign that has Concretive Dynamical Object and Designative Immediate Object. We have already seen that Concretives are particular occurrences. According to Peirce, Designatives are like a pointing finger which “brutally directs the mental eyeballs of the interpreter to the object in question, which in this case cannot be given by independent reasoning.” (EP 2; 484 [1908]) The repetition and rotation of the “basic characters” in the WENS character points to the digital act of copying, pasting and rotating that might have generated the WENS typeface.

Once the former act that creates the WENS typeface is noticed, one can understand that this act produces a particular style that reveals Lee’s idea of blending Latin alphabet to an ideogram. The possibility to write in four directions is a particular characteristic of this typeface. It is not a general convention for all written texts, but a particular one. The fifth Qualisign depicts this singular convention due to the combination of a Collective Dynamical Object to a Designative Immediate Object. We might also observe that the sign visual qualities may change when the sign is actually present. They will vary according to a particular media, but there might be also some changes in particular occurrences due to pure chance. We cannot determine these changes, but we might consider that the laws of chance can act on it.

Although some variation may occur in particular occurrences of this sign, great part of its qualities, and consequently its identity, is guaranteed by the digital code that funds a digital typeface. The particular style of this typeface reveals a kind of stereotype. That is, Lee takes advantage of ideographic writing stereotypes to create a Latin typeface. Many visual characteristics depicted before points to this idea. However, it is the Distributive Immediate Object found in the sixth Qualisign that makes possible to draw logic relations and come to these hypotheses. About the Distributive Immediate Object “we do not derive these notions from observation, nor by any sense of being opposed, but from our own reason.” (EP 2; 485 [1908]) However, following the logic of the categories and remembering its omnipresence, we may argue that without observation, comparison and contrast it is impossible to have any kind of reasoning. Therefore, all the Qualisigns before are necessary to make us believe that a digital typeface has been constructed based on ideographic writing stereotypes to transform the Latin alphabetic written text.

**Sinsigns**

The Qualisigns depict characteristics that are independent of any occurrence of the sign. We had to imagine possible manifestations of the sign to comprehend the
Qualisign. On the Sinsigns, we will talk about the occurrence of the sign in such a way that it can be experienced.

Peirce describes the Sinsigns in three types. Firstly, the Iconic Sinsign, which ‘is any object of experience in so far as some quality of it makes it determine the idea of an Object. Being an Icon, and thus a sign by likeness purely, of whatever it may be like, it can only be interpreted as a sign of essence, or Rheme. It will embody a Qualisign.’ (EP 2:294 [1903]) Secondly, the Rhematic Indexical Sinsign, which ‘is any object of direct experience so far as it directs attention to an Object by which its presence is caused. It necessarily involves an Iconic Sinsign of a peculiar kind, yet is quite different since it brings the attention of the interpreter to the very object denoted.’ (EP 2:294 [1903]) For example; ‘the ring of a telephone bell is affected by the person at the other end who wants to make a communication.’ (EP 2:295 [1903]) Thirdly, the Dicent Sinsign which is ‘any object of direct experience in so far as it is a sign, and, as such, affords information concerning its Object.

(....) Such a sign must involve an Iconic Sinsign to embody the information and a Rhematic Indexical Sinsign to indicate the Object to which the information refers.’ (EP 2:294 [1903])

More than the increasing on the number of Sinsigns from the ten to the 66 classes system of signs, it is important to remark that they are divided in three groups according to the nature of their objects. Each group has an Iconic Sinsign, six Rhematic Indexical Sinsigns that involve the Iconic Sinsign of the same group and two Dicent Sinsigns that involve all the previous Sinsign classes of the same group (Picture 4).

The simplest Sinsign group has both objects of the second category: Concreetive Dynamical Object and Designative Immediate Object. That means that they are related to the possible characteristics depicted by the Qualisigns that have this kind of object (Concreetive Designative Qualisign and its former, the Concreetive Descriptive Qualisign). The Concreetive Designative Qualisign shows that the relation between a previous Latin alphabet and the WENS characters is not only a vague and imprecise visual sensation, but it is indicated by an existential connection between them. The similarity of qualities is given by a precise tool, the digital language. The same code that determines the visual qualities of the ‘basic characters’ is used in the WENS characters. Although the code is exactly the same, the two characters are not equal because the WENS character is composed in a determined way. Just when these acts effectively appear, or are object of visual experience, the repetition of the four letters rotated can suggest that an original image has been copied. The original image is similar to a letter, so it is an Iconic
Picture 4  The Sinsigns in the Signtree model of 66 classes of signs

Sign. However, when this image is composed in the WENS character the similarity is not evident. Then, this typeface also works as a sign for being really affected by the ‘basic characters’. And each instance of this sign might appear in the same space where a Latin typeface would appear (in a text or with other typefaces) to represent a letter. Otherwise, the sign can be seen just as an abstract image. Moreover, if the characters do not follow the rules of the written text—which are very important not only to understand precisely the verbal text, but to identify a graphical image as a verbal text—it is going to be even more difficult to identify it with a text. The objects in this first group of Sinsigns say nothing about written rules. It only shows similar qualities between each WENS characters and a particular ‘basic character’. This similarity is given by a digital code that transfers the quality of one to the other. Thus, this Iconic Sinsign could represent the characters of a Latin alphabet, but the iconic relation predominates as well as mimetic relations. The visual qualities of this typeface can represent any visual form, not being
restricted to signs of a written text.

The possibility to represent characters of a Latin alphabet will increase as we have more experience with the typeface. Experience is related to the second category and we can notice that there is a gradual increase of secondness in the six Rhematic Indexical Signs that follows the Iconic Signs. They will call attention to the object by experience. To perceive the repetition of a pattern, its rotation, the rule to create the typeface, and the typeface in a text, are experiences that could contribute to indicating the object of the sign.

The tenuous relation to the Latin alphabet suggested by the Iconic Sign will become stronger with the experiences from the Rhematic Indexical Signs until it reaches the Dicent Sign, which affords information. In this case the information might be something like: the characters of this typeface are composed by a letter repeated four times in different directions that creates texts with particular writing rules.

The second group of Signs differs according to the Dynamical Object that in this case is Collective. Three classes of Qualisigns have Collective Dynamical Object. These three Qualisigns depicted (1) the visual laws related to the visual perception; (2) the written composition rules of any text; (3) the law of chance that describes singular occurrences not related to others; (4) WENS written composition rule (writing in four directions); (5) the digital laws that enable the creation of graphical images such as the typeface, and (6) ideographic writing stereotypes. These general laws are going to be experienced in the second Iconic Sign as the mark of an action. The digital action of coping, pasting and rotating is registered in the typeface, if it was not, it would disappear in the next instant and no one would be able to notice it later. A set of codes are registered in the typeface program and they make visible the visual qualities of the ‘basic alphabet’. The perception, chance and digital laws are responsible for creating any kind of graphical image. How the graphical images will be composed is determined by the other three laws, which are related to the visuality of the sign. The visual qualities of the typeface are the mark of a composition rule that repeats a digital action in each character of it. The similar qualities suggest that the characters form a group and this will be fundamental to interpret the graphical images as a typeface and the set of characters as a text.

The second Iconic Qualisign suggests that the set of characters are determined by the same composition rules. While the first Iconic Sign considers the single character, this Iconic Sign considers the set of characters and its relations. Then, the experience gradually acquired in the Rhematic Indexical Signs will show the
relation between the characters of the typeface. We know that the typeface allows writing in four directions, however, the texts are not necessarily written in four directions. Some directions are adopted or not dependent on the text. The experience with texts written with this typeface indicates a variation on the text direction. The directions of the text might be suggested by its visual form. Finally, the information given by the Dicent Sinsign might be based in the experience of reading the texts, which shows that the visual and verbal languages are spatially related in the WENS texts.

The last group of Sinsigns has Collective Dynamical Object and Distributive Immediate object. They are both from the third category, which means that they depend on a logical reasoning to be understood. The sixth Qualisign has these same Objects and it depicted the digital code used on the typeface to create its own written system. It also showed that an ideographic writing stereotype was used to create this typeface. These signs that are objects of experience will show the occurrences of these laws.

The actual existence of the typeface (in a text or as a typeface that can be used in software) embodies qualities, which means it embodies its Qualisigns. This Iconic Qualisign that embodies Qualisigns of the third category has squared characters composed by the Latin alphabet in four directions. At this point we already know that we are dealing with a typeface that has a particular composition mode that seems to be based on the idea that ideographic writings convey meaning through visual resemblance. This hypothetical idea will become more evident in the Rhematic Indexical Sinsigns because the index denotes the ideographic writing stereotype.

The texts written with this typeface suggests that the visual and the verbal languages are used together to convey information. The texts relate the visual and the verbal languages, but how does that work? Is this relation an analogy, a diagrammatic relation, a metaphor? Reading and writing with the WENS typeface means working on the verbal and visual meaning at the same time. The visual meaning can be similar to the verbal meaning, but that is not the rule. Contrasting meaning may also convey information. The third Iconic Sinsign cannot convey definite information; it only suggests that a verbal/visual text could be built.

The particular experience with texts depicted by the Rhematic Indexical Signs will indicate the relationship between visual and verbal language in each text. For example; (1) the visual form of the text “An old pond. A frog jumps in. The sound of water” describes the movement expressed by the verbal text (Picture 5); (2) The text “War” describes a scene of war with missiles being thrown (Picture 6); (3) In
the text “Mirror” the lines of the text are reflected as the image in the mirror (Picture 7); (4) The text “One” shows the concept of a unit by contrasting it with the multiple (Picture 8); and (5) the text “Power” a bigger character is put in the center and smaller ones are around it, suggesting that the bigger has power over the smaller (Picture 9).

**Picture 5** An old pond. A frog jumps in. The sound of “water”

**Picture 6** “War”

**Picture 7** “Mirror”

**Picture 8** “One”

**Picture 9** “Power”
When we reach the Dicent Sinsign, the experience with this kind of text will have shown how to look at the text, discover the relation between visual and verbal languages and reach the meaning of each text. If the visual-verbal relation becomes clear, the meaning of the text is revealed.

Legisigns

After that it is possible to think of this sign as a Legisign, which means that its mode of being governs single replicas. The law that governs this sign is the WENS visual verbal syntax. The Iconic Legisign “requires each instance of it to embody a definite quality which renders it fit to call up in the mind the idea of a like Object” (EP 2: 294 [1903]). Therefore, the typeface might guarantee that the characters have common qualities and that the texts written with it have some kind of resemblance to ideographic writing. The Iconic Sinsigns presented earlier are replicas of the Iconic Legisign. They depicted a process that firstly showed the possibility of the visual qualities of this typeface to represent a Latin alphabet; secondly, they pointed out that the similarity of qualities among the characters could suggest they were a set, or a typeface, determined by the same composition rules; and, thirdly, the typeface seemed to be based on the idea that ideographic writings convey meaning through visual resemblance.

We have already noticed that the classes of Sinsigns show gradually how the sign becomes more complex until reaching the Legisign (Picture 10). While the Iconic Legisign calls the object by similarity of qualities, the Indexical Legisign will call the object by being really affected by the Object. As we have seen the relation between the visual and the verbal languages in each text can vary. This variation is not given by chance, but by a visual verbal syntax that appears when we see the sign as a Legisign. The Rhematic Indexical Legisigns are affected by and they indicate this law. For being Rhematic, the interpretant of this sign represents it as an Iconic Legisign. Its visual qualities suggest the visual-verbal syntax. The Rhematic Indexical Legisigns are not single objects, but a general type, which requires an instance of it to signify. The replicas of the Rhematic Indexical Legisigns are Rhematic Indexical Sinsigns. Whereas the Rhematic Indexical Sinsign pointed to particular relations in each text, the Rhematic Indexical Legisign shows the modes of this relation, for example, resemblance and analogy of qualities and of relations. A resemblance can be seen in the texts “An old pond. A frog jumps in. The sound of water” (Picture 5) and “War” (Picture 6). In the texts “Mirror” (Picture 7), “One” (Picture 8), and “Power” (Picture 9) we can observe a diagrammatic relation, which “represents the relations (...) of the parts of one thing by analogous
relations in their own parts" (EP 2:274 [1903]).

Based on the Rhematical Indexical Legisign, the Dicent Indexical Legisign will provide definite information about its object. “It must involve an Iconic Legisign to signify the information and a Rhematic Indexical Legisign to denote the subject of that information” (EP 2: 295). Therefore, texts written with WENS typeface follow its verbal-visual syntax, which can be based in resemblances or in some kind of analogy.
The replicas of Dicent Indexical Legisigns are Dicent Sinsigns. We saw that the Dicent Sinsigns are of three types. Each of one informs part of a more complex idea of the sign. The first type of Dicent Sinsign informed that the characters of this typeface are composed by a letter repeated four times in different directions that creates texts with particular writing rules. Next the second type of Dicent Sinsign made us know that the visual and verbal languages are spatially related in the WENS texts. Finally, the third type of Dicent Sinsign made clear the visual-verbal relation, revealing the meaning of each text. It is necessary to go through the Dicent Sinsign to reach the general idea of the verbal-visual syntax.

Next, we will see the sign as a Hypothetic Symbol, which will be the last class examined in this paper. The Hypothetic Symbol is a type of Rhematic Symbol depicted only in the system of 66 classes of signs. It is a sign of law related to its object by an association of general ideas that depend on a certain habit or disposition of a mind to produce a concept (general notion). So far, we have seen that the WENS typeface has its own written system based in verbal-visual syntax. Irrespective of how this particular system works, the WENS typeface proposes new rules for the written text that highlight mimetic relations on the text. This general idea produced by this sign is also found in other signs such as the concrete poems of Décio Pignatary, Haroldo and Augusto de Campos, the famous text ‘Un coup de dés’ from Mallarmé, Finnegans Wake from James Joyce, Ezra Pound’s Cantos, the poems of Cummings, the calligrammes of Appolinaire, and a great number of other works that follows this same idea including other digital typefaces. Knowing some of this work, it is possible that when looking at the WENS typeface an association of ideas will produce in the mind the idea of a system based on analogies. The concrete poets called it “verbivocovisual” (verbal + vocal + visual), while Gérard Genette defines it as mimologism ‘the idea that there is a relation of reflective analogy between word and thing’ (Genette, p. xxii).

The Hypothetic Symbol involves the particular written system of the typeface, which is depicted by the Rhematic Indexical Legisigns, but is not restricted to it. All the other particular system that follows the idea of a written system based on analogy is part of it. Rhematic Indexical Sinsigns are replicas of the Hypothetic Symbol and once more they are responsible for the direct experience with the sign.

We could go on to the sign as a Categorical Symbol, but then we would not be looking any more to the WENS typeface, but to the analogical system in which this typeface is included. This would require much more time and would go beyond the purpose of this paper. However, it is important to remark that this sign transformation shows a very important aspect of Peirce’s semiotic: the growth of
signs.
I finally conclude hoping that this paper could show not only that the visual form of a typeface character is fundamental for the composition and meaning of a written text, but also that it is necessary to consider all the aspects of the sign—its possibility, its actual existent sign and its general laws—to show its capacity to represent. Furthermore, the system of 66 sign classes evinces the relation among the classes and, consequently, its action. In contrast to semiotics applications that only classify the sign as being of one or other nature. The Signicree seems to be a powerful analytic tool and needs to be used in other semiotic applications in order to be improved. Moreover, the visual model suggests relations among the three branches of semiotics: speculative grammar, critical logic and methodeutic. The analysis presented in this paper is related only to the speculative grammar, which is “the general theory of the nature and meanings of signs” (EP 2: 260 [1903]). Considering that the Rhematic and Dicent Symbols are defined by Peirce as being a term and a proposition (EP 2:295 [1903]) and that the third category predominates in the last classes of signs, we may suppose that these classes are related to the critical logic being able to show “the general conditions of the reference of Symbols and other Signs to their professed Objects, that is, it is the theory of the conditions of truth” (CP 2. 93, 1902). But this is only a hypothesis to be investigated at another time.

References


Semiotic Assessment of Language Processing: Efficacy of the Elicited Imitation Paradigm

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Abstract: The primary task of Empirical Semiotics is to identify particular testing procedures which measure qualitative differences in how representations are processed. Elicited Imitation (EI) can indicate the nature of the interpretants which hold between sign and object by tapping how meanings are processed in working memory (WM). The way in which linguistic forms are handled in WM reveals striking distinctions between interpretants which express a proposition, as opposed to those which are simply diagrammatic in nature. Learners processing linguistic signs at the diagrammatic level (ordinarily of lower proficiency) focus attentional resources on phonemic and syllabic sequences, while those processing on the propositional level attend to semantic, morphemic and even conceptual world knowledge. The interpretants of learners of the latter group (typically of higher proficiency) process in a qualitatively more efficient way, given means to draw upon symbolic modes of representation. Conversely, less equipped learners process smaller, more verbatim units, namely, acoustic shape and syllabic contours—constituting iconic or indexical interpretants.

The EI testing paradigm entails a repetition by the learner of stimulus sentences (auditorially or visually presented). Because the stimulus sentences are developed to elicit particular grammatical categories and relationships, and because they are identical and presented in an invariant sequence for all subjects, they permit robust comparisons across subject performance. Although the benefits of EI extrasemiotically to measure the state of learners’ interlanguage (IL) are well documented (Munnich, Flynn and Martohardjono. 1994; Erlam. 2006, 2009; West. 2012), EI’s import as a measurement of semiosis remains unaddressed. EI is the most sound method (compared to natural speech corpora and grammatical judgments) to measure and trace qualitative semiotic advances because it measures changes accorded to the sign in WM.

The subjects (fifteen at each of three proficiency levels of L2 Spanish) were instructed to provide a word association after each stimulus (twenty-four sentences) and before their repetition, to guard against verbatim recall. Repetitions of the advanced groups more often contained meaningful substitutions (words or inflections), whereas word deletions were more often documented in the beginner group’s responses (West, 2012). These findings indicate the propensity of the more advanced L2s to process the sign (stimulus sentence) as a meaningful proposition/argument. Differences between lower and higher proficiency sign users illustrate the efficacy of EI
in measuring the shift from diagrammatic interpretants based in Secondness and Firstness to interpretants characterized by Thirdness. The EI testing paradigm exacts valid and reliable findings vis-à-vis developmental changes in the sign-object connection by revealing qualitative differences in the interpretants assigned to such relationship.

**Key words:** elicited imitation; L2 competence; percepts; perceptual judgments; working memory; Peirce

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### 1. Introduction

Using C. S. Peirce’s categories of Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness as a framework, I demonstrate that the oral elicited imitation (EI) test is a valid and reliable measure of the state of L2 working memory (WM) processing at distinct developmental levels. I first establish its history as a viable empirical method both in L1 and in L2 experimental genres, then attend to its utility to assess language processing in WM; and finally, I discuss its particular application to semiotic inquiry. To exemplify EI’s utility as a semiotic mode of inquiry, I show how responses of L2 Spanish learners at two distinct proficiency levels demonstrate qualitatively different representations. The case is made that while L2 learners with less language experience represent linguistic knowledge as percepts (1903, CP 7.624), learners with substantially greater L2 experience represent linguistic knowledge in the form of perceptual judgments. Accordingly, this inquiry suggests that particular testing procedures are more efficacious (the EI paradigm) than are other approaches (drawing from natural speech samples) to measure the meaning accorded to signs across L2 proficiency levels. EI responses further demonstrate the pivotal role of language experience to advance “Interpretant building,” illustrated by alterations made to the respective original stimulus sentence (lexical deletions or lexical substitutions). The following assertion by Hameyer (1980, 21) underscores the need for further research into the types of morphemic modifications across proficiency groups: “... Incorrect inflections and incorrect substitutions are the surest single indicators by which to distinguish proficiency groups.”

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### 2. The Elicited Imitation Procedure

Prior to describing and defending the elicited imitation procedure as such, attention is accorded to the working memory system and its function in language processing, since it is linguistic WM competency which EI best measures. The WM system most relied upon by linguists is that of Baddeley and Hitch (1974). Later, in
Baddeley implemented a modification to the original model. The original model posits that two slave STM systems (the phonological loop and the visuospatial sketchpad) and the central executive make up the WM system. The modification merely consists in the addition of the episodic buffer, which primarily integrates information from the other subsystems and provides additional storage. Processing within both the loop and the sketchpad is characterized by limited slots or units of information stored for an abbreviated time span—three seconds at best. The number of linguistic units capable of being stored in WM depends on whether learners are processing at the phonological, morphological or semantic level. WM word count ranges from approximately four for non-speakers (Hameyer 1980, 14), to approximately fifteen for the most proficient speakers (Naiman 1974, 72; Ermol 2006, 477, 2009, 78). My own findings (West 2012, 216–217) reveal that L2 learners of differing competencies (distinct L2 proficiency levels) typically store between seven morphemes (for elementary learners), nine morphemes (for intermediate learners), and eleven morphemes and beyond (for advanced L2s). My own research sought to measure the number of morphemes (rather than the number of syllables/words), given the greater sensitivity to meaning on the word level; such more accurately (compared to using words as the measure) determines the number of meanings attributed to each EI stimulus sentence—many fewer for the beginning L2s than for more advanced learners.

In view of these recall limitations, it is critical that language learners process information in WM on the morphemic or semantic level, rather than on the sound level; otherwise, far fewer language units are likely to be recalled and shunted to long term memory (LTM). Processing at the phonological level requires far more WM resources than does processing at higher, more meaning-based levels, given the need to assign sound to representation and to integrate abstract sound units into words. Since WM resources are at a premium for beginning L2s, burdening an already limited capacity storage results in decreased recall of the stimulus sentences. Nonetheless, R. Ellis identifies a functional advantage which WM’s limited capacity affords: “the limitations of working memory drive learners to construct higher order chunks out of lower order chunks” (R. Ellis 2008, 469). The latter function—sequencing morphosyntactic items in WM—is likely to be less utilized since attentional resources are expended on LTM retrieval and message coordination. This burden on attentional resources is responsible for an increased likelihood of L2 errors or slower “serialized articulation” (non-automatic speech) (Temple 1997, 87). Establishing the limits of WM at distinct L2 proficiency levels lays the groundwork for the use of EI to measure competencies in oral memory (cf. Skehan
1998, 78). EI can systematically control the phonemic/morphemic/word count, thereby establishing thresholds for meaningful processing at different language competency levels.

The oral EI procedure developed for this study requires language learners to listen to a recorded contextualized set of twenty-four stimulus sentences individually presented in the target language (TL). These stimulus sentences systematically contained from six to thirteen morphemes (seven-thirteen syllables). Although stimulus sentences were presented as individual frames, they could be constructed to relate to one another and to the discourse at large, since each contributed to the outcome of a story. Learners were tested individually, and were instructed to first provide a word association for the sentence and then to repeat each sentence as it was heard. The requirement to supply the word association was implemented (West 2012, 211–212) to ensure that learners were focusing on meaning (not merely form), measuring other than verbatim recall. Focusing on meaning is critical to establish that responses reflect implicit language knowledge, and not explicit knowledge emanating from memorized chunks or from language rules which are taught (Erlam 2006, 466, 2009, 67). The rationale for requiring an interval between administration of stimulus sentences and respective responses is that three seconds represents the threshold after which sentence recall no longer represents mere regurgitation (Eysenck 2001, 160). In fact, if memory is not refreshed within three seconds of presentation via some form of rehearsal (either vocal or sub vocal) of the language string, recall declines (since access to non-refreshed information is unlikely after short intervals (Baddeley 2007, 51)). In other words, once WM is cleared of the iconic (phonetic) representation, semantic representations can be accessed and analyzed, should they exist in the interlanguage (IL). These semantic alterations are associated with responses of more experienced learners, who increasingly have the means to infuse linguistic signs with more generalizable Thirdness-based Interpretants.

An additional advantage of EI over other methods (natural speech corpora, timed grammatical judgments) to test implicit knowledge or better said, the state of associated Interpretants is insurance that the same opportunity exists for all participants to produce the linguistic sign and to access its Interpretant. Since this battery of EI consists of twenty to forty identical stimulus sentences presented to all participants in the same sequence, production of the signs is not left to chance (Bley-Vroman and Chaudron 1994, 256); as a consequence, avoidance of the linguistic structure(s) under consideration is a non-issue. To this end, fashioning the stimulus sentences to include particular grammatical structures (two past aspects in
Spanish in the present study), and systematically altering the placement of the structure and morphemic count within the stimulus sentence in question, is paramount. Implementing these features into the design before presentation to the participants, guards against confounding recall of the items with effects of primacy or recency—sequential factors which must be considered (for a fuller account of these design issues cf. West 2012, 210–211). EI creates a level playing field, permitting more valid comparisons across subject performance.

Findings from studies employing the oral EI approach have tapped the state of L1, as well as L2 implicit language knowledge. Lust (1986) and Lust, Flynn, and Foley (1996) have used the EI test to demonstrate children’s syntactic knowledge at different mean length of utterance MLU levels. Lust et al.’s findings unequivocally show that at different developmental levels children’s responses are qualitatively different—indicated by the state of their reconstructions of the original stimulus sentences. Responses at different proficiency levels to: “Mommy drinks milk and Mommie eats cookies.” can elicit an exact echo of the stimulus sentence or a reconstruction: “Mommie drinks milk and eats cookies” (cf: West in press for an extended discussion of this phenomenon). This reconstructive ability, substituting a meaningful word in place of the non-recalled one, demonstrates that learners are chunking at the semantic level, rather than at the sound level. In this sample, processing at the phonological level alone (chunking sounds) results in word deletions or in producing nonsense words which conform to the sound structure of the language in question (West 2012, 217).

More importantly, in addition to revealing the extent of learners’ underlying syntactic knowledge, reconstructions reflect meaning-based advances—associations which hold between linguistic signs, their objects, and their Interpretants. These word-object-meaning connections are a direct consequence of qualitatively different semiotic representations which account for semantic advances, not merely syntactic ones, as Lust et al. (1996, 57) assume. The distinct semiotic representations are sound-based, word-based, or phrase-based. Their signs are characterized either as: primarily phonemic signs, morphemic signs, or semantically derived signs. While all of these signs can entail some degree of chunking (connecting individual units into a composite), the latter exacts chunking at a higher level, such that substantially more information belongs to a chunk. This form of processing, guided by increasingly higher semiotic levels, is responsible for enhanced chunking, hence enhanced linguistic processing.
3. Peirce’s Distinction between Percepts and Perceptual Judgments

Peirce determines that percepts are foundational to perceptual judgments, such that the former are grounded in Secondness, while the latter rely on more Thirdness-based rationale; “There are several other points of contrast between the perceptual judgment and the percept that are calculated to exhibit their disparateness. The judgment, ‘This chair appears yellow,’ separates the color from the chair, making the one predicate and the other subject. The percept, on the other hand, presents the chair in its entirety and makes no analysis whatever” (1903, CP 7. 631). Firstness-based components are evident in both forms of cognition; but, in the former case (percepts) Firstness takes the form of affect and attentional preference, while the latter case (perceptual judgments) operates on idiosyncratic, rational propositions. Percepts appear to be foundational to perceptual judgments in the same way that sensorimotor schemes serve as a basis for logical reasoning in Piaget’s system (Piaget and Inhelder 1948/1967, 455)—early processes are used to reconstruct mental constructs, such that percepts (as attention to existent objects) are necessary to build perceptual judgments (propositions involving world knowledge).

For percepts, Firstness entails noticing similarities and nuances among entities and events; hence its effect is couched in replica-building. Noticing gives rise to simple illustrations of haecceity (1897, CP 3.460)-limited reach/access to “thisness” (entities near to self), or to individuality (OED). Firstness-based applications to perceptual judgments take the form of individual insights which appear compulsively, not as a consequence of conscious and contrived arguments. Peirce (1903, CP 5.181) asserts that compulsions/insights are not controllable. Insight and uncontrollability are characterized as Firstness-based issues, by virtue of the possibility and individuality that hold between the sign relations.

Both percepts and perceptual judgments likewise have their roots in Secondness, although percepts are far more bound to Secondness-cognitions which have a significant foundation in material fact and action. According to Peirce, percepts go beyond “first impressions of sense,” (1902, CP 2.141). “Beyond first impressions of sense” does not indicate that sense experience is immaterial or minimized, but that percepts supersede initial exposure to a stimulus, perhaps to include some level of expectation of the meaning/effects of the sign. This basic relationship is never supplanted by perceptual judgments; percepts merely serve as their foundation. In CP 5.538 (c. 1902), Peirce contends that perceptual judgments exhibit a higher level of cognitive intervention, propelled by the element of deliberateness.
Deliberateness does not imply consciousness, nor does it intimate any planning. In fact, the perceptual judgment is a necessary component in “recommending a course of action” (1903, MS 637; 12), which constitutes one of Peirce’s primary ingredients in abductive reasoning. What precludes conscious deliberation and developing sequential steps toward a goal is the presence of spontaneity. The fact that a perceptual judgment must be spontaneous permits the judgment to be volitional without the presence of forethought directing a series of related events.

Although some interpretation exists in the percept, its character does not rise to the level of perceptual judgments until reflection materializes and until the “totality” of the object and its context confront the mind. In CP 7.643 (1903) Peirce refers to this reflective mental confrontation as the kernel of perceptual judgments, the “percipuum”:

We know nothing about the percept otherwise than by testimony of the perceptual judgment, excepting that we feel the blow of it, the reaction of it against us, and we see the contents of it arranged into an object, in its totality.... But the moment we fix our minds upon it [the percept] and think the least thing about the percept, it is the perceptual judgment that tells us what we so “perceive.” For this, and other reasons, I propose to consider the percept as it is immediately interpreted in the perceptual judgment, under the name of the “percipuum.” The percipuum then, is what forces itself upon your acknowledgement, without any why or wherefore, so that if anybody asks you why you should regard it as appearing so and so, all you can say is, “I can’t help it...”

In the percipuum the mind becomes “fixed upon the object and upon the judgment, illustrating an absence of conscious deliberation either to form the percept or the perceptual judgment. It must also be mentioned that the judgment requires some reflection, unconscious though it may be. Nonetheless, this forceful focus is primarily cognitive not affective; hence its foundation is epistemic, not deontic. Peirce, however, is silent regarding how and when percipuum emerges; and their continuing function in measuring the efficaciousness of resultant perceptual judgments.

Other means, perhaps more reliable ones, test whether cognitions constitute percepts or whether they rise to the level of perceptual judgments, namely, children’s early non-verbal responses to non-linguistic stimuli, especially responses not bidden by instruction. One of these is preferential looking at objects which are
recognizable; the other such measure is sorting behaviors to an array of objects by; shape, color, etc. These early nonlinguistic measures can determine the onset and quality of the representation obviated by the quality of response to the objects, e.g., automatic, unsolicited object sorting by similar shape, or looking longer at similarly shaped novel objects rather than familiar ones. If indexical features mediate the representation, the response is similarly mediated by shape (diagrammatic) and location (pointing to place issues). In sum, the state of processing in WM or in LTM can best determine whether the nature of the representation is a percept (when mediated by Index) or a perceptual judgment (often mediated by symbolic representations).

Because of the necessity for symbolic mediation, Thirdness is far more integral to perceptual judgments than to percepts. Accordingly, perceptual judgments, since they assert a semblance of belief/veridicality, constitute Thirdness-based relations; whereas percepts are not so founded (1903, CP 7. 622; 7. 631). Because the foundation of perceptual judgments extends beyond any sense impressions in Secondness to rest on “retroductions” (1903, MS 637; 12), they constitute propositions—not mere stark experience. These spontaneous propositions often propose a remedy, taking into consideration a panorama of previous experience. In short, judgments are formulated via a hunch generated from an abbreviated “look back” on similar experiences at large, hence Peirce’s use of “retroduction.” These retroductions are not mere “looks back;” otherwise “retrospection” rather than “retroduction” might have been chosen. Instead, these “looks back” supersede retrospections. They are enriched by Thirdness-based Interpretants, drawing relevant past and possible subsequent experiences together into a coherent system. This system establishes functional relationships between and among relevant events, and monitors whether and how any conclusory proposition (recommendations of a course of action) should be altered with intake of subsequent experience. It is obvious then, that more complex meaning underlies perceptual judgments, and that percepts, even though they involve interpretation, largely represent adherence to existing schemes.

4. Application to Semiotic Genres

EI responses from distinct L2 competency levels reveal that whereas percepts guide beginner and intermediate learners, perceptual judgments underlie advanced learners’ responses (West 2012, 216–217). The percepts of the less experienced L2s consist in processing on the phonological level, such that linguistic sound units
constitute the attentional forum. Beginning learners primarily chunk sounds; and any expectation(s) which arise(s), result(s) from awareness of the particular sound patterns of the language, e.g., which consonant clusters exist and in which location within words, as opposed to processing on the morphological or semantic level. Beginning and intermediate L2s likewise are more likely, than are more advanced learners to delete words or portions of words when recall fades (West 2012, 216). In contrast, more advanced L2s process on the morphemic and/or on the semantic level; and their chunks consist in meaningful pieces of words and/or words themselves. Chunking morphemically/semantically derives from attaching meaning to a lexical item; and EI modifications frequently give rise to word substitutions as opposed to deletions (West 2012, 216). Such substitutions might include a response of: “The children eat shiny apples” to the EI prompt “The children chew shiny apples.” In this case, the substitution of “eat” for “chew” represents a meaningful one; and both consist in a monosyllabic meaning unit. The initial and final words/morphemes are less likely to experience alteration, given primacy and recency effects. In short, alterations made to recall the EI string can indicate at which level learners are processing, phonologically (using percepts) or semantically (relying on higher level meaning chunks). Moreover, when percepts underlie the processing approach, as in phonological chunking, deletions are the more likely modification in the face of nonrefreshed EI strings; but, when perceptual judgments support EI stimulus sentences, substitutions (often meaningful) surface to compensate for non refreshed, and partially forgotten items in WM. In sum, the presence of these morphemic substitutions indicates the use of underlying Thirdness-based semiotic interventions.

It is evident that at the beginning L2 proficiency level, percepts prevail, since phonological processing rests upon sense impressions or stimuli which go slightly beyond “first sense impressions.” Learners need not engage judgments, nor need they associate any abstract cognition(s) to the sounds. They merely associate sound patterns/sequences with locations within word structures. For example, accurate repetition of “gr.” and “fr.” in “the green frog jumps,” surfaces consequent to knowledge of obstruent-liquid in initial word position for beginning learners, rather than on any symbolically-based word meaning. More advanced L2s, in contrast, employ perceptual judgments to chunk semantically and to substitute meaningful alternatives. To illustrate, a substitution might consist of—“the green frog hops.” The fact that these learners substitute, as well as recall greater numbers of chunks, demonstrates reliance on insightful, deliberate word-finding skills. Still, their word-finding skills are not indicative of conscious or planned approaches, but upon a
“flash” of retroductive reasoning, infused with a view of the “totality of the object.” In this application, the lexical meanings of the particular EI stimulus sentence (both separately and as an aggregate) constitute larger and more meaningful chunked units. “The green frog jumps,” is processed in WM as two constituents: “the green frog” and “jumps.” This higher level of semiotic reasoning (that frogs can jump, and that they do not jump anything) demonstrates more effective WM processing. In short, these relatively advanced L2 learners would not have the means to insert a word substitution in WM without processing (by means of higher level chunking) the totality of the sentence.

The upshot is that the kind of semiotic processing selected by learners of different language competency levels governs how it is that they chunk in WM, which in turn, determines the number and size of the units needed to process the sentence. If the number of units exhausts WM limitations for that proficiency group, some units are not processed or recalled, and cannot easily be refreshed (as is the case for beginners’ processing at the sound level). When the number of units is reduced via chunking on a more semantic level, fitting the necessary components of the stimulus sentence into WM for processing is more successful, as is the case for advanced L2s, (West 2012, 217). Furthermore, processing on the sound level entails associating the shape, location, and sequence of phonemes to similar previous sense data, and hence is indexical and iconic in nature. It is indexical, by virtue of the emphasis on the spatial relations between/among the sounds and their aggregates. The flashbulb-like component of processing here is iconic, in that a mere image/replica of sound patterns within the stimulus sentence is matched to identical sound traces of earlier sense impressions (of previous sound aggregates); whereas semantic chunking in WM draws upon higher semiotic representations—symbolic ones. The level of semiotic representation, obviously affects the quality (and perhaps the quantity) of linguistic processing in WM.

The quantity of information which can fit in WM increases with L2 competency, primarily as a consequence of the underlying semiotic representation; and increases in quantity of information directly enhance the quality of processing. Rationale resides in the claim that whereas remembering the location of sound units perpetuates recall of other neighboring sound stimuli, memory of semantic features already associated with words within the EI prompt facilitates recall of the internal meaning intrinsic to the message. More specifically, processing which rests on indexical or iconic representations results in chaining (stringing phonemes sequentially), while processing supported by symbolic representations (especially episodic in nature) gives rise to hierarchically organized chunks in WM—those
driven by encapsulated meanings within lexical entries. To illustrate this differential, with underlying indexical and iconic representations, L2 processing in WM is characterized by retrospective memory of only seven or fewer units, while processes motivated by symbolic representations are constructed upon reductive and prospective episodic memories, and permit greater units of information within chunks and greater numbers of chunks (approximately eleven) to enter WM (West 2012, 216–217). The latter materializes consequent to the propensity for associating propositional assumptions with the stimulus sentences, which, in turn, increases the value of each chunk for recall of neighboring units from the stimulus sentences. This latter form of WM processing is characterized by more complex mental networks, which Baddeley (2007, 148) refers to as “dynamic binding,” as opposed to “static binding” (for further discussion of binding in WM as applied to issues of semiosis, cf. Chapter 3 of my forthcoming book).

The upshot of these distinctive representational approaches (which stimulate different levels of processing; static vs. dynamic binding) is the quality of the Interpretants which hold between representations and their Objects. Any meaning/effects associated with phonological sign units are context driven and context bound. The signs either lack an Interpretant (in the case of indexical representations) or they constitute reflections of already heard sound units (as in iconic signs). The former possibility (indexical signs) may well lack an Interpretant if the only meaning/effect of the phonological unit is memory of its placement within the EI string, because location alone has merely a circumstantial effect. Even processes driven by iconic representations perpetuate context-bound construction—they replicate mere images of sound data. In fact, Short (2007, 90) characterizes indexical signs largely as “irreducible;” consequently, their signs do not capture any meaning other than co-occurrence or place sharing. Conversely, chunks which are processed symbolically are associated with Interpretants which are reducible (Short 2007, 90). Atkin (2005, 178–181) refers to this Interpretant-based distinction as reagentive-Interpretants, then, associated with Degenerate signs (especially Indexes) are absent, while those connected with genuine signs (often symbols) serve a reagentive function, namely, to measure the effect(s) of other components within the compound. In other words, symbolic signs are associated with meaning/effects beyond the immediate space and time of the EI utterance, often a general meaning is applied to similar signs. To illustrate, the Interpretant of “recognize” can be nullified if it is processed on the phonological level as “re,” in that it often occurs at the outset of words. Alternatively, on the morphological/semantic level, “re-” is associated with “cognizing again.” In this way the latter exacts fewer chunks and
has an Interpretant bearing a more generalizable, less context-bound effect.

5. Conclusion

It is unequivocal then, that the oral EI approach is invaluable as an empirical tool to measure semiosis in ontogeny. It represents a well-crafted testing procedure which can measure qualitative differences in WM processing, and ascribing such differences to underlying semiotic competencies. EI responses can indicate the nature of the interpretants which hold between sign and object by tapping how meanings are processed in WM. Proclivity of word substitutions over deletions, together with the degree of boundedness of linguistic form to contextual features illustrates striking distinctions in sign use, especially with respect to the quality of interpretants. Those Interpretants which express a proposition enhance processing, while Interpretants which are simply diagrammatic inhibit general meaning-building and decontextualization. Learners who process linguistic signs at the diagrammatic level (ordinarily of lower L2 proficiency) focus attentional resources on the location and reproduction of contextualized phonemic and syllabic sequences and they exact little hope of meaningful recall, while those processing on the propositional level attend to semantic, morphemic and even conceptual world knowledge-allowing symbolic meaning to have a regenerative effect on how neighboring words are processed.

The interpretants of learners of the latter group (of higher proficiency) process in a qualitatively more efficient way, given means to draw upon symbolic modes of representation. Conversely, less equipped learners process smaller, more verbatim units, namely, acoustic shape and syllabic contours driven by Interpretants of indexical and iconic signs. By comparing the quality of interpretants between the groups, the influence of semiotic advances on L2 processing can be measured. EI responses can determine changes accorded to the sign and how such semiotic changes contribute to enhanced processing in WM. Semiotic use differences illustrate the efficacy of EI in measuring the shift from diagrammatic interpretants in Secondness and Firstness to interpretants infused with Thirdness. These semiotic shifts, in turn, serve as the foundation for qualitative advances in language processing.

EI’s validity and reliability to measure semiotic processing advances is unrivaled by other methods. More particularly, EI testing methods highlight the pivotal influence of semiotic modes of thinking upon processing, storage, and recall of information.
References


Relation between Measurement Quality and Adjudication of Theory

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Abstract: Most theoreticians either ignore or are unaware of the effect that the quality of experimental data has on the development of their theories and the adjudication of their value as theories. This paper discusses the nature of the quality of experimental data and the role it plays in the development of theory.

The paper concludes that theory development must be based on high quality data in order for the theories to have any scientific value; and in developing a theory, you must look at the meaning of the data.

Key words: experiment; measurement; data; scales; theory; statistics

1. Introduction

Many theoreticians neglect the effect of the measurement qualities of the instruments that will be used to test their theories. Many even neglect the instruments themselves. But this neglect cannot lead to good theories. A theory cannot be good if it only tries to explain bad data. How good do the instruments have to be to yield good theory? This paper attempts to develop an approach to answering that question by examining the measurement qualities themselves.

It turns out that a major part of running the experiments that either motivate or justify a theory is the additional detailed experiments required to measure those measurement qualities.

2. Theory

A theory is an interpreted model of some phenomena of inquiry that we are interested in understanding better. A model can be any mathematical entity, including diagrams. But a theory is a model that is interpreted abductively in such a way that it can be subducted into theorems that can be translated into natural laws,
laws that are grounded in the data. The theory with its abduction, subduction, and translation processes thus provide the sought for understanding.

3. Experimental Measurement

3.1 Measurement Quality Parameters

3.1.1 Accuracy and Precision from Wikipedia “Accuracy and Precision”

In science, engineering, and technology the accuracy of a measurement system is the closeness of measurements of a quantity to that quantity’s actual (true) value. The precision of a measurement system is the degree to which repeated measurements under unchanged conditions show the same results.

Accuracy indicates proximity of measurement results to the true value; precision indicates the repeatability, reproducibility, or scatter of the measurement.

A measurement system can be accurate but not precise, precise but not accurate, neither, or both. For example, if an experiment contains a systematic error, then increasing the sample size generally increases precision but does not improve accuracy. The result would be a consistent yet inaccurate string of results from the flawed experiment. Eliminating the systematic error improves accuracy but does not change precision.

Accuracy vs. Precision: a Functional Model:
Accuracy versus precision: the target analogy:

Accuracy describes the closeness of arrows to the bull’s eye at the center of the target. Arrows that strike closer to the bull’s eye are considered more accurate. The closer a system’s measurements are to the accepted value, the more accurate the system is considered to be.

To continue the analogy, if a large number of arrows are shot, precision would be the size of the arrow cluster. (When only one arrow is shot, precision is the size of the cluster one would expect if this were repeated many times under the same conditions.) When all arrows are grouped tightly together, the cluster is considered precise since they all struck close to the same spot, even if not necessarily near the bull’s eye. The measurements are precise, though not necessarily accurate.

How accurate and how precise do our instruments and experimental procedures have to be? This depends on the measurement statistics, i.e., what kind of scale is the data, what kind of scale is implied or required by the theory. There has to be a matching. To distinguish between two different theories requires a certain degree of accuracy as well as a certain level of precision and a certain level of sensitivity.

3.1.2 Sensitivity (sometimes called Resolution) from Wikipedia: “Sensitivity (electronics)” and “Resolution”

In addition to accuracy and precision, measurements may also have a measurement resolution, which is the smallest change in the underlying physical quantity that produces a detectable response in the measurement. This is called sensitivity.

For instance, my bathroom scales are sensitive to the nearest $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. while my
doctor’s scales are sensitive to the nearest 0.1 lb.

3.1.3 Other Measurement Quality Parameters

Reliability
Wikipedia: “Reliability (statistics)”

Repeatability
Wikipedia: “Repeatability”

Validity
Wikipedia: “Validity (statistics)”

3.2 Measurement Scales and Statistics

What is a measurement? What is a scale? And how does their quality affect our thinking about theory?

A measurement is a systematic and consistent procedure that assigns a name to every observation on a member of a collection of objects that preserves the structure being studied of the object being observed. The structure of the set from which the names are chosen determines the measurement scale. Since we want the measurement to preserve the structure being studied, we want the structure of the set of names to match the structure being studied. For example, if we are studying the order in which runners finished a race, then we want our set of names to have the same ordinal structure, viz. 1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc. Again, there has to be a matching.

Since mathematics is the study of structure, the best way to get names that preserve the structure of measurement is to choose the names from some set of mathematical entities. In addition, mathematical entities are stable and unchanging. The number 2 is always the number 2 and \( \lambda^2(x) \) is always \( \lambda^2(x) \) because of the timelessness of all mathematical entities.

In addition, over many long years of hard and difficult work using trial and error procedures, we have learned that the easiest way to assign a name is to choose it from some mathematical structure. Over the years we have developed many standard and well tested ways of doing this. They are called “measurement scales”.

There are many ways of classifying scales. The two principal ones are the Campbell system (1920; part II) and the Stevens system (1946; 677). Science critics and philosophers prefer the Campbell system because of the deeper insight into the empirical significance and possibilities of measurement. Practical scientists and engineers prefer the Stevens system because it serves as a guide to what statistics to use in analyzing the data. I will use the Stevens system in this paper because of its relation to theory and because it forms a mathematical bridge that links
measurement to theory. But I’ll be using a modified form first suggested by Coombs (1952) that is more than a guide; it determines exactly the correct statistics to use.

We are far today from the olden way of defining measurement and scales; S.S. Stevens (1959; 19) claimed that “measurement is the assignment of numerals to objects or events according to... any rule”. This is wrong in two ways: in being too restrictive in the requirement that the names be numerals and not restrictive enough in allowing for the use of just any rule. Ellis (1968; 41) made a serious attempt to correct this: “Measurement is the assignment of numerals to things according to any determinative, non-degenerate rule.”. But this is still wrong on both accounts. Zunde and Pearson (1985) finally solved both problems with their definition: “A measurement is a systematic and consistent procedure that assigns a name to every observation on a collection of objects that preserves the structure being studied of the object being observed. The structure of the set from which the names are chosen determines the measurement scale.”

How do we know whether two different procedures are measuring the same or different scales? This follows easily from the definition of Zunde and Pearson: Two procedures are measuring on the same scale if wherever they are deemed to be applicable, they would always lead to the same name being assigned to the same objects under the same conditions. For further discussion of scales see (Ellis 1968; 41–45).

Stevens (1946) proposed that we should classify our measurement scales according to their group structure, explaining that the group structure of a scale is determined by those transformations that leave its structure invariant.

3. 2. 1 Stevens/Coombs scales

Since the main purpose of using the Stevens/Coombs system of classification is to determine exactly which branch of statistics to use, I should say a few words about statistics. But I’ll make this very brief by relying on two concepts that you are already familiar with: averages and scatter. All statistics use averages (called measures of central tendency) and scatter (called precision), but each different statistics defines them differently and assigns them different names. I will tell them to you when I discuss the scales.

Nominal scales measure nothing but identity and difference; they require nominal statistics; an example is jersey numbers of football players. \( y = x \) and \( y \neq x \) are the only transformations that leave the structure group invariant. The measure of central tendency is called the “mode” which is nothing more than the measurement which occurs most often. Surprisingly, there was no measure of precision for nominal scales until Shannon created his measure in the early 1940’s
but misnamed it “information”.

**Ordinal scales** An example is Mohs’ hardness scale. The structure group is invariant to transformations of the form $y \prec x; y = x; \text{ or } y \succ x$.

**Nominal-Interval scales** The structure group is invariant to transforms of the form $y \prec x; y = x; \text{ or } y \succ x$ and $|w - x| = |y - z|$, or $|w - x| \neq |y - z|$. Examples include both Centigrade and Fahrenheit scales for temperature. The measure of central tendency is called the “median” which is the measurement which occurs halfway between the highest and the lowest measurements. The measure of scatter is called the “range” and is simply given by subtracting the lowest measurement from the highest.

**Ordinal-Interval scales** The structure group is invariant to transforms of the form $y \prec x; y = x; \text{ or } y \succ x$ and $|w - x| < |y - z|; |w - x| = |y - z|; \text{ or } |w - x| > |y - z|$. Examples include our ordinary date scales such as the Christian and Jewish calendars.

**Ratio scales**: The structure group is invariant to transformations of the form $y = ax$, where $a > 0$. Examples; our common scales of length, mass, and time intervals. Ratio scales require scalar statistics, where the measure of central tendency is called the arithmetic mean and is given by:

$$\bar{a} = \left(\frac{1}{n}\right) \sum_{i=1}^{n} a_{i}$$

And the measure of scatter is called “variance”.

**Logarithmic Interval scales** These scales require logarithmic statistics where the measure of central tendency is called the geometric mean and is given by:

$$\bar{a} = \left(\prod_{i=1}^{n} a_{i}\right)^{1/n}.$$

### 3.2.2 Beyond Stevens

Gauge scales and Tensor scales are very abstract forms of measurement used only in the most advanced sciences.

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### 4. Impact of Experiment on Development of Theory

#### 4.1 Developing Theory

The purpose of theory is to explain the data\(^{\dagger}\). Therefore in order to design theory we must know the experimental parameters of the data as explained above.

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\(^{\dagger}\) As opposed to laws whose purpose is only to describe the data.
There is no sense in designing a scalar theory when the data scales and the statistics are only ordinal. The theory could never be tested. For instance, the USST is a relational theory built on ordinal statistics because most of the data that supports it and that it explains is ordinal data such as: which component of the sign develops first, second, etc.; or which component of the sign is directly connected to which other component, etc.

When two theories are being compared, we must ask how accurate, precise, and sensitive must the instruments be in the exact procedures required by the experiments that will produce the data that is required to distinguish between them?

4.2 Intentional Aspects of Observation

You only see what you look for. This also holds for observations. If you look for a dichotomy, that’s what you’ll find (viz. Kant); if you look for a trichotomy, that’s what you’ll find (viz. Peirce). The question is which fits all of our other knowledge best and which leads to the best understanding of all of the data.

Observations must also fit into our overall conceptual scheme. If we are watching a billiard ball rolling on a pool table, we are probably involved with physical concepts which are all dyadic relations and hence confined to the physical sciences. On the other hand, if we are observing the recognition of concepts in the mind, we are probably involved with semiotic problems which all require triadic relations and hence directed to the semiotic sciences. In physical experiments, we should expect dichotomies; in semiotic experiments, we should expect trichotomies.

Also, as Eddington said: “No experiment should be believed until it has been confirmed by theory.”. This means that science is not just a collection of facts, but facts plus understanding. But the understanding must be of the facts as they are, not as we imagine them to be. Scales and measurement parameters help us to understand the facts as they really are. Paraphrasing Eddington, we can say: No theory should be believed unless it is grounded in reliable high quality data from instruments tested and assayed under the appropriate conditions.

5. Semiotic Examples

5.1 Semiotic Instruments

At ASRI, we have more than 130 semiotic instruments listed and described in our database (Pearson 2011). It is available for free by emailing the author. The following is a categorization of the instruments with only a few examples for each.
5.1.1 Instruments for Measuring Semiotic Variables
a. Eidometer
b. Type-Token Counter
c. Iconic Circles
d. Iconic-Symbolic Memory Interferometer
e. Popova’s Free Association Instrument
f. Osgood’s Semantic Differential (measures pragmatic differential)
g. Pearson’s Menetic Differential (measures meaning differential)
h. Phematic Deviometer
i. Bandwidth Meter
j. Raptometer (measures strength or depth of trance or rapture), etc.

5.1.2 Instruments for Measuring Non-Semiotic Variables in Semiotic Experiments
a. GSR
b. Blood Pressure
c. Colorimeter (measures flushing of cheeks)
d. Chronometer, etc.

5.1.3 Instruments that Don’t Measure but Make Other Instruments Work Better
a. Teescope
b. Multi-Channel Recorder
c. Digital Computer, etc.

5.2 Experimental Paradigms for Semiotics
5.2.1 Stroop Test
5.2.2 Pop-up Test
5.2.3 Search Test, etc.

5.3 Principles for Designing Semiotic Instruments, Experiments, and Observations, etc.

a. Principle of Paradigm Inversion
b. Principle of Semiotic Reinterpretation
c. Gedanken Experiment a la Carnap
d. Method of Logical Extremes, etc.

6. Summary

Theory and experiment interact very intimately with each other. But to know how measurement quality relates to the design of theory, we must know the purpose
of theory, the measurement parameters of the instruments when used in the experiments that will be used to justify the theory, the data scales used to record the measurements, and the statistics that will be used to reduce the data. In developing a theory, you must look at the meaning of the data.

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Significant Symmetries in the Structure of the Sign

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Abstract: During the 20th century, theoretical physicists developed the abstract concepts of symmetry and symmetry breaking into a very sharp tool for use in discovering new laws and new theories in physics. More recently interest has developed for applying this tool to the discovery of new laws and new theories in semiotics and the semiotic sciences. This paper discusses some of the symmetries of theoretical semiotics and one of the new theories that results.

Key words: symmetry; symmetry breaking; semiotic laws; semiotic theories; USST-2000; USSD-2000; USST-2010; USSD-2010; mirror symmetry; rotational symmetry

1. Introduction

Interest in the use of symmetry and symmetry breaking as a tool for discovering new theories in semiotics has been driven in just the last few years by semiotically oriented physicists such as Robert Rosen (1978), semiotically oriented logicians such as Shea Zellweger (I/P), physically oriented semioticists such as myself (Zellweger and Pearson I/P), and biosemioticians such as Robert Batterman (2011), Eliseo Fernández (2012; and T/A), and others. Perhaps this is because of the success physicists have had in using symmetry breaking as a tool for discovering the theory of bosons and other elementary particles such as quarks and the famed Higgs boson.

Fernández (T/A) claims that “Symmetry breakings connect the historicity of the elementary particles with that of the universe.” But does symmetry breaking also connect the historicity of signs with that of the universe? Fernández’ answer is a resounding “yes”. Using symmetry considerations, he attempts to generalize the explanations of critical phenomena to the realm of the semiotics of living systems.

In semiotic theories, there are many symmetries to consider. Just yesterday, in the Peirce Round Table of this congress, I heard William McCurdy describe a

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① See Longo & Montévil 2011 on the concept of criticality.
symmetry concerning Peirce’s 10 classes of signs that has lain hidden until now. But I will start my discussion of symmetry in semiotic theory with something I know much more about: the theory of sign structure.

2. Symmetry in Sign Structure

The standard theory of sign structure is the USST–2000. In Figure 1, I show its model, the main structure diagram of that theory, the USSD–2000. Immediately, we see the first symmetry. If we can reflect a structure in a mirror and nothing changes, we have a mirror symmetry. If we can rotate a structure 180° about an axis with no observable change, we have a 180° rotational symmetry. The pragmatic dimension is perfectly symmetric about its center line. It has both mirror symmetry about its center line and a 180° rotational symmetry about that same line.

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 1** A Model of Sign Structure: the USSD–2000

Next, we consider that the labels on the diagram have nothing to do with semiotic structure. They are only there for the convenience of our logical analysis. So let’s look at Figure 2 which is just Figure 1 with the labels removed. There are, however, some residual arrows in the diagram. They are an artifact of my drawing tool. I cannot erase them without erasing the entire diagram. Pay no attention to them. We also see the fundamental triadic relation of sign structure, what John Deely named “The Renvoi Relation”. It has even more symmetry as discussed next.
Now we see an even grander symmetry. The entire sign structure is doubly symmetric about its center line, just as was the pragmatic dimension before removal of the labels. But it is not symmetric about any horizontal axis. The Renvoi Relation by itself also has these same symmetries, but it also has a 120° triadic rotational symmetry about its center point.

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 2 Figure 1 Showing Structure Only**

Even tho the USST–2000 is the standard theory of static sign structure, Figure 3 shows the structure of what I think is a better theory of static sign structure, the USST–2010, which is a theory that I have been working on ever since the day that the USST–2000 was adopted (2011). But the USST–2010 has never been submitted to any standards body. One purpose of the USST–2010 is to explain the difference between the creation of the sign and the interpretation of the sign without losing any of the explanatory power of the USST–2000. But it also explains Peirce’s confusion about the definition of the interpretant. The interpretant must serve two double functions, one of synthesis and analysis, and the other one of holding the two outer dimensions together.

The USST–2010 is much more powerful than the USST–2000 and is filled with dozens of symmetries. But did it achieve this at the cost of breaking any of the symmetries of the USST–2000? My initial thoughts are that it broke only one of the symmetries of the USST–2000, and it immediately replaced all others with more powerful ones of the same kind. In addition, the breaking of this one symmetry now allows the USST to explain the semiotics of dialog, which it was not able to do
before.
Although the pragmatic structure of the USST–2010 is different from the pragmatic structure of the USST–2000, it still has the same two symmetries. Changing theories may have broken the pragmatic symmetries of the USST–2000 structure; however it has replaced them with the same two kinds of symmetry. But now, even the syntactic dimension has these same two symmetries. Instead of two symmetries, we now have four symmetries.

But, it doesn’t stop there. The semantic structure has these same two symmetries, labels and all. We have now counted six symmetries in the labeled sign structure. Even the entire structure has these same two symmetries; we are up to eight. Only the three symmetries of the single Renvoi Relation have disappeared, but these have been replaced by the two symmetries of the double Renvoi Relation, making a total of ten symmetries of the labeled static sign structure of the USST–2010—a drastic increase in symmetry over that of the USST–2000, altho at the expense of one broken symmetry: the triadic rotational symmetry of the Renvoi Relation about its center point.

We have been looking at Figure 3, the labeled USST–2010 static sign structure. Let us now shift our focus to Figure 4, the unlabeled static sign structure of the USST–2010.

This time, the absence of labels makes no difference in the symmetry of the structure.

3. Conclusions

I have not had time in this short paper to analyze either Fernández’s symmetries of the evolution of the sign, Zellweger’s symmetries of the propositional operators, or McCurdy’s symmetries of Peirce’s ten classes of signs, or even to touch on all of the symmetries of sign structure and sign dynamics. But I think by now that you get the point. There are many symmetries in semiotic theory and a close examination of each one in detail may lead us to the discovery of new and more powerful semiotic laws and theories.

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Linguistic Emergence of Time and Space: Paul Celan’s Poetological Metamodulations

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Abstract: Paul Celan’s speech “The Meridian” (“Der Meridian”), given on the occasion of receiving the prestigious Georg-Büchner-Price in Darmstadt on October 22, 1960, has since acquired the status of an iconic statement on modern poetology. Nothing hardens into permanence in this speech, not even the guillotine that depends on the turbulence of history in the making or—as Celan’s poetry has it—on the lover’s Burb that triggers the fatal device. The sensation of touch that appears in the first paragraph of “The Meridian” is a matter of belief that cannot be ascertained, and so is Hessia, the state in which the award takes place. Even the author whose name the prize commemorates, Georg Büchner, is not excepted from a final immateriality. Names begin to tell stories that supersede and precede them, stories beyond compare. As Celan suggests, these are children’s stories from a time before words took on their full semantic weight. In Celan’s vision, Karl Emil Franzos, the first editor of Büchner’s Collected Works, is associated with invisible signs that at first sight take on the shape of the German word for quotation marks, “Gänsefüßchen” (Celan, 1986, p. 202), the little feet of little geese, feet that upon further imagination look like “Hasenöhrchen” (Celan, 1986, p. 202), delicate rabbit ears made to perceive what might be approaching, but cannot be heard yet. These exquisite ears sprouting from quotation marks pick up the future as it were, an immaterial presence that demands the rabbit’s full alertness. This hypersensitive creature partakes in and already responds to a subjunctively formative future. Space and time thus conceived emerge in reverse, out of a future as uncertain as deep memory. In his “Conversation in the Mountains” (“Gespräch im Gebirge”), written in 1959, the year preceding “The Meridian”, Celan begins to develop the ear that transforms into the rabbit’s post-quotational organ.

Key words: modern poetology; metatopography; spatial inversion; temporal reversibility; post-lingualism

Paul Celan’s speech “The Meridian” (“Der Meridian”), given on the occasion of receiving the prestigious Georg-Büchner-Price in Darmstadt on October 22, 1960, has since acquired the status of an iconic statement on modern poetology. But
Celan’s text resists such an elevation. It rather negotiates a certain mindlessness around the mergings and emergences of time and space. Speech has a chance to loosen the constrictions that bind written language to the page. It is no coincidence that Celan quotes from Büchner’s tragicomedies and that in these dramatic works the guillotine, the marionette, the automaton, and the absurd rhetorical ejaculation play decisive roles. Nothing硬化s into permanence in Celan’s speech, not even the very sharp guillotine that depends on the turbulence of history in the making or—as Celan’s poetry has it—on the lover’s burp that triggers the fatal device. Celan’s ultimate *femme fatale* in “Hunediblu” does not depend on words; her digestive imbalance produces the final blow (Celan, 2005, p. 157).

Nothing finds a firm, let alone final place in the course of Celan’s speech. To begin with, the speaker apparently aims at a respectful and educated audience. “Ladies and gentlemen” are addressed over and over again (Celan, 1986), very, very politely, until a certain irritation sets in, a sense of being mocked. The speaker’s platform increasingly resembles the makeshift constructions of the French Revolution; the audience witnesses a spectacle that will not end well, or worse; that will never end.

At the end of Celan’s considerations, a certain yet unlocalizable gaiety signals the endlessness of a laughter in which each and everyone is implicated. In the final convolutions of his speech, Celan invokes the meridian, an imaginary line circling the globe with a both topographical and disembodied assertiveness. Celan, placed on the rhetorical platform, about to be subjected to ritual applause by Ladies and Gentlemen, tries for the last time to make some contact with the audience at his feet, but he does so (and this leaves the speaker enigmatically intact in spite of his demise) via a touch that immediately turns putative, a touch in the delicate interspace of desire and consummation. Of the meridian he says: “With you and Georg Büchner and the state of Hessen I just thought to have touched it again” (Celan, 1986, p. 202).

The sensation of touch as it appears in the final one-sentence paragraph of “The Meridian” is a matter of belief, a tender matter that cannot be ascertained, and so is Hessia, the state in which the award takes place. Of course the audience is not spared from this final immateriality; but more strikingly, even the author whose name the prize commemorates, Georg Büchner, stands exposed. His name in the end appears between the spectators and the state, a disturbing trinity in which sounds lurk uncannily. The *buchen* tree that sprouts in Büchner, the man that arises from his Spandau imprisonment in Hessen’s first syllable, the Ladies and Gentlemen that applaud the spectacle with their hunger barely concealed; who would want to
touch them?

Rather, Celan places his finger on a children’s map of his own conception, and in so doing foregoes all mockery and hesitation. Not Georg Büchner, the author to be commemorated, nor Hessia, the topographical home of Büchner, but Karl Emil Franzos. Celan’s compatriot from Czernowitz in the Bukovina, appears as closest to the touch, and slightly further removed Reinhold Lenz, the wanderer from Cesvaine—Seßwegen—in Latvia who desires to walk on his head. Franzos, the editor of Büchner’s work, and Lenz, Büchner’s most haunting creation, both once removed from the author, allow for the sense of elusive intimacy associated with Celan’s meridian, with its “immaterial”, imaginary, yet “earthly” circularity (Celan, 1986, 202). Celan’s topographical intimations, however, do not furnish a firm ground or a confirmed touch of intimacy, nor an affirmation of personal groundedness. In a strikingly simple sentence Celan states that none of these places and demarcations can be found, not even on a children’s map. But this is not the end of the story.

While the children’s map, the topography of an oddly fabled past remains elusive, the names that appear beyond and before the ominous trinity, take on lives of their own, lives that depart from long-established conceptions of space and time. Franzos from Czernowitz (mostly) and Celan from Czernowitz and—as a long-time expatriate—from Paris touch each other in France and elsewhere more intimately than if they had met in the flesh. Names begin to tell stories that supersede and precede them, stories beyond compare. These are children’s stories from once upon a time, before words took on their full semantic weight.

Beyond Celan’s text, but well within its imaginary range, Lenz, his name a poetic variation of frühling, spring-time, born in Cesvaine/Seßwegen, brings time and space into play, the yearly season and the sense of place, even home in Seßwegen, a town’s name associated with being seßhaft—dwelling in permanence—, a state that, however, immediately enters into a tension with wege, paths.

Back in Büchner’s novella, Lenz is on his way toward Spring and toward himself, namely on the 20th of January when he now and then finds it disagreeable that he cannot walk on his head (Büchner, 1988, 137). At such unpleasant moments space and time dissolve concurrently, for whoever walks on his head, Celan interjects, has the heavens beneath his feet, like an abyss. There is no future in the above and beyond, no spring time that awaits this wanderer. The 20th of January remains frozen in time, there will be no 21st (no solstice, no turn as the calendar unfolds), but only a terrible silence, or more precisely, the onset of such a silence in which one’s breath (the Celanian Atem) ceases, as does one’s word. Struck by this
potentially final moment in time. Celan engages the possibility of an *Atemwende*, a turn of breath: as one’s breath turns at the end of time, in a space turned upside down, the ground or the sky may or may not materialize.

Celan evokes a similar dynamics with Franzos not only with regard to the latter’s unsettled geographical attachments, but especially so in a post-linguistic, possibly utopian dimension. In Celan’s vision, Franzos is associated with invisible signs that at first sight take on the shape of the German word for quotation marks, “Gänsefüßchen” (Celan, 1986, p. 202), the little feet of little geese, feet that upon further imagination look like “Hasenöhrchen” (Celan, 1986, p. 202), delicate rabbit ears made to perceive what might be approaching, but cannot be heard yet. These exquisite ears sprouting from quotation marks pick up the future as it were, an immaterial presence that demands the rabbit’s full alertness. This hypersensitive creature partakes in and already responds to a subjunctively formative future. Space and time thus conceived emerge in reverse, out of a future as uncertain as deep memory.

The linguistic progressions highlighted by quotation marks turned rabbit ears morph into metamodulations that do not depend on the forward trajectories of customary human communication. In the world of the hunters and the hunted, rabbits survive by changing course abruptly, for their meta-ears trigger their legs to an unheard-of tune.

In his “Conversation in the Mountains” (“Gespräch im Gebirg”), written in 1959, the year preceding “The Meridian”, Celan begins to develop the ear that transforms into the rabbit’s post-quotational organ. “Do you hear”, asks one of the two partners in this both otherworldly and unspeakably realistic conversation, “do you hear”, “do you hear”? There is no answer, but the addressee turns into the question, the verb into the name; “you hear”, now “Youhear” (Celan, 1986, p. 171) remains silent, with only his name to be heard like an echo in the glacial mountain ranges. “Youhear” is the one “with the glaciers”, we read, an auditory quotation mark, a transposition of marked utterance into marked sound. The verb freezes into a name, and that name, an echo, precedes and perhaps supersedes the unspeakable passage set in a subjunctive on the verge of a potentially emergent time and space, a passage that can or could be or could have been spoken, but that is and was not spoken by a speaker who now is on the way reminiscent of Lenz’s path: “[…] I who can tell you all of this, could have told you all of this; who does and did not tell you that; […] I accompanied perhaps—now! —by the love of the unloved, I on the path here to me, above” (Celan, 1986, p. 173).

This speaker speaks beyond preconceived notions of time and space, and
beyond a sense of identity linked to quotable speech. Away from particular citations, a quotational realm begins to emerge, with rabbit ears and geese feet, and with a quotation sign loftier still than “above” (Celan, 1986, 173)—or “beyond”—marking the end of Celan’s text.

References


Temporal Merging of Actantial Models of Space: A Semiotic Approach

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Abstract: In the domain of current spatial semiotics two important, but also radically different, approaches can be used to model the co-operative effect of human, material and axiomatic production of space, namely that of Manar Hammad’s and that of Bruno Latour’s. Hammad, being a semiotician truer to the Greimasian heritage, regards a finite set of principal actantial types (owners, visitors, authorizers, and material partitions), while Latour, who is more openly critical of structuralist and typological approaches, suggests a more open-ended model as far as the types of actants concern. Both approaches render the production of space in societies or communities from an agency perspective, and these models allow an analysis of architectural and urban space, that regards the environmental and material circumstances as vital. Actanial analysis opens for instance for the issue of the negotiability of space, as well as that of spatial accessibility. In comparison, the philosophical concept of spatial otherness (heterotopia) as stated by Foucault must be seen more as a description and historical rendering of existing spatial divisions and overall societal trends. A heterotopic point of view may nevertheless help to deconstruct authoritative categorization by way of making clear that specific places’ depend on the societal web and its overall historical authorization mechanisms. However, a view more concerned with the actual operators in spatial production will acknowledge that actors are found as they are studied, rather than thought up beforehand. The actors, major as well as minor ones, that have decisive impact on space, have thus to be “followed” in their defining of spatial activities, and they can be found through the locating of controversies in connection with spatial activities, such as the establishment of new architecture or new city parts. In order to avoid dichotomic (either-or) stabilisation of spatial controversies, and allowing the impact of temporal phenomena, a gradual view must be possible, where actants rise and expire, grow and diminish, transform or stay intact as the sociological process goes on. If Latour’s emphasis on letting the actors themselves decide the grouping of will and matter (rather than having the scientist’s mind doing it beforehand), is added to Foucault’s otherness-approach and Hammad’s typological variations, one may see a powerful methodological pattern of how to investigate the agencies of urban/rural space production. Such a “merged” model, of otherwise partly incompatible theoretic origins, would then build upon a methodological succession, or analytical-temporal procedure, that should preferably await stabilisation as long as possible, in order not to lose its applicability to unexpected data or studies. This successive- and in practice temporal-analytic procedure would open for found actors
that have influence on space formation, as well as recurrent spatial actor types, but also recognise the fact that actors may change as the investigation goes on. In such a “merged” model (here labelled SMAMS: Sequential Merging of Actantial Models of Space) the regularly appearing as well as the spontaneously emerging and vanishing operators of space production will be recognised.

**Key words:** actant; actor; space; time; model; architecture; negotiation.

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### 1. Introduction—an Abbreviated and Speculative Survey on the Semiotics of Space and Agency

#### 1.1 Dilemmas in notions of space

A lot of modern theorization on space can be traced down to a crude, but still main, line of dispute: space is just there, present or presented to us, given beforehand for everything to exist in, versus space is thought/ enacted/ created/ i.e. produced by ourselves as subjects or as actors.

This dilemma has, in a semiotic discourse, been given numerous elaborated descriptions, and has also been the object for semiotic overbridging of the dispute itself. However, semiotics is in the end concerned with the meaning that space brings along, and only to a subordinate extent with how it is physically, mathematically or linguistically construed.

“Space is relative and absolute [...] a principle of exclusion as much as of inclusion [...], continuous and discontinuous. Modern semiotics, having inherited this philosophical debate, has pronounced itself on space as a form of production of meaning.” (Pellegrino, 1998)

Greimas, in an attempt to develop a basic concept for a semiotic analysis of space, postulates a preliminary term, “extent”, as a complex, but continuous pre-spatial entity. Greimas defines extent “as the substance which, once informed and transformed by man, becomes space, i.e. the form which, by reason of its articulations, may be of use with a view to meaning” (Greimas, 1976).

Lotman, on the other hand, uses a spatial figure already loaded with meaning, the semisphere, to show that the epistemological content in it has boundaries and that those boundaries are constantly violated (or more mildly: dealt with) in semiotic (cultural, textual, translational) activity. (Lotman, 1990)

The physical space, or as we should perhaps say (if we involve our own relation to it), the environment, has at least since Kant been considered to be deeply intertwined with our comprehension of it. In terms of suggesting the cognitive aspect of our comprehension of space and objects in space, Luis Prieto said in a somewhat circular logic:
“[A]n object does not occur as such in material reality but instead appears as such in the mental representation which the subject constructs of it: an object, in fact, is nothing else but a fragment of material reality which the subject recognizes as precisely that, in other words as a fragment of that reality” (Prieto, 1995; Pellegrino, 1998).

This cognitive claim, reminiscent of phenomenological ones stating that we have access only to the relation between thinking and objects, has lately seen a contender in so-called speculative realism, where the objects in space are seen as released from this correlation (Meiland, 2008) and instead comprehended as entities with a will, or at least agency, of their own (Harman, 2010).

Several of the thoughts on space and cognition as mutually related, have appeared in a phenomenological vein, more specifically in Husserl’s, Gurwitsch’s, Gibson’s and other’s approaches to perception as part of a situated consciousness (Sonesson, 2007). And lately, these kinds of problem have been given more experimental substance and neurological determination, in recent development of a cognitive and ecologically oriented semiotics.

Space and scale have since long been linked to time: Husserl’s time consciousness theory emphasises the intertwined principles of “a before”, “a now” and “an after”, above all the dependence between these three as our capacity on a consciousness level to comprehend what just happened and predict what will happen next. This theory operates in the time-space of consciousness itself, of the knowing about the knowing. The attempt to conjoin phenomenological models of time-space comprehension with the neurological ones—such as that of Varela’s, where cognition is divided into three principal time-scales, depending on the time it takes for a conceptual connection to be formed—is an on-going task in the cognitive science branches that attempt to bring the notion of consciousness more explicitly into theorization about cognitive acts and evolutionary development.

Comprehension of space as a matter of ontogenetic evolution has been studied for instance in relation to children’s development: as in what age, or in what situation it is possible for a child to recognise in a picture an object from an absent spatial situation, and being able to locate and transport itself to that space. Recognition in its basic form (i.e. that upon which iconicity rests), involve visual as well as spatial semiotic resources. So does the basic understanding of signs, if we by that mean the capacity to connect two entities while also keeping them apart.

1.2 Conjoining “incongruent” parts

In order to render also the actontial aspect of space, let’s consider again the two
main perspectives on space as roughly mentioned above. The first one could be expressed as:

1.2.1 Without a given space (describable in coordinates) there can be no activity

Mathematically driven sciences postulate that space is isometric—thus objects’ positions have coordinates. So called “ether models”, container models or geometric models have, intertwined and applied to space, assisted—and made possible—the development of modern building construction communication devices, geographical positioning systems, artificial materials, etc. The manifold mathematical applicability of these models however also suggests an omnipotent fitness as general models, not only for technological thinking, but also in a wider philosophical (and perhaps even common) sense.

Space is generally on a philosophical level recognised as a temporally complex environmental and intersubjective entity, also for the evidence-oriented sciences that measure for instance eye-movements or brain activity. Still, when it comes to the experimental situation itself, and for the sake of measurement, the temporality of spatial cognition has often to be described in terms of metric containment.

The second position could be stated like this:

1.2.2 Without action/creation/production there is no (meaningful) space

Space may, as a sociological (or biological, anthropological, etc) phenomenon, be seen as that which is made by people (or organisms) through the conjunction of situational agents and circumstances. Space is in other words here actually determined, and considered as primarily existing due to, and for, somebody—and not as an “unoccupied” entity in its own right. This view goes basically also for governmental and religious creations of space, even when their concern is the imputation of a major and omnipotent force of spatial authority.

Spatial thinking as a semiotic resource distinct from verbal-linguistic competence, and a vital part of for instance gestures, acting, visualisation and architectural creation, has been said to contribute not only to the extended field of cognitive linguistics, but also to the theoretical development of the use of vectors in natural sciences, as exemplified for instance by the discovery of DNA and other molecules/organisms that within themselves carry multidirectional or otherwise complex relations between elements of various sorts. In a Lotmanian terminology, such diversity of spatial relations can be considered as “spatial text” carrying meaning by way of spatio-syntactic and spatio-semantic qualities that are non-verbal because they are not time-dependant, or irreversible, or discretely construed the way a written or spoken text is. (Tchertov, 2002).

Now, is there then a third principal position. Well we could hypoyhetically
state it as;

1. 2. 3 Conjunctions of spatial comprehension

Space is a matter for the investigation of the interrelation between environment, culture, and mind, and has also been investigated as the linguistic capacity to express object’s positions, such as in utterances belonging in different languages, for instance about everyday descriptions of a cup on a table, or an object hidden under a cup on a table. Spatial ordering, as part of human as well as non-human acts of communication, such as animals making an impression on other individuals, is a part of a niche-construction of a more or less culturally complex sort.

Different comprehensions of space and its creation have a tendency to “eat” each other, or take primacy of each other. It is hard, for instance, to model space entirely from the perspective of social interaction, without letting the geometrical understanding be subordinated (of less interest), and it can be hard to contemplate a monistic object at the same time as letting a multiplicity of subjective wills be decisive for the spatial existence of that object. Nevertheless, several attempts of spatial modelling today attempts to merge otherwise incompatible theories.

I will in the following mainly refer to a domain of space semiotics that can roughly be described as “sociological”, but in order not to make claims on the traditional models of the different schools of sociology, it is better labelled “actantial”. Theoretical attempts to recapture the agency and agency-potential of not only humans but also non-humans, have been labelled “material culture oriented”, “niche construction oriented” or “actor-network oriented” models of space. Depending on main focus all of them are strictly speaking rather new streams of thought, and form a rather incongruent semiotic stream of thought, not least as regards a lack of, or only a limited participation in, the traditional semiotic discourse. Nevertheless, they represent contemporary semiotic attempts—and are currently influential in those attempts—to take notions such as actors, actants and agency one step ahead in order to be able to model space, but also socio-spatial activity in general. Apart from explicit use of the notions, and labels, of actor and actant there are however also seminal semiotic concepts that consider the actantial approach. Lotman, for instance, appears to have described a museum interior space in terms of what others might call “actantial”, when he viewed it as a semiosphere with an agglomeration of spatial texts, and text types, that conquers the exhibited visual art objects and their verbal descriptions, and determines the overall “visual rhetoric” of the museum space (Tchertov, 2002).
2. Agency in the Founding History of Semiotics

Greimas (1987) stated that every act is a basic presupposition in meaning-production—as when an act of enunciation occurs before the resulting utterance is recognized, or just by the fact that an enunciation as always modalized by the utterer.

Lotman’s (1990) notion of translation suggests that an act of translation has a creative effect in itself; i.e. it has agency in the sense re-shaping not only the text translated, but the context(s) involved in that translational act.

Peirce’s notion of semiosis allows signs to cause a change in the interpreting mind or community, thus signs have agency. Signs (or their constituents) affect interpretation in the sense that the “interpretant” is not only a prerequisite for the existence of reception, but also an effect of semiosis (or the mediation process).

For a sign to exist there has to be a conjunction of content (indirectly present and thematic) and form (directly present representational) (Sonesson, 2007). This means that at the very heart of semiotics, a spatial logic (presence-absence, and an embodiment of this difference) is part of the definition of what it means to convey meaning.

Affordances (Gibson, 1979) are potential for action for an organism in an environmental situation. Affordances can be regarded as not yet active actors. Affordances may even stay “un-executed”, such as when an individual or a community knows what types of action can be taken in an emergency situation, but never needs to perform that action. However, this “potentiality” can be regarded also as actual agency when its mere existence influences a spatial behaviour.

Actors need not be physically present or or verbally comprehensible to have agency; legal, material and human absence for instance, can be of necessity for a spatial occurrence to take place.

The main purpose of this paper is to propose a merging of seemingly incompatible agency-based models of space, into a temporal methodological approach.

Agency is discussed in what follows, as the combination of forces (actors) that create a spatial situation, with social and architectural implications.

3. A Methodological Approach to Actantial Space

3.1 Places as activated spaces

Before addressing the main topic of this paper, to discuss methodological
attempts made to understand the variety of agency that informs the production of space, I would like to consider the principal fact that places reflect the societal rules by which they are created, as well as the other places to which they relate. My analysis will therefore start in a recalling of the notion of “heterotopia”, or “the place of difference” as it were, launched by Foucault (1998) in the 1960s. Before Foucault turned it into an epistemological and spatial concept, in 1966 in Les mots et les choses, and in 1967 as a talk later to be published as the article Des espaces autre, 1984, “heterotopia” existed as a term in medicine as denoting tissues or growths occurring in unusual (corporeal) places (Lax, 1998). Foucault’s renderings of the “order” of institutions, languages and sciences have inspired several inquiries on the manifestation of structural power. However, Certeau (1984) also said that Foucault was more occupied with describing the appearance of power structures and their historical arrangements, and less with the ways in which people actually handle disciplinary power in daily practical circumstances. We may in an extension to Certeau’s note, and in relation to more recent theories that emphasize actors’ influence on places, ask: To what extent does the concept of heterotopia exceed its own dichotomic construction and offer insight also into the acts that define place formation? In order to give an answer we will have to recapture the “definition” of heterotopia, quotation marks included because Foucault himself hesitated to make it into a scientific concept.

3.2 Reflections of Societal Space

In Des espaces autres—a short and dense text, bearing the lecture manuscript’s character of provisory arrangement and the pamphlet’s character of proclamation, Foucault took his overall interest in various disciplines’ obsession with emplacement, and applied it to the specific concerns of architectural and urban space. Here, he introduced the concept of “heterotopia” as places with a clear societal function which all have the ability to reflect their surroundings in such a way as to “represent, challenge, and overturn all (other) real emplacements” (Foucault, 1998). This overly general definition almost bears the traits of a sign vehicle that reflects, rather than straightforwardly represents, another entity. However, Foucault, occupied with breaking away from structuralist semiology did not primarily present heterotopia as a semiotic concept. Rather, he showed its features by stating six principles of its societal appearance: 1) A heterotopia, as a spatial condition of otherness in all societies, appears in two principal guises; of crisis (loci for rites of passage, e.g. boarding schools, military service, and honeymoon hotels); and of deviance (loci for putting aside, e.g. rest homes, psychiatric
clinics, prisons, and old people’s homes); 2) A heterotopia may operate in different
ways in different historical periods—its function may be modified and altered, as in
the historical development of cemeteries and the rituals connected with them. 3) A
heterotopia juxtaposes locations that are essentially different, by the conjunction of
separate and otherwise incompatible dimensions, as in theatres (scene after scene),
cinemas (3D into 2D) and gardens (representing several worlds); 4) Heterotopia
appears in different types of time: as accumulation (locus for collections, e. g.
museums and libraries); and as absolute presence (festivals, fairs and holiday trips); 5) A heterotopia may open and close by the will of others than those who are
found to be there, thus they have material as well as ritual keys, as in a guest house;
6) A heterotopia reflects the remaining space; in one extreme as making that space
appear as an illusion, in another extreme as being a compensation, functioning as an
alternative to everyday blur. (Brothels, colonies, and ships serve as Foucault’s
examples here.)

These heterotopic places are defined as idiosyncratic exceptions in the societal
web, establishing a fundamental difference when entered. However, as places in
the urban web they also reproduce the rules and schemas of society. The notion of
heterotopia has been widely used, not least in architectural theory, but it has also
been criticised for several reasons. It shows a problematic definition as a physically
located phenomenon, at the same time as claiming a general logical relevance as an
orderings principle (Genocchio, 1995; Hetherington, 1997). It’s general and
systemic claim has been associated with the Eurocentric philosophical position from
which such diverse locations as the paradises of European tourism, the brothels of
Paris, and early historical prisons, were unilaterally treated by Foucault, i.e. where
a more elaborated concern about historical connectivity would have been
appropriate (Gregory 2000; Said 1984). And in a constructivist urban studies
discourse the notion of heterotopia has been criticised for raising an interest only in
extra-ordinary types of places, ignoring the everyday types of space that most
people live and work in (Lefebvre, 1991; McLeod, 1996; Katz, 2001). Taken
together, the critique shows that “heterotopia” works as a discourse trigger, and a
rough reflection-model of societal space-production, but also brings vagueness in
respect to what is more precisely pointed out.

Despite the critique here mentioned—and as partly acknowledged by the critics
themselves—Foucault’s heterotopology has the ability to show that what we
ordinarily think of as strictly separated spaces are—if not simply ideals, or
illusions—mutually intertwined in defining each other. It also actualizes the fact
that places are temporarily constituted by spatial rule-owners as well as by occasional
occupiers. Such is the case for instance with all those so called semi-private, and semi-public places that still in for instance planning documents often are typified as either public or private, despite the fact that it is through our actions that we privatize the public, as well as make the private more public.

# 4. Typological vs Open-ended Actant Theories

In agency-oriented theoretical approaches space is defined as continuously produced by a set of actors (and their generalized types: actants) which allow us to say for instance that an individual’s apartment is not necessarily in the hands of its owner, but the ownership is rather a modality of various possible stabilisations of actantial relations (including those that may have to do with for instance land-lords, house owners, governmental principles, the wills of neighbours, city planning documents, social policies, social movements, war, natural disasters, etc). How, then, are we to distinguish between different urgencies here, how are we to make investigations of actantial space where not every actor is equally important? In order to answer that question two main approaches are discernible: one that makes a choice of recurrent actant types, and one that follows the actors themselves. In order to reflect these two approaches we will look into the space semiotics of Manar Hammad, a rather close follower to Greimas’s (1987) structuralist approach, and compare it with a more reluctant follower, namely Bruno Latour. While Hammad, as we shall see in more detail, operates the notion of actant on a systematic semiotic level, in a constrained typology of agency or actor-types, Latour uses the notion of actant first of all in order to make room in sociology also for the non-human agency of spatial production, such as physical matter, technological tools, prescriptions or law. This systematically “looser” approach of Latour’s is also, as we shall see, part of an ambition to differentiate between actors’ varying degree of intensity and transformability.

# 5. Actor-network-based Models of Space

A third position in contemporary actantial theory could be seen as that of Actor-Network-Theory modelling of space and objects in space (Law and Mol, 2001). Here, various spatial ordering principles, or types of actantial connection, are emphasised—such as region (similar to Euclidian spatial extension, based on metric regularities), network (agglomerations of fixed or pre-existing entities (forces) that hold a materialised situation together), fluid (defined as a spatial
composition that includes exchange of the constituting elements, continuous
reconstruction, and dynamic existence, and finally fire (defined as patterns of
discontinuity, where absence of one or more actors is a prerequisite for spatial
stabilisation). While “networks” compose an “immutable mobile”, a spatial
composition that hold together with its own rules of freedom in relation to metric
space, the “fluid” presents a more mutable system that includes unpredicted
maintenance, and produces “an object continuity that precisely demands gradual
change”. Through the metaphor “fire”, lacking actors are given precedence, such
as those un-built parts of a city that could be needed in order to enable movement
between different parts, or absent functions or individuals in an organisation that
enables the organisation to work (Law and Singleton, 2005). Law et al thus
introduces, in this metaphorical way—i.e. discursive rather than structuralist—a set
of “object versions” that could relevantly cover such diverse spatially conditioned
phenomena as Portuguese vessels during European colonial domination, a bush pump
for water in Zimbabwe, and the progress and management of liver disease.

The position of Actor-Netwok-Theory—to the extent that the authors here
mentioned subscribe to that label—is clarifying as regards the distinction between a
gometric and a socially constructed space, but from a general semiotic point of
view also problematic, in the sense that the three latter “object versions”, or types
of spatial merging, i.e. network, fluid and fire, are logically the same, and not
easily distinguished as qualitatively different from each other when real cases are
studied, but rather could be seen as three different modalities of “networks” where
the elements are more or less dynamic and exchangeable. Other principal figures for
discussing network stabilisation could for instance be based in “sort”, or “similarity”
between architectonic objects (Kärhrholm & Sandin 2011).

In a recent attempt to model dynamically the controversies surrounding the
architectural becoming of the Olympic Stadium in London 2012, the sociologist
Albena Yaneva, has taken the concepts of actors and actants into a new visual mode
of interpretation. In a rendering made with the help of contemporary digital
processing of a parametric description of the number and content of media reports
on controversial moments in the process of the birth of the arena, a moving image
of the emergence, development and decline of actors can be seen. The data, taken
from web-based media, then parametrized and clustered into for instance: legacy,
cost, sustainability and design bids. This way, such diverse data as protesters’
demonstrations (against climate change caused by extended airport services),
designer’s proposals and opinions, communities’ protocols, existing environment,
existing architectural types, the role of Beijing Olympics, etc., were incorporated
into the diagrammatic moving image.

6. Spatial Modalities: the Negotiation of Access to Space

An important suggestion to a general approach to the semiotics of space, can be found in an experimental setting in 1984 by Manar Hammad, designed to highlight the issue of access to space, thus also to the theoretical division between private and public. Hammad staged his experiment in La Tourette, the architectonic classic designed by Le Corbusier. Once a monastery with room for prayer, meals, living, gathering, management, transportation, etcetera, this building was now functioning as a conference hotel, but still with a small amount of monastic representation (a prior and a few monks) in the running of some of the daily operations. In collaboration with a group of selected partakers in a conference taking place here, Hammad (2002) initiated a series of rule-breaking behaviour such as 1) occupying the “most important” table in the refectory (room for meals) usually advised for a group of leaders including the prior, or 2) knocking at the door of a guest room and ask the guest for access to the room, or 3) telling a guest that he has to leave the room and move to another one for reasons of ranking of the guests, etc. It was important to Hammad that the experiments concerned implicit (or tacit) rules, more like etiquette, implicating that a violation of them was initially perhaps only vaguely experienced, without the possibility to consult any written regulations. In his analysis, Hammad (2002) suggests a set of spatial “modalities” based on “the wills”, “the musts”, the “cans” and “the knowing” that make up the spatial relations between different actors; between people; between people and concrete architectural elements like windows; between people and authorisation (or law); between activities and time; etc. These relations are realised in, and by, a set of “actants” such as; “the owner of a place”, “the spatial partition controlled by this owner”, “the authoriser (or legaliser)”, “the visitor”, “the spatial extent external to the visitor inside the place of the owner”, and so on. They all concern modes of the possession of space, i.e. how a portion of space is prohibited from access, how it is possible to access, how it is de-accessed, etc. Hammad’s analysis concerns, in other words, some fundamental mechanisms in privatisation acts. His conclusions support the initial hypothesis that to privatise (to make ones own) means always also to deprive others of a spatial partition. He points to the possibility of creating temporary spaces within a larger place, partitions achieved through the “bending” of etiquette. The notion of threshold, for instance, is here given an expanded understanding, while several of the experimental acts are performed virtually on the
threshold to the room in question. While the threshold is a liminal space, often seen as architectonically belonging to “the house”, or regarded as a non-place marked only as passage, this space can from Hammad’s socio-spatial point of view be temporarily extended, for example by way of having a conversation that can expand further into the room behind the threshold. In Hammad’s description this threshold space belongs initially to the temporary “owner of the place”, but it is at the same time the very space where the owner’s capacity as such can be questioned.

The experiments in La Tourette show that spatial access is a matter of time, or more precisely of the segmentation, succession and duration of time. One example is the daily schedules that allow alteration of space, due precisely to their intention to divide time (Hammad 1989). The importance of a temporal division of space is made clear, like when the refectory in the monastery is used only certain hours per day, a fact that provides the possibility to disturb that particular spatial system by out-of-regulation actions (occupying chairs) at the immediate beginning of active hours. This limited time-space then constitutes a spatial appropriation possibility. Another time-related mechanism that appeared as important in this experiment is the ability to negotiate access to a room depending on the amount of time at hand for an intruder to spend spontaneously in the room.

Hammad’s experiment, partly constructed so as to reveal spatial controversies, shows that access to space, as well as the shared situational comprehension of the current line of division between private and public, is a matter of construction, aggression and negotiation. And it also shows that the outset itself matters for the result; one choice of parameters could be substituted by other empirical choices or perspectives that may then reveal other mechanisms of privatisation.

7. Beyond the Typological Set of Actants. Unexpected Humans and Matter

The fact that controversies have a revealing capacity has been taken up in different ways also by others. Hammad’s range of actants follow, as we saw, a typologized set of interests in the “struggle” for spatial access. The notion of actant is taken slightly differently in the hands of Bruno Latour, who is provoked by the semiotic tendency to categorize while making the categories perfectly repeatable and operative on an equalized and non-affected level. He is also critical to sociologists’ tendency to use readymade categories that stay intact through analysis after analysis. He prefers a more open-ended and more unprecedented set of actors and actants to
define each studied situation, and even let the actors themselves play a more active part for the investigator. Latour, paying a lot of tribute to Garfinkel as well as Tarde, emphasizes the methodological feature that actors cannot be pre-conceived, they can not be “placeholders” in a pre-established system, this in order to really make a social and analytical change. Actors, for Latour, are “able to propose their own theories of action to explain how agencies’ effects are carried over”. They even have the capacity to (thus should methodologically be let to) “propose their own theories of action” (Latour, 2005).

This way he suggests a less determinable space of reference to represent his actors, but in congruence with Hammad he advocates the delegation of human enactment to non-human objects. In Latour’s case this delegation of “allowing”, “stopping”, “suggesting”, etc., is frequently exemplified through technological features of designed objects, such as (Latour, 1992) the doors, keys, hinges, automatic door openers and shutters (grooms) that have replaced the human activity needed to enter a house without having to bother too much with opening and closure difficulties. The degree of “excorporation” of intra-somatic skills (like lifting, pushing, hindering, opening, etc.) into machines, as well as the “incorporation” of extra-somatic functions into our daily handling of matter-dependent situations, like when a trained driver just “know” how to drive a new car without having to read the instruction manual first, are emphasized by Latour in a kind of degree-of-anthropomorphization-theory where the notion of actant is needed in order to include things, machines, and the decisions made in the histories of technology that led to their realisation. But not only does Latour’s approach to actor-network theory emphasize what a situation might reveal in terms of obscured controversies in histories/sociologies of matter; he also sees the need to consider the material transformation, the destruction and the labour connected to each mediating vehicle in the studied situation. He states this in contrast to the perfect semiotization, where all the categories stay intact. In order to make clearer this distinction of labour and transformation involved in agencies, he introduces “mediators”—in contrast to the perfectly transportable and unchanged “intermediaries”—as those vehicles of agency that bear resistance to the mediation process, and change their force and appearance as the study is undertaken. To talk of timing, spacing, acting instead of time, space, and actors, would mark the fact that these entities exist separately, that they influence each other, and that they are in a constant mode of alteration (Latour, 1998).

By localising controversies, and by applying an actor-based view directly to architecture, Albena Yaneva (2012) showed how a building, or an urban plan, is a
process—not only as dependant on phases of design and construction, but in shorter or longer historical perspectives as dependant on a series of decision-making and reaction to opinions, failures and environmental change—invoking a number of co-operative and re-acting actors. Actors appear through, and show themselves in controversies, however “controversies” in this context need not necessarily be fierce or politicised disputes, but are defined as “shared uncertainties”, i.e. we see “not yet stabilised states of the urban and the social” (Yaneva, 2012).

Actor-network-theory leaves, and should leave, according to Latour, a majority of information outside of the study; it is not, he says, a matter of panopticon, but oligoptikon; see little but see it well. The scope can be narrow, as long as the connections between actors hold. Hammad too, acknowledges the impact of the empirical choice. He views for instance his own problematization of the line of division between “public” and “private” space through studying “exchange of visits”, as confined to its empirical choice. So, a fellow and important component for these theoretical views is the self-recognition that only certain aspects of space can be studied.

8. Conclusion: a Model for Investigation of Social Space

8.1 A methodological succession: reflective and active capacities conjoined

Two principal actantial views, a typological one and an open one, have been discussed in their capacity to render socio-spatial, or as it were, placial situations. Through Hammad’s spatial experiments we saw a possibility to address the violation and negotiability of space. In comparison to this systematically elaborated variation of the studied spatial situation, the philosophical concept of heterotopia was seen as confined to its (strong but rough) ability to describe existing spatial divisions and overall societal functions. A description more true to the dynamic forces of production will be possible if actors are found, and “followed”, in their capacity to define spatial activities, and by locating the controversies in connection to these activities, in the way that Latour proclaims. But not only that; one would also, with a combination of typological and open-ended actantial analyses, be able to locate possible conjunctions and disjunctions of actants, and see how actants rise and expire, grow and diminish, transform or stay intact as the sociological process goes on. A successive, or co-productive methodological pattern emerges, concerning how to investigate the agencies of urban/rural space production. It may start an initial overall judgement of the reflective capacity of the situation of study, for instance with help from very general spatial models; such as Foucault’s notion of
heterotopia, in order to capture an initial socio-spatial interest; or through Lotman, and the notion of semiosphere, focusing on the translational capacity when going from one space to another. It would thereafter regard Hammad’s typology (addressee, addressee, authorizer, extent), as well as Latour’s self-instructing actor, and actor-network-oriented theories discursive metaphors.

A methodological suggestion, and sequential merging of actantial approaches, for the describing the alteration of spatial, and specifically urban situations would then look like this:

**8.2 Sequential merging of actantial models of space (SMAMS)**

1: Sensing/asking/following a variety of actors in a studied situation.

2: Looking for/applying recurrent actor types (like owners, visitors, authorisers and material extents).

3: Do 1 and 2 show overlapping or mutually exclusive actors?

4: Re-open the study for detection of unexpected actors.

5: Can spatial object versions (i.e. modes of stabilisation) stimulate a discovery of actors?

6: Can a dynamic rendering of the alteration of actors, add understanding of the situation?

Phases 1–3 are the essential part of this investigatory method, while 4–5 could make additions to the total description of the studied situation.

This methodological succession, and analytical process/procedure, should preferably await its own stabilisation as long as possible in the analytical process, not to lose applicability to unexpected situations, and capture those influences on spatial formation that takes time to discern.

**References**


Navigating Through Diaphanous Space and Polychronic Time

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Abstract: We perceive the world in a three-dimensional space modulated by the passage of time. In human experience, spatiality and temporality are merely ordering systems through which all objects and activities in the world can be perceived as “real”. The literal-minded perception of space and time has triggered absolute sociocultural and cognitive values, which in turn have led to a limiting way of life. While space and time are elements of a semiotic systemic framework that lets humans make sense of their experiences, they are not the ultimate truth. Like all semiotic signs, the words “space” and “time” are open to multiple interpretations. Although human perception of space and time is an illusion, illusion is not necessarily the opposite of truth or reality. Contemporary society would benefit greatly from an age-old tradition of navigation through “diaphanous space and polychronic time”—where diaphanous space is materialized through the image of the human body and the universe transparently interconnected; and where the concept of polychronic time provides a reversible circular dimension of cultural practice that was bound to the cycle of seasons in an infinite process. Learning to navigate through diaphanous space and polychronic time bridges different civilizations and stimulates cultural sensitivity and environmental sensibility.

Key words: design; future memory; semiotics; space-time; transparency

1. The Possibility of the Impossible

We live in a world where the absolute no longer makes sense. No longer can we afford to be apathetic about space-time determinism. It is possible for human beings to have free will to conceptualize and materialize a desired future. Although the philosophical basis for a time-free and space-free is not new, the idea of navigating through diaphanous space and polychronic time seems to provide an unconventional way to perceive and experience reality that has the potential for bridging different civilizations. My intention in this paper is to open up the possibility for a neglected way of perceiving and acting in a transparent and integrative reality that allows for imagining a desired future. Before we go far, however, is it possible to navigate through diaphanous space and polychronic time? Not only is the answer already
insinuated in the way the question is being formulated, but in fact, the answer could also be “yes” and “no” simultaneously.

Paradoxically, within this aporia of possible-impossible, the “possible” is not the opposite of the “impossible.” According to Jacques Derrida (2007), impossibility does not mean that which cannot be possible; rather, it is what happens outside our anticipated condition of possibility, a leap outside the realm of our expectations. For “so many things are possible just as long as you don’t know they’re impossible,” says Norton Juster (1961: 247). Similar to what happened with the Copernican solar system, once we get over our anthropocentric biases, time reversibility becomes familiar and provides us with a richer picture of reality (Stenger 2000). Ilya Prigogine, who explains the role of irreversibility in the processes by which nature evolves in a complex system, goes on to say, “It is only because we are aware of irreversibility that we can recognize reversible motion” (Prigogine & Stengers 1984: 300).

The possibility of the impossible is not based only on scientific theories or philosophical speculations. My own personal experience has shown that many impossible things have become possible. And, more broadly, throughout human history one can recognize many events where the impossible has become possible.

Therefore, the idea of navigating through diaphanous space and polychronic time is possible if it can only come to be viewed as impossible. In other words, the impossibility of such navigation precipitates only when we insist on maintaining the conventional perception of space and time. While this perception of space and time has been the basis for our familiar way of being and doing in the world, we do have a choice to make a major shift or, to borrow an idea from Ilya Prigogine (1984), to co-participate in a process that would trigger “order out of chaos.” Equally important, we do have the opportunity to acquire the wisdom necessary for persevering through the change-continuity paradox (Seif 2005).

2. Human Perceptions and the Illusion of Space and Time

The manner in which human beings perceive space and time has been a source

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1 The memory of this personal experience seems to be relevant here. Reflecting back on my own journey, which took place nearly 35 years ago. I am reminded of my perception of what may have rationally seemed an impossible situation, leaving my birthplace and the familiar culture of Egypt and immigrating to the United States. At that time, all perceivable limitations and the gravity of the present made this move far from being possible. Against all odds, my desire to navigate through diaphanous space and polychronic time did, in fact, make the impossible possible.
of philosophical debate for centuries. On a metaphysical level, human perception of space and time is essentially an illusion. Although space and time have been brought into quotidian existence by human consciousness, nevertheless they are illusions. Time, in the classical theory of thermodynamics, implies degradation and death, which contradicts the very phenomenon of life, which tends toward self-organization and ever-increasing complexity (Prigogine & Stengers 1984). The process governing all phenomena of life is not linear but involves nonlinear and transformative leaps. As quantum mechanics has suggested, we have been experiencing and living the artificial distinction between past and future (Stenger 2000). Albert Einstein once said, “People like us, who believe in physics, know that the distinction between past, present, and future is only a stubbornly persistent illusion” (quoted in Dyson 1979: 193).

This stubbornly persistent illusion of space-time is not merely in the realm of physics; it is also in the realm of humanities. Alfred North Whitehead (1978) tells us that there is nothing in reality that is merely a static fact or an absolute certainty. And Einstein considers the division in space and time as illusory in human affairs as it is in physics (Dyson 1979). Within hyperreality, for instance, there is no distinction between real and imaginary space and time (Baudrillard 1994). However, this illusion of space and time is not a superfluous view to be discarded. I shall return to this point later, but for now, it suffices to say that while many things are cognitively real, they are fundamentally untrue. The real and the true are not necessarily opposite poles, but a spectrum. That is to say, what is real is not always true.

Granted, conventional use of space and time is indispensable for the pragmatic survival of human beings and a way to make sense of their world. In a biological sense, we are certainly getting older, not younger! However, as I shall briefly explain, the ability of the human mind to navigate through multivalent spatiality and cyclical temporality is essential for creating meaningful and sustainable futures. It has been suggested that human beings are not near their own capabilities. Perhaps this is what Edward T. Hall (1983) hints at when he claims that the science of time will assume greater stature in the future. He anticipates that “the future is not so much one of developing new technologies as it is of developing new insights into human nature” (Hall 1983: 186). Hall’s anticipation highlights the missing congruity between the rapidity of technological developments and the pace of cultural change (cf. Brand 1999).

Space and time are comprehended as elements of a semiotic systemic framework for humans to make sense of their experiences. There are also “sacred, profane,
metaphysical, physical, biological, and clock times, but we have very little idea of how they all fit together or how each affects our lives” (Hall 1983: 14). Habitually, we perceive and act in the world as a three-dimensional space modulated and measured by the passage of time. Spatiality and temporality in human experience are merely ordering systems upon which all of social activities and objects in the world can be perceived as real. Nonetheless, we have to keep in mind that what we perceive is not reality itself but reality exposed to our way of perceiving.

Space and time are not absolute—they are relative constructs. Based on Charles S. Peirce’s doctrine of *synecism* (Deledalle 2000; Esposito 2013), the reality of space and time is one continuum, which can never be full of isolated entities. Building on Peirce’s work, we seem to have developed a tendency to experience reality in ways we value and in manners that enable us to perceive more what we value. Consequently, this continuum of Peirce’s synecism has been overlooked by conventional perception and the resulting assumptions, which have isolated, segmented, and objectified space and time. One can also assume that not only does compartmentalization of space and time encourage cultural enclaves, it also widens the gaps between different civilizations.

Perceiving reality as an absolute and isolated entity has encouraged contemporary societies to conceive space and time as fixed, linear, and immutable entities that can be used as standards for measuring events, objects, and even qualities. By being interposed between past and future, the notion of “now” becomes as a divider.1 And when we think of past, present, and future as “parts” of time, it is time itself that is divided and atomized (Gebser 1985). Undoubtedly, this atomization and division of time have led to the reification and commoditization of reality. Hence, the slogans, “time is money, time to kill, have no time,” and so on. On the contrary, cultures that have not been influenced by western tradition, like the Hopi and the Sioux, have no word for time in their vocabulary.

In addition, the literal-minded perception of space and time has triggered absolute sociocultural and cognitive values that have become addicted to efficiency and maximization, which in turn have led to limiting and constraining consequences. And because it is easy to measure the result, efficiency requires linear perception of space and time, whereas effectiveness requires good judgment to assess the outcome of navigating through diaphanous space and polychronic time. The

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1 In fact, the English word “time” (as in all the other the European languages—*zeit* in German, *tempus* in Latin, *temps* in French) can be traced back to the Indo-Germanic root *da*, which also formed the Greek verb *daiō*, “to divide, to take apart, to lay apart, to tear apart, to lacerate” (Gebser 1985: 173).
phenomenon of life has a propensity to optimize rather than to maximize (Hawken 2007) to be more effective than efficient. Efficiency does not maximize the outcome. Effectiveness optimizes. While efficiency is the driving force for a problem-solving strategy, effectiveness is the passionate desire for a meaningful and beautiful outcome of a design process. We need a design approach to a desired future, which provides the opportunity for making the impossible possible. And in order for contemporary societies to bridge different civilizations, conventional understanding and habitual perception of space and time must be framed differently.

3. Reframing the Concepts of Space and Time

How do we reframe our conceptual understanding of space and time? First, we need to take space and time out of the domain of “absolute truth.” And in order to reframe the concepts of space and time, it is necessary to make a distinction between what is “true” and what is “real.” Cultural practices are real, but material things are true. An experience is real, but scientific observation is true. Where the true depends on factual information, the real relies on multiple interpretations. And where the true is generally characterized by descriptive explanation of that which already exists, the real is distinguished by prescriptive composition of that which is yet to come.

It is commonly understood that where sciences value objectivity, rationality, neutrality, and a concern for the “truth,” humanities value subjectivity, imagination, and a concern for “justice.” Basically, sciences are concerned with how things are and deal primarily with what is true or factual. In the scientific method, which underpins all science, the right or true answer is always the outcome of rational thought and traditional research. Perhaps the right or true answer works well for the natural world and technology, but it is extremely limiting and even misleading in the sociocultural realm.

The distinction between the real and the true is what makes the study of semiotics quite different from, for example, the study of physics or chemistry. This is a peculiar distinction, as I am aware that the real and the true are, for the most part, inclusive. However, perhaps the misunderstanding of the subtle difference between the true and the real is the mother of all confusion in dealing with social and cultural issues.

Yet the difference between the real and the true can be subtle. Certainly, the concept of simulacrum challenges the difference between the “real” and the “false,”
between the “real” and the “imaginary” (Baudrillard 1994:3). In Disneyland, illusions and phantasms play a significant role in canceling the fact that what you see is real. Similarly, in the Luxor Hotel in Las Vegas, the “real” is concealed: the pyramid shape hotel and the sphinx are a mere simulacrum of the “true” Sphinx and Pyramid of Egypt. Jean Baudrillard argues that there is no such thing as reality. For him, simulacrum is not a copy or simulation of the real; rather the reality of simulacrum becomes true in its own right. However, things can get a little murky. There are instances where the real and true can be isomorphic. Or, we might say, sometimes the real becomes true!①

Although linear time is a concept we have accepted, it is not as true as it may appear to us. Consider Einstein’s work, where time is a relative reality. The so-called “present time” is an illusion, it “signifies nothing” (cf. Rotman 1987), and so does the notion of “here.” In this sense, while the expression “here and now” is cognitively real, it is fundamentally untrue. Once again, what is real is not always true. Time is “like the landscape seen through a railway carriage window. Yet we do really believe that landscape is moving” (Merleau-Ponty 1945:487). Time does not flow, the past and future “spring forth” when we “reach out toward them” (Merleau-Ponty 1945:489). Space and time are not physical matters; neither are they absolute notions. And like all semiotic signs, the words “space” and “time” are open to multiple interpretations.

Certainly, surrealistic paintings express the illusions of our senses. Surrealists have rejected the assumption that space and time are rigid, deterministic, or absolute. Artists have reframed the concepts of space and time. Consider, for instance, Salvador Dali’s extraordinary painting The Persistence of Memory, which represents the past, present, and future, helping us to perceive space and time as a fluid and soft reality; or Carte Blanche, by René Magritte, who manipulates space so that we have an illusion of a woman and horse simultaneously in front of and hidden by trees, and even hidden behind the empty space between trees. These artists believe that there is an element of truth that is revealed by our subconscious minds which transcends everyday reality by reframing the spatial and temporal perception.

The irony is that human perception of reality was once that the world is flat. This was believed true for centuries. But if reality were always “true,” Christopher

① Take, for example, Abu Simbel or Ramses II in Aswan, Egypt. The original monument was built in 13th century BC. But because of the construction of the High Dam in the 1960’s, the monument was relocated to higher ground to avoid its destruction by Lake Nasser. One could consider that the temple at the old and original location is “true” and that the temple in the new location is “real.”
Columbus would have fallen off the edge of the flat Earth. Columbus seems to have reframed his perception of reality. Unfortunately, our language dominates our perception of what is real and what is true. It is not unusual for language to control and monopolize the mind to a degree that thought is rendered a slave to words and imagination is trapped in analytical boxes and linear perception. We know that imagination involves more than logical, linear operations and depends on the acquisition, interpretation, and manipulation of images and nonverbal codes. That being said, imagination does not fit neatly into the mainstream, conservative linguistic understanding of absolute space and time.

Although Prigogine (1984) rejects the idea of time as illusion, where time is irreversible, moving from the unchangeable past toward an unknown future. Nonetheless, the unknown future and the unchangeable past are already in the present, but because of the perceptual limitations and lack of imagination human beings experience reality only in a linear flow sequence of time. “Whatever we call reality, it is revealed to us only through the active construction in which we participate” (Prigogine & Stengers 1984; 293). In the grand scheme of life, space and time may not have true, long-lasting, and meaningful consequences, but they are real. We create our real world and it is done by our thoughts and actions. What is needed is to take into account that our perceptions and thoughts are what create the reality we experience, be it turbulent or transformative. In other words, the reality we experience here and now is the manifestation of our previous (past) thought.

Turbulence arises as a result of a system that has reached the point where the linear region exceeded its capacity to survive. Our efforts in navigating through diaphanous space and polychronic time, to use Prigogine’s model, can be viewed as creating fluctuation¹ that is necessary to introduce an unstable reality where small causes can have large effects. And since we arrived to the current condition by not imagining, it seems sensible to expect that, in order to get out, we must start imagining (cf. Juster 1961). Even the theory of evolution has been widely accepted on the basis of imaginary perception despite the lack of the observed evidence.

Observing current world events, it is clear to me that human beings are no longer satisfied with facts; they demand to understand their causal connections and strive to discover ways to recreate their spatial and temporal reality. We, as

¹ According to Prigogine, “[a]t the bifurcation point with much more fluctuations than ordinary situation at near equilibrium, a small cause can change radically from the old system into a new one.” The “analog with social phenomena, even history, is inescapable” (Prigogine & Stengers 1984: 14).
semiotic animals, strive to discover ways to re-create our reality and uncover the primordial wisdom of balancing change and permanence. Reality can certainly be created teleologically, and the balance between change and continuity can be achieved by design. To engage in a design process, one must develop the desire and daring commitment to navigate through the uncharted terrain and uncertain realm of diaphanous space and polychronic time.

4. Navigating Through Diaphanous Space and Polychronic Time

In reframing temporal and spatial reality, one cannot plot a course of a journey in a linear fashion, but must navigate through the waves, making a constant adjustment back and forth while maneuvering along the way. Navigation is the “optimal flow experience” (Csikszentmihalyi 1991) that one chooses and commits to make happen. In this sense, navigation is the freedom that allows the consciousness to fully engage with the space-free and time-free reality—hence my choice of the term. But specifically, what do I mean by diaphanous space and polychronic time? And why do we need to navigate through diaphanous space and polychronic time?

It was the anthropologist Edward T. Hall (1959) who in his widely known book *The Silent Language* first introduced the concept of “polychronicity,” which is derived from the words *poly* meaning many and *chronos* meaning time. Initially, Hall made a cultural distinction between polychronic (synchronous) and monochronic (sequential) time based on how people perceive and manage time. In cultures with polychronic time, people tend to work on more than one task simultaneously, be more group oriented, view their relationships as deep and long-term, and feel at ease in dealing with a sea of information. In cultures with monochronic time, people tend to segment tasks and prefer sequential time. However, subsequent research has suggested that both polychrons and monochrons are found to coexist within most cultures (Palmer & Schoorman 1999). Due to globalization and recent digital advancement, it is no longer meaningful to consider an entire culture as monochronic or polychronic. Within cultural systems, Hall (1959) believes in the autonomous segmentation of time and its signifiers within a chronemic code; however, “time can be a system only of distinctive but not of autonomously

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1. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi describes this optimal experience when he says: “It is what the sailor holding a tight course feels when the wind whips through her hair, when the boat lunges through the waves like a coltsails, hull, wind, and sea humming a harmony that vibrates in the sailor’s veins” (Csikszentmihalyi 1990: 3).
signifying units" (Nöth 1990: 416).

My preference for the notion of “polychronic time” is not merely to differentiate among cultures and discuss the compartmentalization of time: as I mentioned earlier, even within a specific culture one can observe perceptions of both polychronic and monochronic time. Nor do I need to elaborate on the multitasking that occurs within a single time frame. Rather, I use the notion across different cultures to make a case for the significance of navigating through multiple times—past, present, and future—and transparent spaces in order for us to liberate ourselves from the gravity and limitations of the present reality.

Although the notions of “proxemics” and “chronemics” developed by Hall (1966) are the semiotics of space and time, it should be noted here that I am not restricting my use of these notions to the context of anthropology and the sociocultural dimension of spatial and temporal behavior for the semiotics of diaphanous space and polychronic time has a more inclusive and interdisciplinary nature (cf. Nöth 1990).

Semiotically, it is impossible to separate time from space. The manner in which we perceive time has a lot to do with the way we structure space (Hall 1959). \(^1\) It is commonly known that the interrelation of space and time has been suggested by the theory of relativity in which time curves space as much as space measures time. But “time does not curve space; it is open and opens space through its capacity of rendering it transparent,” says Jean Gebser (1985: 353). Therefore, one cannot navigate through diaphanous space without polychronic time.

In the context of this paper, navigation through diaphanous space and polychronic time includes much more than nonverbal communication; that is, it takes into account cognitive ways and imaginative thinking and action that require a different kind of intelligence. Navigating through diaphanous space and polychronic time requires more than “time mastery,” as Clemens & Dalrymple (2005) claim; rather, it demands a spatial and temporal intelligence that which the ancient Egyptians called “the intelligence of the heart.”

A great deal of Peirce’s work describes the affinity between human consciousness and the nature of reality. And, according to Jean Gebser (1985), consciousness and reality are reciprocal. In this sense, consciousness and reality form a whole which, in principle, is one and indivisible. In contemporary societies,

\(^1\) This may explain why Edward Hall (1959, 1966) initially used the term “proxemics” for the study of personal space in different cultures, and later developed the term “chronemics” for the study of the cultural use of time. In a sense, chronemics is an extension of proxemics (cf. Nöth 1990: 415).
separating consciousness from reality has led to a false sociocultural praxis. However, there is hope. “Epochs of great confusion and general uncertainty in a given world contain the slumbering, not-yet-manifest seeds of clarity and certainty” (Gebser 1985: 531). The spatial and temporal intelligence embodies transparency, as Jean Gebser tells us:

Only where the world is space-free and time-free, where “waring” gains validity, where the world and we ourselves—the whole—become transparent, and where the diaphanous and what is rendered diaphanous become the verition of the world, does the world become concrete and integral. (Gebser 1985: 263)

Although Gebser’s notion of “verition” or “waring” is not familiar to many semioticians, it is the essential aptitude for integral consciousness, encompassing the sense of perceiving and imparting verity or truth. This integrative consciousness as a simultaneous integration of structures of consciousness is necessary for the initiation of what Gebser (1985) calls the “a perspective world.” Only with spatial and temporal intelligence can human beings develop the aptitude for navigating through diaphanous space and polychronic time. Gebser also reminds us that we continually draw on our origin in forming the future. Gebser goes on to say:

The events of tomorrow are always latently present today. Tomorrow is nothing other than a today which is not yet acute, i.e. is still latent. Every manifestation of our lives inevitably contains the sum of what is past as well as what is to come. (Gebser 1985: 277)

We repeatedly must go back for a better start. The “new” takes for granted the “old” through integration. Change does not dismiss the past; nor does continuity ignore the future. Every novel idea must include the familiar, and every familiar idea ceases to exist without novel ideas. This paradoxical process has magical and mystical qualities, making the familiar strange and the strange familiar. Interestingly, both Peirce’s synechism and Gebser’s diaphaneity seem to have opened the way for a different perception of space and time that integrate human consciousness and reality. And, as described in Finite and Infinite Games by James P. Carse (1986), genuine integration is the quality that prepares human beings, as infinite-game players, to continue playing with boundaries, not within boundaries of time.

Surprisingly, navigation through diaphanous space and polychronic time is an age-old practice. It has deep roots in the records of human history. Technologically advanced societies would benefit greatly from the tradition exemplified in ancient Egyptian navigation through diaphanous space and polychronic time. For example, the idea of diaphanous space represented in the principle of anthropocosmos is found
in temple architecture in the “House of Life,” where the images of the human body and the universe are transparently interconnected. For the ancient Egyptians, the spatial directions of east and west, north and south, are transparent orientations. The east and west represent the sun god Ra rising from and descending into the nonlinear Underworld as initiation of birth, death, and rebirth; and the north and south represent the cyclical flow of the Nile.

And the concept of polychronic time provided a constitutive factor for the entire Egyptian experience, where the notion of time was conceived as a reversible circular dimension and the practice of the agriculture-based society was bound to the cycle of seasons in an infinite process and integration of nature and culture (Seif 2010). One can reasonably conclude that the physical percepts had for the ancient Egyptians an immense significance, where visible form was a manifestation of invisibility of space-free and time-free reality, and where any point of space and time was seen as the center of a cross whose axes represented the cyclical flow of the Nile and the path of the sun.①

The phenomenon of space-free and time-free reality in ancient Egyptian experience echoes Peirce’s writing. For Peirce, the past, the present, and the future are considered a synchronic indivisible triad. In his phenomenological categories, Peirce seems to connect the past to Secondness (actuality), the present to Firstness (the vague), and the future to Thirdness (the would-be). And yet, since the present has no independent existence—a single instant of zero—it is half past and half of that which is yet to come. Whereas the past is “a nexus of actualities,” the future is “merely real,” says Whitehead; and in this sense, “the present is the immediacy of teleological process where reality becomes actual” (1978: 214). Therefore, the future is accessible in the present through the teleological challenge of perceiving what shall become.

People who perceive absolute space and time rely on their memory of the past to influence the present and forecast the future. On the contrary, people who are capable of constructing future memory are able to provide a meaningful way to imagine a desired future that doesn’t necessarily focus on efficiency but is attracted by and oriented toward effectiveness.

Merleau-Ponty (1945: 491) states, “[... ] we were able to treat the future as a past only by qualifying it as past to come, and the past as a future only by calling it

① The hieroglyphic sign of Ankh, as the “Key of Eternal Life,” represents the two axes in which the cyclical path of the sun from east to west crosses the Nile, with the loop on the top representing the Nile Delta (Seif 2010). For the ancient Egyptians, wearing or holding the Ankh demonstrated awareness of the nonlinear spatial-temporal matrix of life.
a future which has occurred.” While present reality is constructed by past memory, it can also be transformed by future memory. And since memory is from the Latin word memoria, “mindful remembering,” one can make a case that to remember mindfully is to influence the future. This concept is the core purpose of future memory. Undeniably, imagining future memory requires a shift from being trapped by the absolute space and linear perception of time to the freedom of toying with the real, from the gravity of “here and now” to the weightless dreaminess of a desired future.

Quantum experiments have suggested the possibility of time reversal, where time operates from future to past (Stenger 2000). In the optimal flow experience, Csikszentmihalyi makes a valuable observation; “As far back as there are records of human intelligence, the most prized mental gift has been a well-cultivated memory” (Csikszentmihalyi 1991: 123). In this sense, when the unselfconscious mind experiences the flow that transcends the division of space and time, past memory can be future memory and vice versa.

Interestingly then, it is easy to trick the mind into imagining future events and experiences, recalling and reminiscing about them as if they were in the past. Future memory is the upshot of navigating through diaphanous space and polychronic time. Future memory provides a cognitive leap that is essential for intentional and sustainable social and environmental change. Certainly, future memory provides the lens through which we come to imaginatively interpret the context within which these changes will take place. Future memory is practiced as if one is in a distant future, and then reminiscing about the memory of the past, which is really a memory of the future. This may seem an oxymoron, but contradictions of the oxymoron are the true wisdom within all paradoxes. Indeed, it is possible to remember things yet-to-be.

And now, I return back to the question, why do we need to navigate through transparent space and cyclic time? Space and time are the most significant illusionary phenomena that can best be navigated by creative thinking and innovative action. A purposeful navigation through diaphanous space and polychronic time by design approximates the paradoxical phenomenon of change and continuity (Seif 2005) and, more significantly, provides the context for human beings to influence the future and engage in the process of making meaning. Our

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1 I have been using the idea of “future memory” with my graduate students and organizations to free their minds from the gravity of the present and to help them disregard, even temporarily, the limitations of current conditions. Many students and managers seem to have discovered the cognitive leap that is essential for creating sustainable and meaningful future.
ability to imagine and communicate new possibilities is beyond mere prediction and forecasting, which are often intended to control future possibilities. While finite-game players are trained to control every future possibility, infinite-game players “continue their play in the expectation of being surprised” (Carse 1986: 22).

Observing current world affairs and events, it is evident to me that there is a growing need to go beyond what we are conventionally able to predict into what we are imaginatively capable of creating. There has never been a time in history when it has been more significant for societies to engage in a transformational process that would lead to global wellbeing and an imaginative sustainable way of living. We know that the paradox of change and continuity is the fundamental nature of reality. Animating and leading change while simultaneously maintaining the resilience of continuity can only be accomplished intentionally by design. If we accept the premise of this paradox, we can begin to engage in a process that has the potential to stimulate a major shift in our consciousness, which in turn would create what systems theorists call a “second order of change.” This transformation will not occur without paradoxical thinking and imaginative navigation.

Because of the intense level of ambiguity and uncertainty, navigating through diaphones space and polychronic time can be seen as a heroic journey, to borrow a notion from Joseph Campbell (1949). We must face the challenges of abandoning our current familiar world and entering an unusual future world. We must survive these challenges with help along the journey. If we survive, we may achieve a great gift, which often results in the discovery of an imaginative breakthrough. We must then decide to return with this gift, facing challenges on the return journey. When we return, the transformational gift may be used to improve our world. This is indeed the splendor of navigating through diaphanous space and polychronic time, which have far-reaching consequences for our world.

5. Implications for our Transmodern World

To navigate through diaphanous space and polychronic time is to be able to perceive the transparency and integrative reality of space and time. Favorably, this transparency and integration are the hallmark of the age that has been called Transmodernity—a notion that was introduced by the Latin American philosopher Enrique Dussel (1985).

Transmodernity, which embodies many diaphanous and integrative qualities, transcends the visual reality of modernity and the virtual reality of postmodernity into visceral experiences. Diaphanous perception is inclusive of modernity and
postmodernity, and it does not reject the characteristics of either. This means that reality in the transmodern world is a hyperreality that integrates the visual, the virtual, and the visceral. This also means that hyperreality is the perfect condition, *par excellence*, where integrative consciousness does not distinguish the real from the true—a consciousness that is at ease with transparent spatiality and cyclical temporality.

In the literal sense, the illusion of space and time can be devastating or lead to a state of apathy. However, considering the current condition of hyperreality and digital development associated with our transmodern world, illusion, as argued earlier, is not necessarily the opposite of truth or reality. If this is the case, then we are able to create a desired future, whether this future is perceived as real or true. This desired future could be accomplished through design, by intentional modeling of the illusion of space and time.

Our capacity to navigate through diaphanous space and polychronic time liberates us from the current limitations of the present and dogmatic nationalistic ideologies. This capacity can lead to a transformation of consciousness that highlights the reciprocal relationship between cultural ethos and environmental ethics. Learning to navigate through diaphanous space and polychronic time bridges different civilizations and, equally significant, it stimulates cultural sensitivity and environmental sensibility.

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The Strategy of Irony: Figures of Speech in Chinese TV in the New Century

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Abstract: After nearly 60 years of development, TV series has become one of the the most important forms of cultural signification in the contemporary Chinese society. With the theory of symbol rhetoric, the study of this thesis is aimed at three classical types of Chinese TV drama which cover the whole domain of China’s broadcasting network, and to explore forms of image expression in TV drama of different periods of time, in order to analyze the rhetorical evolution of Chinese TV drama’s image system, and to reveal its cultural significance.

Key words: drama; images; symbolic rhetoric; changes

After nearly sixty years of development, TV series has become one of the most important forms of cultural signification in the contemporary Chinese society. According to the macroscopic classification of the content and the subject matter of the Chinese TV drama, in the whole domain of the subject matter, Chinese TV drama can be divided into three theme areas: family drama, social drama and historical drama. It is acknowledged by scholars that family ethics drama, costume historical drama as well as servicemen drama are respectively the most prominent category of each theme area. Because of this, the symbolic rhetorical research of

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\(^1\) This paper was supported by the national social science funding project “The History of Taiwan’s TV Criticism” (11cxw013).

\(^2\) From the actual development situation in the Chinese TV drama, family ethics drama, costume historical drama and military drama has become the most outstanding genres in Chinese TV drama. Most researchers choose them as the main subjects in TV drama’s categories. Even from the amounts of historical accumulation, the three kinds of types are the most prominent examples which related in the sustained attention time, quantity, and the groups of viewers. This conclusion can be proved according to a national television audience survey report that hosted every 5 year by CCTV. In fact, the three kinds of TV drama so will become the most important types, is not only this reason, which has a natural relationship with the China historical tradition, culture, aesthetic habits, but also more important is, the three kinds of drama have closely related with Chinese social reality, such as the relationship between the family drama and the “popular drama”; the relationship between the historical drama and the “main melody”; the relationship between military drama with the “red theme”. However, behind the highlight of the three kinds of image is the affection of the Chinese cultural structure.
these three representative types of TV drama contains the significance of representative samples. This paper attempts to use semiotic rhetorical theory to explore the contemporary cultural implications of Chinese TV drama.

In film and television drama, rhetorical language is narration and description based on the shot pictures and the combination of sound and pictures. With the connection of shots as the basic characteristic” (Xiong 2004:29) the basic content of the rhetorical analysis of television drama’s images is constituted by the analysis of pictures, shots and sound.

According to symbolic rhetoric, irony has two meanings; literal meaning / actual meaning; level of expression / level of intension. The two elements coexist in opposition. The domination of either element will change according to the context. Unlike the plausibility of paradox, the significance of the conflict in irony occurred at different levels; the text said yes while the actual significance said no; the contradiction between the surface meaning and the epitaxial implication is contradictory unity of meaning. “Irony is pretending ignorance with illusion alluding to truth; those who cannot understand irony tend to think that the truth is what is said and do not understand what is said is not the truth. This basic pattern exists in all the variable bodies of irony. ”(Zhao 2009:157)

Speech rhetoric of irony generally uses language games as its strategy. Since irony is bereft of “fantasy”, it will lose all beliefs of “essence”, and will eventually tend to become the game of words or the language about language, in order to resolve the spell inflicted by language itself. All the formulaic expressions are suspicious, and, irony is ready to reveal the contradictions that exist in each attempt to use language to express experience. It often removes the outcomes of awareness in the expressions of mottos, epigrams and proverbs. These outcomes will in turn rely on their own, and will dissolve their own obvious authenticity and appropriateness. Finally, irony thinks of the world as a cage made of language, and as “a forest of symbols”. It can not see the road out of the forest, so it is content to ruin all the rules and all the myths for pure “meditation” and return to “things as they are”. (White 2004:318)

1. Family TV Drama “Golden Marriage”: the Narrative Strategy of Duplicity

The popular family television series “Golden Wedding” in 2006 was produced in the way of chamber teleplay, in which the pictures are simple but both characters’ relationship and plots are constructed through a great quantity of dialogues.
Compared with family ethics drama in earlier times, “Golden Marriage” was broadcast in the new century, and its most obvious feature is the interactive verbal collision and deconstruction between characters. The irony in characters’ dialogues is the highlight of the “Golden Marriage”. The characters speak in ridicule fashion with rich subtext, revealing the hidden facts by saying the opposite. In the fifth episode of “Golden Marriage”, the dialogue between Tong Zhi’s mother and Wen Li’s mother when they meet is one of the typical sections in the television drama.

Plot background: Tong Zhi’s mother came from his hometown in Sichuan to his home in Beijing. She was not satisfied that her daughter-in-law Wen Li, was not good at doing housework, and thus a conflict arose between the mother and the daughter-in-law. Wen Li went back to her parents complaining, and Wen Li’s parents came to visit Wen Li’s mother-in-law.

*Tong’s Mother*: “Ah! I didn’t expect that you would visit me in person. I told Wen Li that I would stay for a few more days to acquaint myself with the route so I could visit you in a couple of days.”

The strategy of duplicity is used here. Due to the conflict with Wen Li, Tong’s mother was unwilling to go to visit Wen’s parents.

*Wen’s mother*: “How nice of you to say so! You came down from such high mountains in the land of abundance. Your journey would last for a month or more if we were in the Qing Dynasty. How difficult your trip was! Thus it is reasonable that we should play host to you.”

Wen’s mother showed no sign of weakness either. The dialogue pointed out the gap between Sichuan and Beijing from the beginning, showing the regional advantages, and hinted the difference of Tong Zhi’s and Wen Li’s identities. The sweetness and light on the surface level of the dialogue conceal the confrontation of characters opposing each other.

In the plot, Wen’s mother paid the visit nominally, but essentially she came to help her daughter to ease the tension with her mother-in-law. In this conversation, both sides showed surface humility, but in fact they used words intended for something else, with implied meanings underlying their discourse. Both sides used the ironic language of duplicity, but Wen’s mother is obviously more skillful. Wen’s mother used retreat as a means of aggression, and used compliments as a mask to include all the contrary opinions beneath. Her successful use of irony made Tong’s
mother feel angry and unable to express the anger only to give way, and this is the advantage brought by the language strategy of irony.

In the fortieth episode (1995), the discussion of Wen Li and his husband about a lot of problems in their unruly daughter’s life is also very typical. Their lines are filled with the language strategy of duplicity to deceive deliberately, to divert attention, to avoid mother-daughter conflicts. In this conversation, a large number of interrogatives are used and all of their answers are negative. The two sides raised many questions but none of them is supplied with a satisfactory answer. Each other is in the relationship of mutual dismantling, and the result of mutual questioning is just the embarrassing situation faced by a pair of helpless parents. This is exactly the negative rhetorical effect achieved by ironic strategy. Similar modes of discourse abound in the “Golden Marriage”, such as the dialogue between the couple Dazhuang, the dialogue between Dazhuang and Tong Zhi, and the dialogue between Tong Zhi and his son. These modes of discourse are the basic rhetorical devices which constitute the dialogues in the “Golden Marriage”, and form the artistic style of humor mixed with bitterness.

2. Soldiers’ Drama “Soldiers Sortie”; the Verbal Carnival of Multi-voice Speaking

Roland Barthes proposed: “If literature becomes irony, language will constitute profundity and experience.” (Barthes 2008: 52) The language used in soldiers’ drama “Soldiers Sortie” is also outstanding, and many lines from the television drama became popular. For example, Xu Sanduo said, “It is meaningful to have a good living, and it is a good living to do something meaningful”; squad leader Lao Ma said, “If you waste time now, be cautious not to be wasted by time in the future”; the regimental commander said, “Between what you want and what you get is what you do”; the company commander Gao Cheng said, “Days are problems piled on problems, and the only thing you can do is to face the reality”; squad leader Shi Jin said, “If today is better than yesterday, there is hope; Wu Zhe said, “sense of balance, sense of balance, No.39 Wu Zhe”. As soon as the TV series was broadcast, the language used in a lot of classic sections of this play spread, and characters’ lines from “Soldiers Sortie” collated by net users can be easily found through a simple online search①.

① There is an entry about the classic lines of Soldiers Sortie in Baidu encyclopedia; Modern Express’s article: “Soldiers Sortie: Sanduo Xu’s lines into the most popular sayings” also described this situation.
The day-to-day language used by the officers and men in “Soldiers Sortie” breaks the stereotypes of servicemen in television drama. Language used in this drama creates comic effects by the opposition, deconstruction or incoherence of words uttered before and after, but underlying characters’ utterances to seemingly ridicule, banter, or joke is the solemn observation of human existence: for example: “If you waste time now, be cautious not to be wasted by time in the future”.

First of all, the silly words uttered by the hero Xu Sanduo constitute the situational irony(1).

Xu Sanduo is a character that is similar to “Forrest Gump” with a distinctive way of thinking and expression and rich “comic colors”. However, the truth is hidden in his seemingly dissonant language, which often constitutes a kind of allegory of the situation in the scene. In episode 10, in the military exercise, this kind of language use is reflected clearly in a dialogue after Xu Sanduo captured the enemy commander-in-chief Yuan Lang (the captain of the Special Forces which Xu Sanduo joined later).

(Captured) Yuan Long (asked Xu Sanduo); ... Then why did you make a mistake?

Xu Sanduo: Because my friend wanted to make a good show in the confrontation. He was killed. He did not have the chance.

Wu Liuyi: (called Xu Sanduo in low voice) Report to directorate! His expression is unclear. It is not for this reason!

Yuan Lang: Then for what reason?

Wu Liuyi: For the sense of honor and responsibility of the Steel Seventh Company. Yuan

Lang: (silent for a moment) I see.

Secondly, in the play, there are a lot of multi-character mixed choruses of “duplicity” which constitute ironic scenes. For example, this technique is used in the dialogue between the instructor He Hongtao and the soldiers of the Fifth Squad when he sent Xu Sanduo to the Prairie Fifth Squad.

Lao Ma (Fifth Squad leader): Do you know how to treat a new comrade?

In unison: We know. (They brought He Hongtao and Xu Sando each a glass of water.)

Li Meng: Instructor, please take your time to drink the water. It is abundant with the element of copper, so it can be considered as mineral water, but I just don’t know whether it is healthy to human body. (He Hongtao tilted back his head and finished the whole glass.)

He Hongtao: Now I convey a message to you. The water pipe line will reach here in the second half of the year, and then you can drink clean water. —To connect a water pipe line for four people. Don’t say that the regiment didn’t have your welfare on mind.

Lao Wei: It will be good then if a club is connected here.

Xue Lin: It will be good then if the Regiment 353 is also connected here.

Li Meng: It is for five people to connect the root water pipe here. Instructor, do you have the new comrade in your heart?

He Hongtao (stuck for a response. Li Meng refilled a full glass of water for him.)

Lao Ma: Li Meng, take the new comrade Xu Sanduo to walk around and make him familiar with the environment of combat readiness here. Don’t fool around and blabber.

Li Meng: Yes sir! Come on. Go!

He Hongtao: Lao Ma, we should have a talk.

Lao Ma (suddenly surprised waving the spatula): The noodles! The noodles are paste!

This dialogue is filled with characters’ various discourses of duplicity. The semantic field composed of the five-party discourses contains the tacit attitudes of opposition.

Thirdly, there is a great amount of parody language. For example; before he entered the military, Cheng Cai’s confessed his ambition to join the army:

Cheng Cai: I grew up with a great ideal, that is to join the glorious Chinese People’s Liberation Army! Look back to the history, the Long March, the War of Resistance Against Japan, the three major campaigns, the spark on top of the city wall of Nanchang turned into flames all over China! Today, to wear the sacred uniform, to take the steel gun of predecessors, I feel my blood is boiling and find it hard to control my emotions. I will defend the motherland, safeguard the people, become one of the millions of bold warriors, like a small
drop of water integrating into the sea . . .

The similar forms of rhetoric appeared in large numbers in the play, and constitute the teleplay’s discourse full of humor and tension. The section in which Li Meng led Xu Sanduo to visit the prairie is a wonderful scene of the play, and the dialogue between Li Meng and Xu Sanduo is full of irony. In fact, the character “Meng” as the first name of Li Meng has a metaphorical meaning. He compared himself to a great writer who wrote masterpieces because of being “in jail”. It also constitutes the allegory of the situation where the character lives. It is indicated particularly that Li Meng forgot the name of his idol writer.

Fourth, dialectical mash-up. Another significant feature of irony in “Soldiers Sortie” is characterized by the extensive use of various regional dialects, which means the deviation from the voice standard of traditional television drama. Common spoken Chinese is used as the basic speech sounds in the play’s dialogues, and a large number of dialects are also intermingled, such as the Henan accent of Xu Sanduo, the Hubei dialect of the Regimental Commander, the northeast accent of Shi Jin and Lao Wei, the Shanghai dialect of He Hongtao, and so on. A variety of dialects are intermingled to form the text’s multi-voice voice field which reflects by sound the various confrontations of characters’ identities. Xu Sanduo’s dialect highlighted his essential identity as a “bumpkin”; the dialect of the Regimental Commander fully demonstrated his straightforward personality; Cheng Cai deliberately concealed his accent in common spoken Chinese.

The voice conversion also became the metonymic sign that indicates the maturity of Xu Sanduo’s personality. When he finally faced his father and his brothers, the common spoken Chinese and the accent of his dialect are mixed in his speech sound. He spoke the dialect when he just arrived home and was still regarded as the disappointing youngest son, but he began to speak the common spoken Chinese when he was eventually determined to break away from his family. In addition, each chapter of the novel Soldiers begins with large segments of monologues which are divided and spread in the narrative of the television drama. The subjective perspective in Xu Sanduo’s metonymic monologue strengthened TV audience’s identification with him.

3. Historical TV Drama “The Ming Dynasty 1566”; the Montage of Sound and Picture Interaction

In 2007 historical TV drama “The Ming Dynasty 1566” used a lot of flashbacks
as psychological montage to realize the ironic deconstruction of historical figures. The psychological montage can visualize characters’ inner activity, but is generally less used in TV series. Former film director Zhang Li is skillful in the use of this technique in “The Ming Dynasty 1566”. In this drama, the psychological montage is mainly achieved through flashbacks in order to explain the reason for plots or characters’ stream of consciousness, and deconstruct characters’ complex mental activity of duplicity.

For example, in the 39th episode, while walking with the eunuch Huang Jin outside the palace, the emperor Jiajing recited a poem from the Tang Dynasty “As long as the brave general of Dragon City is alive, the enemies are unable to enter the country’s territory.” When he answered this question, the shots in which Hu Zongxian prostrated flashed on the screen for three times, and it seemed like the image of him suddenly flashed across the emperor’s mind. The use of psychological montage manifests characters’ complex psychological changes and conflicts, which are especially intense at the climax of confrontation.

According to the plot development, the eunuch Lu Fang privately met Yan Song and Xu Jie, conspiring to attempt to hide from Jiajing and directly deal with the case of corruption in Zhejiang. After knowing their conspiracy, Jiajing kept silent and suddenly asked about Feng Bao. In the image narrative, the instant Jiajing’s voice was down, the color picture in the lens turned to black and white with the rapid push-pull lens, showing the close-up of the face of Lu Fang, forming the partial demonstration of his face centered with his eyes on the screen. The incomplete revelation of the character’s face, the highly vigilant eyes, and the off-screen voice which appeared and disappeared suddenly lead to the strange atmosphere of the scene.

The camera language accurately conveyed characters’ horrified and gloomy psychological consciousness flow, and reflected the tensions of power structure in which characters deconstruct each other.

Due to the complexity of the political environment, the psychology of characters in “The Ming dynasty 1566” is rich and changeful, and their mental activities of stream of consciousness become the focus of the drama’s expression, which are often opposite to the outward manifestation of characters, showing the ironic effect produced by the inconformity between pictures and sounds. For example, the hero Emperor Jiajing was seemingly slovenly and didn’t think about politics, but while meeting his courtiers he often imagined himself as a great hawk spreading wings always wary of his own power to be dispersed.

In Episode 39, when the ministers were waiting for the emperor to move, the
mind of Jiajing on the couch flashed to the pictures in which Beijing officials were beaten violently and the people were starving to death, and in this way expressed his inner ambivalence toward moving. Another example is the use of sound; in Episode 41, the memorial presented by Hairui infuriated Jiajing. The creators used tiger’s roar to simulate Jiajing’s angry voice, in order to convey Jiajing’s inconceivable wrath exaggeratedly after reading the memorial.

At the same time, the effects of sound combined with the sudden black screen constitute a particular atmosphere; in Episode 20, Hai Rei went to arraign Zheng Bichang and He Maocai. When Hai Rei put on his black gauze cap, the compact drum music began to appear in the background, thus creating a tense atmosphere and the majesty of the trial. At the Imperial Palace, the sound changes subtly with the change of listeners’ distance. Moreover, Jiajing’s behavior that he often rang the bell to express his intentions is also a kind of invisible deterrent.

“The Ming dynasty 1566” also contains the clever use of the background picture to deconstruct the atmosphere. The occasional insertions of scenes of snowing become the background picture to transform the atmosphere. Whenever the drama developed into a tense conflict, the snowing scene will repeatedly appear in the series of images, and becomes the metaphoric signs to create an atmosphere and foreshadow characters’ emotions.

The discourse strategy of “duplicity” is used frequently in “The Ming Dynasty 1566”. When Hu Zongxian persuaded a scholar named Gao Hanwen, he said, “Since you passed the imperial examination, you should accumulate knowledge and write books at the Imperial Academy instead of vainly commenting on national policies. This section is a typical scene that indicates the irony of intellectuals’ living dilemma in the dynasty’s predicament. Intellectuals who read classic works of sages and passed the imperial examination are useless in political practice. The contrast between form and content is the most pungent irony. As Yan Song’s student and a man of rich experience in official circles, Hu Zongxian’s remarks reflected the language style in this television drama. In “The Ming Dynasty 1566”, the utterances of the characters, regardless of their positive and negative roles, seldom expressed their intentions directly, and characters often said something to mean something else or used puns to convey the hidden meaning.

If we conduct a comprehensive survey on the figures of speech of images in Chinese classic television dramas, we will reveal the following facts that are shown by the ironic presentation of the figures of speech of images in the Chinese television dramas of the new era. As for the image narrative, personal subjective discourse space is enlarged; concerning the object of discourse, ideal characters are
transformed into the day-to-day humanity; analyzed by ways of rhetoric, metaphor of spiritual conceptions, metonymy of family emotions, synecdoche of life choices, and irony of mental reflections constitute an evolving process in which the narrative viewpoint descends.

Because the length of this paper is limited, I will expound this topic further in the relative research.

References


Excess of Emotions in Filmic Perception

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Abstract: If there is a correlation between, on the one hand, the specific nature of filmic perception, its high impression of reality, and on the other hand, the high emotionality that characterizes filmic reception, would the Peircean theory of perception be able to help explaining this correlation?

In other words, in which ways does filmic perception make possible an excess of emotional situations, seen from a semiotic-pragmaticist angle?

Key words: pure icons; perception; Peirce; perceptual judgment; reality; percept

1.

Can the Peircean semiotics and perception theory shed a novel light on the crucial question of filmic perception? Never having referred himself to cinematographic art, Peirce claims in 1905:

“Our percepts approach closely to the character of pictures, moving pictures accompanied by feelings and sounds etc. It appears to me to be clearly open to doubt whether those appearances are real or not. But we find that all the ‘willing’ we can do won’t affect them. We call upon others. Those others may not be real. Still, it is remarkable that their testimony is such as we might ourselves give. A camera (again perhaps not real) agrees. All this is a strong inductive argument that those percepts are real.” (MS 939;24)

As soon as our senses are opened we are inevitably confronted with percepts. In that way it seems to make no fundamental difference if our eyes perceive images on a screen or if they perceive any event continuous to our own space-time-world. As Peirce puts it: “If one sees one cannot avoid the percept.” (CP 7.627). Percepts are omnipresent moving pictures\(^1\).

\(^1\) Peirce emphasises the “non-representative” character of these “pictures” or “images”: “Only one must be on one’s guard against a false impression that it might insinuate. Namely, an “image” usually means something intended to represent, — virtually professing to represent, — something else, real or ideal. So understood, the word “image” would be a misnomer for a percept.” (CP7.619)
Whereas the percept can be situated more on the outer-world-side, the perceptual judgment is the first instance of the interpretative work of our minds. The perceptual judgment renders the non-interpretative and a-representative percept describable, it “professes to represent” the direct experience with the outer world given within the percept. The percept is not a sign—it is the object of the perceptual judgment, that functions like an abductive guess and produces an observational proposition: “an ‘observation’, or perceptual judgment, is a proposition which shows certain marked symptoms of being backed by the universe” (MS 326). “It is plainly nothing but the extremest case of Abductive Judgments.” (CP 5.185)

The occurrence of the perceptual judgment lies completely beyond human control: “the interpretation is forced upon us” (CP 7.677), or again in visual terms: “if one looks one cannot avoid the perceptual judgment.” (CP 7.627) Peirce connects the origin of the perceptual judgment to the process of looking, observing, and consequently assigns a higher degree of consciousness to the perceptual judgment than he does to the percept. Seeing and looking seem to differ in terms of grades of cognition.

As we said, the omnipresence of percepts is undoubted and lies completely beyond analyzability. However, it is possible to question the functions and effects of the perceptual judgment that Peirce logically classifies as an incorrigible abduction and as an irreversible index of the percept. The percept “forces” the perceptual judgment to appear, it influences it by its physical qualities; if the percept had not existed, the perceptual judgment would not have appeared. Nevertheless the perceptual judgment remains an uncertain guess, an abductive inference. That means, the relation between the percept and perceptual judgment is not a “conventional” one. The perceptual judgment appears hic et nunc, it appears with Secondness. But perceptual judgments are propositional, their forms including Thirdness. They function pragmatically, serving to discern, to classify, to rule.

For Peirce, the percept and the perceptual judgment form an inseparable couple called the “percipium”; the immediacy of the percipium comes along with the immediacy of the perceptual judgment.

But whereas the perceptual judgment is inseparable from the percept, this relation is not automatically reversible; there are thinkable cases, albeit rare, in which a percept is not immediately followed up by a perceptual judgment. These are cases of inability to discern in perception, to classify the perceived qualities, inability to find any rule explaining the surprising and unanalyzable fact before us.

If we would transpose the terms of abduction to the instances of perception, the percept would function like the surprising “fact”/ “result”, the perceptual judgment
would occupy the role of the hypothesis or ‘hypothetic rule’ and the percipuum as a whole would constitute the “case”.

It is precisely because of its abductive character (generating new hypotheses) and its indexicality (Representamen induced by contiguity) that the perceptual judgment occupies a “privileged position in the order of inquiry”\(^1\). If it is more easily acceptable to assign an *epistemological* function to the perceptual judgment, the innovative and transforming function (abduction) can at first sight seem to be hardly concealable with the presupposed omnipresence of percepts and perceptual judgments (“if one sees one cannot avoid the percept, if one looks one cannot avoid the perceptual judgment”). In the stream of semiosis, the tendency to take and fortify habits occupies a predominant position over innovation, transformation and creativity. We do not perpetually make up genuine perceptual judgments out of genuine percepts. We cannot permanently have a pure and new view onto the things. Such a state of mind or consciousness would not only abuse our power of concentration, it moreover is incompatible with anticipation, adaptation and learning.

So as in time the process of seeing and interpreting has become a habit, and as the abductive phase of the earliest childhood lies behind us, the perceptual judgments of the greatest part of our environment are “ready-made”, and their reactivation functions by a simple cognitive click. But can we still speak of “perceptual judgments” then, as its characteristic traits indexicality and abduction are no longer given?

Peirce underlines that the conditions of perception depend not only on our phenomenological dispositions (opened senses and ontological connectedness) but also on cognitive and pragmatic dispositions. At CP 5. 185 he states: “Another familiar fact is that we perceive, or seem to perceive, objects differently from how they really are, accommodating them to their manifest intention. Proofreaders get high salaries because ordinary people miss seeing misprints, their eyes correcting them.”

The process that characterizes a failing (proof)reading could then be described as a non-genuine perception. Here, thought and habit occupy a sort of leading position and precede genuine perception in time. To put it differently: whenever habit is “well working” and semiosis is in a continuous efficiency perception seems to be generally directed by semiosis. Contextual, pragmatic and situational aspects

then induce an anticipation of the “result” and the “case”. The assumption of “result” and “case” necessarily transforms the inferential process into an induction, and abduction or “genuine perception” is omitted. The percipuum here functions as a rule. Habit, seen from this angle, could be described as recurrent percipui.

Thus, perceptions are influenceable through thought and situations as well as they do influence thoughts and situations. The passage from the percept to the perceptual judgment, being an abductive passage, cannot be initiated but by the unexpected “collision” (Secondness) with a genuine percept, whereas pre-established or anticipated judgments are to be ranged under the category of the percipuum as a whole. In the case of the failed proofreading, the process of an abductive guess disappears along with the occasion of a genuine percept, and is replaced by the re-activation or memory of an expected percipuum.

Semiosis can cache the real object behind the thought object, outer realities behind inner realities. In such cases, only a surprising or unexpected outer event could eventually “waken up” genuine perception.

2.

According to Peirce, genuine percepts are not representational at all, presenting themselves as something vivid and unanalyzable. Genuine immediate perception is a “direct experience of things in themselves.” ① (CP 6.95). For Peirce, “things in themselves” are not thinkable for us, but they are perceivable or experienceable. More precisely, the percept is an experience of Secondness; a collision between an Ego and a non-Ego. There is something very conflictual and factual in the experience of real perception. The percept “knocks at the portal of my soul and stands there in the doorway. It is very insistent, for all its silence. It would be useless for me to attempt to pooh-pooh it, and say, ‘Oh come, I don’t believe in the chair.’ I am forced to confess that it appears. Not only does it appear, but it disturbs me, more or less.” (CP 7.620, emphasis added). In a genuine perception, the appearance of the chair would be more disturbing, whereas perception ruled by habitual semiosis would render the appearance of the chair less disturbing, comprehending it as a regular and pragmatically classified object within a ruled environment.

The genuine percept is a physical and coercive situation in which outer and

① “It is downright nonsense to dispute that in perception two objects really do react upon one another [ . . . ] That of course is the doctrine of Immediate Perception.” (CP 5.555-6)
inner worlds collide. It is characterized, in the oeuvre of Peirce, as the “passage at arms between the non-ego and the ego”, a kind of shock responsible for the abductive birth of cognition and pragmatism.

Against this background, we may then raise the question if, during filmic perception, the spectator is confronted with genuine percepts and abductive judgments of any kind, or if filmic art rather furnishes pericpi right away. At first sight, and from a cognitional point of view, the representational and artificial character of filmic images seems to contradict the non-interpretative and unanalyzable character of percepts. On the other hand, as filmic images perfectly include the processes of “seeing” and “looking” thanks to their moving optical character—is there a way to link filmic perception to real percepts defined by Peirce as “moving pictures accompanied by sounds, feelings etc.”?

Taking into consideration the way films are produced, we may state that photograms are indexes of the external world. It has repeatedly been underlined, that the direct connectedness between the apparatus of the camera and the filmed or photographed world would be at the basis of the impression of reality of filmic and photographic art. As the collateral experience of Secondness that characterizes indexicality is genuinely present in immediate perception, its occurrence in whatever situation of life may function as a “proof” for reality.

Peirce distinguishes genuine indexes, or reagents, from degenerate indexes or designators¹. From a production point of view, photograms can of course be understood as reagents, but with regard to the final product, which interests us here in the context of its perceptibility, this collateral indexicality is no longer present. During the reception of photographic and filmic art, the indexical or reality-proving effect doesn’t appear to the perceiver as a “direct collision” with the “things themselves”. Whereas during photographic or filmic registering “two objects really do react upon one another” (CP. 5.555), this vivid duality is no longer directly present in the completed work of art. ² As the genuine percept with its physical coerciveness is soaked up in the production-past, the ‘past’ indexicality of filmic pictures is something that the spectator may know, but which he cannot directly

¹ Whereas designators like “personal, demonstrative, and relative pronouns, proper names, the letters attached to a geometrical figure, and the ordinary letters of algebra [...] force the attention to the thing intended”, reagents “may be used to ascertain facts.” (CP 8.368)

² It is a crucial aspect about filmic perception that it lacks the third of the three “Signs of the Reality of an appearance” (EP 2-2, 510). Filmic appearances may well guarantee “Insistency” and “Sameness to all Witnesses”, but they cannot prove their reality to the spectator by any “physical reactions”. Whilst a camera may reinforce the second sign of reality of an appearance (“sameness to all witnesses”), it is not qualified to present to us a complete (experience of) reality.
sense (like during the event of the brute force of genuine perception). In Peirce’s words: “A reagent can indicate nothing unless the mind is already acquainted with its connection with the phenomenon it indicates.” (CP 8.368)

If we situate photograms within the class of genuine indexical signs\(^1\), we must face a discrepancy with at least one of three characteristic marks outlined by Peirce in order to define indexical signs. Namely: “[indexes] have no significant resemblance to their objects” (CP 2.305). However, finished photograms do have a very significant resemblance to their objects. Moreover, according to Peirce, the Interpretant that makes the index act as a sign “depends upon association by contiguity and not upon association by resemblance or upon intellectual operations.” (CP2. 306). Though what characterizes the Interpretant of images is usually association by resemblance. To sum up this discussion we might say that the indexical creation is not a crucial aspect in the perception of filmic images as signs of an outer reality, because the past collateral experience can only be inferred intellectually qua the knowledge about the production technique.

Further, if the impression of reality were mainly to be explained as the spectator’s previous knowledge about the indexicality of the documentary production of photograms, how could then be explained the impression of reality of flip-books, comics, digital images or surrealistic and unrealistic settings?

Take for example a one-year-old child that has never encountered the image of a lion before, neither a painted one, nor a told one, nor a photographed or a real lion. Now let us imagine that he is confronted for the first time with a photograph, not knowing anything about photo-technique yet. He would see a close-up of a face of a lion. Let us compare this to a second example, in which the child would be confronted with a filmic sequence, never having been acquainted with filmic art before. He would perceive a static shot of about 10 seconds, showing a close-up of the moving lion-face. In a third example the shot would be a 10-second-sequence shown qua a moving camera that approaches and examines the moving animal-face. Without a doubt, the effect of realism increases along with optical moving forms.

Regarding the human habit of perceiving “events”\(^2\), or moving pictures, filmic images set up the phenomenological framing familiar to human perception. The movement of objects as well as the movement of the perceiving instance provides a phenomenological reality qua temporal continuity between an inner and an outer


\(^2\) “That which we especially perceive is an event.” (CP 1.336)
world.

In other words the realistic effect of film also lies within its double optical form of movement; whereas a photograph of a totally unrealistic or unknown species may not appear realistic to a child, there is much more chance to provoke an effect of realism in a child watching the unknown species moving. Reality persists, continues, endures. Or in Peircian words; “There is no such thing as an absolute instant.” (CP 7.653).

But what is movement or time in semiotic terms? Is it sufficient to explain the reality of impression of moving images just by their formal resemblance to our every-day perception?

The filmic camera (even a static one), by means of its continuity of seeing, provides a phenomenological basis for the process of “looking”. To look simply means, with Peirce, to have entered the field of time in terms of consciousness, time taken in its mediating sense, time as the phenomenological premiss of semiosis. It is in that way, that we must understand the Peircian definition of perceptual judgments as “observations” or processes of “looking”—here is also shown that Peirce links his theory of comparative perception to his theory of continuity; Looking differs from seeing in that it presupposes the ontological possibility of attention, which again presupposes time. If someone pays attention to something, he literally “stretches” his mind or energy to something, he “tends to hold” something. This something must already be “given” as a continuity of changeable qualities. “Time with its continuity logically involves some other kind of continuity than its own. Time, as the universal form of change, cannot exist unless there is something to undergo change, and to undergo a change continuous in time, there must be a continuity of changeable qualities” (PWP, 344) These changeable qualities are visual/optical qualities in filmic art. If we regard any movement as a succession of immediate qualities (sounds, colors, optical shapes, etc.), which only become intelligible via comparative perception in time, this seems to clearly explain the difference between the perception of photographs and the perception of moving images; The process of perceptual interpretation is a substantial part of the filmic form. Film is able to present us perception in time, whereas a photograph confronts us with an unmoving “form”, from which perceptual or interpretative processes can only be abstractly inferred.

The perceptual judgment follows the interval of the percept in time and

1 from Latin “attendere”, literally “to stretch toward.” from ad- “to” + tendere “stretch”/“tending to hold”.
therefore results in an inferential abstraction of the perceptual object. Within the act of “comparative perception”, as Peirce defines it, the percipium occupies the place of “mediate objective consciousness”\(^\dagger\). Just by means of photograms time then, the cinematographic technique brings before us a “mediate objective consciousness” qua “process of looking”. In other words, it confronts us with percipui put into images. This is probably the most (and still very slight) indexical part of the perception filmic images; contiguity can be found in the impression of continuity of the succession of filmic images.

As we have seen, the experience of filmic viewing cannot be classified as an indexical or collateral experience. The brute, vivid duality of real life is absent to filmic perception. Can we therefore exclude the occurrence of genuine percepts within filmic perception?

3.

As we already pointed out, film proceeds via one optical Representamen in two ways. Besides the complex realistic content of reality of the “captured” part, which is common to both photographic and filmic art, the seventh art possesses the aptitude to confront its receivers with realistic forms of perception and thought. Filmic images induce high degrees of reality-impression as the camera framing carries out movements in time and space that, even when unrealistic or superhuman, reflect the connectedness between an ego and a non-ego in real perception. It is precisely this connectedness that characterizes the forms of perception: the perceptions to which we refer are always already a mixture of the perceived forms and the perceiving forms. But as the perceiving forms are not yet active on the level of the percept, the perceiving instance bringing in its proper forms only on the level of the perceptual judgment, film logically tends to represent higher instances of perception than genuine percepts.

Take for example a superhuman high-angle shot as seen in Figure 1 (“The Amazing Spiderman”, 2012, Marc Webb). Insofar as most of the characteristics of this image are able to exist independently of what or how one thinks, this image cannot be defined as a pure mental or inner figment. There is doubtlessly an

\(^\dagger\) CP 6. 111: “Now, let there be an indefinite succession of these inferential acts of comparative perception: and it is plain that the last moment will contain objectively the whole series. Let there be, not merely an indefinite succession, but a continuous flow of inference through a finite time; and the result will be a mediate objective consciousness of the whole time in the last moment. In this last moment, the whole series will be recognized, or known as known before.”
external ingredient, namely the recorded external space. But in its particular form (framing) this image does not exist independently of how one thinks: the chosen angle is a sign of a quasi-mind qua which an external reality is presented to us in a certain way. So regarded, the filmic image, which the spectator perceives cannot be defined as a purely external reality, the external, according to Peirce, consisting in that which is as it is independently of how any single man thinks. Now, there is no filmic image, which is not already a choice of point of view, or even of a specific attention or interpretation. Consequently we may say that the cinematographic technique produces inner or mental realities:

“X is a real, mental or inner object; what the characteristics of x are depends on how we think, but not on how we think those characteristics are”\(^1\)

This “definition”, of course, concerns the cinematographic pheno-technique, and not its diegetic or narrative dimensions. In the same way in which mental icons or existential graphs are “moving pictures of thought”, camera angles and movements or montage styles constitute moving pictures of perception or again of thought. Cinematographic images considered in their pheno-technique are not pure figments, and if they were, the most different types of filmic spectators would probably not share any impression of reality.

![Figure 1](image-url)

In other words; filmic images have two iconic objects that are indexically related to each other: one is the “perceived/filmed world” and the other is the

\(^1\) Susan HAACK, op. cit., p. 26
“perceiving/filming instance”. In that way, they are icons of an external reality on the one hand, and they are icons of points of view, of quasi-minds, of perceptual judgments on the other hand. Immersing into the discourse of filmic images then means to perceive an outer and an inner world at once. This explains partly why fantastic movies may maintain an impression of reality, albeit the unrealistic iconicity of the diegetic world they show. We can say by now, that a large part of the filmic impression of reality can be ascribed to its realistic pheno-technique that furnishes iconic-indexical representations of natural perception and thought processes.

4.

In Peirce’s oeuvre sign-action is first and foremost to be comprehended from a pragmaticist point of view: looking, interpreting, thinking enables us to act. On the contrary, feelings become largely suppressed by Thirdness: “The development of the human mind has practically extinguished all feelings” (PWP, 344). Peirce believes that “consciousness […] is limited to so much of my feeling as I can almost absolutely control” (MS 693; 378 (2)). But what would happen, if a human being were liberated from the necessity of acting and thinking, nevertheless remaining in the flow of semiosis and perception? Wouldn’t this automatically provoke an increase of emotional situations?

We have seen that the human perceptual situation is narrowly bound to its cognitive-pragmatic habits, in particular the instance of the perceptual judgment. We have also seen that the relation between our cognitive-pragmatic habits on the one hand and the perceptual process on the other hand is not a unidirectional relation that always starts from the genuine percepts and ends in a new abductional guess.

As it can be seen at the example (Figure 2) of the two photograms extracted from the film “Mulholland Drive” (2011) by David Lynch, the camera framing has the power to leave us, for a more or less unrealistically long moment, on something very similar to a pure percept-level. Hence, the difficulty to guess what this is that we “see” on the screen is a consequence of the space-time-world dichotomy. Interestingly this shows in how far the possibility to form a perceptual judgment seems to be clearly dependent on the ontological contiguity between the perceiving ego and the perceived non-ego. Thus, it is a logical impossibility for the spectator to directly get in touch with the outer world represented by the film. So what (probably not incidentally) happens in this David Lynch film is an exemplification
of the epistemological position of the perceiving instance, as the spectator finds his perceptive investigations totally limited to the framing procedures. The final inferring, the construction of the perceptual judgment, can only be given by means of the camera or the montage, but interestingly this process is not visualizable. Fascinating, that the most mysterious passage of real perception, namely the abductional one that goes from the percept to the perceptual judgment, is also the most cached process within the processes of perception in filmic art.

By this example we see as well, that the film spectator is not only not in the need to construct perceptual judgments in order to feature thought or action, but that he moreover finds himself largely disjointed from his perceiving (interpreting) abilities.

While on the one hand filmic perception confronts the spectator with a spatial separation of the implied space-time-worlds (the external world perceived by the spectator is not contiguous to his space-time-continuum), it provides, on the other hand, perceptual contiguity. This makes film a clearly aesthetic and immersive situation, during which the being-pragmatically-incorporated-in-an-environment is more or less suspended. Genuine perception here disappears along with the interpreting forms that camera- and montage-framing bring in. By the way, the pedagogical dimensions of such a perceptual situation remain essentially unexplored.

To repeat, the perceptual material that knocks on the portal of the film-spectator’s door must be qualified as an iconic Representamen that provides forms of a represented world qua forms of a representing quasi-mind. These two iconic forms are indexically related to each other, their ontological contiguity manifesting itself first and foremost through their jointly persisting in space and time (moving images).

Thus, as a filmic image mostly already includes a perceptual judgment, it confronts us automatically with the instance of the percipuum. The captured or perceived worlds of filmic images could be regarded as the iconic ingredient of the percept, the object of the filmic sign. These percepts are usually less disturbing percepts, as interpreting processes are synchronously present in filmic images.

Moreover, as the perceiving instance and the perceived objects merge into one iconic Representamen, film even has the power to refer itself semiotically to the fascinating process of perception (something which David Lynch often does).

In filmic perception, the whole Representamen is its object and its interpretant at once. So regarded, the filmic percipuum becomes a hardly tangible sign, as it is
difficult if not impossible to triadically distinguish it. Its form is a *relation* that “does not draw any distinction between itself and its object. It represents whatever it may represent, and whatever it is like, it in so far is. It is an affair of suchness only.”(CP 5.74) Thus, the filmic percipuum approaches closely to the characters of pure icons, a very particular sign, merging the instances of Representamen, Object and Interpretant. In terms of perception, filmic images do not deliver any genuine percepts to us, “genuine percepts represent[ing], *both in their qualities and their occasions*. Facts concerning Matter as independent of themselves, the Perceptions” (EP 2, 510, emphasis ours). On the contrary, just by its processes of “looking”, film can never deliver an entire “independency of Interpretation”.

![Figure 2](image1)

If the semiotic nature offilmic images were highly capable to trigger pure icons, this would explain why filmic viewing is known for its ability to immerse spectators into a highly emotional impression of reality. In fact, by its moving form, film
delivers even better conditions than paintings or other icons for the most perfect immersion or “contemplation of icons”: the camera and the montage replacing much of the spectator’s thinking and acting. We can state by now that the substance of filmic images is similar to immediate consciousness (percpium) but that the perceiver’s access to these percpui is very different from the perceiver’s access to the real life, as he encounters the developments of a first perceiving instance already present in the perception material (images). This perception situation frees the spectator from any direct pragmatic implication and opens doors for an experience that can be excessively emotional.

To speak with Peirce:“[T] here is a moment when we lose the consciousness that it is not the thing, the distinction of the real and the copy disappears, and it is for the moment a pure dream,—not any particular existence, and yet not general. At that moment we are contemplating an icon.” (EP 1, 226)

References

Dancing Tragedy: Alexander McQueen’s Aesthetics of Spectacle

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Abstract: Alexander McQueen’s spectacle has had an enormous impact on the fashion industry for both the radical experimentation of his designs, often embodying a darker strain of Romanticism, and for the innovative ways in which he presented these, around a show whose concept was frequently inspired by cinema, but also drew from theatre, dance and music, and even the circus and other forms of spectacle. In this article, I draw from both Nietzsche’s concept of tragic art and Peter Greenaway’s ideas of total cinema to discuss McQueen’s Deliverance collection (Spring/Summer 2004), based on Sidney Pollack’s 1969 film They Shoot Horses, Don’t They?, as both tragic art and total artwork. To put it briefly, Nietzsche argued that in genuine art the oppositions he called Dionysian or imagination and Apollonian or reason cross-fertilise each other so that “the metaphysical horror of existence is simultaneously revealed and made bearable, the ravages of intoxication are transformed by dreams and the sublime is beautified by the aid of appearances.” This art he called tragic. On the other hand, Greenaway’s idea of total cinema—which can be traced back to Wagner’s Gesamtkunstwerk—conceives of film as the ultimate artwork, merging as it does image, music, literature, dance and so on. I thus contend that the key features which make Alexander McQueen’s fashion spectacle so relevant to our times are precisely its tragic dimension and the way it draws from the narrative and the spectacle potential from the other arts—notably theatre, literature, film, music and dance—to create an integral artistic practice in fashion.

Keywords: semiotics; sign; fashion art; show; fashion industry; show; clothes; dress; media; adaptation; total art; Gesamtkunstwerk; spectacle; tragic; tragedy; painting; music; film; cinema; Bacchus; Dionysian; Apollonian; literature; Romanticism; deliverance; horse; designer; Eros; Thanatos; ontological.

The semiotics of fashion has a long history. In this paper, I understand semiotics of fashion as the study of signs and symbols and their use or interpretation in the realm of clothes. One of the early theorists of fashion semiotics was Charles Baudelaire, whose papers “Le Dandy” and “La Femme” are meaningful disquisitions on the ontological function of men’s and women’s dress. They constitute one of the first seminal contributions to the semiotics of fashion. Baudelaire contends that the dandy’s dress, far from being an immoderate taste of material elegance, is a keen
necessity which establishes a sort of religion, a “culte de soi-même” (cult of oneself) (Baudelaire, Le Dandy 1976, 710), in such a way that dandyism becomes a “doctrine de l’élégance et de l’originalité” (doctrine of elegance and originality). ¹ (Baudelaire, Le Dandy 1976, 711) Baudelaire also conceives woman’s dress as an essential part of her beauty, as all that adorns her is an integral part of herself. In this way, woman’s identity is considered as tending towards general harmony not only because of her intrinsic nature, but also due to the clothes that wrap her body in order to enhance her beauty. In sum, a woman and her dress are but one, “une totalité indivisible” (an indivisible totality) (Baudelaire, La Femme 1976, 714).

Later on, in his seminal work *Système de la Mode*, Roland Barthes lays the foundations of his structural analysis of women’s clothes, on the basis of the general science of signs, postulated by Ferdinand de Saussure under the name of semiology. Basically, this semiological project distinguishes between “la Mode réelle” (real fashion) or visual fashion, which refers to actual clothes either worn or exhibited; and “la Mode écrite” (written fashion) or described fashion, which concerns the same system, although articulated by language (Barthes 1967, 8). Barthes reconstitutes the semantic of written fashion step by step, as he considers it is an established system of signification. Thus, his research does not focus on clothing, nor on the language, but rather on “la ‘traduction’ de l’un dans l’autre” (the translation from one into the other) (Barthes 1967, 8).

More recently, discussing the way that corporate interests have co-opted the process whereby we are, according to Charles Sanders Pierce, to make meaning from experience, Laura Marks coined the term “immigrant semiosis.” (Marks 2007, 284) In short, Marks reminds us that, to Pierce, meaning making was all a personal process that relied, first, on feeling, then on distinguishing among these feelings, and finally on acting accordingly, stages roughly equivalent to perception, impression and thought (the ability to synthesise, generalise). But at present, many thoughts come to us ready-made, as if they were no more than the green light in a traffic light, which, as she puts it, asks only to be obeyed. Ubiquitous media disseminate the conceptual ready-mades of the day. In this context, engaging the world around us, through experience, as utterly unfamiliar, as immigrants have to do, holds the possibility of returning the personal semiotic process back to people, enabling perception, the first stage for original thought, to take place. My contention is that this is precisely what the work of Alexander McQueen has done for fashion: forcing audiences to engage in what Marks calls “immigrant semiosis”

¹ All translations from French are mine.
by presenting spectacles that require the meaning-making process of signs and symbols to be engaged anew.

Alexander McQueen’s work has had a huge impact on the fashion industry, both for the radical experimentation of his designs—often embodying a darker strain of Romanticism—and for the innovative ways in which he presented these, in a show whose concept was frequently inspired by cinema, also drawing from literature, theatre, dance and music, and even from the circus and other forms of spectacle. In this paper, I discuss McQueen’s Deliverance collection (Spring/Summer 2004) (McQueen, Women’s Spring Summer 2004 “Deliverance” n. d.) in the light of Friedrich Nietzsche’s concept of tragic art as well as Peter Greenaway’s ideas of total cinema. I contend that the key features that make the designer’s work create a post-modern artistic practice in fashion, which converges upon an art that conforms an eclectic spectacle of the Tragic.

So let us start with the background to his collection. McQueen’s Deliverance is composed of a complex network of inter-textualities that comprise literature, theatre, cinema, painting, music, dance and fashion. His show was inspired by Sydney Pollack’s 1969 film, They Shoot Horses, Don’t They? (Pollack 1969), which in turn was an adaptation of Horace McCoy’s homonymous novel written in 1935 (McCoy [1937] 2010), the times of the Great Depression in the United States. The novel in turn has inspired an intricate sequence of adaptations, from Pollack to McQueen, including a play by Ray Herman that premiered in Australia in 1983 and later had several revivals in England between 1990 and 2000. McQueen may well have seen some of these adaptations. At any rate, he re-creates the tragic dance marathon that is at the heart of the novel and the film for his fashion collection show. This spectacular presentation took place in Paris in October 2003, in the Salle Wagram, a 19th century Parisian dance hall. Michael Clark, a Scottish dancer, choreographed the performance with the participation of models together with professional dancers.

What were the novel and the film about? Let me briefly summarise the plot. Young Robert Syverten wants to become a film director. He meets Gloria Beatty, who is passionate about films. Both have just failed to get parts as extras in Hollywood so, motivated by the free food and drinks and the $1,000 prize that is offered they enter a marathon dance competition. However, little by little they realise the contest turns out to be a slow and merciless process of degradation and humiliation for all contestants. Deeply corrupt, the promoters of the contest improvise all kinds of fraudulent strategies to increase attendance and ensure the commercial success of the event. One such strategy involved the organisation of a
derby, an elimination race that consists in racing around a track for fifteen minutes and whose obvious purpose is to disqualify some couples. This way the marathon dance goes on relentlessly for 879 hours of dancing, and with 20 couples remaining. The story reaches its climax when Robert and Gloria, having realised that the contest has become a fraud, give up. They go outside the dance hall and then she takes a pistol out of her purse and begs Robert to shoot her, which he does without hesitation.

There are no accuratereferences to or proper descriptions of clothes in McCoy’s novel, except for a laconic mention of the uniforms the contestants wear during the derby races—such as “track suits”, “tennis shoes, white shorts, white sweat-shirts”, accompanied with some extra leather items—and a few allusions to sponsorships received from local businesses, usually in the form of clothes. By contrast, in Pollack’s film clothes are important in that they help to convey the atmosphere and the spirit of the 1930s, and to delineate character. As for McQueen’s Deliverance, it is focused on the derby only, with all models re-enacting the dancing marathon. And in his show, instead of wearing their flat sport uniforms described and shown in the novel and the film, contestants wear beautiful pieces of art with predominant colours and shades, leading contrasts and shapes oscillating between what Nietzsche called the Dionysian and the Apollonian tragic principles, so it is to this point that we now turn.

Tragedy is a form of art based on human suffering that paradoxically offers its audience a great aesthetical pleasure. Nietzsche constructed his early philosophy of art on the claim that pain for some irreparable lack is the fundamental character of the world. Two complementary principles predominate in his seminal work The Birth of Tragedy, namely the Dionysian, connoting imagination, and the Apollonian, connoting reason, which can be understood under three aspects; metaphysical, epistemological and aesthetic. (Nietzsche 1967, 37) This way, the Dionysian means respectively a metaphysical primordial horror of things; a state of “intoxication” because the deepest and most “horrible truth” of the world is just glimpsed, i.e. death; and the sublime or the overwhelming, awe-inspiring and yet elevating experience of things that exceed rational apprehension. (Nietzsche 1967, 60)

By contrast, metaphysically, the Apollonian stands for the false and the illusory, for “mere appearance” (Nietzsche 1967, 34); as regards the epistemological, “it indicates a dream-like state in which all knowledge is knowledge of surfaces” (Berrios and Ridley 2001, 98); and finally, as regards the aesthetic, it turns into the beautiful, “the world experienced as intelligible, as conforming to the
capacities of the representing intellect.” (Berrios and Ridley 2001, 98) In this scheme, McQueen himself might well have conceived of his fashion collections as primarily Dionysian, in that he rejected the merely pretty, the banal and the conventional, appealing instead to a set of qualities that encompasses irrationality, spontaneity, visceral reactions and the rejection of conventions. For instance, he famously once put on a fashion show for a collection entitled Highland Rape (Fall/Winter 1995–96) (Gleason 2012, 31–34), about Scotland being conquered by England, which expresses the distress caused by colonialism. Other films that provided inspiration for the designer’s work include Milos Forman’s 1975 One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest (Forman 1975). Briefly, the plot of this film is about social and individual repression allegorised by showing the coercive measures against in-patients in a mental hospital. Inspired by Forman’s film, McQueen created his Voss Collection (Spring/Summer 2001) (McQueen, Women’s Spring/Summer 2001 “Voss” n. d.), also based on Alfred Hitchcock’s The Birds (Hitchcock 1963). Writing about the deep impact of this show, which evokes the sense of fragmentation and uncanny features, fashion journalist Suzy Menkes interestingly commented: “Distasteful images? But a reflection of our nasty world.” (Bolton 2011, 12) And McQueen himself once remarked: “I don’t want to do a cocktail party, I’d rather people left my shows and vomited. I prefer extreme reactions.” (Bolton 2011, 12) And, I would add, all clear instances of fording audiences into “immigrant semiosis” as per Marks above. Regarding the gloomy and dreary side of his creations, McQueen also commented: “There is something ... kind of Edgar Allan Poe, kind of deep and kind of melancholic about [my] collections.” (Bolton 2011, 13) As we know, Edgar Allan Poe was an American writer of superb macabre tales, famous for works such as The Black Cat and The Fall of the House of Usher (Poe 1982, 223–230 and 231–245, respectively), which McQueen acknowledged as a source of inspiration.

However, there are also Apollonian features in McQueen’s fashion shows. For instance, in McQueen’s hands, in the derby race in Deliverance, chaos and degradation are turned into a sort of harmonious pandemonium, so to speak, by means of a powerful alchemy; an amazing spectacle of fashion art. As stated by Peter Greenaway, art is about “trying to find some order in the chaos”. (Pally 2000, 108) In fact, Nietzsche’s claim is that in genuine tragic works of art, the Dionysian and the Apollonian principles cross-fertilise one another, “so that the metaphysical horror of existence is simultaneously revealed and made bearable, the ravages of intoxication are transfigured by dreams; and the sublime is beautified by the evil of appearances.” (Berrios and Ridley 2001, 98) In sum, as tragedy—and by
extension, any genuine work of art—makes this possible, “it is only as an aesthetic phenomenon that existence and the world can be eternally justified.” (Nietzsche 1967, 52) I contend it is precisely as tragic art that McQueen’s Deliverance adapts its literary, filmic and theatrical predecessors, bringing to bear the plastic and the haptic in just a few minutes that condense the mood and feeling, or what I have called the existentialist, nihilistic, romantic and melancholic tonalities of They Shoot Horses, Don’t They? in all its lives across media through different forms of art. Here I focus on two aspects; McQueen’s juxtaposition of opposing elements and the dance sequence, music being the very realm of Dionysus.

Essentially tragic, McQueen’s fashion show is created on the basis of the amalgamation of contradictory features, transposing the derby race into a spectacular Bacchic and orgiastic dancing interpreted with his very best fashion, which celebrates the fusion of Eros and Thanatos, life and death—the two main subject matters of Western culture as Greenaway contends—by merging light and darkness, joy and bitterness, sensuality and decay, sorrow and happiness, in a sort of an impossible communion. In this regard, McQueen stated that; “I oscillate between life and death, happiness and sadness, good and evil.” (Bolton 2011, 70) The interplay between opposites is also a distinct feature in McQueen’s Fall/Winter 2009 collection, in which the “contrasting forces of life and death, of lightness and darkness, are the principal dichotomies”, according to critic Andrew Bolton. (Bolton 2011, 13)

These juxtapositions recall Nietzsche’s concept of cross-fertilisation of the Dionysian and the Apollonian, which in Deliverance, characterised by a strong dissident feeling, converge on a state of dissolution leading to emancipation from prejudices and social restrictions. The designer always considered his shows something like the exorcism of his “own living nightmares.” (Alexander McQueen, 40 n.d.) Actually, in the novel when Robert explains to the jury that will sentence him to death how he killed Gloria, he “could see enough of her face and her lips to know she was smiling.” (McCoy [1937] 2010, 3) Turning to McQueen, it has been asserted that his “models were never at rest or at ease. They were always fleeing some predator; history, social constraints, fashion’s confining gestures.” (Alexander McQueen, 40 n.d.) Consequently, the designer was often criticised for his striving for emancipation, which usually has been presented as malicious attacks, unpleasant and obscene. Quite the contrary, in Deliverance McQueen vindicates Gloria’s terrible predicament and extreme suffering, following McCoy’s novel and Pollack’s film. In relation to women’s constriction in Western societies, having stated that his clothes would enrich the woman’s identity, the designer added:
“when you see a woman wearing McQueen, there is a certain hardness to the clothes that makes her look powerful... It kind of fends people off. You have to have a lot of balls to talk to a woman wearing my clothes.” (Alexander McQueen, 40 n. d.) (My emphasis) Always having been interested in and inspired by what he called “iconic women”, McQueen added; “I want to empower women. I want people to be afraid of the women I dress.” (Bolton 2011, 60)

As for the music, interestingly, the tragic seems to be better expressed at a moderate tempo, i.e. moderato, or even at a slow tempo, i.e. adagio or lento. In Pollack’s film the derby race is realised through slow motion and silence. During the derby all couples move slowly and soundlessly, trotting and painfully gesticulating because of their tremendous efforts to win. All contestants move like dancing, but paradoxically in extreme mental and physical suffering. In McCoy’s novel, this image is evoked by Robert when he was “a little kid”. Old Nellie, the horse the title alludes, was lying “on the ground whispering still hitched to the plough”, because she had stepped in a hole, and as a consequence, she must be shot by Robert’s grandfather. (McCoy [1937] 2010, 120) In Pollack’s film, the very first scene depicts Robert’s recollection of the horse being shot dead. Old Nellie runs in the fields splendidly free, just before she suddenly falls down and thus not being able to stand up because of the fatal injuries caused by the accident, she must be slaughtered. The background music is extremely sweet, but also extremely sad, like a lullaby for a dead child. Indeed, slow motion cinematographic technique has been a recurrent resource to express the tragic, the unbearable and extreme situations. ❼

Musically, the motifs that constitute the ritual of dancing the tragic in Deliverance resonate with the categories of tonality and tempo. In musical terms, the tonality is the dominance of a note determined by the key that does not lose its function as the fundamental element in the structure despite the modulations that may appear in a given piece. In McQueen’s show, the dominant note—the tragic—is transposed, into an essential focal spirit as if it were the dominant colour in a painting by means of what becomes an aberrant and fantastic derby race. Regarding tempo, the fashion show’s music requires a moderate pace, a contained, quiet and peaceful tension, as the character of dancing on the track is essentially tragic. Throughout the novel and the film, references to the figure of the horse become a symbol of pain and misfortune, humiliation and degradation, which culminates with

❼ A remarkable example of the use of slow motion, which amalgamates Eros and Thanatos until the unbearable is the first scene from Lars von Trier’s 2009 film Antichrist (Trier, 2009). It is about a hyper-slow motion sequence (1000 frames per second) in black-and-white images harmonized by a George Friedrich Händel’s soprano aria “Lascia ch’io pianga” from Rinaldo (1711) to narrate the tragic death of a child.
euthanasia. For instance, the uniforms all contestants must wear for the derby races include “thick leather belts”, and some “little handles”, which allude to riding paraphernalia. (McCoy [1937] 2010, 51) As a matter of fact, all participants in the marathon dance are treated like horses. Another sign of the metaphor of the burden beast is the way they have to run; “heel and toe walking.” (McCoy [1937] 2010, 57) In the novel, the derby reaches its climax when the girls, running frenetically on the track and getting hot, remove “their sweat-shirts”, and the excited audience realised that they “wore only small brassieres, and as they trotted around the track their breasts bounced up and down”, like disarticulated puppets. (McCoy [1937] 2010, 97) In McQueen’s show, this metaphor of dehumanization is also a cornerstone because of its intrinsic visual power. The designer will exploit this image by means of a wild and fantastic dancing. Here, the tragic is depicted (fashion) and danced (music) in such a way that the contestants of the derby race, whose bodies are distorted with distress, pain and sorrow, seem to float, as they were in an empty and timeless space. This clothing derby race halfway between a farcical race, a masquerade and a carnival, undulating seductive bodies and contortions of suffering, amalgamate with the violent but subtle tempo and pulse of the music, which determines—and is determined by—the ontological idea of the vacuity of life, or what Edgar Allan Poe described as the “tragedy” called “Man” in his poem “The Conqueror Worm.” (Poe 1982, 960-961)

I now turn to Deliverance as a spectacle that appertains to the concept of total art. The idea of total cinema can be traced back to Richard Wagner’s Gesamtkunstwerk, a German term meaning precisely “total art” or “ideal artwork”, and whose concept pursues the aesthetic ideal of synthesising all or many art forms, to achieve a total one, comprehensive and all-embracing. Although this concept became rather unpopular for most of the twentieth century, when film scholars engaged in constructing the boundaries of different disciplines and thus arguing for the specificity of each medium, usually on visual grounds, in these days of media convergence the idea of a total art of sorts is making a comeback. It has enthusiastically been put forward by filmmakers such as Greenway, who stated that because cinema “can contain metaphorical, allegorical, and literal meanings. It’s the system Wagner always dreamt of, the total art form.” (Pally 2000, 116) And to stress his viewpoint, he added: “Works of art refer to great masses of culture, they are encyclopaedic by nature.” (Pally 2000, 107)

It is unquestionable that McQueen’s fashions shows have revitalised the fashion industry by means of incorporating other forms of art, such as theatre, literature, painting, music and cinema, again incorporating the “immigrant semiosis” alluded
to above. There is broad critical agreement that McQueen’s work is an artistic and innovative avant-garde work. According to Andrew Bolton: “McQueen runway shows, which suggested avant-garde installation and performance art, provoked powerful, visceral emotions.” (Bolton 2011, 12) I would argue, however, that if Greenaway has aspired to liberate cinema from the narrative constraints that turned it, in classical Hollywood, into a successor of the 19th century novel, exploring instead cinema’s relation to painting, the same can be said of a fashion show such as McQueen’s. In my view, his show precisely allows a further, painterly, as it were, exploration of Pollack’s cinematic version of They Shoot Horses, since his fashion show is essentially visual, and his clothing splendidly displayed, reminding the viewer, for instance, of Gustav Klimt’s paintings. McQueen’s show thus neatly encapsulates Greenaway’s ideas on what he calls total cinema. Deliverance was conceived as such a comprehensive artistic practice in fashion. Filmmaker and designer share a focus on the pictorial in their respective works. To Greenaway, his films are better seized by a painting aesthetic, rather than by a cinematographic one. McQueen’s show gives us a glimpse of what a film version of They Shoot Horses that focused on the exploration of painting would have been like.

In Deliverance a spectacle is created from the synthesis of Nietzschean principles, the Dionysian and the Apollonian, so as to make the tragic an amazing extravaganza. Deliverance is intrinsically contentious not only because of its transgressive content, but also because it goes beyond conventional catwalk fashion shows, inaugurating a total fashion artwork. Technically, Deliverance had a great impact on the Western industry of fashion. Criticism about McQueen innovation and renewal of fashion is unanimous. McQueen’s Deliverance fashion show, interweaving McCoy’s and Pollack’s They Shoot Horses. Don’t They? gives rise to a magnificent and striking spectacle of the Tragic.

Throughout history, artists and intellectuals have conveyed sharp social critiques through sardonic paradoxes. In McCoy’s novel, Pollack’s film and McQueen’s fashion show, that hopeless and incongruous world is revealed and its protagonists are emancipated from their misery, thanks to Art. Art is an aesthetic alchemy that rescues human conditions. This way, Gloria Beatty and Robert Syverten and their misfortunes, became literature and cinema, respectively, by means of a renovating aesthetic narrative. In Deliverance, the distressed melancholic couple become an innovative art fashion show; all in all, a dehumanizing spectacle of a marathon dance of the 1930’s was converted into a great piece of total fashion art. Once more, I agree with Greenaway when he says that; “we can make ourselves immortal by creating one grain of sand on the beach of
civilization—not by religion, which fades, and not by politics which fades very rapidly, but through art.” (Pally 2000, 112)

In sum, given his continuous, and highly successful, adaptations of sorts from the fields of film and literature into fashion, Alexander McQueen’s work offers a wealth of materials for the analysis of the way semiotics works across the media. More researches ought to be taken in this regard, and hopefully this will be done in the future.

References


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*One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest*. (1975). Directed by Milos Forman.


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Cultural Identity Representation in Claudia Llosas’s *The Milk of Sorrow/ La Teta Asustada*

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### 1. Introduction

During the last decade the Latin American cinema has been in bloom. Films like *Amores Perros / Loves’ a Bitch*, (Mexico, González Iñárritu entre 2000 and 2010), *Machuca* (Chile, Andrés Wood 2004), *Cidade de deus / City of God* (Brasil, Lund & Meirelles 2002), and *La zona / The zone* (México, Plá 2007) are examples of original aesthetic approaches to current issues in Latin-American societies.

These films, together with many others, have been welcomed both by the general public and by the critics, and have been rewarded in several international film festivals.

*The Milk of Sorrow/ La Teta Asustada*, directed by Claudia Llosa, is the subject of this study. It is a movie that is part of this present wave of Latin American cinema, and has been rewarded in 2009 with the Golden Bear (Goldener) in the International Film Festival of Berlin (Internationale Filmfestspiele) and also nominated in 2010 for an Oscar for best foreign movie. These facts show that the movie was appreciated in the US as well as in Europe, the distribution centres of cultural products with the highest economic, cultural and media impact.

Despite the awards and all the international recognition, the movie’s reception in Peru, the country where it was filmed, was not fully satisfactory. The international impact triggered a national debate that divided opinion, a celebration of the international success and aesthetic value of the movie on one side, and on the other, a questioning of the film’s artistic accomplishments, especially those related to the image of an underdeveloped Peru that the movie supposedly shows. Its verisimilitude and historical accuracy were put in question and became the subject of a debate that therefore developed into a discussion of the facts that composite that
compose the movie’s historic background.

Besides the critics and the commercial success, the movie acquires relevance as it manages to stimulate a debate about the need to deal with a painful national memory.¹

This is an interesting text to work with both because of its aesthetic power and because of its repercussion on the on-going discussion about historical memory. In this manner, an aesthetic sign becomes a social sign, motivating the spectator to pick up a position and to make his or her own interpretation of the past.

Furthermore, The Milk of Sorrow calls to be seen from the perspective of the study of transnational phenomena as well. It raises the issue about how exoticizing traits contribute to cement clichés about a nation outside the nation’s borders, while this same international attention interacts with the local discussion about what a nation is, where it begins and where it ends. This movie offers interesting and complex conditions for the discussion about “the national” since it is produced with the economic contribution of several European countries, especially Spain, but filmed in Peru with Peruvian actresses and actors, portraying a topic specifically related to the recent Peruvian history. One Spanish newspaper, for example, defines the movie as “Spanish-Peruvian” (El País 2009) and comments that the film’s director is Peruvian but lives in Barcelona, and the actress playing the role of the pianist is Spanish (El país 2009²).

This cinematographic text is an exponent of the group of contemporary Latin-American films that deal with issues referring to cultural identity, since they all, in different degrees, depict coexisting cultural realities that share the same geographical space. This issue is expressed in very diverse ways and motifs include “the conflictive encounter of cultures”, “cultural identity formation in big cities”, or “the exercise of power of one culture on another one”. This movie is therefore an exponent of themes like hybridity, transculturality and the consequences that


² At the beginning of the movie following names are shown: Oberón cinematográfica, a film and television production company based in Barcelona. Wanda films, Latin-American and European production film company based in Madrid. Vela producciones, a Peruvian film production company. Later, following names are shown as contributors: Televisión española, Televisión de Catalunya, among others, all Spanish except one that is Swiss and one that is European.
globalization has on the complex phenomenon of the formation cultural identity-individual as well as collective-in today's world.

Tzvi Tal and Moira Cristiá (2010, n/p) claim that cinema, in the same way as any other cultural expression, reflect social changes and is sensitive to the characteristics of its time. According to them, it is not just the historical events that have an influence, but also

“the current ideas, [...] the shifting balance of power within the elites, [...] the cultural turns, [...] the changing production modes, [...] the globalization processes, [...] the disappearance and the emergence of social actors, [...] the identity crises and the rise of multiculturality “(Moirá y Tal, 2010 n/p, own translation).

This movie by Claudia Llosa shows several concrete expressions of the theme of cultural identity. We assert that in The Milk of Sorrow, there is a clear decolonizing option (Mignolo & Tlostanova 2009, 130-135), i.e., this text encourages, through its way of representing cultural identity, a world-view where epistemic, spiritual, of gender and ethnic hierarchies are shown as related to coloniality.  

This decolonizing-destabilizing impulse we read into the text invites the study of representations of cultural identity from an intersectional perspective, between

1. Area studies, because it is related to an specific geographical area.
2. Cultural studies, the question is one of cultural identity, and, finally.
3. Literary/narratological studies, because it is an aesthetic expression formed as a text and composed of signs.

Destabilizing hierarchies through the relationship proposed by the text between these hierarchies and coloniality affects the representation of the encounter between cultures and the representation of cultural identity. The representation of cultural identity in the text is based often in a presentation of cultural differences, together with a critic to the dominant discourse of power that enforces them. To put it in an extremely simplified manner, the film shows a “white culture with European background, Spanish-speaking and wealthy”, that exert its power over another one, which is “quechua-speaking, not white, and poor”. At this point a first problem arises, by trying to show differences in a vindicating manner and to challenge the dominant discourse of power, the text uses tools, and rests on world-views, that are borrowed from other hegemonic discourses. Hegemonic discourses, in this case, are very close to the discourse that is the target of the critic. It is possible, for example,

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1 Walter Mignolo makes a differentiation between colonialism (related to specific historic period) and coniality, a logic and a world-view that is a consequence of colonialism.
to find examples where the text repeats the same methods in order to represent otherness. The critique becomes inefficient in this way, because the hegemonic discourse gets confirmed in its possession of a normative role, thus adding another link to a chain of practices that contributes to maintaining the order that the text intended to criticize.

Another problematic component that may weaken the critique is the use of elements that the text presents to viewer as archaeological evidence of the past of a people, and does it in a reductive manner. This would mean that cultural identity is based on, or can be reduced to, this kind of evidence. For instance, in the movie there are some moments where ritual-like celebrations corresponding to the past history of a people take place in the present of the story. If this is an anachronism, then it represents an essentializing way of describing a culture. If it is not, its purpose may be way to remind the viewer about a certain past or to recreate it, in connection with a believable present. Our purpose is to discover and discuss such negotiations of identity that it is possible to find in the text. We ask, together with Hall (1996, 210 – 221), about the nature of the search suggested by this cinematographic representation. We wonder whether the search suggested by The Milk of Sorrow, points towards a discovery and revelation of a people’s cultural identity related to its origins, towards showing the colonial experience and frameworks of reference and meaning that have been repressed, or whether the film shows a different way to tell history/the story that does not show the beginnings, but produces cultural identity within the text.

2. Chronotopes

The narrative space of the film is tied up with historical time that goes from the conquest of Tahuantinsuyo (the Inca empire), in such a way that the story, narrated chronologically, manages to include both the colonial and the postcolonial period. The symbolic power of the relationship between Fausta, the main character, and her employer, Aída, is built upon the differences between the spaces shown in the film. On one hand, there is Aída’s house that functions as a microcosm where the colonial dynamics are reproduced. This colonial space is powerful, —since it is here that the colonial symbols are projected—with its leafy garden, with its spacious and dark interior, and with its evident limits and closeness; the house and the garden are surrounded by a wall only accessible by a gate that is locked at all times. The garden is characterized by its big old trees that indicate how solid historical power has gone in inheritance from one generation to the next. A detail from one of the rooms in
the house shows an image of the Holy Spirit, a sign connecting the colonial house—space to the Catholic Church. The rooms of the house are dominated by darkness, silence, and objects from the past, in clear contrast with the space just outside the gate. Here there is a street market, dominated by rich colours, tight spaces, noises and movements, a vital present.

Outside the market, in the margins of the city, the movie shows another space that is central to the story. This is the place where Fausta lives, the opposite of Faustas colonial styled home where she works. Fausta’s neighbourhood is difficult to get to, being separated from the rest of the city by enormously long stairways that go up all the way from the bottom to the top of a mountain. The recurrent image of these stairways is reminiscent of pre-colonial constructions such as those at Machu Pichu. Between the houses in the periphery there are not walls or clearly marked boundaries, creating a sense of collectivity, whereas in Aída’s house a feeling of isolated individualism predominates.

The images of the stairways and the neighbourhood set on the mountains are meaningful because they refer to Tahuantinsuyo when it still existed in its highland location as well. In some of these images, the perspective corresponds to that of the characters going up or down these stairs, they look down on the city from above, this angle of view is increased by the camera angle that magnifies the altitude, all signs of the pride of what nowadays is a poor neighbourhood. This viewpoint unites the characters diachronically with the pre-colonial power organization.

3. The Relived Past

A determining scene in The Milk of Sorrow that shows clearly how the colonial past is present is the one where Aída hangs a portrait in one of the rooms in her house. Aída appears turned away from the camera drilling on a wall already full with portraits of her ancestors, when she calls for Fausta’s help so she can hang up one more. When Fausta enters the room, she sees Aída holding the drill with one hand, the image is presented in a way suggesting that, for Fausta at least, the drill might be confused for a moment with an automatic weapon. The narrator presents Aída as constantly surrounded by silence, pale and with a hard expression on her face. As Fausta looks at the portrait, she becomes frightened by the image of a man in military uniform, and runs away.

This is the scene which represents the textual unification between Aída and the hegemonic power, and this scene thus gives Aída the role of opponent-actant, since she exerts a negative force against Fausta’s goals. Aída hinders Fausta’s most
concrete aim, that of carrying out her mother’s funeral, because she at first denies an advance on Fausta’s wages, and later fails to give Fausta the pearls she had promised her.

Aída is also an obstacle to Fausta’s more abstract and personal goals, which are independence and survival, because Aída upholds the power structure that leaves Fausta in the margins. This is because she is not only situated in a powerful position as an employer, but because all her genealogy is related, at a supradiegetic level, the most external and encompassing level of the narrative, with one of the conquerors first and later with the creole elite, and at the next level, the extradiegetic (these two levels, the supra- and the extradiegetic, are outside the text, they are not shown directly by images), with the military force that committed the rapes in Ayacucho.

4. The Performativity of Identity and the Materiality of the Body

Fausta’s body is, paraphrasing Judith Butler (65–75, 1993), a body that matters. The bodies in The Milk of Sorrow sometimes tell more than the characters, specially female characters. To Judith Butler, the discursive and the material are not necessarily exclusive categories, though the material can not be reduced to simply words, the material is a kind of surface where the discursive leaves traces. Fausta is rebels against these discursive traces, and confronts them using another materiality; that of the potato. The potato is not just a way to stop a possible rape, but to cancel her sexuality as such, and thus to counter the effects of discourse, she refuses to be “a woman”, that woman who is produced by discourse, and she does so by closing her body.

Fausta’s mother’s rape is the most profound influence on Fausta’s life. This is a rape based on cultural identity. The anthropologist Kimberley Theidon (8–9, 2009) explains that the rapes that happened in Ayacucho are “racing rapes”, i.e. they are consequence of racism but, at the same time, they produce race. Sexual violence inscribes itself in the bodies producing racial identity. The women that were raped and the soldier-rapists had a similar ethnic origin. While the group rapes were taking place, the soldiers humiliated their victims with racist insults. The insults that related to ethnicity were the same insults that the soldiers themselves had suffered during their own lives. According to Theidon (8–9, 2009), the rapes, together with the racist insults, were a way for the soldiers to “whiten up” themselves and to transmit ethnic humiliation to the victims. The performative act of insulting produces a racial distinction.
*The milk of sorrow* is the name of an illness, that Fausta’s uncle explains to the doctor who takes care of her in the hospital emergency room. Fausta’s mother was raped during “the hard times”. The trauma that resulted from that experience was transmitted to Fausta through her mother’s milk. The memory of the violence remains in the body and takes over the bodies of next generation too. The discursive traces in Fausta’s body (just by being a woman she is more exposed to sexual violence than a man, and even more so, because she is not white), cause her to insert a potato in her vagina. This sexual-racial violence is consequence of an imbalance in power relations that is, in turn, an effect of the logic of coloniality. 

All of the images in *The Milk of Sorrow* are powerful, and since the film’s narrative is told by only few words, the images themselves tell most of the story. For instance, in one of the first scenes, we see Fausta who has just awakened in the hospital after fainting when her mother died. This is a good example of how the cinematic narrator uses images of the body images and plays with the idea of dismembered bodies. The image is a close-up of Fausta’s face; focus is on the centre, showing clearly her disturbed expression, surrounded by a black diffuse colour and nothing else. This is a metaphor of Fausta’s self closure, isolated from the world and from her own body. The contours of the slightly illuminated face against the blackness reminds the viewer of the shape of a potato still underground. Fausta is, at this point, enveloped in a black shapeless matter and disconnected from the rest of her body.

Soon after the potato-like image comes another one, in the same scene, that creates the idea of the disjunction between body and mind. This is the image of a gynaecologist’s examination room, showing just one of Fausta’s legs, resting over the stirrups of the gynaecologist’s chair. The leg without an owner, together with the damaged fan in the background, takes up half of the frame and intensifies the idea of the broken body. This dismemberment of Fausta’s identity is a recurring element in this narrative; there are several scenes where Fausta’s face is shown partially in different situations, hiding herself behind objects that do not allow the spectator to see her completely.

Introducing a potato into her own body is a symbolic action of strength. The individual choice asserts itself over the power of the discursive: because of her fear Fausta decides to obstruct her own sex which, that is, according to Judith Butler, a variation in the script of identity construction. However, the potato sprouts and causes an infection, biological processes parallel that run parallel to her subjective processes. This is the turning point in Fausta’s life; life itself imposes the need for Fausta to move on, to develop. After returning to Aida’s house for the pearls, a
deed like a test. Fausta arrives back at the hospital again for the potato to be removed. After she has recovered the pearls and removed the potato, she also in a sense recovers her soul. To show this, the cinematic narrator, portrays Fausta waking up in the same hospital room, but this time shows the entire Fausta, head attached to body without blackness. Her identity has been recovered and her personality is no longer truncated.

5. The Discourse of Otherness: Silences and Songs as Discursive Semiosis

The shaping of the main character’s identity develops under the whole film. After the death of her mother (in one of the first scenes), Fausta cannot go on with her life overshadowed by her mother’s fate, and must define herself in order to survive. In the beginning, seconds after the mother’s death, the cinematic narrator presents Fausta’s solitude in the world. This happens through a silence produced after the first song in Quechua and through an image of Fausta completely alone in back light framed by a window. The background shows a labyrinthine hamlet of uncompleted houses over a dry landscape, a symbol of the world Fausta needs to confront unaided and by herself. Fausta’s face gets darker while the background lightens up, signifying that this is the world that now Fausta must now enter into her own.

Fausta is a fearful person and does not talk much, but at the same time she is quite resolute. The cinematic narrator often uses the sound channel\(^1\) to compensate for the lack of dialogue or to describe Fausta’s interior life. The songs Fausta sings tell about her thoughts, this is confirmed by the text when the cinematic narrator shows Fausta in silence while the spectator can clearly hear her singing, like in a interior monologue. The songs sung by Fausta under the whole film are important as they refer to her process of subjectivization. Fausta sings in different situations, mostly when she is scared, she sings for herself and it is partially through these songs that she shapes and creates her identity. Singing, as we hear and see in the first minutes, helps Fausta and her mother to communicate with each other; this medium allows them to talk about subjects they could not otherwise talk about.

In this first song, besides telling about the rape, Fausta’s mother points to the

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1. Schmidt (219), claims that the dissolution between body and voice in cinema is there to serve the narration. A voice might have a specific source within the diegetic space, and still be separated from the images seen by the spectator.
need to preserve memory: “Comeré si me cantas/ y riegas esta memoria que se seca. / No veo mis recuerdos, es como si ya no viviera… (Llosa, 01:30)”

To keep the memory of a tragedy alive is a theme that reappears. It is Fausta who ultimately must deal with it, not just to preserve it, but to elaborate it. In the lyrics, memory is as important as life itself, if memory is lost then this is the end of life. Fausta must feed this memory, representing the new generation that inherits a history. In this scene, the mother and daughter sing in two languages, taking up the question of recovering repressed continuities. On one hand there is the fact of the rapes, that have not been punished yet, while the victims have not been recognised and compensated as such, the painful memory is therefore very persistent and present. One the other hand there is the transmission of memories codified in Quechua. The very presence of Quechua is evidence of an epistemic continuity, the native language expresses the presence of a knowledge framework parallel to the modern Latin-American knowledge framework, following Mignolo’s ideas. In this sung dialogue with codeswitching, languages are arranged in parallel mode and not hierarchically, producing a destabilization of binary dichotomy native-language/imperial-language. Quechua tells something different than what is being told in Spanish, not because of the specific or literal meaning of the words, but because it connects the speakers with a determinate history and heritage. The story told in that language connects the filmic text with Latin America’s third period according to Mignolo, i.e. the period when the challenging of the idea of Latin America with its division as a concept takes place, a period that has just begun. A Quechua-America, for instance, contradicts the very definition of ‘Latin’ America, because the idea of Latin excludes the idea of Quechua. However, the stories being told in that language tell that they still exist, they happen and have always happened, disarticulating the idea of a homogenic of Latin America.

Fausta also sings to overcome the nervous breakdown she suffers when she sees the picture of the military man in Aída’s house. Every time she suffers from this kind of crisis, she gets a nose bleed, caused mostly by fear, which makes her run out of the room crying. She starts singing (in Quechua) to cope with the moment: “… / To hide our fear/ Let’s sing/ Let’s sing nice things / To dissimulate our / To hide our little wound / As if it wouldn’t exist, it wouldn’t hurt.” (Llosa, 29:49, own translation). These lines strengthen the idea that Fausta uses singing as a therapeutic technique. The importance of singing originates in the fact that, in this

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1 I will eat if you sing for me/ and water this drying memory/ I don’t see my memories, it’s like i’m not living anymore… (Llosa, 01:30, own translation)
case, the solution comes from the world of the Quechua, as we saw in the analysis of the dialogue-songs between mother and daughter, and because, as Theidon points out, it is possible to see it as an intent to the social reconstruction of life.

The mermaid song is the only one entirely in Spanish. This is the first song Fausta accepts to sing for Aída in exchange for the pearls in the deal they make. The first half is heard in Fausta’s voice-off, the spectator sees Fausta crying and on her way to Aída, and she is not seen singing until the last verse. This sound-channel manipulation sets the discourse point of view as Fausta’s. The lyrics of this song are based on an Andean myth according to which musicians sold their souls to the mermaids in exchange of a gift (Millones & Hiroyasu, 15–31, 2004). Fausta sings however another version, probably her mother’s, where the musician manages to save his soul. In the performance of this song, the pain of this transaction for Fausta can be seen, because she is selling her soul too, and at the same time, the crucial modification, the possibility of recovery, is opened.

6. Fausta’s Cultural Identity

The situation in the beginning of the movie, posed as Fausta’s simple difficulties in gathering an amount of money to pay the trip necessary for her mother’s funeral, gets more complex all though the development of the story, and eventually achieves the status of a process of maturation and self-definition. As a consequence of her “the milk of sorrow” condition, Fausta has lived in the margins of her own life, under the shadow of her protective mother, almost without talking, almost without contact with other people, almost without being able to safely leave the safety of her home. This situation has to change after the death of her mother, a chain of events starts which are related to the forging of her cultural identity and to the process of subjectivization. In order to gather the money, she needs first to find a job, and to do that she needs to overcome the fear of going out alone, of talking with strangers and being around men. She finds the job, but the possibility of receiving an advance on her wages is denied by her employer, Aída. Nevertheless, another possibility appears the day Aída happens to hear Fausta singing. Aída asks for more songs and offers her a pearl from her broken necklace for every song Fausta sings. Singing for others is difficult for Fausta; it makes her expose herself and show her most personal feelings, to no one less than her employer, in this case, but she struggles and finally does it. Towards the end of the film, she has to encounter Aída’s abuse, so fighting all her fears at once, she runs into Aída’s house in the middle of the night and recovers the pearls she has fairly earned. Ultimately,
she asks for the potato to be removed as an expression of freedom and a reassertion of her identity.

Fausta’s name, as a textual marker of the character’s identity, is of importance for the analysis. It suggests a relation with the myth of Faust, who sells his soul to the devil. Fausta’s soul is a motif present everywhere in the film, because, as Fausta’s uncle explains to the doctor, the effect of “The milk of sorrow is that the soul of the one infected runs away scared and hides in the ground” (Llosa 08:45, own translation). When Fausta agrees to sing for Aída for the pearls, she somehow sells her soul, because her songs are something intimate, a tool useful as a means of connecting with herself. This sale of her own soul is consummated when Fausta realizes that Aída steals the songs and presents them her own compositions in the concert.

Back from the concert, Fausta comments in the car on the success of the songs with the public. Aída gets irritated and throws her out of the car, leaving her alone by the highway in the middle of the night. Aïda gets furious because Fausta reminds her (in the presence of Aïda’s friend who is driving the car and probably does not know the origin of the songs) indirectly not only that she has not composed the music herself, but also that she has stolen it from the domestic help. As a result of this event, sets of the last “test” for Fausta’s process of the recovery and formation of identity is set in motion, because the night after this she will come back and take the pearls that represent her soul.

In the section about cultural identity we presented the ways chic, that according to Hall, cinematographic representation can use to reveal cultural identity. The conversation with the past is always indispensable. A way to engage in this dialogue is to use different languages, as Fausta does, with Quechua and Spanish, two languages closely related to the history of the geographic area in the movie. It is generally known that language is one of the most important markers of identity. We know that Quechua is the native tongue of Fausta’s mother, and we assume that is also spoken by the rest of the family, or at least by the uncle. Yet the language spoken by the family is Spanish, their conversations are in Spanish and Spanish represents the language of a new period. Spanish is also the language Fausta uses in her new job with her employer. Quechua nevertheless returns to take an important place in the relationship between Fausta and Noé, Aïda’s gardener. The circle then closes, because her mother tongue also becomes part of her new life, i.e. it is both a modern and an ancestral language.

The conversation between the text and its past, with history, is also present in Fausta’s labour relations. Peru’s creole elite, with European background, has
historically employed women from the native people and Afro-peruvians as domestic workers (Benavides & Valdivia, 20-30, 2006). The relationship between Fausta and Aida is understood within the framework of this tradition, and it is explained by the logic of coloniality.

The scene of the mummification/conservation of the mother’s body is another textual example of the past in dialogue with the present, of how history talks with Fausta’s Now. On the one side, it indicates the relationship with the supradiegetic level, the narrative of the pre-colonial Quechua past, when the ritual of mummification still existed. On the other side, there is a relationship with a past closer in time to Fausta, a more explicit one that is narrated by Fausta’s aunt. In this scene Fausta, together the women of the family, treat the corpse to preserve it. While working on it, the aunt tells that, during the hard times, it was necessary to preserve the dead bodies so that they could be showed to the authorities as evidence that people had been killed. This means the text here engages again with the burden that these years (the same period when her mother was raped) left on the people, this time emphasising the scale and the extent of the crimes, because it becomes clear that assassination were a common practice and a whole people was their victim.

Hall concludes that one of the tendencies that one finds in cinema dealing with the question of identity is an attempt to describe an authentic collective self that is commonly hidden under other more superficial and artificial selves, a self that is shared by people with a history and with ancestors in common. As we have shown, there are in The Milk of Sorrow a number of references to past that Fausta shares with her family and with other members of her social circle. However, as far as a search of a real and collective self is concerned, the character of Fausta is distanced from this. Fausta is different, as can be seen, for example, when she sings the mermaid song. She is taking a Quechua tradition, part of the narrative of the past, but she chooses to translate to Spanish. Fausta makes the myth her own, she leaves her own trace on it. From her mother’s version, she retains the different ending, the happy ending, where the musician is liberated. Fausta situates herself before her past, using her heritage but at the same time opening the myth to a future with possibilities for freedom. In the end, when Fausta is at last on her way to the village to bury her mother, she decides to stop and to bury her on the beach, by the sea.

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(1) The “hard times” refers to the so called “Guerra interna”, in English “Internal war” was an armed conflict between the Peruvian State, Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) and Movimiento Revolucionario Túpac Amaru (Revolutionary Movement Tupac Amaru) that took place in Peru between the years 1980 and 2000 (Isla, 40-44, 2008).
She changes her mother’s decision and makes her own. She rests on her heritage but she nevertheless moves forward.

**References**


Part B
Arts
Pedro Lemebel, the Play of the Author and the Idea of the Author

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In this article I aim to comment on the relation that exists between the public being of the Chilean author Pedro Lemebel and some aspects of his literary work. The work of the Chilean artist is divided into three fields, closely connected with each other. Firstly, there is the performative field, an area that the artist developed towards the end of the 80’s and the beginning of the 90’s when he belonged to the cultural group Las Yeguas del Apocalipsis. These performances took part within an identity discourse, a questioning of the normative structures, related to different groups considered minoritarian by the established dictatorship as well as by the remaining social structures, political parties, NGO’s, the church, etc. A second field is the one related to his written work, his chronicles as well as his short stories and his novels. Within this written work the themes and the perspectives are partly the same as the ones developed by the author in his performative activity as an artist—they are critical texts that question the established social structures. Finally, to a certain extent related to the first field mentioned above, the author develops a performative act as a reader of his own work, mainly the chronicles, where Pedro Lemebel represents Pedro Lemebel.

In this paper I take into consideration the three representations of Lemebel’s work. In each of them features are produced that are later repeated or referred to in the rest of the textual production, in this way connecting and holding together the work of Lemebel. The performative acts are registered in different ways, photography, short films, radio pieces, videos, etc, that later are transmitted or retransmitted through different media, and that afterwards can be accessed virtually, for example through blogs and YouTube. Obviously, the features that are furnished within these contexts are numerous and diverse. Generally speaking, these features can be related to the thematic direction of Lemebel’s work, with specific figures present throughout all his work, with external contextual references, also repeated in each of Lemebel’s texts.
Lemebel’s work basically consists of novels, short stories and chronicles. His most famous work is the novel *Tengo miedo torero* (2001), translated into many languages\(^\text{1}\). This novel is narrowly connected to the literature of Latin America, the most explicit links being with the novel of the guerilla fighter (for example, with the novel by Omar Cabezas, *La montaña es algo más que una inmensa estepa verde* (1982) or *La Mujer habitada* by Gioconda Belli (1988) and with the novel with identity thematic (for examples the novels by José Donoso, *El lugar sin límites* (1966) or by Manuel Puig, *El beso de la mujer araña* (1976).

An important part of Lemebel’s work is constituted by the chronicles, also brought out from the end of the 80’s and the beginning of the 90’s, accounting for the major part of the artist’s enterprise. These chronicles were produced by the author, first in different “cultural” acts in alternative centers of social organizations and later in local radio shows and others with autonomous traits and considerable range, for example the case of Radio Tierra that is broadcast all over Latin America through Internet stations. A big part of Lemebel’s chronicles were published by almost all the media of Chile and parts of the media of Latin America, for example the newspaper *Clarín* of Argentina. Several anthologies of these chronicles were published by the editorials Anagrama, Seix Barral and Sudamericana. A big part of Lemebel’s chronicles are reproduced through YouTube and Facebook, granting it a permanent presence which underlines its performative trait.

Through my reading of Lemebel I will try to prove, first, that there is an intention in his work to create a voice that aims to be the voice of an entire group that, in the space of the fiction of Lemebel, is considered, described and represented as a minority. Secondly, that this group—actants, characters, figures, models, or what you may call them—in its doings and alongside its doings provoke a conflict between what they achieve and what they should achieve. The first part would be an attempt of a subaltern to speak with his own voice (Spivak, 1988) and the second part, in a way, through a doing (or performance) that these figures have with the purpose to create their own identity (Butler, 1990), this last part based on an idea that also fictive figures can generate spaces where aspects of established identities are questioned or where these norms are ruptured. A third aim is to show how the representation of the author, created through the performance of the artist, or public figure of the author, is a textual network where the voices of the minority act and speak and modify the norms of behaviour; it is to say, the way in

\(^1\) In English translated as *My tender matador*, in German as *Träume aus Plüschi* and in French as *Je tremble, ô matador*
which the representation of the author Pedro Lemebel is transformed in the space where his (fictive) characters act, thus becoming an inevitable place of reference when it comes to reading any of his texts. Therefore, what I aim to show is that these three aspects exist intrinsically in the work of Pedro Lemebel:

* the presence of a group denominated “minority” (women, children, prostituted children), Mapuches (Indian minorities), travesties, transsexuals, prostituted women, old people, foreigners (Peruvians, Bolivians, etc)
* a narrative voice of Lemebel that pretends to speak for these minorities, and that through this discourse tries to modify norms of doings and forms of comprehending the way of acting of these minorities
* the representation of the author, as a result of the performative creation of Pedro Lemebel the artist through different representations conducted during the last twenty years in the political and cultural context of Latin America

I stated earlier that the representation of the author—or the idea of the author—if you so wish—works as a kind of spatial network where the characters exist, live and act. Pedro Lemebel has created not only the backdrop where these characters act and develop their lives, but, also, this representation. Pedro Lemebel the author, is the one who legitimizes the veracity of the spaces and of the characters within this context. It is to say, the presence of Lemebel the author (the physical person) legitimizes in that context the represented characters as well as the discourses that are produced (or its ideas) and the acts that these have. Through his various performative representations Lemebel has created an image of an author, and the space of this author, where all his literary production is subsequently settled, or where the fiction is realized. The performative activity has established a succession of features, others more evident than others, where subsequently the reader or spectator is situated as he/she is confronted with Lemebel’s work.

You can observe this relation, for example, in the chronicle “La pesquisa y a Silvio Rodríguez. o el malentendido del unicornio”(from the final years of the 90’s) in which a gesture from the author, which originates from a performative act, is incorporated. The author makes a pause in his reading “to put right his hair”, and he then continues his reading, or the text continues;

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1 This idea is explained with the concept of “performative biographism” by the Danish theorist Helt Haarder.
2 The idea of the author has been thoroughly discussed by Barthes, Foucault, Culler, and Eco.
3 http://www.letras.s5.com/lemebel221102.htm
[...] My friend and I are Chileans who admire your poetry, and in Chile we homosexuals have made ours the Unicornio Azul song, thinking that it refers to a lost and impossible love. (A pause to put right my hair). I also want to seize the opportunity to ask you what you think about homosexuality and about the revolution. Could you answer these questions, please? [...]"

In this chronicle Lemebel supplies the vision that existed within the left of Latin America towards the end of the 80’s in relation to the gay question. In the chronicle, the author makes use of the song of Silvio Rodríguez, “El unicornio azul”, suggesting that he sees in the figure of the blue unicorn the existence of a possible metaphor in the search of gay identity. Years later Silvio Rodríguez responded to this chronicle, taking away its fictional character to give it an ideological context: “Today I received the answer from the person responsible for the article, who sent me the fragment of the book from where he extracted the quote that relates to me. It is about an absurd fabrication by a Chilean writer that I was not familiar with (I know that he is famous), with a way of writing very influenced in its style by Antes que anochezca by Reinaldo Arenas [...]”\(^2\). The response from the Cuban musician is a sample of a way of reading Lemebel’s chronicle, and it functions to demonstrate the effectiveness of the relation between Lemebel’s performances and his written texts. The main idea is how the expression “a pause to put right my hair” hints at the identity of the author, and this act of putting right his hair should be associated with some of the previous performances by Lemebel where the author has made, or would have made, a pause to put right his hair. Through the use of this performative gesture a feature is established that the author has indicated for future readings, among those the one realized by Silvio Rodríguez.

Clearly, the characteristics of the chronicle allow that this kind of text moves in a broad field between what we comprehend as fiction and as reality, bearing in mind that it is written in the first person, temporally linear, with referents and direct

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1. [http://www.letras.s5.com/lemebel221102.htm](http://www.letras.s5.com/lemebel221102.htm)
contextual thematic (historically, politically etc), generally signed by the author as his own. The formation of the idea of Lemebel the author, his thoughts, his origin, his identity is initially based upon performative activities in Yeguas del apocalipsis and later through the textual definition of these ideas in the chronicles, that is to say, when the reading of the chronicle becomes a part of the compilation and, as we are about to see, also in the novel Tengo miedo torero.

1. The Construction of the Idea of the Author and its Verisimilitude

Another fundamental aspect regarding the construction of the idea of the author is its level of verisimilitude. It is how through his performative acts he has created a voice that will take the responsibility to speak for some oppressed minorities, first oppressed by the dictatorship and later by the general social structures in Chile. Whereas in the early performances and chronicles there existed a certain homogeneous body of the oppressed where almost the totality of the opposition against the dictatorship took part, subsequently, after the shift from the military to the non-military regime, this body is dispersed and as a result the different unities that form the minorities post-dictatorship of Lemebel are manifested; boys, girls, women, prostituted men, Mapuche Indians, etc. The verisimilitude of the voice of Lemebel is established around the identity of the author, this voice is reinforced with the use of physical spaces bordering this identity. One of the anthologies of these chronicles has the name of an emblematic political, geographical and social space of the Chilean society of the last 50 years, even going beyond the local boundary: the Zanjón de la Aguada.

2. Lemebel and the Zanjón de la Aguada

Pedro Lemebel was born in Chile in the early 50’s, hailing from one of the most battered sectors in Chile of that era. He is of Mapuche origin, with a big family, living as a child in one of the poorest places of Santiago, off the Zanjón de la Aguada, a channel that crosses the city from the foot of the mountains to the Maipú region. The bordering inhabited sectors that grew off the Zanjón were also one of the most marginalized from the reality of Santiago in the mid-90’s, when the channel was cleaned and big parts were sunk beyond the ground. The space of this poor neighbourhood that partly surrounds Santiago is characterized by its paltry conditions; rooms of poverty, mud floors, walls of papier maché, zinc ceilings, or fonola (pressed paper infused with tar), constructed in a continuous line that
followed the Zanjón in its course crossing the city of Santiago. From above it is possible to see how the crystalline water from the melted ice of the Andes mountains enters the city, filling itself with life from the city, transforming into a kind of sewer that also gives it nutrition: the origin of the construction of the channel was to allow irrigation to the whole garden of old Santiago, and in due course, following the typical model of expansion of the contemporary big metropolises, this area was constructed. The Zanjón de la Aguada, as a spatial reference in the work of Pedro Lemebel, hails back to the final years of the 1940s, eventually turning into the emblematic space that we now know as Población la Victoria. The Población de Victoria is originated in one of the most ancient occupations of land in Latin America. During the dictatorship it is one of the most affected areas, where important zones of resistance emerge and where, from the 1980s, the first armed struggles of resistance materialize.

The space of the Zanjón extends across the entire work of Pedro Lemebel, thus becoming the most important reference of all. Many of the characters that are portrayed in his work refer to this space, directly or indirectly. However, the core of this reference is, according to my reading, the figure of the author, Pedro Lemebel. It is to say, the idea of Lemebel the author. The author mentions that “I speak from the homosexuality, from the proletariat, from being urgent to express a political desire” and he refers to these as a place/space from where the emission of his discourse is produced. Although it is true, in this text I will not contemplate the relation that Pedro Lemebel carries out between the spaces of poverty, marginalization, crowding and sexual identity, doubtlessly the characterization of the idea of the author that Lemebel chooses to use starts with the Zanjón. The hero/heroine of Lemebel is constructed in this spatial context of the marginalised area of the Zanjón and we can follow him/her through the entire work of Pedro Lemebel, faithful to this origin, faithful in the sense that the characterization and the starting point is always liable to this origin that he pleads with in all his activity, whether it is performances, chronicles or novels.

It is possible that the tangible space of the Zanjón is not always mentioned, but the narrative voice is always the same. Pedro Lemebel, or La Loca del Frente in Tengo miedo torero. This narrative voice is born in the Zanjón de la Aguada and possesses all the features of this place, the sexual identity as well as the ideological. The act of rebellion that the Lemebel voice appeals to is related to this space, we

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have already observed that the emblematic nature of the Población la Victoria comes from their rebellious origin of land occupation to their attitude of total confrontation against the dictatorship during the years that it lasted. “The rats were my teddy bears”\(^1\), Lemebel says, transforming the most extreme expression of poverty into an act of affection that legitimizes the narrative voice, being shaped and fortified throughout his entire work.

### 3. Brief Final Conclusions

We can establish that there exists a pursuit of creating a voice that can speak for a minority in the work of Lemebel, a minority that is distinctly delimited and defined. These minorities are defended by this voice that possesses ideological features that are also defined. They are deprived beings who live in delimited spaces, delimited by social structures that suppress them or force them to places that belong to them but where they do not belong (Bhabha, 2004). Lemebel creates the verisimilitude of this voice, his voice, through mechanisms that I have pointed out, trying to speak for these minorities. In one of his many chronicles, “Socorro, me perdí en un mall (O, ¿tiene parche curita?)”, the narrative voice, a masculine voice in this case\(^2\), goes into one of the malls of Santiago of the 90’s to buy sticking plaster. The voice, Lemebel, makes a critical tour through the space of free-market comercial modernity, describing this space in contrast to the exterior space. He depicts his characters also using this contrast between oppressed and repressive minorities, pondering over the figure of lost children in that outside space. After having done the tour, frontier, when leaving the place through one of its exits he finds that “[. . .] in the kerb, a woman humbly gives me a smile as she offers me, with the charm of contraband of the street; do you want a sticking plaster, sir?”\(^3\).

We can also establish that Lemebel’s characters in their doings shift the normative conceptions of identity, as is the case shown by the love story between the Loca del frente and the FPMR\(^4\) combatant, Carlos, in the novel Tengo miedo torero. Carlos falls in love with La Loca, and although he fails in overcoming his

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2. The narrative voice of Lemebel follows, in most cases, the grammatical norms, an I masculine, that, however, in many cases questions the gender norms through characterizations as gay (colisa, mariposón), in this way questioning his identity.
4. FPMR, (Frente Patriótico Manuel Rodriguez) organización armada opositora a la dictadura e integrada principalmente por jóvenes menores de 30 años y que actuó en el ámbito político chileno desde principios de la década de los 80 hasta mediados los 90.
own conceptions towards love, he recognizes that he has fallen in love with La Loca. If we accept that this relation between different texts by Lemebel conveys an idea of the author, it is possible to see Pedro Lemebel in the figure of La Loca. In many other textual spaces, in the chronicles as well as in the performances, there are passages where the narrative voice makes fun of his predilection for young men and for profound ideological convictions, as is the case with the main character of Tengo Miedo Torero. The thoughts of the La Loca character, his taste for music, his fetishes, are the same that appear in many of the chronicles, where they function to construct and depict this character of Lemebel.

Finally, the relation that is established between the existing referential spaces in the cases that have been mentioned, the performative act of Pedro Lemebel, in the proper performative act as well as in the reading and transmission of the chronicle, also generates a trace or textual feature, in the chronicles and in the novels, that are induced or directed by the figure of the author, it is to say the idea of the author previously transmitted, and that has an objective to establish its verisimilitude, legitimize its “defending” voice for the groups that it represents and in this way vindicate what these groups demand.

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*** (2012) Crónicas. [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pe5-Fn1Wgfs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pe5-Fn1Wgfs)


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Deixis in Musical Narrative: Musical Sense-making between Discrete Particulars and Synoptic Overview

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Abstract: The major aim of this contribution is to bring together the domains of deixis, narrative and semiotics as related to musical sense-making. Conceiving of music as discourse, it introduces the concept of narrative comprehension as a kind of mental journey through the music, stressing the dynamic-vectorial rather than the symbolic field of meaning. Starting from the conceptual framework of deixis, it elaborates on the concept of pointing as a heuristic guide for sense-making, stressing the role of focal attention as a means for singling out those elements that can be denoted as being meaningful. Three aspects should be considered here: the delimitation of the elements (which elements are selected?), the mutual relations of these elements (the structure of the music) and the mental operations of the listener (cognitive processing and narrative comprehension). To the extent that all these aspects can be organised in a kind of overall mental apprehension, it is possible to explore the possibilities of cognitive maps as organisational tools for musical sense-making, both as the result of sensory experience and cognitive processing by the listener.

Key words: deixis; musical narrative; discourse deixis; real-time narrative; route description; cognitive maps; cognitive structuring

1. Introduction

Music is a temporal and sounding art. It is characterised most typically by its sounding articulation over time and by consumption of time. Sounding music, therefore, implies a listener and listening calls forth sensation and perception. The actual sensation, however, is limited by perceptual constraints, which are related to the concepts of *psychical present* (psychische Präsenzzeit) (Stern, 1897) and *spacious present* (James, 1890), which can be defined as a “now” with a horizon of retention of what is just past and a protention of what is just coming.

The experience proper, for that reason, is time-bound; it exists of actual now-moments that are perceived for only a very short time and that constitute the
temporal windows through which listeners keep step with the unfolding over time.

These temporal windows can be very small or more encompassing, with a possible transition from “high-resolution” processing—in the range of about 10 milliseconds—to perceptual units—in the range of 2–3 seconds—and which allow event identification over time (Wittmann & Pöppel, 1999–2000; Wittmann, 1999). They can move along with the unfolding of the music and have a duration that is adjustable and dependent both upon the level of attention and cognitive organisation of the listener (Baddeley, 1986) and upon the characteristics of the musical material. As a rule, they are within the scope of a few seconds, and mostly do not surpass 5 seconds (Fraisse, 1978, 1982). It is possible, however, to extend the temporal window from 3 to 8 seconds. Listeners, then, are no longer relying on direct perception but on memory (Crowder, 1993). As such, they are able to go beyond the limits of focal attention and to deal with music both at the level of actual sounding and representation. The former are proceeding in real time and are actually sounding, the latter are processed partly outside-of-time at a mental level of virtual experience and need a conscious act of reconstruction in imagery.

Music, in fact, is not just a concatenation of now-moments. It has structure as well and calls forth mechanisms of sense-making that go beyond the mere perception of small temporal windows in order to grasp the overall impression of relational continuity. As such, there is a basic tension between the successivity of discrete particulars and the more global synoptic overview. Perception, then, has to be complemented with memory and anticipation to provide the transition from time-bound presentational immediacy—the perceived sounds—to the simultaneous apprehension in consciousness of the music as a global structure (Godøy, 1997, Reybrouck, 2004). It brings us to the conception of music as discourse, stressing the role of narrative comprehension as a kind of mental journey through the music, which can be conceived either as tapping the moment-to-moment history of the musical unfolding or as the simultaneous grasping of the whole network of relations in imagery. The former elucidates the linearity of unfolding, the latter the simultaneity of the synoptic overview.

2. Deixis and the Act of Pointing

Thinking of music as discourse entails a transition from a static conception of music as a structure to a more dynamic and processual approach. It calls forth a dynamical-vectorial approach to musical sense-making, allowing the listener to allocate points of focal attention in time and space and to describe the listening
experience in a real-time listening situation. As such, it is related to the concept of pointing and its theoretical elaboration in the field of deixis and deictic devices.

The act of pointing, first, is a primitive marking system for singling out the noteworthy. It can emancipate itself from an object-oriented movement (merely grasping) to an act of pointing as an internal reconstruction of an external operation (mentally pointing to things that are not physically present). Such an act of pointing mostly begins with the emergence of a kind of quality in combination with an insistent particularity, e.g. “this is important”, “that is difficult” (Whitehead, 1968). As such it presents a heuristic guide for sense-making which allows the listener to conceive of perceptual elements in terms of salience, value, valence and semantical weight, somewhat related to the mechanism of cue abstraction (Deliège, 2001) which focuses attention on salient elements that are prominent at the musical surface and summarise the sequences from which they arise. As such they provide key structures that play a foreground role in the musical work and help to grasp its design.

The deictic framework, second, has been introduced by Bühler (1934), who made a distinction between two different fields of meaning: the field of pointing and the symbolic field. In an attempt to draw an explicit analogy between gestural and linguistic means for showing direction or place, he presented as a main thesis that deictic expressions refer to a deictic field of language whose zero point (the Origo) is fixed by the person who is speaking, the place of utterance and the time of utterance. As such, a speaking situation can be systematised in terms of personal (I), spatial (here) and temporal (now) coordinates. Deictic terms, accordingly, are words that “pick out” or “point to” the participants in a speech situation. They locate individual elements in context, rather than simply tagging them and have their origin within the speaking situation with the meaning of the deictic expressions depending crucially on when, where and by they are used. As such, each speech situation is characterised by socio-spatio-temporal anchoring which provides a source of reference (Fillmore, 1982).

It is not difficult to apply the deictic framework to the realm of music (Reybrouck, 2009). One should merely conceive of music and listeners in terms of a referential exchange, with listeners experiencing the music as a sequence of sounds which are presented to the senses through a temporal window that constitutes the centre of a system of coordinates. Like speakers, they can use their current situation for anchoring referential acts in space and time and should be able to keep step with the temporal unfolding of the sounding music and to give an adequate identification of the place and time in its unfolding. As such, the deictic framework can provide
operational tools for sense-making in a real-time listening situation by singling out focal points of attention and by gathering the objects of attention to which the listener is mentally pointing. Two questions can be raised here; (i) how does a listener delimit these denotable things as signified? and (ii) what are the relations between these entities? There is, in fact, a distinction between a mere collection of selected elements and their putting together in a more encompassing structure. The act of pointing, therefore, should be conceived not only as a series of episodic acts of focal attention, but as a kind of continuous gesture that tracks the sonorous articulation over time. As such, musical sense-making is a combined approach of what Langacker has called *processual predications* and *episodic nominalisations*; processual predications follow the temporal evolution of a situation and involve a continuous series of states that represent different phases of the process as occupying a continuous series of points in conceived time; episodic nominalisations, on the contrary, refer to just a single instance of the process (Langacker, 1987, pp. 191 and 244). They call forth the concept of overall continuity, which, in turn, is related to the concept of narrative.

### 3. Music as a Deictic Space

The concept of mentally pointing to the music stresses the *dynamic-vectorial* and *directive* character of the field of pointing. It delimits the now-moments that are actually sounding. The musical structure, however, is not reducible to focal positions in a time series but entails the simultaneous apprehension of all of its elements—both sounding and not-sounding—and their relationships. The listener, therefore, has to combine the objects of perception with their mental images in memory and imagination in a kind of mental map, which brings us to the concept of *deictic space*.

Such a deictic space is set up mostly by summing up all possible “denotata” of local deictics or localities. It can be understood most easily by describing, e.g., the elements that one encounters by travelling the countryside (flowers, shrubs, trees, meadows, hills, ponds, creeks, and others) but the denotata need not be physical object or localities. They can be abstract places in a train of thought as well, allowing the concept of deictic space to be broadened in order to give it a more abstract definition. According to Klein; “a deictic space is nothing but a set of elements provided with some structure (an order or a topology); its subsets or some of them, are the possible denotata.” (1982, p. 163).

Music, as a deictic space, can be the locus for a mental journey with the listener
going from one place to another. This going “from here to there”, as it is commonly called, is known in more technical terms as route-description (Klein, 1982, see Reybrouck, 2010 for a musical analogy). Listening, accordingly, can be described in terms of route-descriptions of different kinds. They allow the listener to navigate mentally through the music, to retrace or infer a route, to estimate the distance between the start and end nodes of a route or of the segments that make up that route, and to estimate the direction between the start and end nodes of the route or between various locations along its length (Kitchin, 1997). In order to do so the listener should have access to a kind of cognitive representation of the area in question.

4. The Concept of Narrative

The ability to retrace route-descriptions of different kinds is related also to the concept of narrative or narratology (Herman, 2009a). It has a long history in classical structuralism with major exponents as Barthes, Genette, Greimas and Todorov. Since the heyday of the structuralist revolution, however, there have been further developments bearing on cognitive narratology (Hermann, 2003, 2009b, Duchan, Bruder & Hewitt, 1995), which can be defined as the study of mind-relevant aspects of story-telling practices, wherever and by whatever means those practices occur. This means a broadening of scope from a mere textual approach to other story-telling media, including all processes by means of which interpreters make sense of the narrative worlds evoked by narrative representations or artefacts, and the cognitive states and dispositions of characters in those narrative worlds (Hermann, 2009, p. 31). This definition goes beyond common definitions of narratology as a spoken or written amount of discourse—a sequence of connected events—a story—involving some kind of retelling, often in words, of something that happened. In stressing the “transmedial” aspect, cognitive narratology is no longer restricted to the spoken or written format of retelling, but embraces other modes of miming a story, such as the visual, tactile, enactive and other modalities.

There is no place to go in detail here. There are, however, some developments in the domain of discourse deixis (Levinson, 1983) and real-time narrative (Ryan, 1993), which relate the attended portion of the discourse to the speaker’s current location in the discourse. As such, they give full deictic value to the “present-tense narration” with the time of narration being identical with the time of occurring. Interesting examples of real time narrative have been provided by transcripts of live performances, such as sporting radio broadcasts, with three aspects being most important: the chronicle or the linear succession of the events (chronology), the
actual description that immerses the audience in the action (mimesis) and the organisation of the narration in a global design that makes the events intelligible (plot) (Ryan, 1993).

These developments are challenging also for the realm of music. They have operational power in providing the conceptual tools for the assessment of listening strategies of common listeners with as major questions; what do they hear and on what kind of narrative do they rely in order to grasp the overall structure of the music-as-heard? The rationale behind these questions is a “clinical approach” to music understanding with the aim to assess the actual process of sense-making in a real-time listening situation (Reybrouck, 2010). The means to do this can be multiple, but they should provide at least some lasting marks, in an attempt to externalise what listeners select as denotive objects of focal attention. These marks can be of different formats; discrete or continuous, formal or intuitive, global or differentiated, related to the music in a one-to-one-relationship or referring to the music in a rather loose relationship. But all of them can be helpful in an attempt to objectify the global design in a visual way, as suggested by recent developments in narrative maps—the practice of visualisation of the narrative experience—(Buckland, 2009) and visual narratology—the graphic description of narrative features and the verbal description of the visual dimensions of narrative—(Ryan, 2003b). There is, in fact, no compelling ground for limiting the theorisation of discourse to verbal narratives. Visual tools can do as well and especially the multiple relations between maps and narrative can be considered as a fruitful and interesting domain.

5. Cognitive Structuring. Route Description and Cognitive Maps

Narrative maps are spatial visualisations that map one’s comprehension of a narrative experience to visual representations. As such, they can provide a lasting trace of the structuring activity that organises sequences of events into patterns of a larger design. This structuring activity, further, can be related to the principle of cognitive structuring in general, as described already by Lewin (1952), who provided the example of wayfinding in a foreign city. When a person has to find his way from, e.g., the train station to his apartment, he is confronted at first with an unstructured space. As soon as he begins to find his way to the apartment, some cognitive structuring occurs; he learns to make a distinction between the starting place, the way to the work, some features of this way and finally his apartment. In doing so there is the construction of an itinerary that consists of paths and labels. The whole process is closely related to the concepts of route description and
cognitive map (Tolman, 1948; Ryan, 2003a) construction. The latter provides an overall mental image or representation of the space and layout of a setting. Such a map is tentative—it indicates possible routes and paths and environmental relationships—and can be constructed in two ways: a primary plan involves the localisation of a starting point and can be built in advance or step by step (advance or stepwise planning). It is a first condition for each successful route description. A secondary plan, on the contrary, has as organising principle the idea of an imaginary journey through the primary plan from starting point to destination with certain focal points of the primary plan being selected and marked. This series of fixed points, then, forms the skeleton of the final description (Klein, 1982).

Cognitive maps, further, are interpretative frameworks of the world. They exist in human minds and affect the way how knowledge is acquired and structured. They can be defined as the body of knowledge of a large-scale environment, which is constructed by integrating Observations gathered over time, in order to find routes and to determine the relative position of individual places (Downs & Stea, 1973).

It is not difficult to apply this to the realm of music (Reybrouck, 2010). Listeners, then, should be invited to construct cognitive maps in real-time listening situations. These cognitive maps for listening may be differently structured for different listeners, but even if they are Vague, incomplete, or even wrong in some respects, they may be very informative as to the way how individual listeners structure their own routes and how their attention may be focused on different objects. It allows a factual description of actual hearing strategies, but it provides operational tools for interfering in these strategies as well.

6. Hallmarks and Cues

Building up cognitive maps entails the extraction of hallmarks and putting them together in a coherent way. It is best illustrated through tasks that demonstrate the map in action, such as wayfinding in a complex environment. This can be a physical environment—with landscape landmarks and outdoor objects as typical examples—but the idea can be applied to every possible object of pointing and it can be applied also to the realm of music. Cognitive map construction, further, is related to the domain of data collection and analysis techniques, from the simple (e.g. a sketch map) to the complex (e.g. multidimensional scaling). Listeners, in this view, can be considered as navigators who try to find their way in a sounding environment. It has been shown, further, that fewer landmarks are selected by bad navigators and that their bad performance is attributed to their inability to acquire enough
information from the environment. Listening strategies, therefore, are related to
cognitive map acquisition and its application in the navigation process. In order to
make these claims operational, however, there is need of empirical research in
order to collect the cues listeners extract from the sounding and perceptual flux.
Much is to be expected here from the descriptive vocabulary of cognitive mapping
research in 3D virtual environments (Rameshsharma & Mowat 2001) and the
problem of wayfinding in large-scale virtual environments.

It is possible, further, not only to assess these cues but to interfere with the
extraction strategies as well, and the whole area of cognitive mapping is likely to be
suited for this task. We see as a challenging area for future research the elaboration
of a kind of musical cartography with two basic questions: which are the cues that
are represented (the elements) and what is their representational format (the
expression form)?

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Mental and Verbal Images as Resources for Musical Performance and Actoriality

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Abstract: Technical mastery is a priority for a musician. This is a customary value in the context of technical tradition in the Western academies. Obviously, instrumental mastery is not enough for musical interpretation. Given the human innate need of “telling things”, performance techniques are commonly acquired by oral tradition. Imagination and narration contribute thus, for linking isolated facts in perceived time and space, as well as for providing clues for memory. Congruently, visual and circumstantial memory and feelings contribute to understanding and connecting events that are useful for musical performance. Very often, musicians have a need to a verbal approach, in order to explain genre and style within a historical context, as it is believed that this helps to understand musical meaning.

The search for certain experiences surrounding musical creation—e.g. the composer’s environment during creative processes—provides either real or imaginary arguments as guidance for musical interpretation, pointing out specific character and discursive direction in performance. According to Nattiez’s tripartite model, musical meaning is given, firstly, by the composer, then by the player, and finally by the listener. Within this model, mental and verbal images presumably connect stages between the tripartite order: by construction and re-construction of images—many of which may work as analogies and metaphors—an explanation to the emotional content of a piece is intended. Hypothetically, performers use “by instinct” these devices as an empirical and practical resource for musical interpretation. However, many questions arise within this approach, e.g. are musicians aware of the images’ symbolic background as crucial component of the construction of arguments for their performances? How these arguments are “basic”, and how do they act, guiding the conceptual direction of a piece during performance?

Recent research confirms that most of musicians base their performances on different types of images without objectively knowing their semiotic function and psychological motivation. However, the current division of musical information into specific domains seems to exclude images as an important part of formal-musical knowledge. Moreover, this issue is often left to scientists and theorists, but not to musicians’ own research and capacity of theorizing. By contrast, this paper suggests that, based on the premise that one of the most frequently used symbolic processes in musical performance is image, it must be scrutinized the way an image affects the conceptual process
of a musical performance development. The proposed hypothesis claims that in Western tradition, most of academic, instrumental performers elaborate and retrieve mental and verbal images—according to J. Thomas Mitchel’s classification system. Musicians use images as means to invent, recreate, recall or visualize different situations, emotions or stories that can be used during a performance. Nevertheless, further research must be developed in order to understand the symbolic and cognitive implications of verbal and mental images used during musical performance.

**Key words:** images; musical conceptualization; performer; interpreter; musical performance; verbalize; imagination

Technical mastery of an instrument is a legacy from the old Western music academies. On one hand, this tradition lies on the concept of performer, and on the other, it obscures the concept of interpreter. In this context, it is hard to find systematic and objective grounds to teach in music schools, how to interpret rather than how to perform. Interpretation is practically learned through oral tradition thanks to the human inherent need of “telling things” in order to add a certain materialness that helps providing some meaning, and thus, to make easier the understanding and learning of certain events.

For those involved in musical interpretation, there is a need to be aware of certain contextual elements around the creation of the works we approach, as well as understanding its intent and character. In this way, we attempt to build an argument that works as a backbone of the interpretation. The research on how such argument is constructed would, presumably, contribute to the systematic grounds of the performer education.

The “emotional argument” is at least part—if not a critical component—of the interpreter’s behavior, which determines his or her musical results. And one of the essential relationships of this “argumentation” is made up by the construction or reconstruction of images, many of which act as analogies or metaphors. The latter is a practical and empirical resource used intuitively by interpreters; however, the background for the construction of an argument is hardly known or made consciously. In my case study, gathering some experience references from professional saxophone interpreters is enough to obtain evidence in this sense. Although this exploration—which I will address later on—has led to asking new questions, it also supports the idea that most musicians use different kinds of images without deeply knowing their function or cause. Of course, some exceptions appear in musicians who have notions about the function of image under cognitive science explanations.

Study of images is an issue frequently left to theoreticians and scientists, but not to music performers. Nonetheless, it is clear that image is one of the most recurrent
aid in musical interpretation. We should ask then, why is the use of image so common when constructing and interpretation? How does an image act on the conceptual construction made by the interpreter? Usually, we also ignore that images are essential to guide the direction of a musical performance, but how do images operate in this way? At first, an image could be used not only in an intuitive way, but also in a conscious way, resulting in the recognition of a tool that is effective for the musical interpretation’s conceptual construction and, consequently, as a series of methodological proposals.

In my hypothesis, I suggest that in Western musical tradition, most performers of academic instrumental music elaborate and re-elaborate images as a support to invent, recall or visualize situations, emotions or stories that are useful to interpret music. This is due to symbolic and cognitive reasons. Even as thumbnails or sketches, images contribute to a significant initial link between the written musical discourse and the interpreter acting. Then, through the musical work’s re-signification—consciously or unconsciously—the interpreter determines the direction the musical discourse must have.

Many scholars developed already the study of musical performance from different theoretical viewpoints. There are studies, such as those by Clarke and Gabrielsson (2010), whose object study is psychology and performance expression. A number of other studies have focused on correspondences between aspects of musical structure and expression and the cognitive bodily representations, like those made by Sloboda (2010) or Lidov (1999). And several more, such as Levitin (2008), Trias (2010), López Cano (2011) or Bartra (2006), investigate musical symbolism from anthropologic and neurological views. Paraphrasing neuromusicologist Eric F. Clarke, the role of cognitive representations of the body and the widespread use of metaphors of motion in music, are absolutely relevant within this context. However, many aspects of musical performance remain non-researched, and these few sources are not widely spread either they are discussed by musicians.

Obviously, the study of images comprehends an extremely vast horizon. For the sake of clarity in this study, I adopt William Mitchel’s classification stated in Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology (1986). He recognizes a great variety of concepts that can be held under the name of ‘image’, and notes that this fact does not necessarily mean that such concepts must have something in common. Nonetheless, he proposes that images exist as a symbolic family, “which has migrated in time and space and undergone profound mutations in the process”. Mitchel does not look for a universal definition of the term ‘image’, but for the
differences among its many possible functions. Conceptualization in musical performance is clearly associated to memory, and under this classification, memory belongs somehow to mental images. Whether visual and spatial images are ‘real’ to the mind, they can also be remembered when they are ‘reconstructed’ by imagination. In contrast, I decided to focus on mental and verbal images for this case; mental because they may include all the senses; and verbal because they also may “involve all the senses, or it may involve no sensory component at all, sometimes suggesting nothing more than a recurrent abstract idea like justice or grace or evil” (Mitchel, 1986). Within this framework, I believe that the way images affect the conceptual process of the development of music performance, must be scrutinized.

1. The Performer as Interpreter

It is clear that musical interpretation entails a set of technical skills and expressive means. However, in most western academic institutions, the interpretation process is usually reduced to technical and practical phases, leaving the intellectual approach to music in a second place. The importance of weaving technique and intellect lies in establishing the difference between “performance” and “interpretation”; understanding as well that “to interpret” cannot be simply a ‘well-informed performance’.

When talking about performance, I also intend the neuronal connections that make possible an accurate reproduction of a series of bodily movements learned through repetition. A musician can perform a musical work from the beginning to the end, without making mistakes, in the same way a gymnast can perform a routine without hesitations. However, because of the richness in bodily movement nuances and their symbolic subjectivity, musical expression cannot be learned or taught as a simple recipe. Interpretation arises—rather—through a certain amount of familiarization of the musical discourse and the creative re-signifying made by the interpreter, according to his/her own experiences.

The conceptualization main process happens before the performance, since it is too hard to reason concepts or analyze specific images while performing a piece of music. A useful analogy in this sense is that of the work made by an actor before appearing on stage; once he has understood and assimilated the character’s complexity, he builds an argument that adds meaning to said character. If the interpreter “owns” the character’s discourse, the on-stage appearance becomes realistic. Thanks to the evoking of images, emotional reactions are triggered both in
the actor and the audience due to the established empathy. Conceptualization of the argument to be interpreted facilitates—through images—the understanding of the discourse to be developed on stage. In music, ‘actoriality’ also exists: once performers appropriate a musical piece, they decide consciously and deliberately the expressiveness in their performances. In this manner, they achieve particular structural and stylistic results, in addition to the intention and direction that will characterize their very own version. As a consequence, music will reflect the performer’s personal conception of the discourse emanated from a musical work.

2. Narration to Understand and Signify

The construction of an argument by the interpreter comes from the natural human need of explaining, telling things as to understand them, relate events and their causes, at least hypothetically, or producing a “narrativization” of experiences as to provide a temporary continuity and memorizing them with no complications. This narrative is not explicitly included in a score’s musical discourse: it has been “researched”, imagined, completed, and assumed by the interpreter, based on the narrative which, in turn, the composer, aware or unaware, reflected on his/her creation. Here, it is worth recalling the tripartite semiological theory used by Molino and Nattiez: a) compositional creation, usually born from a series of facts, images or particular events; b) recreation of said facts, images or elements, but this time influenced and embedded by the interpreter’s view, and c) re-interpretation of the listener, who is not necessarily aware of all the facts, images or elements that gave life to the creation or the recreation, but who, happily, has the liberty to re-interpret after his/her own viewpoint. Quoting Nattiez (1990; 246):

The freedom of interpretation remains significant, for here the narrative exists on a potential level, as a reconstruction by the person to whom the story is told or a projection by him who relates it. (…) Exactly as with the constituent parts of a musical work, the initials scratched on a wall do not in themselves constitute a narrative; they are the result of a narrative ‘thread’ and they trigger off an infinite number more in those who read them.

3. The Image: a Resource in Musical Conceptualization

Garfinkel (2006) states that “the human being’s actions are in the forefront, leaving regulations, laws and others to a second front, which causes the human
actions to be in charge of transforming laws according to the context in which they live”. After this ethno-methodological statement, we can claim that in musical tradition, primary actions that conform an interpreter’s work are: technical mastery of his/her instrument and the use of any resource that triggers his/her creativity and expression. Usually, the importance of technical mastery of an instrument is strongly encouraged, but the instruction to achieve expressiveness is reduced to a series of verbalized suggestions, most of the time intuitive ones, and thus leaving it to a second place, one that is interim, circumstantial, even accessory. Therefore, the gathering of experience references mentioned above shows that:

- Image is indeed used by academic music professional interpreters.
- In most cases, it is used intuitively.
- For all interviewed subjects, image is an essential resource to add sense to the musical work, and decide the intention and/or character of it.
- Image is used in different moments; before the performance, when constructing the argument that will support the interpretation, or in rehearsals; in other instances (the least and only partially), it is even used when playing on stage.
- Most recurring images are mental and verbal, although some indicated to “recall” specific visual images.
- Image as a resource in interpretation varies among interpreters from different generations; while people over 45 years old use specific images such as scenes or past situations, landscapes or pictorial works, younger people (most commonly under 40) use more abstract images such as colors and vague shapes.

These results raise new questions:

- Which factors have an influence over the difference in conception and use of images in musical interpretation among different generations?
- What are the most recurring images?
- Is there a conscious intent in the interpreter to “translate” images into music?
- How does the image have an influence on the score and the score on the “musical image”?
- What are the differences between “real” and “fictitious” or “invented” images? and how do they specifically work on the musical interpretation?

Thanks to the progresses achieved through research so far, we can see that the most used images are those that evoke states of mind or concrete emotional reactions; and that more than “translating” them into music, the scope of their use is to find a significance to the subjectivity of the musical discourse, so as to form a
bond between interpreter and work, that is, as Stanislavsky (1953; 150) states, “[to] get in the character’s place, and act as they would”. It is irrelevant whether the images are real or fictitious, since both work in the same way at the brain’s level. What is really relevant is the level of empathy accomplished by the interpreter, thanks to images, drawn from the work itself. Similarly, this is also how empathy is accomplished between interpreter and listener.

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Ringing Stone: Concerning the Problem of Archaeological Musical Heritage Research

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Abstract: Lithophones are potentially durable musical instruments, which consist of single (or a set of) raw stones/slabs which resonate when struck. Information about their physical and musical qualities and about the role they played in extinct societies is limited. Some archeological musical stones still in use can provide us with valuable information about the methods and places chosen for sound production as well as about the acoustic aspects of the life of past worlds.

Key words: semiotics of the stone; lithophones; Russian Karelia; ringing stone; sound production; soundscape; reconstruction of musical text; birdsong; prehistoric music; anthropology of music.

1. Introduction

Lithophones are potentially durable musical instruments which consist of a single or set of raw stones/slabs with different signs of having been struck. These instruments can provide us with valuable information about past sound worlds. Such archaeological objects are neither marked on an archaeological map nor described as thoroughly as others. Consequently the information about their physical and musical peculiarities as well as about the role they played in ancient societies is limited. In this report methodology is presented of the information which can be derived through examining the lithophone Ringing stone discovered in 1966 in Russian Karelia (Ablowa 2003). When struck it produces clear melodic sounds of different pitch resembling the sounds of a small metal bell. Prevalent terminology used to describe and study similar musical instruments does not exist. Musical stones are referred to as “lithophones”, “stone idiophones”, “percussive idiophones”, “stone instruments”, “ringing stones”, “musical stones”, “singing stones”, “bell stones”, “resonant stones”, “stone bells”, “struck boulders”, “stone drums”, “stone gongs” etc. The term “sounding stones” seems the most appropriate and will consequently
be generally used.

Little can be added to the definition of musical stones given by the French researcher Catherine Fagg. According to Fagg (1997) lithophones are “[…] naturally situated and naturally tuned rocks, boulders, exfoliations, stalactites and stalagmites which resonate when struck and show evidence of human use as idiophones […]. They seem to be of any shape or size; some may have been repositioned slightly and very occasionally stone wedges have been added. Several different notes can usually be obtained from a single boulder […] and resulting from percussion an abraded area may show on the edge of a rock; alternatively hollows or “cupmarks” are formed” (p. 2).

Singing stones are often spatially closely connected with petroglyphs, which proves that ancient stone art included both visual and non-visual components. Studying similar stones situated in the open landscape has recently attracted increasingly more attention. Major systematic research concerning these stones is, however, scarce. This is even more deplorable because sounding stones are still located in the places of their initial use and for this very reason present invaluable information about the ancient methods and places of sound production.

### 2. Ringing Stone

For many years I have been studying a lithophone situated on a small island in Russian Karelia. It is called Zvonkoy kamen or Ringing stone, a name which it got from a high cliff called Zvonkaya shchelga (the Ringing ridge in Karelian). This cliff is situated on an island called Kolostrov which is also symbolic (translated from Karelian as the Bell Island). Inside the stone there is a big resounding cavity of 50–60 cm² formed as a result of a previous earthquake (or the movement of the glacier). Some scientists assume that once this region of Karelia featured considerable seismic activity. According to the Hornbostel-Sachs classification, the Ringing stone is an Unmittelbar geschlagene Idiophone (111). It was mentioned in the Arheologicheskie otkrytija 1972 goda (Zhuravlyov, Mironov & Glagolev 1973). The sounding stone phenomenon possesses stable physical and acoustic characteristics. These are determined by its size, rock type, landscape location, accessibility, boulder visualization and, taking these peculiarities into consideration, signs of visible deterioration. The stone in question is a fine-grained diabase, which is considered to be one of the most solid on Earth. The percussion zones (there are two of them on the boulder) differ in their type and size, as well as in the sounds they produce and extent of patination. It is difficult to say how many people played
the stone drum together or how many listeners they attracted. However, all this indicates communal activity.

In the course of studying the *Ringing stone* a number of questions arose calling for an immediate answer. How was this stone instrument used? What sounds did it produce? Did the preference for specific sounds or sound combinations alter (in the case of several performers playing together) in the course of time? In which period and for how long had this percussion idiophone been used? In what context was it performed on? How did performing on the sounding stone correlate with the creation and usage of petroglyphs? What other activities took place in this region? In order to at least answer some of these questions I have, during the course of this research, formulated a methodology which enabled the creation of a detailed documentation of the stone instrument.

### 3. Methodology

The sound recording strategy took into account the physical aspects of the *Ringing stone*, its location as well as examples of sounds it produced. The sound recording process began with the descriptive and photographic documentation. In the following section I will successively set out all its stages.

1. The instrument involved in the study is to be found and defined. With a view to ensuring its most detailed description the number of stones involved in the research is determined. Those in question can be distinguished as a “sounding stone” consisting of a single boulder or a “sounding stone complex” including two (or more) boulders.

2. The sounding stone is described according to the number of clearly discernible percussion zones, e.g. “a sounding stone with one percussion zone” or “a sounding stone complex consisting of two boulders and possessing two percussion zones” etc.

3. The lithophone is sketched in accordance with its location and shape.

4. The singing stone’s length, width and height above ground level is measured.

5. The type, number, size, and location of the traces of wear (e.g. small hollows, big free percussion zones, cup-shaped marks etc.) are recorded.

6. The extent of the wear of the percussion zone, which contains important information about the frequency and intensity of the lithophone usage, is described. The location and number of percussion zones enable us to draw conclusions concerning the manner in which the musical stone was used. In each group of percussion zones there are, as a rule, some where the traces of wear are more
extensive than others, which indicates preferences towards certain sounds or sound combinations. Percussion zones on the surface of the resonant stone differ according to the extent of patination, indicating either cessation of or continuation of its use.

7. Taking the spatial location of the stone and the position of the percussion zone into consideration a determination is made of how the sounds were extracted; from one playing position or several (different). A new percussion centre appears every time the performer shifts his position in order to reach a new percussion zone. Moreover, percussion zones tell us about the preferable body position and the direction of the performer’s movements during the performance, as well as about a minimum/maximum number of people involved in the playing session. The body positions of the performer during sound production can vary depending on the physical characteristics of the stone gong. This tool presumes a more or less comfortable vertical position of the player in front of the vertical or sloping surface of a huge stone or a squatting position of the player in front of a smaller stone idiophone. Traces of wear visible on the stone surface provide evidence that one or both hands of the performer were used when striking. It is difficult to say precisely whether a huge stone instrument was used by a large group of people who had chosen particular percussion zones for their playing session and were moving around from one of them to another; in other words, whether the struck boulder was used as a group instrument with several performers playing it at the same time. Ethnographic information from other continents (e.g. Africa) reports the existence of both solo and group performances.

8. Having described the physical peculiarities, the absence/presence of petroglyphs on the sounding stone itself or in its immediate proximity is noted and the spatial relation between them determined. The Ringing stone from Karelia is spatially connected by two types of petroglyph motifs: ① the image of a circle and ② the image of a cross, both representing common components of an artistic petroglyphic drawing of the Christian period. The additional correlation of certain types of petroglyphs and percussion zones allow us to make a deduction about the conceptual world in which the sound was produced. Percussion zones, petroglyphs and extent of patination enable the determination of the relative time context of the sound production traces (signs) and provide important evidence for dating the lithophone.

9. All the diagnostic panels chosen for testing are then transferred to the transparencies.

10. An attempt is made to find the percussion tools with which the blows were struck. As a rule, they represent small quartz pebbly stones with traces of water
treatment. The signs of wear indicate the duration of playing and the manner in which these percussion tools were used. If such percussion stones were not found in the immediate proximity of the lithophone they must have been brought from some other places in order to be used, which indicates a purposeful action plan connected with sound production in the past.

11. All the reference data about percussion tools are collected and used in a research experiment which consists of the following: over the different time periods necessary to obtain visible wear traces the unmarked surfaces of the resonant stone are struck with pebble tools. The wear traces obtained both on the percussion tools and on the surface of the singing stone are photographically recorded and some of the tools are kept for further use. Experimental playing shows that the percussion tools alter their shape and size and are worn away much faster than the surface of the stone gong. According to the limited wear of certain percussion tools it becomes clear that they were used for sound production during the first minutes and were then thrown aside. Only a few fist-size pebbles can have extensive defects caused by prolonged hitting which testify to the tool’s repeated usage. Moreover, the experiment carried out indicates the ability of quartz pebbles to produce sounds of a better quality when struck than other kinds of rock.

12. The last step of the sound recording procedure deals with the landscape conditions. Landscape peculiarities include the following: topographic location of the stone bell, its accessibility, visibility and clear visibility from a distance. As a rule, lithophones are located in remarkable eye-catching places presuming a general view of the landscape. This is especially true of badly worn instruments and/or those strongly blackened by patination, i.e. the sounding stones located in higher landscape vicinities. The stone idiophone location in and around an ancient human site gives information about possible activities connected with its use, the immediate participants of events, and the breadth and singularity of such activities. Certain singing stones with badly worn percussion zones are located in places which presume a huge gathering of people. Quite often the struck stones are also found in inaccessible places. Attempts to estimate the distance from which a performance on the stone can be heard are sometimes interrupted due to the subjectivity of such work and its dependence on the weather (wind, rain, rustle of leaves etc.).

13. The sound record of rhythm patterns is central to the musicological part of the procedure. This aspect has two aims: to ensure the rational recording for each percussion zone and to create sound patterns. Hitting the resonant stone during the recording process can leave new traces on the surface of the rock and, at the same time, destroying the old patina. For this reason before obtaining new sound patterns...
additional efforts must be made to complete the process of the registration of the lithophone physical properties including additional photography, sketching and/or tracings.

14. Particular attention must be paid to the colour of the percussion zones compared to the unmarked surface of the rock. Digital photographs and video recordings register the state of the percussion zones before and after taking sound samples.

15. The sound recording process includes striking blows with small pebble tools in each percussion zone or in the directly marked “cup”.

16. The sound recording process also includes creating sound patterns for “free performance” in the area of the percussion centre.

17. All volunteers including the locals are allowed to play the sounding stone. Their performance must be video recorded whenever they volunteer to participate. The aim of this is to determine whether there has ever existed a significant interpretable local performing tradition. However, a modern sound recording can only partly approximate the sounds produced in the past because they depended on a range of factors including the type and size of percussion tools, the technique and force of blows etc. The sounds produced can vary subject to the surrounding temperature, humidity and, among other factors, subject to the progressive erosion of the stone surface. Despite numerous restrictions and drawbacks this method of the sounding stone documentation provides important visual and acoustic data indispensable for the research.

4. Conclusion 1

The wide spectrum of sounds which were produced while playing the stone idiophone presumes the fact that the quality of sound is not in all cases significant. Sometimes the place itself or a precise stone has a particular significance. This is proved by the fact that sometimes people use musical stones with limited sound resources while well resonant phenomena are found in the immediate proximity.

The existence of frequently used percussion zones on non-resonant stones raises the problem of defining a stone sounding case as a phenomenon which presumes the compulsory involvement of resonant rock. These together with the fine-grained diabase mentioned in the description of the Ringing stone from Karelia include gabbro, granite, basalt, rhyolite, porphyrite, rhyodazite, dolerite, jade, jadeite, jasper, slate, limestone, alabaster etc.

The general impression is that there no longer exists a precise living local
tradition of performing on the *Ringing stone*. In fact, new traces of blows appear on it as a result of children playing or accidental visits by adults. However, in spite of the absence of the local playing tradition the experimental study of the lithophone led to the use of video recordings of the locals playing. Its analysis is of significant interest as it has fixed the percussion tools chosen by people, their usage and the remaining traces of sound production. Only one native of Karelia was ready to perform on the *Ringing stone* at any time day and night. Only once a group of children used simultaneously two percussion zones on the *Ringing stone*. What was of particular interest was the movements which accompanied the performance on the *Ringing stone* and included rhythmic hand-clapping, which indicates that the actual performance of the stone drum was probably only one element of a wider range of rite components. As the *Ringing stone* lithophone is still located in its initial spot (*in situ*), the quality of its sound does not seem to deteriorate owing to any physical changes.

## 5. The Problem of Reconstruction of the Musical Text

The second part of my report is devoted to the problem of the reconstruction of the musical text. Here an attempt is made to reconstitute musical structures which could have once been performed on the *Ringing stone*. This kind of work is difficult as it concerns material which has never been recorded. As Curt Sachs (1938) rightly observed “as to prehistoric music (spacing is mine—A. A.), we cannot hope to find anything by excavation, except for some musical instruments, and even for instruments only to the extent to which they are made from an imperishable material, such as bone, stone, or metal. On the other hand, we possess living remnants...” (p. 148).

Sachs’ remark that it is impossible to find prehistoric music may seem too pessimistic. However, the results of his scientific work demonstrate the opposite. He is one of those who has been tirelessly searching for ‘lost’ musical sounds all his creative life. Curt Sachs’ pessimism is connected rather with the lack of written sources than with the absence of prehistoric sounds. After all, the first example of music notation deciphered by Hans Hickmann (1961) dates from the period of the Middle (2160–1580 BC.) and New (1580–1090 BC) Kingdoms of Ancient Egypt (p. 12). The long period of time in the history of music which preceded it (as well as the one following it) remained without written language, and thus, inaccessible for study.

According to one version (Lévy-Bruhl 1930), music structures of prehistoric
time copied the sound environment of primitive man, i.e., nature, animals and birds. In my experiment I chose birdsong as one of a series of possible music patterns because its role in the spiritual life of the northern Finno-Ugric people (including the Karelians) is substantial. The cult of the water bird, for example, is well-known among the peoples of the Urals. Archaeological artifacts found in the Northern Trans-Ural territory feature a large number of bird-shaped pendants. Among the Komi people, before the adoption of Christianity, personal names derived from zooynyms prevailed. Such zooynyms, which were tribal symbols, are found at the stem of Udmurt names. The role of a bird in the spiritual life of Karelia, where the Ringers stone is located, is also important. Ornithomorphic images are a favourite pattern of modern Karelian embroidery. An important part of Karelian petroglyphs’ subjects is connected with birds and bird motifs run all through Kalevala.

But perhaps the most solid argument which convinces us of the genuine interest of the ancient Finno-Ugric people in birds is their appellation of certain extraterrestrial objects. Thus, for example, the Finns and Karelians from the earliest times called the Milky Way the Bird Track, the Komi called it the Track of the Flying Bird or the Goose Track, the Mari it was the Way of the Wild Goose or the Sky Way, for the Udmurt it was the Goose-Star or the Wild Goose Track, the Mansi knew it as the Game Bird Way, the Khanty—the Goose Way etc. (Rut 1990, 44). The North-South arrangement of this cluster of stars was associated in the minds of Finno-Ugric peoples with the annual spring return of the birds. Their appearance from the South was interpreted as a peculiar symbol of regeneration and a revival of life.

The reconstruction of music structures which could presumably be performed on the Ringers stone in the past has been made on the basis of birds signals copied from the Lintukuvasto sound album (Laulava lintukuvasto, 1991). The analysis of the recorded voices suggested that more rhythmically complicated signals belong mostly to continental birds—from the Forest and Grassland. On the contrary, clear and rhythmically distinct singing distinguishes Littoral, Insular and Lapland birds. This can probably arise from the fact that the propagation of sound in this region is

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1 The Lintukuvasto album comprises three cassettes which include the recording of 100 birds voices (two hours of recording in total) and a book containing a detailed commentary and colourful illustrations. The birds’ singing is systematized according to the generally accepted ornithological tradition. Bird species are organized according to the peculiarities and nature of the surrounding landscape (e.g., Grassland birds, Mixed Forest birds, etc.) with the exception made for the last section defined according to its geographic feature (Lapland birds). Together with common ones the atlas provides recordings of some non-vocal birds’ signals (the sound of a large flock flying up or wing clapping) as well as singing of rarely heard birds (e.g., a swan).
influenced by the local landscape. The signal of an insular bird must be heard at a
great distance. This results in its loud and distinct pronunciation, simple rhythm and
moderate pace. The mirror-like water surface surrounding the islands is also a good
sound conductor. This can be attributed to the singing of Lapland birds as well. The
landscape of this northern territory represents the tundra with low rocky knolls
scattered amongst thousands of large and small lakes. As a result of natural selection
birds live there that can produce loud, short and vivid signals.

Among the most suitable for reproduction on the Ringing stone lithophone I
have chosen the voices of four of them: ① a wood grouse (Tetrao urogallus), ② a
bunting (Emberiza), ③ a red sandpiper (Numenius) and ④ a herring gull (Larus
argentatus). Fragments of these birds’ song were played on the Ringing stone
lithophone. The timbre of the sound resembled the birds’, but at the same time
possessed its own peculiar features as the sound attack of a bird and of a stone tool
are different. The sound pitch characteristics were also slightly different. The
duration of signals sound did not coincide. The birds’ signals were longer and faded
away more slowly. On the Ringing stone lithophone the echo ceased much faster
despite its unique acoustic performance capabilities (as the duration of the singing
stone signal lasts only 25 - 40 msec). Nevertheless, it seems that similar sound
structures together with others could be a subject for imitation and have been
performed on the Ringing stone in the past.

In support I would like to refer to Alan Merriam, the author of the well-known
book The Anthropology of music, where he speaks about the origin of percussion
instruments, a xylophone and a drum in particular. Alluding to ethnographic
material Merriam (1964) says that the origin of the playing and music for these
percussion instruments arises from birdsong (p.74).

6. Conclusion 2

The experiment that has been carried out can be compared to the work of
linguists who reveal the phonological foundations of a language and reconstruct lost
language structures. After all, a man records the diversity of surrounding sounds not
only in music. Language is also a sphere where the signals of animated and
inanimate nature (including birds) are reflected. Certainly, the spectrum of sounds
surrounding a man is wide and various with the share of birds’ voices in the linguistic
image of the world being tiny, but even this small share presents undoubted interest.
The question is what particular sounds and according to what principles are the
specific notation in language derived. Studying this seemingly limited aspect enables
one to reveal a range of important patterns connected with the issues of cognitive anthropology. According to an apt remark of the Russian scientist Ilya Rusin (1993) “in earlier periods of existence of a language the share ... of natural sounds of animated and inanimate nature (... birds) was far more important that nowadays” (p.27). However, even today there exist languages where onomatopoeic characteristics are fundamental. These include the descriptive languages of the Finno-Ugric group. Their study will broaden our idea of the general rules of interrelations between the language, the thinking and reality. And music, of course.

References


Bridging Civilisations: The Application of Systemic-Functional Semiotics in the Comparison of Drawings from China and Europe

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Abstract: This paper discusses the application of systemic-functional semiotics in the analysis of visual materials, and, specifically, presents an original systemic-functional model that is intended to facilitate both the analysis and synthesis of drawings in a cross-cultural context. The model is explained as developing from Michael O’Toole’s systemic-functional semiotic model for painting (O’TOOLE, 2011) itself an adaptation of Michael Halliday’s systemic-functional semiotic model for language (HALLIDAY, 1973, HALLIDAY, 1978, HALLIDAY, 1985) The article is illustrated with examples of work from China, Europe, and the author’s drawing practice.

Key words: systemic-functional; semiotics; drawing; Luo Changpei; Halliday

1. Introduction

In his article Pushing Out the Boundaries: Designing a Systemic-Functional Model for Non-European Visual Arts, Michael O’Toole (O’Toole 2005) demonstrates how systemic-functional semiotics can reveal how ideological values are embodied within the conventions of drawing by analysing a scroll painting of 1689 by Chinese artist Gong Xian.

This paper takes O’Toole’s premise as its starting point: that systemic-functional semiotics can reveal a variety of ideological positions through analysis of visual work produced in a variety of cultural contexts. Specifically, the paper compares the representation of both landscape and figure within European and Chinese art.

O’Toole’s systemic-functional model, elaborated in his 2011 The Language of Displayed Art, is an adaptation of the English socio-linguist Michael Halliday’s
(1973; 1978; 1985) model for language which is adumbrated below in terms suitable for a discussion of drawing as a code of visual communication.

Before visual comparisons are made, a brief explanation of their theoretical basis is offered.

## 2. The Social Semiotics of Drawing

From a materialist point of view, drawings are produced through the selection and combination of particular surfaces, drawing tools, and the marks resulting from their interaction. But semiotically speaking both artists and viewers of drawings take up positions, adopt attitudes, points of view which are influenced by their positions within their sets of social relations. Such an ideological positioning involves a definite way of using signs, and a structured sensibility (an aesthetic) both grounded in a particular system of social relations. How the artist selects and combines the compositional elements of the drawing, and how the viewer relates to that drawing are both functions of the social contexts in which the work is (re)produced.

But to simply say that drawings reflect social structure, (or in the case of the Western tradition of life drawing, the social relations between artist, model and viewer) is too passive; drawing not only expresses the social context but is also part of a more complex dialectic in which drawings actively symbolise the social system, thus producing as well as being produced by it.

Variation in ways of drawing is the symbolic expression of variation in social relationships. Drawing systems are produced within society, and help to produce social form in their turn. This dialectical relationship is what Michael Halliday (1978; 183) discusses in the phrase social semiotic. Halliday developed his theory during a long career which began with the study of Chinese language structures. He studied in China in the 1950s under Luo Changpei at Beijing, and Wang Li at Lingnan, before returning to England to take a doctorate in Chinese linguistics at Cambridge University. Such cross-cultural studies of languages provided him with insights into the variety of languages. Here, we adapt Halliday’s insight to another code of communication common to all cultures, that of drawing.

## 3. Varieties of Drawing

Of the two kinds of variation in language identified by Halliday (et al. 1964), dialect expresses the diversity of social structure, and register expresses the diversity of social process. Whilst the meaning of dialect may be commonly understood,
register may require further discussion. It refers to the fact that language usage varies according to the situation in which it is used.

In terms of drawing, register would refer to the variation in selecting and combining visual elements according to the purpose for which the drawing was produced.

From this social semiotic perspective, any social context may be understood as a temporary construct, mapped in terms of three variables which Halliday (1978:33) calls Field, Tenor, and Mode.

Field of social process—what is going on at the time of production of the drawing.

Tenor of social relationships—the type of drawing we produce varies according to the level of formality, of technicality, of need for clarity of communication, etc. It is the role relationships—the drawer, the subject matter, the viewer and their interrelationships—that affect the variations.

Mode of symbolic interaction—in the sense that how we draw, and with which particular medium, varies with our attitude; from the clinically objective through the poetically gestural to an absent-minded doodling.

4. The Functions and Systems of Drawing

Any code of communication (language, dress, drawing . . .) has three main functions: to represent some aspect of our experiences of the world; to both express our attitude, mood regarding our experience, and to position the receiver in terms of mood and attitude towards that which is being represented; and thirdly to structure these two into a coherent, perceptible form. These functions may be termed the representational, the interpersonal, and the compositional.

The parameters of social context, field, tenor, and mode are systematically related to the functions of the semiotic model. In fact, those meanings that constitute our understanding of any particular social situation are made visible through the selection and combination of elements within the semiotic model.

Such a model which theorises how the functions of drawing operate within a social context relates specific choices to specific social contexts. We are thus able to imbue the relationship between code and social structure with dialectic resonances.

The chart shown here, Figure 2, is an attempt to map these functional relationships for the whole domain of drawing, and is an adaptation of O’Toole’s (2011) format for analysing paintings. It should be noted that each term within each

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box of the model—for example, Theme in the first box—represents the whole range of available selections embraced by the term itself: every theme available to the artist (or indeed for the viewer’s interpretation.) Each range of available choices implied by all those terms is what Halliday meant by System: a Hallidayan system represents a range of available choices. Hence the term Systemic-Functional semiotics!

**Table 1  The Parameters of Social Context**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter of social context</th>
<th>Function of drawing through which a social situation is realised</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Field (what is happening)</td>
<td>Representational function</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenor (who is taking part)</td>
<td>Interpersonal function</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode (what part the semiotic code plays)</td>
<td>Compositional function</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2  The Functions and Systems of Drawing**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Engagement</th>
<th>REPRESENTATIONAL (what is depicted)</th>
<th>INTERPERSONAL (how the viewer is positioned in terms of mood and attitude)</th>
<th>COMPOSITIONAL (how is it depicted)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Work as Displayed</strong></td>
<td>Theme</td>
<td>Attitude, modality</td>
<td>Overall format and size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Narrative</td>
<td>Rhythm/focal points</td>
<td>Gestalt relations; horizontals,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Genre</td>
<td>Intimate/monumental</td>
<td>verticals, diagonals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Representational/abstract</td>
<td>Public/private</td>
<td>Frame/Mount/Light</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interplay of episodes/ passages</td>
<td>Dynamic/static</td>
<td>Range of colour/B &amp; W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Episodes of the Work</strong></td>
<td>Actions, events central to</td>
<td>Orientation of viewer</td>
<td>Systems of geometry;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>narrative supporting narrative</td>
<td>Perspective/                                                           perspective, orthographic,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>non perspective</td>
<td>axonometric, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Gaze/eyework</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Modality; happy/gloomy, calm/excited etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Combinations of marks (sub-assemblies)</strong></td>
<td>Direction</td>
<td>Distance</td>
<td>Relative positions of marks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transparency/opacity</td>
<td>Force</td>
<td>Relative sizes of marks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Atmosphere</td>
<td>Heavy/lightweight</td>
<td>Division of picture-plane;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Time of day</td>
<td>Flatness/illusions of depth</td>
<td>ratios, angles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Surfaces/edges</td>
<td></td>
<td>Overlap of shapes/tones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individual Marks</strong></td>
<td>Effects of light on surfaces and</td>
<td>Hard/soft stylisation</td>
<td>Position within picture plane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>media (air, water) in the</td>
<td>Matt/gloss</td>
<td>Texture of surface</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>environment</td>
<td>Wet/dry</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Indices of maker’s movements</td>
<td>Size relative to picture-plane</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Each System in the systemic functional semiotic chart represents specific choices made by the artist, who makes compositional selections that serve to position the viewer, who is then free to make decisions about their stance/attitude towards whatever is represented in the work. A Postmodern understanding positions meanings generated as socially and culturally dependent. Social semiotic analysis is intrinsically suitable for generating multiple interpretations and may be applied across a multiplicity of viewing experiences. The analysis of works demonstrated in this paper will necessarily reflect understandings related to twenty-first century Western European perspectives.

5. The Systemic-Functional Model in Action 1: Landscape

As O’Toole (2005:96) observes:

Particular systems may dominate in the realisation of each of the functions in any one visual culture, and each system may be realized in particular culturally characteristic forms and patterns... 

These choices of representation are rarely arbitrary decisions on the part of the artist, but can represent and realise—make visible—the different ideologies to which the artists are affiliated.

For example, a comparative analysis of Claude Lorrain’s Landscape with Country Dance (Figure 1) with its near-contemporary, Kuncan’s (pronounced Kun-

![Image](image.jpg)

Figure 1 Claude Lorrain 1640–41, Landscape with Country Dance. British Museum.
Landscape after Night Rain Shower, (Figure 2) can demonstrate how certain of these Systems reveal ideological differences between the two, and how other Systems operate in very similar ways to position the viewer in terms of their mood and attitude towards the subject-matter depicted.

A widely-held understanding of the differences between Chinese and European conventions for the depiction of three-dimensional space upon a two-dimensional surface is based on the systems of projective geometry favoured by each culture. For some time it has been understood that the cultural belief systems prevalent in Renaissance Italy gave rise to the development of Artificial Perspective, which places the viewer at the apex of the Euclidean cone of vision, as in the Lorrain drawing. For a similar length of time it has been understood in the West that such an egocentric ideology has not prevailed in Chinese visual culture, hence the more prevalent use of non-perspectival projective geometries such as Vertical Oblique projection (Dubery and Willats 1983) in the Kuncan drawing. It is also worth noting here that within the Interpersonal Function the “landscape” format of Lorrain’s drawing is conducive to a reading of space as a wide vista, whereas Kuncan’s choice of “portrait” format is conducive to a reading of space as vertically structured. However, the wide range of geometric projections is but one System for positioning the viewer spatially—part of the function labelled the Interpersonal in Figure 2; other Systems at work on the viewer may be discerned in both Western and Chinese image-making, such as Focus, Gaze and Modality all at work in the three Functions simultaneously.
Differences between the artists’ cultural values fully emerge when the following aspects of the interpersonal function are considered: orientation and focus of the viewer, the direction of the gaze and paths of eye movement, and the representation of distance through illusions of depth.

Lorrain grounds the viewer directly in front of the centre of the represented landscape and slightly elevated, as though positioned on a slight slope facing the scenery. The landscape is revealed as a stage set, trees and foliage to the sides and details in the foreground serve to frame the central narrative, the dancers themselves. These compositional choices allow the viewer to connect with the scene, we are invited to join the festive activities. The viewer’s gaze is gradually drawn from this prime central focus, into a circular clockwise eyepath from the cows in the foreground through the dancing figures, up the tree into the bright tonal block of the sky and drawn along the horizon line, taking in the picturesque idyll, down the facing trees and onto the goats, unattended and falling off the cliff. The narrative of the story reveals itself as the viewer’s gaze is directed through the picture, and the landscape, characteristically for its cultural genre, recedes into the background.

Kuncan positions the viewer at some point in space, not grounded as in the Lorrain drawing, but gazing over an inaccessible and misty depth of landscape in which the point of focus varies as the eyework of the viewer roams from the bold diagonals of the rocky outcrop at lower right towards the high tonal contrast of the foliage in the centrally positioned foreground tree. The diagonal of the tree branches leads the eye to the finely detailed crane, the simply-constructed hut and, eventually, a human figure, lower left, hardly differentiated from his surroundings and who faces out of the pictorial plane. The line of the hut’s roof draws the viewer’s eye back into the landscape and the delicate upward sweep of the brushstrokes, suggesting undulating bamboo, lead us to the bridge affording access to the series of rather more sophisticated buildings that climb the gradient of the landscape, centre right. The continued upward sweep of these buildings form a curve across the picture connecting to the facing cliffs, upper left, upon which sits the highest, isolated building facing directly into the calligraphy which completes the composition. In Kuncan’s work the potential narrative play between the crane, the seated figure and the buildings is made incidental to the expanse and grandeur of the landscape within which they exist. His compositional choices serve to distance the viewer from the scene; we are awed by the mystery and monumentality of this landscape and we are reminded of our infinitesimally tiny significance in the presence of such soaring surroundings.

Having identified such diametrically-opposed cultural beliefs regarding the
relationship between mankind and landscape expressed through the Systems at work in the Interpersonal function, let us see what our systemic-functional model can reveal about the two cultures by addressing the Representational Function. There are discernible similarities within these two drawings; at the level of engagement The Work as Displayed, both images figuratively represent rural landscapes. But despite their initial similarities, a further consideration of the works in relation to their representational function reveals clues to their different cultural influences and references, as we shall see; The Episodes of both drawings suggest a rural idyll, figures and buildings are harmoniously incorporated into the landscapes, and at the Combinations of Marks level of engagement, both drawings are executed in pen and sepia ink, with line worked on top of an underlying ink wash. There is a shared delicacy and a sensitivity in the mark making that creates a similar atmospheric quality in both works and which suggests that elements of the landscape have been carefully observed, even though selections from the Systems of projective geometry, gaze and focus position the viewer differently, as discussed above. However, Individual Marks that describe the textural quality of the foreground foliage and log in the Lorrain landscape and the complex arrangement of the rock bedding plane in Kuncan’s image are combined with more generic and culturally specific forms of mark making. For example, both images define larger tonal blocks with wash, but the Lorrain landscape further defines areas of tone with fine line hatching. This is most evident in the foreground rocks, but also discernible in the foliage on the tree and in the clouds. Hatching, which uses closely spaced parallel lines to provide illusions of depth and shade, is a method of delineating tone embedded in the European tradition, evolving from woodblock engraving. Highly developed in the drawings of Leonardo da Vinci. (Figure 3)

The technique became closely associated with Renaissance drawing which, through its subsequent association with the Academy, came to epitomise the formal traditions of European art. Hatching is not used in Kuncan’s work. Instead the stylisation of the marks forming the tree in the compositional foreground have a calligraphic quality to them. The lines describing the forms of the trees are defined and applied in confident strokes without the need for additional layering, indicating the importance of the direct calligraphic tradition of Chinese painting.

Within the drawings as displayed, the initial static atmosphere of the works is countered by Kuncan’s fluid and dynamic brushwork, and by Lorrain’s narrative played out by the dancing figures and their unattended goats. Mark making and narrative respectively create tensions between stillness and movement thus engaging the viewer through this apparent contradiction.
To sum up, for Lorrain, the landscape appears as a backdrop to the represented narrative, in Kuncan’s drawing the narrative is inconsequential and insignificant in relation to its landscape setting. Such contrast might be understood as indicating a European preoccupation with the *Picturesque*, whereas the East ponders upon the *Sublime*.

6. The Systemic-Functional Model in Action 2: The Figure

Along with landscape, the human figure is one of the most common genres in art. This section analyses the representation of the figure within two cultures; contemporary China, and the contemporary practice of one of the authors, Roberts.

Engaging with Zhang Dali’s installation *Chinese Offspring* at the level of *The Work in Context* (this work was displayed in the Saatchi Gallery, London in 2009), Figure 4 indicates the high degree of perceptual intrigue engendered through the contrast of exterior and interior lighting as the viewer glimpses the hanging figures from a distance.

Within the installation room, the life-size resin-moulded figures are displayed hanging from the ceiling, out of reach of the visitor, but close enough for the viewer to observe individual differences in the poses of these otherwise anonymised...
figures—no distinctions of dress or other codes of personal identity. A further opposition to that between individuality and anonymity is emphasised by looking up to these inverted figures, positioning the viewer in a most uncomfortable attitude; the dignity of the figures’ elevation contradicted by their undignified suspension by the feet, connoting a complete lack of control over their situation. Such oppositional compositional choices might be associated metaphorically with the wider cultural oppositions apparent in contemporary China: the shift from a rural way of life to an urban one, entailing the turning of lives upside down, in the common phrase; the necessity for many of the rural-based population to work in the construction of the rapidly-growing cities, abandoning their rural individuality to urban anonymity.

Figure 4  Zhang Dali 2003–5 Chinese Offspring Saatchi Gallery, London 2009.

At the level of engagement Individual Marks, the viewer notices that each suspended figure is indeed marked with its individual number, but also with the common label Chinese Offspring and the signature of the artist (Figure 6). Could the conventions of the artworld—the provenancing activities of labelling, dating and signing of works—here be construed as an ironic comment upon the controlling activities of the state, both in the spheres of workers control and population control policies?

In any case, Dali’s representation of the human figure breaks with the traditional conventions of Chinese art, a trait we shall also discern in the seemingly
traditional charcoal representations of the life model in Roberts’ practice, discussed next:

![Image](image1)

Figure 5(a)  **Zhang Dali 2003–5 Chinese Offspring** installation view, Saatchi Gallery.

![Image](image2)

Figure 5(b)  **Zhang Dali 2003–5 Chinese Offspring** (details)

A useful entry point to the semiotic analysis of Roberts’ *Extended Drawings* series is the mapping of the specific parameters of the particular set of social relations existing at their execution onto the three functions identified in Figures 1 and 2:

*Field*: A private studio drawing session.

*Tenor*: Female model and female artist interact at close quarters, with the artist directing the model’s pose, and shifting viewing/drawing positions at regular intervals.

*Mode*: The interaction is realised visually through a series of charcoal drawings taped together, unframed and displayed in a variety of dispositions; wall-mounted, floor mounted.
Figure 6  Zhang Dali 2003–5 Chinese Offspring (detail)

Figure 7  Amanda Roberts 2012 Emma Extended Drawing. charcoal on paper

The image underpinned with this basic background information already generates a series of assumptions and associations. The close proximity between the model and the artist during the drawing process within a private drawing studio suggests a level of intimacy and familiarity.

The initial impact of the Functional Compositional structure of The Work as
Displayed is the scale of the drawings. The represented figures are large, and viewed within the context of the studio, dominate the viewing space. The scale of the works is accentuated by the figures’ lack of containment within either a frame or a single sheet of paper. Each figure expands and fills the compositional plane, although the figure, and the multiple viewpoints represented within it, is enclosed within a figurative compositional whole. The absence of any background, other than areas of blocked tonal differentiations that operate as a ground against which the form of the body is defined, combined with the unframed edges of the work counteracts the concept of the drawing as an autonomous space. Instead, the figure inhabits the space within which it is exhibited. Since the drawings represent a single figure, narrative interplay exists, not between figures depicted within a pictorial composition, but between the represented figure and the viewer within this shared space. The small studio restricts remote viewing positions and encourages the viewer to move along or around the works. This mirrors the working practice with both the artist and viewers’ positions variable and active, the represented figure static. This corresponds to conventional associations of the female nude with the ‘viewer active/model passive’ but the scale of the works, experienced within a restricted area, allows the represented figures to physically dominate the viewing space. The compositional decision not to frame, from the range of choices (what Halliday termed a system) labeled in Figure 2 as the system of Framing/Mounting/Lighting, carries significant semiotic potential; the resultant edges and the physical mass of the represented figures imbue the drawings with a dynamism at odds with the passivity of the represented pose, and challenges viewers to make sense of—to resolve—the tensions thus set up. At the level of engagement The Work as Displayed, the compositional choices of close-up viewing positions and a variety of viewpoints, together with the choice of medium—organically—expressive charcoal—afford the viewer opportunities to compare the perception of pictures with the perception of our four-dimensional world; we view the world from a moving path of observation. This reality of the perceptual process is implicit in these drawings, rather than obscured in the conventions of a single-point perspective projection system of geometry, and affords the viewer opportunities to experience pictorial perception as a movement through space.

The Extended Drawings each compositionally represent a single figure, the viewer engaging with a narrative representation of a specific person. In Emma, Extended Drawing, (Figure 7) the focus of detail on the woman’s (Emma’s) face and tattooed arms recognizably represent individual identity. This emphasis on singularity is contrasted with the stylised and simplified drawing used to represent her
body and the genre of life drawing, traditionally associated with generalized representations of the female body. Despite the geometric contortions resulting from the multiple perspective system that represents divergent viewpoints within a contained form, Emma appears comfortable, and her direct gaze suggests a confidence participation in her relationship with the viewer. Unlike Zhang Dali’s figures, and despite her reclining pose Emma is neither static or passive and projects a level of control.

![Figure 8](image)

Figure 8  Amanda Roberts 2010 *Tonya; Elevated Perspective*, charcoal on paper.

*Modality within the Interpersonal Function of The Work as Displayed* is inextricably linked to the viewer’s own preconceptions and expectations. Figure 8, *Tonya; Elevated Perspective* is a representation of a woman lying naked on the floor. The drawing is also displayed on the floor, resulting in an elevation of the viewer’s position. The power relationship between the depicted form and the viewer is explicit, the viewer looks down onto the represented body. How the viewer interprets this positioning is liable to differ from individual to individual. While producing the drawing Tonya was peaceful and self-contained, but this might not be interpreted in the image produced. The figure could be open to sexual objectification, the model’s eyes are averted from the viewer, the position she lies in could be interpreted as sexually responsive, but the figure is also vulnerable and exposed. Emotions generated will depend on the viewer’s personal and particularised response to being placed in this relational position to the represented figure. The permutations of potential meanings to do with gender/power relations, both
between artist and model and between the drawing and its viewers, may well stimulate those viewers to reconsider their individual preconceptions about, and stances towards, the possible permutations of those relations.

Ambiguities and contradictions identified in the *Extended Drawings* can be seen as reflecting the concerns and the interests of the artist. Feminist theorists have established that historically representations of the female nude are produced by men for a presumably male audience. (Clark 1960, Pollock 1988, Broude and Garrard 1982) As such, figurative representations of the female body are susceptible to an objectifying and voyeuristic male gaze. The position of a female artist, working in the life drawing room, producing figurative representations of another woman, remains unfixed and undefined. Semiotic analysis reveals and articulates the fact that ambiguities and tensions of the artist’s position are embodied in works produced.

### 7. Conclusion

We have demonstrated that particular choices made from the available range of choices (Halliday’s *Systems*), when realised in culturally characteristic forms, reveal—confirm in many cases—the ideologies of those cultures. What has been construed in those cultures as “natural” is revealed through systemic-functional analysis to be culturally-constructed.

### References


Reflections on Esthetics and Peirce’s System of 66 Classes of Signs

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Abstract: Esthetics and semiotics are philosophical disciplines on Charles Sanders Peirce’s system of sciences. Esthetics, ethics and semiotics (or logic) are suborders of the Normative Science, which is the “science of the laws of conformity of things to ends”. Esthetics is the first branch of the Normative Science and it considers those things whose ends are to embody qualities of feeling. It is “the science of ideals, or of that which is objectively admirable without any ulterior reason”. Esthetic is the ground of semiotics, which is the science whose end is to truly represent. Therefore, the two disciplines are closely connected and this relation might be investigated. The aim of this paper is to think about esthetics through the system of 66 sign classes lately suggested by C. S. Peirce. Many authors have already pointed out some relations between the sign categories and esthetic in order to characterize the esthetic sign. However, many analyses of the sign classes are superficial, neglecting fundamental aspects of the sign relations and ignoring the system of 66 classes of signs. For instance, saying that a sign is iconic means only that it refers to the object by virtue of qualities. It leaves aside the ground of the sign and the relation with the interpretant. According to Sontaella, the concept of icon isolated from the other sign relation fulfills certain requirements for the esthetic sign, but considering the triadic logic of the iconic sign and the relation among the classes of signs it is possible to make fine distinctions and be more efficient at characterizing the esthetic sign. When Peirce proposes the enlarged system of signs, he details the model of sign dividing the object in two objects and the interpretant in three different interprets. Consequently, the number of aspects to be analyzed increases from three to ten. Thus, it would be possible to characterize in more details the esthetic signs and develop the studies in semiotic esthetics. To analyze the system of 66 classes of signs I will use a model of this system called Signtree, which I have developed. This system shows six classes of qualisigns and four classes of iconic signs. As the qualisigns and the iconic signs are good examples of esthetic signs, my proposal is to examine these classes considering each one of the ten aspects of the sign and the relation among these classes and the whole system of 66 classes. Therefore, the paper might enlighten the studies on the semiotic theory of the esthetic signs.

Key words: esthetic; semiotics; C. S. Peirce; classes of signs; esthetic signs
1. Introduction

Esthetics and semiotics are philosophical disciplines on Charles Sanders Peirce’s system of sciences. Esthetics, ethics, semiotics, are the three disciplines of Normative Science. The first one, esthetic, considers those things whose ends are to embody qualities of feeling (EP2: 200 [1903]). It is “the science of ideals, or of that which is objectively admirable without any ulterior reason.” (CP 1.191 [1903]) Following, ethics is “the theory of self-controlled, or deliberate, conduct (EP 2; 260)” and semiotics, “the theory of self-controlled, or deliberate, thought (EP 2; 260)”. Being the first one, esthetics is the ground for ethics and semiotics.

The idea of esthetic is related to a kind of phenomenon perception. The quality of feeling has to be embodied in something, a sign, to be experienced. To apprehend the meaning of a perception, and not only feel it, it is necessary to take a distance from the manifested phenomenon and analyze the sign, which means enter in Semiotics. The structure of the signs is given by the first division of semiotics, Speculative Grammar, which presents “a general theory of the nature and meanings of signs, whether they be icons, indexes or symbols.” (EP 2:260 [1903])

The first step on examining esthetic signs is to determine which objects of experience are intended to embody qualities of feeling. Among many objects that may embody qualities of feelings, artworks appear to be exemplar esthetic signs. Semiotic studies consider that the work of art is a sign made of signs and the study of the nature and meaning of these signs could reveal the feature of esthetic signs. Therefore, this paper attempts to use Peirce’s latter sign classification to approach the nature and meaning of esthetic signs.

One of Peirce’s definitions of signs states that the sign “is something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity. It addresses somebody, that is, creates in the mind of that person an equivalent sign, or perhaps a more developed sign. That sign which it creates I call the interpretant of the first sign. The sign stands for something, its object. It stands for that object, not in all respects, but in reference to a sort of idea, which I have sometimes called the ground of the representamen.” (CP 2.228 [1897]) The semiotic process, also called semeiosis (or semiosis), is defined as the action that involves the three subjects: the sign, the object and the interpretant.

To analyze a sign it is necessary to consider its tri-relative influence (EP 2:411 [1907]) and not only use the classification of the signs to depict a preeminent quality of the esthetic sign. The taxonomic approach emphasizes one aspect of the sign ignoring others, enhancing distorted views about it. That is why there is so much
divergence according to the classification of the esthetic sign. For instance, Morris claims that signs of art are iconic signs, Shapiro that they are symbolic and Bense says that indexicality characterizes the artwork (Nøth 1990, 424). The esthetic sign in general can never be classified as being of one or other type because signs change in the course of life. At best, a sign can be classified as being mostly of one type or another in a determined period of time. But that does not bear down the action of a sign.

An approach on the classification of signs must consider the triadic relation of the sign and the relation among the classes of signs to conform to Peirce’s idea of continuity. The isolation of an aspect of the sign or of a class of sign may distort the whole system. This paper will emphasize the relation among some classes of signs in order to observe the capacity to represent by likeness and the interpretative openness of a sign, since these are two well-known characteristics of artworks. I will begin looking into the system of ten classes of signs to identify some classes that would be related to these characteristics and then, using the system of 66 sign classes go deeper into these relations.

## 2. The Ten Classes of Signs

The sign triadic relation involves three aspects: its own mode of being, its reference and its interpretation. The mode of being of the sign is described by the Quali-, Sin- and Legisign trichotomy. The referential function of the sign corresponds to the sign/object relation, defined by the icon, index and symbol trichotomy. Finally, the interpretation aspect refers to the sign/interpretant relation, which is described by the rheme, dicent and argument trichotomy.

As Santaella (1994, 177) noticed, the icon is frequently considered the exemplary esthetic sign. However this is just one aspect of it, which deals with the representative power of the sign. Being iconic means that the “sign refers to the Object that it denotes merely by virtue of characters of its own and which it possesses” (EP 2:291 [1903]). Icons refer to their Object because they resemble them. Once we consider the sign in its three aspects (at least), iconicity becomes more complex and interesting as a characteristic of contemporary artworks. Let’s begin by seeing which sign classes have iconic relation in the system of ten classes of signs.

### 2.1 Iconic signs: representing by likeness

Considering the system of ten classes of signs, we can find three sign classes
with iconic relation in it. The first one is the Iconic Qualisign, which is a sign of possibility; the second one is the Iconic Sinsign, which is a sign of experience; finally there is the Iconic Legisign, which is a general law or type. The Iconic Qualisign is not a sign of experience; its function is to show the possible qualities of the sign independently of its embodiment. The concrete form of a Qualisign is expressed in the Iconic Sinsign, which is an actual existent, a sign experienced in a determined time. The Qualisigns are of a peculiar kind in the Iconic Sinsign (EP 2: 291). An Iconic Sinsign can be a single instance disconnected from other signs (an effect of chance, for example) or it can be a Replica of an Iconic Legisign. In the last case, the peculiar qualities of the Iconic Sinsign would be demanded by the Legisign, since the Iconic Legisign ‘requires each instance of it to embody a definite quality which renders it fit to call up in the mind the idea of a like Object.’ (EP 2: 294). All the Iconic Signs are Rhetic, since signs of likeness can only be interpreted as representing a kind of possible object that have some possible qualities. Qualities assert nothing, they just resemble something, no matter what. Therefore they can only be ‘interpreted as a sign of essence, or Rheme’ (EP 2:294 [1903]).

The three types of Iconic signs are related to each other and they show that the Qualisigns are fundamental to all sign classes. The possible qualities of the Iconic Sinsign and Legisign are in the Qualisign. Each iconic sign (either Sinsign or Legisign) will embody a Qualisign. Legisigns being of a general type require a Sinsign to be regarded as significant.

Angela Detanico & Rafael Laine-Star Names (Mesarthim)-200
"inchiostronk, serigrafia-cm 41×41-courtesy Biindarte, Napoh"
To see how this works in a sign analysis, let’s take Angela Detanico and Rafael Lain artwork called “Star Names”. Just by looking at it, we can notice that this sign is composed of white circles of different size and transparence, all centralized in the picture. These qualities may resemble the shining of a star, but we cannot affirm that they will be understood in that way. They may simply resemble a circle. Knowing that in an exhibition the Star Names is presented as a series of images similar to the one above, each one representing a star, and considering that the experience with this sign will take place in an exhibition, then, we could suppose that, looking carefully at the series of stars, one can notice that the white circles are precise and that these qualities are not exclusive of one picture, but are present in all the pictures of stars. Next, one should suppose that a general law is regulating the qualities of these images. The picture could be a graphical image, made with a technic that regulates the qualities of circles. In addition, there might be some rule that defines the size and the transparence of each circle in the stars represented.

2.2 Rhematic signs: the interpretative openness

According to Peirce, “icons and indices assert nothing.” (EP 2:16 [1895] Icons are just a potential mood, or a supposition. Indexes declare assertions that can be doubtful, interrogative, saying nothing about the assertion itself. The interpretative openness of the artwork might be associated to icons and indices as Peirce says they assert nothing. However, the interpretative openness is an aspect of the sign/interpretant relation and icons and indices refer to sign/object relation. Then, if we want to focus on the interpretative openness of a sign, we should investigate all types of Rhematic signs. We will see that even Symbols can have an interpretative openness since they can be Rhematic.

Peirce says that the Rhema could be compared to a general term. The Rhema is not interpreted as conveying information; it is a sign of qualitative possibility. It is interpreted as representing some kind of possible object according to its qualities. If we consider that the esthetic sign has an open meaning, then we might agree that being Rhematic is a characteristic of the esthetic sign.

However, an open meaning does not mean that the interpreter determines the referent of the sign. My view of Peirce’s semiotics agrees with Hausman affirmation that “although context and previous habits affect the interpretation, there is also an indeterminate condition, which, in some respects, is independent of thought so that it constrains and thus limits the hegemony of interpretation over its object.” (Hausman 2006, 232)

Rheme, Dicent and Argument are the three types of sign/interpretant relation.
Rheme is the sign that has an open meaning. Knowing that the sign/interpretant relation is the third trichotomy on the ten classes of sign system and following the logic of the phenomenological categories, we can assert that an Iconic sign can only be a Rheme. An Indexical sign can be a Rheme or a Dicent and a Symbolic sign can be a Rheme, a Dicent or an Argument. Therefore, Symbols can also be Rhematic. Being a Rhema is not exclusivity of Icons; on the contrary, being Rhematic is a possibility of all types of signs. Interpreting a sign as representing a possible object due to its qualities is the simplest mode of interpretation. It does not indicate the object that is intended to represent, neither the interpretant that is intended to determine. As long as qualities are fundamental to all type of signs, all signs can be interpreted as being Rhematic.

Since Icons, Indexes and Symbols can be Rhematic and we already know that this does not mean that the interpreter determines the referent of the sign, we should look for constraints that limit this interpretation. An interpretation process might consider its referents, which corresponds to Peirce’s Objects. According to Peirce, the Sign represents part of the Object to an Interpretant, but it is the Object that determines its Sign. The Sign represents the Object and determines its Interpretant to represent the Object. The Object of the Sign functions as a constraining condition that gives some objectivity to interpretation process. It is important, then, to focus on the Objects of the sign.

3. The Objects of the Sign

The division of the Objects in Immediate and Dynamical is fundamental to understand the role of the Object in semiosis. The Immediate Object is “the Object as the Sign represents it” (EP 2:482 [1908]), while the Dynamical Object is the “really efficient but not immediately present Object” (EP 2:482 [1908]). By being efficient it is meant that the Dynamical Object initiates the semiotic process. But the Dynamical Object is an external object that determines the Immediate Object, which is internal to the sign.

In a semiotic process the Dynamical Object will never be reached, because it is an external object and all the experience we can have with it is through the sign. So, all we can say about it is given by the Immediate Object of the Sign. A single interpretation of a sign can only give a slight idea of what the Dynamical Object would be. However, in a series of signs and interpretations it is possible to get closer to the Dynamical Object. The series of interpretations might show something in common with the signs and that is the Dynamical Object.
The Dynamical Object should not be regarded as a “real object” that affects the Sign and is immutable. Firstly, we may pay attention at the word dynamical in the name of this object, meaning that this object has some dynamic, thus, it is not inert. The Dynamical Object interacts with the sign interpretation and can change in the course of time. The dynamic of this object can be seen in the following quotation where Peirce admits that a sign can have many objects and that this objects can be of three types (not only an existent):

“The Objects—for a Sign may have any number of them—may each be a single known thing or thing believed formerly to have existed or expected to exist, or a collection of such things, or a known quality or relation of fact which single Object may be a collection, or whole of parts, or it may have some other mode of being, such as some act permitted whose being does not prevent its negation from being equally permitted, or something of a general nature desired, required, or invariably found under certain general circumstances.” (CP 2.232 [1910])

The object division in Dynamical and Immediate leads us to Peirce’s expanded system of signs. When Peirce states these two objects and begins to consider their modes of being, he proposes the ten main trichotomies of signs that bring the 66 classes of signs. Then, we might focus on the system of 66 classes of signs.

4. The System of 66 Classes of Signs

The Mode of Being of the Dynamical Object and the Mode of Presentation of the Immediate Object are two of the ten aspects of the sign, also called trichotomies, that leads to the sixty-six sign classes. In a letter to Lady Welby (EP 2:477-91 [1908]) Peirce says that the Dynamical Object can be (1) Abstractive, (2) Concretive; and (3) Collective. An Abstractive is a possible Dynamical Object. We can say, for example, that the word “art” is an abstractive, as well as the word “artistic”, since it is the ultimate reference that makes the sign an Abstractive and not its grammatical form (EP 2:480 [1908]). A Concretive is the Dynamical Object that is an occurrence; it can be an existing thing or an actual fact of the past or future. An artwork can be a concretive. Next, a Collective is a necessitant Dynamical Object. The forms, genres, and styles of art can be seen as a Collective since it is a habit or law that can only be known through a logically valid reasoning.

According to the Immediate Object, Peirce says they can be (1) a Descriptive;
(2) a Designative; (3) and a Distributive. When the Immediate Object vaguely indicates the Dynamical Object by means of qualities, it is called Descriptive. If the Immediate Object is an occurrence that indicates the Dynamical Object, the Immediate Object is a Designative. Finally the Distributive is the Immediate Object that expresses a logical sequence from something referred before (the Dynamical Object) to itself. The Interpretant of the sign may identify it as a necessitant.

The Simgtree model shows many objects on the sixty-six sign class system. We might focus on the model to see how the expanded system can contribute to the ideas presented until now.

The first thing to be noticed in the model is that the Qualisign, which is a sign of possible qualities, is divided in six classes. These classes are distinguished by the nature of its Objects. Since the Objects of the sign determine the sign itself, observing the Objects we can depict the possible qualities of the signs. The second thing to be observed is that there are three different
Iconic Sinsigns in this system. Again, the Iconic Sinsigns are distinguished by its different Objects. If the Iconic Sinsign embodies a Qualisign, then, their Objects might be of the same type. Each Iconic Sinsign embodies a Qualisign that has objects of the same nature. Being of a general type, the Iconic Legisign is represented by one class of sign only.

As the Qualisigns are fundamental for the other classes, I will begin by depicting the objects of it. While depicting the Qualisigns, the related Sinsigns will be shown.

**Abstractive Descriptive Qualisign**

The first Qualisign has two possible objects; Abstractive Dynamical Object and Descriptive Immediate Object. This class shows the sign representative possibility. What is the most general and abstract idea that this sign represents and what is the most fundamental thing to the possible manifestation of the sign? Although the sign represent these objects, a single experience with the sign may not be sufficient to reach the objects. In addition, the sign reference can change in the course of time because the collateral experience will influence the idea in the immediate object. For instance, if we take as Abstractive the general idea of art, its immediate objects are all the possible ideas that describe art in any period of time (in the past, in the present and in the future). It is obvious that this idea changes during a long period of time. Thus, the meaning of this sign will vary according to the ideas of a certain period of time and to the collateral experience with the art world.

**Concretive Descriptive Qualisign**

From the first to the second Qualisign, the Dynamical Object passes from Abstractive to Concretive and the Immediate Object continues to be Descriptive. Concretives are particular occurrences in any period of time (past, present, or future). These occurrences characterize the abstract qualities to which the first sign class made reference to. It would be impossible to make a list of qualities found in particular signs that could describe them as an artwork, since the universe of artwork is enormous. However, we could say that any esthetic experience could be a Concretive Dynamical
Object. The sign will represent that esthetic experience by suggesting the characters of it. The Immediate Object will share the qualities of the Dynamical Object, but there is no guarantee that the sign will be interpreted like that.

**Concretive Designative Qualisign**

When the Immediate Object becomes designative and the Dynamical Object is still concretive it is possible that the sign will brutally direct the attention to the esthetic experience. However the Qualisign is just a possible sign and if we want to see the sign in action we might focus on the Iconic Sinsign that has the same type of Objects.

**Concretive Designative Sinsigns**

The Iconic Sinsign that has Concretive and Designative Objects shows the particular characteristics of the sign in a determined period of time and space. Our experience with an artwork at this moment is an example of it. However, this is not a good example to depict the characteristics of the artwork because we are seeing a reproduction and that modifies the qualities of the sign. It would be exemplar to see the work itself in an exhibition to have the esthetic experience of this sign. The sign visual qualities can provide a visual experience that is similar to other artworks suggesting that this is a work of visual art, and also similar to the brightness of stars suggesting that the sign represents a star. Notice that the collateral experience with the object is fundamental to the interpretation of signs that represent its object through likeness. Without the collateral experience with the objects of the sign, it would be impossible to perceive any similarity between them. When there is no collateral experience, the sign will represent its own qualities, meaning that the sign will not be interpreted as an artwork, neither as representing a star. However, the context in which the sign is inscribed gives some clues that help the sign to determine its object. These clues are not explicit in the sign; they might require some logical reasoning. Therefore it will be necessary to focus on the Collective and Copulant objects, which are objects of Thirdness.

**Collective Descriptive Qualisign**

The first Qualisign that have a Collective Dynamical Object has a Descriptive
Immediate Object. A Collective Dynamical Object is a Habit or law that can only be known through a logically valid reasoning. Forms, genres, and styles of art could be a Collective Dynamical Object that will be described in the sign through the Immediate Object. Being descriptive, the Immediate Object can only give a vague idea of its Dynamical Object. When it becomes a designative, the Immediate Object will point to its Dynamical Object. Then, we should jump to another Qualisign.

**Collective Designative Qualisign**

The Collective Designative Qualisign shows a possible sign, whose Immediate Object is an occurrence. This particular occurrence cannot represent all types of art styles, but only one or few of them. We will have to look to an existential sign to exemplify which art style the sign refers to.

**Collective Designative Sinsign**

The Iconic Sinsign with Collective and Designative objects shows the singular conventions of a sign through its own particular qualities. Once the experience with an existent sign can suggest its conventions, we can look at the work Star Names to find its style. Star Names have many conventional systems in them. The first one we can notice is the verbal language. On the left side of each image there is a list of all the letters of the Latin alphabet. There are also some lines connecting the circles to particular letters in the image. The existence of letters in the image suggests a possible reference to the verbal language. Next, if we look carefully into the characteristics of these circles in all the images, we can notice that they have similar qualities, which might not be given by chance, but by some kind of composition rule. The regularity of the visual elements is given by certain principles of composition. Although this Iconic Sinsign cannot confirm any of these conjectures, the Indexical Sinsigns that follow from this sign class and have the same type of objects will give some evidence to confirm or refute these ideas. Since the Immediate Object in this Iconic Sinsign is a designative, the qualities of this sign suggest
the particular way in which the conventions of the Dynamical Object are presented in the Immediate Object. Repetition of elements and forms, regularity, predictability, transparency, and accumulation of ordered elements are visual language communications strategies largely used that have a particular mode of presentation in this sign.

Other conventions are also found in the Iconic Sinsign that has Collective and Copulant objects. To understand this Iconic Sinsign, we might look first to the corresponding Qualisign.

**Collective Distributive Qualisign and Sinsign**

The Collective Distributive Qualisign is a possible sign that refers to some law or habit through a logical sequence that relates the former to the later. The Iconic Sinsign that has these same objects might be able to suggest this logical sequence through its qualities. The qualities of the Star Names work have already suggested that the image is related to the verbal language and has its own composition rules. The proximity between the column of all the Latin alphabet letters and the column of small circles suggests that each letter corresponds to a circle. The similarity of forms in the columns on the left and in the bigger image, such as circles and letters, suggests that, despite the size difference, they are related. If we perceive that each image of the series is composed in the same way (a column with letters related to circles and a big image composed of circles with different saturation of light and related to different letters), it is possible to suppose that the circles represent letters and each image corresponds to a different word. Given the name of the work series ‘Star Names’ and the name of each image, which corresponds to the name of the star, one can suppose that each image is composed by the name of a star.

As a result we could think that; (1) the new alphabet creates the images of the stars; (2) if the star brightness is caused by the overlapping of characters of each star name, then the brightest star is the one with the longest name; (3) the series of stars allude to the star catalogues. However, the recreation of this stars are not based on an astronomy criteria, but on a visual criterion invented by the artists. The creation process based on copy, incorporation, revision and parody is characteristic of the Modernist art movement that rejects the idea of absolute original.
Appropriation is as well a characteristic of postmodern art. Their artwork also suggests a new way of interpreting texts incorporating elements of graphic design. The stars are made to be seen at the same time that they are read. This visual artwork deals with matters of verbal language, graphic design and visual art at the same time. This is also related to some art movements, such as Pop Art, that employs aspects of different media and cultures combining elements of different context. In addition, the digital work of Detanico and Lain has qualities of the digital language and has no traces of manual production. It is distant from human products as minimalist works are. As we can see, Star Names share characteristics with many other artworks making reference to it.

The most general and abstract Dynamical Object of this sign is no other than the whole universe of art, and more specifically, the visual art. The more experience you have with other signs of this same universe, the more you know about it. Consequently, the idea of art becomes more complex. The Dynamical Object also increases and changes as more artworks are created.

5. Final Considerations

The analysis I have just presented depicts in detail the steps to reach the meaning of the sign. It is obvious that the esthetic state is not like that. There is no judgment upon the pure esthetic state and it does not follow a method, such as the one I presented. However, the analysis shows that the esthetic perception is not a simple type of feeling. The qualities of feeling embodied in an artwork can become very complex varying according to the previous experience with all the objects of the sign.

Santaella remembers us that “the esthetic ideal is nurtured by the growing of habits of feeling. Since the artwork is the best embodiment for qualities of feeling, the habits of feeling can only grow if we expose your sensitivity to the artwork.” (Santaella 1994, 150) The experience with other artworks creates habits of feelings. That explains why artists and critics of art have a different experience with artwork than a person who has never been to an exhibition. I am not saying that they have a better experience; neither comparing a possible critical judgment with a simple perception. It is the quality of feeling itself that may vary according to previous experience.

Contemporary art is often criticized for requiring previous information and, consequently, being too difficult to be understood. In a way this affirmation is proper, since the larger experience with artworks may enable us to reach more objects of the sign. However, this is not a distinctive feature of the artwork; this is
characteristic of all signs. The more collateral experience you have with a sign, the more you will know about it. On the other hand, the interpretative openness of contemporary artwork makes no restriction to its interpretation. Then, there is no meaning to be reached, but various possible meanings, which were shown in the analyses of the Qualisigns. It doesn’t matter if the sign represents its own visual qualities or if it represents genres and styles from the universe of art as long as it arouses a quality of feeling.

References

Modulation and Articulation

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Abstract: Following and improving L. Hjelmslev and C. S. Peirce’s sign theory, Deleuze takes image as a non-linguistically formed signaletic material, and proposes the concepts of pre-linguistic images and pre-signifying signs, with which language system should be retested. This paper maintains that the concept of pure semiotics extends the scope of study of sign as a discipline or a methodology, and focuses on that how successfully conception “articulation” is replaced by the conception of “modulation”. And this article further analyzes the importance and significance of considering the image as a modulation. Image, as both a modulation and signaletic material, turns the value of the signified into “zero degree”, i.e. the signified coincides with the signifier, as a result, signs disappear from semiology. Both the concept of modulation and the analysis of material constitute the base of Deleuzian pure semiotics, in which the image itself is the sign.

Key words: Deleuze; modulation; articulation

Following and improving L. Hjelmslev and C. S. Peirce’s sign theory, Gilles Deleuze takes image as a non-linguistically formed signaletic material, and proposes the concepts of pre-linguistic images and pre-signifying signs, with which language system should be retested. Concept of articulation is the very basis of semiology, and is replaced by the concepts of modulation in writings of Deleuze. Modulation is a logical basis of the whole narratation by Deleuze.

1. Aim

The concept of modulation is proposed by Deleuze in his Cinema 2; the time-image, where he does not directly elaborate its relation to the concept of articulation. Deleuze declares explicitly that the double of utterances and “grand syntagmatics” (Metz) has been substituted for that of images and signs, to the point where the very notion of sign tends to disappear from this semiology.

“At the very point that the image is replaced by an utterance, the image is given a false appearance, and it’s most authentically visible characteristic, movement, is
taken away from it.”\(^1\)

In our interpretation, the conception modulation can be sufficient to replace or to erase the problem of articulation of film image. And it is the cornerstone of Deleuze’s theory of image-sign, in the meantime, the most fundamental question in film semiotics. It’s possibility and significance will be discussed in this paper.

## 2. Background

There are three kinds of ideas about the problem of articulation of cinematic sign, which are respectively proposed by Christian. Metz, P. P. Pasolini, and U. Eco.

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Metz avoids the challenge of the problem, and runs directly towards the discussion of the issue of utterance. As we know, Christian Metz has taken a number of precautions on the relations between cinema and language, on which the possibility of a semiology of the cinema seems to be dependent. Instead of asking “In what way is the cinema a language (Langue—the famous universal language of humanity) ?”, he poses the question “under what conditions should cinema be considered as a language(Langage)?” Deleuze says;

“Substituting an utterance for the image, he can and must apply to it certain determinations which do not belong exclusively to the language system [ langue ], but condition the utterances of a language [ langage ], even if this language is not verbal and operates independently of a language system. The principle according to which linguistics is only a part of semiology is thus realized in the definition of languages without a language system (semes), which includes the cinema as well as the languages of gestures, clothing or music.”\(^2\)

Apparently, there is therefore no reason to look for features in cinema that only belong to a language system, like double articulation.

Unlike Metz, Pasolini wants to go still further than the semiologists. He wishes

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that cinema could be a system just like language, and he conceives a double articulation (the shot, equivalent to the moneme, and the objects appearing in the frame, “cinemes” equivalent to phonemes). Pasolini do deem that cinema language is the language system ... of reality; however Umberto Eco reproached him for his “semiological naïve”. Eco follows and transforms the three categories of signs of C. S. Peirce (qualisign, icon, dictum), and also proposes a treble articulation theory.  Deleuze criticizes all the three, and contends that cinematic articulation is only a specious idea.

3. Conception of Signaletic Material; Logical Basis for Deleuze

As we all know, the articulation question of linguistics is proposed by Saussure and André Martinet in a semantic perspective whereas Deleuze puts forward his question on the ontological level, aiming at the existence of image. Above all, the image is essentially comprehended as material, aloof from the linguistic realm. In order to grasp the materiality of film medium, Deleuze firstly proposes the term “signaletic material” (matière signalétique) as a non-language-material. Signaletic material is a plastic substance (plastic mass), which is meaningless, without syntax. It is not a statement of utterance, but a statement utterable.

Signaletic material “is a condition, anterior by right to what it conditions... what language gets hold of this material (and it necessarily does so), then it gives rise to utterances which come to dominate or even replace the images and signs, and which refer in turn to pertinent features of the language system, syntagms and paradigms, completely different from those we started with.”

In a few words, it is the image for which, the language system only exists in its reaction to a non-language-material that it transforms.

From the dual point of view of specification and differentiation, these components of the movement-image constitute a signaletic material. The latter, as a matter of course, creates or includes all kinds of modulation features.

4. Modulation; a Radiologic Term

Modulation is a radiologic term, with which Deleuze tries to reveal the

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1 Eco, Umberto: *Appunti per una semiologica delle comunicazioni visivi*, Università di Firenze, Bompiani Editore, pp. 139–152. And Pasolini, Pier Paolo: *La lingua scritta dell’azione*

characteristic of movement of image-material. The so-called modulation actually means all sorts of formal characteristics of the image as material, among which are: sensory (visual and audio), kinetic, intensive, affective, rhythmic, tonal, and even verbal (oral and written).

Deleuze emphasizes the duration and variation of image-material, in this way, we should consider it in terms of modulations instead of moulds. Modulations produce singularities. The modulation is in a state of permanent variation—a promise of becomings—disallowing predictions of what image is capable of.

Concept of articulation belongs to mould. “But modulation is completely different; it is a putting of variation of the mould, a transformation of the mould at each moment of the operation. If it refers to one or several codes, it is by grafts, code-grafts that multiply its power (as in the electronic image)... For modulation is the operation of the Real, in so far as it constitutes and never stops reconstituting the identity of image and object.”

5. The Significance of Considering Image as Modulation

5.1 Modulation and Articulation

The concept modulation can contain all the symbolic levels from frame, shot, to full-length shot, which as a matter of fact dispels the problem of articulation in film images. Articulation can occur anywhere and nowhere, consequently, it becomes meaningless. For instance, the mise-en-scène includes setting, costume, makeup, lighting and the movement of figures within the frame. The theory of articulation is incapable of dealing with such holographic image. On the contrary, the idea of modulation confirms and maintains the holographic features of vision and audition.

In other words, language-articulation and image-modulation are different in nature. Language is granular; while image is like wave. It is the granular wave or wave like granular, a wave of 24-frame per second.

The difference can be visualized as full line and dotted line.

Graph 2

articulation ........................................

modulation _______________________

5.2 Modulation and Signs

We mean that the concept of modulation leads to some theoretical

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consequences; the individualization of Image and the infinity of sign. It denies the signification mould of image, and affirms its taxonomy. One image carries one sign; one category of images carries one category of signs. The classification of image signs is concrete and open.

The expression level of film image is usually comprehended incorrectly as signifier. But it should actually be mobile and kinetic with topological features. As for its content, which is usually comprehended as signified, it is infinite and holographic. Only the concept modulation can correspond to such characteristics. On the contrary, the linguistic articulation is limited, because the core of linguistic structure (phoneme and syntax) is limited. As we all know, In A Thousand Plateaus, Deleuze and Guattari assert that content is not a signified, neither is expression a signifier; instead both are variables in common assemblage.

Image, as the non-language material, turns the value of the signified into zero degree, i.e. the signified coincides with the signifier, as a result, signs disappear from semiology. Both image movement as a whole and the thingness as the object constitute the base of Deleuzian pure semiotics, in which the image itself is the sign.

5.3 Modulation and Signification

The dissolution of articulation in image indicates the end of the semiotic concept signifier/signified. The connection of signifier—signified is replaced by the circuit of the whole—the objects. The whole and the objects are defined on the vertical and the horizontal axes. According by Deleuze, the image has two sides, depending on the whole that it expresses and depending on the objects between which it passes. Meanwhile, the image includes intervals, through which distinct kinds of signs have been becoming. The whole and the objects is defined on vertical and horizontal axes. The value of the signified, which belongs to the relationship of significance, will therefore be like a degree zero in the deduction, in which image is a non-language-material. The signified coincides with the signifier; as a result, signs will disappear from semiology.

As a conclusion, “Deleuze and Guattari’s semiotics present a conceptual mix of Charles S. Peirce’s logic of signs and Louis Hjelmslev’s linguistics: both frameworks are taken to oppose Saussurean semiology.” Both image-movement as a whole and the thingness as the object together constitutes the base of Deleuzian pure semiotics, in which the image itself is the sign. Nevertheless this issue is out of the reach of this article.

Generally speaking, Deleuze has defined “semiotics”, rather than semiology, as the system of images and signs independent of language in general. Since the
concept subjectivity is still ambiguous in shaping the function of the whole and the objects. Deleuze finally emphasizes a conception of spiritual automaton, with which the circuit of the whole & the objects proceeds to the subjectivity, i.e. the thought-image called by Deleuze. The brain is the screen; the image is the thought; and finally the sign is the image. The objects—the whole—the subject constitute a super circuit. The image-sign is no longer empirical, nor metaphysical; it is transcendental in the sense that Kant gives.
Semiotics is no longer a study limited within its borders, in which, remarkable progress has been made over the past decades; it has been increasingly adopted in the study of various fields of studies as an effective and productive methodology. A quick preview of the papers in the 2\textsuperscript{nd} Volume can better illustrate this ongoing trend.

The 2\textsuperscript{nd} Volume mainly contains 25 papers which could be roughly divided into two parts: a literature and linguistics; a culture, media and comparative studies. These papers cover different fields of semiotic studies in terms of literature, arts, culture, media, marketing, history, philosophy, linguistics, etc., demonstrating the widespread influence of semiotics.

“It is...possible to conceive of a science which studies the role of signs as part of social life. It would form part of social psychology, and hence of general psychology. We shall call it semiology. It would investigate the nature of signs and the laws governing them. Since it does not yet exist, one cannot say for certain that it will exist. But it has a right to exist, a place ready for it in advance. Linguistics is only one branch of this general science. The laws which semiology will discover will be laws applicable in linguistics, and linguistics will thus be assigned to a clearly defined place in the field of human knowledge”. Ever since Saussure first unveiled this new field of study in his pioneering masterpiece Course in General Linguistics, a kind of connection between linguistics and semiotics, or in Saussure’s term, semiology, has become natural and undeniable. Just as Saussure himself puts it, “Linguistics is only one branch of this general science [of semiology]. The laws which semiology will discover will be laws applicable in linguistics...As far as we are concerned...the linguistic problem is first and foremost semiological... If one wishes to discover the true nature of language systems, one must first consider what
they have in common with all other systems of the same kind... In this way, light will be thrown not only upon the linguistic problem. By considering rites, customs, etc. as signs, it will be possible, we believe, to see them in a new perspective. The need will be felt to consider them as semiological phenomena and to explain them in terms of the laws of semiology". Such a connection can be best illustrated in the five papers concerning the semiotic study of language and linguistics.

Three Chinese scholars Xunzhun Lin, Yongxiang Wang and Mingming Liu focus their attention on interlanguage, which can serve as a barrier-free system for global semantic transmission in international communication, as well as a way to provide an important basis for the automatic processing of internet information. In a world of increasing globalization, this paper shows how semiotics can offer its contribution. Second language acquisition has always been an important aspect of linguistic studies and in this volume, three papers fall into this category. Anastasia Christodoulou and George Damaskinidis share their achievements in the research in visual literacy in higher education, which has shown that using non-verbal semiotic elements in the area of foreign language acquisition is a novel experience for university students, regarding these non-verbal semiotic elements as the fifth elements in foreign language acquisition. Russian scholars Pavel Dronov and Svetlana Bočaver conduct researches into the problem of representing idiom modifications in lexicography discussing a number of approaches to idiom variability and its representation in Russian, English, German and Spanish phraseological dictionaries, both monolingual and bilingual. When it comes to idioms, Chinese scholar Yuchong Xu does a similar research. In paper, A Sociolinguistic View of Animal Names in Idiomatic Expressions in Chinese and French, the author explores animal names in Chinese and/or French idiomatic expressions in the light of representation (la représentation), a notion interpreted by French sociolinguist Henri Boyer.

No study of language can neglect the important role played by literature and semiotics is by no means an exception. Anneli Mihkelev, in his paper Historical Narratives and Semiosis in Contemporary (Estonian) Culture, analyzes how historical narratives influence collective cultural memory and collective identity and analyzes the mechanisms of intersemiosis in historical and mythical narratives by studying two literal works. In the other two papers, Ling Yu discusses the cross-media integration of literature and dance and Su Min focuses on the self-regulation of literary symbols.

In spite of its linguistic orientation, semiotics has gone far beyond the limitation of language. Semiotics is generally defined as the science of signs which
focuses on the structural relations between what a sign appears to be and what it refers to. Contemporary semiotic studies no longer deal with signs in isolation but as part of a sign system so that a much more comprehensive study can be conducted. Having developed for less than 100 years, semiotics has evolved into a field of study involving many different theoretical stances and methodological tools, a multi-disciplinary science serving as a tool for other sciences. A case in point is the study of culture. From the 1960’s, semiotics has become a major approach to cultural studies, with Yuri Lotman and his Moscow-Tartu School as the most important representatives. Based on formalism and structuralism and influenced by the theories of Saussure and Bakhtin, another outstanding semiotician in the former Soviet Union, Lotman and his Moscow-Tartu school developed a new field of cultural study—Cultural Semiotics. New terms like Text, Primary Modeling System and Second Modeling System, and most important of all, Semiosphere are coined. One of the most significant features of Cultural Semiotics is that comprehensive researches are conducted, which is also a feature of semiotics.

In this Volume, several scholars represent their achievements in cultural studies. Discussing various theories in contemporary western philosophy, semiotics and linguistics, Guo Hong notices an ethic turn in those studies. In the paper The Paper-cut of Longzhong and its Rhetoric Shu-ping Zhang focuses on this most traditional Chinese art and its various rhetoric meanings. Another semiotic study about cultural difference is conducted by Drina Hočevar who approaches the universally human in Hamlet as manifested in Shakespeare’s play Hamlet, seeking to understand Hamlet’s transcendental character that could be seen as global, bridging different civilizations. Ricardo Nogueira de Castro Monteiro intends to analyze the collective composition created by a needy community in the outskirts of São Paulo (Brazil) that resulted in the production of the video clip “Si-Mi-Re-Lá, Vai Ter!” by applying some of the core ideas of Eero Tarasti’s Existential semiotics.

A semiotic study of culture is not solely about traditions; it is concerned with the latest development of the society as well. The fast development of media, marketing communication, consumer culture advertising and so on attracts no less attention of contemporary semioticians. Mi-Jung Kang adopted the theories of C.S. Peirce, Mikhail Bakhtin and Volosinov in the study of design of SNS, or Social Networking Service, such as Facebook and Twitter, arguing that semiotics can offer us plausible explanations regarding the inter-subjectivity of SNS design mechanisms and how collective intelligence is formed and works in our era of the online social network. Diogo Kawano and Leandro Batista analyze the risk communication scenario in the section of alcoholic beverage under the perspective of Greimasian
semiotics in the paper *The Risk Communication in Latin America: a Semiotic Approach*.

Robert Hodge and Gunther Kress offer one reason why semiotics have developed so fast and expanded to so many fields of study by arguing that unlike many academic disciplines, “semiotics offers the promise of a systematic, comprehensive and coherent study of communications phenomena as a whole, not just instances of it”. Papers mentioned above, together with all other papers in this Volume, can best demonstrate this feature of semiotics, which has attracted so many outstanding scholars into this field and will keep the vigorous growth of Semiotics.

### References


Part C

Literature and Linguistics
Historical Narratives and Semiosis in Contemporary Estonian Culture

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Abstract: Historical narratives play a great role in our cultural memory and art, and also in our identity. The first aim of this paper is to analyze how different constructions of time (historical time, present, mythical and fictional time) and space (geographical, mythical and fictional) interact in historical and mythical narratives, and how these narratives influence collective cultural memory and collective identity. Another important question is how collective and individual cultural memory interact in historical and mythical narratives and in contemporary culture. The second purpose is to analyse the mechanisms of intersemiosis in historical and mythical narratives. The paper focuses on two literary works from Estonian and Finnish literature. Sofi Oksanen’s novel Purge represents historical events in Estonia after World War II, and Anton Hansen Tammsare’s play Judith interprets the apocryphal story of Judith from the Old Testament in a new way and connected Judith story with the story of Salome and the modernist discourse from the beginning of the 20th century.

Key words: historical narrative; mythical narrative; identity; contemporary literature; Estonian literature; Finnish literature; intersemiosis

There are several definitions of narrative, but I will deal with narrative as a cultural phenomenon which creates and arranges the world created by people or created by works of art (novels, paintings, movies, plays, etc.), and which includes story. Narrative is a social phenomenon where the events of story involve “showing or telling [- - -] and the selected mode for that takes place” (Cobley 2001: 6) or, in other words, narrative is “a communicative relation which is often conflated with straightforward understandings of what story is” (Cobley 2001; 2–3). According to M. Toolan, “Narrative has a function which relates to the type and extent of narrative progression. In short, narrative sets in train a motivated chain of events perceived as such by the reader/listener” (Doloughan 2011; 11).

In my opinion, narrative (especially the grand narrative) is very similar to myth; historical and mythical narratives, in particular, work as myths in some ways. The Estonian researcher Jaan Puhvel has written that a myth is not just a
story but through myth the whole society creates its own self-awareness and self-realisation, as well as explaining the essence of itself and its surroundings (Puhvel 1996: 10). There has been no culture which has not generated a set of its own unique myths. These narratives play a great role in the formation of national identity, and these myths originate and appear in the oral stage of human culture. Juri Lotman has stated the idea of myth: the mythological space is small and closed, but at the same time the story itself is about cosmic proportions, about the whole universe (Lotman 1999: 196). I think myth and national identity work in a similar way and sometimes they are intertwined; the purpose of national identity is also to create a specific world, the national space, where we can find the unique spirit and character of the nation. The specific national world is closed, is sometimes small, and the story about the nation extends far back in history. At the same time, national identity contains not only one myth, but several myths, which we call national myths. These are the narratives or “stories about who and what we are and where we come from...” (Lukas 2007: 75). And these national myths also appear in different literary texts. Or, as Stuart Hall has written in his article *The Question of Cultural Identity* (1996), one of the aspects of national identity is the narrative of a nation which exists in national narratives in literature, in media and in everyday culture. It creates a connection between stories, landscapes, historical events, national symbols etc. (Hall 1996: 613–615). Hall assigns literature a very important role in the creation process of national identity.

Literary texts have played a major role in the formation of national and cultural identity. Estonian literature is quite young and most of our early texts are connected with the construction of national identity, for example, the main aim of our epic *Kalevipoeg* (1857 – 1861), written by Friedrich Reinhold Kreutzwald, was to construct Estonian national and cultural identity, which means that a society can create its cultural memory, because some historical pictures are reinforced in the memory through literature. Literature can be one of the tools with which societies construct and interpret history and their identities, in Aleida Assmann’s sense (Assmann 2006). All these constructions are grand narratives in the context of postmodernism.

Turning to contemporary literature and narratives, they have the same or at least a similar function, but in the postmodern era these narratives are used in different ways. One literary work can use different narratives (or small narratives) side by side; sometimes these are diffuse, and they work in different ways. The main question is how these little narratives work in a literary text. Do they play with history or do they represent real history? Do they destroy grand narratives or
do they reinforce grand narratives? The meanings of narratives depend on interpretations by readers, and interaction between different components of the text (small narratives, fragments, symbols, etc.).

**Sofi Oksanen’s novel *Purge***

Sofi Oksanen (b. 1977) is a Finnish writer who has Estonian roots, and her novel *Purge*, based on a play with the same title, (2008, in Estonian 2009) has been very successful internationally; it has been translated into more than 20 languages, and it has been staged in Estonian and Finnish drama theatres, as well as in New York and London, and as an opera in Helsinki. The film based on Oksanen’s novel premiered in August 2012. *Purge* presents historical events in Estonia after World War II and events in the 1990s. The protagonists of the novel are two women of different generations. The author presents their tragic life-stories and, at the same time, interprets historical motifs which exist in our cultural memory. It is paradoxical that the novel, play and opera are very popular in many countries, but the reception has been lukewarm in Estonia.

The novel *Purge* begins with a page from Hans Pekk’s diary, which means the storyteller is a man who writes the diary. Hans Pekk is one of the protagonists in Oksanen’s novel, and he lives in a special little room, a hiding place. That page of the diary was written in May 1949. And that moment leads the reader to the historical narrative, a great historical narrative in the context of Estonian history, a narrative about the freedom of Estonia and the Soviet occupation of Estonia after World War II. The year 1949 was the time of Stalin in the Soviet Union. Estonia had lost its freedom, and the borders were closed. Hans Pekk lives in his hiding room and he does not know what has happened during the past five years. When he writes in his diary: “What’s keeping the English? And what about America? Everything’s balanced on a knife edge—nothing is certain” (Oksanen 2011: 12), he touches painful memories in readers who remember that time. It is possible that some readers read that text as a historical novel or as a novel on historical trauma.

The next chapter also presents historical time, but it is contemporary history, when Estonia regained its freedom in 1992. It was a turbulent time in the young Estonian Republic, when crime increased and people did not feel safe. The discourse of fear is permanently captured in historical narratives and stories; Aliide fears thieves and Zara fears her captors and violence, because she was a sex slave in Berlin, and her mother in Siberia, Vladivostok fears black Volga cars, because these were security agency cars in the Soviet Union which arrested and abducted
people. Both women are also the victims of sexual violence. The fear and violence connect the historical times in these stories, and fear also plays a significant role in the historical narratives in Oksanen’s novel.

Another important discourse which plays a great role in these stories is betrayal; Zara is a victim of betrayal, because her friend Oksana has betrayed her, and Aliide has betrayed her sister Ingel and her daughter Linda, both of them deported to Siberia. Betrayal is one of the main phenomena which activate events in these stories and narratives.

The text of the novel presents non-linear time; the 1940s and 1950s alternate with the 1990s, and finally all these lines of time connect at the end of the novel. It is possible to read the novel as an adventure story or as a melodrama. According to Eneken Laanes: “The melodramatic elements of the text, in aspiring towards an unequivocal moral interpretation of the world, construct a world of perpetrators and victims” (Laanes 2012).

I believe that the melodramatic elements and the thriller elements are not the dominant elements in this novel. The author begins and ends the novel with Hans Pekk’s diary, and at the end of the novel there are several fictional documents which represent the documents of the Soviet security agency (NKVD). Although all of these are fictional situations and documents, they create an impression that all these events are real. Oksanen plays with fictional and real worlds, imitates the real world, and she uses fiction to talk about real historical events, possible events in the context of national history. Although it is a novel, it describes our real history and it is possible to read it as a historical novel. Another important element which makes historical narrative the dominant one is the quotes from the Estonian poet Paul-Eerik Rummo at the beginning of every chapter of the novel. Rummo is one of the major authors of the Estonian poetry innovation of the 1960s. These verses by Rummo are from the collection Sender’s Address and Other Poems, 1968 – 1972, which was banned for a long time during the Soviet period; some poems were published in 1985, but the full collection was published in 1989.

Turning to another medium, in the film Purge, which premiered in August 2012, the emphasis is on another place; the film begins with the episode where Zara escapes, runs into the woods and falls down in front of Aliide’s house. And the film also ends with Zara; at the end of the film, she smiles as she leaves Aliide’s house, and her money and her passport are in her hand. She is happy and free, and also safe. Aliide’s house, full of dead bodies, is on fire, and smoke is visible from a distance. That scene in the film gives a different meaning to the narrative, and it is much more melodramatic than the novel. The story of Zara shows violence in Berlin
at the beginning of the 1990s. The film combines the memories of the two protagonists, Aliide’s memories of the 1940s and Zara’s memories from the beginning of the 1990s. The main message of the film is opposition to violence, especially sexual violence against women.

However, the historical facts are not the most important elements in this novel; rather, the feeling of horror and fear which characterized that historical time is the main thing that Oksanen presents in her work. And that is the reason why the scenes of violence do not seem exaggerated; these episodes are not presented just as isolated acts of violence, but they also present the atmosphere of fear. People who live under violence and permanent fear may behave unpredictably, and that situation is also a touchstone for how strong a person is. The protagonist Aliide was not strong enough during the Stalin time, but she changes during the novel and she is strong when she meets Zara and her captors; Aliide’s character develops during the story. The episode when Paša and Lavrenti (Lavrenti was also Beria’s first name, an instance of Oksanen mixing different historical narratives symbolically; the name Lavrenti connects different times in this novel) come to Aliide’s house to catch Zara is very significant:

“There was a knock at the door. Commanding blows. The blow of a man used to giving commands. [- - -] A man greeted her. Behind him stood another man, older, who also greeted her, and Aliide smelled the scent of a KGB officer… Aliide started to breathe through her mouth. She knew men like these. Men with that kind of posture, men who know how to punish a woman, and they were here to get a woman, and punish her. People with an insolent bearing, who smile broadly with their cap visors level, knowing that no one can deny them what they want. The kind of people who wear boots to trample anyone who gets in their way” (Oksanen 2011; 229–230).

Aliide no longer experiences fear in this situation, because her body had “got old enough. Old enough that no one would ever bother her the way they did in the town hall” (Oksanen 2011; 229).

Historical narratives play a major role in our cultural memory and art, and also in our identity. Oksanen’s novel reminds us of our tragic history, activating our memory, but at the same time it also destroys our great national narrative, which was established after World War II. Eneken Laanes has written: “…the debate on Purge brought to the fore the differences in the interpretation of World War II and its aftermath in post-Soviet Estonia, not only between the ethnic communities in the country, but within the Estonian community itself, in particular with regard to whether or not the memories of ethnic minorities deserve a place in the Estonian
collective memory” (Laanes 2012: 20). The reception of Purge has been contradictory in Estonia: some critics believe that Oksanen shows life in the Soviet Union as too tragic and too full of fear, that the life in the Soviet Union was more varied, not merely full of violence. Still, Sirje Olesk has compared Purge to an ancient Greek tragedy; it is a great story about love, passion, betrayal and redemption written in a somewhat high style (Olesk 2010: 477).

The protagonist Aliide also represents the typical Estonian peasant who loves her land and farm and woods (Olesk 2010: 480). This type of protagonist belongs to our grand national narrative.

Oksanen’s novel offers several possibilities for interpretation and for reading; it does not provide final meanings, and the work falls into the serious historical genre, while some aspects make it possible to read as a melodramatic story or a thriller.

Anton Hansen-Tammsaare’s Judith

Another example of how historical and mythical narratives are used in contemporary culture is Tammsaare’s play Judith.

Anton Hansen-Tammsaare (1878–1940) was a major Estonian epic writer and playwright. His play Judith (1921) interprets the apocryphal story of Judith from the Old Testament in a new way and connects the Judith story with the story of Salome and the modernist discourse from the beginning of the 20th century. Tammsaare’s Judith has attained a different meaning than existed in the original text based on an apocryphal story. It is significant that every director has given his/her own interpretation to that apocryphal narrative when staging Tammsaare’s play. Although it is not a historical story, it contains historical elements from the first century BC, and it is also very significant that the text is connected with the Old Testament, although it is not a canonical text. Judith is a story about a hero who brings freedom to the Jews in Petulia. The story of Judith belongs to the grand narrative, as is true of most literary works based on original apocryphal stories. The mixture of history and apocrypha makes Tammsaare’s play meaningful in the present time. Other examples of this mixture are Friedrich Hebbel’s drama Judith (1840) and paintings by Botticelli, Mantegna, Michelangelo and Rubens. Tammsaare gave new meaning to the old story because he focused on the psychology of Judith as a woman in the context of Freudian psychology and biology; both of them were grand narratives at the beginning of the 20th century. In the play, Tammsaare destroys the grand narrative of Judith, and presents her as a passionate woman in love who acts on her passion, and he uses another narrative for that deconstruction. In the
postmodern era, Tammsaare’s play has been produced more playfully and liberally than it was in the 1920s. The question of whether Judith is a hero or just a passionate murderer lives on. It is the same question that we can ask about Oksanen’s work *Purge*: is Aliide Truu a victim, a murderer or a hero?

### References


Cross-media Integration of Literature and Dance

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Abstract: How can we achieve the cross-media integration of literature and dance? Here I refer not only to literary works adapted for dramatic dance, but also to the literature which absorbs the essential elements of dance into its narratives and in so doing stimulates new areas of the reader’s imagination. For example, Blood Carmen, the novel by Hong Kong writer Huang Biyun, combines the rhythm and beat of literature with that of flamenco dance into a unified whole, tapping out a unique artistic form (We should note that Huang Biyun is not only a novelist but also a flamenco dancer who has studied in Spain for several years.). Through a careful reading of this novel I identify three key characteristics of its fusion of literary narrative with flamenco dance. First, the form of dance is blended into the form of language in order to create a unified, dynamic narrative. The author takes the essential qualities of flamenco—its driving rhythms and tapping tempo, its dynamic imagery and composition—and integrates them into her prose. Thus, we have the fast, urgent cut of space and time, the interwoven narratives of plots, as well as numerous and varied characters—all adding up to a kind of literary embodiment of the polyphonic music form. Second, literary style is blended with the style of dance. Spanish flamenco is famously known for its outward passion, vigor and dynamism. However, it is also an art form requiring tremendous internal forbearance and restraint on the part of the dancer. In a similar vein, Blood Carmen may appear at times to be characterized by lightness in form and tone; however, the work is ultimately constrained, cold, impassive, and deeply concerned about the hardships of human existence. The narrative style of the novel thus employs what we may call “unspoken speech” as dancing and writing are infused with elements of paradox, optimism and disillusionment, reality and fantasy, action and stillness, extroversion and introversion. Third, the author, through her portrayal of the dancers’ lives, expertly evokes aspects of the unspeakable painful life often brings. Flamenco is expressive of certain conditions of life through dancers’ fierce concentration and movement; similarly, Blood Carmen expresses aspects of life through a violent, obscure and crushing style. Influenced by the rhythms and vicissitudes of life the author conveys of the unspeakable pain involved in survival; in her portrayal of dance in Blood Carmen, the author not only depicts the love, hate and physical pain felt by the female dancers, but also adeptly evokes the confusion and disillusionment they feel while living on the edge of this psychological state. Thus, Huang delves into deeper questions regarding the meaning of life itself. Whether ordinary dancers or a “dancing queen,” in Blood Carmen
performers experience a profound emptiness in their lives. In a larger sense, there are bloody “holes” within us all, and so we can never find complete security for the soul. In this way, Huang Biyun’s own soul resonates with flamenco both as an accident and, in a larger sense, as a kind of inevitability. And from this deep, personal experience she has given us new possibilities for the cross-media narrative.

**Key words:** cross-media; integration; literature and dance; *Blood Carmen*

How can we achieve cross-media integration of literature and dance? One possible scenario is for dance to borrow from literature. There have been such experiments in Hong Kong since the 1980s, one of which was the dance drama *Wu Wen* (The Literature of Dancing). Mei Zhuoyan, the dancer, impresses the audience with her role as the heroine “Cui Cui” in the novel *Bian Cheng* (The Border Town) and “Lan Tianyu” in *You Yuan Jing Meng* (Sweet Dream in the Garden) coming to one. The last scene of the drama is an adaptation from Professor Leung Ping-kwan’s *Shi You* (Journey of a Poet), which features dancers walking through the snow-covered land with modern Russian music in the background. Lu Weili, a dance critic, studied over 30 dance dramas produced in Hong Kong, among which are Li Haining’s interpretation of the classic *Jiu Ge* (Nine Songs) by Qu Yuan in 1991, then another adaptation from Calvino’s novel *Invisible Cities* into dance drama *The Invisible Cities* in 1995. Mei Zhuoyan’s *Hua Zang* (Funeral of Flowers) in 2001, which is inspired by *A Dream of Red Mansion*, is also a good example. Still another pioneering experiment is the dance *Er Xing Huan Ying* (Shadow-boxing of Two Figures), in which dance is a tool to Zen and the wheelchair is a stage for “writing with the feet”. This dance portrays a dialectic understanding of dreams and reality through dramatic reading of Chinese classic poetry and Can Can dance, separated by a folding screen. The unique aesthetic value is reflected in the combination of the modern and the traditional, the east and the west.

Another way of integration is for literature to absorb the essential elements of dance into its narratives and in so doing stimulates new areas of the reader’s imagination. Hong Kong writer Huang Biyun combines the rhythm of literature with that of dance into a unified whole, tapping out a unique artistic form. Huang, a dancer herself, performed the solo dance *Narrative of a Woman* in 1986 and published the book *Yang Mei Nv Zi* (Pride of a Woman) in 1987, both constituting

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to her stunning debut in the artistic world. Almost ten of her literary works were published before she took to learning Flamenco in Sevilla of Spain, after the final appearance in Hong Kong theatre production of Mei Xing Zhe (Walking in Enchantment) in 2000. Wu Ai Ji (Loveless) and Xue Ka Men (Blood Carmen) were published after her time in Spain. She resumed her training in Spain, though, after the publication of Hou Zhi Min Zhi (Post-Colonialism) in 2003.

Blood Carmen is a 14-chapter saga similar in structure to her previous work Lie Nv Tu (Legends of Virtuous Women). Both are collections of female legends and the materials echo with one another to create a resonating effect. The first 4 chapters tell the stories of many flamenco dancers. The next 4 chapters tell stories of dancers by describing such symbols of dance as the dance music, a red dancing shoe, blood green and bright yellow dance dresses. Chapter 9 to 12 describe body language expressed with the face, hands, feet and back. The last 2 chapters, Blood Wedding (Bodas de sangra) and Carmen turn the classic love tragedy dance into the story about a certain man “K”, thus setting the traditional dance drama into the real life tragedy and achieving intercontextuality. This paper takes three perspectives to analyze the fusion of literary narratives with elements of dance in Blood Carmen.

Fusion of Body Language and Literary Language

Having been submerged in the essential elements of dance, Huang Biyun gives in Blood Carmen the innovative presentation of dance moves and tempos in her narratives. She seeks in her work the style of flamenco and creates a stage for the dance of words.

First, the integration of the beauty of dance and poetic language.

Dance presents the stretches of space and the flow of time. It is poetry and painting in one. Time, power and space are what keep dance alive. Flamenco is

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melodic like poetry, so are the words in Blood Carmen. Here are the words
describing Camellia’s feeling about Antonio’s dance, “like a giant soaring bird. The
mountains show a great divide and gusts of wind come through. A waterfall in the
storm. A baby breaks away from the womb. The most passionate affection. The
sweetest sugarcane wine aged 50 years would not taste as sweet as his dance” (p. 56).
Even homely girls don’t seem mediocre when they dance. “A turn, a jeté, a kick...
like the notes that wouldn’t leave the strings of the violin, like the tango on an
accordion, and the prayers in the cathedral at midnight” (p. 84). These poetic words
match perfectly with the beauty of dance. In a flamenco dance one hears guitarists
playing, singers clapping and dancers dancing, all in souls achieving perfect
interaction and resonance. Such is the growing affection between the dancer Lotus
and singer Ernesto in the novel, with no need for verbal communication. “She
dances to seduce, like cherries of June, like quietness in the scorching sun.” “His
singing is mild when her dance is slow, violent when it is fast, frivolous when it is
sensual.” (p. 19) When she sees him again, “it is already the season of orange
blossom. Mandarin ducks swim on the river. The day gets brighter.” (p. 20) In the
end, when she breaks up with him for his promiscuity, “Lotus tiptoes as cunningly
as a fox”. She raises her hands, and there is the flamenco dance.” (p. 24) The
romance in the novel resonates with the singing and dancing and acquires the
qualities of poetry and music.

Second, the resonation of dance beats and verse style.

Flamenco, without accompaniment, is melodious in itself. The dancer’s feet
move like percussion, her body, rhythms. Here a billowing of the skirts, a turn, or
a stamping of the feet. Most movements are resolute, with occasional slow ones.
Similar to these are the narrations in Blood Carmen. They are like sketches and
dancing figures, at times showing themselves in gentleness, other times definite and
resolute. The sentences are mainly short and abrupt, consisting of only several
characters. There are abundant lines in verse, with words of implication and
intensity, which are more than meets the eye. Description of dance tempos is
frequent in the book. “Soleá and alegrías in flamenco are both 12-beat. Waiting for
entrance, the dancer freezes herself, her chest protruding and her face looking
upwards. She is so focused that it is hard to tell whether she is happy or sad. The
12th meter begins now!” (p.3) “Dum! Dum-dum-dum! Dum-dee-dum-dee-dum! The
stamps and heartbeats of Chieiko when she sees her sweetheart Shan Shu holding
hands with Wei Yang.” (p. 88) “—| o—| o—| o—| o—|” (p. 8), this is how
the feet stamp and how they tap. The verse pattern echoes with the beats of the
dance, which is most evident in the 11 poems from the last 2 chapters, Blood
Wedding and Carmen, then again in the very brief lines about “hands and feet” from chapter 10 and 11. The lines in verse entitled Hands (p. 130) talk about “hands of a quiet woman: rough, worn, yet powerful. They descend from above her head, seemingly to compress the air, which is as thick as water in the imagination of the dancer. Or the hands may rise, like a dolphin hitting the sky”. Then there is the part entitled Feet (p. 134), “the Enchanting Walker wonders how much longer you have to travel before returning to where you started. She very often seeks the womb that has gone rotten, once rampant with maggots and fire. The Enchanting Walker says she wants to take and reject, but is always followed by them. Words, she says. How I hate China, how I hate the ideas of nations, regions, sexes, ideologies, identities, transformations and histories. How I hate life! And how difficult it is to die in the right time.” The poetic language beats in tune with the body language of the dance, embodying the exaltation, the distress, the excitement and exhaustion, the love and hate of the heart. The heavy words are interwoven with the mercurial dance movements.

Third, the synchronization of the dance movements and the free narratives.

Movements are what defines a dance. The four key elements of dance movements are choreography, dynamics, tempos and motives. Ballet dance is characterized by openness, tension and straightness, whereas Chinese classic dance is characterized by smoothness, curviness and withdrawal. Flamenco dance, different from either, is highly dynamic. The movements of the body express the dancer’s emotions such as joy, exaltation, sadness and melancholy. The highly free expressiveness of flamenco fits right into the dreams of Huang Biyun. At the time she was in a desperate search for a breakthrough from traditional narratives. Upon first reading, the narratives in Blood Carmen may strike readers as broken and fragmented, but this is a deliberate act on the part of the writer, who really integrated the tempos of dance into the novel. The dynamics of flamenco help forge the uniquely unconventional narratives, making words as dynamic as dance and emotions they carry as streaming as rivers.

Changeable and shifting narrative dimension. Blood Carmen is mainly structured according to the individual reflections of different dancers on life instead of plots. In the first chapter, the writer starts with Barbara teaching Lola to dance, then moves to Lola’s slow learning, leading to her recollection on the simplistic philosophy that her father, a man nurse of psychiatry has preached after seeing so many cases of mental disorder. Then there’s the story of Fernando who finally gave up on the idea of suicide because he figured out that “life is too much of a joke for something as serious as suicide”, or simply because he was overdosed. After this the
narration shifts back to Barbara’s teaching, when Lola associated the slow dance to slow death and her impatient grandma upon deathbed. The narratives in the book are changeable and shifting, defying linear logic. Everything seems like fragments of memories, altogether reproducing the disillusionment of the dancers. Just as dancers accumulating strength through slow motions and leaps, so are the words gathering grief through wordless blanks.

Fragmented and interwoven stories. *Blood Carmen* presents the dancers’ stories in a jigsaw puzzle way. There are separate chapters devoted to individual stories as well as ones scattered with fragments. The texts are therefore intricately interwoven with each other. For instance, the story of dancer Lourdes is told in a separate chapter, but the name also appears elsewhere such as “My name is Lola, not Lourdes”; and again when Anna thinks that “even a dancer as good as Lourdes can only give performances in small theatres and sleazy bars.” In the chapter *As Green As You Like It*, “I” got to know a lot of flamenco dancers in Sevilla by working in a dancing dress shop. In this way dancers including Lola and Lourdes are presented one after another in quick sketches. These flamenco dancers appear to be irrelevant, but they all belong to the same group of “soul dancers”, seeking soul asylum from flamenco.

Varied narrators. The book presents the revelations and lives of the dancers in third person or omniscient narration, while telling the non-dancers’ stories in the first person. Sometimes the two cross over. The first chapter about dancer Lola starts by exploring the secrets in her hearts in omniscient narration, ends with first person narration: “I have never seen Lola again. She didn’t come to class anymore. Perhaps her dancing days are over.” Apparently the persons are mixed up here. But it should be noted that “I” in the book serves not only as the narrator and a dancer, but also as the one connecting all the dots. The use of the first person in this chapter indicates that even the story-teller “I” cannot access Lola’s inner world any more. Indeed, however close to everyone the narrator is to their creations, “one’s body is familiar to oneself only, never really coming close to others”. Words of wisdom are
scattered across the book, consummating to truth about life. The words of Huang Biyun defy the conventions of narratives and seem to be always striving out of the ordinary to achieve as much as the beauty of dancing.

Interlacing monologues. This is mostly seen in chapter 5 Soleá, Soleá, where two monologues are arranged together, the speakers not specified. This deliberate obstacle poses a challenge to readers. Eventually they figure out that these are interlacing monologues of two women, Mei and the Japanese woman Chieiko, both voiced by “I”. The two heart-felt monologues are largely independent from each other, with occasional connections, but overall questions with no answers or vice versa. Mei has been in a 10-year homosexual relationship with Ning Jing. The latter then cheated on Mei with other men and left Mei devastated. Not even the affection of Ming, Ning Jing’s lover, could ease her pain. She sees no other way to heal the wound but to travel to a strange land where she met Chieiko, a woman deprived of love for her ugliness. Compared to the suffering of Chieiko, Mei made peace with her own fate. The two women, deliberately unidentified by the writer, are spiritually one.

As far as the dynamic narrative form is concerned, Blood Carmen resembles very much a flamenco dance. Huang’s narratives seek order in the orderless to present deeper messages and greater emotional depth, at the same time engaging readers in the tension jointly created by body and verbal languages.

### Interaction of Literary Style and Dance Style

The early style of Huang Biyuan’s novels was violent and bloody, closely resembling that of Baudelaire. “Les Fleurs Du Mal” of the city and of humanity was her favorite subject matter. Her favorite scenarios feature blood, madness, violence and death. Her early works were marked with wild imagination of death and violence and stunning presentation of vileness. More recent works of Huang, however, are more obscure and with holding, comparable to flamenco dance which is outwardly passionate but inwardly inhibited. The language in Blood Carmen is cold and emotionless in appearance but focused and engaging in essence. Both dance and words are paradoxical in the violence and disillusionment, reality and illusion, motions and stillness, wildness and inhibition.

Flamenco dance is kinesic. It is powerful and dynamic. The dance movements are centrifuged and radiant like star rays. The dancer’s limbs are fully stretched as if separating from the torso. The flesh and soul of the dancer swell as the dancer performs the movements by stretching. The free and passionate leaps symbolize the
thirst for heaven and search for a new horizon. Japanese dance, on the other hand, is essentially steady. This can be seen from three movements. The first is known as “taking corner”, when the dancer circles the stage. The second is “folding feet”, when the dancer walks without taking the feet off the ground. Still the third one is “backflash” or stamping, when the dancer steps to keep rhythm, a movement symbolizing love for the earth. “Eastern dances feature centrifuged movements. The dancers wrap their bodies with their arms. Every movement is towards the centre and focusing on one point.” Flamenco dancers, however, make a point to avoid these floppy movements and slow tempo music, as they would take away the whole beauty. Dancers would pause, of course, but only to store up more energy to move even harder.

These characteristics of flamenco are reflected in Blood Carmen. The paradoxical narratives serve to lead readers to epiphany. While dancing the dancer’s elbow may rise, but the shoulder must at the same time descend. The torso may rise, but the feet must remain on the ground. The upper body may be still, but the feet must scurry. The fight between different parts of the body gives it tension and makes it beautiful. A flamenco dance appears gorgeous, but the dancer must learn to appreciate the inner fight, for the fight is the way to achieve true harmony of dancing.

The first half of Blood Carmen is written at a slow pace, telling the depression of regular women. The first one is Lola, who seemed indifferent towards everything, not in any hurry or delay, peacefully passes through life. Then there’s Lourdes, whose endurance through a hard life builds up her passion. Her love for Ernesto is calm and tender, but passionate and dignified. She suffers the most because she cannot handle the women around her lover, or the fact that he is bound to leave. This suffering is the soul of the flamenco dance. The third woman, Anna, was suddenly attacked by a loss of meaning as she forgot her destination while waiting for a bus. Her life was thus on hold, waiting to take a crucial turn. The rhythm of flamenco is mercurial, so is the mood of the dancer. The overacted kinesic language and different facial expressions are really interpretations of the emotions of the dancer. The same thing can be said about the language in the book, which is just as mercurial to explore the inner worlds of the characters with strength and power.

The second half of Blood Carmen gives more intense accounts adapted from Carmen and Bodas de Sangre and is focused on the legendary love stories. Of these the story in The Red Dancing Shoe is as complex as a detective story, revealing the secret of a red dance shoe found in “My grandpa’s shop”. “I” asked “mother” and
the cobbler and his son, and got a name, Mary Luisa. Later at a ball, “I” noticed an elderly woman swiftly avoiding me. Then Carmen told “me” that the woman had been a flamenco dancer before. Her lover cheated on her with someone else, which led to a huge fight between the two. The woman in fury was caught in an accident and lost a leg. As it turned out, her cheating boyfriend was none other than “My grandpa”. Another story is entitled As Green As You Like It. A Basque woman by the name of Ursula was trained to be a terrorist and is wanted by the police. Like every other unhappy woman who finds joy in impulsive shopping, the tough-minded woman bought a flamenco dress with the color of burning green. In the end she was penetrated by bullets and died in green blood. These unyielding women are incarnations of flamenco’s Carmen.

Carmen, Bodas de sangre and El Amor Brujo are considered three masterpieces of flamenco. The image of Carmen has long been the symbol of the persistent struggle against one’s fate. Carmen’s dancing and singing are acts of defiance against outrageous laws, military rules, imprisonment and other misfortunes. Carlos Saura’s 1983 film Carmen tells a story of real life dancers overlapped with the dance drama Carmen, creating a form of narratives which magnifies the theme of the dance drama to fit the real life. The line between drama and reality is blurred. Passionate flamenco rhythm accompanies dramatic conflicts, a combination extremely entertaining and appealing to the general viewers.

Huang Biyun, however, rewrote the classics and replaced all the original heroines with a man named K. In her Blood Wedding, Bi, the bride, bled at her wedding and a bastard child was born at the altar. A few years later the child died before Bina divorced her husband and changed her name to Nora and remarried. It was K who got Bina pregnant and abandoned her afterwards. K then married others, and had three children. He cannot remember the faces of many women he has been with, nor would he like to know anything about his kids because apparently, kids are the women’s problems. There is a hole in K’s heart, bound to open sometime. Later K passed by a church and fainted while a wedding was on. Before he died, K remembered another man Ah Liang, with whom he had gone swimming in Deep Water Bay, and for whom, upon death, he had helped to trim the nails.

More stories about K are in the chapter Carmen. “There are two women in K’s life—Carmen and Carmen. One is as bitter as honey, the other is as sweet as gall.” Now the readers learn that Carmen is the name for both a mother and her daughter, both of whom are lovers of K. Mother Carmen would make bloody steak for all, calling it the memory of a matador who died with guts hanging out of his belly. K
used to be picked on and hurt by girls. His classmate from primary school by the name of Leocadio would laugh at him. “One day you’ll die because of them”, he’d say. But the truth is Leocadio eventually escaped with a large sum of legacy that K is heir to. K was shot by a burglar while seeking prostitution. Many recollections came to K before he died; his sister in Hong Kong called to tell him, crying all the time, that she just gave birth to a baby. She cried because she realized that somehow she had to be responsible for someone else’s pains. A witch wrote to him. The ghost of K, as the witch wrote, dances with the ghost of writing, and has intercourse. As if seduced by the devil, K lived his life in sins and miseries. The gesture he died in bears remarkable resemblance to flamenco dance. Story of K gives us the idea that behind every Carmen, there are men like K who inflict varied pains. And the spirit of flamenco is not only a salvation for Carmen-like women, but also a funeral for K-like men.

Dance is a mobile sculpture. The dynamics of flamenco must come from the dancer’s surging force, vigorous passion and swift paces. On close observation one will notice the dancer’s wry eyebrows and sullen and stern face. With daunting looks and disdainful moves, the dancer interprets the theme of power display, evasion and struggling. From the peacock hand to the wiggly waist, from tapping of the feet to spinning of the body, every movement is the expression of passion and power, and a force so suddenly leashed out after slow and steady accumulation of the inner feelings. The dancer is forceful when moving, yet at times tender. Wrapped in voile-like fabric of sharp contrast of black and red, she gives rein to the bitterness and pain inside by swirling the enormous skirt and stamping hard on the ground. While doing so, she becomes the shadow of her feet and her skirt, a metaphor for the shadow of death in the passionate pursuit of life. The tension between softness and violence is heightened in the dance, as if one were seeking a moment of ecstasy and glory upon perishing, something in the same spirit as the Carnival.

It takes force to be moving and just as much to be still. A dimension is thus created. It is easy to lose control in a stricken world. The challenge is to keep control. “It is not hard to gain speed, but to slow down. To accept slow death and gentle entrance is the real ordain.” (p. 9) “The greatest difficulty in flamenco is to keep it slow. It is not easy slowly raising the hands, bending the body and stretching it open. The body aches when doing all these slowly, for slow movements are the most intense.” (p. 36) Secrets are formed out of the unspeakable and perceptions come from loneliness. Loneliness, bitterness and isolation are slowly experienced. Symbolic dance is considered the highest form of dances and those prone to it is like a living sculpture. Arnheim came up with the term “Kinesthetic Amoeba” to
describe “dynamic body figures without any contour lines”. The heart of the dancer should be one with the surroundings and with the dance. Different from Huang’s earlier works whose narrative styles are rampant and poignant, Blood Carmen appears to be more withheld and inhibited, exerting touching effects with implying, estranging and hesitant language so as to create from calmness more room for reflection. The contrast between tension and tenderness is born out of her usual style of “gentleness and violence”. By doing so Huang has made a breakthrough in the cross-media narration of literature and dance. The interaction between dancing and writing is vivid not only in the unconventional choice of subject matters and subtle delivery of materials, but also in the fusion of literary narratives and kinesic narratives in terms of structure and style.

**Pain and Suffering of a Writer and a Dancer**

Why dance? Why exile herself from words? Obviously, words alone are not as good an outlet for Huang Biyun to say what’s on her mind. It is through dancing, flamenco, that she finds a way to soothe the beast inside her. “Sweating and sore feet are as real as rain, words, by contrast, are just illusion.” (p. 2) One recalls a Russian dancer’s answer to the question “what does your dance mean?”; “If I could let you know with simple words, do you think I’d still be dancing this much?”

Both a dancer and a writer, Huang Biyun is well aware of the complementary effects of kinesic expression and verbal communication and the paradox of attraction and repelling between the two. “I try to feel the movements with my body and extend my perceptions as far as possible. I know how hard closeness is to get because I have been there. And I feel the difficulty precisely because I have tried searching for it.” Dance is a physical art, and as French thinker Cixous observed, women need to write with their physical selves to find language exclusive to them. What Huang does, is to use both dance and literature to set herself free and speak to the world. Cassirer put it best when he said that artists set themselves free through pains and humiliation and transform immense brutality andatrocity into the proudest freedom in our hearts inaccessible any other way.

So what pains has Huang Biyun been through in her life? Huang was born into a single family in 1961 and grew up in Hong Kong in its peaceful times. Her early

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life, however, was not as peaceful. Domestic violence, in the form of a cruel and unpredictable father, has haunted her for a long time, so much so that she still has nightmares in which her father threatens to beat her to death. To overcome fear, she keeps reminding herself that even back from the grave now, the old man would be well over 80 and with a durian she could have put him back where he belongs. This sensitive and rebellious girl spent a brief period in Jing Mei Women’s High School in Taiwen and finished her undergraduate studies in the Journalism Department of Chinese University of Hong Kong. After graduation she worked for 6 years as a reporter, paying multiple visits to Vietnam, Northern Thailand, Bangladesh and Laos, where she experienced wars and their victims and had better idea of the pains and suffering of the human world. In 1995 she graduated from the Criminology Institute in Department of Sociology of Hong Kong University, later earned a law diploma from HKU in 1998 and became a certified lawyer in 2003. As if life was not full enough, she was also a student majoring in French in University of Paris 1 Pantheon-Sorbonne, an assistant to a legislator and owner of a fashion shop. She started to learn dancing in Spain shortly after leaving her job at a law firm in London. To make up for the inadequacies of flamenco, she also took to learning modern dance and ballet. In short, rich career experiences, diversified artistic interests and extensive world travelling together forged her easiness in cross-media and inter-disciplinary endeavors.

But why flamenco of all dance forms? Ballet and waltz may be for those born with silver spoons, but flamenco is the one for survivors of life’s ordeals. In the words of Leila, “this is it.” As she approached middle age, Huang Biyun discovered the connection flamenco has with her soul. The moment of that revelation must have sent shiver down her spine. As a Spanish dance form, flamenco originated from Andalusia where East meets West, as a cry for the deprived and miserable life of the gypsies. Modern flamenco is completed with essence of Tango from Argentina and the Gypsy Romani from Hungary. A flamenco dancer is cold and indifferent, but also tender and suggestive, enough to stir up all the emotions one can perceive and push one to the limit. The dancer walks on the edge of life and death, just like a matador, and presents to the viewers the passion, struggle and cries for life.

The art of dancing is Huang Biyun’s addiction. To her, dancing is both the supreme form of beauty reproduction from which she finds ultimate relief, and a quest into the depths of the monstrous world for a reason for all the suffering. She learned from dancing that true happiness hardly lies in the vitality of life, but in the inevitable disillusionment. Blood Carmen ends with the 11th poem, “I was
abandoned that year and came to South America... I felt like doing a dance... if my soul is still with me, what’s left of it must collide. I cannot explain how I made the decision. But for a woman like me, past her prime time, perishing is something not to be afforded...” Disillusionment and dance, writing and dancing, memory and oblivion, they cannot live with each other, nor can they live without each other. In the end everything vanishes to nothingness. Huang cannot stop dancing to her dreams, like the girl from fairy tale who, upon wearing the red dancing shoes, has to keep dancing to exhaustion. Her raised head says dignity, confidence and that she will not go without a fight. Softness and violence, fighting each other yet staying close, like water and fire, are Huang’s life. Thus is the world of Huang Biyun, comprehensible only to the minds that have suffered as much.

Flamenco is a passageway not only to Huang’s relief from pains, but also to her perception of others’ suffering. Huang is not the only woman suffering from unspeakable bitterness and distress of the soul. Women’s suffering has always been brushed off in traditional literature. Huang tried to do justice to women by telling their own pains. In the novel Lola frequently experiences emptiness, which matches the part when she found her fallen teeth in the dancing room and the big cavities. She was often mistaken for someone named Lourdes. She was not very intelligent, failing three times to gain university admission. Her parents, on different shifts at work, were hardly ever around. Their love, if any, was never on duty. Girls with cavities cannot even die hard. Lola finally gave up dancing. Lourdes, on the other hand, is an expert in pains. She had menstrual pain as early as when she was 14. When learning flamenco she had sore feet. Her hands were wet and bled from clapping. Everything of any profundity always has something to do with pains. Pains are as unexplainable as dance, and as physical as dance, too. Only those acquainted with pains can excel at flamenco. German woman Leila tried to understand time with reason and inhibition. She has been so independent and penetrating since childhood that her single mother would take her to see a psychiatrist. The shrink then suggested that she take to artistic work as a cure, which brought her to the dancing world. She believes herself to be her own master and therefore turned down the lesbian Georgia, but suffered loneliness and regret when Georgia found someone else. Anna, another German woman so tall that she can “raise her arm to touch the sky and lower her head to see the entire human race”. Her younger brother, a cross-dresser, learned the suffering of being a woman in the hard way—by being sexually assaulted. He then stopped dressing in women’s clothes and went off to a military school to be a soldier. Anna, on the other hand, lives the life of a regular man. She went to college in US before moving to London
and became a researcher. She has three relationships, with three men all named Michael. At one point she lost direction and realized that she needed a gesture, which took her to Spain and to flamenco. Her height, however, restricted her from developing the bouncing charm of a little girl. She then went off to Finland, where her height is not an issue and her self-pity gone forever. Another name. Camellia, literally name of a flower, is considered queen of flamenco. Camellia was born into a dancing family, but oddly illiterate. She had been obsessed with Antonio’s dancing but eventually became his reject. The richest man in Florence pursued her and failed, thus the legend of dance over money. Later when her adaptation of Carmen was ill-received, she resorted to marihuana for relief. Bodas de Sangre was her last appearance on the grand stage. Camellia’s later life involved a country singer who lost his voice because of laryngocarcinoma. An attachment developed between the singer without his voice and the dancer without her dance. Soon a tumor struck her and she went back alone to her birthplace, waiting for the glorious end of her life.

The complete expression through dancing and the profound self-examination of the soul go together in the novel. The tone of *Blood Carmen* is grieving dark rather than intensified red. Sadness is in every word. The deepest grief is transformed by the writer into hopes for the hopeful women. “What people forget, the hopeful women pick up on their shoulders. They bear the loss of all hopes and tramp on the earth. Thus is the enchanting walking.” (p. 120) Huang Biyun also constructs the image of a soul collector, who collects the shadows of trees, rivers, bridges and passers-by. The souls, however, are not a beer’s worth. The only shadows that he cannot collect are those of dancers, for every dancing figure is in such quick motion. These shadows are angry, quiet, exalting, rejoicing, seducing, lingering, confused, suffering, restless and charging. “The beauty and passion last but a few minutes. The dancing stage is even more unreal than shadows. It is the shadow of a shadow of a shadow, so overlapped that it becomes darkness.” (p. 138) How can a collector handle such souls?

Flamenco dance interprets life in a wild, focused and powerful way. The novel does so in a radical, veiled and fragmented fashion. *Blood Carmen* is a portrait of dance, a perception of the pace of life and an account of the unspeakable pains of living. Presented in the book are the love and pains, emotionally and physically, of the women dancers, their confusion of living on the edge of bewilderment and disillusionment, as well as their search for the meaning of existence and point of life. There is a bloody hole in all of these women, dancing queen or otherwise. Something is missing from all of their lives and they can find nowhere to shelter their souls. It seems accidentally inevitable, then, that flamenco speaks to all of
them. Anyone can be a flamenco dancer, and the best of them are the mix of masculinity and femininity. In Iranian director Abbas Kiarostami’s films, the tastes of mulberry and cherry can save the souls of suicidal men. Flamenco in *Blood Carmen*, instilling power in the troubled women, seems to work the same charm. The boiling blood and anger are given an outlet and women find relief and freedom from their shackles. Huang Biyun’s brilliant work has established flamenco dance as the exotic cure for independent women everywhere.
Self-regulation of Literary Symbols

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Abstract: Literary symbols, a complex structure existing in the literary activities of specific historical time and space, are formed by two fundamental structural levels, literary technique and literary style. The basic mode of the literary symbol is \(((\text{ERC}^1 \text{RC}^1 \text{RC}^2 \text{RC}^3 \text{RC}^4 \text{RC}^5) \text{RC}^6 \text{RC}^7 \text{RC}^8, \text{RC}^9\)), where E is the signifier of the symbol which means the voice of the natural languages; C is the signified of the symbol which means the meaning of the natural languages; R represents the relationship between E and C. ERC is the natural language symbol formed by the interaction between the voice and meaning of the natural language. When ERC itself as a symbol signifier involves in the bigger structural formation while keeping its structural boundary and transformation law, C^i stands for the indivisible literary imaginary figure, and the interaction of ERC and C^i forms the minimal literary technique \(((\text{ERC}) \text{RC}^i) \text{RC}^2\), which is the first structural transformation process and result of literary symbol-structure, reflecting the transformation from the natural language symbol toward the literary expressing symbol. When (\text{ERC}) \text{RC}^i itself as a symbol signifier, C^i stands for integrated literary imaginary figure, the interaction of (\text{ERC}) \text{RC}^i and C^i forms the simple integrated literary technique \(((\text{ERC}) \text{RC}^i) \text{RC}^2\), which is the second structural transformation process and result of literary symbols. When (\text{ERC}) \text{RC}^i itself as a symbol signifier, C^i stands for textual literary imaginary figure, the interaction of (\text{ERC}) \text{RC}^i and C^i forms the textual literary technique \(((\text{ERC}) \text{RC}^i) \text{RC}^2) \text{RC}^3\), which is the third structural transformation process and result of literary symbol. When (\text{ERC}) \text{RC}^i \text{RC}^i itself as a symbol signifier, C^i stands for textual imaginary space, the interaction of (\text{ERC}) \text{RC}^i \text{RC}^i and C^i forms the pure textual literary style \(((\text{ERC}) \text{RC}^i) \text{RC}^2) \text{RC}^3) \text{RC}^4\), which is the fourth structural transformation process and result of literary symbols and the transformation from literary technique to literary style. When (\text{ERC}) \text{RC}^i \text{RC}^i \text{RC}^i itself as a symbol signifier, C^i stands for textual aesthetic ideal, the interaction of (\text{ERC}) \text{RC}^i \text{RC}^i \text{RC}^i and C^i forms textual literary aesthetic style, which is the fifth structural transformation process and result of literary symbols, reflecting the transformation of the literary style from pure object to intentional object. Among the various structure formation factors of literary symbols, ERC and C^i are starting point and end point of continuous structure activities respectively, and they serve as key structure elements of both literary symbols and non-literary symbols. Through the two key structural elements existing in both literary and non-literary fields, literary symbols are associated with natural language and spiritual culture, which makes literary symbols maintain their independent, self-contained and self-disciplined movement as well as their connection with non-literature while keeping their structural boundary and structural transformation.
laws and thus an open structure with the unity of autonomy and heteronomy is achieved.

**Key words:** literary symbol; structural level; self regulation; literary technique; literary style

On the basis of comparison and contrast between Chinese literature and Western literature, the author hereby proposes that literary symbols, with text as separate unit, are a multi-level structural system. With minimal literary technique being the starting point, the five independent and self-contained levels of literary symbols are the following in sequence: the minimal literary technique, the simple integrated literary technique, the textual literary technique, the pure textual literary style and the textual literary aesthetic style, of which, the first three structural levels belong to the domain of literary technique while the last two literary style. The basic model of literary symbols is $(((ERC)^3)RC^2)RC^3)RC^4)RC^5$.

According to M. M. Bakhtin, the text in the discourse of literary activities enjoys the properties of being completed and closed, which is illustrated by the finished and closed “face” in portraits. With the “face” being done, the person as a whole is finished and cannot be changed into another. That means the person cannot be reborn, renewed or transformed—that is the finished stage of the painting.

Though being composed of five structural levels, literary symbols that exist in the literary activities of specific historical time and space are composed by what Bakhtin termed the finished and closed text, which also serves as the segment unit. Literary symbols composed by individual texts are constructed by three structural levels; textual literary technique, pure textual literary style and textual literary aesthetic style. Literary symbols composed by units smaller than texts, such as minimal literary technique and simple integrated literary technique, involve in the construction of textual literary symbols in a lower structural level.

Based on the theory of the structural self-regulation by Jean Piaget, the paper aims to illustrate the relation between various structural levels as well as the five structural levels of literary symbols.

## Part I Relevant Basic Concepts

The discussion of the self-regulation within the five structural levels of literary symbols is mainly based on the following theories: the linguistic semiotics by Ferdinand de Saussure, the concept of connotative by Roland Barthes, the structural self-regulation by Jean Piaget, and the General System Theory by Ludwig von Bertalanffy.
A. Signs and the Connotative

The concepts of the signifier and signified were introduced by Saussure. According to him, any sign is composed of signifier (sound image) and signified (concept) and is a combination of the two. This idea can be supported by Saussure’s words: “I propose to retain the word sign [signe] to designate the whole and replace concept and sound-image respectively by signified [signifié] and signifier [signifiant]; the last two terms have the advantage of indicating the opposition that separates them from each other and from the whole of which they are parts.”① The relation between the signifier and the signified was re-termed by Louis Hjelmslev through the model ERC, in which E stands for expression, C content and R the relation between E and C, namely the meaning. In the words of Hjelmslev, “We have still acted as if the unique object of linguistic theory were the denotative semiotic, by which we mean a semiotic none of whose planes is a semiotic. It still remains, through a final broadening of our horizon, to indicate that there are also semiotics whose expression plane is a semiotic and semiotics whose content plane is a semiotic, the former we shall call connotative semiotics, the latter metasemiotics.”② He further stated, “It is clear that the connotators themselves also provide an object whose treatment belongs to semiotics. It seems appropriate to view the connotators as content for which the denotative semiotics are expression, and to designate this content and this expression as a semiotic, namely a connotative semiotics”③ He also pointed out, “Metalanguage (or, we should say, metasemiotic) is meant a semiotic that treats of a semiotic, in our terminology this must mean a semiotic whose content is a semiotic. Such a metasemiotic linguistics itself must be.” ④

Hjelmslev’s ideas were further developed by Roland Barthes who proposed the concept of the secondary system in opposition to the traditional isolated sign system, namely the primary system. The secondary system could be demonstrated by two phenomena; one is connotative, the other meta-language. According to Roland Barthes, the connotation system (ERC)RC is a complex system based on the primary system ERC. The signifier of the connotation, namely, the carrier of connotation, is composed by the combination of the signifier and the signified, namely ERC. The signified of the connotation is the fragment of consciousness. Then the connotation

③ Ibid. 118–119.
④ Ibid. 119–120.
is the process of interaction between ERC and the signified of the connotation. In contrast, in the metalanguage ER(ERC), the signified of the secondary system is composed by the signs in the primary system. The metalanguage is a sort of activity while the connotation system is not. Generally the study of semiotics involves both the connotation system and the metalanguage.

In terms of mutual reference between Chinese literature and Western literature, the chaotic content revealed by the process of literary text constructing is composed of five structural levels, namely, the complex connotation system of literary symbols does not stop at the stage of the secondary system. If the new signifier results from the multi-level connotation system is presented by $C^n$, then the complex multi-level connotation system can be deduced as $(ERC)R^n$.

The word taken as a segment unit in syntagmatic relations in literary symbols’ primary system, the sound image of the natural language, the signifier “E” of literary symbols’ primary system, and the concept which echoes the sound image, the signified “C” of literary symbols’ primary system, and literary symbols’ primary system can be presented as the natural language’s syntagmatic relations “ERC”. Similarly, the physical being ERC taken as new signifier (ERC) of literary symbols’ connotation system, literary symbols could be regarded as the interaction between the natural language and $C^1$, the first signifier of literary symbols’ connotation system. Thus, with $(ERC)$ being the primary system, literary symbols interact ceaselessly with $C^1$, $C^2$, $C^3$, $C^4$, $C^5$, new signifiers of connotation system in higher structural level connotation and then formulate a complex connotation system including five structural levels, the model of which is \(((ERC)R^(C^1)R^2)R^3)R^4)R^5$.

**B. Structure and Self-regulation**

Saussure emphasizes that language sign, being a sign, affects both sound image and concept and is a product of the interaction of the two. The totality of the language sign suggested by Saussure is then confirmed by Piaget who further supplements some other important features of structure, that is transformation and self-regulation, on the basis of physics, psychology, linguistics, anthropology, economics, biological structure and social structure. With the two features, Piaget elaborates on the more complex and dynamic structural totality.

Piaget declares explicitly in *Structuralism* that structure is a process of constructing. He said, “There is no structure apart from construction; Structure is simply a system of transformations; Structure is being under construction.”

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Piaget also emphasizes that transformation can be a temporal process. He adopts duality in illustrating the structural transformation. According to Piaget, structure is to become a transformational system instead of a certain static form; structure is always simultaneously structuring and being structured. This eternal duality, namely the structural transformation rule, endows the structure the integrity. All known structures—from mathematical groups to kinship systems—are, without exception, system of transformation and are simultaneously structuring and being structured.

In his study of structural transformation or continuous structural constructing, Piaget revealed the two derivative properties of the structure: self-maintenance and closure, which are entailed in self-regulating. What they add up to is that the transformation inherent is a structure that never lead beyond the system but always engender elements that belong to it and preserve its laws. Again an example will help to clarify: in adding or subtracting any two whole numbers, another whole is obtained, and one which satisfies the laws of the “addictive group” of whole numbers. It is in this case that a structure is “closed”, a notion perfectly compatible with the structure’s being considered a substructure of a large one; but it is being treated as a substructure, a structure that does not lose its own boundaries, the larger structure does not lose its own boundaries; the larger substructure does not “annex” the substructure; if anything, we have a confederation, so that the laws of the substructure are not altered but conserved and the intervening change is an enrichment rather than an impoverishment.

Piaget deduced the theory of continuous structural constructing by applying Strauss’s Structural Nets in anthropology and Mathematical Groups and combining the studies in other fields, such as the elementary arithmetic and transfinite arithmetic in mathematics, the hierarchical relationship in biology and so on. He said, “[T]he idea of structure as a system of transformations becomes continuous with that of construction as continual formation.” The limits of formalization are not laid down once for all, like the walls of China, but, instead, are “moveable” or “vicarious.” “The limits of formalization can, more simply, be understood as due to the fact that there is no “form as much” or “content as much,” that each element—from sensory-motor acts through operations to theories—is

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2. Ibid. 10.
3. Ibid. 13-14.
4. Ibid. 34.
5. Ibid. 35.
always simultaneously form to the content it subsumes and content for some higher
form. Elementary arithmetic, for example, is no doubt from one perspective a
form,” but from the perspective of transfinite arithmetic it is a “content.” namely,
the “denumerable”. At each level, formalization of a given content is limited by the
nature of this “content”. ①

As to the relativity of the complex and dynamic structures between high and
lower levels, Piaget sums up in Structuralism: This “decentering” makes the subject
enter upon, not so much an already available and therefore external universality, as
an uninterrupted process of coordinating and setting in reciprocal relations. It is the
latter process which is the true “generator” of structures as constantly under
construction and reconstruction. The subject exists because, to put it very briefly,
the being of structures consists in their coming to be, that is, their being “under
construction”. ②

According to Piaget, the structural self-regulation is achieved through different
levels and procedures. Thus, in discussing the structural self-regulation, Piaget
proposes the concepts of structural closure and self-maintenance, and he also points
out, “Now self-regulation may be achieved by various procedures or processes, and
these can be ranked in order of increasing complexity.” ③ In addition, he sums up
the functions of self-regulation in the continuous constructing process in different
structural levels in the following two points; first, the structure keeps self-
maintenance; second, the structure involves the constructing of new structure as
substructure. ④

The structural self-regulation theory by Piaget sees eye to eye with the complex
connotative system. And both theories recognize the more complex, open and
dynamic symbol-structure in comparison with the natural linguistic signs. And the
structural self-regulation theory by Piaget further reveals the interdependence
between the primary system and the connotative system in the imbedding relation in
semiotics and provides theoretical resources for the study of open and dynamic
structures. If the linguistic semiotics inspires the author here to propose the
embedding relation between the five connotative systems in literary symbols, then
the structuralism by Piaget helps the author further interpret this embedding relation
in literary symbols as a process of continuous constructing and being constructed
among the five structural levels in order to keep the function of structural self-

② Ibid. 139–140.
③ Ibid. 14.
④ Ibid. 16.
C. System Dominant Part

While the structural self-regulation theory by Piaget supplements the study on the open and dynamic relation between different levels of the semiotic embedding relation, his concept of economic characteristic/property coefficient involves the relation between different elements within the same structural level.

In his discussion of structure and function, Piaget relates the concept of coefficient in econometrics. He points out, “In econometrics these properties are expressed in terms of coefficients ‘and the ensemble of such coefficients contains two kinds of information’: first, it provides a blueprint of the economy; second, it indicates the paths of reaction to certain modifications. There could be no clearer indication that the economic structure is a function one, since it is capable of ‘reacting’; it cannot be thought of apart from its functions.” ①

The economic characteristic/property coefficient proposed by Piaget involves not only the structural “function” but also the fact that the structural elements at the same level are not homogeneous equivalent. And the latter is explicitly expounded consciously by modern biologist Bertalanffy.

Like Piaget, Bertalanffy, in the study of structural whole, opposes mechanistic view that accepts only the cumulation of individual elements, the interaction between equivalent elements and the view that equals the structural whole to the sum of its parts. Nevertheless, Bertalanffy further points out certainly that the nature and function of all the elements in the same structural level are not homogeneous equivalent and the coefficient P plays a vital role in deciding the developing tendency of some properties in constructing system whole.

In his study of the gradual process of biological individualization and centralization, Bertalanffy, against the tendency in the traditional Genetics that regards the genetic material/hereditary substance as the sum of particulate units deciding the features and organs, proposes that the sum of the polymer cannot generate the biological organic whole and emphasizes that, on the one hand, the genome generates the organism; on the other hand, some gene mainly decide the direction of the development of some properties, namely, the gene function as a dominant part. In his study of nervous system function, Bertalanffy also emphasizes that any function derives from the interaction of all parts, but some parts in the central nervous system plays a decisive role, which can be taken as the functional

“centre”. On the basis of his study of biological individualization and nervous system, Bertalanffy puts forward that element Pᵢ can be called the dominant part, or the system is centered on Pᵢ. If the coefficients of Pᵢ in some or all the equations are big while those in Pᵢ itself are small, the minute change of Pᵢ will result in a rather great change in the whole system. Thus, Pᵢ may be called a trigger and the minor change may be amplified in the whole system. ¹

On the basis of the study of the economic characteristic/property coefficient by Piaget and the system “dominant part” in modern biology by Bertalanffy, the author introduces the concept of “key structural element”. Whenever the study of whole structure is involved, key structural element is frequently referred to, but clear definition of it is seldom read. In light of the wide use of this concept, the author adopts this terminology, but reinterprets it with Bertalanffy’s theory of “dominant part”.

Key structural element is termed in comparison with the other elements in the same structural level. In the self-regulation of the same structural level, all the structural elements are not homogeneous equivalent. Instead of limiting to themselves, the nature and function of some structural elements will be amplified to affect the other structure elements, which will interact with each other around these structural elements. And these structural elements which define the basic direction, nature and function of the same structural level are called key structural elements.

In the five structural levels in literary symbols, the signifier and the signified are not homogeneous equivalent, with the signified being the key structural element which defines the basic nature and function of every structural level. The theory of system dominant part by Bertalanffy helps the author represent literary symbols model more accurately as

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(\text{ERC}) \overline{RC'}
\]

The underlined part is the key structural element.

### Part II  The Structural Level of Literary Symbols

Just as mentioned above, literary symbols are a complex connotative system which includes five structural levels with the natural language ERC being the primary system and (ERC) its carrier. The minimal literary technique (ERC)  \( RC' \)

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is the first structural level of the connotative system.

A. The Literary Carrier (ERC)

ERC is the Structural Transformation shared by natural language signs and literary symbols. In terms of natural language signs, ERC enjoys both the physical and psychological quality of the linguistic signs by Saussure and the prescriptive nature of index signs by Charles Sanders Peirce.

Referring to the signified as a concept, Saussure explicitly pointed out the psychological nature of the signified; the signified is not just “a thing”; instead, it is the mental representation of “the thing”. This point may be well illustrated by the word “ox”; the signified of the word ox is not the animal ox, but its mental image.

Roland Barthes emphasizes the signified is one of the two relata of the sign, namely the non-intermediary relatum. According to him, the signified is neither the phantasia (the mental representation) nor the tinganon (the real thing) but rather the lekton (the utterable), and it is this “something” which is meant by the person who uses the sign. In this way we are back again to a purely functional definition; the signified is one of the two relata of the sign; the only difference which opposes it to the signified is that the latter is a mediator. ¹

In terms of the nature of the signified, Saussure and Roland Barthes have their own preferences, but they both share this judgment; the substance of the signifier is always material (sounds, objects, images) and the signified is non-physical; either psychological or the meaning endowed by the user in the process of using.

About the classification of signs, Peirce classifies the signs into icons, indexes and symbols.² Indexes and symbols are conventional, such as linguistic signs, beacons and semaphores, etc. while images are formative, for example, pictures, icons and maps, etc. Guided by Wallon’s study, Roland Barthes proposes that the signal and the index form a group of relata devoid of mental representation, whereas in the opposite group, that of symbol and sign, this representation exists; furthermore, the signal is immediate and existential, whereas the index is not (it is

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² Charles Sanders Peirce, “Logic as Semiotic; The Theory of Signs” *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, ed. Charles Hartshorne & Paul Weiss (Cambridge; Harvard UP, 1931) 9-10. A sign is either an icon, an index, or a symbol. An icon is a sign which would possess the character which renders it significant, even though its object had no existence; such as a lead-pencil streak as representing a geometrical line. An index is a sign which would, at once, lose the character which makes it a sign if its object were removed, but would not lose the character if there were no interpretant. Such, for instance, is a piece of mould with a bullet-hole in it as a sign of a shot; for without the shot there would have been no hole; but there is a hole there, whether anybody has the sense to attribute it to a shot or not.
only a trace); finally, that in the symbol the representation is analogical and inadequate (Christianity "outruns" the cross), whereas in the sign the relation is unmotivated and exact (there is no analogy between the word ox and the image of an ox, which is perfectly covered by its relatum). The relation between the signifier and the signified is unmotivated and fixed. ①

A similar conclusion is reached by the arbitrary relation between the signifier and the signified by Saussure and the classification of signs by Pierce and Roland Barthes.

ERC and (ERC), though of the same material entity, are different signs and thus have different functions. The former is the natural language with a pure function of communicative exchange while the latter the material carrier of literature. In literary works, ERC continues its constructing of symbol-structure in a higher structural level as a sub-structure while keeping its own structural boundary, its physical and psychological feature, its conventionality and its nature of being. In this sense, the author proposes that language in literary works has double identity: as ERC, it belongs to the domain of linguistics while as (ERC) it belongs to the domain of literature.

In his discussion of constructing deductive structural theory system, Piaget emphasizes the study of the starting point of structural continuous construction and points out clearly that structural continuous construction is relatively simple and stable. This starting point may not necessarily be the primitive material and does not possess the abstract from the later structural constructing, but it is the very starting point which cannot be further traced back, and is the process of assimilation among the primary structural elements. The functional factors are assimilation, the process whereby an action is actively reproduced and comes to incorporate new objects into itself (for example, thumb sucking as a case of sucking), and accommodation, the process whereby the schemes of assimilation themselves become modified in being applied to a diversity of objects. The structural elements are, essentially, certain order relations, subordination schemes and correspondences. ②

Is (ERC) the starting point of literary symbols’ continuous construction process? According to the author, ERC, being isolated, static and self-enclosed, is not the starting point of literary symbols’ continuous construction process; instead, (ERC)RC*, with ERC being the connotation system in the primary system, is the

② Ibid. 63.
very starting point in the structural study of literary symbols. ERC will become the sub-structure only when it becomes (ERC) in its interaction with the new signifier C₁ in literary symbols. The interaction with the new signifier in the connotation system, or the identity of being the primary system of the complex connotation, is the absolute precondition of the transformation of natural language into literary symbol.

B. The Minimal literary Technique (ERC)RC₁

In the first structural level of literary symbols (ERC)RC₁, what is the new signifier C₁? How could it be possible that conventional symbols can be transformed into literary symbols with its interaction with (ERC)? And what is the overall nature and function of the first structural level of literary symbols (ERC)RC₁?

In the secondary connotation system of literary symbols, the new signifier C₁ is the indivisible literary imaginary figure which serves also as a segment unit. When ERC syntagmatic segment is divided by C₁, the interaction between the (ERC), a new signifier from ERC, and C₁, a new correspondent signified, is the first structural transforming process and results in (ERC)RC₁, which is called minimal literary technique. In terms of literary symbols continuous construction, (ERC)RC₁, a higher structural level of ERC and the starting point of literary symbol-structure, is endowed with the fictional-icon⁠¹ nature and function.

The syntagmatic construction of the minimal literary technique reveals the relation between natural language sign and literary symbols; (ERC) is one of the constituent elements while (ERC)RC₁ contains ERC; (ERC) involves in the construction of (ERC)RC₁, a larger unit and higher structural level, while keeping its own structural boundary and transformation laws.

The poem “Magnolia Bank” by Wang Wei, a famous poet in Tang Dynasty, may serve as a good example. Its Chinese version reads as follows:

木末/芙蓉花, /C₁-a
山中/发红萼。/C₁-b

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¹ This term is a coinage of the author here. It refers to the nature and function of the minimal literary technique (ERC)RC₁, namely the minimal literary technique functions as an icon which enjoys the fictional nature.

² Wang Wei (701–762, Tang Dynasty) was a native of present-day Shansi. A poet of genius, he was a brilliant painter and musician. His poems and paintings give such superb expression to the beauty of nature. His poems about the countryside around Wangchuan are famous—*Anthology of Poetry in Countryside around Wangchuan*. With his seemingly simple yet highly polished style he paints scenes which all can see but most miss, and he is supremely skillful in communicating his mood. His poems give us the same satisfaction as a fine painting.
With Chinese character being the segment unit, the discourse continuum above can be cut into ten individual characters, which can be represented by E-1. And E-1 can be in turn replaced by eleven English words, represented as E-2:

On the tips of trees /“lotus flowers” /C\(^1\)-a
mountains /produce red calices. /C\(^1\)-b

With phrase being the segment unit, E-1 and E-2 can be further cut into four segments, which are the four ERC constructions resulting from the interaction between E-1, E-2 and their correspondent conventional C-1, C-2 in Chinese and English respectively. The first one is the location adverbial “On the tips of trees” (“木末”); the second, the central word “lotus flowers”（芙蓉花）; the third, the location adverbial “mountains”（“山中”）; and the fourth, verb-object word group “produce red calices”（“发红萼”）.

In fact, the construction of literary symbols does not stop in this self-enclosed structure ERC. In the poem “Magnolia Bank”, E-1 or E-2, as an indivisible literary imaginary figure, is extended into syntagmatic segment in a larger scope and transformed into two new significations through its interaction with the two indivisible literary imaginary figures C\(^1\)-a（the “lotus flowers” blossoming on the tips of trees) and C\(^1\)-b（“red calices” blossoming in the mountain）while keeping its role of segment unit, its physical-sound image and mental-concept convention and laws in Chinese and English respectively. The two significations are the two scene description approaches/techniques: the first, namely (ERC) C\(^1\)-a, contains two word groups and five Chinese characters or seven English words; the second, (ERC) C\(^1\)-b, two word groups and five Chinese characters or four English words. In this way, the ten Chinese characters or the eleven English words participates in the construction of the scene description techniques (ERC) RC\(^i\) and becomes the material carrier (ERC) of scenery description keeping its role of segment unit, its structural boundary and structural transformational laws as ERC.

Saussure derives the pair concept of “signification” and “value” from signification in Course in General Linguistics. He also points out that from a conceptual point of view, value is doubtless one element of signification, and signification is dependent upon value but still be distinct from it. It is only the counter-part of sound image. Everything that occurs concerns only the sound-image and the concept when we look upon the word as independent and self-contained. But here is the paradox; on the one hand, the concept seems to be the counterpart of sound-image, and on the other hand, the sign itself in turn is the counterpart of the other signs of the lan-
guage. Language is a system of interdependent terms in which the value of each term results solely from the simultaneous presence of the others. How can value be confused with signification, i.e. the counterpart of the sound-image? Take up the example of the sheet of paper that is cut in two; it is clear that the observable relation between the different pieces A, B, C, D, etc. is distinct from the relation between the front and back of the same piece as in A/A', B/B', etc. ①

Roland Barthes generalizes the signification and value of the sign from the adjacent relationship of being syntagmatic and paradigmatic. The signification can be conceived as a process; it is the act which binds the signifier and the signified, an act whose product is the sign. ② The value of the sign is considered in terms of the potential paradigmatic and associative relation.

The “value” of the adjacent paradigmatic relation of minimal literary technique rests mainly with the mutually antagonistic relationship of the three types of (ERC) RC³; narration, description and lyrical, which endow each of the three with the potential and relative connotation.

The above ten Chinese characters or eleven English words will evoke the associations with narration, description and lyrical in the mind of the readers with literary accomplishment. And the “value” of the description technique is determined by the antagonistic relationship of narration, description and lyrical, that is non-narrative and non-lyrical. Similarly, the “value” of scenery description is non-portraiture, decided by the antagonistic relationship of various descriptions, such as the description of person and the description of scene, etc.

Wang Wei was free in composing the two lines of the poem, for he knew nothing about the classification of three literary types into narration, description and lyrical or additionally the divisions of description into scenery description and portrayal in the modern study of literature and art. Nevertheless, Wang Wei’s free composing is actually a free choice within human collective unconsciousness of various types of minimal literary techniques.

In Chinese and Western literary history, no matter how free the writer or poet is in literary creation, but in terms of minimal literary techniques, the literary freedom can be interpreted as the free choice among the antagonistic relationship of the three basic types and the sub-types of minimal literary techniques. The feasibility of literary translation between different languages lies not only in the fact

that different languages can communicate at the plane of the signified in different languages but also in the fact that minimal literary techniques exist in the collective memory of mankind.

In the self-regulation of minimal literary techniques, not all the structural elements are homogeneous equivalent; instead, the indivisible literary imagination figure \( C^1 \) is the structural key element, whose function of fictional-icon is not restricted just to itself but will be amplified and then influences the connotation system of the whole literary symbols and determine the basic nature and direction of symbol-structure.

As \( (ERC) \), the ten Chinese characters or the eleven English words interact with the literary imaginary image \( C^1 \), namely the “lotus flowers” blossoming on the tips of trees and “red calices” blossoming in the mountain, which forms the signification of the sign while descriptive technique’s adjacent paradigmatic relation with the three literary types of narration, description and lyrical, and with also the various sub-divisions of descriptive techniques, constitutes the “value” of the sign. And the signification and the value of the signs formulate the signification, i.e. the literariness of the above ten Chinese characters or eleven English words as scenery descriptive technique. In this structure, the literary imaginary figure of the “lotus flowers” blossoming on the tips of trees and “red calices” blossoming in the mountain is the key structural element of scenery descriptive technique, which defines the nature and function of literary symbols’ fictional-icon and scenery description with the ten Chinese characters or eleven English words as the carrier while each Chinese character or English word is equipped with the fictional-icon “signification” granted by \( C^1 \) and the “value” of scenery description while retaining the conventional psychological-physical nature of sound-image \( E \) and concept \( C \) in its respective language system.

### Part III: Literary Technique: The Lower Level of Literary Symbols

In the continuous structural constructing of literary symbols, literary techniques are composed of three structural levels: the minimal literary technique \( (ERC)RC^1 \), which involves in the construction of literary technique in higher structural level while retaining its structural boundary, structural transformational laws, integrate literary imaginary figure \( ((ERC)R C^1)RC^2 \), and the textual literary technique \( ((( ERC)R C^1)R C^2)RC^3 \).
A. The Three Structural Levels

The simple integrate literary technique \((\text{ERC} \text{RC}_1 \text{RC}_2)\) is the secondary structural level of literary symbols or the third connotation system, which is formed through the interacting between its signifier \((\text{ERC} \text{RC}_1)\), a syntagmatic collection, with a larger unit integrate literary imaginary figure being the segment unit and its new signified \(\text{RC}_2\), integrate literary imaginary figure.

The modifier “integrate” here has two basic provisions; first, literary imaginary figure is bigger than the indivisible literary imaginary figure, and is the collection of syntagmatic relation of the latter; second, literary imaginary figure, smaller than textual literary imaginary figure, is unfinished and unclosed.

The term “integrate” is borrowed from Aristotle, who introduced “a single and complete action” in his discussion of plot in Poetics. In the discussion of tragedy, Aristotle points out, “...a plot, since it is an imitation of an action, must be an imitation of an action that is one and whole. Moreover, it is necessary that the parts of the action be put together in such a way that if any one part is transposed or removed, the whole will be disordered and disunified.” The integrate incident and the integrate image are the various paradigmatic types of the simple integrate literary technique.” The word “incident” is also from Poetics by Aristotle. From the quotation above, we can see that Aristotle proposes that incidents constitute plots. The word “image”, from The Preface to Lyrical Ballad by William Wordsworth, refers to pictures created by the poet in poetry through imagination to express feelings, passions, thoughts, etc. Similar to the notion “image” by Wordsworth, in ancient Chinese literary theory, there are the notions of Bixing or

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2. Bi’xing, from Maoshidaxu (Preface to the Confucian Classics of Poetry, by Mao Heng (Han Dynasty)), annotated by Zheng Xuan (Han Dynasty), commented by Kong Yingda (Tang Dynasty), collected in Shisanjing zhusu (The Thirteen Classics), with Annotations and Commentaries, collation by Ruan Yuan (Qing Dynasty), Zhonghua Shuju Publishing House, 1980, p. 271. Shijing (The Confucian Classics of Poetry or “Book of Songs” or “Book of Odes”), earliest anthology of poetry in China and one of her greatest treasures. It contains more than three hundred songs composed before the sixth century B.C., most of them with four characters in a line. According to Maoshidaxu, there are six principles in the poems; 1) Feng, 2) Ya, 3) Song, 4) Fu, 5) Bi, 6) Xing. “Fu, Bi, and Xing are defined by the different nature and function of the literary techniques. Fu is to mimic the incident or image and express one’s emotion; Bi is to make a comparison or a fable; Xing is to stir an image. Unlike the three above, Feng, Ya, and Song are defined by the varied music nature. Feng refers to the local music in different regions. “Book of Songs” is the collection of local songs or ballads from about 150 regions ranging from South of the Capital (Modern Shanxi and Henan), South of Zhao (Modern Henan), Bei (Modern Hubei), Yong (Modern Shandong), Wei (Modern Henan), Wang (around the capital, Modern Henan), Zheng (Modern Henan), Qi (Modern Shandong), Wei (modern Shanxi), Tang (Modern Shansi), Qin (Modern Shanxi), Chen (Modern Henan), Gui (Modern Henan), Cao (modern 接下页)
Jingxiang, \(^1\) which have the Chinese flavor.

The textual literary technique \(((\text{ERC}) \text{R} \text{C}^1 \text{R} \text{C}^2) \text{R} \text{C}^3\) is the third structural level or the fourth connotation system, the syntagmatic collection \(((\text{ERC}) \text{RC}^1) \text{RC}^2\) being its signifier which is segmented by much larger unit textual literary imaginary figure and \text{C}^3, textual literary imaginary figure being its new signified. The interaction between \(((\text{ERC}) \text{RC}^1) \text{RC}^2\), the simple integrate literary technique and textual literary imaginary figure forms the signification of the textual literary technique. Likewise, the paradigmatic types of text plots and textual images generate the value of the text literary technique.

The modifier “textual” defines the qualities of being closed and completed of the textual literary technique, which not only make this structural level the highest structural level of the literary expression but also determine the structural boundary of the independent entity of literary symbols.

In terms of literary technique, the textual literary technique is a complicated structural level, in which there exit not only two paradigmatic types of textual plots and textual images but also other five paradigmatic types of theme, genre/tizhi,\(^2\) structural layout, character/image-building\(^3\) and style in the second level.

In the continuous construction process of literary symbols, the new signified \text{C}^2 and \text{C}^3 of the connotation system in the second and third structural levels share similar functions with the new signified \text{C}^1 of connotation system in the first structural level, that is they are not only the segment units of the structural level they belong to but also the key structural elements. Their fictional-icon nature and

\(^1\) Jingxiang, realm image, is a Chinese term in literary theory, which means emotion appeared, but writings ignored. It may be interpreted as that there’s an end to the words, but not to their messages. The term is from the following Chinese documents: Jiao Ran. Shishi&Shiyi (Tang Dynasty). *Anthology of Ancient Chinese Literary Theory*, vol. 2, ed. Guo Shaoyu. (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Publishing House, 2001) 77–88.

\(^2\) Tizhi is a traditional Chinese literary term, which is similar to the genre in Western literary discourse and is first from Wenxindiaolong (the title means roughly that the Literary Heart and the Carving of the Dragon), a book-length study of different literary forms and genres as expressions of the creative impulse, vol. 6, by Liu Xie (Liang Dynast, c. 465–522).

\(^3\) character/image-building here is the author’s coinage which combines the focus of character building in Western literary tradition and that of image building in Chinese literary tradition.
function and particularity of the paradigmatic relation are not just limited to C₁, C², and C³ themselves; instead, they will be amplified and influence the whole structural levels. The three structural levels of literary techniques differ from each other in the fact that their segment units are of different sizes. That means also that when the primary system of literary technique (ERC), transcending the limit of self-closure, interacts with the new signified, the literary imaginary figure of the literary connotation system, there emerges the process of constructing and re-constructing various literary techniques with fictional-icon nature and function.

**B. The Literary Techniques in “The Grave of Three Kings”**

In the ghost story “The Grave of Three Kings” in Soushenji, or Records of Spirits by Kan Pao (285–360) in Wei and Jin Dynasties in China, ERC is the 543 Chinese characters. When they interact with literary imaginary images, there will emerge literary techniques at different structural levels; the sixteen minimal literary techniques (ERC)RC₁, such as narration and description, etc., and four integrate literary techniques (ERC)RC₁RC₂. Four separate single and whole incidents constitute the textual plot in chronological and causal order; Ganjiang was killed by the King of Chu State after he forged the swords; growing up and following his father’s last words, Chi, Ganjiang’s son, found the male sword and gave up his own head to the stranger he met in the mountain in order to take revenge for his father; following his own words the stranger killed himself immediately after killing the King.

In these textual plots, the “value” of the textual literary technique ((ERC)RC₁)RC₂ of “The Grave of Three Kings” is formed by the following elements; the theme is about revenge; the genre/Tizhi is short story; incidents include; Chi handed his head and the male sword in both hands to the stranger; his head was bobbing on the water in a cauldron, the eyes burning with anger; the three heads of Chi, the King and the stranger became mashed and were no longer recognizable; the structural layout is beyond the time and space and the natural logic; the two characters are portrayed as cavaliers beyond life and death with fantasy stories—to take revenge for his father, Chi risked his own life; the stranger fight for the weak against the strong and kept his promise; and last the style of the language is simple and rustic.

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1 Soushenji (or Records of Spirits) is a collection of stories about the supernatural, and anecdotes about famous men. And the story here is from Feng Yanjun, *A Concise History of Chinese Literature* (Beijing: People’s Literature Publishing House, 1979) 47.
“The Grave of Three Kings” has the following four single and whole incidents:

A. Leaving behind his last words and the male sword after he lodged the pair of swords, Ganjiang presented the sword to the King of Chu State and was killed. This forms the introduction of the textual plot, which includes five minimal literary techniques; 1. Narration (the beginning of the plot); 2. Description; 3. Narration; 4. Description; 5. Narration (conclusion).

B. Growing up, the son was told his father’s last words by his mother. Following his father’s words, the son found the sword and was thinking of taking revenge for his father (the development of the plot). There are four minimal literary techniques; 1. Dialogues (the beginning of the plot); 2. Description; 3. Narration; 4. Narration (the conclusion of the plot).

C. Dreaming that the son of Ganjiang would take vengeance for his father’s death, the King offered a reward of one thousand taels of gold for the capture of the young lad. Hearing the news, Chi took to the mountains and on the way, he sang sad songs. Hearing his sad story, the stranger he met in the mountain offered to help him to take the revenge with the condition that Chi gave him his head and sword. Chi killed himself and handed the stranger his head and sword and the stranger promised to take revenge for him (the further development of the plot). There are two minimal literary techniques; 1. Narration; 2. Dialogues.

D. The stranger went to see the King with Chi’s head and asked the King to boil it in a cauldron. But three days and three nights went by, the head remained intact. Therefore, asking the King to see it himself and taking this chance, the stranger chopped off the King’s head, and killed himself soon after, and then the two heads fell into the broth. The three heads became mashed and were no longer recognizable. Later, the broth, with what was left of the heads, was divided into three parts and buried in three graves, which came to be called “the Graves of Three Kings” (the climax and the conclusion of the plot). There are six minimal literary techniques; 1. Narration (the beginning of the incident); 2. Description of speech; 3. Narration; 4. Description of speech; 5. Description of action (the climax of the plot); 6. Narration (the conclusion of the plot).

The Grave of Three Kings

Ganjiang and Moye, who were husband and wife and lived in the State of Chu, were obliged to forge swords for the king. Three years had passed before they could finally produce them. Annoyed, the king intended to kill Ganjiang. The couple made two swords, one male; the other female./1 Just then Moye, the wife, was about to give birth to a child. The husband said to her, “Since it has taken me three years to make the swords, the king must be angry. It is certain that he will put me
to death when I go and present the swords to him. If the child turns out to be a boy, tell him this as soon as he grows up. ‘Go out of the house, look at the southern mountains and search for the place where a pine tree is growing on a rock. Try to find one of the swords on its back.’” /2 After he said this, Ganjiang left for the palace with the female sword. /3 The king became furious when he saw only one sword, and ordered it to be examined. When he was told that there were actually two swords, one male and the other female, and that the one he saw was female, while the male one was not there, /4 the king flew into a rage and had Ganjiang beheaded at once. /5A

Moye named her son Chi. When he grew up, he asked her, “Where is my father?” “Your father once had to forge two swords for the king,” Moye replied, “and it took him three years to finish them. The king killed him in a fury. Before he left home, your father asked me to give you this message, ‘Go out of the house, look at the southern mountains and search for the place where a pine tree is growing on a rock. Try to find one of the swords on its back.’” /1 So the boy ran out of the house and looked south, but he saw no mountain at all. Then his eyes fell on a stone plinth in front of the house, with a pine pillar on its top. Chi hurried to cleave the pillar from behind. Sure enough, there was the male sword. /2 From that time on, Chi planned day and night to avenge his father. /3B

The king had a dream one night, in which he saw a boy, whose eyebrows were one foot apart from each other, swearing to take vengeance for his father’s death. The king offered a reward of one thousand taels of gold for the capture of the young lad. Chi heard the news and had to take to the mountains. /1 On his way he sang sad songs when a stranger came up and asked, “Why are you so sad, young man?” “I am the son of Ganjiang and Moye,” replied the boy. “Because the king killed my father, I’m determined to take revenge.” At this, the stranger said, “People say that the king has set a price of one-thousand taels of gold on your head. If you could give me your head and the sword, I would take revenge for you.” “Good!” said the boy. He cut off his own head and handed it, together with the sword, to the stranger. But his body stood where it was until the man vowed, “I will not let you down!” /2C

The king was pleased when he saw the boy’s head. /1 “Since this is a brave man’s head,” said the man, “it should be boiled in a cauldron to prevent further trouble.” This the king did. /2 Three days and three nights went by, but the head remained intact. And it was bobbing on the water, the eyes burning with anger.” /3 “The head will not decompose,” the stranger said to the king, “would you just come over and take a close look. Then it will surely go.” /4 The king came. As soon as
he bent forward, the stranger swung his sword and chopped off the king’s head which dropped into the cauldron. This done, the man killed himself, his head also falling into the broth.  /5 In no time, the three heads became mashed and were no longer recognizable. Later, the broth, with what was left of the heads, was divided into three parts and buried in three graves, which came to be called “Graves of Three Kings.” Today they can still be found in Yichun County north of Runan. /6D

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**Part IV  Literary Style: the Highest Structural Level of Literary Symbols**

Literary symbols’ construction is not limited to the literary technique; instead, it can generate new connotation system with textual literary technique (((ERC) RC^1)RC^2)RC^3 being the primary system. In the continuous construction process of literary symbols, literary style is the highest structural level.

Textual literary style and textual literary technique share the same segment unit, and they are composed by the syntagmatic collection of the completed and closed textual literary imaginary image; but they are different in nature and function. Literary style is textual imagination with the nature of the third space and is the intentional object with value judgments. It is composed of two structural levels; the pure textual literary style (((ERC)RC^1)RC^2)RC^3)RC^4 and textual literary aesthetic style (((ERC)RC^1)RC^2)RC^3)RC^4)RC^5.

**A. The Two Structural Levels**

The pure textual literary style (((ERC)RC^1)RC^2)RC^3)RC^4 is the fourth structural or the fifth connotation system. ( ((ERC)RC^1)RC^2)RC^3, as its primary system, becomes the new signifier in the connotation system while textual literary imagination C^1 becomes the new signified. The interaction between the textual literary technique and textual literary imagination becomes the signification while the two paradigmatic types of experience and transcendentalism form its value. Being the key structural element in the pure textual literary style, textual literary imagination C^1 endows it with the nature and function of the third space and extends the domain of literary construction from literary expression to literary imagination space. The textual structural layout and image/character portrayal, being the key structural elements in textual literary imagination space, will define the two types of experience and transcendentalism in the pure textual literary style.

The modifier “pure” is borrowed from Husserl’s concept of “object pure and simple”. The “object pure and simple” by Husserl is a technical term in opposition to
intentional object, meaning that there is no subjective evaluation and value judgment. ①

Borrowed from Edward Soja, “third space” here is defined in reference to the traditional “first space” and “second space”. Spatiality is either seen as concrete material forms to be mapped, analyzed, and explained; or as mental constructs, ideas about and representations of space and its social signification. Soja critically reevaluates this dualism to create an alternative approach, one that comprehends both the material and mental dimensions of spatiality but also extends beyond them to new and different modes of spatial thinking. He conceptualizes social space as being simultaneously perceived, conceived, and lived. He emphasizes the openness of thethirdspace and the influx of all dualistic ideas; subjectivity and objectivity, abstract and concreteness, reality and imagination, the knowable and the unknowable, mind and body, consciousness and unconsciousness, and discipline and interdisciplinary, etc. ②

Textual literary aesthetic style $(((E) (R) R_1^1 (R)_2^2 (R)_3^3 R_4^4) R_5^5$ is the fifth structural level of literary symbols or the sixth connotation system, and also the highest structural level in the continuous construction process of literary symbols. The pure textual literary style $(((E) (R) R_1^1 (R)_2^2 (R)_3^3 R_4^4$ is now its new signifier, and C5, textual aesthetic ideal its new signified. The interaction between the pure textual literary style and textual aesthetic ideal generates the signification of text literary aesthetic style while the paradigmatic types of textual theme and textual will to art forms its value. Textual aesthetic ideal C5 is the key structural element in textual literary aesthetic style and endows its intentional object with basic nature and function. Accordingly, textual will to art, being the key structural element of textual aesthetic ideal, makes the textual theme involve in the spiritual and cultural construction at the same historical time and space while retaining its literary fictional-icon and literary imagination space.

“Aesthetic ideal” here is borrowed from Kant’s technical term and his basic definition of aesthetic ideas—aesthetic ideal: the union of some concept and representation. In his Critique of Judgement, Kant proposed “aesthetic ideas”—“aesthetic ideal”. He termed the aesthetic concept “Idee” from the perspective of

literary creation and aesthetic “Ideal” from the perspective of appreciation respectively. “Aesthetic ideal” introduced here by the author does not distinguish the subjective dissemination wishes between the coding of disseminator and the decoding of recipients; moreover it enjoys some special provisions. First, the “aesthetic ideal” limited in the domain of text (then textual aesthetic ideal) is not the aesthetic ideal beyond the textual literary technique-textual literary imagination figure-textual literary imagination space, but the signifier of literary symbols in the fifth structural level. Next, “some concept” that is formed by the union between “textual aesthetic ideal” and representation includes not only cultural spirit but also will to art. Besides, it is an integrated whole generated through the interaction between textual subject-ethical value judgment and textual will to art-aesthetical value judgment. Last, textual aesthetic ideal is neither a general concept nor an everlasting absolute being, but exists in textual literary technique-textual literary imagination figure-textual literary imagination space in specific historical time and space and also in poetic literature.

“Theme” here is borrowed from Wilhelm Dilthey’s discussion of theme in poetry. The textual theme, being closed and finished, is not only included in works and art pictures but also appears in some human life experiences. Similar to the uncertain concept of reason included in Kant’s imaginative representation, it is some uncertain cultural spirit concreted in textual technique-textual picture-textual imagination space, the human cultural spirit keeping the literary structural boundary and the structural transformation law and is isomorphic with the cultural spirit in the same specific time and space. Its paradigmatic types are physical life experience and metaphysical life experience.

“Will to art” here by the author is borrowed from Alois Riegl. The textual will to art refers to the closed and finished literary creation-reception aesthetic spirit or momentum, promoted and formed in specific historical time and space. It is the idea and also the tradition. The textual will to art in the poetic literature in specific historical time and space is identical in function with the two types of experience / transcendentalism in pure textual literary style in specific historical time and space.

In the two structural levels of literary style, the new signified of the connotation system is still the key structural element of the structural level it belongs to. But unlike the three structural levels in literary techniques, it no longer serves as

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segment unit of literary symbols. It is due to the involvement of the new signified of the connotation system in the construction of higher structural level of literary symbols, literary symbols can extend from literary expression into literary imagination space-subject and object and the third space in which certainty and uncertainty coexist and also from pure and simple object to intentional object.

In the three structural levels of literary symbols, the various types of paradigmatic relation belongs to the shared human collective memory while that of the literary style belongs only to the memory of the civilization and culture or nation and region it belongs to. Poetic discourses and textual will to art-aesthetic judgments of the experience/transcendentalism textual literary imagination space vary in different civilizations, cultures, nations, and regions. For instance, the core concept of Chinese poetics is “Yanzhi” (expressing the aspiration) while that of the Western poetics is “imitation”. Thus, the poetry of Yanzhi aims at expressing the poet’s aspiration and passion while the Western literature of “imitation” imitating the action and character of the hero. In China, the proposition of “Poetry of Yanzhi (Poetry carries sentiments in words. /Poetry expresses the aspiration.)” was first introduced in the Chinese classics Shang Shu (or the Book of History) ① During the Qin and Han Dynasties, in The Prelude to the Classic Book of Poetry, this concept was developed into “The poem is that to which what is intently the mind (志) goes. In the mind (心) it is “being intent” (志); coming out in language (言), it is a poem. The affections (情) are stirred within and take on form (形) in words (言). If words alone are inadequate, we speak them out in sighs. If sighing is inadequate, we sing them. If singing them is inadequate, unconsciously our hands dance them and our feet tap them” ② In Europe, Heraclitus first proposed the view that art be the imitation of the nature and then in the Athens period, Aristotle proposed that poetry was the imitation of the action after his systematic discussion of the imitation theory. ③

① “Poetry of Yanzhi” is an important traditional proposition about the function of poetry, which holds the view that poetry carries sentiments in words or poetry expresses the aspiration. It was first introduced in the Chinese classics Shangshu, (Book of History), Shangshuzhengyi (Proper Meaning of Confucian book of History of ancient times), collected in Shisanjingzhushu (The Thirteen Classics), with annotations, commentaries and collation by Ruan Yuan (Qing Dynasty), (Beijing, Zhonghua Shuju Publishing House, 1980) 131. Shangshu, Confucian Book of History of Ancient Times (also translated as The Book of History), is a historical literature almost at the same time of The Confucian Classics of Poetry.

② Shangshuzhengyi, Proper Meaning by Mao the Book of Songs, with commentaries by Mao Heng (Han Dynasty), annotations by Zheng Xuan (Han Dynasty), commentaries by Kong Yingda (Tang Dynasty), collected in Shisanjingzhushu (The Thirteen Classics), with annotations, commentaries and collation by Ruan Yuan (Qing Dynasty) (Beijing: Zhonghua Publishing House, 1980) 261.

The four types of literary style in Chinese “poetry of Yanzhi” and Western “literature of imitation” have respectively four poetic discourses, four textual literary technique-textual literary imagination figure-textual literary imagination spaces and four correspondent textual will to art—textual aesthetic value judgments, which is illustrated in the following chart.

Ya and Qi list in the chart above are a pair of styles of Chinese poetry, which sum up the styles of *the Book of Poetry* and *Lisao* by Quyuan respectively. Ya and Qi first appeared in Chapter 27 in *Wenxindiaolong* by Liu Xie who summed up the style of Chinese literature as eight styles which fall into four pairs. And Ya and Qi is the first pair and form a contrast in style.

### Four types of the aesthetic style of the Western literature of imitation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poetic discourse</th>
<th>Textual technique-textual picture-textual imagination space</th>
<th>Textual will to art-textual aesthetic value judgment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-free imitation</td>
<td>Imitation of the single and limited art picture of life which is either beautiful or ugly</td>
<td>The pursuit of single emotional experience of tragedy or comedy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free imitation</td>
<td>Imitation of the complicated art picture of life in which beauty and ugliness coexist</td>
<td>The pursuit of realistic emotional experience of the combination of tragedy and comedy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figurative expression</td>
<td>Art picture of inner feelings in complete and objective figure</td>
<td>The pursuit of novelty effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-figurative expression</td>
<td>Art picture of inner feelings in incomplete and objective figure</td>
<td>The pursuit of discordant effect</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Four types of aesthetic style in Chinese poetry of Yanzhi

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poetic discourse</th>
<th>Textual technique-textual picture-textual imagination space</th>
<th>Textual will to art-textual aesthetic value judgment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ya (Grace)</td>
<td>The art picture presented without myth or supernatural power</td>
<td>Truthful emotions expressed with elegant and fine diction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qi (Exoticism)</td>
<td>The art picture presented with myth or supernatural power</td>
<td>Peculiar imagination without losing the truth, gorgeous rhetoric but with rich content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bixing</td>
<td>The art picture of the juxtaposition of mind and object</td>
<td>Expression of one’s will and aspiration by describing natural objects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jingxiang</td>
<td>The art picture of the blend of mind and object</td>
<td>An end to the words, but not to their message and a blend of emotion and scenery</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bixing and Jingxiang are taken here by the author as another pair of styles of Chinese poetry. The former is more prominent in poetry before the Qin Dynasty whereas the latter in Tang Dynasty. Bixing refers to the expression of one’s will and aspiration by comparison or description of natural objects while Jingxiang...
emphasizes that there is an end to the words, but not to their message and there is a blend of emotion and scenery.

B. Literary Style of “Magnolia Bank”

As previously mentioned, minimal literary technique is the starting point of literary symbols and literary technique the lower structural level of literary style. Thus the appreciation of the literary style of the five-character quatrains① “Magnolia Bank” in Anthology of Poetry in Countryside Round Wangchuan by Wang Wei should be started from the study of literary technique.

王维 《辛夷坞》

木末芙蓉花，
山中发红萼。/ A
洞户寂无人，
纷纷开且落。/ B

Magnolia Bank
By Wang Wei

On the tips of trees “lotus flowers”
mountains produce red calices. / A
The mouth of the valley is silent without men.
In all directions they open, then fall. / B
(Pauline Yu)

In terms of literary technique, in the five-character quatrains “Magnolia Bank”, the twenty Chinese characters are the carrier of literary symbols, four scenery description techniques the minimal literary technique, and two integrate literary imaginary images A and B the simple integrate literary technique. Literary imaginary images A and B, including two scenery description techniques respectively, compose the textual literary imaginary figure, namely in the mountain, on the tips of the magnolia that look like “lotus flower” red buds are blooming, which open and fall silently without human attention.

To readers with literary accomplishment, “Magnolia Bank” will wake up their

① Five-character quatrain is one genre of ancient Chinese poetry, which is composed of four lines with five Chinese characters in each line.
potential memory about textual literary technique. In the paradigmatic relation of textual plot and textual image, its relative “value” of textual literary technique is defined as “non-textual plot” and in the paradigmatic relation of subject, genre, structure, character and language style, its relative “value” of textual literary technique is further defined as: the subject is about mountains, flowers and birds; the genre five-character quatrains; the structure the blend of emotion and scene, the image/character building Jingxiang (There’s an end to the words, but not to their message.); and the elegant language style is achieved by simple straightforward description and color words.

Unlike a five-character quatrains “Jequirty” by Wang Wei where there is at least the mention of the pun of the fruit jequity, which is the symbol of homesickness in Chinese literature and culture, in the twenty characters of quadruple in “Magnolia Bank”, there is no single character speaking the internal state of mind, but only implied through the so-called “Huoju”. What is more significant is that in the textual image of the poem, Wujing in Zen (the awakening in the manner of Zen) of no insistence and care where Buddha’s mind of emptiness is identified with cosmic body is united with Huajing (the sublime state) of the real image of magnolia’s opening and falling and then turns into the state of Zhuxing. This may be described as “The Buddhist’s Wujing (the awakening in the manner of Zen) is equal to the poet’s Huajing (the sublime state)”. In this sense, the textual image of “Magnolia Bank” is neither the natural physical state of the magnolia (such as “The jequirities grow far in the southern part. How many do they fruit when the spring start?”) nor the speaking of various emotions in secular life (such as “As many as you can should you try to pick. They’re the best to make you less homesick). On the contrary, it is the poet’s magic creation with the blend of emotion and scenery about “color the same empty form and vice versa.” And Yin Fan in Tang Dynasty commented the poetry by Wang Wei, “His diction and tune are elegant; the theme original and reasoning satisfied... and his diction is always beyond the common.”

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1. Huoju is a term referring to a superb diction in ancient Chinese poetry creation, which is from Daijingtangshihua (Daijingtang’s Discourse on Poetry), vol. 3 by Wangshizhen (Qing Dynasty).
2. Emptiness is one of the core concepts in Buddhism. According to Paramita Sutra, form is emptiness, emptiness is form, color the same empty form.
3. Zhuxing is a term from the Chinese poetic discourse, which emphasizes the natural epiphany of aspiration.
4. Huajing, a term in Buddhism, is from Avatamsaka Sutra, vol. 5.
5. Wangshizhen (Qing Dynasty), Daijingtangshihua (Daijingtang’s Discourse on Poetry), vol. 3.
interpreted by Hu Yinglin in Ming Dynasty as that “Mojie’s (i.e. Wang Wei’s) five-character quatrains are implicit but significant... And his poems are all superb work.” He further commented on “Magnolia Bank”: “This five-character quatrains can be taken as a work of Zen”; “After reading his poem, one will forget his misfortune and lose his heart’s desire.” Wang Shizhen in Qing Dynasty commented, “Each character of his poems shines with Zen’s implication. ... His poems are all deep and subtle.” Keeping its structural boundary of poetic textual and structural transformation laws, this romantic charm in which poetry is identical with Zen, and vice versa, involves in the spiritual and cultural construction of Chinese Buddhism.

To the recipient with a basic knowledge of the poetry in Tang Dynasty, reading “Magnolia Bank” may remind him of the poem “Spring Dawn” by Meng Haoran. In Meng’s poem, one can read the integrate image; “How suddenly the morning comes in spring! On every side you can hear the sweet birds sing” and the speaking of the emotion “Last night amidst the storm-Ah, who can tell, with wind and rain, how many blossoms fell?” The two textual images of the opening and falling of flowers can reveal “the unique/rare experience” of that “there’s an end to the words, but not to their message” popular in the flourishing period of Tang Dynasty. But the Zen realm of being still and solitary in “Magnolia Bank” reveals that the poet is “refined”/ “sublimed” and the “rare talent” in his mind and his “unique/rare experience” of Zen realm, which realizes the combination of Wujing (the awakening in the manner of Zen) and Huajing (the sublime state). Similarly, Hong Liang-jie in Qing Dynasty commented in his Beijiang’s Discussion of Poetry, “The poetic realm created by Wang Wei’s poems can be accessible only in the god’s world.” It is no wonder that Hu Yingling in Ming Dynasty would mention Li Bai and Wang Wei in the same breath and regarded their poetry as being superb, subtle and profound. In comparing and contrasting Wang Wei and Meng Haoran, Wang Shizhen remarked, “Once Wang Dun asked me, ‘Wang and Meng enjoy equal popularity, but why is Meng inferior to Wang?’ And my answer is ‘That is because

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① Hu Yingling(1551–1602), Shisou (The Collection of Poems), vol. 6.
② Wangshizhen(Qing Dynasty). Daijingtangshihua (Daijingtang’s Discourse on Poetry), vol. 3.
③ Meng Haoran (689–740, Tang Dynasty) is a famous poet with similar popularity as Wang Wei.
⑤ Hong Liangji (Qing Dynasty), Beijiangshihua, (Beijiang’s Discussion of Poetry or Beijiang Poem Theory), commented by Chen Er’dong(Beijing: People’s Literature Publishing House, 1998) 94.
⑥ Hu Yingling(Ming Dynasty; 1551–1602), Shisou (The Collection of Poems), vol. 6 (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Publishing House, 1979) 116.
Meng is still bound by conventions’. Therefore, in the paradigmatic relation of Chinese poetry of Yanzhi, “Magnolia Bank” is much closer to the style of Qi in textual imagination, namely transcendental literary imagination space, with Qu Yuan’s Lament being the source. In contrast, “Jequirity” and “Spring Dawn” are identical with the style of Ya in textual imagination, namely the empirical literary imagination space, with the Book of Poetry being the representative. The intertextuality between “Magnolia Bank” and “Jequirity” and “Spring Dawn” defines that the relative value of textual literary aesthetic style of “Magnolia Bank” is non-Ya.

In addition, “Magnolia Bank” can also wake up in readers with the basic knowledge of Chinese classics the memory of “The peach tree is slender and sturdy” of “Songs Collected South of the Capital” in the Book of Songs. Both poems deal with the same subject of flowers, but in the paradigmatic relation of Bixing and Jingxiang, the intertextuality between “Magnolia Bank” and “The peach tree is slender and sturdy” where the former enjoys the feature of Jingxiang (There’s an end to the words, but not to their message.) and the latter the feature of Bixing (This term means that the expression of one’s will and aspiration by comparison or description of natural objects), defines that another relative value of textual literary aesthetic style of “Magnolia Bank” is non-Bi Xing.

In a word, the literary aesthetic style of “Magnolia Bank” is demonstrated in its relative value which is defined by the paradigmatic relation of Ya-Qi and Bixing-Jingxiang and its signification which is derived from the structural levels of literary technique-literary imagination figure-literary imagination space of “Magnolia Bank” and its correspondent textual will to art-aesthetic value judgment.

In the reception process of “Magnolia Bank”, readers with a basic knowledge of Western literature may associate it with the poem “Daffodils” by William Wordsworth. British Romantic poet Wordsworth and Tang Dynasty poet Wang Wei

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1. Wangshizhen(Qing Dynasty). Daijingtangshihua (Daijingtang’s Discussion of Poetry), vol. 1.
2. Qu Yuan(339B.C.–278B.C.) was a brilliant poet of Warring States Period, a noble of the kingdom of Chu. His masterpiece is Lisan, a poem of more than three hundred and seventy lines, which sets forth his aspirations and emotions. It is beautifully constructed with myths and legends, considerable variety in the sentence structure and concern for his countrymen, ruthlessly exposing the king’s folly and the treachery of evil ministers. He uses fragrant herbs to symbolize his own aspiring spirit. Though he met with many setbacks and occasionally was on the verge of despair, his fervent patriotism made him fight on resolutely. He has left us an incomparably moving picture of a patriot of ancient times. Though he was hounded to his death, his immortal poems live on to inspire fresh generations of patriots. This period also was the beginning of stories and drama. The origin of fiction is closely linked with myths and legends, at first handed down by word of mouth, were gradually recorded as written literature. Some of these have been preserved in The Book of Poetry and Chu Tzu, and many more in The Book of Mountains and Seas. It is to them that we must look for the origin of Chinese drama.
share many features in their literary creation; first, they share a tranquil attitude to life and nature; second, they share similar subjects, tones and language style. Besides, “Daffodils” also belongs to the genre of lyrical expressing the poet’s emotion with the description of flowers.

“Daffodils” is about the poet (“I”)’s recalling of his experience of being cheered up at the sight of golden daffodils while he was wandering lonely in the valley and it also reveals the poet’s love of nature. The ERC of “Daffodils” is 163 English words and four single whole images in the four stanzas form its textual images.

In the first stanza, “I” saw the “fluttering and dancing” daffodils during my solitary wandering. Narration and scenery description are the minimal literary technique. The narration introduces the person, event and place, and simile and personification are employed.

In the second stanza the ten thousand daffodils were “tossing their heads in sprightly dance”. Scenery description is the minimal literary technique and again simile and personification are employed.

In the third stanza, “I” was gazing at the daffodils and the waves and the glee of the daffodils was set off by “the sparkling waves in glee” and then the poet turned to the inner happiness “I” felt. Scenery description and direct expression of the poet’s emotion are the minimal literary technique and personification and foil are employed.

In the fourth stanza, when “I” lay sleeplessly in the couch and recalled the dancing of daffodils, my heart was filled with pleasure, which demonstrated the bliss of solitude. The combination of narration and emotional expression is the minimal technique. Narration introduced the time (lying in the couch in solitary), character and event (“I” recalled the dancing of daffodils). “The bliss of solitude” in the fourth stanza echoes my “wandering alone” in the first stanza.

With the poet’s imagination, the image of daffodil in “Daffodils” is expanded into four images of dancing daffodils, the stars on the milky way, the sparkling waves and the poet’s dancing with the daffodils. Due to the legend of the narcissistic daffodils in the British people’s cultural collective memory, the textual image in “Daffodils” may imply a metaphor of the unity of nature and beauty. Keeping its structural boundary, structural transformation laws of literary symbols, “Daffodils” involves in the spiritual and cultural construction of the 19th British humanism.

Literary symbols’ connotation system of “Daffodils” or the constructing meaning of the five structural levels is determined by the following aspects; simile and personification, etc. are the rhetoric devices; minimal techniques are three
narrations, three scenery descriptions and two direct expression of emotion; the structure is the combination of four integrate images and direct expression of emotion; the love of the nature composes the transcendental textual imagination space; the will to art is Wordsworth’s dealing with the subjects in daily with his imagination and the direct expression of his emotion through the images; the aesthetic value judgment is the practice of expressing the passion through imagination in the Romanticism in 19th century. In the paradigmatic relation of imitation and representation in European literary style, the relative “value” of textual literary aesthetic style in “Daffodils”, namely non-imitation, is defined by its intertextuality with the empirical imagination space of the imitation literature since the ancient Greek.

With natural language as the carrier, both “Daffodils” and “Magnolia Bank” express emotions through the creation of images and the transcendental type in which the limit of physical and natural time and space is transcended is their shared textual imagination space. But they have different cultural traditions, aesthetic connotations and literary techniques. In terms of fictional-icon, “Magnolia Bank” is dominated by line drawing whereas “Daffodils” employs various rhetorical devices; “Magnolia Bank” only has the scenery description of Huoju while “Daffodils” dopts three techniques of narration, description and lyrical; “Magnolia Bank” is dominated by Jingxiang (There’s an end to the words, but not to their message.) while “Daffodils” is designed by the combination of image and direct expression of emotions. In terms of textual imagination space, “Magnolia Bank” belongs to the Qi-Jingxiang style in the system of Chinese Poetry of Yanzhi in contrast with the Book of Poetry’s style of Ya-Bixing style whereas “Daffodils” belongs to the expression style in Western imitation literature system in contrast with the imitation style of Iliad and Odyssey.

### Conclusion

Piaget’s structure self-regulation theory provides theoretical resources for the open study of the symbol-structure. It can interpret the relation between language and literature and literature and culture without deconstructing the structure.

In literary works, fictional-icon techniques, the third space, natural textual imagination space, and cultural poetics literature of different nations are the unique fields in literary symbols. Among them, the carrier of literary symbols, the signifier of the first structural level (ERC) and the signified of the textual aesthetic ideal of the fifth structural level C⁵ have double identities. Therefore, literary field is
interrelated with natural language and spiritual and cultural fields.

Structural elements of connotation system of literary symbols are not homogeneous equivalent. The new signified of connotation system $C^a$ is the key structural element, which defines the basic nature and function of the various structural levels of the connotation system in literary symbols.

The five structural levels of literary symbols are composed by literary technique and literary style with different natures and functions.

Literary technique refers to literary expression generated by the interaction between natural language and literary imagination figure, with three segment units, three structural levels. It enjoys fictional-icon function and contains the physic-psychological and conventional features of natural language signs in lower structural levels.

Literary style refers to the intentional object which is generated by the interaction between literary technique and literary imagination space, with text as its segment unit, and which includes two structural levels and enjoys the basic nature and function of the third space.

Individual literary style, just like individual life, is a complex system composed of genetic library, literary style, and environment. Here the genetic library refers to the paradigmatic system of literary style in individual national culture; individual spiritual and cultural system compose the environment; cultural aesthetic expectation and textual aesthetic ideal compose the feedback loop between individual literary style and spirit and cultural system; literary style, keeping its structural boundary and transformational law, involves in the spiritual and cultural construction.

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**Appendix**

孟浩然《春晓》

春眠不觉晓，
处处闻啼鸟。
夜来风雨声，
花落知多少?

**Spring Dawn**

*By Meng Hao-ran*

Oversleeping in spring I missed the dawn;
Now everywhere the cries of birds are heard.
Tumult of wind and rain had filled the night
How many blossoms fell during the storm?
《诗经·桃夭》

桃之夭夭，灼灼其华。之子于归，宜其室家。
桃之夭夭，有蕡其实。之子于归，宜其家室。
桃之夭夭，其叶蓁蓁。之子于归，宜其家人。

The Book of Songs

The peach tree is slender and sturdy
The peach tree is slender and sturdy.
Flaming red are its blossoms.
The girl is getting married.
Most suitable for the house.
The peach tree is slender and sturdy.
Luscious and abundant is its fruit.
The girl is getting married.
Most suitable for the home.

The peach tree is slender and sturdy.
Exuberant and green are its leaves.
The girl is getting married.
Most suitable for the family.

（Translated by Yang Xianyi）

Daffodils

by William Wordsworth

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills./1
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze./2A

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay;
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance./2B

The waves beside them danced: but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee;/1
A poet could not but be gay.
In such a jocund company:
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought; 2C

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood.
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;/1
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils. /2D

《水仙》
华兹华斯

我孤独地漫游,像一朵云
在山丘和谷地上飘荡/1
忽然间我看见一群
金色的水仙花迎春开放
在树荫下,在湖水边,
迎着微风起舞偏偏./2A

连绵不绝,如繁星灿烂,
在银河里闪闪发光,
它们沿着湖湾的边缘
延伸成无情无尽的一行；
我一眼看见了一万朵,
在欢舞之中起伏翻簇。/2B

粼粼波光也跳着舞,
水仙的欢欣却胜过水波;/1
与这样快活的伴侣为伍,
诗人怎能不心快乐！
我久久凝望,却想象不到
这奇景赋予我多少财宝。/2C

每当我躺在床上不眠,
或心神空茫,或默默沉思,
它们常在心灵中闪现,
那是孤独之中的福;/1
于是我心便涨满幸福,
和水仙一同翩翩起舞。/2D
Interlanguage: a Common Language for the Global Village

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Abstract: Interlanguage is a global semantic transmission system. Based on language commonness, interlanguage can break through language barriers in international communication, and provide an important basis for the automatic processing of internet information. This paper gives a brief introduction to the fruits, theories, methods and equipment of the research.

Key words: interlanguage; symbol language; intermediate language; global village; semantic net; human-machine consensus; machine translation; automatic processing of information

The purpose of our research is to create a barrier-free system for global semantic transmission, that is, the Interlanguage system (IL). I’d introduce our starting points which can be listed as four aspects.

To begin with, semiotic research should take cross-culture communication as its principle, set up its own systematized theoretical system, put up with its unique and effective way of application, and provide systems / methods / tools for cross-culture communication. As a great scholar once said, “What thousands of philosophers are doing is to interpret the world, while what’s important is to change the world.”

Secondly, the basis and premise of cross-culture communication is mutual understanding of different languages. However, language barrier is a world-class problem which UNESCO has worked so many years to solve but has not won complete success. And that should be the central subject and main developing line of semiotics.
What’s more, cross-culture communication has gone beyond traditional linguistic boundary and become an edge subject. It asks for the coordinated work of specialists of many disciplines and encourages the integrated thinking of many disciplines. In information era, all scientific and technological issues can be solved to display strong vitality only with the aid of the computer and the internet.

Last but not least, interlanguage communication will lead to a semantic transmission system called Interlanguage—“global village common language” to link people all over the world. Some experts think that semiotic theory system does not exist. From where we stand, the global semantic transmission system is most likely to develop into the semiotic theory system, which is an area of greatest value in semiotics.

Based on the above, we make the interlanguage research and development with an integrated multi-discipline thinking.

### 1. The preliminary results

The preliminary results are summarized in the following papers:

- *The Commonness of Languages and Its Symbol — Interlanguage*;
- *The Mechanism for Mutual Comprehension between Human Languages*;
- *A Shortcut to Global Semantic communication*

The papers discuss the concept, implementing measures, operation carrier and tools. The implementing measures and application tools are a set of Interlanguage Protocol which includes:

1. Expression of semantic logic;
2. Concept dictionary;

The global translation website is used as an implementing carrier of interlanguage, and the operation tools can be a computer, a cell phone, or other terminals. Without internet, the original culture ways (Icon language) can also be used in the direct communication of people speaking different languages. Therefore, interlanguage can break through language barriers at the semantic level so as to provide an overall solution to global language communication. We can know this idea from the following figure;
Two approaches
to realize barrier-free communication between languages

2. Understanding of interlanguage

We can understand interlanguage in the following way:

1. Interlanguage is a human-machine consensus language;
2. Interlanguage is the mediator for semantic transmission of different languages;
3. Interlanguage is a language standard in expressing information;
4. Interlanguage is a standard language of internet;
5. Interlanguage is an intermediate language, a logical language, a formal language and a symbol language;
6. Interlanguage provides a general solution to the problem of language barriers;
7. Interlanguage internet and cell phone declare that international language barriers can be broken through.

The fruits of the current stage include an international chat room website 360ichat, com and the international translation cell phone for interlanguage, ILphone.

The following are pictures taken from the interlanguage experiment website;
360ichat Website:

目前网站还在持续建设中，第一期版本主要在聊天室中体现IL的应用。

Chatroom界面：
聊天室按功能分成多个区域，详细见图中说明。
The following are pictures taken from the international translation cell phone for interlanguage, *ILphone*.
People speaking different languages now can use internet and cell phones, with the help of machine translation, rather than translators to conduct direct international exchange in their native language.

This is an original technological achievement which can bridge a gap in the area of internet application after being improved.

### 3. The meaning of interlanguage

Interlanguage is composed of a whole set of concepts, ways, tools working together to realize the barrier-free transmission of semantic meaning so that people speaking different languages can understand each other.

Currently, linguistic barriers exist both among human beings and between human and machine. The human civilization with a history of thousands of years is still unable to make it possible for people of all languages to exchange their ideas directly. The international society, especially UNESCO, attaches great importance to language communication problems and has made great efforts to solve them. However, international language barrier so far still exists which has become a contemporary problem of the world. Combining the research results of their multi-
disciplinary thinking, Lin Xunzhun from Global Interlanguage Research Center (Shenzhen) and his co-workers put forward an interlanguage system, putting forward an answer to this question, hoping to fill the gap in the internet application area.

Interlanguage provides two tools to break through language communication barriers; they are the international chat room 360ichat, com and the interlanguage international translation cell phone ILphone. Anyone can conduct direct international communication in their native language. Interlanguage makes machine translation a reliable language tool, and marks the first step to barrier-free international language communication. The recommendation from specialists regards interlanguage as an original and great scientific achievement which fills one gap in internet area, and is likely to promote internet application to a new stage where information processing has new thinking and prospect.

4. The main arguments and fruits of interlanguage

The main arguments and fruits of interlanguage can be summarized as follows:

(1) The main characteristics of a mature information society are internetworking, barrier-free semantic communication, resource sharing and cooperative work. The next theme of internet is the global coordinated work on the basis of automatic information processing.

(2) The problem of the current development is the language barrier which exists both between human and machine and among human beings. International society, including UNESCO, many governments and several big corporations have worked decades to promote Esperanto and develop machine translation, but none of the above efforts has break through language barrier.

(3) The effective way of solving the language barrier is to realize human-human consensus through human-machine consensus—using the intermediate language of human-machine consensus to realize the semantic transmission of different languages. The intermediate language is called interlanguage. The status and function of interlanguage can be shown by the following formula:

“The global village” = \{Internet \((1/n + \) Interlanguage)\} Cooperation

\(n \gg 1\), \((n = \text{language distribution parameters})\)

Without interlanguage, global cooperation is discounted by language distribution parameters, and can only be individual and partial.
(4) The development and application of Interlanguage is likely to open a new space for information technology, promote social informationization to a new stage, and stimulate human civilization to move towards the ideal goal of establishing a global village.

(5) Based on semiotics, system engineering, artificial intelligence, and computer science, and abstracting the commonness of different languages, Interlanguage Research Center puts forward the Interlanguage Protocol (ILP), a global translation network based on human/machine consensus language. Interlanguage brings an unexpected new vigor to machine translation and makes it a practical communication method. Currently, more than ten languages can be mutually translated with the help of interlanguage. The translated version is more reliable than other machine translation versions. When no machine is available for translation, symbol language, the most easily consensus and minimized meta-language system can be used for simple communication. Therefore, interlanguage system is capable of realizing barrier-free global communication.

(6) The further development of interlanguage system is to establish human-machine consensus internet operation language, which will promote the standardization of information language, the standardization of information description and the automation of information processing. The new application of intelligent service agency will help realize the popularization of global coordinated work. A series of innovative information technology industries will come after that and a new age for internet application will open up.

(7) The carrier of interlanguage system—global translation internet system project has been approved, supported and accepted on a stage basis by science and technology department of Shenzhen, China. The staged achievements of the project are the international chatroom 360ichat.com and the interlanguage international translation cell phone ILphone. The achievement of its current stage can be described as follows; people speaking different languages now can make use of internet and cell phone, the machine translation tools rather than a translator to conduct direct communication with their native language. That is to say, the international language barrier can be broken through.

The systematic experiments suggest that the current version of V1.1 is feasible.

(8) Interlanguage may open up a new era for information standardization. Language barrier comes from the irregularity of different languages while irregularity is the natural enemy of computers which can never be overcome. To permanently get rid of the language barrier, we should avoid irregular language behaviors. The standardization of internet information forms the premise and basis
of the automation of information processing and global coordination. In the
industrialization process of the 20th century, human beings learnt to standardize their
industrial behavior, and in the informationization process of the 21st century, human
being should also learn to standardize their information behavior, especially the
standardization of language internationalization.

(9) Interlanguage is an easy and effective way of breaking through
international language barrier, which allows people of different nations to
communicate in their native language, thus promoting the globalization of business,
making friends and cooperating.

Internet protocol links the nets all over the world into a united internet;
likewise, inter-languages protocol will become the platform for global language
connection, the standard of language internationalization as well as a new milestone
for internet.

(10) Interlanguage ensures the equality of all language fundamentally. It
provides a scientific basis and a method for the Universal Convention of Cultural
Diversity put forward by UNESCO in 2005.

To speed up human civilization, relevant international organizations should
practice a standard for language internationalization.

Let’s join hands to build the global village. I hope that semiotic studies can
make practical contributions to human civilization.

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A Semiotic Quest for the “Fifth Element” in Foreign Language Acquisition

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Abstract: In the last three years, our research in visual literacy in higher education has shown that using non-verbal semiotic elements in the area of foreign language acquisition is a novel experience for university students. Of particular interest has been our difficulty in making students understand why we need these semiotic modes in teaching and learning foreign languages in addition to the traditional four language skills, namely reading, writing, speaking and listening. We call this research a quest, since proposing that non-verbal skills be on an equal footing with the four traditional skills would require great exertion on the part of any researcher, who would have to overcome many obstacles. These would include the inability to define precisely what constitutes a visually literate person, a lack of extensive experimental research on the impact of the non-verbal on foreign language acquisition, making it impossible to defend its role as an autonomous skill, and the relatively narrow focus of semiotics as a field of study in several countries. This paper nominates the non-verbal semiotic element as the ‘fifth skill’ in foreign language acquisition. This ‘visual nomination’ includes a self-examination of our research and teaching experience in visual literacy, and a review of studies that investigate the effects of language instruction that incorporates varying degrees of non-verbal components. We aim to stimulate interest in enhancing the role of the visual in teaching and learning foreign languages, with the long-term ambition of having it formally introduced as an examinable component in international foreign language certifications. Finally, we aspire to contribute to the efforts to make visual literacy a subject to be taught in itself and across the curriculum in higher education.

Key words: semiotic; fifth element; acquisition

1. Introduction

The teaching of the four basic literacy skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening) has revolved almost exclusively around verbal language. This dominance of verbal language in the field of visual communication has also been pointed out by several researchers (e.g. Damen, 1997; Moriarty, 2002; Love, 2008; Jim and
Boling, 2010). Love (2008) argues, on the basis of the proliferation of multimodal texts within the new communicative landscape, that in the twenty-first century the traditional notion of literacy as consisting of the “four basic skills” is inadequate. If we accept, then, that there is a new type of literacy that is not (solely) verbal in orientation, then we need to adopt a systematic approach to the study of visual education (Jewitt and Kress, 2003).

Based on our research and teaching experience in using non-verbal semiotic elements in higher education (Christodoulou and Damaskinidis, 2011, 2012a, 2012b, in press), the non-verbal element in the area of foreign language acquisition is a novel experience for university students. We are aware that proposing that we put non-verbal skills on an equal footing with the four traditional language skills would require great exertion on the part of any researcher, and that many obstacles would have to be overcome. Such difficulties would include defining precisely what constitutes a visually literate person, a lack of extensive experimental research on the impact of the non-verbal on foreign language acquisition, and the relatively narrow focus of semiotics as a field of study in several countries.

This paper nominates the non-verbal semiotic element as the “fifth skill” in foreign language acquisition. This “visual nomination” includes a self-examination of our research and teaching experience in visual literacy, and a review of studies that investigate the effects of language instruction that incorporates varying degrees of non-verbal components. We aim to stimulate interest in enhancing this new role of the visual, with the long-term ambition of having it formally introduced as an examinable component in international foreign language certifications. We also aspire to contribute to the efforts to make visual literacy a subject to be taught in itself and across the curriculum in higher education.

This paper is structured as follows: first, we outline a number of approaches to the concept of foreign language acquisition skills; second, we examine the role of non-verbal semiotic elements in the foreign language classroom; third, we briefly present our own research and teaching-based data on the use of non-verbal semiotic elements in the language classroom in higher education; and fourth, we provide a tentative description of the present state of our semiotic quest.

2. Approaches to the concept of foreign language acquisition skills

Traditionally, the four language skills, namely reading, writing, speaking and listening, have been essential components of EFL classes. These skills are supposed to help students increase their communicative competence, which is the goal of most
EFL instruction, in order to use the language system appropriately in any circumstance. Brown (2000) claims that the best way to attain communicative goals is to pay attention to language use rather than just usage, to fluency rather than just accuracy, to authentic language and contexts, and to the students’ ultimate need to apply classroom learning to real-life circumstances. A number of studies have shown that teaching by combining verbal and non-verbal semiotic elements has a better outcome than teaching either with verbal or non-verbal elements only (Jin and Boling, 2010; Mayer, 2003). Although some students find visual images to some degree distracting (ibid.), Clark and Lyons (2011) argue that the educational benefits of visual images are indisputable.

One attempt to add an additional fifth skill to the four traditional skills has been Damen’s (1997) claim that language learning implies and embraces culture learning. She bases her claim by reference to Brown’s (2005) argument that language teaching is also a teaching of cultural customs, ways of thinking, feeling, and acting. Damen (1997) states that culture is a skill that differs from the traditional four because it intersects and overlaps with them in specific ways. An assumption made by EFL teachers is that it is safe to focus on the four mentioned skills since students have already acquired some knowledge of the second language’s culture. However, the idea of culture as a skill in foreign language acquisition has been met with scepticism. For example, while teaching the culture of the foreign language increases, according to Vernier et al. (2008), students’ overall learning experience, they argue against its autonomy as a skill. Also, Kramsch (1993) argues that culture, as a skill, should not be simply an expansion of the four traditional skills. On the contrary, if language is viewed as a social practice, culture will become the core of language teaching, and will even become the overall context of meaningful cultural learning into which the four language skills would be integrated.

Another skill proposed to be added to the four traditional skills, for example, in teaching English, has been called “viewing skills” under the broad field of visual literacy (No Author, Date). It is argued that visual literacy components should be integrated into one or more of the steps (pre-, post- and during teaching) of the teaching-learning process. Nevertheless, the visual is not considered as an equal skill but simply as a tool through which the other four skills could be taught. While there have been examples of using visual images for teaching reading, speaking, listening and writing skills, it is not proposed the other way around. That is, there are no examples of these skills being used to teach the visual skill. Moreover, for the visual image to be employed in this way, a teacher would have to be “visually literate”. This gives rise to the question of who is visually literate. This is a problematic aspect
of integrating, or adding, the visual to the language teaching process, since generic
criteria of what constitutes a visually literate person have yet to be established.

The need to look for additional skills in the language classroom is also derived
from other factors which are not strictly educational, such as space, agents of
learning and teaching and display learning (Heath, 2000). A number of related
activities are proposed in reference to these factors (No Author, Date). By leaving
the traditional indoor space of the language classroom and moving to other outdoor
teaching and learning spaces, like museums or parks, or going sightseeing, students
would be able to experience the subjects they study in their books. In these spaces,
teachers would have to design visually integrated lessons, thus creating a more
socially meaningful education experience.

When training to become an English language teacher, students could be treated
as agents of learning and teaching. For example, they could go to a community
centre and find people who want to learn English and then design a project to help
them learn. Such a project would turn students into agents of teaching and learning,
providing them with a direct perspective on how teaching and learning processes
take place. This way of learning requires a type of training that Kiraly (2001) calls
a social constructivist and collaborative learning approach to pedagogy.

The concept of “display learning” is dependent on the provision in the
classroom of specialized educational modes of learning, such as videos and cameras.
Teachers who opt for such different modes of learning should also design different
types of assessment that suit the learning type. However, curriculum documents and
assessment requirements for reading and writing are based on established theories on
the reading and writing of print-based texts. These theories have determined
specific approaches and strategies for teaching reading and writing to assist learners
at all stages of learning. Yet, ongoing research is required to theorize the
interactions that occur as learners read and process various visual, aural, spatial and
textual modes, separately or simultaneously, in texts that consist of various semiotic
modes.

In the previous examples, it has been taken for granted that English language
teachers are visually literate. As it has been noted already, it is very difficult to
determine who is visually literate generally speaking, let alone for the purpose of
教 English as a foreign language. Although there are not many studies about
the visual literacy levels of foreign language teachers, some of them are indicative of
the wider situation in the field of foreign language acquisition. For example, Abdel-
Moneim (2010) conducted a study in Egypt in order to discover English teachers’
attitudes towards the understanding and use of visual literacy concepts. According to
This study, one hundred percent of the instructors indicated that they did not have to
take any formal course in visual literacy instruction as part of their university
training. These teachers recalled that there was not even a reference in the
curriculum in regard to the concept of using visual literacy in the English language
classroom. Moreover, they went on to reveal that even the English language schools
and institutions they worked in provided no formal in-service training in visual
literacy instruction.

3. The role of non-verbal semiotic elements in the foreign language
classroom

Well before the twenty-first century, we were flooded with visual messages of
all types in a wide range of media, mainly the Internet and television, both in
personal and private spaces. The ability to decode visual expressions and to consider
them critically has become an essential skill for researchers and teachers in
education. It is important to be able to decode, encode and critically consider visual
expression. These are essential skills for researchers and teachers in education. We
think it is high time that this skill was passed on to students as a powerful learning
tool in the development of creative, critical and independent thinking. We do not
imply that teachers and researchers have fully mastered this visual literacy skill. On
the contrary, we strongly believe that imparting this body of knowledge to students
will better enable teachers and researchers to reflect on their practices and to propel
the field of visual literacy one step forward.

Bernhardt (1986) argues that reading electronic texts in front of a computer
screen is not a passive activity. The reader interacts physically with the text by
means of the mouse, the cursor, the touch screen, or voice activation. In contrast to
the print book, the text becomes a dynamic object, capable of being physically
manipulated and transformed. This might also involve continuous transfers from one
electronic text to another to the point of potentially losing track of the start in this
reading process. Bernhardt (ibid.) goes on to stress that we must begin using visual
literacy in the composition class because our students are interacting more and more
with these “dynamic” texts in school and on the job. Following these arguments,
before using video as a teaching medium, for example, rather than merely viewing
it, students should be instructed to use it in a more interactive mode to convey ideas
and to solve problems. This interaction may take the form of using specialized
software to re-edit the video in order to convey ideas and solve problems.

Nevertheless, visual literacy-based activities should be included in the language
classroom with great caution. For example, in the First-year Writing Program at Virginia Tech, teaching visual literacy was believed to be just too much for the level of first-year composition (Brizee, 2003). This concern was voiced because the addition of lessons to cover visual literacy moved the academic essay to more electronic or visual formats. Therefore, since the core writing requirements shifted, then first-year composition would have to shift to match the change.

In the field of foreign language teaching, visually literate teachers that are capable of choosing or creating visual images could use them to enhance the students’ achievements in learning. In addition to teaching visual literacy skills to language learners per se, the integration of a visual component in some of, or all, the stages of the teaching and learning processes might foster the teaching of the four traditional English language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Visual literacy may also help teachers to design more attractive teaching and learning processes that could better engage students in learning activities. Studies have consistently revealed that teaching with words and visuals has more favourable results than teaching using only words or only visuals (Jin and Boling, 2010).

However, language and image should not be separated as this would create an unnatural boundary. In the visual and verbal dyad, one is not superior to the other; in fact, they complement each other. This is pertinent to McKim’s (1980) argument that “the thinker who has a broad command of graphic languages... can find more complete expression for his thinking”. Thus, recognizing the value of the theories surrounding visual thinking and visual language (and their pedagogical implications), composition instructors are now applying elements of visual literacy in writing classrooms.

In the next section we are to summarise our recent experience in researching and teaching using non-verbal semiotic elements in the Department of Italian Language and Literature of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki in Greece.

4. Research and teaching-based data using non-verbal semiotic elements in the language classroom in higher education

Here we outline our recent teaching and research experience in the way it has informed our semiotic quest for the fifth element in foreign language acquisition (Christodoulou and Damaskinidis, 2011; 2012a; 2012b, in press); firstly, reading videos using visual semiotic analysis; secondly, combining social semiotic and multimodal analysis in expanding the term “educational microworld”; thirdly, presenting the implications of designing a visual literacy course for postgraduate
students of a foreign language department; and fourthly, employing a technique called photo elicitation so as to elicit students’ semiotic perspective of the contemporary Greek crisis.

The first example is our reading of videos, which was based on visual social semiotics (Jewitt and Oyama, 2001) as a tool kit for use in critical research, in the sense of the Frankfurt School aiming to enlighten the critical viewer about the inimical relationship of industry to culture. We examined Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (2006) idea to extend the three Hallidayan (1978) metafunctions—ideational (representing ideas about the world), interpersonal (facilitating certain kinds of social and interpersonal interactions) and textual (combining ideas and interactions into meaningful texts)—to visual analysis, under the names of representational, interactive, and compositional metafunctions, respectively. The project involved postgraduate students watching videos and asking visual semiotic questions in a collaborative mode of teaching and learning with the aim of enhancing their visual literacy skills.

The students made a sincere effort to answer the questions, which provided a springboard for filmic analysis. Some questions required minor conceptual and syntactical modifications, while all the questions required further elucidation. The interview confirmed, and in a sense exceeded, our expectations of its contribution as a research tool. We consider the research subjects’ performance to be slightly above the average; for example, they managed to provide some insightful and intuitive comments and balanced arguments. They contributed to the interview with their own comments and led the discussion to several related topics. In some cases, students could not use their own background knowledge in watching a video with a particular music theme. For example, although one student is an amateur musician, (with his own band) he told us that he had never paid any attention to the music in the films he had seen. This suggests that users of multimodal texts do not always draw on all meaning-making resources in multimodal reading. This may also explain why the students, in principle, did not relate the music to the overall impact of the video.

The second example is taken from our exploration of the concept of an educational microworld as an interactive learning environment. Using as a case study a computer-based language activity in the area of teaching English for Specific Purposes, we demonstrated how a multimodal PowerPoint slide show (integrating pictures, audio and changing slides) could become an educational microworld in a specific professional context. By analysing each semiotic element as an independent meaning-making resource and examining how all modes are jointly used, we
investigated the ways the users of this microworld (both teachers and students) use social resources for communicating meanings.

It was proposed that, apart from the professional group for which it was originally designed, this microworld could also be tailored to specific social groups, like immigrants or illiterate people, in the form of informal lifelong learning. Recently, there have been numerous attempts to transform the Greek school into a truly intercultural learning environment so as to accommodate the large number of immigrant children. An effective way to allow for the smooth integration of immigrants into school could be a cultural microworld, where the role of the users would be assumed by native Greek students and immigrants, who would take turns presenting the culture of their own country to the rest of the students. Moreover, Greek students could be asked to present the culture of the immigrants’ countries and the other way around. The role of the teacher is crucial here in making sure that this presentation is an accurate and balanced account of the relevant culture. This is an instance where culture becomes an additional skill in foreign language acquisition. Yet, in order for it to become a true ‘skill’, in the sense discussed here, the teacher would have to have been trained how to integrate culture in the language classroom.

The third example is the design of an innovative course titled *Visual Literacy in Language Teaching and Learning* for students in the post-graduate “Italian Language and Culture” programme. While the current curriculum of the programme offers a variety of courses to improve students’ language skills for this specialization, its focus has remained relatively narrow. It is now apparent that changes primarily brought about by the use of video as a teaching material in the language classroom have created new opportunities for video as a tool to promote and enhance the study of non-verbal semiotic modes of communication in multimodal texts.

We have followed the “new pedagogies of multiliteracies” (New London Group, 1996), shifting from the dominant print text and examining how literacy can be practised when analysing video, as a new form of multimodal text, in the new millennium. By employing this new concept of pedagogy, we aim to introduce a framework consisting of two elements: a systemic functional approach and multimodal discourse analysis to describe the activities of individuals as they identify, read and create new texts using a variety of semiotic codes.

Based on our evaluation of this course, one of the most interesting findings was our difficulty to explain two important aspects of visual literacy: Why we need visual literacy skills, both as individuals and foreign language teachers, and the concept of video as an autonomous type of (multimodal) text that is to be viewed, edited and analysed for pedagogical purposes. We frequently had to resort to
parallelisms with other more traditional methods of teaching and learning in order to demonstrate this need. For example, the participants in a video were compared to the characters of a novel, or the different frames, shots, scenes and sequences to the unfolding of the plot. It has become clear that any tool for teaching visual literacy skills is dependent on background knowledge and theoretical concepts of the visual as a semiotic mode of communication, including systemic verbal-visual associations.

Our initial intention was to provide a very specific, and sharply defined, point of view regarding visual literacy, by means of a practical model applied to the analysis of a video. However, it became clear that this approach should be supplemented by other approaches in verbal-visual education. The findings reported here point to the need for further research towards gaining an understanding of how to aid the development of teachers and students’ visual skills in language teaching and learning. Therefore, it would have been an exaggeration to call such SF-MDA a potential fifth element in foreign language acquisition, since we strongly consider students who lack formal education in visual literacy ill-equipped to be introduced to this model.

The fourth example is from a small-scale study where we applied the photo elicitation technique as a research method to get a visual semiotic perspective of post-graduate students’ views regarding press articles on the contemporary Greek crisis. The intention was to identify a relationship between the verbal aspect of news articles and the visual message of the accompanying photograph. Photo elicitation, based on the simple idea of inserting a photograph into a research interview, was combined with Barthes’ (1964) commutation test to isolate important signifying qualities. An image-based questionnaire allowed for the open expression of students’ dilemmas while providing concrete talking points. The focus of the discussion was the photos and their content, rather than the students themselves, which seems to have triggered confidence, leading subjects to reveal their attitudes and values. Thus, the questionnaire provided a stimulus for students to bring in the visual as a key aspect in verbal discussion. Verbal-visual dilemmas broadened students’ perspective of their choices in making visual-verbal associations.

Despite the lack of formal standards for assessing visual literacy levels, evidence suggests that familiarity with the visual—the visual literacy level—varied among the respondents. For example, although one question required students to find a photograph to accompany a press article, thirteen visuals (out of twenty-four in total) were not photographs. These visuals were graphics, photographic collages, newspaper front pages, and students did not explain if their choices were made on
purpose, or if they were the result of misinterpreting the question. This is circumstantial evidence that the students might not have had a clear understanding of the term ‘photograph’. Although the questionnaire was not related to a foreign language activity, it illustrates the difficulties entailed when giving instructions for a language activity which is related to visual materials.

5. Concluding remarks

In this paper we have tried to demonstrate the inherent difficulties in integrating the non-verbal element in foreign language acquisition on an equal basis with the four standard skills, that is, listening, reading, speaking and writing. Whether this effort will result in the naming of an entirely new fifth skill or in incorporating the non-verbal element in some complex way with the four standard skills is a question, we argue, that cannot yet be adequately answered.

Such an exploration would depend on a number of various factors. First, it matters which theoretical perspective or approach is adopted. For example, in the sphere of foreign language teaching and learning, the proposal for a “fifth language” skill seems to be restrictive in scope and does not provide many opportunities for further research. On the other hand, in the wider area of education, visual literacy has started to earn a place as a distinct skill. However, we have to go back and reconsider the questions we set earlier about what is visual literacy, who is considered visually literate, and how to measure visual literacy.

Finally, is it valid to look for a “fifth” skill? Someone might also propose a sixth, a seventh or even a group of skills, and so on. There is no doubt that we need a great deal of theoretical brainstorming from a variety of theoretical perspectives and disciplines, even if these are not closely related to foreign language acquisition. The various educational institutes in foreign language teaching and learning may also have to reset their policies at an international level. In addition, and even more importantly, more experimental, research-based data are required because we cannot theorize without looking at hard evidence.

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66–78.


Continuum.


Principles of Representing Idiom Modifications in Bilingual Lexicography

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Abstract: This paper deals with the problem of representing idiom modifications in lexicography. A number of approaches to idiom variability and its representation in Russian, English, German and Spanish phraseological dictionaries, both monolingual and bilingual, including the one being compiled by the authors, are discussed.

Key words: idioms; idiom modifications; lexicography; bilingual dictionaries; text corpora.

Although tradition holds idioms as rather rigid expressions, their power of variability is widely known and described (see, for instance, [Dobrovolskij 2007b, 2007c; Langlotz 2006; Moon 2006; Nunberg, Sag, Wasow 1994]). There are a lot of convergent pairs of idioms such as to be in a hole / to drag sb. out of a hole, to get in on / come down off one’s horse, etc. Many of them can be modified in various ways without ceasing to be themselves (i.e., without breaking into separate constituents). Such alterations of a form include lexical substitutions (English to do sth. against time / the clock, to up / raise the ante; it’s all Greek / double Dutch to sb; German für jmdn. die Kastanien/Kartoffeln aus der Feuer holen “to be employed—by being manipulated, or otherwise utilized—to undertake the dangerous part of sb else’s enterprise”, literally, “to drag chestnuts/potatoes out of the fire”); morphological modifications (English to blow whistles / to blow the whistle). Besides, there may be lexico-syntactical modifications of two main types: those with an adjectival modifier—cf. English to take full/maximum advantage, tip of the large iceberg, German mir fehlen die passenden Worte (lit. “suitable words fail me”)—and those with a genitive or of-component one (Russian gromy i molnii gneva Gospodnà, lit. “thunder and lightnings of God’s wrath” < metat’ gromy i molnii “to be extremely angry or wrathful”, lit. “to hurl thunders and lightnings”; English to go through the motions of listening).

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Usually, modifications are divided into formal (it is the structure of an idiom that gets modified like in the aforementioned examples) and semantic ones (idioms change their meanings in a specific context, e.g. when *they had a mountain to climb* refers to a group of alpinists; see [Burger 1998]). Sometimes a formal modification leads to some shifts of meaning. Semantic and pragmatic effects of the use of idioms and their modifications, their discursive behavior were studied in a number of treatises and articles, such as [Dobrovolskij 2007a, 2007b; Dobrovolskij, Piirainen 2005; Nascimento 2001; Omazić 2008]. Sometimes a single morphological alteration may transform a meaning drastically and turn a phrase into another idiom in its own right, cf. *to be in a hole* ‘to be in trouble’ and *to be in the hole* ‘to be penniless, to lose all one’s gatherings’ (the latter actually has an underlying metaphor of a ‘hole card’ in poker, which is not quite plausible in the former). It should also be noted that the terms ‘variant’ and ‘modification’, although close, are not entirely synonymous. Besides, there is a difference between standard and non-standard (the latter are either context-based, such as *to spill the electoral beans*, or double-take effect, e.g. *to bite the lead bullet*, where *lead* seems to be only a reference to the underlying metaphor); see, for instance, [Dobrovolskij 2007; Dronov 2011: 147–149].

It is certain that a comprehensive phraseological dictionary, the one that can be useful both for a linguist and an aspiring language learner, should include a wide variety of standardized idiom modifications that may be regarded as idiom variants in their own right, as well more creative ones such as. This article deals with how such modifications are represented in mono- and bilingual dictionaries of idioms.

It should be taken into account, however, that a monolingual dictionary may sometimes be (at least to some extent) rendered bilingual by adding a foreign counterpart of a headword in the end of an entry. We may cite examples such as a Chinese version of *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* [Longman 2004] or—especially relevant for the subject of this paper—a Russian edition of *Collins Cobuild Dictionary of Idioms* entitled *Anglo-russkij slovar’ ustoječivyh slovosočetanij* “English-Russian dictionary of set phrases” [Collins-Rus 2004].

*Collins Cobuild Dictionary*, a worthy example of using text corpora (to be more specific, *The Bank of English*) in lexicography, offers an elegant approach by showing the information on idiom variability implicitly, cf.: “We do not give explicit information about the inflection and syntactic behavior of idioms. Instead, we give the information implicitly, by showing in the explanations and examples which words inflect and which structure or structures are typically associated with an idiom. By using these as guidelines, learners will be able to produce their own
sentences with idioms” [Collins 2005: xiii]. An example of that would be to be the way the idiom smart alec / aleck is presented: “If you describe someone as a smart alec or a smart aleck, you dislike the fact that they are very clever and they always have an answer for everything” [Ibid.: 5]. Yet, such a user-friendly approach, characteristic of learners’ dictionaries (cf. [Rundell 2006]), is rather rare in dictionaries of idioms.

More commonly, dictionaries of idioms have basic modifications included in their entries (usually headwords) in a formalized manner, cf. take something into account / take account of something [Wordsworth Idioms 1993]; against time / against the clock [DAI 1995].

An interesting approach towards representing idiom modifications can be found in A. M. Melerović and V. M. Mokienko’s Fraseologizmy v russkoj reči (lit. “Idioms in Russian Speech”) [Melerović, Mokienko 2005]. The authors divide modifications into semantic (double-take effect, connotational changes, etc.) and structural semantic ones. The latter are, in turn, divided into those that do not break the referential identity of an idiom (e.g. component increase or decrease, changes of word order and construction of negative/assertive forms), and those resulting in creative idioms and words (extraction of non-standard idioms out of standard set phrases, creation of non-standard idioms on the basis of structural semantic inversion and alteration of the categorical meaning of an idiom; contamination of a phraseological unit, etc.) [Ibid.: 17–32]. Yet, their concept is not entirely flawless, for a concept of component increase appears to be rather generalized, as it may encompass lexical substitutions and various adnominal modifications similar to izobretat’ derevnnyj velosiped (lit. “to invent a wooden bicycle”, based on Russian izobretat’ velosiped ‘to be working on a project that is no better than its functioning counterparts’, cf. English to reinvent the wheel). It should be noted that a lot of entries in this dictionary walk on a tightrope of “breadth, not depth”, one of the major rules lexicography (cf. [Hanks 2006]), but do not break it.

It is also worth mentioning the way of representing idiom modifications in monolingual phraseological dictionaries of the Romance languages such as Spanish. The Spanish tradition of scholarly lexicography dates back to 1780, the year when the first edition of Diccionario de la lengua española (“Dictionary of the Spanish Language”) was published [DLE 1780]. This paper, as well as its later revisions authorized by the Royal Spanish Academy (Real Academia Española), is a prescriptive scholarly dictionary of record that comprises words and set phrases (idioms and proverbs). The latter, while abundant in the dictionary, are represented with a degree of inconsistency. While earlier editions did not contain
any information on idiom variability, later ones would inform their reader on the most spread and frequent modifications.

For one thing, even the 5th edition published in 1817 [DRAE 1817] would include over 50 idioms having a nominal component *pan* ‘bread’, while a more modern edition of 2001 has more than 70 of them [DRAE 2001]. The idiom *el pan de cada día* ‘daily bread’ (lit. ‘the bread of every day’, a Biblical quotation from the Lord’s Prayer), which is included in the dictionary of 2001, is usually modified lexico-syntactically (predominantly, by the Spaniards) in the form of *el pan nuestro de cada día* (lit. “the bread of ours of every day”)—a standard variant motivated by the text of the Lord’s Prayer (cf. Greek τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐποικὸν δῶξεις σῷμαν, Latin *panem nostrum cotidianum da nobis hodie*, English *give us this day our daily bread*). Here, however, both the variant *ser algo el ~ nuestro de cada día* and the invariant *el ~ de cada día* are separated by 12 idioms, thus complicating the search and possibly making a reader believe that the variant may only be used as a nominal phrase within a predicate. At the same time, some other idiom modifications are represented differently, e.g. *ganar, o ganarse, alguien el ~, o su ~* ‘to earn one’s living’ (cf. English *to earn one’s bread*) and *hacer un ~ como unas hostias, o como unas tortas* ‘to do sth. wrongly or badly’ (lit. “to do bread like [one does] church wafers or journey-cakes”). Since these modifications are represented in two components at a time, defining which one exactly is an invariant and what is the actual usage might be hard.

Another peculiarity of representing idiom modifications in [DRAE 2001] is the lack of representing pragmatics. Sometimes an idiom would have discourse labels such as *expr. (expresión ‘expression’), loc. (locución ‘set phrase, collocation’), coloq. (coloquial ‘colloquial’)

1), and regional labels *Am. (Latin America), Arg. (Argentina), Cuba, Ur. (Uruguay), etc.* Yet, it is harder to find out stylistic differences between an invariant and a variant or modification, a context, and the like.

A completely different approach is implemented in the *Diccionario fraseológico documentado del español actual* (“The Documented Phraseological Dictionary of the Modern Spanish Language”) [Secco, Andrés, Ramos 2005]. Its compilers consider variability an essential property of an idiom and note that a “phraseological unit” consisting of words might be capable of “infinite creation of variants” motivated by

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1 As is shown in some studies, using labels such as colloquial, informal. German umgangssprachlich. Russian razg. (razgovornoe “colloquial, vernacular”) appears to be inexcipient, for idioms tend to be informal and it is neutral or formal idioms that need labeling [Baranov, Dobrovolskij 2008; Smelëv

1977: 289].
a speaker’s memory or intent [Seco, Andrés, Ramos 2005: xi]. The dictionary also contains an analysis of different types of modifications [Seco, Andrés, Ramos 2005: xvi].

Idiom variants and modifications may be set apart (cf. [DRAE 2001]) but have cross-references that allow for taking them all into account easily: *llamar al pan*, *pan*, *y al vino, vino → al pan, pan, y al vino, vino* ‘to speak frankly and directly about sth’ (lit. “to call bread ’bread’ and wine ‘wine’”, cf. English *to call a spade a spade*). Apart from that, NP-idioms are supplemented with suitable verbs and verbal phrases, e.g. *el pan bajo el (o debajo del) brazo → un pan bajo el brazo* ‘well-off’ (lit. “a bread below the hand”)* venir, llegar, nacer* (‘to come, to arrive, to be born’). Each idiom is labeled according to its structure (*pron < locución pronominal* ‘pronominal phrase’, *fórm < fórmula oracional* ‘speech formula’, etc.), “level of usage” (e.g. *juv* < *juvenil* ‘juvenile’, *pop* < *popular*), “speaker’s attitude” (*desp* < *despectivo* ‘derogatory’), scope of use, frequency, and geographical area [Seco, Andrés, Ramos 2005: xxiii]. All the entries are illustrated by examples taken from texts of various genres and styles (fiction, academic discourse, legal documents, and so on).

There exist bilingual and even polylingual dictionaries of idioms such as [Fink Arsovski, Hrnjak 2006; Lubensky 1995; Schlemann, Knight 1997a, 1997b]. The whole concept of a bilingual dictionary seems to be entwine with that of a learner’ one, yet some should be regarded as scholarly dictionaries, for they provide counterparts of a number of idioms in various languages (nine Slavic languages, in the case of Ž. Fink Arsovski and A. Hrnjak’s dictionary) on the basis of comparative studies. Therefore, they can be of great assistance to a scholar.

If data on regular variability are included in bilingual dictionaries, they usually appear in a headword, cf. Croatian *izgubiti/gubiti pamet* (lit. “to lose [perfective/imperfective aspect] mind”) [Vrgoč, Fink Arsovski 2008].

It is interesting to note that some bilingual dictionaries, e.g. S. Lubensky’s *Russian-English Dictionary of Idioms* [Lubensky 1995], reflect one of the types of the idiom variation: there exist idioms that are able to change their word order. This ability can hardly result from their semantic properties, e.g. the Russian idiom *na tebe lica net* ‘you have a gloomy face’, lit. “there is no face on you” has fixed word order, with “*net na tebe lica,*” *lica na tebe net* being non-standard. On the other hand, *dat’/vrezat’ duba* ‘to die’, lit. “to give/indent [some] oak” has a free word order (*dat’ duba, duba dat’*, *duba vrezat’, *vrezat’ duba*).

Though these approaches seem to be various, their differences are minor. The similarity of their concepts enables one to depict an entry of a comprehensive
dictionary of idioms that could be both scholarly and learner-oriented. A scheme shown below describes an entry of the English-Russian dictionary of idioms that is being compiled by us.

1. Headword (including a status label, if needed).
2. Explanation of the meaning of the idiom.
   2.1. Explanation of the meaning proper.
   2.2. Explanation of the underlying metaphor.
3.1. Synonymous idioms and word-groups in the recipient language.
3.2. Commentary on actual usage, if necessary.
4. Examples of the most common modifications of the idiom, including the number or percentage of their occurrence in text corpora.

A further explanation of this proposal topic can be found at [Dronov 2011: 152–159]. Still, it is worth mentioning that an explanation of underlying metaphors is more frequent in learners’ dictionaries, especially illustrated ones, cf. [Dubrovin 1997]. In scholarly dictionaries, they are sometimes neglected. Yet, there are dictionaries that have those metaphors, though not on a regular basis (cf. [Collins 2005; Duden 2008; Wordsworth Idioms 2003]). Notable dictionaries that provide such explanations consistently are [Mihel’son 1902, 1903; FOS 2009; Kövecses, Tóth, Babarci 1998]. The latter has some features of a learner’s one (especially due to the abundance of illustrations).

We should also note that a commentary on the actual usage is necessary because even similarly looking idioms in different languages may have utterly different meanings, cf. English to cross the sill and Russian perestupit’ porog ‘to enter a household, to be a guest, often an unlikely one’ (cf. also an example of semantic and pragmatic differences between the Russian idiom al’ja i omega and its English and German seemingly obvious counterparts—Alpha und Omega and alpha and omega, respectively—cited by A. Kozerenko [2010]). A template of such a commentary is based on the one proposed by D. Dobrovol’skij and T. Filipenko for Moderne Idiomatik : Deutsch-Russisch Wörterbuch, MIDRW, a German-Russian dictionary of contemporary idioms [Dobrovol’skij, Filipenko 2003: 371, 373–374].

An example of an entry in a dictionary of idioms containing data on their modifications would look like this:

English-Russian dictionary of idioms and modifications (pending): To break the back (of sth.) GG+IG ‘VP + IP’—1) pobedit “ili uničtožit’ kogo-l. (čto-l.); pobeda osmyslāetsā kak lomanie pozvonočnika” to win over or destroy sb./sth.; this is conceptualized as breaking the spine perelomit’ hrebet (komu-l. čemu-l.) [Russian counterpart]; 2) “vypolnit’ samuú trudnuú čast’ kajok-l. raboty,
osmyslæmoj kak živoe sušestvo, kotoromu možno slomat’ pozvonočnik” to complete the most challenging part of sth. (e.g. work), which is conceptualized as a living creature whose spine may be raptured (COCA; 113; COHA; 58; BNC; 16) 1) In June 1942 the Cabinet formally agreed that there would be no attempt to invade Northern Europe until the Russians had broken the back of the Nazi offensive in the East. [CE7; BNC]. Mr. Hundt said last week. “It is a license to use the public property, and it can be conditioned in exactly the same way that an apartment lease can be conditioned for ‘no pets’ and ‘no children’.” “Think about it,” Mr. Hundt added. “We could break the back of the political fund-raising monster” by providing free broadcast time for candidates. [1996; NEWS; NYTImes; COCA]. 2) She was doing fine, thinking she had broken the back of the laundry, until something made her look behind Stephanie’s door. She found another pile of dirty clothes. [2005; FIC; GoodHousekeeping]. LS—Ad’ektiv Kontekstno-zavisimye “Lexico-Syntactical, Adjectival, Context-based” (COCA, COHA; 1.7%; BNC; 12.5%); So, if it is telecommunications, you are retaliating against telecom. Of course, that never works from the standpoint of the U.S. retaliation technique for two reasons. One is the one you mentioned, which is that they are really trying to break the political back of the foreign government that is maintaining what the United States has labeled as unreasonable or unacceptable practice. [2001; ACAD; CanadaLaw; COCA]. S—Passivizacië “Syntactical, Passivisation” (COCA; 2; COHA; 3); Sorry to hear about the disruption of your production? oh, and I believe there was loss of life also. Regrettable. At least the back of the strike is broken, and that devil Debs is facing prison. [1993; FIC; Bk; Homeland; COCA].

The final issue we need to address as regards to idiom modifications in lexicography, is the problem of tokenization and lematization, which is crucial for compiling a dictionary. Sometimes a difficulty may arise with choosing a lemma for a headword. For example, the idiom to leave (sb.) holding the bag, along with its chiefly British variant to leave (sb.) holding the baby, becomes passive in 70% of contexts. Therefore, it might be rational to include this form, i.e., to be left holding the bag/baby, in the entry, either as a lemma or as a variant of a headword, cf.:

To leave (sb.) holding the bag/baby/to be left holding the baby;
To be left holding the bag/baby/to leave (sb.) holding the bag/baby

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1 Corpus of Contemporary American English (http://corpus.byu.edu/coca/).
2 Corpus of Historical American English (http://corpus.byu.edu/coha/).
3 British National Corpora (http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/, also available at: http://corpus.byu.edu/bnc/).
Or: To leave (sb.) holding the bag/baby as a headword and S—Passive: Standard: to be left holding the bag/baby.

Taking these features of various dictionaries into account would be helpful for making phraseological dictionaries that combine features both of scholarly and learners’ ones.

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A Sociolinguistic View of Animal Names in Idiomatic Expressions in Chinese and French

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Abstract: This paper attempts to explore animal names\(^1\) in Chinese and/or French idiomatic expressions in the light of *representation* (la *représentation*), a notion interpreted by French sociolinguist Henri Boyer.\(^2\) As linguistic phenomena are believed to be rooted in society and explained by the latter, animal names in different languages could be culturally loaded via their figurative/symbolic significations, due to the representations associated with animal referents in a given society. On the premise that animal referents generally exist in the physical world, the representations of animals would be formed on the basis of animals’ appearances, their habits and their relations with other animals, especially in accordance with the observation and the exploitation of animals by human beings in social life, and might be eventually enhanced, modified or even created in the common imagination. Besides animal referents as objects of human cognition, the other reason accounting for animal representations could be that human beings tend to attribute their moral values and spiritual expectance to the animals around them.

Key words: animal name; idiomatic expression; polysemy; *representation*; sociolinguistics

1. Introduction

As a part of the world we live in, animals have been named in human languages. A quadruped creature that prances and whinnies is called 马 [mā] “horse” in Chinese and *cheval* in French; both animal names refer to the same species and hence seem to be equivalent in a sense. However, adding to the complexity has been another fact that many animal names have figurative/symbolic significations apart from their literal meanings. On the one hand, both 狐狸 [hú li]...
“fox” and \textit{renard} imply slyness and cunning; on the other hand, 喜鹊 [\textit{xǐ què}] “magpie” is regarded in Chinese as an auspicious omen for happiness, while \textit{pie} “magpie” connotes in French noisiness and pilfering. Moreover, polysemic animal names are more likely to appear in idiomatic expressions in Chinese as well as in French, forming an active part of the language system.

Regarding these interesting linguistic phenomena, we carried out studies in an effort to answer the following questions: Among numerous animal names, why are some of them polysemic and used in idiomatic expressions? What are the similarities and differences between Chinese and French regarding figurative/symbolic significations of “equivalent” animal names? How can these phenomena be explained from a sociolinguistic point of view?

2. From the Sociolinguistic Interpretation of representation to the Polysemy of Animal Names

In sociolinguistic research, linguistic phenomena are usually attributed to society and its culture. As a transversal concept in diverse disciplines of humanities and social studies, \textit{representation (la représentation)} has gained theoretical importance in sociolinguistics owing to Henri Boyer. It casts much light upon the dynamic correlation between language and society; a language constantly absorbs and accumulates life experiences, ways of thinking, systems of value, etc., known as “culture”, which is shared within the given society; at the same time, members of society transmit and modify their cultural heritage by means of language.

\textit{Representation} has a basic meaning of image, figure, symbol or sign that represents a phenomenon or an idea; it signifies in philosophy an image or a concept by which an object is present in mind, and in psychology a perception or a mental image whose content is related to an object, a situation, a scene of the world we live in (Legrain et al., 2001, p. 881). Owing to the French sociologist E. Durkheim, this notion was introduced to the analysis of social phenomena by the term \textit{collective representation (représentation collective)} as a structural system and an autonomous object of research. The Romanian sociologist S. Moscovici, for his part, applied the notion to social psychological studies based on his psychoanalytic survey of French society in the postwar years, and proposed \textit{social representation (représentation sociale)} as an operational term. Another French sociologist, D. Jodelet, considered \textit{representation} as a kind of knowledge established and shared by members of society.
and emphasized its practical significance in constructing a common “reality”. As for French sociolinguist Henri Boyer, he insists on the fact that representations are above all shared within a given society, no matter whether it concerns collective representation of the society as a whole or social representation, which varies with social groups. And it is highly due to shared representation (représentation partagée) (Boyer, 2003, p. 14) that social members acquire their common social identity. Furthermore, H. Boyer confirms that representations constitute versions of reality, which enable society members to comprehend the world around them and behave in a pertinent manner.

The notion of representation contains intrinsically two complementary processes: in one, human beings perceive the physical world (as the object) through the senses and represent it mentally as images, concepts, symbols, etc., which form versions of reality known as shared representations; in the other, shared representations assume cognitive and practical functions in human beings’ attitudes as well as their behaviors towards the physical world, and might be modified in conformity with reality. Because of the continuity of these alternate processes, human beings are able to accumulate their cultural heritage transmitted from generation to generation. With regard to language, it synchronically loads human culture and enables its continuation in diachronically, as depicted in Figure 1. In other words, language interiorizes and inherits human beings’ common perception and cognition of the world around them.

Animals constitute a part of the world we live in, and animal names are in the first place used to refer to them in human activities, but also imply that human beings have already accumulated to some extent “enough” cognition of certain species. For instance, a bird is referred to as a creature with feathers and wings that can fly and the female of which lays eggs. These characteristics are sufficient to distinguish it from other animals and therefore are included in its name: 鸟[niǎo] “bird” in Chinese and oiseau in French. Through long usage, many animal names have acquired figurative/symbolic significations and become culturally loaded terms.

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1. The above retrospective discussions are greatly due to Boyer (2003).
2. This point of view was formulated by D. Jodelet (1989).
For example, both 猪 "donkey" in Chinese and âne in French signify in a
figurative sense silliness and stubbornness; 龙 "Chinese dragon" and 风 "Chinese phoenix" symbolize in Chinese auspiciousness while dragon "dragon" and phénix "phoenix" connote in French respectively fierceness and immortality. The reason for this could be that members of a given society tend unconsciously to mark animal representations with their own cultural impresses as they deepen the
cognition of certain animal referents.

From the perspective of representation, animal referents are endowed with
shared representations, i. e. versions of animals in the physical world, which
provide the basis for the literal meanings and especially figurative/symbolic
significations of animal names. As animal representations that are socially
established, modified and transmitted serve to identify different societies, animal
names exhibit similarities and differences in terms of figurative/symbolic
signification across languages, as in the comparison of Chinese and French. To sum
up, the polysemy of animal names as well as its coincidence and divergence between
different languages depend highly on the shared representations associated with
animal referents within a given society.

3. Analysis of Animal Names in Chinese and/or French Idiomatic
Expressions from the Angle of representation

As the quintessence of language, idiomatic expressions are noted for richness in
content, compactness in form and popularity among speakers. In our studies, two
small corpora of idiomatic expressions were established to confine the research
scope to 76 animal names from Chinese and 77 from French. And based on
comparative observation, we may state the following: (1) Some animal names seem

1 The corpus of Chinese idiomatic expressions is composed of phrasal idioms with four Chinese characters
(成语 [chénghù]), proverbs, popular sayings and sayings with the latter part suspended (歇后语 [xiē hòu
yǔ]) collected from the twelve books in the collection of the Chinese Zoology and Culture (十二生肖与中
国丛书). Selections of Chinese Proverbs (《中国谚语选》) and Stories of Chinese Popular Sayings (《中国
俗语故事》). The corpus of French idiomatic expressions was formed on the basis of When We Speak
of the Wolf (Quand on parle du loup), Name of a Dog (Nom d’un chien), Dictionary of Comprehension
and Production of Imagery Expressions (Dictionnaire de compréhension et de production des expressions
images). Popular Sayings of Animals, Plants and Seasons (Dictions des bêtes, des plantes et des saisons)
and A Flea on the Ear (La puce à l’oreille). We should point out that, for our research, the corpora
were set up with a view to provide two representative but non-exhaustive lists of animal names in Chinese
and French, and that the titles of French references mentioned above are translated literally in order to
correspond to the original titles. That is why some of them, which are effective idiomatic expressions in
French, have lost their original meanings once translated into English.

2 See Appendix I.
to appear in either Chinese or French idiomatic expressions, while others are used “correspondingly” in both Chinese and French idiomatic expressions; (2) Regarding animal names that are “equivalent” in terms of literal meaning, their figurative/symbolic significations coincide or diverge between Chinese and French; (3) It might be the case that an animal name in Chinese and that in French have different literal meanings but are used to express similar points of view or judgments in idiomatic expressions.

In the sections below, we reveal the four hierarchical levels in the formation of animal representations in an effort to explain the coincidence and divergence of the polysemy of animal names between Chinese and French.①

3.1 Animals in Existence: The Premise of Animal Representations

On the premise that animals exist in the physical world or specifically in the scope of the perception of human beings, they could be associated with shared representations and referred to by means of human language. In other words, animals would receive their names because they are regarded as objects of human cognition, and animal representations are formed on the basis of animals’ existence within the scope of human cognition.

3.1.1 Coincidence

With regard to the animal names that are used in idiomatic expressions, there are cases of coincidence between Chinese and French, such as the following:

First, among all the animal names of the diverse species living in the world, only some of them have figurative/symbolic significations, and even fewer appear in idiomatic expressions. Similar phenomena are observed both in Chinese and in French, as shown in Appendix I, which exhibits 76 and 77 animal names collected respectively from the two languages. The reason for this could be the fact that human beings are relatively familiar with animals “nearby”, i.e. those that they are in contact with in daily life. It is highly due to the relation of familiarity established in human experiences that animal representations become more complicated, leading to the polysemy of the corresponding animal names. Meanwhile, familiar animals are referred to more frequently in human communication, and their names might be integrated into idiomatic expressions.

Secondly, in the comparison of animal names in either Chinese or French idiomatic expressions, animals living on land seem to be referred to more frequently.

① That is to say, we attempt to explain the observations of (1) and (2) in the light of representation, but do not consider that of (3) to be within the research scope of this paper.
than those flying in air or swimming in water, as illustrated in Table 1. Furthermore, animal names of terrestrial species appear in more idiomatic expressions with much richer figurative/symbolic significations. For instance, 牛 [niú] “cattle”/bœuf “cattle” or “ox” symbolizes force, endurance, but also clumsiness and ignorance, while vache “cow” implies insensitivity, laziness and slowness. On the contrary, 鷹 [yīng] “hawk”/aigle “eagle” connotes simply perspicacity; 蟾蜍[há ma] “toad”/crapaud signifies ugliness and vulgarity. For the “smallest” animals such as a creature with a spiral-shaped shell, referred to as 蜗牛[wō niú] “snail” in Chinese and escargot in French, both of the two names imply slowness. As the familiarity with animals existing in the world accounts for the complicatedness of animal representations and then the formation of the polysemy of animal names, the more familiar human beings are with animals, the more complicated animal representations would become, which results accordingly in more figurative/symbolic significations that animal names would have. To be brief, it is greatly due to different degrees of familiarity with animal referents that their names are correspondingly invested with rich figurative/symbolic significations.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1  Categories of Comparison</th>
<th>Chinese animal names</th>
<th>French animal names</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Category 1: flying creatures</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Category 2: a great family of terrestrial animals</td>
<td>26</td>
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<tr>
<td>Category 3: aquatic creatures</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
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<td>14</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Finally, there are in both Chinese and French idiomatic expressions corresponding animal names that refer to the same species in the world. Although they seem to be “equivalent” in a literal sense, we find in our comparative analysis that their figurative/symbolic significations may either coincide or diverge, as explicated in what follows.

3.1.2 Divergence

Regarding cases of divergence where animal names seem to appear in either Chinese or French idiomatic expressions, it might imply that the related animals do not exist in the biosphere in France or that in China. It is for this reason that these

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1 See Appendix II.
2 It might be possible that the related animals do exist in a given biosphere and are referred to in the corresponding language, but their names do not appear in idiomatic expressions, partly because they are not sufficiently familiar to the speakers of that language.
animals would have no chance of being endowed with representations in the given society, and hence named in the corresponding language. While 鹰 [yāo] “harrier” is used in Chinese idiomatic expressions such as “There would be a harrier in remote mountains, and there would be a saint among ordinary people” (深山出銳鷹, 众人出圣人), it is not the same case for its counterpart busard “harrier” in French, for the Chinese expression concerns a kind of hawk living in Asia and in Africa (Legrain et al., 2001, p. 160). Another example is 甲鱼 [jiǎ yú] “soft-shelled turtle”, referring to an aquatic turtle widespread in China. This species is also known as 王八 [wáng ba] in the common language and is considered especially in an ironic manner as a symbol of longevity as in “While a soft-shelled turtle could live one thousand years, a tortoise could live ten times longer” (千年的王八万年的龟). On the contrary, if dindon “turkey” appears in French idiomatic expressions such as un franc dindon “a frank turkey”, it would be attributed to the fact that this large bird with a fan-shaped tail has been domesticated in Europe since the sixteenth century (Legrain et al. 2001, p. 335). A similar case is hareng “herring”, as in La caque sent toujours le hareng “The barrel still smells of smoked herrings”. The expression is based on the abundance of this fish in the English Channel and North Sea; the French have been long familiar with herring and exploited its name in idiomatic expressions.

In other cases, certain species that are absent from a given biosphere may be referred to in the corresponding language and associated with representations, owing to various exchanges including translation activities. For example, found throughout Asia, a tiger is regarded in Chinese culture as the King of animals and the King of forests; this representation explains why its name 虎 [hǔ] “tiger” connotes an awesome majesty, cruelty and fearsomeness, as shown in the following:

1a) On one mountain there will never be two tigers. (一山容不得二虎);

1b) to have a narrow escape from a tiger’s gaping jaws (虎口余生).

In contrast, the French name tigre “tiger” associates curiously the fierceness of this large feline with an unbearable feeling like jealousy in jaloux comme un tigre “as jealous as a tiger”; while it seems to be relatively reasonable to relate the concept of energy to a predator’s ferocity as in mettre un tigre dans son moteur “to put a tiger in his (gasoline) tank”. Consequently, it can be seen from the example of 虎 [hǔ] / tigre “tiger” that representations may change as animal names vary in use from language to language. It might be equally possible that a new

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1 It is used to describe a person as stupid and naive.
2 It signifies that a man of humble birth cannot conceal his family background.
3 In other words, a tiger does not tolerate a competitor in its territory.
representation is formed in conformity with the original one if a certain animal name is translated into another language. A case in point is 蚕[cán] “silkworm”, denoting the caterpillar of a Chinese moth, which spins a prodigious amount of silk to construct its cocoon. Like the Chinese name, the French expression ver à soie “silkworm” also has the connotation “devotion to work” because of similar representations of a tireless producer of silk.

3.2 Animals in Nature: Substratum of Animal Representations

Regarding animals living in nature, shared representations are based on their appearances, habits and relations with other animals, but also in accordance with human emotional tendencies and moral judgments. Thus “equivalent” animal names may receive similar or different figurative/symbolic significations across Chinese and French.

3.2.1 Coincidence

From a higher plane, animals classified according to certain biological characteristics are generally associated with similar representations, which lay the foundation for the coincidence of the polysemy of their names. Animals with a conventionalized “ugly” appearance would be endowed with negative representations, accounting for the pejorative significations of their names. For example, 鸟[wǔ yǎ] “crow” or “raven”/corbeau “raven” implies malevolence or evil for it concerns a large bird with black feathers; 蟾蜍[há ma]/crapaud “toad” connotes ugliness and vulgarity for this species has leathery skin. Likewise, animals of a fierce nature could receive an image of violent predators, and the consequence is that their names may signify cruelty, ferociousness and voraciousness, as in the case of 狼[láng]/loup “wolf” or 鱼[shā yú]/requin “shark”. In regard to relations with other animals, the everlasting antagonism between a cat and a mouse, or a fox and a chicken would contribute to form the prototype of the strong and the weak, resulting in the coexistence of their names in both Chinese and French idiomatic expressions, with a view to express various significations based on this unequal rivalry.

Concerning a certain species, if attention is focused on the same aspect of the animal referent, the related representations in different cultures would present similarities and hence account for the coincidence of the figurative/symbolic significations of their names in the corresponding languages. To be specific, a parrot is a bird with a curved beak as well as the ability to mimic sounds, which constitutes a focus common to its representation in Chinese culture and that in French culture. Consequently, both 鹦鹉[yīng wǔ] “parrot” and perroquet “parrot”
symbolize an excellent but mindless imitator as in 鹦鹉学舌 “A parrot copies what
people say” and répéter comme un perroquet “to repeat like a parrot”.① Similarly,
representations of wolf in both Chinese and French cultures have the same focus on
the fierce, voracious and vicious nature of this carnivorous predator. Therefore, 狼
[láng] “wolf” and loup “wolf” both imply ferociousness, voraciousness and
viciousness as in the following:

2a) A wolf could change its fur but never its nature. (狼毛会褪换,狼性不会
改);
2b) A wolf will die in its skin. (Le loup mourra dans sa peau). ②
3a) If you let a wolf pad into your house—it would be to incur dangers for
yourself. (引狼入室——自己害自己);
3b) to fall into the jaws of a wolf (tomber dans la gueule du loup). ③

Another example is an insect with a yellow and black striped body capable of
producing honey, referred to as 蜜蜂 [mì féng] “bee” in Chinese and abeille in
French. With the focus on its busy work, the similar representations of a bee
explain why both of the Chinese and French names connote business and diligence as
in “a bee in spring—never wastes a moment” (春天的蜜蜂——闲不住) and “This is
a real bee” C’est une véritable abeille. ④

In rare cases, even though attention is focused on distinct aspects of a certain
animal referent, there would still be similar animal representations in different
cultures, leading to the coincidence of the polysemic of the related animal names in
the corresponding languages. For example, a louse is a blood-sucking insect living
on the bodies of people or animals, and represented as a nasty parasite with a focus
on its habit of biting people in order to feed off their blood in Chinese culture, and
another one on its ugly appearance with a flattened body in French culture. It is due
to the similarity of representations in a broader sense that both 虱子 [shī zi] “louse”
and pou imply nastiness as in “to put lice in hair—it would be to make troubles for
oneself” (头发里放虱子——自寻烦恼) and “as ugly as a louse” (laid comme un
pou).

① It can be seen from this pair of examples that the coincidence relies not only on the figurative/symbolic
significations of the related animal names but also on the constitution of idiomatic expressions in the two
languages.
② This is an old idiomatic expression, which claims that vicious people will never become kind-hearted.
③ It signifies that a person is unconsciously exposed to an imminent danger.
④ It is used to describe a person as industrious.
3.2.2 Divergence

Conversely, although attention is focused on the same aspect of a certain animal referent, the related representations may vary from culture to culture and thereby provide an explanation for the divergence of the figurative/symbolic significations of their names in the corresponding languages. For example, a peacock has a crested head and a very large tail marked with iridescent spots (that can spread out like a fan); the same focus on the appearance of this bird brings about different representations in Chinese and French cultures. In the eyes of the Chinese, a peacock is a beautiful bird and hence its name 翠雀[kǒng què] “peacock” symbolizes beauty, which could be matched with virtue, as in “The beauty of a peacock relies on its crest, the virtue of a man depends on his words and deeds” (翠雀似看花郎，人的品德看言行); it also concerns a bird that likes to attract others’ attention and therefore its name connotes pretentiousness and pride as in 翠雀开屏——翘尾巴 “A peacock spreads its tail—displaying its fine tail feathers”.

For the French, the splendid fanlike tail of a peacock as well as its habit of strutting around justifies substantially that the French name paon “peacock” has the connotations of vanity and arrogance similar to its counterpart in Chinese, as in fier/vaniteux/orgueilleux comme un paon “as proud/conceited/arrogant as a peacock”. Consequently, it can be seen from this example that an ambivalent representation of a peacock leads to both commendatory and pejorative figurative/symbolic significations of its Chinese name, and that a negative representation of this species accounts for the pejorative connotations of its French name. To give another example, a shark is a carnivorous fish with very sharp teeth; however, the same focus on its nature as a large predator does not produce similar representations between Chinese and French cultures. This species is judged as violent and ruthless in Chinese culture but as voracious and greedy in French culture. Consequently, while the Chinese name 鲨鱼[shā yú] “shark” implies violence and cruelty as in 鲨鱼掉眼泪——假慈悲 “If a shark sheds tears—it is completely an illusion of kindness”; The French name requin “shark” connotes voraciousness and especially avarice as in un requin “to be a shark”. A third example concerns the social insects living in organized colonies, and referred to respectively as 蚂蚁[mǎ yǐ] “ant” and fourmi “ant”. In spite of the same focus on their work in large groups, ants are represented as excellent collaborators in Chinese culture and meticulous workers in French culture. As a result, the Chinese

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1 The image of a bird that sticks its tail up is considered in Chinese culture as an act to draw attention to itself, and judged as a symbol of vanity and arrogance.
2 It is used to describe a person as greedy and arriviste.
name signifies cooperation as in 心坚, 不怕天; 蚂蚁能搬太行山 “If all of us join our efforts, no difficulty will not be overcome; if all ants work together, even Taihang Mountain\(^1\) will be moved”. The French name implies meticulousness as in un travail de fourmi “an ant’s work”.\(^2\)

In other cases, since attention is focused on distinct aspects of a certain species, it would be possible that animal representations differ from each other across cultures, resulting in the divergence of the polysemy of the related animal names in the corresponding languages. One of the best examples is a magpie, which has black-and-white feathers and a long tail. In Chinese culture, a magpie is traditionally represented as an auspicious omen of happiness,\(^3\) and its appearing as well as its call is believed to predict that a propitious thing will happen soon. Consequently, the Chinese name 喜鹊 [xī què] “magpie” symbolizes auspiciousness and happiness as in 喜鹊飞进洞房里—喜上加喜 “A magpie flies towards a matrimonial home—luck never comes alone”.\(^4\) The focus has also been placed on one of the typical habits of a magpie, i.e. to perch high on a tree, and contributes to forming the representation of a conceited bird. That is why its name implies vanity as in 属喜鹊的——好登高枝 “to be born under the zodiac sign of magpie—this person likes so much to show off in front of others”.\(^5\) For the French, the representation of a magpie is rather negative with the focus on its chattering call as well as its habit of collecting and keeping things that are usually of little value. In consequence, the French name pie “magpie” connotes nosiness and pilfering, as illustrated respectively in être bavarde comme une pie “to be noisy like a magpie” and voler comme une pie “a thief just like a magpie”.\(^6\) As another example, a crab is a sea creature covered by a broad flat carapace and has five pairs of legs with large claws on the front pair. While the representation of a crab in Chinese culture is

\(^{1}\) Taihang Mountain is a Chinese mountain range situated in Shanxi, Henan and Hebei provinces. With an average elevation of 1500 to 2000 meters. Taihang Mountain is in this idiomatic expression compared to a huge difficulty which seems to be insurmountable.

\(^{2}\) It signifies a work that has been accomplished in a meticulous manner and usually during a long time.

\(^{3}\) Thus, it is difficult to find the origins of this traditional belief.

\(^{4}\) It signifies that the appearing of a magpie presents another auspicious omen in addition to the coming-up ceremony of marriage, which is regarded as an important activity of auspiciousness.

\(^{5}\) In Chinese culture, it is widely believed that the one who was born under a certain zodiac sign would exhibit the characteristics similar to the species symbolized by the sign. For example, a person with the zodiac sign of monkey would be very intelligent, agile or even irritable. Although a magpie is not one of the twelve Chinese zodiac signs, it is also possible to generalize the pattern "a zodiac sign would justify a person’s characteristics" and deduce another one "a person’s characteristics could be explained by his zodiac sign". Because of this, the above saying with the latter-part suspended is used to describe a person as pretentious just like a magpie, which usually perches high on a tree.

\(^{6}\) It refers particularly to an impenitent thief.
related to the focus on its shell and its habit of moving sideways, that in French
culture depends a great deal on its appearance, its aggressive nature as well as its
preference for immobility and quietness. Therefore, the Chinese name 蟹 [páng
xiè] “crab” signifies subtlety and imperiousness, but its counterpart crabe “crab”
receives other pejorative connotations such as ugliness, bad temperament, silliness
and laziness, as in the following:

4a) The flesh of a crab—it is covered by its shell. (螃蟹的肉—藏在肚里);①
4b) A crab teaches its child to walk—the young will never walk in a straight
direction. (螃蟹教子,不走正道).②
5a) an old crab (un vieux crabe);③
5b) as lazy as a crab (feignant comme un crabe).

To present a third example, a fly is a common insect with two wings. In
Chinese culture, the representation of a fly focuses on its habit of eating dirty things
and transmitting bacteria at the same time. For this reason, its name 苍蝇 [cāng
yíng] “fly” implies filthiness and sordidness as in 苍蝇偏向臭处飞 “A fly always flies
towards stinking things” and 苍蝇跟屎壳郎交朋友——臭味相投 “A fly makes friends
with a dung beetle—one always finds his congeners”. By contrast, a fly is
represented in French culture with focuses on its agile mobility and active flight.
Therefore, the French name mouche “fly” signifies agility, craftiness and irascibility as in une fine mouche “a subtle fly”④ and prendre la mouche “to take a
fly”.⑤

3.3 Animals in Human Society: The Middle-stratum of Animal Representations

As objects of exploitation, animals living within the human society are endowed
with shared representations in the process of human beings’ activities, especially in
conformity with their life experiences and spiritual expectation. That is why
“equivalent” animal names exhibit similarities and differences in terms of figurative/
symbolic signification in the comparison of Chinese and French.

① It signifies in a figurative sense that a person hides what is important to him.
② A crab’s particular manner of moving provides an allusion to an imperious person or one who follows an
abnormal path, which is often erroneous.
③ It refers to an ugly person, especially one who is bowlegged because of age, or a person with a fractious
temperament, or an old and silly man.
④ It is used to describe a person as very cunning and subtle.
⑤ It signifies that a person easily rages about something trivial or in other cases a person provokes someone
else for no reason.
3.3.1 Coincidence

In a general sense, representations are above all based on the observation of domesticated animals, which are relatively familiar to human beings in social life. A duck has a depressed body, short legs and webbed feet; so does a goose: they are both represented as awkward walkers in Chinese and French cultures. As a result, 鴨 [yā] / canard “duck” signifies clumsiness and 鴨 [é] / oie “goose” implies imbecility. It is the same case for a donkey or a mule, which seems resistant to the burdens imposed on it. Because of the similar representations of uncooperative animals, the Chinese and French names 驴 [lú] / âne “donkey” and 瞄子 [luó zi] / mulet “mule” both have the connotation of stubbornness. Furthermore, animal representations rely mainly on the exploitation of animals by human beings for various purposes. In China,① pigs as well as cattle are farmed for their meat and represented as a source of wealth for a peasant’s family. That is why both 猪 [zhū] “pig” and 牛 [niú] “cattle” signify affluence and wealth. In France, cows are kept for their milk and hens for their eggs, leading to similar representations of farm animals. For this reason, both vache “cow” and poule “hen” imply benefits. Likewise, oxen and horses are used for pulling vehicles or carrying things in China and in France, accounting for their representations of beasts of burden. In consequence, 牛 [niú] “cattle” and cheval “horse” receive the same connotations of force and power.②

With regard to a certain species, as attention could be focused on the same aspect or distinct aspects of the animal referent, representations would show similarities or differences across cultures and bring about the coincidence or divergence in terms of figurative/symbolic significations of animal names in the corresponding languages. Consequently, there would be four cases in the comparison of “equivalent” animal names between Chinese and French: 1) similar representations with the same focus—coincidence of the polysemy of animal names; 2) similar representations with distinct focuses—coincidence of the polysemy of animal names; 3) different representations with the same focus—divergence of the polysemy of animal names; 4) different representations with distinct focuses—divergence of the

① This example is not used to emphasize that pigs or cattle are farmed only in China, but to justify their representations in the eyes of the Chinese and thereby the figurative/symbolic significations of their names in Chinese. Similar comments would be valid for the following example in this paragraph.

② In China as well as in France, both oxen and horses are regarded as beasts of burden. However, a similar relationship in terms of connotation exists between the Chinese name of cattle (including oxen) and the French name of horses. Moreover, it can be seen from this example that the polysemy of animal names depends greatly on the representations of a certain species but is effectively influenced by others factors.
polysemy of animal names. Figure 2 illustrates the point:

As the discussions in the proceeding section have covered the four cases, this section follows the same method, i.e., it deals with cases of coincidence according to the first two cases and treats those of divergence in conformity with the latter two.

To substantiate Case 1, a duck could be taken as an example. With focuses on its manner of walking and its ability to swim in water, a duck is represented as an awkward walker but also an excellent swimmer. Therefore, both 鸭 [yā] “duck” and canard signify clumsiness as in “To force a duck to jump onto a shelf is as impossible as to oblige a cock to lay eggs” (打鸭子上架, 遭公鸡下蛋) and “to walk, waddle like a duck” (marcher, se dander comme un canard); the two animal names also imply proficiency in swimming as in “Mountains are never high enough to hide the Sun, and waters are never abundant enough to drown a duck” (山高遮不住太阳, 水大淹不过鸭子) and “to swim like a duck” (nager comme un canard). Another example concerns a pig, which is an omnivorous animal with a stout body and is kept in pens for its meat. Since focuses are placed on these aspects of the species, representations of a pig seem to be negative in both Chinese and French cultures. That is why 猪 [zhū] “pig” and cochon equally receive pejorative connotations such as greediness, stupidity and dirtiness, as shown respectively in the following:

6a) A herd of pigs crowd around the trough—to fall over each other. (群猪争食——互不相让);
6b) to eat like a pig (manger comme un porc, un cochon).①
7a) A man with a head of pig—he is so stupid. (猪脑袋——不开窍);
7b) It is as silly as a pig. (C’est bête comme cochon).②
8a) As contemptible as a pig, and as insidious as a dog. (猪卑狗险);③

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① It is used to describe a person who eats gluttonously and dirtily.
② It signifies an extraordinarily simple or easy thing, so that even a pig is capable of knowing or doing it.
③ In this phrasal idiom with four Chinese characters, the figurative/symbolic signification of dirtiness is related to the focus on the fact that a pig is always accustomed to its dirty pen.
8b) to play a pig’s trick (jouer un tour de cochon).  

As a third example, consider the mouse, a small rodent with pointed snout and a long tail. Due to the observation of its appearance as well as its cowardly nature, a mouse is endowed with similar representations with the same focuses in Chinese and French cultures. In consequence, 鼠[shǔ] “mouse” symbolizes insignificance and cowardice as in “A person who is as petty as a mouse or sparrow” (鼠雀之辈) and “When a mouse intends to run out from its cave—it looks around”（小洞的老鼠——左顾右盼）; likewise, souris “mouse” has similar figurative/symbolic significations as in “A mountain gives birth to a mouse” (La montagne accouche d’une souris) and “It seems that he would be forced to hide himself in a mouse’s cave” (On le ferait se cacher dans un trou de souris). Furthermore, a mouse is regarded as the prototype of a thief in both Chinese and French cultures, for this small rodent collects and hides food in its hole everything, especially cereals. Thus, both 鼠[shǔ] “mouse” and souris “mouse” imply thieving as in “A mouse takes charge of a granary—the longer it remains at its post, the less cereal will be left” (老鼠管粮仓——越管越少) and “to act like a mouse” (faire la souris).

For Case 2, supporting evidence seems to be marginal. As farm animals, cattle receive similar positive representations with a focus on the exploitation of their meat in Chinese culture and a focus on that of the milk of females in French culture. Because of this, both 牛[niú] “cattle” and vache imply an affluent life as in “A head of cattle is worth half the fortune of a peasant’s family” (一头牛,半个家) and “a cow that offers its milk” (la vache à lait). By contrast, cattle are associated with similar negative representations in the eyes of human beings: the Chinese focus attention on their large bodies and slow movement while the French prefer to focus on their contemplative appearances. Consequently, both the Chinese and French names signify sluggishness and clumsiness as in “to play the Chinese lute for a head of cattle” (对牛弹琴) and “to resemble a cow that is watching trains pass by”

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1. It refers to a person who plays a dirty trick on someone else.
2. Among domesticated animals mentioned in this section, the mouse is an exception. However, it concerns a common animal in human society, which dares to live near human beings and “share” with them food and fate. That is why this species is taken as an example to strengthen the point in the above discussion.
3. It signifies in an ironic manner an ambitious enterprise that ends up with no result.
4. This is an old idiomatic expression, which signifies that a person skillfully searches some one else’s pocket.
5. It signifies a person or a thing that one profits from.
6. It is used to ridicule a person who is too stupid to appreciate the music played by an expert, or a person who is so stupid to play a piece of wonderful music for someone unable to understand it.
(ressembler à une vache qui regarde passer les trains). In addition, the massive bodies of cattle are not neglected in French culture and beu “cattle” or “ox” has the same connotations as in “as heavy as a bull/an ox” (lourd comme un beuf). It can be seen from this example that similar representations with distinct focuses would be formed across cultures but also within a given culture, leading to the coincidence of the polysemy of animal names between different languages and even in the same language.

3. 3. 2 Divergence

With regard to Case 3, the first example would be a chicken, a common domestic fowl. Despite the same focus on its combative behavior, a cock is represented as a brave animal in Chinese culture and a belligerent animal in French culture. Accordingly, 公鸡 [gōng jī] “cock” signifies courage as in “When cocks meet in a fight—they glare at each other” (公鸡打架—头对头); while coq “cock” implies impetuousness and bellicosity as in “as red as a cock” (rouge comme un coq). Regarding a hen, the same focus on its call does not bring about similar representations; pompous in the eyes of the Chinese but noisy for the French. Thereby, 母鸡 [mǔ jī] “hen” and poule connotes respectively pompousness and noisiness as in “A hen cackles when it has laid an egg, yet small merits are not worth loud praise for oneself” (母鸡下蛋咯咯哒，有了成绩莫自夸) and “Squawks with a good beak, just like the hen of my aunt” (Caquet bon bec, la poule à ma tante). To give another example, a donkey is widely used as a beast of burden. Since its representations exhibit more similarities than differences between Chinese and French, 驴 [lǘ] “donkey” and âne both symbolize foolishness, stubbornness as well as laziness. However, with a focus on its silence in work, a donkey is endowed with a relatively complicated representation in Chinese culture. That is why the Chinese name receives the connotation of resignation, which is absent from its counterpart in French, as in “A harnessed donkey—it works to the benefit of human beings” (戴上笼头的小毛驴——听人使唤). In other words, the focus mentioned above complicates the representation of a donkey in Chinese culture, but seems to be neglected by the French or contribute to strengthen the established representation of a donkey as a silly animal in French culture. For this reason, 驴 [lǘ] “donkey” has

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1. It refers to a person with an pathetic and simple expression.
2. In this idiom, heaviness of the body of this species is believed to account for its slow-witted mind.
3. This aggressive behavior of a cock at the beginning of a fight is considered in Chinese culture as the manifestation of courage in front of antagonists.
4. It is used to describe a person who is easily irritated, and by extension refer to a person touched by a strong emotion such as shame or shyness.
5. It signifies an unfailing talk or a chattering and defamatory person.
more figurative/symbolic significations by comparison with âne “donkey”.

A third example is still more particular. Kept by human beings to guard or hunt, a dog is associated with an ambivalent representation in Chinese culture; it concerns a faithful protector but also a blind servant. In consequence, 狗 [gǒu] “dog” signifies fidelity and servility as in “A son will never abandon his mother because of her ugliness; a dog will never leave a house in view of its poverty” (子不嫌母丑, 狗不嫌家贫) and “A dog growls by counting on its master’s power” (狗仗人势).① In French culture, the same focus on the services offered by a dog to human beings accounts for a similar representation with more emphasis on its negative aspect. That is to say, a dog is a rather blind servant than a faithful protector in the eyes of the French. Thus, chien “dog” has the commendatory signification in addition to the pejorative one as in “as faithful as a dog” (fidèle comme un chien) and “to act like a couchant dog” (faire le chien couchant).② It can be seen from this example that the same focus would lead to (an) ambivalent representation(s) across cultures as well as within a given culture, and that the parallelism between two cultures does not exclude minor differences.

Concerning the fourth case, it is possible to mention chickens again, due to the complexity of their representations. In Chinese culture, a cock is considered as an honest animal since the focus is placed on its regular crows whereas in French culture, it constitutes the prototype of masculinity for the focus is put on its role as a male. Consequently, 公鸡 [gōng jī] “cock” connotes honesty as in “With neither praise nor reward, a cock always announces the start of a new day” (雄鸡没人嘉奖, 照样天天报晓)③ but coq “cock” implies masculinity as in “a cock of the village” (le coq du village).④ Besides its squawks, a hen receives a relatively complicated representation in French culture, with a focus on its timorous nature and another on its overprotection of its chicks. That is why poule “hen” signifies timorousness and indulgence as in “to be like a hen which has found a knife” (être comme une poule qui a trouvé un couteau)⑤ and “a mother who acts like a hen” (mère poule).⑥ As another typical example, a horse is indispensable to human society with its various

① It refers to a person who does violent or dishonest things to others in order to execute orders of his ringleader.
② It describes a person who flatters someone or obeys despically the requirements of this person in order to obtain his favor.
③ It should be noted that 雄鸡 [xióng jī] “cock” in this idiom is synonymous to 公鸡 [gōng jī] “cock”.
④ It is used to describe a seducer who runs after girls in the village or who is the most admired by all the girls of the village.
⑤ It describes a person who is stunned or embarrassed by nothing important.
⑥ It refers, in a tempered or kindly ironic manner, to a mother who pays too much attention on or devotes too much to her child.
roles in agriculture, transport, war, etc. Owing to the focus on its remarkable ability to run, a horse is represented as a fast and tireless runner in the eyes of the Chinese. Therefore, 马 [mǎ] “horse” symbolizes speed and endurance as in “A horse keeps prancing on its way” (马不停蹄). Moreover, this representation of a horse leads to other connotations of its Chinese name like courage and determination as in “to be the first among horses” (一马当先). On the contrary, the French prefer to focus attention on the appearance of a horse as well as its role as a beast of burden. Hence, cheval “horse” implies robustness and ignorance as in “This is a big horse” (C’est un grand cheval) and “a horse used for pulling coaches, ploughs” (cheval de carrosse, de charrue). It can be seen from this example that commendatory significations of the Chinese name of a horse depends greatly on the positive representation of this animal, while pejorative significations of the French name of a horse relies a great deal on its negative representation. To illustrate the point with a third example, a mule is a common farm animal in Chine as well as in France. While a focus is placed on the origin of this species, accounting for its representation as a hybrid animal in Chinese culture, another focus is put on its role, leading to the representation of a beast of burden in French culture. Accordingly, 骡子 [luó zi] “mule” connotes hybridism as in “a mule’s face—it resembles neither a donkey nor a horse” (骡子的脸——非驴非马) but mule “female mule” or “jenny” signifies labor as in “to be loaded like a jenny, a mule” (chargé comme une mule, un mulet).

3.4 Animals in the Common Imagination; The Superstratum of Animal Representations

Emerging in human minds are animal personages or imaginary animals that receive shared representations depending on the will of human beings, i.e. their representations are formed to a great extent on the basis of human beings’ ways of thinking and systems of value. Because of this, “equivalent” animal names have particular figurative/symbolic significations within given cultures, as in Chinese or French culture.

3.4.1 Animal Personages

Among animals in the physical world, some are regarded by people to be animal
personages in fairy stories, literary works and traditional beliefs. Regarding a certain species, its representation as an animal personage may change to some extent by comparison with that as an animal in nature or in human society. In other words, when an animal referent shifts the position from the physical world to common imagination, the previously established representation may be enhanced or modified. Consequently, animal names highlight some of their figurative/symbolic significations or receive additional ones in the corresponding cultures.

In some cases, previous representations are enhanced with an emphasis on the focuses that have already been noticed. In Chinese culture, one of the most famous animal personages is 孙悟空 [sūn wù kōng] "Monkey King", disciple of the monk Xuanzang (Tripitaka) in Journey to the West (《西游记》). With arboreal habits and the ability to imitate others, a monkey is represented as an agile, intelligent but impetuous animal. These focuses are emphasized to endow the Monkey King with extraordinary capabilities; e.g., he can jump into the air and travel on clouds over vast distances, he can overcome all kinds of difficulties during a pilgrimage, he can transform himself into 72 different figures and so on. But the Monkey King also has an impatient temperament as well as a tendency to disobey his master. In fact, the representation of a monkey has been enhanced to form a new one for the Monkey King, and thereby the two names 猴 [hóu] “monkey” and 孙悟空 [sūn wù kōng] “Monkey King” have similar connotations such as agility, intelligence, irritability and disobedience. As an animal personage, Monkey King is widely known in China to the extent that some episodes in Journey to the West are summarized in idiomatic expressions in Chinese, as in the following:

10a) By a somersault, Monkey King is able to travel 108 000 li. (一个筋斗十万八千里);⃒
10b) Monkey King defeated the Baigu Spirit three times. (三打白骨精);⃓
10c) Monkey King revoluted in the Palace of Heaven. (大闹天宫).⃔

Likewise, carps become animal personages without specific names in an ancient

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1 Journey to the West (《西游记》), as one of the Four Great Classical Novels of Chinese literature, is a fictionalized account of the pilgrimage to India of the Buddhist monk Xuanzang with his four disciples.
2 Li is a Chinese unit of length. 1 li = 0.5 kilometer.
3 During the pilgrimage, Tripitaka and his disciples encounter 81 tribulations, for various monsters, demons as well as animal spirits try to eat Tripitaka’s flesh in order to obtain immortality. Formed from skeletons, the Baigu Spirit has the same intention and transforms itself into human figures to cheat Tripitaka’s sympathy. However, the Monkey King sees through its disguise; he fights off the Baigu Spirit twice and, in the third encounter, beats it to death.
4 This episode demonstrates Monkey King’s rebellion against Heaven.
Chinese legend. It was long ago when Da Yu¹ had been given charge of fighting floods. One day, he found a high mountain that impeded a watercourse and split it in half with his axe in order to drain the floodwater. However, this exploit dissatisfied the carps previously living upstream, for they were brought downstream and could never return back home. Da Yu’s wife was so intelligent that she quickly had an idea: these carps should be authorized by Jade Emperor² to try jumping over this split mountain, named the “Portal of Dragon”. Any carp that succeeds will be transformed into a real dragon; otherwise, it will spend its life downstream as a fish. Since this compromise was made, every carp comes to get its chance but hardly any succeeds. As time passes, this legend has turned into an idiomatic expression in Chinese “鲤鱼跳龙门”, which signifies literally a carp having jumped over the “Portal of Dragon” and refers figuratively to a person who has obtained the greatest honor because of his success. It can be seen from this example that the connotations of vitality and energy are highlighted for the Chinese name 鲤鱼[lǐ yú] “carp” due to an enhanced representation emphasizing the focus on the fact that carps jump energetically and constantly once out of water.

In French culture, the Renart is a famous animal personage as the protagonist in Roman de Renart.³ With pointed muzzle and ears, reddish-brown fur as well as a bushy tail, a fox is represented as a sly and deceitful predator and thereby its name renard “fox” implies slyness, malice, artifice and deception. Having the same appearance and habits, the fox named Renart receives an enhanced representation of its species to such an extent that the original name of a fox in French goupiol “fox” has been finally replaced by the name of this animal personage Renart, with a minor modification of the final sound shift (t > d) during language evolution, and always highlighting the similar pejorative connotations. Also, some of the episodes in Roman de Renart have been transformed into idiomatic expressions in French, e. g., Il ne faut pas se confesser au renard “Never confess to a fox”, evoking the scene in which Renart pretends to be a priest in an attempt to catch some ewes. Besides, various animals become personages in Fables de La Fontaine.⁴ To be specific, ants are social insects that reserve food in their colonies for winter. Emphasizing the focus on this habit, the representation of an ant as an animal personage is an

¹ Da Yu (大禹[dà yǔ]), literally “the Great Yu”, is a Chinese legendary hero famed for his fight against floods.
² Jade Emperor (玉帝[yù dì]) is the ruler of Heaven in Chinese mythology.
³ Roman de Renart “Stories of Reynard the Fox” is a compilation of medieval stories concerning Renart.
⁴ Fables de La Fontaine, published in several volumes from 1668 to 1694, is viewed as a classic of French literature.
enhanced version of that of an ant in the physical world. Accordingly, connotations such as foresight, egoism and stinginess are highlighted concerning the French name _fourmi_ “ant” as in _La fourmi n’est pas prêteuse_ “The ant is never willing to lend”, formed from a fable titled _La cigale et la fourmi_ “The Ant and the Grasshopper”.

In other cases, previous representations are modified with new focuses placed on other aspects of the related animals. In Chinese culture, a sheep is usually represented as a docile and defenseless animal, which is readily preyed upon. That is why its name 羊_“sheep” symbolizes docility, vulnerability and lack of aggressiveness. As a new focus is placed on the fact that a lamb kneels when it sucks its mother’s breast, this species has become in the eyes of the Chinese a perfect incarnation of filial piety and respect towards one’s parents. Therefore, a sheep is endowed with a modified representation according to Chinese traditional beliefs, and 羊_“sheep” receives the connotation of filial obedience as in “A lamb kneels when a ewe nurses it, with a view to show respect towards its mother” (羊有跪乳之恩). Another example concerns a magpie, a common bird with black-and-white feathers and a long tail. In addition to its habits, a magpie is traditionally believed to presage the arrival of propitious things and hence represented as an auspicious omen for happiness. As proof, the Chinese name 喜鹊_“magpie” signifies literally “a magpie, which brings happiness” and implies auspiciousness in idiomatic expressions such as “A magpie stops just in front of our house—a happy thing is coming soon” (门前喜鹊叫——好事儿来了).

In French culture, a swan has a positive representation owing to its white plumage and its name _cygne_ “swan” connotes beauty and elegance. Besides this, the focus on the call of a swan may have inspired an ancient legend in which a swan utters the most melodious call when it is dying. Consequently, the modified representation of a swan enriches the connotations of its name as in _le chant du cygne_ “a song of a swan”, which refers figuratively to a talented artist’s last work, considered as his best creation. To give another example, a snake is represented as a pernicious and devious animal, accounting for the pejorative significations of its name. Moreover, _serpent_ “snake” implies ingratitude due to a modified representation of this species, probably formed in a fable titled _The Peasant and the Snake_; One day in a glacial winter, a peasant saved a snake that had become numb. However, no sooner had the snake come to life than it gave a fatal bite to its benefactor. There is also an idiomatic expression related to this fable; _réchauffer un

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1. It refers in particular to a stingy person.
2. _The Peasant and the Snake_ is a fable credited to Aesop.
“serpent dans son sein” “to warm up a snake at one’s breast”, signifying that a person becomes victim of the one he once helped.

### 3. 4. 2 Imaginary Animals

Imaginary animals have no existence in the physical world, but obtain their representations and names as real animals. In fact, these representations are created by human beings according to those of animals in the physical world. That is to say, an imaginary animal’s representation constitutes in a sense a mosaic of several real animals’ appearances as well as their characteristics. As a result, it is possible that “equivalent” animal names refer to distinct imaginary animals in different cultures, and their figurative/symbolic significations vary greatly from culture to culture.

One of the best examples is 龙 “Chinese dragon” /“dragon”. An emblem of China, a Chinese dragon occupies an indispensable place in the common imagination of the Chinese, who believe themselves to be the descendants of this giant legendary creature. It originally had the elongated body of a snake covered with the scales of a fish, and as time passes acquires successively the branched antlers of the deer, the mane of the horse, the claws of the hawk as so on. With such an appearance as well as many extraordinary abilities, a dragon is represented in Chinese culture as the King of aquatic animals, and hence its name implies majesty and danger as in “A Chinese dragon engenders a Chinese dragon and a Chinese phoenix brings forth a Chinese phoenix, while a mouse’s offspring is congenitally capable of digging holes” (龙生龙, 凤生风, 老鼠儿子会打洞). Based on this, 龙 “Chinese dragon” became in Chinese feudal society a term exclusively reserved for emperors, as in “the real Chinese dragon and son of Heaven” (真龙天子). Related to its majestic status, a Chinese dragon would be rarely seen, which accounts for another signification of its name: a remarkable person with distinguished morality and talent. As evidence, 望子成龙 “to hope that one’s son will become a Chinese dragon” expresses in a figurative sense the ardent expectations held by a pair of

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1. In this paper, “equivalent” animal names are generally used in the sense that they refer to the same species in different languages. With regard to imaginary animal names, the term “equivalent” has a different meaning. Specifically, these names are believed to or seem to denote the same imaginary animal. However, as representations of imaginary animals are closely related to the given cultures, “equivalent” animal names concern effectively distinct imaginary animals in different cultures.

2. In a figurative manner, this proverb emphasizes the distinction between people of nobility and those of humble birth.

3. It signifies that a person is unconsciously involved in a succession of extremely dangerous situations.

4. This idiomatic expression constitutes another manner of referring to emperors, for an emperor is believed in Chinese culture to be the son of Heaven and thus the incarnation of a real Chinese dragon.
parents for their son. Furthermore, 龙[lóng] “Chinese dragon” symbolizes masculinity when compared with 风[fēng] “Chinese phoenix”, symbol of femininity, and the coexistence of the two names connotes matrimonial harmony as in 龙凤呈祥 “A couple of a Chinese dragon and a Chinese phoenix constitutes an auspicious omen for happiness”. On the contrary, a dragon in French culture is represented as having wings of a hawk, claws of a lion and a tail of a snake (Legrain et al., 2001, p. 348). It concerns in mythology a legendary creature that breathes fire, never sleeps and guards the Golden Fleece. This representation of a guardian explains that dragon “dragon” implies austerity and ferociousness as in dragon de vertu¹ “a dragon of virtue” and faire le dragon “to act like a dragon”.² Besides, a dragon is considered in Bible stories as a symbol of evil and diabolic tendencies. That is why its name becomes the synonym of a demon as in le dragon, le dragon infernal “the (infernal) dragon”.

To give another example, a Chinese phoenix is an imaginary creature with a beak of a parrot, a body of a mandarin duck, feathers of a pheasant, wings of a rook and the claws of a crane. It is represented as the King of flying animals and believed to perch only on Chinese parasols, divine trees according to Chinese traditions. Because of this, 风[fēng] “Chinese phoenix” has connotations similar to those of 龙[lóng] “Chinese dragon”, i.e. majesty³ and rarity. On the one hand, 风[fēng] “Chinese phoenix” appears in idiomatic expressions such as 没有梧桐树,引不了凤凰来⁴ “Without the Chinese parasol tree, there will be no Chinese phoenix” and is used as a synonymous term for empresses in Chinese feudal society. On the other hand, the rare appearance of a Chinese phoenix enables its name to signify a distinguished talent as in 凤鸣朝阳⁵ “A Chinese phoenix crows when a new day begins” but also a propitious omen for both the country and a newly married couple as in 凤凰来仪⁶ “A pair of phoencies appear and dance with elegance”. Moreover,

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¹ It refers to a person with an austere temperament.
² It describes a person as ferocious.
³ The connotation of majesty of 龙[lóng] “Chinese dragon” implies that of danger, while it is not the same case for 风[fēng] “Chinese phoenix”.
⁴ In this proverb, the majestic status of a Chinese phoenix is associated with, or in a sense justified by, the divinity of Chinese parasols.
⁵ It signifies figuratively that a talented person takes advantage of opportunities in order to show his aptitude.
⁶ The Chinese name 风[fēng] “Chinese phoenix” is a simplified form of 凤凰[fēng huáng] “Chinese phoenix”, in which the two Chinese characters 凤[fēng] and 凰[huáng] refer respectively to male and female phoenixes. That is why the co-apparition of a pair of phoenixes constitutes in Chinese culture an auspicious omen for the country as well as for the newly married couple. However, as the cult of the Chinese dragon is widely spread during the long history in China, the Chinese phoenix has been greatly feminized and ends up being the companion of the Chinese dragon.
it should be mentioned that 风[fēng] “Chinese phoenix” symbolizes femininity by comparison with 龙[lóng] “Chinese dragon” as in the example above. By contrast, a phoenix in French culture has its origin in Egyptian mythology and is endowed with the ability to revive from its own ashes (Legrain et al., 2001, p. 1591). It is for this reason that phénix “phoenix” implies immortality. Whereas, there seems to be in French no idiomatic expression concerning this legendary creature.①

As a third example, a Chinese unicorn is distinct from a unicorn in French culture, despite the unique horn growing from their foreheads. The former has a body of milu② covered with the scales of a fish, hoofs of a horse, the tail of a bull as well as a fleshy horn; while the latter is characterized by a long spiraling horn and a body of a horse (Legrain et al., 2001, p. 595). In addition, a Chinese unicorn is believed to live as long as 2000 or even 3000 years and to be able to bring babies to sterile couples, but its counterpart is considered to have the particular habit of laying its head on the breast of a virgin. These different representations lead to the divergence of the Chinese and French names in terms of both literal meaning and figurative/symbolic signification. Similar to 龙[lóng] “Chinese dragon” or 风[fēng] “Chinese phoenix”, 麒麟[qí lín] “kylin”/“Chinese unicorn” connotes nobility and rarity as in the following:

9a) an offspring of a Chinese unicorn or a nestling of a Chinese phoenix（麟子凤雏）;③

9b) Those who study are as many as the hairs on a head of cattle; while those who will succeed are as few as the horn of a unicorn.（学如牛毛，成如麟角）;④

9c) A unicorn appears only at a prosperous time.（盛世出麒麟）.⑤

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① It should be noted that our studies rely on the two corpora which are expected to be representative but effectively restrained. In consequence, if there is no idiomatic expression containing a certain animal name in the corpora, it does not signify that the related animal name does not appear in any idiomatic expression in the corresponding language. The same remarks would be valid for the third example in this section.

② It concerns a species resembling the chevrotain and living only in China.

③ It refers to a person of noble birth.

④ The signification of this idiomatic expression is strengthened by the contrast that every head of cattle has numerous hairs while each unicorn has only one horn.

⑤ Analogous to 风凰[fēng huáng] “Chinese phoenix”, 麒麟[qí lín] “kylin”/“Chinese unicorn” is a combination of the name of males and that of females of this imaginary animal, i.e. 麟[qí] and 麒[lín]. And the co-apparition of a couple of unicorns equally constitutes an auspicious omen for the country and to a great extent justifies its prosperity. However, as time passes, 麒麟[qí lín] “kylin”/“Chinese unicorn” is usually considered as a general term for any unicorn, regardless of sex.
It also evokes the extraordinary ability of this legendary creature as in “A unicorn brings to a sterile couple a son, who will serve the country when he is grown up” (麒麟送子). Conversely, licorne “unicorn” symbolizes in French culture masculinity, sexuality and by extension virginity.

### 4. Summary and Conclusion

This paper has investigated the polysemy of animal names in Chinese and/or French idiomatic expressions in an attempt to answer questions such as: (1) Why do some of the animal names in a certain language receive figurative/symbolic significations and eventually appear in idiomatic expressions? (2) Concerning the animal names used in idiomatic expressions, what are the cases of coincidence and those of divergence in terms of polysemy between Chinese and French? (3) How can we elucidate these linguistic phenomena from a sociolinguistic perspective? To achieve the above objectives, our studies were carried out on the basis of two small corpora of idiomatic expressions, which limit the research scope to representative animal names, i.e. 76 in Chinese and 77 in French, and in the meantime provide examples as supporting evidences in discussion. By means of comparative analysis, it is found that some animal names seem to appear in either Chinese or French idiomatic expressions while others are used “correspondingly” in both languages with either coincidence or divergence of their figurative/symbolic significations.

From the perspective of representation, the polysemy of animal names as well as its coincidence and divergence across languages is attributable to the shared representations associated with animal referents in the given societies/cultures, and these animal representations are rooted in close relationship between animals and human beings. First, animals are referred to in human languages since they are endowed with shared representations depending on the cognition of the related species. Besides literal meanings, some animal names receive gradually figurative/symbolic significations due to the complicatedness of animal representations as human beings deepen their understanding of the related species. Meanwhile, with remarkable cultural imprints on animal representations, these animal names become culturally loaded terms. In short, shared representations bring about a solid foundation on which rely not only literal meanings but also figurative/symbolic significations, i.e. the polysemy of animal names. Based on this, polysemic animal

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1 In this phrasal idiom with four Chinese characters, the baby brought by a Chinese unicorn is usually called 麒麟之子“lin zi” “the son of a unicorn” and thus believed to become a talented person in the future.
names may appear in idiomatic expressions for a relation of familiarity has been established in human contact with animals. For the same reason, terrestrial animals have relatively complicated representations and their names are used in more idiomatic expressions with much richer figurative/symbolic significations.

Secondly, shared representations are characterized by four levels as regards animals, and this accounts for the coincidence and divergence of the polysemy of animal names between Chinese and French. Level 1 concerns animals existing in the physical world and constitutes the precondition for animal representations. Specifically, animals appearing within the scope of human cognition have the possibility of receiving their representations; animals that human beings have no experience with or cognition of would be seldom endowed with representations. In consequence, the use of animal names in either Chinese or French idiomatic expressions might be explained by the fact that the related animals are absent from the biosphere in France or that in China; although there are rare cases where absent animals are referred to and associated with representations owing to various exchanges between different cultures. At the second and third levels, it concerns respectively animals in nature and human society, and accordingly the substratum and the middle-stratum of animal representations. Regarding the “equivalent” animal names used “correspondingly” in both Chinese and French idiomatic expressions, there are at both of the levels equally four cases providing a detailed explanation for the coincidence and divergence of figurative/symbolic significations of animal names. That is to say, with the same focus or distinct focuses, similar representations lead to the coincidence of the polysemy of animal names in Case 1 and Case 2; while with the same focus or distinct focuses, different representations result in the divergence of the polysemy of animal names in Case 3 and Case 4. Moreover, for animals in nature, representations rely heavily on their appearances, habits and relations with other animals; and for animals living within human society, representations depend greatly on the observation and the exploitation of animals by human beings. The fourth level concerns animals in the common imagination of human beings, and serves as the superstratum of animal representations. While animal personages have physical existence in the world and their representations are enhanced or modified in fairy stories, literary works, traditional beliefs, etc., imaginary animals do not exist in the physical world but still receive representations, which are formed by the combination of real animals’ appearances and their characteristics. As a result, animal names highlight some previous figurative/symbolic significations or acquire additional connotations in the given cultures, whereas animal names of legendary creatures vary from culture to
culture in terms of both literal meaning and figurative/symbolic signification. These four levels are illustrated in order of hierarchy in Figure 3:

Subjectivity

Animal in common imagination

Superstratum of representation

Animal in human society

Middle-stratum of representation

Animal in nature

Substratum of representation

Animal in existence

Premise of representation

Objectivity

Figure 3  Four-level hierarchy of shared representations

It can be seen from Figure 3 that from the lowest level to the highest level, animal representations are formed according to different degrees between Objectivity and Subjectivity.

Lastly, shared representations are rooted in the coexistence of animals and human beings in the world. On the one hand, animals as objects of human cognition offer a world of familiar images in the eyes of human beings. On the other hand, human beings consider animals as another self and tend to attribute their moral values and spiritual expectances to them. That is to say, in their life experiences, human beings have feelings or emotions about animals, and they make judgments or evaluations on animals according to personal likes and dislikes; meanwhile, human beings mark animal representations with cultural impresses, i. e. their ways of thinking, systems of values, etc. which vary from culture to culture. It is in this way that human beings attempt to comprehend the world, reflect on themselves and behave in an appropriate manner.

Based on the discussions in the previous sections, we have come to other conclusions, which are not less significant; (1) For animals absent from a certain biosphere, a translated name would receive a distinct representation when it enters the new culture or bring a new representation formed in conformity with the original one. (2) Positive representations result in commendatory significations for animal names and negative representations account for pejorative significations, while an ambivalent representation leads to both commendatory and pejorative

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1. See the example of 虎/hū/tigre “tiger”.
2. See the example of 蝴/cán/ver à soie “silkworm”.
3. See the example of 马/mò/cheval "horse".
figurative/symbolic significations. Similar representations with distinct focuses can be formed within a given culture as well as across cultures, causing the coincidence of the polysemy of animal names in the same language and between different languages; while the same focus could bring about (an) ambivalent representation(s) not only within a given culture but also across cultures, producing the divergence or parallelism of the polysemy of animal names in the same language and between different languages.

In any case, all the representations are effectively incomplete and simplified versions of a complex reality. Incapable of mirroring the physical world, representations are always limited by human cognition, and, at the same time, are susceptible to further development as human beings deepen their cognition. To sum up, the investigations in this paper are not oriented only to the polysemy of animal names as well as its coincidence and divergence between Chinese and French in idiomatic expressions, but also contribute to further researches in the areas concerned and application to foreign language teaching and learning.

References


1 See the example of 孔雀/kǒng què/ pau “peacock”.
2 See the example of 牛[niú] “cattle”, bœuf “cattle” or “ox” and vache “cow”.
3 See the example of 犬[gǒu]/chien “dog”.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese animal names</th>
<th>French animal names</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>百灵鸟 [bǎi líng niǎo]</td>
<td>l’aigle ’eagle’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>鹅 [é]</td>
<td>la caille ’quail’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>鸡 [ji]</td>
<td>le canard ’duck’</td>
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<tr>
<td>鹧鸪 [qī hú]</td>
<td>la chouette ’owl’</td>
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<tr>
<td>麻雀 [má què]</td>
<td>or ’owl’, le coq ’cock’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>麋鹿 [mí lù]</td>
<td>le corbeau ’raven’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>鹦鹉 [yīng wǔ]</td>
<td>la corneille ’crow’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>斑鸠 [bān jiū]</td>
<td>le coucou ’cuckoo’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>画眉 [huà méi]</td>
<td>le cygne ’swan’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>鹤 [hè]</td>
<td>le dinard ’turkey’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>鹤 [hè]</td>
<td>la grive ’thrush’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>麦鸥 [mài ōu]</td>
<td>la grue ’crane’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>普菁 [pǔ jīng]</td>
<td>le héron ’heron’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>小鸟 [xiǎo niǎo]</td>
<td>l’hirondelle ’swallow’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>鹦鹉 [yīng wǔ]</td>
<td>le merle ’blackbird’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>鹦鹉 [yīng wǔ]</td>
<td>le moineau ’sparrow’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>鹦鹉 [yīng wǔ]</td>
<td>l’oiseau ’bird’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>鹦鹉 [yīng wǔ]</td>
<td>le paon ’peacock’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>鹦鹉 [yīng wǔ]</td>
<td>le perroquet ’parrot’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>鹦鹉 [yīng wǔ]</td>
<td>la pie ’pie’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>鹦鹉 [yīng wǔ]</td>
<td>le pigeon ’pigeon’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>鹦鹉 [yīng wǔ]</td>
<td>le pinson ’chaffinch’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>鹦鹉 [yīng wǔ]</td>
<td>la poule ’hen’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>鹦鹉 [yīng wǔ]</td>
<td>le tourterelle ’little turtledove’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Category 1: flying creatures**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese animal names</th>
<th>French animal names</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>鹳 [chán]</td>
<td>l’aigle ’eagle’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>蝙蝠 [biān fú]</td>
<td>la caille ’quail’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>猫 [mā]</td>
<td>le canard ’duck’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>蝙蝠 [biān fú]</td>
<td>la chouette ’owl’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>猫 [mā]</td>
<td>or ’owl’, le coq ’cock’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>蝙蝠 [biān fú]</td>
<td>le corbeau ’raven’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>蝙蝠 [biān fú]</td>
<td>la corneille ’crow’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>蝙蝠 [biān fú]</td>
<td>le coucou ’cuckoo’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>鸭子 [yāzǐ]</td>
<td>le cygne ’swan’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>鸭子 [yāzǐ]</td>
<td>le dinard ’turkey’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>鸭子 [yāzǐ]</td>
<td>la grive ’thrush’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>鸭子 [yāzǐ]</td>
<td>la grue ’crane’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>鹅 [é]</td>
<td>le héron ’heron’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>鹅 [é]</td>
<td>l’hirondelle ’swallow’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>鹅 [é]</td>
<td>le merle ’blackbird’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>鹅 [é]</td>
<td>le moineau ’sparrow’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>鹅 [é]</td>
<td>l’oiseau ’bird’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>鹅 [é]</td>
<td>le paon ’peacock’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>鹅 [é]</td>
<td>le perroquet ’parrot’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>鹅 [é]</td>
<td>la pie ’pie’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>鹅 [é]</td>
<td>le pigeon ’pigeon’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>鹅 [é]</td>
<td>le pinson ’chaffinch’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>鹅 [é]</td>
<td>la poule ’hen’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>鹅 [é]</td>
<td>le tourterelle ’little turtledove’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Category 2: a great family of terrestrial animals**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese animal names</th>
<th>French animal names</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>伯劳 [bò lóu]</td>
<td>l’aigle ’eagle’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>蝙蝠 [biān fú]</td>
<td>la caille ’quail’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>蝙蝠 [biān fú]</td>
<td>le canard ’duck’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>蝙蝠 [biān fú]</td>
<td>la chouette ’owl’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>蝙蝠 [biān fú]</td>
<td>or ’owl’, le coq ’cock’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>蝙蝠 [biān fú]</td>
<td>le corbeau ’raven’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>蝙蝠 [biān fú]</td>
<td>la corneille ’crow’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>蝙蝠 [biān fú]</td>
<td>le coucou ’cuckoo’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>蝙蝠 [biān fú]</td>
<td>le cygne ’swan’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>蝙蝠 [biān fú]</td>
<td>le dinard ’turkey’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>蝙蝠 [biān fú]</td>
<td>la grive ’thrush’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>蝙蝠 [biān fú]</td>
<td>la grue ’crane’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>蝙蝠 [biān fú]</td>
<td>le héron ’heron’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>蝙蝠 [biān fú]</td>
<td>l’hirondelle ’swallow’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>蝙蝠 [biān fú]</td>
<td>le merle ’blackbird’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>蝙蝠 [biān fú]</td>
<td>le moineau ’sparrow’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>蝙蝠 [biān fú]</td>
<td>l’oiseau ’bird’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>蝙蝠 [biān fú]</td>
<td>le paon ’peacock’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>蝙蝠 [biān fú]</td>
<td>le perroquet ’parrot’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>蝙蝠 [biān fú]</td>
<td>la pie ’pie’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>蝙蝠 [biān fú]</td>
<td>le pigeon ’pigeon’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>蝙蝠 [biān fú]</td>
<td>le pinson ’chaffinch’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>蝙蝠 [biān fú]</td>
<td>la poule ’hen’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>蝙蝠 [biān fú]</td>
<td>le tourterelle ’little turtledove’</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Category 3: aquatic creatures**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese animal names</th>
<th>French animal names</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>蟾蜍 [chú shui]</td>
<td>l’aigle ’eagle’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>蝌蚪 [ké dou]</td>
<td>la caille ’quail’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>蝌蚪 [ké dou]</td>
<td>le canard ’duck’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>蝌蚪 [ké dou]</td>
<td>la chouette ’owl’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>蝌蚪 [ké dou]</td>
<td>or ’owl’, le coq ’cock’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>蝌蚪 [ké dou]</td>
<td>le corbeau ’raven’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>蝌蚪 [ké dou]</td>
<td>la corneille ’crow’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>蝌蚪 [ké dou]</td>
<td>le coucou ’cuckoo’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>蝌蚪 [ké dou]</td>
<td>le cygne ’swan’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>蝌蚪 [ké dou]</td>
<td>le dinard ’turkey’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>蝌蚪 [ké dou]</td>
<td>la grive ’thrush’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>蝌蚪 [ké dou]</td>
<td>la grue ’crane’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>蝌蚪 [ké dou]</td>
<td>le héron ’heron’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>蝌蚪 [ké dou]</td>
<td>l’hirondelle ’swallow’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>蝌蚪 [ké dou]</td>
<td>le merle ’blackbird’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>蝌蚪 [ké dou]</td>
<td>le moineau ’sparrow’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>蝌蚪 [ké dou]</td>
<td>l’oiseau ’bird’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>蝌蚪 [ké dou]</td>
<td>le paon ’peacock’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>蝌蚪 [ké dou]</td>
<td>le perroquet ’parrot’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>蝌蚪 [ké dou]</td>
<td>la pie ’pie’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>蝌蚪 [ké dou]</td>
<td>le pigeon ’pigeon’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>蝌蚪 [ké dou]</td>
<td>le pinson ’chaffinch’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>蝌蚪 [ké dou]</td>
<td>la poule ’hen’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>蝌蚪 [ké dou]</td>
<td>le tourterelle ’little turtledove’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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1. 猪婆龙 [zhū pó lóng], commonly believed to be the colloquial name “Chinese alligator” / “Yangtze alligator”, was described in *Strange Tales of a Scholar’s Study* (《聊斋志异》) as a creature resembling the Chinese dragon, which can fly and live by eating geese and ducks near rivers.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category 4: the “smallest” animals</th>
<th>Chinese animal names</th>
<th>French animal names</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category 1: flying creatures</th>
<th>Chinese animal names</th>
<th>French animal names</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category 2: a great family of terrestrial animals</th>
<th>Chinese animal names</th>
<th>French animal names</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category 3: aquatic creatures</th>
<th>Chinese animal names</th>
<th>French animal names</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1. As a Chinese character 鸡[jī] is used as a general term for the gallinaceous fowl, there are two corresponding French words *coq* and *poule*, referring respectively to males and females.
2. The Chinese animal name 乌鶇[wū yā] corresponds semantically to the French word *corneille* “crow”, and might extend its denotation to *corbeau* “raven” in the daily life of the Chinese, for both species have black plumage.
3. The French language is characterized by the linguistic phenomenon “grammatical gender” such that all nouns are categorized as either masculine or feminine. Used as a feminine word in French, *mule* refers to females of the species, although it usually has a general signification. That is why we tolerate in our research an approximate “correspondence” between 鹿子[lù zǐ] and *mule*. 

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese animal names</th>
<th>French animal names</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>苍蝇[cōng yíng]·‘fly’、</td>
<td>l’abeille·‘bee’、</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>虫[chóng]·‘insect or worm’、</td>
<td>l’araignée·‘spider’、</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>黄蜂[huáng fēng]·‘wasp’、</td>
<td>l’escargot·‘snail’、</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>蚂蚁[mǎ yǐ]·‘ant’、</td>
<td>la fourmi·‘ant’、</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>蜜蜂[mì fēng]·‘bee’、虱子[shī zi]·‘louse’、</td>
<td>la guêpe·‘wasp’、</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>蝎子[xiē zi]·‘louse’、</td>
<td>l’insecte·‘insect’、</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>蜗牛[wō niú]·‘snail’、</td>
<td>la mouche·‘fly’、</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>蜘蛛[zhī zhū]·‘spider’、</td>
<td>le pou·‘louse’、</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>le ver·‘worm’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

① The Chinese character 虫[chóng] has a broader signification corresponding to insect “insect” but also refers to various small elongated animals with no bones or legs· known by the name of ver “worm”.
Part D
Culture, Media and Comparative Studies
Ethic Turn of Contemporary Western Philosophy, Semiotics and Linguistics

Hong GUO  
Nanjing International Studies University, China

Abstract: The summary of contemporary Western philosophy is the tendency of the confluence and integration of the trends of thought of scientism and humanism, its linguistic turn and the formation of postmodernism (poststructuralism) which marks the ethic turn of contemporary Western philosophy.

In contemporary Western semiotics also appears an ethic turn. In Saussure’s linguistic semiology, the most notable one is that the structuralist Barthes, in the late 60s of the 20th century, turned into a post-structuralist. His ethical theory is: “myth” and “anti-myth”; the ruling class uses the power in its hand to create “myth”, that is, to make unreasonable things sound reasonable to strengthen its rule of the people while the people create “anti-myth” to break these lies. Peircean cognitive semiotics holds that the world is full of signs which serve to link up all forms of life in the universe; any kind of semiosis may affect “the otherness”, including all forms of life in human society and natural world, which gives rise to a “global semiotics”. Therefore, everyone must take responsibility for his or her semiosis, in particular, politicians whose semiosis have much greater influence on the destiny of “the otherness”. Furthermore, there is a combination of Saussurean linguistic semiology, Peircean cognitive semiotics, and Jury Lotman’s cultural semiotics. It combines the social communication of the former with the cognition of individuals of the latter and makes it a semiosis of social communication and social cognition which realizes through “text exchange” that is, “cultural exchange”. Cultural exchange is a way of enhancing mutual understanding and increasing knowledge of mankind, is a way of peaceful co-existence and common progress of all nations or countries in the world. Therefore, it is “a constructive ethics”. In the area of Linguistics, critical discourse analysis is a complex of the major linguistic disciplines and the highest stage of development of “discourse analysis”. Around the 70s of the 20th century, capitalism entered its late period, and a variety of critical and constructive ethic theories of postmodernism were infused into “discourse analysis”. Among the theories, the most powerful one is Foucault’s doctrine of “power” which manages to make “discourse analysis” critical, and becomes a powerful weapon of critique of current “globalization” and “imperialist hegemony”.

Key words: ethic turn; philosophy; semiotics; linguistics
A paragraph of *Contemporary Western Philosophy* runs as follows: “Actually, personal and others’ interests are in a close mutual relationship, especially in the globalization of today. If one only considers and pays attention to one’s personal, national or country’s interests, ignores or even damages others’ personal, national interests, it will inevitably result in a global disturbance and human crisis. Where does Western philosophy go? This question awaits philosophers’ answers. (Xia Jisong, 2009, 592)

This paragraph points out the problem of the direction of development of Western philosophy of today. The author of this paper holds that semiotics is based on philosophy, linguistic sign is one of the many signs, and therefore, linguistics is a branch of semiotics. Thus, philosophy, semiotics and Linguistics are inseparable. Since the ancient times, ethics has been one of the component parts of philosophy, but when society is in disturbance and interpersonal relations are in serious conflict, ethics becomes all the more prominent. That is what we call “ethic turn of philosophy”. Now the question we are going to discuss is actually; the ethic turn of contemporary Western philosophy, semiotics and Linguistics.

The linguistic turn and integration of the two major trends of thought of contemporary Western philosophy (scientism and humanism) is a summary of contemporary Western philosophy (Xia Jisong, 1999, *introduction*). The author holds that Peircean semiotics and Saussurean semiology are respectively subordinate to the above two major trends of thought, and superior to the two types of linguistic disciplines (the type of linguistic disciplines which studies the psychological and biological activities of language from the perspective of intraorganism and the type of linguistic disciplines which studies the social functions of language from the perspective of interorganism). Thus we have the following two series; trend of thought of scientism—Peircean semiotics—the type of linguistic disciplines which studies the psychological and biological activities of language from the perspective of intraorganism; trend of thought of humanism—Saussurean semiology—the type of linguistic disciplines which studies the social functions of language from the perspective of interorganism (Guo Hong, 2004). We will follow these series to discuss the ethic turn of contemporary Western philosophy, semiotics and linguistics.

I. What is ethics? What is the ethics in today’s Western society?

Generally speaking, ethics studies moral issues which concern human social relationships and codes of human conducts for the purpose of preserving the normal
order of society. The common features of various ethics are: being critical, judging which conducts are moral and which ones are immoral. In late capitalism and globalization, contemporary Western ethics has the following features: being critical, global (internationally political), highly technical, and emphasizing the responsibility of politicians, etc. It stresses the close relations between people and people, country and country, nation and nation, stresses concern for the otherness, for other nations, for other countries, and emphasizes the responsibility of people, especially that of politicians who master the national fate.

II. Tendency of Ethic Turn of Contemporary Western Philosophy

1. Formation and Development of Two Major Trends of Thought of Contemporary Western Philosophy and Tendency of Their Confluence

In the 30s of the 19th century and early 20th century, two major trends of thought, scientism and humanism, formed in Western philosophy. Roughly speaking, scientism was derived from the trend of thought of empiricism of modern philosophy; humanism was derived from the trend of thought of rationalism of modern philosophy. Scientism claims to confine all knowledge to the scope of experience, trying hard to apply methods of natural sciences, especially methods of physics, to all fields of the humanities. Humanism regards (human) “will” or “life” as the object of philosophic study, objecting or belittling observation, experiment, logics and other methods of natural science, advocating irrational methods of inner experience, hence the title of “irrationalism”.

From the early 20th century to the 1970s, the two major trends of thought of philosophy developed and approached each other. Scientism developed through the movement of analytic philosophy. Humanism developed through the phenomenological movement. Both trends of philosophy turned to philosophy of language; scientism turned through Anglo-American analytic philosophy, and further to scientism through the post-pragmatism of Anglo-American analytic philosophy; the trend of thought of humanism of European continent philosophy developed through phenomenological movement and further approached humanism through hermeneutics (a humanistic philosophy of language).

From the 1970s till now, the two opposing trends have tended to combine. The confluence of the two major trends is a bi-directional interaction, but more of the trend of scientism is fused into humanism. Modernism conceived in the trend of thought of humanism is mainly poststructuralism or a philosophy of deconstruction, while postmodernism produced by importing scientism into humanism is a
philosophy of postmodernism of new pragmatism. Poststructuralism or postmodernism of deconstruction is derived from structuralism, which is, in turn, derived from structuralist linguistics. Structural Linguistics emphasizes the language structure, while structural philosophy emphasizes the transcendental language structure of constraints on human behavior. Poststructuralism inherits the structural ideas of unconscious constraints on human behaviors of the former, but denies its ideas of eternal and immutable structure and draws on ideas of variable textual meaning and language as life. Derrida, a representative figure of poststructuralism, proposes “anti-logoscentrism”, the essence of which is to negate and oppose the linguistic theory of binary opposition of Cartesian mode of epistemology. Postmodernism of new pragmatism primarily refers to “a philosophy of postpragmatism”. Its appearance is closely related with the debate between scientific realism and anti-realism in the trend of thought of scientism at that time. Scientific realism is a theory which ascertains the objectivity of the meaning of scientific language and insists on its reference to external reality. Anti-realism, on the contrary, negates the objectivity of the meaning of scientific language and negates scientific words or sentences’ reference to external reality. This dispute is based on the prerequisite of whether the Cartesian epistemological mode of the binary opposition between subject and object is admitted or not. Richard Rorty proposes a new idea of “postrealism” which is neither realism nor anti-realism, and is, in essence, identical with Derrida’s “anti-logoscentrism”. Thus the Anglo-American linguistic analytic philosophy of scientism and hermeneutics of continental phenomenology are combined, and the analytic philosophy is introduced into humanistic hermeneutic movement. Thus the confluence of the two opposite trends is achieved. (Xia Jisong, 2009 Introduction)

2. Essence of Postmodernism Produced by Confluence of Two Trends of Thought

In the above is mentioned the formation, development and tendency of confluence of the two trends of philosophical thought and the emergence of postmodernism. “Postmodern”, as the term suggests, is the opposite of “modern”. “Modern” refers to the present capitalist society. By definition, “postmodernism” implies the idea of opposing the current capitalist society, of opposing modern scientism and advocating humanism. What is the cause of it? The author of this paper believes that, from a linguistic point of view, the linguistic turn of the two major trends of philosophical thought and their confluence is caused by the confluence of the two main linguistic philosophies (Anglo-American analytic
philosophy and European continental hermeneutic philosophy) and the their intersection is “anti-logoscentrism”, or opposition to “metaphysics of presence” which means that in the mode of binary oppositions of language structure, the present party is better than the absent party. For example, between “brightness” and “darkness”, “brightness” is better than “darkness”; between “good” and “evil”, “good” is better than “evil”;” between “philosophy” and “literature”, “philosophy” is better than “literature”, and so on. Derrida, a representative figure of postmodernism and “anti-logoscentrism”, opposes this pattern. His ways of opposing this pattern are: the first is “to turn the upside down”, and the second is “to cancel”, that is, to reverse the order, putting the prior in the secondary position while putting the secondary in the prior position, or cancel this order at all. The two trends of philosophical thought combined in 1970s and coincided with the beginning of the late capitalism, during which capitalist contradictions have been intensified, thus giving rise to various crises and disasters which are “globalized”. Derrida’s own political position is radically leftist. In his view, the collapse of the former Soviet Union and drastic changes in Eastern Europe meant the death of the physical body and certain dogmas of Marxism, while the soul of Marxism still exists, and the world cannot be without Marxism. Obviously, his “anti-logoscentrism” has its metaphorical meaning of politics, that is, to put all preposterous things in capitalist society in a right order, or cancel all unreasonable things. What is more, this view is not his personal opinion, but the common view shared by most people living in capitalist society. This is a profound political implication of postmodernism. It is written in Contemporary Western Philosophy: the main change in the more than 100 years of contemporary Western philosophy is the rise, development and confluence of the two major trends of thought of scientism and humanism and the emergence of postmodernism, which, to a certain degree, reflects the spirit of the times of “alienation of late capitalism”. It has given profound insights and raised many thought-provoking questions. It stresses the ideas of the otherness, margin, difference, negation, disorder, anti-egocentricity, identity, certainty and order, which embody the discontent and rebellion to the social order of the current capitalist society of the people who are oppressed by the phenomena of alienation. Therefore, it has a profound social meaning and should be fully affirmed. But theoretically, it is one-sided to some extent. (Ibid, p. 587)

3. Ethic Turn of Contemporary Western Philosophy

It is written in Contemporary Western Philosophy: After the linguistic turn in the early 20th century, ethics become once again linguistic, that is, ethics which
discusses moral concepts and moral judgments from the angle of semantics in an abstract way gradually caught on... In 1970s, the Western society entered a period of late capitalism or a post-industrial period, and since then society has become highly informationalized, globalized, networking and risky; relationship between man and man is correspondingly informationalized, globalized, and networking (virtualized) and disorderly... Thus orientational change takes place in discussing ethic issues, shifting from the perspective of linguistics to that of political science and law... (Ibid, 13, bold letters are made by the author, and the same is true with the following citations)

The author, however, believes that this is not just ethics itself shifting from the perspective of Linguistics to politics and law, but the whole Western philosophy is turning ethic. As ethics is part of philosophy, it is a shift of its focus to ethics. As a consequence, postmodernism represents the spirit of the period of late capitalism, and its philosophical content is mainly criticism of the social alienation of this period.

4. Nature of Postmodern (Post-industrial) Ethics

As the name suggests, “post modern” is in contrast with “modern”. But the interpretation of their relationship is inconsistent. Some understand the former as a continuation of the latter, while others understand it as a negation or opposition to the latter, and still others understand it as the continuity and unity of the opposite. (Ibid, 409)

The author thinks that the last view is preferable, because in the postmodern period, science and technology are highly developed, which provides a material basis for the improvement of human welfare. While globalization brings about the consequence of a global alienation, it also provides a material basis for exchanges between the countries of the world, for common progress and development of human society as a whole. Therefore, while criticizing various phenomena of capitalist alienation in post-modern period, we should fully affirm the high technological development for the benefit of the human race. We should not be totally disappointed with the current capitalist society, as not all is darkness, there is still hope and light. While criticizing various phenomena of alienation of capitalist society, we should also point out measures for the elimination of the phenomena of alienation, or do more actively to prevent alienation and find the ways to improve the material and spiritual civilization of mankind, or even go further, from a Marxist perspective, point out the ways of developing science and technology and at the same time prevent the alienation of the modern society. In fact, these views
have already been included in the part of “Postmodern Ethics of Pluralism and Relativism of European Continent” (see below).

5. Various Ethics in Postmodern Times

(1) Distinctive Features of the Period of Late Capitalism and Their Reflections on Philosophy

“The late period of modern times”... refers to the period of time around the 1970s with the following distinctive characteristics: Due to the high-tech revolution, the Western world entered the information society or post industrial society dominated by information technology. Globalization of the world economy intensified, drastic political changes in the former Soviet Union and Eastern European countries appeared, struggle between unilateralism and multilateralism in the world intensified, economic gap between developed and third world countries widened, cultural contradictions between different nations activated. Various social crises: nuclear crisis, economic crisis, ecological crisis, human psychological crises and crises of survival generally deepened. In the field of Western philosophy appeared the following striking situations: ① Confluence of the two major trends of philosophy were realized, and there appeared various trends of thought of postmodernism which stressed negative, passive and deconstructive factors; ② Postmodern trend of thought widely involved all culture fields, and there arose a postmodern cultural movement with massive momentum; ③ Scientific philosophy (epistemology) developed towards naturalization, socialization (post modernization) and phenomenonlization; ④ In the field of ethics or political and legal philosophy, controversies intensified, such as controversy between new liberalism advocating “the theory of justice” as its main idea and the theory of community advocating reform, and various controversies on ecological ethics, life ethics and information ethics. (Ibid, 408–409)

(2) Two Sources of Postmodernism

If post-modernism derived from post-structuralism, conceived and developed mainly in the phenomenological movement of the humanist trend of thought on the European continent, then the postmodernism derived from new pragmatism, conceived and evolved from the analytical philosophical movement of the Anglo-American scientism. (Ibid, 447)

(3) Various Ethics Arising during the Period of Post-modernism

Since the 1970s of the 20th century, the Western society has entered a period of late capitalism. The society is highly informationalized, globalized, networking (virtualized) and risky, and the relationship between man and man is
correspondingly Informationalized, globalized, networking (virtualized) and disorderly. Various contradictions are intensifying and moral crisis is deepening, and all these reflect in the area of ethics as various new ethics’ challenge to the ethics of transcendental individualism. There are several new situations which deserve special attention: A. On the European continent, the postmodern ethics of pluralism and relativism arises. B. In the US and UK, the debate between New Liberalism and Theory of Community heats, and C. There emerge new ethics of science and technology such as bioethics and ecological ethics which leads to the rise of new social responsibility ethics. (Ibid, 533)

A. On the European Continent, Postmodern Ethics of Pluralism and Relativism Arise

a. Jameson’s Postmodernism of Western Marxism.

Fredric Jameson (1931- ) is an American literary critic and philosopher. In his view, the technical development of capitalism, since the industrial revolution, has gone through three periods: (1) beginning in 1848 of the steam engine; (2) motor period after 1890; (3) nuclear power after 1940. And corresponding to this, capitalist society also has gone through three periods: (1) the period of market capitalism; (2) the period of monopoly capitalism; and (3) post-industrial or late capitalism. He thinks the most basic feature of the period of late capitalism is that everything is thoroughly commercialized and capitalized, including the thorough commercialization and capitalization of “natural” world and “unconscious” world. The former refers to the overall erosion of world agriculture, including the complete erosion of the third world; the latter refers to the capital’s full erosion of the inner world of man (including the unconscious)… He points out that modern culture which appeared in the early 20th century caught on after World War I. It shifted the focus of literary description from objective reality to characters’ inner world, to promote the propagation and excretion of “feeling of alienation” and “feeling of being boring” from man’s inner world, so it is a reaction to realistic culture. It reflects in a roundabout way the turbulence and bewilderment of the period of monopoly capitalism… A roundabout way to show concern and attention is a hidden form of realism…. With the development of science and technology as the first production capacity, capital and goods have quietly made penetrating invasion into the whole natural world and the “unconscious” world. Human nature and human relations are fully alienated, and social reality is fully distorted and cracked. Reflection on culture is the disappearance of the sense of depth, the disappearance of subjectivity and the disappearance of historic significance. People have lost their past, their future and their hope. There is no “self” and what remains is apathetic
feeling and lost heart... Representative “elite culture” quickly disappears, and in its stead arises such “commodity culture”, “popular culture”, “leisure culture” and “desire culture” as detective novels, martial arts novels, rock and roll music, commercial television, soap operas... The post-modern culture is mainly Derrida’s deconstruction culture or, what is called by Auta, “a game literature”. It is characterized by cutting off the link between linguistic signs and their references, thus making uncertain the writing and reading of literature, and literature becomes a kind of changeable “game literature” or “recreational literature”, “floating freely” with different understandings of the context... Behind the essence of game literature is the disturbance of the late capitalist society and the “discrete” and “uncertain” human will and human relations... Rock and roll music is a rugged vent of feelings of primitive music, popular in the late capitalist society, embodying the revolt and resistance to rational culture by the masses of the people repressed by high tech, and their contempt for and negation of all social authorities and traditional values. With a deafening sound and a noise of amalgamation, it gives a strong stimulus to materialized unconsciousness caused by material consumption... Hidden behind the “free trade”, “fair exchange” and “equal consultation” advertised by modern market economy, are actually “mandatory”, “forced” and “not free” actions. This is because, in the late capitalist society, consumers’ desires and purchasing behaviors are not voluntary but completely under the control of the advertising and propaganda... He criticizes the cultural invasion of the Western capitalist world (the first world) into the third world. Supreme in ideology, the first world exports its values through cultural aggression into the third world, causing the devaluation of its culture, the loss of its mother tongue, the distortion of its ideology, reducing it to colonies without colonialism. From the above, we can see that Jameson’s analysis reaches a considerable depth... reveals the dark side of modern capitalism, and wins the attention of Western academic circles. It should be noted that Jameson’s postmodern theories are different from general theories of postmodernism, for they are not entirely based on anti-logoscentrism, but based on Western Marxist theory. (Ibid, 479–484)

b. Griffin’s Constructive Postmodernism

In recent years, mainly in the United States, there has been a “constructive postmodernism”. It criticizes the negative and pessimistic critique represented by Derrida and Lyotard, claiming that the latter plays an important role in the criticism and negation of modernism, but their critique is too passive and has almost totally negated man’s future. Postmodernism should not be simply the negation of modernism, instead, it should be modernism’s “inheritance” and “transcendence”... It does not expound postmodernism only through the relation between man
and society (the humanities), but more through the relation between man and nature (natural science)… Modernism necessarily brings with it the following drawbacks: ① In the area of human and nature, antagonism is the emphasized between man and nature, and harmony and unity between them is negated. Man is absolutely set against nature, and nature is taken purely as man’s object of seizure; slogan of anthropocentrism, “man is the master of nature”, is proposed, man obtaining from nature by crazy plundering. As a consequence, rich natural resources run out, many rare plants and animal species become extinct, and large tracts of forest are destroyed, large areas of soil are eroded, pastoral desolation and desertification appear, phenomena of El Niño frequently occur, waterloggings and wind-hails happen everywhere… Global ecology is damaged, and human suffering from nature is a just retaliation. ② In the social area, material comforts are stressed, spiritual pursuits are ignored; materials are seen while man is unseen; all is commercialized, and people become computer parts and tools of seizing surplus interests; only interests are pursued while virtue is ignored; people are numb, human nature is distorted, value and meaning of life are forgotten; “Here any meaning, freedom or value lose their footholds, and society is mired in confusion.” ③ In the area of international relationship, the interests of one’s own country or nation are absolutely set against those of other country or nation. European Center Doctrine (the author thinks that it should be “Western Center Doctrine”), militarism and new colonialism are advocated; the small are bullied by the large, and the weak are humiliated by the strong; military expansion, war preparations and military race are vigorously carried out; nuclear weapons and nuclear war are wielded for mutual threat, the human race is facing the peril of nuclear destruction to the extent that “each survivor of our planet is endangered.”… Post-modern new spirit and new order should be: ① In the area of relation between man and nature, antagonism between man and nature is to be opposed and harmony between them is to be advocated; anthropocentrism is to be opposed while ecological centralism of promoting the common prosperity of humans and various animals and plants is to be advocated; their slogan is no longer “man is the master of nature”, but “man is the partner of nature”; the principle is to be persisted in that all activities of man are for “preserving ecosystem’s stability, integrity and beauty; man no longer wastes any natural resources, but exerts great efforts to conserve natural resources; no longer extincts rare fauna and flora, but actively cares for animal and plant species; no longer destroys ecological environment, but vigorously protects ecological environment. This human love of nature will bring nature’s love for humans, and get the just reward of nature for humans. ② In the social aspect, egoism of only caring for oneself regardless of others is to be opposed,
while the altruistic doctrine of loving others as loving oneself, all men being equal, equality between men and women is to be advocated; greed for material pleasure is no longer encouraged and promoted while pursuit of rich spiritual life is to be advocated; great efforts are to be exerted to liberate man from various alienation phenomena of materialization and commercialization; humanity is to be given full play to and value is to be pursued; moral and good style of life and work is to be advocated; believe in God, and love the masses of the people: unite and help each other and promote common happiness. In the area of international relations, European centralism (it should also be “Western centralism”) and militarism of the big bullying the small and the strong humiliating the weak is to be opposed, while the international relationship of mutual support and assistance, consultation on equal basis and peaceful co-existence is to be advocated... (Ibid, 485–487)

c. Spretnak’s Ecological Postmodernism

One of the representatives of ecological postmodernism is Charlene Spretnak (1946– ). He believes that modern physics demonstrates whether man or nature is the unity of “energy” and “matter”, “spirit” and “material”. The fundamental error of modernism is to set “energy” against “matter”, “spirit” against “material”, “man” against “nature” so that one-sided emphasis is put on man’s pursuit of material production, science and technology, which results in distortion of human nature, and one-sided emphasis is put on man’s conquest of nature, which results in ecological crisis. She insists on an ontology of the unity of “energy” and “matter”, “spirit” and “material”, “man” and “nature”. (Ibid, 488)

d. Said’s Orientalism

Edward W. Said (1935–2003) is a Palestinian-born American philosopher. In his view, the Westerners have earned cultural hegemony, and deprived Orientals the right of discourse and propagated the wanton fallacy that Western culture is superior to that of the East, with a view to cause the East to descend to a position of postcolonial status without colonization. In his view, the best way to end Western postcolonial cultural domination is to implement “discourse revolution” through his propaganda on postcolonial theory, recapture the Eastern people’s right of expressing themselves deprived by Western cultural hegemony and rewrite the history of the Orient and the world. That is to use Derrida’s deconstruction method to eliminate or subvert the binary opposition and conflicts of “the West” and “the East”, to arouse the awareness of the fact that there are no fixed boundaries between Oriental culture and Western culture. Oriental culture is not all backward, and Western culture is also not all advanced; Western culture is not at the centre of the cultures of the world, and Oriental culture is not at the margin; Eastern culture and Western culture are
interdependent, mutually penetrating, complementary, co-existing, promoting each other. (Ibid. 499)

e. Spivak’s Postcolonialism

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1941–) is an American writer of Indian descent and philosopher. She advocates the combination of postcolonialism and feminism... trying to criticize the reversion of the history and culture of colonies by imperialist ethnocentrism, through revealing the nature of the power discourse of Western hegemony. Meanwhile, she also reveals the Western imperialist cultural hegemony’s oppression, slavery and distortion, from the position of “the third world women”, and tries hard to recover their subjective status and their right of discourse, so that the world can again hear their “lost voices”. She has also borrowed from Gramsci, a Western Marxist, the concept of “subaltern”, thinking that the third world women are not only “subordinates” of the colonialists, but also the “subordinates” of the “subordinates”... As the “subordinates” of the “subordinates” and the “marginalized” of the “marginalized”, the third world women are “silent others”, “aphasics” who have completely lost their right of discourse, “the absent” of “the absent world”, “the blind spots” in the “blind spots”. The world cannot hear their voices which are submerged under the horizon by the double cover of Western cultural hegemony and malecentrism. They are “subjects without subjectiveness” and “empty signifiers”. (Ibid. 500)

f. Western Marxist Postcolonialism

Aijaz Ahmad (1942–) is an Indian researcher of Contemporary Research Center of Memorial Hall for Nehru of New Dali. In his view, the postcolonial cultural criticism must make directional adjustments or changes. That is, post-structuralist theory must be replaced by Marxism as the guide, “discourse struggle” must be replaced by Marxist class struggle. He holds that in today’s world of globalization, workers of the world should unite under the banner of Marxism, and strive against global capitalism. (Ibid. 502)

B. Heated Debate between Neo-liberalism and Theory of Community in UK and US
a. Neo-liberalism

Since the early 20th century, Muller’s utilitarianism has been dominant in the field of ethics in UK and US... After the 1960s, social turmoil was caused by Revolutionary Storm of May, struggle against the Vietnam War, black people’s struggle for democracy; after the end of Cold War in the late 1980s, cultural, ethnic, national, gender, multiple contradictions between strong groups and vulnerable groups became unprecedentedly fierce, and ecological crisis, life ethics crisis, and social ethics crisis deepened, Muller’s utilitarian normal ethics could no longer adapt itself
to the new situation, therefore in UK and US appeared a new normal ethics—Neo-liberalism. It rose vigorously in the wave of criticism of utilitarian ethics... Since the 17th century, especially since the 19th century onward, in the Western capitalist ethics, there have been two opposing trends: (1) Kant’s transcendental rationalism. In his view, moral is the “absolute order” existing in human transcendental reason; and (2) as the representative of the trend of thought of empiricism, John Muller advocated the moral principles of experience, stressing: “goodness” is the experience of “being merry” or “being happy”. The current rise of the trend of thought of Neo-liberalism (or individualism) is a rebellion against John Muller’s trend of thought of empiricism (utilitarianism), and the revival of the ethical thought of Kant’s transcendentalism. So people also call it the “trend of thought of Neo-Kantism. (Ibid, 533–534)

b. Liberalism and Theory of Community

If Neo-liberalism stems from social contract theory of early bourgeois revolution, natural rights theory and Kant’s transcendental thought, some advocates of the theory of community, to a certain degree, accept some influence of Hegel’s historicism and of Marx’s theory of social theory. Of course they are not socialists, for their theory serves the purpose of perfecting or patching the current social system of the West... The social origins of this idea are the tendency of social integration brought about by high-tech revolution and various social crises waiting to be settled by Western countries or societies. It should be noted that the individual and the society (the association, the collective) are an integration of a pair of contradictions, and any one-sided emphasis on one aspect while neglecting the other, will bring serious harm to the community. Thus, in this sense, current disputes between Western Neo-liberalism and Theory of Community have not only important theoretical significance but also great practical significance in promoting people’s comprehensive understanding of the relationship between individuals and community (the collective), and between democracy and centralization. Also it should be noted that, although Theory of Community has attracted much attention, yet, in today’s Western society in which individualism has long been prevailing, it is still not the mainstream. Liberalism and individualism are still dominating the Western governments in laying down various principles and policies. (Ibid, 551–552)

C. Emergence of Bioethics, Ecological Ethics and Other New Ethics of Science and Technology and Rise of New Social Responsibility Ethics

a. Bioethics

Since the 1960s, with the development of modern science and technology, especially the development of medical science, medical technology and life science
and technology, there has emerged in the field of ethics in the West an important branch of new ethics: bioethics... It is a discussion on ethic problems arising in the development of life science and technology and medical science and technology. Successful experiments in test-tube babies, transgenic animals, cloning animals, deciphering of the genetic code and so on, have been promoting the rapid development of this new branch of ethics. New technologies such as organ transplantation, euthanasia, artificial abortion, and artificial reproduction involve many ethic problems. Artificial reproduction involves such problems as: Whose child is he (she)? Who are his (her) “real” parents? Who has the right of guardianship and parenting? Who has the right of succession of property and so on. In the area of cloning, natural persons are produced in the evolution of human development, while human cloning is the disruption of this evolution. Its consequence to the future of humanity is immeasurable. In the area of genetic engineering, the technique of genetic engineering makes possible “designing and creating non-natural persons”.... Through the recombination and configuration of genes, people can create elites, athletes, outstanding scientists and outstanding political activists who are strong, smart and extremely capable, and also through injecting all kinds of animal genes into human genomes, people can manufacture various “beast men” as “rapacious as wolves and as savage as curs” or “men with human faces but beasts’ hearts”. (Ibid, 552-555)

b. Ecological Ethics

Since the 1960s, due to the development of high technology and the destruction of ecological environment; air pollution, climate deterioration, desertification, food poisoning and extinction of plant and animal species, human survival has faced a serious crisis which starts a global “green” movement of protecting the ecological environment in the world, and a new branch of “green” ecological ethics thus rises. “Ecological ethics”, “environmental ethics” or “ecological environmental ethics”, specialized in discussing relationship between human behavior and ecological environment, has emerged. ...(Ibid, 560)... Fundamentally speaking, eco-ethics is established to safeguard human survival, and its central task is to safeguard human survival and development. Although there is a harmonious aspect of the relationship between man and nature, there is also an aspect of conflicts (antibiotic side) (Ibid, 563)... Therefore, if “anti-anthropocentrism” is only regarded as an ethical slogan against random destruction of natural environment, it is understandable, but if it is used as a doctrine or philosophy of transcendentalism or universalism, it is unacceptable. (Ibid, 563)... “Marxist ecological socialism” is an anthropocentrism and humanism, but not an anthropocentrism in the sense of technic-centrism of
capitalism (ibid 564). In the theories of criticizing anthropocentrism there is one that people pay much attention to, that is, the ethic theory of “social and historical conditions”. This theory holds that there is no abstract or immutable principle of universality. Principles derive from the reality of social life, and they change with the change of social history. Human behavior in nature is required to be “modest”, to maintain the ecological balance (ibid, 564). American philosopher Francis Fukuyama (1952–) presents a “posthuman” and “posthumanist” idea... Owing to the fact that revolution in life technique and life science may complete social engineering which failed in the past, radical changes in human nature will take place. The human race will begin a new history—a “post human” history... Natural men will be replaced by non-natural men designed by men themselves. Humanism will be replaced by “posthumanism”. Ethics of humanism will be replaced by “ethics of posthumanism”... If human society is a society in which human nature has undergone a fundamental change, this change will cause social, ethic, legal, political and other issues... He advocates the “humanism” of naturalism... He warns that inherent human nature makes it possible for humans to continue to the present, to reflect the value and honor of man, and to objectively shape the political system of the human race. However, current biotechnology, especially the development of biological engineering, will completely change inherent human nature. What follows will be the confusion of human value and dignity, the abandon of democracy and human rights, as well as the negation of system and order. Man will be pushed to the terrible “post human future” created out of bio-technology invented by himself... So we have to protect the complex nature of man caused by gene evolution against the self (gene) amendment attempts. If we allow “gene technology to change human nature”, we may face disappearance of “common humanity”. (Ibid, 556–557)

c. Information Ethics and Computer Ethics

The development of information science has led to the emergence of a new type of society—information society. Scientists use electric devices instead of human brains in information processing, cognition and thinking, thus arises the problem of artificial intelligence which refers to a machine behavior similar to human intelligence. Information ethics is a branch of ethics which studies ethical problems arising or exacerbating in the development of information science. In the 90s of the 20th century, with the further development of information science and technology, information ethics developed accordingly. It involves issues of respect for intellectual property, privacy principles, principles of fair show (fair representation), principles of no prejudice against others, and so on. Late in the 90s
of the 20th century, such department information ethics appeared as; cyber ethics (also known as Internet ethics), life information ethics, media ethics, business ethics, library information ethics and so on. Studies on information ethic problems involves: ① ethic issues in information life, including the protection of intellectual property and relevant issues of shared information. ② Ethic issues concerning collection, classification and dissemination of information are related with systems of review and control. Based on certain political, religious and economic interests, it is necessary to review and control information and adopt legislative means or technical measures to control or filter it. But, in countries that pursue the principle of free speech, such review and control are considered to be interference on citizens’ right of free speech. ③ On the problem of globalization of information, it is not realistic for citizens who live in economically underdeveloped countries to have equal right to information. In information society, those who first possess information will first win time and money. Developed countries and their citizens have a greater advantage over citizens of other countries or regions in getting access to information, and therefore, how to shorten the gap of possession of wealth due to differences in obtaining information is one of the problems that ethics must face. ④ Cultural conflicts in information society. People of all countries and regions have their own ethical traditions, but information will necessarily bring about globalization, and therefore, the problem of how to address various contradictions and conflicts must be resolved. Computer ethics is part of information ethics. In a narrow sense, computer ethics only studies the negative side of the relationship between computer and man, and its purpose is to prevent the occurrence of acts of violation of computer ethics; In a broad sense, computer ethics is a comprehensive study of the relationship between the computer and human values, and its aim is not only to passively prevent the occurrence of violations of the computer ethics, but is active in increasing human values. Since the 80s of the 20th century, the science and technology of information and the computer technology have developed to a new height, and promoted the universalization of computer applications and the globalization of online communication. Issues of computer crimes, social disasters caused by failures in operating computers, invasion of privacy by computers and litigations concerning computer software and intellectual property, all these issues are global. The main issues which computer ethics deals with are: ① Protection of privacy. ② Anonymous questions: fully hiding true identities of Internet users, virtual identities or screen names or codes used to communicate, completely ignoring authenticity required in interactions. ③ “Virus” and “hacker” problems: Excepting “virus” quietly enters other’s computer to destroy computer programs, internal
“bacteria” quietly enter, rapidly propagate, occupy and undermine the computer; computer “worms” go through Internet from one computer to another; and “Trojan horse” and “logic dynamite” with damaging effects are employed. Hacking or stealing data, or theft of the contents of files, or exploring the computer activities take over. There are even economic, political and military network wars between group and group, nation and nation. In 2002, U S President Bush published his “President Order for National Security”, and on this order the first network hacker force was formed under the command of “Network War Joint Function Command” (JECCNW). Spy activities on International networks are more concerned by people, and have become an important part of the contemporary military strategy (the author; it is more exact to say that an “electronic network war” has been waged in the world. It has become the fifth force besides the army, navy, air force and space force). Many countries in the world have established such forces and their commands. United States used this force in Kosovo and Iraq wars, and Israel used it to destroy Iran’s enriched uranium centrifuges. Recently, some developed countries have developed a fifth-generation fighter, and is working on the sixth generation attack type of UAV, that is, intellects attack airplanes. When this paper is published, there must be more instances. Computer ethics tends to be globalized, and crimes on the Internet are often global, and therefore, online proceedings are also often global. (Ibid. 565–580)

d. Responsibility Ethics

Responsibility ethics is not a new branch of ethics, but in order to adapt to the new historical period, to new branches such as bioethics and ecoethics, a new theory of ethics, a kind of “new ethics in the age of science and technology”, is produced. Responsibility ethics is an ethics which stresses the basic significance of ethics. As political activities are closely related to the interests of the masses of the people, politicians should not be constrained only by “ethics of conscience”, but also by “ethical responsibility”. And “ethical responsibility” should precede “ethics of conscience”. Later, in the 60s of the 20th century, owing to further development of modern science and technology, growing damage on the natural environment, and more and more serious threats to human existence, some ethicists inherited and developed the above view, stressing the basic significance of responsibility ethics, emphasizing man’s responsibility for destroying nature and threatening human survival, and thus ethics of responsibility was gradually formed. Hans Jonas (1903–1993), an American scholar of German decent, thinks that the balance between man and nature established in the industrial age has been destroyed, nature has become a machine and nature itself has never been the purpose of considering, and
in the end, people themselves may become industrial products designed with biotechnology. This is unacceptable. He urges people to “concern about the future of mankind”, care for nature and to put “responsibility” in the era of science and technology at the central position. To this end, he proposes an “absolute command” similar to Kant’s. “This action will make your behavior consistent with the true sustainability of human life. He believes that ethics in the past only emphasized the relationship between man and man, but the relationship between man and the surrounding animals, plants, air, soil, and so on has not been given due attention. His responsibility ethics has the following characteristics: ① It stresses the significance of responsibility. And in contrast with “ethics responsibility” is “ethics of conscience”. Kant’s “transcendental rational” theory of conscience ethics is typical of the latter. It only attaches importance to the motivation of behaviors, but ignores the effect of them. Jonas’s responsibility ethics is opposed to conscience ethics, stressing the effects of human behavior, stressing that the subject is responsible for his action. Especially today, when modern science and technology advances with each passing day, and destruction of nature and threats to human survival become more and more serious, more criticism should be on such one-sided doctrine of conscience, and the ethics which stresses the significance of responsibility should be established. He writes, “modern science and technology have brought completely new behaviors, completely new objects and completely new consequences, and have also brought new ethical problems that the old ethic framework cannot accommodate.” The old standards of traditional “the ethics of love”, “justice”, “compassion” and “honest” and so on, though useful, but are covered by areas with expanding collective behavior which require a new, unprecedented principle of responsibility ethics to strengthen their foundations. ② It emphasizes the sociality of responsibility. Traditional ethics is essentially “individual” ethics which emphasizes the norm of behavior between people. Responsibility ethics emphasizes not only individual responsibility, but more responsibility to the society and nature, that is, it emphasizes the sociality, integrity, or public nature of responsibility. Society is an organic system by which people communicate with each other. Especially in current postindustrial society, it is a highly-networked system, in which an individual’s behavior is not only associated with another, but also closely related to the harmony and prosperity of the entire eco-system. ③ It stresses the futurity of responsibility. Human behavior must not only be accountable to the people at the time, but also accountable to the future of the people who do not exist, or should be responsible to future generations not yet born. It is not only responsible for the effect produced now, but also
responsible for the effects not yet produced but may be produced in the future, and the latter is a greater responsibility than the former. It stresses “not only human” or “anti-human Center” responsibility or physiocentrism. Ethics of responsibility extends human responsibility beyond the biosphere, or even beyond the biosphere to the natural world. It is an ethics of “anti-human centrism” or “physiocentrism”. It stresses the responsibility of non-cross or asymmetry. Traditional ethics advocates that ethic norm is bidirectional and should be observed by everybody, while responsibility ethics stresses that responsibility is a one-way duty, non-cross, asymmetric. You should be responsible for the people in the future and the natural world beyond the human race, but the people of the future and the natural world will not be equally accountable to you as a result. We can see from the above discussion: In ethics of late modern times, traditional transcendental ethics with born rights and personal conscience as the core is subject to the challenge of the new ethics which emphasizes social conditions and responsibility, especially the ethics which emphasizes the social historical conditions and social responsibility. Despite the fact that traditional transcendental, human right theory is still dominant in the Western ideology, challenge and impact on it cannot be ignored. This situation is closely related with today’s social integration, economic globalization and the globally worsening ecological environment. And its characteristics of emphasizing sociality, relativity and mutability of ethic theories are consistent with the general features of the contemporary Western philosophy of the late period which stresses relativity and mutability. (Ibid, 582–586)

6. Correct Attitude toward Two Trends of Thought of Contemporary Western Philosophy and Phenomena of Social Alienation of Capitalist Society

Contemporary Western Philosophy points out the correct attitude toward the two trends of thought of contemporary Western philosophy and the phenomena of alienation of capitalist society: There is certain rationality in scientism which stresses the important role of science and technology in society. Its error is to look at science and technology from a pure capitalist and profitable way. It denies the idea that science and technology should be people-oriented, and stresses “profit” or “capitalist interests”. This is the view that leads to the alienation of science and technology and mankind, and leads today’s human society to the edge of destruction. Therefore, the correct attitude towards the two trends of thought should be comprehensive and critical; absorb their reasonable factors, while abandon their errors, so as to establish a comprehensive theory of social development which emphasizes the people-centered idea and thorough eradication of
capitalist alienation on the one hand, and attaches great importance to science and technology on the other (ibid. 591), for the rooted cause of the alienation of modern science and technology is not science and technology themselves (although their development and application must be subject to rigorous forecast and limitation), but is rather the social alienation of late capitalism. This alienation is not only in the areas of science and technology, but also fully reflects the field of social humanities (such as commercial culture, consumer culture, game culture, counter culture, and so on). Therefore, the way to eradicate this alienation is not to negate science and technology, but thoroughly eradicate the social alienation of modern capitalism. This requires long-term efforts, of course (Ibid. 592).

III. Tendency of Ethic Turn of Western Semiotics

In the above, we have discussed the ethic turn of philosophy in the late period of capitalism. On the level of semiotics, there are also reflections of such ethic turn. In the following the author tries to illustrate it from the aspects of structural semiology (Saussure’s linguistic semiology), cognitive semiotics (Peircean semiotics), as well as the integration of both.

1. The Aspect of Structural Semiology

Roland Barthes (1915–1980) is a famous French literary theorist, ... he was once an existentialist and a (Western) Marxist. After the 50s of the 20th century he shifted from a structuralist to a poststructuralist, and applied the theory of poststructuralism to the study of literature and became a famous poststructuralist (Xia Jisong, 2009:421).

After the 60s of the 20th century, a clear change in his thought happened, from emphasizing the static structure to denying the existence of objective, static structures. For example, in his view, the meaning of the text is not derived from external reality but from internal differences of systems which are forever changing. Thus his theory leads to textualism of game, switching from structuralism to poststructuralism. (Xia Jisong, 2009:421–422)

His thoughts of poststructuralism also reflect in his semiology which criticizes the alienation of late capitalism and with an ethical nature. He creates the semiotic model of “myth and anti-myth”. Like Michel Foucough, he starts from “power theory” to illustrate how the ruling class uses power in their hands to present unreasonable things as reasonable ones, to achieve the purpose of deceiving and ruling the people, and anti-myth is the way to expose and criticize such mode of
discourse of the ruling class.

2. The Aspect of Peirce’s Cognitive Semiotics

Chinese Semiotic Studies published two years ago has carried many essays about ethic turn of semiotics written by foreign scholars, including: Augusto Ponzio’s The Dialogue Nature of Signs, Susan Petrill’s Globalization from the Perspective of Global Semiotics, John Deely’s The Full Vista of the Action of Signs-From Semiotics to Semioethics (Vol. 1, June 2009) and Susan Petrill’s Rhetoric, Social Alienation and Semioethics in Global Communication (Vol. 2, Sept. 2009). What is worth special attention is that Susan Petrilli and Augusto Ponzio propose the term; “semioethics”. Susan Petrilli predicts: “The future of semiotics is in ethics” and “the ethic turn of semiotics”. The author believes that this phenomenon is by no means accidental, but states the fact that there is a tendency of ethic turn in contemporary Western semiotics. These authors all write about this fact from a cognitive-semiotic perspective of Peirce.

The author attempts to sum up their ideas as follows;

(1) These authors are all researchers of Peircean semiotics. They set out the semiotic theories of Charles Sanders Peirce, the founder of the cognitive semiotics, of his theoretical heir Charles Williams Morris, and of Thomas A. Sebeok, modern advocator of Peircean semiotics, the late President of the International Association for the Study of Semiotics.

(2) Peircean semiotics is pan-semiotic. It is believed that the world is full of signs, and any kind of activities of life is semiosis. Signs serve to link natural science and social science, and to link humans and other life-forms. Therefore, the world is an integral whole linked up through signs. Any kind of semiosis will affect other semiosis; anyone will affect another, any state or nation will affect other state or nation, humans will affect nature, any life-form will affect any other life-forms.

(3) Semiosis is unlimited interactions among signs, or “dialogues” among them. These interactions deepen human cognition and promote the interactions, mutual affections and change of things in the world.

(4) The development of capitalism to the present stage (the late period of capitalism) has made human disasters “globalized”.

(5) Therefore, we should have an awareness of “global semiotics”: activity of any person, any country or any nation will involve the otherness (the interests of other people, other country or nation, and other life-forms), and therefore, we must have the awareness to look after the otherness and have a high sense of responsibility, being fully responsible for our behaviors. This is the foundation of a variety of ethics, in particular, the global political ethics.
(6) On the basis of the above observations, “cognitive semiotics”, “global semiotics” and “ethics” as well as their “dialogue” are proposed, and also “the ethic turn of semiotics is proposed.

3. Aspect of Integration of Structural Semiology and Cognitive Semiotics

Generally speaking, structural semiology and cognitive semiotics respectively represent the trend of thought of humanism and the trend of thought of scientism (Guo Hong, 2004a and 2004b). Integration of these two trends and later production of postmodernism, necessarily reflects the integration of the two major schools of semiotics and later production of postmodernism in semiotics. Yuri Lotman’s cultural semiotics is an example. As stated above, there are two schools of postmodernism. One is negative postmodernism. It is a criticism of the phenomena of alienation of the late capitalism and holds a negative and pessimistic attitude towards the future of humanity; the other is positive postmodernism or constructive postmodernism. While criticizing the phenomena of alienation of the late capitalism, the constructive postmodernism proposes the way to eliminate and prevent the alienation. In the view of the author, Yuri Lotman’s cultural semiotics is essentially a manifestation of the constructive postmodernism.

(1) A Brief Introduction of Yuri Lotman’s Cultural Semiotics

In 1973 (in the period of late capitalism) the Moscow-Tartu School with Yuri Lotman as its representative founded a cultural semiotics. Yuri Lotman is “the first structuralist scholar of the former Soviet Union”. Yuri Lotman inherits the Saussurean tradition of semiology, but he questions Saussure’s theory of structuralism and draws on some theories of Mikhail Bakhtin and Julia Kristeva of the same tradition, while, on the other hand, absorbs some theories of Charles Sanders Peirce and Charles Morris of the opposite tradition. Yuri Lotman, Mikhail Bakhtin and Julia Kristeva are all poststructuralists, inheritors and concurrently critics of Saussurean structuralism. Therefore, we may consider Yuri Lotman’s cultural semiotics a combination of structural semiology and cognitive semiotics (the author thinks that Peircean semiotics is exactly a cognitive semiotics, as stated in the above). Therefore, this situation corresponds to a turn of structuralism to poststructuralism and the integration of structural semiology and cognitive semiotics.

(2) Main Ideas of Yuri Lotman’s Cultural Semiotics

A. Definition of Culture

Culture is a system of signs, human semiosis, the interaction between the various subsystems and the levels of the system, and the collective semiotic mechanism of the production, circulation, processing and storage of information.
B. Culture Is a Complex Interactive Activity Which Produces Meaning—Semiosis

Structural semiology regards a text as a level of linguistic signs: from word to phrase, sentence and discourse. A discourse is a text, or a text is an organized fragment of language which conveys an integral meaning or a code. The function of a text is to exchange information. Cognitive semiotics regards signs as tools for thinking, and semiosis as a cognitive process. Cultural semiotics regards a text as a “reduced model of culture”. A text is not a language phenomenon, but an interactive activity—meaning-producing complex interactive activity. This point of view moves the focus from a text to its surroundings and thus the text is immersed in history and society; a text occurs not only through interactions between various language components within the closed structure of language, but also occurs in the mutual affection of a variety of cultural movements and documents. A Text is a piece of information in communication, a semiosis. The culture of a nation is a text, the semiosis of a whole nation. Culture has its cultural and national characteristics, and thus it becomes a psychological model; a nation generally sees its culture as a text, a cultural circle, inside which is what a nation regards as civilized culture while outside it is uncivilized culture. Therefore, when a nation first contacts a new culture imported from another nation, it often resists the foreign culture, but if two cultures undergo a prolonged exchange, they may come closer or even converge. The key position of the cultural exchange lies in the boundaries of the cultural circle. A foreign culture has the dual character of both “translatability and untranslatability”, that is, it may be accepted or rejected, or not completely accepted. This is the so-called “psychological model of texts”.

C. The Dialectic Nature of Text

Cultural semiotics regards culture, first of all, as a text, a semiosis. Cultural texts are composed of many sub-texts, and between them and between their various levels continuous interaction happens, through mixing and hybrid, generating new texts and new information. Structuralism speak about binary oppositions, but the opposing sides do not interact while cultural semiotics speaks about “asymmetric binary opposition”, that is, there is inadaptability between the opposing sides. Therefore, opposing sides come into contradiction which gives rise to interactions which, in turn, generates new information, thus promoting the continual change and development of culture. All cultures have a tension between automatic balance and dynamic tendency. There are also two tendencies in semiosis, one tends to diversity and formation of various sign languages, thus constituting a multilingual culture; the other tends to unification, attempting to interpret its own culture and others’ cultures as a uniform strict language.
(3) Yuri Lotman’s Cultural Semiotics Is an Integration of Two Major Schools of Semiotics with the Nature of Poststructuralism

As stated above, the linguistic turn and the tendency of integration of the two trends of philosophical thought inevitably reflect in the tendency of integration of two major schools of semiotics. Yuri Lotman’s culture semiotics is this integration added with some ideas of poststructuralism. Saussurean semiology focuses its study on the role of signs in social communication, while Piercean semiotics on the role of signs in personal cognition (Guo Hong, 2004a, 2004b). Cultural semiotics combines the study of communication and that of cognition, the sociality of communication and the psychological and biological activities of personal cognition, and therefore cultural semiotics is seen as a study of social communication and social cognition added with the critical nature of poststructuralism, but the critique is constructive because it positively points out the way to eliminate the phenomena of social alienation of the late capitalism.

(4) The Constructive Nature of Global Political Ethics of Yuri Lotman’s Cultural Semiotics

A. Yuri Lotman’s Cultural Semiotics Points out for All States, All Nations and Regions a Way to Peaceful Coexistence and Common Development

The current world is in an era of globalization and imperialist hegemony. The imperialists see the globe as their own range of power, and place their own interests above the interests of any other nation, frequently use the excuse of maintaining their own interests and security to threat with force or even launch wars, and to overthrow a regime and bring huge disaster to its people. Countries with conflicts of interests frequently station troops along their borders or even resort to wars. Thus, an endless arms race is carried out among many countries in the world, armed conflicts or even wars frequently break out, which consume massive human and material resources, destroy countless lives. In short, many countries in the world today use force or threat with force as the only way to settle international disputes. Yuri Lotman’s cultural semiotics points out a road to a peaceful development of the world. It considers that a cultural exchange is an exchange of texts, and a text is a piece of information, also a semiosis. Interaction between texts produces a new text, generates new information, new cognition, to achieve the objective of peaceful development of national cultures and human civilization. Each nation regards its own culture as a text, a semiosphere, within which all culture is considered civilized, while outside this sphere all culture is uncivilized or even savage. Therefore, a cultural text, usually at the beginning, resists the approach of a foreign culture, but if an alien culture often and repeatedly imports, it will be
gradually accepted as part of the cultural text. Cultural exchanges between countries, peoples and regions tend to precede an economical exchange or they happen at the same time. And cultural and economical exchanges tend to lead to political proximity, and finally achieve a settlement of serious disputes. Performed by the Chinese Government the cultural exchange policy of “harmonious world”, as well as its policy towards Taiwan of “one country, two sides” and towards Hong Kong and Macao of “one country, two systems” is a positive example. Overall, this is the road of peaceful development of cultural exchange and human civilization. In semiotic terminology, “Various cultural exchanges are peaceful exchanges of signs to achieve the purpose of productive development, this can also be referred to as mutual learning and understanding.”

Conversely, if a culture is imposed on another nation, or even use force to break the “semiosphere”, then it will lead to the nation’s more firm and strong resistance to the foreign culture, and cannot meet the purpose of cultural exchange, or even evoke armed conflicts or wars between countries or nations.

B. Cultural Semiotics Points out for Less-developed Countries Road to Progress and Development

In today’s global integration and rapid development of science and technology, some less developed countries, due to the confinement of their minds, or external threats, cannot but adopt strict precautions against foreign invasion, or a closed-door policy, and as a consequence, their economical and cultural development come to a standstill or even a retrogression, their people are reduced to poverty. Cultural semiotics indicates a path of progress and development for these countries, that is, to open their minds and adopt the policy of “reforming and opening up to the outside world” to soften threats from outside. Cultural exchange is exchange and interaction between texts. Exchange and interaction will result in new texts and new information, so as to achieve new cognition. To refuse to exchange is to reject new information and new knowledge and results in standstill or even retrogression. “Isolation is to subtract cultural signs from the process of cross-culture semiosis, and will lead to standstill. From the perspective of semiotics, standstill is equal to death” (Peeter Torop, 1999). Key to cultural exchange is the boundary of cultural exchange. “Semiosphere’s boundary is the most important functional and structural position, which determines the essence of the sign mechanism... Boundary is a bilingual system, it translates external information into language within the semiosphere, or vice versa. So it is only through the boundary can semiosphere contact non-semiosphere or alienate semiosphere” (ibid.). Therefore, cultural exchange, first of all, occurs on the boundary, for opening to the outside world is
the primary condition of cultural exchange and only cultural exchange can promote a country’s economic, political, and cultural development. More than 300 years ago, China used to be a powerful empire of ancient civilization which had continued for more than 2,000 years. In the 18th century, industrial revolutions broke out one after another in Europe, capitalism rose and developed in Europe and America where political, economic and cultural development gradually overtook China, but Chinese emperors were self-conceited and closed their gates, looking down upon European and American nations and regarding them as “barbarians”. As a consequence, China’s political, economic and cultural development came to a standstill. Not until the time when the Opium War broke out did the imperialists knock open the gate of China with their modern rifles and artillery and capitalist culture began rushing into our country, bringing in some science and democracy, but the consequence were imperialist aggression, war and national disasters. After the founding of new China, due to the blockade of imperialism and our subjective reasons, China was once still closed and backward. Until 1976, after carrying out the policy of reform and opening to the outside world and extensive cultural exchange with the world, rapid progress and development of economy and culture have been taking place in China. This is a positive example.

C. Cultural Semiotics Points out the Way to Resolve Ethnic and Religious Problems

In the world of today, conflicts and wars between states or nations mostly result from ethnic and religious issues. Some states or nations implement chauvinistic policies of enforcement and imposition of uniformity and even spare no efforts in armed military suppression, resulting in years of war, or even some degree of genocide. Imperialism makes use of these ethnic or religious conflicts to divide and rule, to maintain its own hegemony, or even takes the opportunity to interfere and dismember a multinational country, or even eradicate an entire country.

Yuri Lotman believes that signs must be understood as a term of dialectical relationship; binary asymmetry. Both sides constitute a sign, one side does not completely meet the need of the other, neither of the two sides can be completely translated into the other, but if the sign is wanted to exercise its functions, it calls for both sides to be translated to the other. Meanwhile, semiosis also has “two opposing trends”. Various cultures are in a tension of automated balance and dynamic imbalance. Novelty, diversity, and proliferation of relatively independent subsystems, contradict with the desire of consistency and unity, with the view of culture as a strict and stable homogeneity. If there is no diversity, culture will be rigid (with no self-renewal ability), but without a certain degree of homogeneity and cohesion, cultural exchange is impossible. Different levels and subsystems can
be combined into a single sign total-culture, two opposing mechanisms are at work, one tends towards diversification, consisting of different sign languages, constituting a multilingual culture; the other tends to unification, trying to interpret its own or other’s culture as a consistent and strict language.

Cultural semiotics points out a way to resolve ethnic and religious problems. All nations, big or small, are equal. They communicate and help each other. In particular, the majority ethnic group in a country should respect and care for ethnic minorities, helping them to develop their economy and culture, to achieve the purpose of common development and unity of all nationalities. On the other hand, it should respect the minority’s cultural traditions and religious beliefs, helping them to preserve and develop their own distinctive religions and cultures, so as to build a unified, ever-growing and, at the same time, a colourful, blossoming multiethnic and multi-religious country. Only such a unified multi-ethnic and multi-religious country can prevent the differentiation, collapsing and aggression of imperialism. The ethnic and religious policies implemented by the Chinese Communist Party from the time of “Long March” until the present period of national economic construction have been highly effective. This is another positive example.

Although, Yuri Lotman’s culture semiotics does not directly criticize phenomena of alienation of late capitalist society, nor does it involve any political problem, or put such a label as “semioethics” on his theory, but the author thinks that it is still very much to the point, as it positively points out the way to eliminate or prevent such phenomena of alienation of late capitalist society as “mutual distrust”, “irresponsible to the otherness”, “conflict”, “war” and so forth. Therefore, the author ventures to call it a “constructive semioethics”.

IV. Ethic Turn of Contemporary Western Linguistics

In the above, we discussed the tendency of integration and linguistic turn of the two major trends of thought in contemporary Western philosophy, and around the 1960’s of the last century (advent of late capitalist society) the emergence of postmodernity and ethic turn of contemporary Western philosophy. Then we discussed the tendency of integration of cognitive semiotics representing scientism and structural semiology representing humanism and the corresponding ethic turn of postmodernity. The author holds that corresponding changes have also occurred at the linguistic level, that is, the ethic turn of linguistics in response to the ethic turn of postmodernity.

M. A. K. Halliday points out that linguistics can be divided into two types; one
is the linguistics which studies the psychological and biological activities of language from the perspective of intraorganism, and the other is linguistics which studies the social function of language from the perspective of interorganism. (Hu Zhuanglin, 1989, 9; Zhang Delu, 2004). In the author’s view, this classification is incisive, accurate and practical. The two types of linguistics can be respectively traced back to cognitive semiotics and scientism on the one hand, and structural semiology and humanism on the other. The first type of linguistics includes cognitive linguistics and pragmatics, etc.; and the second one includes structural Linguistics, stylistics, sociolinguistics, text Linguistics, discourse analysis, etc. This system of classification involves many complex situations, and can only be regarded as a rough classification, but only in this way of classification can be somewhat illustrative. Interactions between the two types of linguistics and their integration embody the tendency of the integration of the two trends of philosophical thought, the two major schools of semiotics, the emergence of postmodernism and the ethic turn of them all. In the ethic turn of linguistics, the most illustrative and prominent one is the discipline of “critical discourse analysis”, for this discipline is a comprehensive one, a combination of major disciplines of linguistics and its critique aims at the phenomena of social alienation with “power” as the central issue illustrated by a group of postmodernist scholars. Following our discussion are the formation of “discourse analysis”, how it turns to “critical discourse analysis” and carries out the ethic turn of linguistics.

Although “critical discourse analysis”, containing a number of disciplines, has gone through a long process of development, and its content is complex, yet its process of development can be broadly divided into the following major stages, each with its distinctive features.

1. **Stage of Structural Analysis of Discourse**

The most prominent features of Saussure’s Linguistic semiology are its sociality and being structural (systemic), but Saussure does not succeed in combining these two features, and as a consequence, fails to make clear what is language and how it works. Furthermore, language is divorced from the social factors which are changeable and interactive, its structure is naturally closed and static. Nevertheless, the structural linguistic semiology has laid the foundation for modern Linguistics, and also provides “discourse analysis” with basic conditions and determines the direction of its development.

2. **Stage of Analysis of Combination of Discourse Structure and Socio-cultural Context**

Structural Linguistics’ further development calls for the solution of the problem
of combining its social and systemic nature. Although many linguistic disciplines have, in different degrees, made contributions in this regard, yet the author believes that systemic-functional linguistics plays a major role. It has inherited the social and structural features of Saussure’s linguistic semiology, and manages to combine them, thus making outstanding contributions to modern linguistics. Halliday is not in favour of Saussure’s theory of “language and parole”, nor in favour of Chomsky’s theory of “competence and performance”. He takes language as social semiotic, and thus further stresses the social nature of language. He proposes the theory of “meaning potential and its realization”, that is, using language is to make choices from the meaning potential of language system according to the situational and cultural context of language. In his theory, the paradigmatic relation (vertical selection) takes precedence over the syntactic relation (horizontal combination), because the horizontal combination is interpreted as the realization of the vertical selection. He divides language into three levels (semantic, lexicogrammatical and phonological levels), and their relationship is that of realization and extends beyond the language to reach the cultural and social context. Register is considered the interaction between the three aspects of context (field of discourse, tenor of discourse and mode of discourse) and its result. The three aspects of the context activate respectively the three meta-functions (or syntactic components) of language, (ideational function or component, interpersonal function or component and textual function or component), which, in turn activate respectively the three systems of language (transitivity, modality and theme systems) and constitute a realization chain of discourse. Thus, the idea that the use of language is to make choices from the meaning potential of language system is made clear. And the problem of closed and static structure of Saussure’s linguistics is also solved. In addition, the textual function is an enabling function which makes possible the realization of the other two meta-functions (ideational and interpersonal functions), that is, to combine the three functions to make a discourse. Halliday attaches great importance to textual function and makes detailed analysis of such components of discourse as theme, rheme, coherence, cohesion, and thus has laid the foundation for “discourse analysis”. In short, systemic-functional linguistics makes it possible for structural linguistics to continue to make progress, and for the structural analysis to be made in a social and cultural context. In addition, it has an outstanding practicability, as it believes that linguistic theories are formed in use while serving the use of language, and that language is a resource for the expression of meaning, so it pays special attention to the use of linguistic theories, and as a result, it is especially suitable for
the analysis of language. It has been widely applied in stylistics, literary criticism, and, in particular, “discourse analysis”.

3. **Stage of Analysis of Combination of Discourse Structure and Ideologies**

   (stage of discourse as social practice)

This stage is the stage of formation of “critical discourse analysis”. It is characterized by being “critical” of phenomena of alienation of late capitalism, particularly critical of “power” in international politics. Therefore, in the author’s view, it reflects the ethic turn of linguistics. “Critical discourse analysis” developed from critical linguistics from the late 1970s to the early 1980s (author; it is generally acknowledged that from the 1960s to 70s capitalist society entered its late period). It developed from critical linguistics as a theoretical framework or a research method for discourse analysis. The representative writers of this discipline are Fairclough, Fowler, Kress, van Dijk, van Leeuwen, Wodak and others.

Fairclough has made outstanding contributions to the formation of “critical discourse analysis”. He says that language constructs social relations, so he tries to combine discourse analysis with social and political theories. An ideal discourse analysis should be conducted in an interdisciplinary sense, involving not only the generation and dissemination of discourse, but also the process of social cognition of generating and interpreting discourse, involving social practice in various institutions, involving the relationship between social practice and “power”, involving “hegemony” at social level.

Simply speaking, “critical discourse analysis” is based on systemic-functional Linguistics plus some social theories of analysis of poststructuralism of the following scholars:

(1) **Michel Foucault’s “Power” Doctrine**

Michel Foucault (1926–1984) is a French philosopher. In his view, the outward manifestation of power is the relationship between man and man, that is, a social relationship that embodies power... He thinks that power is not only prohibitive or repressive, but also creative or productive. It produces (is indicated by) various social phenomena, it produces all kinds of knowledge and truth... First of all, he believes that power creates all social phenomena, not only creates all kinds of political struggles, wars and other significant social phenomena, but also creates all sorts of marginal social phenomena, that is, phenomena often not concerned for, such as imprisonment, madness, sex and so on. He believes that prison and the prison system of the modern Western society is the product of power of the bourgeois “freedom system”. He points out that the feudal system adopts killings and mutilations as the major means of punishment, which mainly dealt with the
minority criminals. Capitalism adopts prisons and imprisonment as a punishment, to effectively deal with the masses of the people... They adopt a set of surveys, statistics, surveillance, reconnaissance and personnel records, awards and attendance system or means, not only to control the external behaviors of individuals, but also try in every possible way to control everyone’s inner world, at a minimal cost to achieve a maximum effect. Thus the myth of bourgeois “freedom” and “human rights” is built on the basis of the suppression of this widespread power... In his view, such often overlooked social phenomena as epilepsy, mental illness and so on are not, as most people think, physical diseases, but products of power like confinements and prisons... He thinks that power not only produces various social phenomena, but also produces knowledge. “knowledge” is recognized as “knowledge” and generally accepted, because it is supported by power... He asserts that all humanities are products of power for the repression and domination of people’s thought; all knowledge of natural science is also products of power which, like power, also plays a role of ruling the people... Truth is undoubtedly a form of power. He who has the right to speak owns the truth. ... Power is always associated with the right to speak. He who has the right to speak owns truth and other people must speak according to his words, otherwise, what they speak is “false” or “lies”... Foucault’s theories which deny the objectivity of scientific knowledge and truth are not entirely correct, but his revelation of the power-centralism and hegemonism of the Western world is undoubtedly of great importance. (Xia Jisong, 2009, pp.414-417). The author believes that Foucault’s “power” doctrine constitutes the core of the ethics of postmodernism and poststructuralism, from which derive criticisms on “imperialist hegemony in the era of globalization”.

The author believes that Foucault’s “power” doctrine constitutes the core of the ethics of postmodernism and poststructuralism, from which derives the critique of “the imperialist hegemony in the era of globalization”. This doctrine is very apt and profound. Please look at the world of today. some (or a)Western powers, making use of some relatively weak countries’ internal national or religious contradictions, support the opposition parties to overturn with violence their governments, cause tens of thousands of casualties, then accuse the leaders of these countries of “committing crimes of extinguishing mankind”, manipulate the United Nations to take various sanctions against them or make direct invasions on them using armed forces equipped with hi-tech armament, causing much greater personnel casualties and property loss, kill the leaders of these countries or send them to the International Tribunal, nurture puppet regimes, dismember or even destroy a country. The
legality of such leaders of the affected countries, whether or not they represent their people, are not decided by the peoples or parliaments of these countries, but by the powerful countries. The leaders of these powerful countries bluntly declare to the world: “The leaders of such and such countries no longer represent the interests of their people or have lost their legal status and should step down immediately, and so on so forth.” In fact, the big powers do so, simply to plunder strategic resources and seize strategic positions, in order to maintain their hegemony in the world. They have in their hands tens of thousands of nuclear warheads and launchers, but do not allow other countries to develop nuclear weapons, even against their peaceful use of nuclear energy, as “nuclear materials can be used to make nuclear weapons”. They have already launched numerous satellites into space, including spy satellites, but claim that “a certain country’s launch of a satellite is a serious provocation against them” and must be shot down. They force other countries to comply with “the nuclear non-proliferation treaty”, not to manufacture or export nuclear weapons. But they themselves refuse to participate in this treaty. On nuclear issues, they take “double” even “multiple” standards; to be indifferent to their allies’ nuclear armament, even secretly render help; to those countries who pose them little threat, only take slight sanctions; to so-called “rascal “or “rogue” countries, they openly make armed invasions on and change their governments. Theses powers regard any emerging countries in the world as a threat to them and organize their allies to surround and deter them, thus giving rise to confrontations and arms race among countries, etc. Is it not what Foucault refers to as “the productive nature of power”, “manufacture of truth by power”, and “power causes unrests and wars”?

(2) Bakhtin’s “Dialogue” Theory

Former Soviet scholar Bakhtin (1895 – 1975) also makes a significant contribution to “critical discourse analysis”, mainly in the ideological nature of language and the theory of “Dialogue”. He says that dialects (author: it refers to social dialects, that is, varieties of language used by different social classes) are infused with social values, political views and traces of various experiences and implied meanings, and therefore, conflicts of dialects are actually conflicts between these aspects. The opinions, views and experiences of speakers are part of the nature of language. The reason is that language is not an abstract system but is infused with personal and social background. He also says that one of the functions of literature is to force people to own various personal languages and to have ideological conflicts between them. In the aspect of “Dialogue”, his main idea is this: language mainly stems from dialogues, forms in the process of social interactions, thus leading to interactions between different social classes. Many
different sounds can be found in Bakhtin’s “Dialogue”. In a broad sense, all activities and all discourses of human beings can be seen as a complex of differences. This language of a dialogic nature or dialogic speech, is not only “polysemy” but also “heteroglossia”, an action of listening to each other, a “phenomenon of polysemy of dialogue”.

(3) Julia Kristeva’s Theory of “Intertextuality”

French scholar Julia Kristeva also makes an important contribution to “critical discourse analysis”. She proposes the semiotic concept of “Intertextuality” under the influence of Bakhtin’s theory of “Dialogue”. She notes that the text has two axes; one is the horizontal axis connecting the author of the text and its reader, and the other is the longitudinal axis connecting the text and other texts. What connects the two axes is the common code. Every reading of the text relies on the previous code. Julia Kristeva claims that each text is, from the very beginning, under the jurisdiction of other discourses which impose on it the whole universe. In her view, we would rather study the structuralization (formation of the structure) of the text than focus our attention on the text itself. This involves the placement of a text in the previous or the total of the synchronic texts. (Daniel Chandler, 2003).

In the view of the author, the theory of “Intertextuality” is essentially the same as that of “Dialogue”. The theory of “Dialogue” and “Intertextuality” gives a good explanation of the generation and interpretation of discourse, and the application of this theory plays an important role in developing “critical linguistics” into “critical discourse analysis”. As noted above, Halliday connects discourse with its sociocultural context, but the context is a single context which also produces a single meaning. “Critical discourse analysis” involves a complex of contexts which produce a complex of meanings. Therefore, in “critical discourse analysis”, systemic-functional Linguistics’ theory of “context-meaning” must be replaced by the theory of Bakhtin’s “dialogue” and kristeva’s “Intertextuality”. (Terry Threadgold, 2003)

Simply put, “critical discourse analysis” consists of Halliday’s systemic-functional linguistics and the critical ethics of poststructuralism. As “discourse analysis” is a synthesis of the major disciplines of contemporary Western linguistics, the emergence of “critical discourse analysis” can be regarded as a symbol of the ethic turn of contemporary Western Linguistics.

### Conclusion

Philosophy is the basis of semiotics and linguistics is a branch of semiotics, and therefore the ethic turn of contemporary Western philosophy necessarily happens
concurrently on its subordinate levels; contemporary Western semiotics and contemporary Western linguistics. Ethics is critical. The object of critique of contemporary Western ethics is the various phenomena of social alienation of the late period of capitalism of the West, in which the major ones are “globalization” and “imperialist hegemony”.

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The Paper-cut of Longzhong and its Rhetoric

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Abstract: The paper cut of Longzhong is one of the oldest in China, and its original functions are worshipping and witchcraft. Along with the invention and widespread of the paper, decorating paper-cut came into being in the period of the Northern and Southern Dynasties. Worshipping type of paper-cut is mainly engraved by knife and chisel, whilst witching and most decorating ones except for Chunye and Zhemian are made by means of cutting. The Longzhong paper-cut, characterized by its wildness, simplicity and clumsiness, has its distinct themes of Totemism, reproductive worship as well as the intense interest in human life itself, which are expressed by resorting to rhetorical devices such as simile, metaphor, synecdoche, metonymy, symbol, analogy, homophones and exaggeration. The function of witching paper-cut is of spiritualism, exorcism, illness-driving, evil-driving and rain-praying. The god-worshiping paper-cut, with its simple and abstract patterns, attempts to display prayers’ reverence to gods and goddesses so as to obtain their benevolence and protection. The patterns of ancestor-worshiping paper-cut are much richer and more complicated, which function as expressing men’s love of the dead and as a wish for being helped by supplying them with living necessities in the Underworld. The Decorating paper-cut is used to adore the house and utensils. In addition, ideologies such as loyalty and filial piety of Confucianism, Yinyang and five rules of Taoism and Karma of Buddhism are penetrated and females’ social identities such as family-centered, capable in housework and childbearing are emphasized and constructed as well.

Key words: paper-cut; worship; witchcraft; decoration; rhetoric; function

1. Introduction

The paper cut of Longzhong is one of the oldest one in China, which has been said to date in 541 AD when worship and witchcraft paper cuts were commonly used in funeral, and some of them are still reserved perfectly in the tombs due to the dry climate in Tulufan, Xinjiang, which is beneficial to the reservation of paper. It is rumored that these are the earliest paper cuts in China. The hosts of the graves are courtiers of Gaochang Kingdom who were of Han nationality, and emigrated mainly from Gansu and Shanxi. Gaochang Kingdom at that time was governed by the king
Qu and his descendents during 502 AD – 640 AD, whose hometown was Yuzhong situated in Longzhong. So the etiquette in Gaochang Kingdom inherited Longzhong custom undoubtedly since it was a feudal autocratic government and the birth and etiquette of the king must be uplifted and glorified so that the etiquette and custom that the king got used to were regarded as the standard one and all courtiers and common people followed the fashion. Furthermore, the patterns of the paper cuts in the tombs are similar to that of contemporary Longzhong which convey almost the same cultural connotation and also function approximately. Because of the closed living environment and backward living conditions, the ancient crafts have been reserved and succeeded in Longzhong till now.

The Longzhong paper cut, characterized by its wildness, simplicity and clumsiness, can be divided into three types according to their different functions, i.e. worship, witchcraft and decoration. Worshipping paper cuts are mainly engraved by knife and chisel, whilst witch craft and most decorating ones except for Chunye and Zhemian are made by means of cutting. The worshipping paper cuts are used on occasions of funeral and festivals in honor of deities. The former ones are very richly concerned about the types, including all kinds of streamers such as filial streamer, couplet streamer, incense streamer, flower streamer, lantern streamer and soul-directing streamer; gold and silver bucket, money tree, treasure bowl as well as paper coins. However, the type of the latter is much simpler, only appearing the honoring banner. They are prevailing and conventional for the patterns of worshipping paper cuts, such as Yuntou, swallow tail, flame, leaf, and some other signs similar to ○, ◇, ☽ and ※.

Witchcraft paper cuts are mainly figures of moppets with the function of disease sending, soul calling, evils warding, family protection, storm prevention, rain praying, drought combating and exorcism, etc. The decorative paper cuts are various and colorful in comparison with the former two, and can be used on any of the celebrating occasions such as Spring Festival, wedding, birthday and other festive days when people get used to decorating their windows, ceiling, pillar, Kang, walls, cupboards, trunks, even men themselves with colored paper cuts. The patterns of the decorative paper cuts are also plentiful including lovely animals, flourishing plants, bright flowers, and well-known figures in myth, folk tales and drama, etc. In addition, some traditional patterns such as totem and fabricated items like dragon and phoenix still make up the main patterns. Each pattern embodies profound and particular meaning such as Totemism, reproductive worship as well as the intense interest in the human life itself, which are expressed by employing figures of speech such as simile, metaphor, synecdoche, metonymy,
symbol, analogy, homophone and exaggeration.

2. Metaphor

Metaphor is a figure of speech that is the most commonly used in the Longzhong paper cuts by resorting to metaphorical way of thinking which is keen to signify abstract things with concrete objects. So it is clear that metaphor is a vehicle for understanding concepts based on the observers’ cognitive experience. All of the other rhetorical devices generate from the metaphor or the variant form of metaphor. In language, both the source and target of metaphors appear in the sentence structure, which are connected by being, like, etc., whilst in pictorial sign the source and linking word are all absent, only being the target present. Furthermore, the metaphorical relation between the source and the target is always ambiguous, which requires readers to be familiar with custom of the culture and to interpret its meaning in the light of the shared knowledge of the culture and custom as well as on the basis of the particular syntagmatic and paradigmatic context.

The paper cuts are pictorial signs that are used to express meaning by finding some homogenous nature among things according to their objective or empirical similarity so as to use one to signify the other. Usually, both the source and target have their own semantic field respectively and the interaction between the source and target are among the semantic fields. For instance, the semantic field of the gourd covers many components such as plant, roundness, bottle-like, big belly, flat bottom, rich seeds, opening up and tool of Tieguai Li, a supernatural being. The semantic field of the womb has such components as female, body organ, roundness, big belly, baby room, source of life, etc. In the interaction of the two semantic fields, only roundness, big belly, seeds, and baby are relevant. But when mapping of the gourd is made upon womb, not only the relevant components, but whole of the semantic field are projected. So the interpretation of the metaphor is of a little difficulty since weighing and selecting are necessary on the basis of the context.

Then how to interpret the meaning of a paper cut? It is clear that context plays an

Figure 1
important role and the syntagmatic components of a paper cut are helpful in
narrowing down the paradigmatic scope and anchoring meaning. Here is a paper cut
of Longzhong on gourd taken as an example for illustrating the interpreting process.
The syntagmatic pattern of the picture is as follows; a big gourd is in the middle
with its mouth opening up and hip down, some leaves springing out from two sides
of the body. In the upper body, the most prominent pattern is Guanqian surrounded
by seedlings of cereal crops. A headstand Yuntou occupies the main part of the
lower body while a small one is at its upward bottom. Six pairs of seedlings of cereal
crops are at the bottom of the lower body. Guanqian is made up of four leaves ☐
and a diamond ◇ which have been rumored as the symbols of genitalia in Chinese
culture since 8000 years ago when worship of generative organ of female was said to
be popular. The primitive notion has been inherited in folk customs and art. The
authors of the paper cuts have been illiterate rural ladies in backward places who
have acquired the notion and cutting craft from their elder granny in an limited
environment and then taught them to the next generation one by one again without
great changes. So the paper cuts are a field of reserving old culture and primitive
notion, which succeed the patterns of ancient painted pottery and accumulate
profound cultural heritage.

Yuntou signifies male genital organ for their formal similarity. Here the
combination of male and female generative organ connotes sexual intercourse and
offspring propagation and the body of the gourd is a place where life begins and
baby breeds, a very warm womb actually. Therefore, the generative organs in the
gourd project the reproductive meaning upon readers who are confined to interpret
it in other ways. The leaves and seedlings of cereal crops connect the nature of the
gourd as plants, and the growth of grass and leaves from the gourd hints it is the
source of life. In addition, the gourd was rumored as the place where human being
came into being in the mythic legend of China. Meanwhile it is said that Fuxi and
Nvwa, the earliest ancestors of Chinese people, were born in Qin’an of Longzhong
who survived in the storm by taking a huge gourd while all of the other people
drowned. For this reason, the brother and sister got married and gave birth to the
human beings. As a result, Chinese people have worshipping feeling to the gourd
and looked upon it as the source of life. In the picture, the mouth of the gourd is
opening up, which indicates access to the heaven, hence the open mouth becomes
the symbol of Heaven while the hip where grass grow refers to the earth. As a
whole, the heaven, earth and man are together but coexist harmoniously where the
heaven is up, the man is in the middle and the earth is at the bottom, so the gourd is
a perfect metaphor of the universe.
3. Simile

Simile is an often adopted rhetoric device in the Longzhong paper cuts, which associates the target with the absent source compulsorily in a particular culture and forces readers to interpret it in a unique way by the shared knowledge of the culture and custom. For instance, the color of paper cuts is regulated in Longzhong culture, red paper cuts signify festivities; yellow paper cuts are allowed to use merely in the sacred situation and only deities have the right to match them; white paper cuts are for ghosts, deceased ancestors and relatives who are much lower in social position in comparison with deities, so the transgressing use of the yellow paper cuts would beget the severe punishment from deities that would destroy the soul of the deceased relatives. On the other hand, the transgressing enjoyment of the yellow itself would shorten or exhaust their fortune since the fate is to be obeyed but never to be against in Chinese tradition even if the deities are benevolent enough to forgive the transgressing action. Blackness and blueness are signs to express mourning and missing, therefore the paper clothing, quilt and other articles of daily use are always black and blue, which are burnt on October 1" to help the dead fight against coldness in winter.

Shadow puppet, a product of paper cuts, exercises the simile mostly because its purpose is to achieve the immediate effect by inviting the audience to interpret the characters correctly in a limited span of time. The facial structure of the scholar is different from that of the warrior so that the audience can identify their roles at once and see what will happen later, which is necessary for the cultivation of a dramatic atmosphere. For instance, the scholar’s eyes are sculpted as a lying fish with two soft eyebrows and a straight nose, whilst a warrior’s eyes must be round, eyebrow being vertically up in company with a hawk nose.

4. Synecdoche

Synecdoche is a rhetoric device that is employed frequently to represent the abstract by the specific or the whole by the partial. In folk culture, good fortune, ample salary, longevity, happy life and great wealth are the basic pursuit of human beings, but how to express these abstract concepts since the paper cut is a visual art which needs direct perception through the sense and specific image? The female authors resort to synecdoche unconsciously and try to express the abstract notions such as their feeling, desire, attitude and faith with specific and common objects in their lives. As a result, animals such as deer, monkey, birds such as crane,
swallow, magpie, and cock, and plants like gourd, peach, persimmon, pomegranate, and bergamot are all borrowed to signify abstract connotations.

Figure 2 is for window decoration. The pattern is made up of four plant gains which are gourd at the bottom, pomegranate on the right, persimmon at the top and peach on the left, and each one of them is accompanied by its vine or leaves. Persimmon is pronounced as shi in Chinese, the homophone of 事 (shi), which means everything going well. The pomegranate is well known for its rich seeds so as to be the symbol of more offspring and children. In ancient Chinese myth, Queen Mother of the Western Heaven likes peach to keep her young, and she has a big peach garden and treats her guests with fresh peach at her birthday party every year. Therefore, peach symbolizes longevity in Chinese folk culture. Then what does the gourd mean here? Its syntagmatic elements do not permit us to associate its profound anthropological connotation, but guide our interpretation to the popular folk culture meaning, wealth and longevity. Surely, the vitality and length of its vine endow it with powerful life force, hence the gourd represents life and longevity too. Furthermore, the feature of the vine makes it act as the model of Panchang that indicates the lasting of the wealth and life, so does the Chinese Knot.

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**5. Metonymy**

According to Wikipedia, metonymy is a figure of speech used in rhetoric in which a thing or concept is not called by its own name, but by the name of something intimately associated with that thing or concept. For instance, a lantern in paper cuts is always used to refer to light. The relationship between the source and target is adjacency, thus the figure of speech here is metonymy. In the traditional pattern of Eight Immortals who are characters in ancient Chinese myth, there are only the tools of those eight immortals such as gourd, fan, lotus, flute, flower basket, jade plate, percussion and sword. Sometimes two or three tools are cut while the others are omitted, but the
function remains the same. Tools are closely associated with their owners, so it is metonymy to represent the immortals with their tools. Apart from metonymy, synecdoche is also adopted if there are only partial tools in a pattern in order to signify all tools of the eight immortals. It is evident that two or more figures of speech can be invited in a pattern simultaneously.

Figure 3 has two syntagmatic layers of which the first one is made up of a flowerpot decorated with a plum, some leaves and buds stretching out from the two sides. Two blossoming lotuses are in the middle upon which are two clusters of leaves. This is the outline of the paper cut at the first glance. If the readers are patient enough, the second syntagm will be discovered, which consists of three parts. At the bottom, it is Flower of Deer Head, a proper name addressed by Mr. Jin Zhilin, a folklorist in China, who has made ethnological study on Chinese paper cuts and concluded that patterns as Flower of the Deer Head are the heritage of totem deer worship. There are two lotuses blossoming on the head of the deer, and two images of man growing out of the lotuses whose head are dressed up with flame.

By interpreting the pattern, it is easy to find that the author takes advantage of many rhetorical devices to express the profound cultural connotations. The first is exaggeration which recreates boldly the form of leaves and deer, distorts the position of flower and leaves, and links flower and leaves with the image of man. In this way, the worship of the totem, plant and sun are combined coherently together. Metonymy is the second figure of speech that symbolizes the sun with flame to indicate the importance of the sun in the developing of life. The third one is metaphor that signifies the totem deer with the flowerpot. Simultaneously, the flowerpot also refers to womb that generates life. Lotus is always the symbol of female because of the similar form between female genital and lotus petal, hence analogy is used. The last one is simile that employs redness to show the happy festival atmosphere, thus the paper cut functions as window decoration or lantern decoration for Shehuo during Spring Festival.

6. Homophone

Homophone is defined as a word that is pronounced the same as another word but differs in meaning in Wikipedia, which is based on psychological misunderstanding and association since double layers of meaning are projected. In folk paper cuts, the figure of speech is preferred by the people so as to find an effective and humorous way of expressing their desire and hope. For instance, bat is 蝙蝠 in Chinese, which is pronounced as bian fu. Since 蝠(fu) is the homophone of
福 (fu) that means good fortune. Therefore, the bat is a popular pattern in folk paper cuts to express good wishes. Not only in decorating paper cuts is bat commonly used, it also appears in worshiping streamers just as Figure 4 shows, in which four bats are flying together to the central direction where a lotus is blossoming. Lotus not only signifies female genital as mentioned above. Moreover, it has a profound connotation in Buddhism and is called “the Flower of Buddhism” for its feature of growing in mud, but never contaminated by it. So the living persons, by using homophone, place hope on the pattern that the dead would go to the Western Paradise after death where they could enjoy a life full of fu.

Paper cut 5 consists of a deer, a crane and a tree, which is named Lu-he-chun (六合春) in Chinese. Lu (六) means six, the homophone of 鹿 (deer), denotes the six directions such as heaven, earth, east, south, west and north. The six directions indicate the whole world; he (合), the homophone of 鶴 (crane), refers to harmony; the sprouting and growing of tree leaves symbolize the coming of Spring. For the reason, the composition of the pattern connotes that Spring comes, the heaven, earth and men are all immersed in a flourishing situation. Furthermore, the pattern also hints people’s desire for living in a harmonious world and everything going smoothly. By representing the abstract notion of 六合春 with more specific objects 鹿鹤树, it is evident that the pattern is typical in projecting abstract concepts upon specific objects by borrowing homophone.

As discussed above, figures of speech are employed by authors of the Longzhong paper cuts to express their desires and ideas that are nurtured in their unique living environment, sensed instinctively by women artists and constructed in the long history of women’s social position transition and family-centered identity stabilization. Furthermore, the prevailing ideologies such as loyalty and filial piety of Confucianism, Yinyang and five rules of Taoism and Karma of Buddhism have also penetrated in the mind of the authors. All these elements constitute the content that the Longzhong paper cuts attempt to represent. By studying the rhetoric devices in paper cuts, we seek to interpret the mapping meaning of the patterns so as to trace back the psychological development of historical people.
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On the Subject of SNS Design Based on the Semiotic Concept of Self as Developed by C.S. Peirce and Bakhtin / Volosinov

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Abstract: SNS such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram have surged in popularity, permeating major aspects of our everyday lives with their power as tools of mass communication. My interest with SNS lies not only in its interconnectedness, but also in its interface design mechanism. Based on the semiotic theories developed by C.S. Peirce and Bakhtin/Volosinov, the main argument in this paper is that interface designs of SNS are created not by the designers alone, but through a designer-user community. Facebook page design has been changed dramatically several times, invoking widespread complaints. Design production in this kind of interconnected social system arises through the course of the interlocutions between the users and the designers. Peirce’s illumination of “self” and “man-sign” as well as Volosinov’s explanation of “verbal interaction” and “inner speech” could be relevant for this situation. I propose that these two semioticians offer us plausible explanations regarding the inter-subjectivity of SNS design mechanisms and how collective intelligence is formed and works in our era of the online social network.

Key words: interaction design; social network service (SNS); Semiotics; Charles S. Peirce; Bakhtin/Volosinov; inter-subjectivity; collective intelligence

1. Introduction

The question of exactly who is responsible for the continual redesign of the immensely popular social networking service (SNS) Facebook is an intriguing one. This question becomes more complex when we consider the continual design iterations occurring in parallel on mobile devices including smart phones and tablet PCs. In this paper, I address major features in the ongoing discussions regarding the intricate concepts involved in Facebook’s web design. My contention is that designers alone are not wholly responsible for the Facebook interface design, rather, it has been a collective effort between users and designers facilitated by
mutually responsive and productive interactions.

As Facebook’s subscription base increases in volume and diversity, the website itself is continually compelled to adapt, to better serve and therefore retain its dynamic user base. One principal reason for Facebook’s overwhelming success in the midst of numerous competitors is its ability to rapidly adjust its interface design to meet new demands. In order to understand the core concepts behind Facebook’s interactive design, it is first helpful to elaborate upon “design semiotics”. Simply put, the word “design” shares a historical association with the meaning of “sign”, which is to convey the meaning of a tangible object or intangible idea. Krippendorff contended that “design is making sense of things”.

A novel perspective in which to explore the core mechanism behind SNS interface designs via the semiotic theories proposed by Bakhtin/Volosinov and C.S. Peirce. It remains pertinent to keep the function of social media in mind, although clever mechanisms of design are an inseparable element of successful social networking sites.

### 2. A short history of Facebook design

#### 2.1 Openness and connectedness

Facebook’s founders state that “... Facebook’s mission is to make the world more open and connected”. Openness and connectedness are not exclusive domains of Facebook, as nearly all forms of modern mass media could be said to share the same features. But what makes social networking media more open and connected than television or radio? What has led to the explosion in popularity of social media as a communicative tool, which has been dominated by conventional forms of mass media since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution?

In order to understand the exceptional power of social media, it should be noted that the empowerment of individuals as communicators has flourished as a direct result of the expansion of internet usage since the mid-1990s. In the modern developed world, almost all people have some form of internet access, with personal

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2. Andreas Kaplan and Michael Haenlein define “social media” as “a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content.” According to them, we can consider social media as any applications for user-created content on the web, although I am focusing on SNS media like Facebook. (Kaplan and Haenlein “Users of the world) unite! The challenges and opportunities of Social Media”. Business Horizons, 53(1), 2010, pp. 61-62)
weblogs serving as an easily accessible tool for public communication. SNS websites including Twitter and Facebook became popular in the late 2000s and have further accelerated the era of personal media.

Public communication is the core function of both television and radio, but these forms of media are comparatively limited by their inability to easily facilitate interactive communication. Owners of broadcast stations, with few exceptions, maintain exclusive rights to broadcast selected content, and this system invariably renders the end user as a passive consumer. Momentous changes to this traditional situation have been brought about through the acceptance of the internet as a mass communication system. The World Wide Web has made it possible for consumers to cheaply and easily access information, create their own content and place in the global public domain. This notion of interactive public communication is perhaps the single most defining and important feature of what we may term the Information Revolution. Internet-based social media has revolutionized communication by making it more about the individual, while simultaneously promoting mechanisms of democracy and interactivity. This has been greatly aided with the near-ubiquitous availability of internet access due to the popularity of smart phones. It stands to reason that the more mobile computing is used, the more personal content is created. Content created by users is typically as diverse as the demographic it represents, although the majority of such content generally gravitates toward information associated with users’ own personal lives or major social issues. Traditional sources of mass media are becoming less popular, as more and more people choose to receive news via SNS.

Facebook has demonstrated a superior ability to facilitate the complex balance between broadcasting diverse content and news that is relevant to a broader audience. It has been said that the critical factor in bringing approximately one billion people to accept Facebook as a major source of information is its user-oriented interface design. The architects behind Facebook’s design have consistently prioritized the quality of the users’ experience and have openly welcomed dramatic redesign iterations.

2.2 Dynamic redesigning of the Facebook interface

Facebook interface design has gone through almost continuous changes since its launch in 2004. Figure 1 shows the original design interface (each Figure in this paper displays the user homepage on the left and their profile page on the right).
Every major iteration of Facebook has brought differences in interface, though the color hue has remained largely the same. The format upon launch was perhaps the most distinct from its following versions and was at the time called “theFacebook” with a male icon. When launching the first Facebook iteration, Mark Zuckerberg (founder) designed the profile page to resemble a book. This initial book layout has been said to be a contributing factor in the site’s success. In 2005, Facebook introduced its own in-house design team, and the second iteration was launched in 2006.

Although Version 2 retained the male icon on the title bar, the gradient of the toolbar at the top was removed. The design achieves a refinement in simplicity in each successive generation. The most important interactive design modification was the incorporation of a “News Feed” that relays a stream of news relating to the user’s social circle. Upon launch, this feature was the focus of criticism, as many who were used to the old Facebook layout feared the exposure of

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1 Refer to (Facebook design) page, http://www.facebook.com/design.
privacy. However, soon after the initial objections, the majority of users found the “News Feed” to be relevant and useful, and concerns largely subsided. Zuckerberg and the Facebook design team placed an emphasis on finding easier ways for users to navigate the site. In the second version, Facebook also added the “Pages” feature allowing companies to open new profile accounts for their product promotion.

1. See http://prowler.uk.to/2011/06/a-history-of-Facebook-designs-part-1/.
2. Ibid.
Just several months later, Facebook changed the interface again (Figure 3).

![Facebook interface](image)

**Figure 3 Facebook design in 2007 (Ver. 3)**

This version removed the familiar male figure in the header. The major left column became a source of application menus, and the core experiences—profile, friends, network, and an inbox were moved to the top, making them more conspicuous.

Another major iteration was launched in 2007, and included dramatic changes to the platform. Prior to this version, the platform only included applications that appeared on the left column of the site. With the introduction of further

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1. See [http://prowler.uk.to/2011/06/a-history-of-Facebook-designs-part-1/](http://prowler.uk.to/2011/06/a-history-of-Facebook-designs-part-1/).
applications. Facebook introduced its users to various tools like photos, events and groups. The 2007 version is often claimed to be the favorite Facebook design of many old users.

![Figure 4 Facebook design in 2009 (Ver. 4)](image)

The next Facebook design was initiated in March, 2009 (Figure 4), and introduced a wider format for the site. A bottom navigation bar was added to support a newly-launched online chatting mechanism and applications were moved. Facebook continued to use a three-columned design, but the arrangement was changed; notifications were introduced in the right column, and filters were added to the News Feed on the left. For this version, the wider format was welcome by many people but the bottom bar was criticized as “ugly and useless”.

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1 Refer to ‘Facebook design’ page.
Figure 5  Facebook design in 2011 (Ver. 5)

Figure 5 shows a more recent Facebook layout launched in 2011. The bottom navigation bar was removed, notifications were moved to the top left toolbar and the search function was made more prominent. The Facebook designers wanted to compel users to read the top items in the News Feed, but it was found to be confusing. Less than a year later, however, the layout was redesigned again, the most important change of which was made in the profile page (see Figure 6).

Facebook designers Nicholas Felton and Joey Flynn, who were responsible for redesigning the profile page, rejected the notion that the chronological personal contents should be boxed in a framework with several widgets. In doing so, they discarded a then utilitarian creation for a brand new page design. Their goal was not only to improve the function of the site, but also to provide an interface in which users could tell their stories and recall their memories. The timeline interface was born through the aspiration to convey feelings efficiently. In short, their goal was
to create an emotional experience, rather than a chronological document. ①

Some users have said that the “timeline profile” is the most significant redesign so far. However one major criticism has been that it can create confusion, leading to some resistance. That is why at least until August 31st, 2012 Facebook allowed some users to select their own profile layout from the older and newer versions. There has been continuous backlashes and negative responses whenever Facebook redesigns their layout, and sometimes even minor changes to a few of the site’s elements. The company has been receptive to these backlashes and often redesigns them according to feedback. For example, when Facebook introduced the News Feed which revealed a user’s friends’ latest activity as a timeline in 2006, protesters organized “A Day Without Facebook” to show their displeasure at the perceived privacy violations, and declared a “Mission Accomplished” when Facebook subsequently added the ability to hide activity from the News Feed. While monitoring and interacting with their users, Facebook continued to explore new designs and take risks with newer ones in order to adapt itself to a changing user base.

Although many users complained about dramatic design changes, these issues often subsided after redesigned pages were found to be more effective than older versions. This may be due to an emphasis on good functional design and an understanding of common user habits. Mark Zuckerberg was famously described as a good designer and hacker, but not a good businessman. In the next part of this paper, I put forth the argument that the subject of Facebook design can be framed within the context of a community composed of the users and the designers. We may view this unusual situation from the semiotic perspective of two distinguished scholars, Charles S. Peirce and Valentine N. Volosinov (aka Mikhail Bakhtin), that human beings can function as signs when they are all systematically connected—logically and psychologically. The mechanism of this inter-subjectivity in the context of Facebook redesign history will be further explained in terms of semiotic theories.

3. Semiotics for the subject of SNS design

3.1 Peirce on the self

Peirce’s exploration of the self in the course of pursuing his semiotic epistemology shows us how our selves are connected with each other, and therefore


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why we do not have to differentiate designers from users. However, I am not suggesting that it is necessary for designers to have their own distinct roles, nor does each of us have to have a private self. Individual uniqueness is discussed by Peirce, but it is not clearly defined if considered as separate from the connection with others.

Peirce explored this concept while criticizing the introspective knowledge insisted on by philosophers like Rene Descartes. At the heart of his critique was the concept of the Cartesian self, which had been regarded as isolated from others or the outer world. Whereas the Cartesian self as a clear and distinct idea was conceived as one taught by intuition, the “self” Peirce suggested was to be understood only by a series of cognitive activities. On the other hand, Peirce’s pragmatic semiotics were developed in depth, during the course of criticizing the psychologism and subjectivism of William James’s pragmatism by which the self was conceived as an isolated, independent entity. His Synechism—the doctrine of continuity—“rules out; (a) viewing the mental and the physical as irreducibly different from each other; and (b) treating self and other as essentially exclusive of one another.”

Peirce’s first conception of the self depended on semiotics, especially on thought-sign theory developed in the late 1860s. As mentioned above, his argument that thoughts are to be regarded as signs was a critique of the intuitive knowledge insisted on by Descartes. For Peirce, every thought is a sign because we cannot think without mediating signs. There is no thought that is not interpreted by subsequent thoughts. In Peirce’s semiotic epistemology, every thought can be called an interpretant—therefore a sign—since it has the potential to be interpreted. Peirce’s well-known doctrine of semiosis, the infinite process of sign functioning, originated from his early semiotic inquiry on the nature of human cognition. After criticizing the Cartesian introspective self and exploring a theory of thoughts as signs, Peirce defined man as a sign in the final stage of “Some Consequences of Four Incapacities” (1868).

“It is that the word or sign which man uses is the man himself. For, as the fact that every thought is a sign, taken in conjunction with the fact that life is a train of thought, proves that man is a sign...Thus my language is the sum total of myself; for the man is the thought.” (CP 5.313-4)

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Although Peirce asserted that a thought is a sign, a man is a thought, and therefore a man is also a sign, he was not understating the importance of the human body in contributing to one’s own personality. In actuality, he was concerned with the embodiment of thought as a sign. For Peirce, anything functioning as a sign materializes as some form of embodiment. His elaboration on the emergence of self-consciousness during childhood leads us to understand how important the embodiment is in shaping one’s own self. Suspecting that we have intuitive self-consciousness, Peirce described in detail the process by which a child achieves its own sense of self. He stated that “a very young child may always be observed to watch its own body with great attention.” (CP 5. 229) Considering its body as the utmost important thing, the child reacts only to what it touches, faces, or tastes.

A child is, for Peirce, not only a sentient being but also an acting, cognitive and communicative being as a thought. In other words, children come to reach levels of self-consciousness by virtue of their ability to interact with their environment and respond accordingly. The impulse toward conversing, according to Peirce, could be regarded as instinctive. Learning a language gives the child more chances to communicate with others (i.e., other bodies like their own). The instinct to interact and communicate therefore develops a child’s self-consciousness. It is noticeable that, for Peirce, testimony comes to play a role in how the self originates. While learning language skills and communicating with others, a child comes to understand testimonies from outside perspectives. Furthermore, realization occurs, in the contradiction between what is perceived and what is alleged in the testimony of others. For example, a child may realize a perceived testimony is false, when it touches a cool stove despite being warned by parents of being burned. “Thus, he becomes aware of ignorance, and it is necessary to suppose a self in which this ignorance can inhere. So testimony gives the first dawning of self-consciousness (CP 5. 233); and “The discovery of error and ignorance requires the supposition of private self which is fallible.” (CP 5. 234). After a child figures out that a parent’s testimony is correct, the testimony—the language of others—becomes the best evidence for what is true. This reliance on testimony allows a child to understand what is immediately experienced can be erroneous. For Peirce, “the private is synonymous with the erroneous.”

Out of this negative definition of the self, we can identify Peirce’s Synechism, which is described as “the communal nature of the self, for it is intrinsically bound

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1 See Colapietro, ibid., p. 71 and CP 5. 231.
2 Colapietro, ibid., p. 73.
up with the testimony of others.” Peirce was the predecessor of those philosophers who tried to argue that personal identity is constituted through relationships to others. Exhibiting erroneousness and ignorance, the human self is identified as a negation. “The individual man, since his separate existence is manifested only by ignorance and error, so far as he is anything apart from his fellows, and from what he and they are to be, is only a negation. This is man.” (CP 5.317). For Peirce, however, individual self is not just a negation. It is a negation only so far as it is separated from others. Peirce stressed the inseparable nature of the self from its community, but he didn’t deny the existence of individual uniqueness. It is at the moment of negation that one’s unique self becomes distinguishable.

It could be said, according to Peirce, whereas the private self identified as a negation falls within the category of Secondness, the self as it is, or individual personality retains all the characteristics of Thirdness. He notes that “each personality is based upon a ‘bundle of habits’, as the saying is that a man is a bundle of habits.” (CP 6.228). In the context of his pragmatic epistemology, the meaning of a concept is construed as something like a habit. As far as a man is an idea and therefore a sign, it also has similar features with habits. A habit, which is general, is distinct from each habitual act, which is particular. In The Law of Mind (1892) Peirce developed the former justification of the self in his evolutionary cosmology. If private self manifests itself in a single event happening within a moment, personality is apprehended in a certain period of time. “Personality is, like a general idea, not a thing to be apprehended in an instant. It has to be lived in time.” (CP 6.155). It is not an instantaneous phenomenon of the self, which is fallible and equated with “immediate self-consciousness” that Peirce was pursuing in the developmental process of inquiry.

Personality was, for Peirce, a kind of coordination or connection of ideas whose nature is to spread continuously and to affect and integrate with others (CP 6.155). When he suggested that personality is a coordination of ideas, it was the teleological character of personality on which he was putting emphasis. By the word “coordination” he implied a teleological harmony of ideas (CP 6.156). However, this teleology is not necessarily predetermined and therefore, open to the future.

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2. For Peirce, even in 1868 the self was conceived to be more than a repository for error, “the possibility of communication does not entail the destruction of uniqueness.” (Colapietro, ibid., p. 74).
A general idea, living and conscious now, it is already determinative of acts in the future to an extent to which it is not now conscious. This reference to the future is an essential element of personality. Were the ends of a person already explicit, there would be no room for development, for growth, for life; and consequently there would be no personality. (CP 6.156–157)

That is, as a thought, an idea or a mind, an individual self has all the characters of a symbol. Just like any other symbol, the man-sign is also in continual growth. (CP 2.302)

Peirce did not deny the existence of a private dimension to the individual self, and “our recognition of this dimension contributes to the pathos with which we view the efforts of any self to communicate fully with others.” However, it has been contended that the most fundamental feature of personal consciousness is the potential for communication in Peirce’s inquiry of self and personality. Peirce’s abstract and idealistic concept of self, of which the nature is intrinsically communal, is elaborated on further by Bakhtin/Volosinov’s illumination of “verbal interaction” which is also concerned with the human tendency for opening, connecting and communicating.

3.2 Bakhtin/Volosinov on Verbal Interaction

Bakhtin/Volosinov also rejected the egocentric model of self. According to them, the self is not something given innately to an independent subject. It remains fluid rather than fixed, being situated in its circumstances and affected by other selves in the process of socialization. Bakhtin’s argument on “verbal interaction” which has its ground in the inter-relations of language, consciousness, and ideology gave further substance to Peirce’s notion of the self. His notion of verbal interaction, which was the earlier form of dialogism, provides us with an excellent explanation on inter-subjectivity (i.e., the communal nature of the self).

Freudian psychology greatly influenced Bakhtin, as did Saussure’s semiology and Marxist materialism, but he criticized each of them and further developed his own theory. It makes a good start for examining his argument for subjectivity if we

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1. Colapietro, op. cit., p. 79.
2. Volosinov was a member of Bakhtin’s circle. It is believed both Freudianism and Marxism and The Philosophy of Language published by the name of V. N. Volosinov were actually written by Mikhail Bakhtin. Although some scholars pointed out the change of philosophical position between Volosinov and Bakhtin, I will refer to these two people as one whose point of view has developed as time went by. Therefore Bakhtin/Volosinov will be referred to as just Bakhtin, when referring to his earlier texts published by Volosinov as well as his later texts.
first consider his critique of Saussurean semiology. Unlike Saussure who distinguished the difference between langue and parole, Bakhtin, like Peirce, refused the dichotomy of an abstract language system and its individual uses. According to Bakhtin, the opposition that Saussure made between langue and parole was equal to the opposition of society to individuals. Bakhtin, a Marxist, could not accept the concept of an individual isolated from social and historical contexts. Individual consciousness, from his perspective, does not occur from within the mind, but is constituted by social relations. He objected to the concept of personal consciousness separated from the outside world and insisted that individual consciousness be a dynamic event occurring between the inner and outer world. It is a sign through which inner and outer realities meet. For him, psychological experiences were nothing but social activities expressed by various signs.¹ He proposed an amendment of Saussurean linguistics by positing four social factors in *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* (1929), one of his major works.² In short, Bakhtin’s treatment of the sign as external, organized socially, concretely historical, and inseparably linked with voice and authority was a critique of the established language theory.

As a result of his semiotic inquiry, Bakhtin came to resist two major tendencies of philosophy of language in his time: abstract objectivism and individual subjectivism.³ The philosophers who took the former tendency regarded language as a code independent of its interpreters. Among them are Rene Descartes and Ferdinand de Saussure. The philosophers included in the latter group were faulted for grounding the message exclusively in the individual consciousness. In other words, the former was concerned with the myth that language makes poets, while the latter with the myth that poets make language. Bakhtin, suggesting this opposition is inherently untrue, tried to synthesize the two extremes. For him, every individual participates in two different but interrelated activities; she/he is involved in relationships with others in particular speech acts, and at the same time with the internal relationships between the outer world and her/his own consciousness. If these activities—what Bakhtin called “verbal interactions”—are constant and indispensable for our social lives, it would be impossible to consider an individual psychic phenomenon as solely internal and independent of the

³ Volosinov. ibid., pp. 77–108.
environment around it.

Bakhtin described the psychic phenomenon as “a boundary one” and the psyche as a “social entity” formed by ideological signs. Objecting to the idealistic Freudianism, Bakhtin did not consider that personal consciousness—including unconsciousness—arises from within people. On the contrary, he believed that social intercourse influences outer speeches, while outer speeches affect inner speeches and then in turn, inner speeches form consciousness. According to Bakhtin, “the very act of introspection is modeled on an external social discourse; it is self-observation, communion with the self, the understanding of one’s own inner sign.”① His fundamental redirection is of two forms; he redirected, on the one hand, the relation between consciousness and the world, and on the other hand, the relation between the self and others. These are grounded on the interrelating of language (or signs), consciousness and ideology. For Bakhtin, no explicit distinction between inner and outer speech exists, since individual consciousness is expressed only through the mediation of signs, whether they are inner or outer. That is to say, if one’s consciousness could not be expressed and interpreted by oneself, it could hardly be said that consciousness exists. We may contend that it is not true, following Bakhtin, that experiences organize expressions. What may occur is the reverse.② Bakhtin described the dialogical formation of consciousness similar to that of utterance, in which signs or expressions that are inevitably social are always tinted by ideologies.

“In fact, not even the simplest and dimmest apprehension of a feeling—say, the feeling of hunger not outwardly expressed—can dispense with some kind of ideological form. Every apprehension, after all, must have inner speech, inner intonation, and the rudiments of inner style.”③

Bakhtin’s argument that no consciousness exists that is not externalized may be supported by Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky’s experiments. Vygotsky’s psychological science was one of the major inspirations for Bakhtin in answering his own questions, for example, “How does a particular circumstance impress a personality?” and “How do outer speeches become inner speech?” In the analysis of the internalization of interpersonal speeches, Vygotsky attended to the third stage

① Volosinov, ibid., p. 66.
② Volosinov, ibid., p. 145.
③ Volosinov, ibid., p. 148.
of young children’s language learning—the stage of egocentric speech. He observed a child of approximately three years of age, who talked to themselves twice when meeting obstacles. This is an example of externalization of conversation with themselves, commenting on and predicting the results of an action. According to Vygotsky, such externalized self-talk is a natural dynamic of problem solving. Additionally, he proposed that this talk is sensitive to social factors because egocentric speech occurs only in a social context, for example, when the child assumes it is being understood by others. Vygotsky argued that egocentric speech is a “direct outgrowth of speech which had been from the start socially and environmentally oriented.” The most significant basis for my argument in the experiments of Vygotsky is that children in their stage of egocentric speech are in fact internalizing their external verbal interactions.

4. Conclusion

Bakhtin’s notion of ego or self, based on his “verbal interaction”, parallels Peirce’s in that both try to establish that people interconnect with each other without precluding the unique experience of self consciousness. The statement by Bakhtin that “every utterance is the product of verbal interaction” summarizes this argument. In the case of Facebook interface design, such utterances are visual signs produced during the interactive and communicative process of designing.

In conclusion, it could be said that minds or signs of the users and designers are in continuum, constructing a “collective intelligence” in designing a still better interface for the social media. This sort of collective intelligence could be called “designer-user community” following Peirce’s pragmatistic terminology. As Mihail Nadin pointed out, “interface is the meeting place between two different entities that are supposed to come in contact, to be brought together—that is, to communicate. It follows that interface has the nature of a sign.” By communicating with each other, both designers and users of Facebook are collaborating in making a better design. The designer-user dynamic inherent in the architecture and management of Facebook continues to redesign the site toward this end. By interacting and com-

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municating, whether in conflict or in harmony with one another, members of the Facebook community steer their way toward an optimal interface design.

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Approaching the Universally Human in Hamlet as a Bridge between Different Civilizations

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Abstract: The paper approaches the universally human in Hamlet as manifested in Shakespeare’s play *Hamlet*. Hamlet’s Self as seen by the others and his inner Self as “that within which passes show”. It seeks to understand Hamlet’s transcendental character that could be seen as global, bridging different civilizations.

Key words: consciousness; conscience; transcendence

1. Introduction

Hamlet’s consciousness goes beyond the limits of the play where he is in. It goes beyond cultural limits, towards the trans-cultural; to the universally human. We cannot say today that Hamlet is the sole possession of an English-speaking culture. It belongs to the world and addresses the universally human. Translation, of course, has played a major role in expanding Hamlet outside the English-speaking community and opening up the text to new meanings and different artistic means of interpretation as we may see in ballet and opera productions of Hamlet. The emergence of film since the 1900’s allowed the visual and sound recordings of theatre productions, freeing the play from restrictions of time and place, and new freedom of interpretation appeared in the different cinema productions with the emergence and growing importance of the director. In 1903 Hamlet had been introduced into Japan and into China in 1916, so that already by the beginning of the 20th century it had become a global phenomenon (see The Arden Shakespeare, 2006; p. 97 and p. 106).

In *Hamlet* we find the essence of theatricality, to see and be seen by others, the outer and inner vision of consciousness. Shakespeare, through Hamlet, as in a mirror, shows us the multifaceted directions of seeing. If human life is acting, be it onstage or in “real” life, and if acting is always intra-cultural, we may ask, what is
really universally human that is not determined by culture or educational restraints? What is really our true expression or choice, not determined by cultural conditioning?

Hamlet as a modern consciousness is free to act. He is free to challenge his fate, unlike the classical heroes of antiquity. When Hamlet sees the ghost for the first time he is not afraid to follow him exclaiming; “My Fate cries out” (1.4.83). He learns the truth about his father’s death and receives from his father’s ghost the order to revenge his murder. Yet Hamlet appears unhappy with his fate; “The time is out of joint; O cursed spite/ That ever I was born to set it right!” (2.1.1.). In his existential freedom Hamlet delays revenge since his consciousness is free to doubt and to question. In this paper we shall focus on the written play, the never ending source of interpretations.

2. Directions of Seeing

Hamlet (the play) emerges or “unfolds” with the first of the play’s many clothing metaphors, from darkness into light, from silence into sound, as do our lives. It is midnight when the first two characters appear, two sentinels; “Barnardo: Who’s there? /Francisco: Nay answer me. Stand and unfold yourself.” (1.1-1.2) And the play ends with the non-seeing of death, the death of all the main characters and the perpetuation of Hamlet in the eye and voice of memory through Horatio, Hamlet’s friend. Hamlet: “...If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart/ Absent thee from felicity awhile/ And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain/ To tell my story.”... (5.2. 330–333). Hamlet opposes Horatio’s will to commit heroic suicide “after the high Roman fashion” (see AC 4.15.91), since Horatio has the moral task to live to make known the truth about Hamlet, in order to heal his wounded name: Hamlet: “Thou livest: report me and my cause aright/ To the unsatisfied.” (5.2. 323, 324)... Horatio, what a wounded name./ Things standing thus unknown, shall I leave behind me!” (5.2.328, 329).

The word theatre, as we know, comes from the Greek words; theaomai meaning to behold, to look closely at, to perceive. The consciousness of seeing and of being seen, that is part of our daily lives, intensifies in theatre, especially in Hamlet.

In the play’s complexity, there are different dimensions of seeing and appearing; On the one hand we have 1) The inner worldly or “real” as when Barnardo appears from darkness into the light of Francisco’s and the spectator’s vision (see 1.1 quoted above), and 2) The other-worldly, or “unreal” as when the
ghost appears: Horatio: “...has this thing appeared again tonight? / “Barnardo; “I have seen nothing”; it is believed by Horatio to be the product of fantasy or imagination. Marcellus; “Horatio says ’tis but our fantasy/ And will not let belief take hold of him/ Touching this dreaded sight twice seen of us.” (1.1.20–24) But then it is experienced by Horatio as real; Barnardo; “How now, Horatio, you tremble and look pale./ Is not this something more than fantasy? (1.1.52–53) Horatio: “Before my God, I might not this believe/Without the sensible and true avouch/Of mine own eyes.” (1.1.55–57). On the other hand we have what appears in the “outside”, as grasped by the senses— like when Horatio sees the Ghost—and what appears in the “inside,” in the mind’s eye; Hamlet: “My father, methinks I see my father”. Horatio: “Where my lord?” Hamlet; “In my mind’s eye, Horatio”. (1.2.183–185).

The Self and the inner Self

The word Eyes in Hamlet is a metonymy for the royal presence. It is significant that it is the “kingly eyes” of the “high and mighty” King Claudius who wants to discover the truth about Hamlet’s change, both in his outward appearance as in his inner being. He calls for Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, believed by the King and the Queen to be Hamlet’s closest friends, and tells them about Hamlet’s transformation: “...Something have you heard/ Of Hamlet’s transformation—so call it/ Sith nor th’ exterior nor the inward man/ Resembles that it was.” (2.2.4–7).

The King calls for Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to find out the cause of Hamlet’s change. Hamlet, as the king worriedly observes, has changed much both in his outward appearance as in his inward being, as far as it may be observed from the outside: that is, from an external point of view. Hamlet’s Self, as a public figure, is seen by many and is loved by the people. Ophelia refers to him as “the observed of all observers”. In the political domain of the play he is the successor to the throne of Denmark, and so a rival to Fortimbras’s claim to the throne. Claudius addresses him as a son but feels uneasy with Hamlet’s sincere and continued affliction for his father’s death. The King manifests his fears overtly later on in the play: “Madness in great ones must not unwatched go.” (3.1.187)

Regarding the drinking habits of the Danes Hamlet answers Horatio’s question of whether it is a custom to sound a cannon to every jocund health the King drinks in celebration of Hamlet’s obedience in staying in Denmark: “Ay, marry is’t, /But to my mind, though I am native here/And to manner born, it is a custom/More honoured in the breach than the observance./This heavy-headed revel east and west/Makes us traduced and taxed of other nations;/They clepe us drunkards and
with swinish phrase/Soil our addition, and indeed it takes/From our achievements,
though performed at height./The pith and marrow of our attribute.” (1.4.14–22)
Hamlet disapproves of the custom that, as a negative stereotype, impedes other
nations to see and appreciate their true value and achievements.

After seeing his father’s ghost Hamlet’s transformation intensifies in his
consciousness of seeing and being seen—the essence of theatricality—into acting
madness in order to protect or cover himself, his true being, from being found out
by the powerful king, his suspicious stepfather. So Hamlet pretends or appears to be
mad in order to escape scrutiny. Hamlet plays with madness and enters its spirit. At
some point in the play we are not sure if he is pretending to be mad or if he is really
mad.

Apart from the *kingly Eyes*, all the eyes in the play focus their attention on
Hamlet. He is the object of the different directions and intentions of seeing. Only
Hamlet can see himself from the inside, and perhaps also King Claudius when he is
trying to pray; “My words fly up, my thoughts remain below. Words without
thought never to heaven go.” (3.3.97–98). Queen Gertrudis, his mother, cannot
“see”, that is, she seems to be the non seeing character in the play, in the sense of
*not being aware of*. Hamlet has to put a mirror before her eyes so that she might see
herself, not her “outer” Self but her “inner” Self; “You go not till I set you up a
glass/Where you may see the inmost part of you”. (3.4.18–19). The Queen sees or
recognizes herself through Hamlet’s words; “O Hamlet, speak no more./ Thou
turn’st my very eyes into my soul/ And there I see such black and grieved spots/ As
will leave there their tinct.” (3.4.87–89)

Hamlet’s conscious intention here seeks to unveil or bring into the light the
conscience of the Queen and he is able to do so through his words that act like
daggers; “O speak no more! /These words like daggers enter in my ears.” (3.4.92–
93) He unveils conscience that is hidden in the dark, to the “eyes” of the Queen’s
inner Self.

Hamlet is very careful not to uncover his thoughts and only does so, apart from
the spectators/readers, to his friend Horatio whom he trusts. Horatio is the
disinterested observer in the play. He does not seek to manipulate Hamlet into
revealing his inner thoughts as do all the other characters, for example, in the
recorder scene with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern; “Do you think I am easier to be
played on than a pipe? Call me what instrument you will, though you fret me you
cannot play upon me.” (3.2.361–363). Hamlet is able to see Horatio’s inner being;
“Horatio, thou art e’en as just a man/ As e’er my conversation coped withal”
(3.2.50)…” Give me that man/That is not passion’s slave and I will wear him/In
my heart’s core—ay, in my heart of heart—As I do thee.” (3.2.68-70).

In Hamlet is approached what is not subject to manipulation in human beings. Hamlet does not allow others to manipulate him but he himself plays with manipulation, in “the Mousetrap”, in search for answers.

3. Uncovering forces

It is in the Mousetrap, the play within the play, where Hamlet seeks to uncover Claudius’s guilt: “The play’s the thing/Wherein I’ll catch the conscience of the King.” (2.2.539). What is hidden must be revealed; “foul deeds will rise/Though all the earth o’erwhelm them to men’s eyes.” (1.2.248)

We may observe the tension of two uncovering forces in the play: 1) King Claudius who seeks to uncover Hamlet and 2) Hamlet who seeks to uncover Claudius. The growing tension of the two contrary forces reaches its climax in the Mousetrap. There Hamlet uncovers Claudius’s guilt and by so doing, he himself is indirectly uncovered.

Shakespeare, through Hamlet, in his advice to the actors, portrays theatre as a mirror of human nature: “For anything so o’erdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is to hold as ’twere the mirror up to Nature (human action or behavior. The Arden Shakespeare, note 22, p. 297) to show Virtue her feature, Scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure...” (3.2.20-24). It is the mirror of humanity as a whole. Theatre is for everybody and for every culture; “O. there be players that I have seen play and heard others praised—and that highly—not to speak it profanely, that neither having the accent of Christian, pagan nor man have so strutted and bellowed that I have thought some of Nature’s journeymen had made men, and not made them well, they imitated humanity so abominably.” (3.2.28-34)

Hamlet held a mirror before his mother so that she would, metaphorically, see herself through his words. Now he places the mirror of theatre before his stepfather to uncover his hidden conscience. Claudius, the King, uses manipulation in order to uncover Hamlet, to make him “speak” his inner self. He first uses Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, then uses Ophelia while he and Polonius hide behind a curtain to listen to the conversation between her and Hamlet. As a result Claudius suspects that Hamlet only pretends to be mad, and hence is a real threat to his power. Finally, he uses Polonius who hides behind a curtain to hear the conversation between Hamlet and his mother in her bedchamber. The second uncovering force is Hamlet’s. It begins with the revelation of the ghost, from the other-worldly dimension and seeks
reaffirmation in the real world of everyday life. Hamlet needs to be convinced by his own eyes. He reaches his goal with the artful and intelligent means of using theatre as a trap. His method is different than Claudius’s. He plays at manipulation, by means of the play within the play, in order to reveal the hidden truth of what has really happened. His evidence is sought, not in words, but in physical signs: change of color and countenance in the King’s face and behavior at seeing the play, The Murder of Gonzago, to which Hamlet has added some lines of his own.

Revelation is mirrored in a chain of reflections: the spectators/readers watching Hamlet watching the King watching the play that mirrors back to them. The important thing in this drama is the play of revelation. The play of seeming/being and appearing. It is not true that Hamlet is unable to act. He demonstrates this at the end of the play. What is crucial is the play of uncovering the truth and theatre as a mirror to be looked at with the aim of deeper understanding of human nature.

### 4. Delayed Revenge

Unlike other revenge tragedies Hamlet does not follow the rules of an Apollonian revenge, to the point that revenge tragedy seems the only excuse for the play, a pretext. Hamlet (the play) seems rather a reflection upon which would be the true action of a human being, not dependent upon casualties and circumstances.

Hamlet’s delayed revenge contrasts with Laertes’s quick disposition and preparation to avenge his father Polonius’s death under the manipulating advice and help of King Claudius. Claudius’s advice to Laertes is not to delay revenge since to let time pass is to let the intention and passion of revenge cool down, giving opportunity for impediments and accidents of all sorts to appear: ...“That we would do/ We should do when we would, for this ‘would’ changes/ And hath abatements and delays as many/ As there are tongues, are hands, are accidents,/ And then this ‘should’ is like a spendthrift’s sigh/ That hurts by easing. But to the quick of th’ ulcer—/Hamlet comes back. What would you undertake/ To show yourself in deed your father’s son/ More than in words?” (4.7.116–123) It is ironic that Claudius’s advice to Laertes indirectly criticizes Hamlet’s delay. He exposes how revenge should be done, and if we give him credit, Hamlet, the play is not a revenge tragedy. If revenge is Apollonian Hamlet’s revenge is Dyonisian. After the first four acts of reflection the rhythm of the plot accelerates in the final act where revenge is finally accomplished as a coda in a musical piece. In Hamlet’s duel with
Laertes they exchange swords and the poisoned sword that has previously hurt Hamlet injures Laertes. The Queen is poisoned by accident after drinking the wine in the cup intended for Hamlet, and finally Hamlet kills Claudius with his sword and then also dies. His delay has cost him the lives of Polonius, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern’s and Ophelia’s and perhaps also his mother’s. His will to revenge his father’s murder appears blind-folded and erratic as when he kills the hidden Polonius non-seeing, believing it is Claudius he has killed.

Revenge is finally accomplished as if by non-seeing; through a force moving in the dark. Hamlet is found to be Shakespeare’s most conscious character—he does not fall into the traps set for him and even in the duel scene he seems to be aware that the sword has been poisoned—but paradoxically his revenge seems to be carried out in the dark, guided by the irrational force of madness.

5. Conclusion

Hamlet’s reflective consciousness pierces not only his individual Self or Moi, but pierces equally deep into his social Self or Soi into his consciousness of being part of a nation. He pierces into the consciousness and conscience of the characters that are close to him. Furthermore, his soul-searching inquiry transcends the limits of nations and cultures, towards the universally human.

Horatio’s task is to observe, to witness in order to be able to tell the truth of what has happened, the truth about Hamlet’s tragedy to the collective memory, in the manner of heroic tales. So we would ask what is Hamlet’s heroic deed? The attention of the drama has not been placed in deeds but in reflection and self-reflection; in the freedom to doubt and to question.

Revenge is something globally understood. We find it is understood in Japan and China through similar artistic expressions, but this seems not the central issue in Hamlet; it is the widening of consciousness.

Although we the readers/spectators have the privilege of hearing Hamlet’s disclosure of his soul through his many monologues, we cannot pretend to hold him in our grasp, for the fascinating mystery of his soul will ever escape us: “You would seem to know my stops, you would pluck out the heart of my mystery, you would sound me from my lowest note to my compass. And there is much music, excellent voice, in this little organ. Yet cannot you make it speak…” (3. 2. 356–360). Before dying he tells Horatio and the audience;“... You that look pale and tremble

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1 Regarding the concepts of Moi and Soi in Existential Semiotics, see Tarasti. Eero (2009:111–125).
at this chance. /That are but mutes or audience to this act. /Had I but time (as this fell sergeant Death /Is strict in his arrest)—O, I could tell you—/But let it be...” (5.2.318–321)

Since Hamlet is obsessed in revealing the hidden truth and conscience of others we may ask if he himself reaches self-revelation. Even though we do not seem to find anagnorisis as we find it in the classical tragedies of antiquity, for example in Oedipus at Colonus (see Hocevar, 2012) I would say that we may see it in the scene when he returns from England. In the letter to his uncle, he writes: “High and mighty. You shall know I am set naked on your kingdom. Tomorrow shall I beg leave to see your kingly eyes. When I shall (first asking your pardon) thereunto recount the occasion of my sudden return” (4.7.43–46) Laertes asks Claudius if he recognizes the hand and he answers: “‘Tis Hamlet’s character. ‘Naked’,” /And in a postscript here says ‘alone’.” (4.7.49–50).

In line with the clothing metaphors used in the play—the clothing isotopy—we may say that Hamlet now returns “naked”, uncovered, unveiled, to confront his destiny. He could have stayed in England or have hidden somewhere, but he is revealed (“Naked”). He knows he is coming to his death. He fears not and comes to meet his destiny in heroic manner.

If it be true that in poetry we find the universal dimension where all human beings are united, it is theatre which gives us the means to work in the understanding of seeing and being seen.

References


A History of Misunderstandings: China in the Western Imaginary

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Abstract: In 1793 an important act took place that would shape not just the way how two empires interacted with each other, but also how two very different cultures perceived one another. I am speaking of course about the McCartney mission to China between 1792 and 1794.

As we know it today the embassy was doomed to fail and not only because of the obvious conflicts of interests, language barriers or difference in etiquette. There may have been something deeper within their own ethnocentrism that stopped both parties from fully understanding each other, thus setting the cornerstone of a misunderstanding so great that would henceforth define how the West saw China.

I want to explore some of the causes that contributed all through history to create an inaccurate image of China that would influence chroniclers, historians, writers, politicians and common people on both sides of The Great Wall until today.

Key words: China; cultural misunderstanding; orientalism; McCartney mission; Western imaginary

1. Introduction

Way before 1793 and the McCartney mission, Westerners had already arrived in China with the intent of bridging different civilizations. The 13th Century Venetian merchant Marco Polo was perhaps the most notorious Western visitor during the Yuan Dynasty.

Polo allegedly travelled across the Silk Road and beyond as far away as to Japan and even though some modern scholars doubt the veracity of his travels (Wood, 1996) the effect of his work is undeniable; during his time as political prisoner in the town of Genova between 1298–1299, Polo’s cellmate Rustichello da Pisa wrote the story of his travels. The manuscript was titled Il Milione or The Million and it is known today as The Travels of Marco Polo.

The manuscript became popular enough among the literate elite of Medieval Europe and was often copied, translated and re-copied into many European
languages. Tragically, the story was more often than not read for pure amusement, since Rustichello wrote the manuscript in a style similar to his past chivalric romances.

The world depicted in *Il Milione* was filled with what Jacques Le Goff (1986) categorizes as Magic, Miracles and Wonders, and thus it was no wonder that few readers ever took the book as something more than a fable. This prevalent scepticism is confirmed two centuries later when Christopher Columbus—inspired by Marco Polo’s description of Chinese and Japanese geography—struggles to find support for his expedition across the Atlantic.

During the 16th century another prominent traveller made a journey to China; this man was the Jesuit missionary Matteo Ricci and perhaps the very first Western sinologist. Ricci’s contributions towards the bridging and understanding of Chinese culture were many. He was capable of reading and writing classical Chinese, and he became the first person to ever translate the Confucian classics into Latin. He also participated in the making of the first Portuguese–Chinese dictionary and created a system to transcribe Chinese words into the Latin alphabet (Camus, 2007).

Ricci reasoned that by explaining Christianity by means of the Confucian rhetoric that had dominated the Chinese thought through the centuries he could reach and by consequence convert Chinese elite. Ricci sustained that Confucian values—such as the veneration of ancestors—were not in conflict with Catholic doctrine, nevertheless the book entitled *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven* (1603) where he expressed his point of view created a controversy among the Catholic Church and stirred a century-long argument until Pope Clement XI in 1705, decided to ban any form of Confucianism. In turn Emperor Kangxi banned Christian missions from China, thus ending Matteo Ricci’s life work. (Gernet, 1985)

Marco Polo and Matteo Ricci were not just travelers, merchants or priests, they also acted as diplomats, observers and advisors in The Middle Kingdom. Their work marked the first steps towards the understanding of Chinese culture and civilization, but paradoxically their work had little relevance towards the construction of Sino-Western relations.

During Marco Polo’s time the World felt like a much bigger place and China seemed too distant to matter in the mindset of the common person. If anything, China was not much more than the source of many fabulous legends and unconfirmed rumors.

During Matteo Ricci’s time European imperialism had contributed to making the world a smaller place and it was now possible to circumnavigate the earth. The
printing press had finally reached Europe, but most people still remained illiterate. Ricci’s work remained confined mostly in religious and academic circles, as the subject matter seemed too obscure for many to grasp. After all China was still not that relevant in the mercantile sense of the word, all and all the British did not discover Tea until 1660. (BBC Radio 4, *In Our Time*, 29 April 2004)

It was not until the late 18th century that China had become a real place in the Western Imaginary. Thanks to the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution people had money to spend and things to spend it on. The written word became a business like never before. Newspapers started feeding the appetite of its news-hungry readers.

By the time the McCaughtey mission reached its inevitable conclusion the world was ready to hear and believe anything that its members had to say.

### 2. The Maccaughty Embassy

On September 26th of the year 1792, King George III sent for the first time an embassy to Chinese territory, with the purpose of convincing Emperor Qianlong into opening the ports and cities for British merchants. So far the economic balance was leaning against the Europeans who were only allowed to trade within the limits of Guangzhou, using some government appointed merchants as intermediaries that in return demanded large amounts of silver in exchange for tea. In order to avoid bankruptcy, Henry Dundas, Minister of Interior and the former director of the East Indies Trade Company proposed that Scottish diplomat Lord Maccaughty should lead the expedition in the name of the Crown. His knowledge and experience with British policies in India made him the ideal candidate in the eye of his peers. (Gernet, 2007)

In June of 1793, after sailing for nine months Maccaughty reached Chinese shores with what probably was the biggest diplomatic envoy of its time, a total of 700 people were accounted for, including diplomats, merchants, soldiers, scientists, painters, watchmakers, gardeners, musicians, Chinese seminarians and an aerostatic air balloon pilot. (Courtauld & Holdsworth, May, 2008)

The strategy was to display the latest technological and scientific advances, hoping to impress and humble Emperor Qianlong into allowing free trade with the West, so he, and by consequence, all of his subjects could get their hands on more of the West’s latest innovations.

Nevertheless it all proved to be an “Up Hill battle” for the British embassy: Just before the party reached the mainland, the Chinese seminarians escaped out of fear
of being punished by Chinese law. This imposed a huge handicap, as they were
suddenly left without any native speaker to aid them on their journey, thus losing
any real chance of understanding and making themselves understood. Luckily the
11-year-old Thomas Staunton had learned to speak some Mandarin along the way
and could communicate well enough as to carry some messages to the other side.
Soon enough the young interpreter was tested as imperial officials Zhengrui and
Heshen came to guide and supervise the envoy, until it reached the capital. (Lovell,
2007)

By August 5th they had begun to move up north. The British mission was
navigating slowly across the Grand Canal that connected the northern Yellow River
with the southern Yangtze River. They were carrying heavy parcels filled with “the
precious gifts” that among many other things included telescopes, barometers,
clocks, compressed air guns, an aerostatic air balloon, automats, a planetarium
and above all stood a flag that read “Tribute embassy of the red barbarians”.
(Courtauld & Holdsworth. May, 2008)

Although this gesture was small in size, it was of great significance as it
inevitably settled the tone of the visit. 18th Century China had no ministry of foreign
affairs or bureaucratic equivalent. The closest thing was perhaps the office in charge
of receiving tribute from vassal countries.

According to traditional Chinese view, the Middle Kingdom was at the centre
of the earth and all other countries were seen as secondary, while its inhabitants
were perceived to be yídí or non-Han people; hence barbarians. Entering China was
possible but only in quality of vassals. Acknowledging another country as a political
equal would have been unthinkable. Even the rulers of neighbouring states such as
Korea and Burma had to show respect to the emperor by kowtowing in his presence.

Kowtow or kòutóu was the traditional ceremony of respect that consisted of
kneeling and bowing so low as to have one’s head touching the ground and it was
customary to do it in the presence of the emperor.

So what else was to be expected of these red barbarians? The British well aware
of this custom told McCartney to conform to Chinese regulations, but instead he
chose to ignore this order out of pride. During the six weeks that the party spent
travelling upriver, Macartney wasted half of that time arguing with Chinese officials
about the proper etiquette and protocol. Macartney refused to kòutóu insisting on
going only as far as to take off his hat, kneeling with one leg and kissing the
emperor’s hand, one thing more impossible than the other.

In the eyes of the Chinese the emperor was the son of Heaven and “ruler of
everything under the sky”. Touching him was forbidden to any mortal.
When the conflict seemed impossible to solve, the Emperor chose to lower the amount of food that was given to the embassy as if to make them see “the importance of respecting the rituals of the empire.” Today people may find this infatuation with rituals and the need to know and obey them, as something somewhat absurd, but we must remember that the emperor Qianlong was the sixth emperor of the Qing Dynasty, a dynasty where a small minority ruled over a vast majority. Only by conforming to the Confucian bureaucracy that had regulated the land for more than a thousand years, could the Manchu Emperor justify his rule over China. Making concessions to the West on how to conduct court affairs was something that could not be allowed.

It was only after they arrived in Beijing that the British discovered that Qianlong had moved to his Summer Palace in Rehe, so Macartney had to face yet another dilemma; he feared that the journey by land would damage the larger and more delicate artifacts and asked his Chinese Guardian’s permission to store them in the Forbidden City until the court returned. Zhengru agreed to his request, but believed that by not leaving all the gifts at the feet of “The Son of Heaven” the British would have demeaned their mission.

Perhaps they were right, because Emperor Qianlong was unimpressed by what was given to him. Since he could not grasp the practical use of Western technology he chose to dismiss the foreign dignitaries with something that looked more like an imperial order than a diplomatic missive. The letter addressed King George III and said the following:

We have never been interested in clever artifacts and we do not need any of the objects that your country produces. Therefore, O. King, as regard to sending someone to remain at the capital, while it is not in regulation with the harmony of Celestial Empire, we also feel that it is not in advantage to your country. Hence we have commanded your tribute envoys to return safely home. You, O. King should simply act in conformity to our wishes by strengthening your loyalty and swearing perpetual obedience so as to ensure that your country may share the blessings of peace”. (Backhouse & Bland, 1914, p. 322–331)

Maybe if Macartney had left aside his ego, the Emperor’s words would have been less harsh, but ultimately the result would have been the same. Truth to be told, both systems were incompatible from the start as no Empire would recognise another nation as equal. Both sides fiercely conditioned by their respective beliefs could not understand each other. The Chinese believed in the tradition and harmony
that had safeguarded the Middle Kingdom through the ages while the British believed in competition and innovation that had made them the most successful merchant nation at the time.

3. The Great Wall as the Great Misunderstanding

It is not a surprise to anyone that after being rejected, the British chroniclers chose to describe China in the most unfavourable way. I believe that by not being able to understand the language they could not get past the superficial aspect of Chinese culture.

According to John Barrow, the treasurer of Macartney’s embassy, the quarters assigned to them in the Forbidden City “were better suited for pigs than for men” while he described Chinese theatrical arts as “vulgar” and Chinese music as “an accumulation of endless noise”. (Lovell, 2007, p.27)

Macartney himself was not shy of words in his memoirs; he had made his feelings about China perfectly clear:

“The Empire of China is an old, crazy, first-rate Man of War, which a fortunate succession of vigilant officers have contrived to keep afloat for these hundred and fifty years past, and to overawe their neighbours merely by her bulk and appearance.” (Robbins, 1908)

He also had more than a few words of choice about Qianlong’s ability as a ruler, often criticizing and sometimes even wishing the end of his reign. Macartney wrote the following in his diary:

The breaking-up of the power of China (not a very improbable event) would occasion a complete subversion of the commerce, not only of Asia, but a very sensible change in the other quarters of the world. The industry and the ingenuity of the Chinese would be checked and enfeebled, but they would not be annihilated. Her ports would no longer be barricaded; they would be attempted by all the adventures of all trading nations, who would search every channel, creek, and cranny of China for a market, and for some time be the cause of much rivalry and disorder. Nevertheless, as Great Britain, from the weight of her riches and the genius and spirits of her people, is becoming the first political, marine, and commercial Power on the globe, it is reasonable to think that she would prove the greatest gainer by such a revolution as I have
alluded to, and rise superior over every competitor. (Ibid.)

It is curious to see how badly he felt about China, especially when modern historians such as Mark Elliott have described Qianlong to be on most accounts one of China’s greatest monarchs. His reign, lasting for more than six decades was the longest in the country’s history. It was under his rule when China expanded its territory to almost twice its size, annexing modern day’s provinces of Tibet, Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia. Not to mention other campaigns in Burma and Vietnam. Elliot said in an interview to the Wall Street Journal; “By the time Qianlong ascended to the throne, Qing rule was at its greatest splendour, the coffers were bursting, the sporadic rebellions against foreign rule mostly under control, and China was looked upon as the most refined place on earth by many, both in Asia and in Europe.”

However, only one thing seems to be worthy of the unanimous approval of the delegation; I am speaking of course about the Great Wall of China. While the British envoy moved up north, Macartney made everyone stop outside of Beijing, just so he could gaze upon its wonder.

In the published version of his diary many pages are dedicated to describing its height, width, number of bricks, the profundity of the foundations, etc... while many other pages are spent describing its shape and defence strategy. According to a very impressed Macartney the Great Wall was “the most formidable edification made by human hands”.

John Barrow on the other hand spent a fair share of his time making sensational and romantic comparisons as if to make the Great Wall, greater to Western readers. He estimated that the amount of stone used in the construction was equal to the amount of stone used in all the houses of England and Scotland; “To have an idea of the material used in the construction of this formidable edification, it is safe to say that it could go around the Earth, not once, but twice with two walls of two meters high and 60 centimetres width each” (Lovell, 2007, p. 28)

The British visitors came to the unanimous conclusion that the wall had been built 200 years before the Christian era, which would amount to two thousand years before their time, without even bothering to verify this fact with Chinese sources.

“In the ancient time of its conclusion—said Macartney—China was not just a powerful empire, but also a wise and virtuous nation with the capacity for prevention that would drive them to build what was then believed to be a perpetual defence against future invasions” (Peyrefitte, 1993, p. 526).

While Macartney may have been wrong in his assertions, the view born during
his journey became crucial since it shaped the way the West viewed and interacted with China.

Before 1794 and in spite of the contributions of the already mentioned Marco Polo and Jesuit Missionaries, knowledge about China was very much limited and often mixed with fantasies.

In the pre-1794 Western society China was a mysterious and distant land with almost no correlation with reality. After 1794 all of that was changed for good. For the first time in history China had appeared in the mental map of all Westerners, but not without a price of course.

Within the post-1794 rhetoric it is possible to identify two main tendencies that although contradictory seem to always come hand in hand. The first seems to be fascination. Fascination does not imply understanding; on the contrary, it requires ignorance to keep it working. (Faure, Guy. O) and ignorance like the one that encouraged McCartney to assume his fabrications as facts.

We know today, that the Great Wall did not come into existence as we see it. Instead, it was built irregularly during different periods of time and space, extending to the south as far as the upper part of the Yangtze River. Some even argue that there is no such a thing as a Great Wall, but rather a series of smaller walls. Another “Great” misunderstanding is the idea that “The Wall” was the most effective defensive mechanism of its time, something so great that Attila the Hun could not overcome, thus resulting in a sudden change of direction towards the West and that concluded with the pillage of Rome in the year 410 AD.

Truth to be told, more often than not the wall failed to repel the attacks and incursions from nomad tribes such as the Mongolians and Manchus who conquered China and founded foreign dynasties that held power for considerable long periods of time. Last, but not least I think it is important to note how ancient Chinese did not seem to share the fascination for “the Wall” as their modern counterparts seem to do. Sometimes “the Wall” was seen as a symbol of bad Omens. No better way to illustrate this point than by quoting an English translation of a Han Dynasty poem about the construction of “the Wall”.

“If a son is born, mind you don’t raise him!  
If a girl is born, feed her dried meat.  
Don’t you just see beside the Long Wall?  
Dead men’s skeletons prop each other up.” (Turnbull, 2007, p. 49)

The second tendency within the post-1794 rhetoric seems to be one of Fear.
Fear born out of frustration and opposing world views, the same fear that made Macartney suggest the British intervention in case of “the breaking-up of the power in China”. The same fear that made Thomas Staunton support the armed conflict that set in march two Opium Wars and a humiliation that lasted 100 years, in which colonial powers dealt with China using what was called “Gunboat Diplomacy”.

### 4. Conclusion

The legacy of the post-Macartney era in Western-Sino relations contributed to the creation of certain paradigms during the end of the 19th century, such as “The sick man of East Asia” and “The Yellow Peril” where a contradictory weak and dangerous foe exists and is meant to be dominated and subjugated by the West. As is explained in Edward Said’s *Orientalism*, (1978, p. 209) “The Orient—in this case China—exists for the West, and is constructed by and in relation to the West. It is a mirror image of what is inferior and alien (“Other”) to the West”.

However, we no longer live in a world of isolated countries. China—contrary to the prediction of many—has risen from the position of servitude imposed by the West and has now become an important actor in the international and economic scene.

China counts with a permanent seat in the UN’s Security Council and is creditor to most Western countries like the US and the UK. It was only due to the Chinese bailout money that many countries managed to recover from the latest economic recessions. So why is China still struggling to find acceptance by the West?

Chinese netizens often feel like Western Media fails to understand their country, distorting domestic news in order to sell. Could it be that we are still suffering from a 200-year-old misunderstanding?

To some extent I would find it accurate to say that a neo-Macartneyean sentiment if it may, is still present on Western Media. Chinese in general and Chinese government in particular, more often than not are demeaned or vilified as they are portrayed either as incompetent or corrupt as if in Qing era “Sick man of East Asia” or as the evil power that represents a threat to the Western way of life, much like the Fu-Manchu antagonist of Sax Rohmer’s *Yellow Peril* novels.

In today’s globalized world the bridge linking the West with China grows stronger on the basis of commerce and technology, but that commercial bridge does not imply that we are reaching a better understanding of each other’s culture. Fear and fascination for the mysterious still persist in spite of the neutralizing and levelling forces governing our modern technological world. As times change, the
way we view China should also be reviewed if we ever hope to find understanding.

References


Existential Trace of Marginal Subject: A Study of Chinese American Writings with Perspective of Existential Semiotics

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Abstract: According to Existential Semiotics, subject carries signs moving forward through negation and affirmation to achieve transcendence. Such an existential journey has been exactly revealed in Chinese American writings. When Chinese depart for America, they begin to experience the disjunction of subject and object; meanwhile it brings various possibilities towards conjunction. In this paper the existential traces of Chinese Americans are categorized in five situations and analyzed from the movement of signs. Different traces reveal different paths of journey from Dasein to Transcendence of subject. Herein the culture plays the role of Other propelling the subject to encounter and penetrate, while subject also shows dynamic energy through the modalities. Their existential effort is of great significance in introspection of globalized process.

Key words: existence; sign; Chinese American writings; subject

Introduction

Chinese American literature, as a special literary field, originated from the transnational flow in the mid-eighteenth century. Since the 1970s, Chinese American literary works bloom for increasing new writers with various writing styles. But in a general view, all Chinese American works are involved in the same theme of “Anxiety of Identity”, where barriers are held up in the way among the protagonists and their families, among the protagonists and the societies and even among themselves. They often lament on such questions as, “Who am I? Where do I come from? Where am I going?” However, it is just in the process of writing identity that they start their existential journey to find the true self.

According to Existential Semiotics by Eero Tarasti, subject, along with sign, attains transcendence through movement of negation and affirmation. The first stage is negation, which is a leap toward the emptiness. After this leap, subject
returns to the world just to experience the object which has lost some previous
significance. However, the subject is no longer in the existential anxiety when he
encounters the emptiness. To be exact, the subject enters another experience that
has opposite traits against early situation. When the subject returns to this world
again and creates signs, these signs possess existential meaning, because they reflect
the significance of the subject’s transcendental journey. The next stage is
affirmation. Through affirmation and long-range scanning, subject can understand
the deficiencies when he passes through the previous level, as if he gets the promise
made by the referential frame of the deeper level. The pre-sign then becomes the
action sign, which means the abandonment of pre-sign and the support of action
sign. It is exactly in this process of separation and return, signs are converted into a
continuous movement; they are no longer a static object, but mold themselves freely
in a brand-new way. (Tarasti 2000; 19) (Figure 1)

As for Chinese Americans, to leave Chinese cultural sphere and head for the
foreign country is a journey of negation which goes out of Dasein and toward the
unknown world. Figure 2 reveals the floating process of Chinese Americans, where
the left is the field of Chinese culture, the right refers to the field of American
culture, and the middle belongs to the field of Chinese American culture, while the
arrowhead shows the movement and impact among each other. In the beginning,
the marginal forces in the field of Chinese culture have realized some dissatisfactory
aspects of the cultural sphere; hence, they attempt to leave it with an intention of
seeking for a perfect sense of transcendence, which is the beginning of negation.
They float in the air, looking for dwelling places to settle down. then prominent
American cultural sphere becomes their destination, the signs descend and enter the
field of American culture and live on the edge of it. At this moment, they have not
only been imprinted by both the Chinese culture and the American culture, but also
have received ideas from transcendence during their float. They continue to move in the field of American culture, some trying to disappear in it, some attempting to separate themselves to form a new field called Chinese American culture, and some wanting to return to the field of Chinese culture. Moreover, there exist communication and negotiation between Chinese culture and American culture. So the intertwined sign flows are flowed among Chinese culture, American culture and Chinese American culture, which forms the seemingly paradoxical themes in Chinese American writings, such as Lan Samantha Chang’s novel *Inheritance*, in which the author regards herself as an American, but she puts the protagonist into imaginary Chinese cultural circumstance, while the author utilizes Chinese cultural resources just to fight against Chinese culture’s oppression upon the subject.

![Figure 2](image)

According to semiotician A. J. Greimas, subject and value object are always in the process from disjunction \((S \cup O)\) to conjunction \((S \cap O)\). (Courtes 2001:15) From the moment when Chinese Americans leave the Chinese culture, subject has started to separate and disjunct from object, in the meanwhile, subject, along with floating signs, is searching for new possible conjunction. Hence, the anxiety of identity in Chinese American works is derived from the emptiness triggered by this rupture, and this existential introspection of subject out of anxiety is involved in the journey of “becoming” of subject from Dasein to transcendence.

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After the subject sign has separated from original cultural sphere, it starts to float in the air. (Figure 3) However, this sign is not always staying there. Rather, floating freedom bestows it with the possibility of moving toward every direction, which has generated the following moving directions.

The first situation is that signs keep moving toward the target cultural sphere
before they settle down. (Figure 4) In Chinese Americans’ writings, this situation expresses that the subjects are longing for transcending their own identity and merging into different cultural sphere. In Christine Chiu’s book Troublemaker and Other Saints, marginal Chinese Americans have gotten rid of the bewilderment of “Chinese-ness” and have paved the way for cross-cultural mergence. For instance, the heroine Georgianna bravely marries the black; the matriarch walks away from the shadow of punishment, the gentleman walks out of the lost past, Amy regrets her antagonism toward Western males, and Eric rescues the aged Chinese American...

In Kim Wong Keltner’s book Buddha Baby, the protagonist deals with the conflict between Chinese Americans and the mainstream with “Buddha” tolerance and generosity. In this novel, Lindsey found two part-time jobs of cross-cultural significance, one of which was being a teacher at her Alma Mater St. Maude’s church school, the other was being a clerk in a museum. Lindsey recalled that she’s been discriminated during her primary school time, such as she was isolated, cursed and beaten by classmates and scolded by teachers. However, when she fortuitously read previous information, she found that the teacher had given her a very high evaluation and that her grandmother was kidnapped here, though fortunately rescued by local government. The novel ends with Lindsey’s participation in celebration held by her Alma Mater, which expresses a harmonious cross-cultural mergence. Under this circumstance, the Chinese American subjects give up their past identity, and identify themselves with target cultural sphere. They also positively seek for mutual communication and understanding to achieve the ideal which combines Chinese American subjects and the target cultural sphere.

The second situation is that they try to return to the original cultural sphere after they’ve been rejected by the target cultural sphere. (Figure 5) They have no
other alternatives but to return, and another key attractive factor is the familiarity of the original cultural sphere. In Lan Samantha Chang’s novel collection *Hunger: A Novella and Stories*, a large number of Chinese cultural symbols are used to describe their original cultural families with rich imagination.

In the novel collection, *Water Names* tells that girls nestled their heads on grandmother on a summer night and listened to her story about the Yangtze River. *The Unforgetting* talks about a story in which Ming’s family, as a Chinese American one, has slowly put Chinese culture into oblivion, so Ming’s wife Sansan learned to cook western-style food for her husband Ming to take to office; meanwhile, china bowls and books brought from China have been placed on the basement bookshelf. *The Eve of the Spirit Festival* narrates that a Chinese American mother died of illness, her eldest daughter Emily was indignant with her father who was unwilling to adopt Western medical treatment to save her mother’s life. After Emily’s father passed away, she always saw her father’s undispersed soul in the night of Spirit Festival. In *Pipa’s Stories*, Pipa’s mother, who behaved like a witch, kept mumbling while simmering traditional Chinese medicine all day long. Pipa tried to stay away from home because she didn’t want to live in the shadow of her mother. In this story, an abundance of traditional Chinese cultural symbols has been used. These symbols, belonging to “public regular symbols”, are “signified priority” symbols which have been ruled again through long-term cultural accumulation. (Zhao 1990: 183) At this time, the “culture” signified has become the sole mark for Chinese American individuals to touch history, and the pledge for ethic groups to identify with themselves. However, it is imperfect for them to return to history through cultural symbols, which misguide the notion of traditional Chinese medicine as the reflection of mysterious witchcraft, and bewilder children with the legend of the Yangtze River. From the previous facts, it has indicated that the notion of subject, continues varying in the floating journey of negation with his own existential mark. Hence, it results in an arduous winding path for the subject to return to the original culture.

In the third situation, there is retardance in the movement of signs. On the one hand, they are alienated from the original cultural sphere; on the other hand, they are refused by the target cultural sphere; then they keep floating in the air. (Figure
6) Sarah Shun-Lien Bynum’s book *Madeleine Is Sleeping* presents such an awkward situation. Little Madeleine was severely punished that even the skin of her hands were scalded together just because she touched the fool Jouy’s genitals out of curiosity. Then she roved with a Gypsy troupe by chance. After much difficulty and suffering, they returned to their hometown and tried to set up the stage to perform, however, all the villagers including her mother were staring at them numbly. Madeleine, who was in a complete daze, finally fell down and slept. In this novel, the wandering girl who can’t return home is precisely in the helpless condition where the signs have to keep floating.

Madeleine has an archetype named “Madeline” which is a fortunate heroine in the fairy story written by American Australian writer Ludwig Bemelmans. Yet the heroine is rewritten in this novel through parody, hence the veil which covers traditional happy ending has been torn away and the name familiar to readers has been regulated again, both of which, thus, have made the signifier turn empty and separated subject from object again. Now, the significance of classic has totally disappeared; instead, the world has become a disjunctive vanity in which the subject feels nothing but “oppression from non-being”. (Tillich 1998: 33, 37) In this novel, dream and reality are intertwined to form a narrative maze. Such writing techniques of post-modern experimentalism as collage, breakage and short circuit reveal that the subject has disjuncted from the object, which results in a suffocated anxiety and homeless hesitance. No wonder many readers complain that this novel is obscure, because it expresses an anxiety in which the will of the subject fails to be comprehended and the identity of the subject fails to be accepted when the subject keeps afloat in the air.

In the fourth situation, the floating existing signs gradually shape their own cultural sphere through the approaching and connecting each other on the premise that neither of the two cultural areas accepts them. They mark their own characteristics in their own cultural sphere and claim that they belong to neither of the other two cultural areas. (Figure 7) Therefore they are in a situation to reject and criticize both Chinese culture and American culture, with Chinese American fighter Frank Chin’s opinion as this situation’s marked logo and “Zhao-Tang Argument” (argument between Chin and Kingston) as its practical application.

![Figure 6]

![Figure 7]
In her book *The Woman Warrior* (Kingston) published in 1975, Maxine Hong Kingston blends a modern Chinese American girl’s situation with the story of Hua Mulan, Yue Fei and Cai Wenji of old Chinese folk tales, resulting in a complex portrayal that passes through the time. This book is awarded National Book Critics Circle Award for Nonfiction and has been one of the bestsellers for a long time. In addition, it has been reported as the most commonly textbook of the living authors’ in university education. However, it becomes the trigger of “Zhao-Tang Argument”, in which Chin has accused Kingston of “liberally adapting traditional stories to collude with white racist stereotypes and to invent a ‘fake’ Chinese-American culture that is more palatable to the mainstream.” (Chang 1991: 2) Chang Chin criticizes that Kingston is making herself Americanized by using the speaking methods of the white people.

Then what is Chin’s definition of Chinese Americans? He believes that Chinese American literature contains only those written by the Chinese Americans living in America generation after generation and having a real sense of “Chinese American sensibility” (Chin 1972: 30) For Chin, Chinese Americans are a group of persons who have their unique cultural tradition and ethnic awareness instead of Chinese or Americans. Chin once got angry because of being equated with the new emigrants from Hong Kong or Taiwan; “... I feel humiliated at being related to persons who are totally Chinese, such as Li Jinyang and Lin Yutang. We have different sensibility and cannot be exchanged.” (ibid) Chin makes a strong declaration of Chinese American field by making himself not belonging to any Chinese or American group.

In the fifth situation, the signs shuttle between the two cultural spheres without any anxiety when those two fields are willing to accept them. It’s a relatively perfect situation since the sense of belonging to the two cultures makes them satisfied in travelling and free at home. (Figure 8) Such a kind of harmony can be found in Larissa Lai’s *When Fox Is a Thousand* and Sarah Shun-lien Bynum’s *Madeleine Is Sleeping*.

The fox in Larissa Lai’s *When Fox Is a Thousand* draws the materials from the “thousand-living fox spirit” in Chinese myths. According to *Xuanzhong Ji* by Guo
Pu of the Jin Dynasty, “when it is fifty-year-old, the fox becomes a lady and one hundred a beautiful lady... a thousand it becomes as powerful as heaven and thus is called fox of heaven.” (Guo Pu 1927) In the novel, the fox dwells in Chinese American girl Huang and experience what Huang experiences. This is the ideal situation of the signs since it can go through the time and space and appears whatever it likes to be.

In Madeleine Is Sleeping, the author uses poetic language and fairy tale images to solace the injured heart. Set in an old French village, the novel characterizes some imaginary figures such as the fat fairy with wings, Charlotte with chord growing from her body and Madeleine, whose hand heals herself. Employment of elegant French vocabulary, poetry form and poetic language, the fairy tale immerses the readers in another world to perceive the truth of life and to find their spiritual home. It is just as what Johann Gottfried von Herder said; “Real fairy tales liberates us from time and space, and release us from death. We reach spiritual realm through fairy tales.” (Li 2003; 24–25)

Through rewriting, the two books subvert or transplant the pretext in order to create a surreal magic world where the signs shuttle between two cultures freely and realize the dream of constructing the subjectivity in a fantastic world. Through the employment of a surreal labyrinthine narration, the author reforms the narrative form, extricates the novel from the manacle of “narrating the real” and avoids political writing. In this way, the author is able to pursue the form of noumenal meaning and the proposition with eternal significance. From this level, the surreal magical world brings the injured subjects to their real home.

As mentioned above original cultural sphere, target cultural sphere and Chinese American cultural sphere belong to Dasein that the subjects rely on to exist. The subjects detach themselves from Dasein 1 (original cultural area) by negation and move to the unknown world as well as experience the existence itself. With the new comprehension of existence, the subjects move to Dasein 2 (target cultural sphere). They construct Dasein 3 (Chinese American cultural sphere) when they find neither Dasein 1 nor Dasein 2 can satisfy their needs. The move of Chinese Americans from original cultural sphere to target cultural sphere and finally to the Chinese American
cultural sphere cannot be understood as occupancy from one point to another, but a trip of existence in which they continually negate and pursue. The trip is not only a connection locus from point to point, but also an extension from point to surface during which the trace of existence becomes more and more clear.

## Significance of Existence

Saussure’s distinction about the signifier and the signified indicates that a disjunction has appeared between the object and the word, and that there’s no merging between the object and the subject, which results in the separation of the subject from the object. In the mean time, both the signifier and the signified always hope to go toward each other and try to reconnect with signs. The footprints of Chinese Americans have just witnessed this kind of tragic magnificent disjunction and quest. Hence, it is, whether a return or a subversion, the existent fruit created by floating signs.

Their journey of existence itself is an introspection to Chinese culture. The machine of Chinese culture throws them out and makes them afloat in the air, which deserves Chinese culture to introspect itself. As Chinese scholar Zhao Yiheng says, a text needless to criticize is an abnormal text and a culture needless to criticize is also an abnormal culture. The cultural area should change as personal perspective in the culture changes, because culture is originally that of human. Globalization is another aspect that needs introspection. It is exactly the time for signs to move reversely when globalization process becomes such a tyrannous Other and thus results in more anxiety and the loss of self. Because the subjects have acquired instructions from the transcendence when they are afloat and this prompts them to treat the Dasein with a transcendent discernment and to correct those backward Dasein.

The journey toward being is far from romantic due to the facts that they have comprehended the melancholy of homelessness during their anxiety and that they long for returning home more than ever during vagrancy. Although they are pushed toward the vanity by what they’ve encountered, they create love stories and poetic fairy tales magnanimously, as the victims, pushed by the affirmation and transcendence of truth, good and beauty hidden in the negation. As one philosopher once said, when nothing exists, there is poetry. The poetry of the subject has illuminated darkness in the vanity.

This is exactly the existential meaning of the writings by the new generation of Chinese American writers. They express the intranslatable anxiety when the subject
and object part and the persistent footprints when they experience the pursuit of transcendence. Now, the author of the paper believes there is no puzzle about identity paradox in Chinese American writings, which literally proves the multiple possibilities of “becoming” and from the other perspective, the vigor and hope of this existential area.

### References


A Conceptual Framework for Brand Equity Planning with Structuralist Operations and Operations of Rhetorical Transformation

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Abstract: This paper furnishes a structuralist rhetorical semiotic conceptual framework for brand equity planning, by engaging critically in conceptual argumentation that is a necessary prerequisite for putting salient facets of the scrutinized phenomenon in perspective. The main source of brand equity that is employed for exemplification purposes is the advertising filmic text. The conceptual framework assumes as its general blueprint Greimas’s generativist model of the trajectory of signification. Structuralist operations and operations of rhetorical transformation are posited as the basis for the generation of superior brand associations. The conceptual model put forward challenges the Greimasian assumption that a depth semantic structure is reducible to a binarist rationale, while adopting a connectionist approach in the form of associative networks. At the same time, the proposed framework deviates from the application of conceptual graphs in textual semiotics, while portraying in the form of associative networks how the three strata of a brand’s trajectory of signification interact with view to generating brand associations.

Key words: structuralism; connectionism; rhetorical semiotics; brand equity; brand associations

The brand trajectory of signification as blueprint for maintaining brand identity as textual coherence

Brand identity is not about repeating the same message, but about maintaining a signification kernel through variable communicative manifestations. It concerns the
maintenance of identity through difference or the repetition of a brand’s semic\(^1\) nucleus through different brand narratives. The master brand narrative\(^2\) manifests the underlying depth grammar of a brand, whereas individual brand narratives constitute a brand’s multifarious manifestations.

In structuralist semiotic terms, a brand’s semantic kernel as core brand identity or a brand’s DNA consists in a semic micro-universe. The key brand image attributes or semes that make up its semantic edifice constitute nuclear semes, which, while enriched with contextual semes or classemes in discrete communicative contexts, make up sememes as manifestations of a brand’s core and peripheral semantic territory. Nuclear semes constitute the minimal units of signification of a brand langue or its core image attributes. What was originally conceived by Greimas (1966) in Structural Semantics as a semic micro-universe and particularly as a semic category, was redefined by Rastier (1987) as semic molecules, which combine at least two semes. The semic micro-universe makes up a brand’s logically organized depth grammar, which becomes manifested through the elements and the particular syntax of two additional strata in the generative trajectory of signification [\textit{parcours g\'en\'eratif}\(^3\)], viz. semio-narrative and discursive structures (Greimas and Court\'es, 1979).

A brand’s textual coherence is maintained synchronically and diachronically through the isotopic recurrence of invariant elements of both expression and content planes, while the differential value of a brand’s idiolectal, intra-textual, isotopically recurrent elements is gauged by comparison to sociolectal product/service category invariants that constitute key image drivers for a given category.

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1. Greimas (1966—1979) defined semes as the elementary relational terms of a semantic universe and distinguished between nuclear and contextual semes or classemes. Nuclear semes constitute invariant semantic properties of lexemes (or videmes in a visual or polysemiotic sign system), whereas classemes contextual properties. The addition of at least one nuclear and one contextual seme furnish a sememe, which is a semantic property of manifest discourse words or lexemes (but also videmes). Rastier (2005a) further distinguished between inherent and afferent semes. In crude terms, inherent semes constitute stable properties of sememes (across different contexts in micro, meso and macro semantic terms), whereas afferent semes constitute contextually determined semes. For Rastier, a semic molecule constitutes a constellation of at least two semes. Let it be noted that whereas for Greimas sememes are ascribable on a lexemic level, for Rastier, they are ascribable on a morphemic level. For the sake of reducing complexity, I am employing semes as the elementary semantic units of lexemes and videmes. A brand’s semic molecule constitutes the kernel of a brand’s semic micro-universe from a structuralist semiotic point of view (see Rossolatos, 2012b).

2. A brand’s master narrative is equivalent to a brand’s canonical narrative schema, as intended positioning statement (see Rossolatos, 2012b)

3. Let it be noted that Rastier (1989) redefined the three levels of the trajectory in the context of his model of interpretive semantics into micro, meso and macrosemantic levels (see Rastier, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c).
Semio-narrative structures contain the depth meaning of discursive structures and furnish the form of their organization. From a structuralist semiotic perspective, a surface discursive structure is customarily translated in semio-narrative terms through segmentation into narrative programs \[\text{NPs}\]. In terms of brand structure, semio-narrative structures are, or at least, should be embedded in a brand specific canonical narrative schema, which constitutes what was termed above as brand master narrative. A brand master narrative includes a brand’s key positioning statement that features its nuclear sémic brand image structure (Rossolatos 2012b).

Discursive structures are situated at a more superficial level in the generative trajectory and allow for the manifestation at the discursive level of semio-narrative structures in the face of an enunciative predicament (Greimas and Courtès 1979). Discursive structures correspond to the manifest texts of a brand master narrative, such as advertising (TV, print, radio, outdoor, ambient), but also experiential events (road-shows, in-store sampling / competitions), sponsorship and any form of brand communications. The model of the brand generative trajectory of signification (Rossolatos 2012b) is portrayed as follows, by interpolating the discrete brand semiotic strata on Greimas’s parcours génératif:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1</th>
<th>A brand’s generative trajectory of signification</th>
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<td>Generative trajectory</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Syntactic composition</td>
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<td><strong>Semio Narrative structures</strong></td>
<td>Depth level</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Surface level</td>
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<td><strong>Discursive structures</strong></td>
<td>Discursive syntax</td>
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| Brand Generative trajectory | | |
|--------------------------------------------------|
| | Syntactic composition | Semantic composition |
| **Brand semic molecules Brand master narrative** | Depth level | Fundamental syntax | Fundamental semantic structure |
| | Surface level | Surface semio narrative | Narrative semantic structure |
| **Ad filmic text** | Discursive syntax | Discursive semantic structure (themes, figures) |

The above model represents a top-line view of how a brand’s various semiotic strata of signification hold together. In order to effect a transition from a brand componential approach to a semiotic outlook on brand equity, considerable
conceptual groundwork must be covered in order to root rigorously a conceptual framework of brand equity in a semiotic discipline, while taking into account how this heavily researched topic has been tackled in the marketing literature. This groundwork involves addressing how a brand’s identity as semic nucleus may be maintained with view to generating superior brand equity.

### Consumer-based brand equity in focus

According to Aaker (1991) brand equity is the set of brand assets and liabilities associated with a brand that either adds or subtracts from its value. Keller (1998), who inaugurated the customer-based brand equity perspective, defined brand equity as the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of a brand. “Customer-based brand equity occurs when the consumer has a high level of awareness and familiarity with the brand and holds some strong, favorable and unique brand associations in memory” (p. 50). “Brand equity is a function of the level or depth and breadth of brand awareness and the strength, favorability and uniqueness of brand associations” (Keller, 1998, p. 87).

Brand associations lie at the heart of the customer-based brand equity perspective. The epistemological underpinnings of various approaches to brand associations and the variable methods that have been employed by consumer researchers in the exploration of brand associations will be outlined in due course. Prior to proceeding with the analysis of brand associations it is advisable to dwell further on the notion of brand equity, from a semiotic point of view (also see Rossolatos 2012a).

Blackston (1995) placed considerable emphasis on the definitional components of meaning and value, as indispensable for understanding and managing brand equity. Insofar as brand equity concerns, first and foremost, the generation of superior value and given that value is interwoven with meaning, the mode of this intricate relationship should be further qualified. This intuitively appealing idea formulated by Blackston, from a consumer research point of view, constitutes a fundamental premise of structuralist semiotics.

### The structuralist semiotic view of the interrelationship between meaning and value

Greimas distinguished clearly between two major types of value, viz. value as act of semiotic exchange and value as axiological framework in both *Du Sens II*
(1983) and *Sémiotique des Passions* (1991). “Value is employed in semiotics in two
different ways, viz. value as an underpinning of a project in the course of one’s life
[my note: that is as axiology] and value in the structuralist sense, as formulated by
Saussure[2] [as linguistic value]” (Greimas and Fontanille, 1991, p. 47). The
axiological[2] and linguistic definitions of value are complementary and non-
contradictory (Greimas, 1987; see Rossolatos 2012e).

I shall briefly describe Greimas’s different approaches to value, prior to
illustrating how value is shaped textually, as well as the implications for a semiotic
approach to brand equity.

A key premise that undergirds Greimas’s approach to value is that it becomes
valorized through figurative discourse (such as advertising texts). “The figurative
form of the object guarantees its reality and at this level value becomes identified
with the desired object” (Greimas, 1987, pp. 85–86).

Values as actantial objects, that is objects of desire, are embedded in objects in
a virtual state. In this sense, any brand *qua* object of value may become figuratively
invested in all sorts of manners. Greimas’s recurrent standpoint that structures are
responsible for the organization of the imaginary, achieves its full expressive
potential in this approach to value. Additionally, this is one of the crucial points
where the import of semiotics in planning and accounting for the figurative
rendition and maintenance of brand equity is deemed to be indispensable, as by
virtue of a set of semiotic constraints in the form of a brand’s idiolectal and a
category’s sociolectal[3] degree zero[3], the potentially infinite expressive possibilities
awaiting to be realized in brand discourse may be reduced to a set of salient
alternatives.

In a quite self-explanatory manner, Greimas (1987) stresses that there is no ex

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1. See Rossolatos, 2012f.
2. The concept of value from an axiological point of view was further elaborated by Greimas and Courtès
(1979), as well as by Greimas and Fontanille (1991). Within the wider axiological framework
postulated by Greimas, thymic analysis aims to furnish a more detailed outlook of the various psychic
workings involved. Thus, “the main elements involved in thymic analysis are: (1) the evaluating
subject, (2) the object being evaluated, (3) the thymic value attributed to the object (euphoria,
dysphoria, etc.), (4) the intensity of the value (low, medium, high, etc.), (5) the time of the evaluation,
and (6) the transformations that may affect thymic elements” (Hebert 2012b, p. 106).
3. Each brand possesses an inventory of lexemes, figures and modes of relatedness, which constitute its
idiolect, while the common elements among brands constitute a category’s sociolect. Rastier (1987)
contends that the idiolect is a system of norms proper to a sender, while the norms of an idiolect may
transgress those of genre.
4. Groupe et (1970, 1992) distinguishes between absolute and relative degrees zero, in an attempt to
pinpoint whether semantic deviations through rhetorical operations of transformation take place in the
context of a global structure (such as a grammatical system or a dominant cultural code of visual
representations) or a local structure (such as a poet’s or a brand’s idiolect).
nihilo creation of values. Values are always already embedded in cultural axiological frameworks. Axiological frameworks also allow for deriving pairs of contrariety and contradiction that are responsible for organizing both elementary structures of signification, in terms of semiotic squares (see Rossolatos, 2012c), as well as surface structure grids (Greimas 1989) and oppositional pairs of visual elements, especially in the context of visual figurative discourse, as amply shown by Floch (2000). Axiology is not just ‘out-there’, awaiting to be discovered, but actively co-created through brand discourses.

In this sense, I propose the following sharper distinction between invented brand values, that is values instituted in brand discourses (at least during their emergence as undercoded acts of semiotic invention, in Eco’s [1976] terms), and appropriated brand values, which reflect the appropriation on behalf of brands of existing values embedded in social structures (e.g., Overby et al. 2005) and the particular target group(s) to which a brand’s communication is addressed.

The ability of an object qua brand to assume linguistic value (in structuralist terms) depends on the distance of the figurative discourse (Greimas 1976) with which a brand’s semic structure is exchanged or the particular exchange between signifier and signified (in Saussure’s terms), both from a local and an absolute degree zero point of view. “There is always a distance between the cluster of semes that metalinguistically organizes the representation of an object and the final lexeme” (Greimas, 1987, p.86). The qualification of this distance that determines the ability of figurative discourse (as advertising text) to be exchanged for a brand (as object of desire), hence for a brand to assume linguistic value, is a significant facet in the determination of brand equity from a semiotic point of view. The qualification of this distance in the light of a highly figurative discourse (such as the advertising text), implies putting in focus structuralist operations that are responsible for maintaining brand identity as textual coherence, while enriching them with operations of rhetorical transformation.

### The role of structuralist operations in the brand generative trajectory

The proposed semiotic approach lays emphasis on the encoding process, whereby a brand’s semic structure is carved in a master brand narrative and multifarious surface discourse brand communications (as advertising texts). Elsewhere, (Rossolatos, 2012a, 2012b) I argued as to how the process of structuration and the involved structuralist operations of reduction, redundancy, recurrence, homology, isotopy, are responsible for maintaining textual brand
coherence and communicative consistency among variable advertising executions, by virtue of which brand equity is built and may be effectively managed through time. In this section, and for the sake of expository clarity of the propounded conceptual framework, I am focusing on the operation of isotopy, which is of paramount importance for maintaining brand identity through difference.

In Greimas’s terms, the main task of isotopy consists in discerning correspondences among the various strata of the generative trajectory. In terms of correspondences between the figurative and the thematic or the discursive and the narrative levels, various combinations are possible, such as between two or more figurative elements and a single narrative element or between different complexes of figurative elements and different themes within the same text. Isotopies furnish a reading grid that allows for a homogeneous reading of a text (Greimas and Courtés 1979).

Discursive isotopies are complemented by actorial isotopies (Greimas 1976), in which case a surface discourse actorial figure is sustained throughout the deployment of a manifest narrative by anaphorical or deictic pronouns (in the case of verbal discourse) or by iconically isotopic signs, in the case of visual discourse or by an interplay between verbal/visual expressive units, in the case of a polysemiotic/multimodal sign system, such as the ad film. Greimas further complements the roster of isotopies with thematic and figurative, in line with the discursive aspects of the generative trajectory (see Figure 1).

At the heart of the concept of isotopy lies the notion of recurrence, which may concern either the plane of expression or content or both. Eco (1976) expanded the notion in order to encompass even purely stylistic isotopies.

Groupe μ adopted the Greimasian structuralist operation of isotopy as global discursive norm (1970, p. 35) and as a principle regulating the normal usage of language (1970, p. 121), while positing that the generation of isotopies presupposes the initial creation of allotopies by reference to a general degree zero (e.g., grammatical rules for verbal figures or genre rules for iconic figures). They further qualified the concept (1992) by allusion to cultural isotopies, in cases where the homogeneity of the expressive units making up a visual message may be discerned

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1 Also see Hebert 2012b for further details about thematic-figurative-axiological analysis and Greimas’s writings on aspeuctual grammar.

2 According to Eco (1976) isotopies do not occur simply at the thematic level or, in our instance, at the level of a semic nuclear structure, but also at the level of surface discourse elements, which he calls stylistic isotopies. This term has also been used by Rastier (1972), who expanded the concept to encompass paratopies (2001).
only by recourse to an embedded cultural practice.

In the context of the ad filmic text as source of brand equity, an isotopically recurrent theme, following Metz (1971), is conceived as the depth structure of a film. Furthermore, a pluri-isotopy\(^1\) may occur as two or more recurrent themes on an intra-filmic level. “The revelation of a theme’s recurrence is equivalent to the constitution of a generic isotopy” (Rastier, 1989, p. 56).

On a surface discursive level, recurrent nuclear semes are evinced differentially as contextually enriched semes, either through visual anchors or through filmic sequences. By the same token, recurrent image attributes are contextually evinced either through the discourse of an actor or through a filmic sequence or by featuring a product-shot in various narrative programs. The maintenance of brand coherence as recurrent nuclear brand image attributes is effected by rendering redundant contextual (i.e. classematic) elements that are not pertinent in terms of the brand’s canonical narrative schema. This process represents the way whereby a brand’s semantic micro-universe and positioning is maintained diachronically throughout variable ad executions.

By virtue of brand image attributes’ ability to be fleshed out in different ad filmic texts against a master brand narrative, they constitute what Guirod and Panier (1979) call discursive configurations. The inventory of possible discursive configurations amounts to a brand’s discursive dictionary or idiolectal dictionary, as Klinkenberg (1990) put it. Thus, a brand’s dictionary includes not only its core image attributes, but also contextually enriching elements. Contextual brand elements attain to enriching a brand’s narrative structure, but, only to the extent that they do not compromise the integrity of either uniformly recurring surface discourse elements or the underlying semic nucleus of a brand. In order to determine stylistic isotopies, as complementary to thematic isotopies, and account for their formation in surface figurative discourse, we must complement structuralist operations with operations of rhetorical transformation.

\[\text{Operations of rhetorical transformation as links between figurative discourse and a brand’s semic nucleus}\]

Operations of transformation introduce dynamism in a structure, by producing, annihilating or transforming objects (Hebert, 2012b). A brand, as object of desire, is transformed textually by generating linguistic value as acts of exchange between a

\(^1\) Rastier (1989) redefined the term as poly-isotopy, while retaining the same operative meaning.
brand’s semic nucleus and expressive units embedded in polysemiotic sign systems, such as a brand’s ad films. In this section, the operations of rhetorical transformation that are responsible for figurativizing a brand’s semic nucleus are laid out.

Greimas and Courtès (1979) recognized that rhetorical figures are not just surface structure stylistic elements, but responsible for streamlining signification among the strata of the generative trajectory. Variable tropical relations lead to a profound textual isotopy (Greimas 1976).

Rhetorical semiotics, and particularly the treatises put forward by Groupe μ (1970, 1992), is capable of bridging the conceptual gap regarding the semantic distance between figurative discourse and semic nucleus, and by implication how brand equity as linguistic value may be managed. In essence, managing brand equity is indistinguishable from managing the semantic transformations that take place between advertising stimuli and brand associations, with the aid of semiotics and rhetoric.

The scope of this analysis is polysemiotic or multimodal, encompassing textual formations that comprise verbal and visual elements of an expression plane. In order to render the operationalization of rhetorical transformations as concrete as possible, we must synthesize (to the extent that it is methodologically permissible) the different types of operations that were furnished by Groupe μ in the two rhetorical treatises. In the Traité du Signe Visuel (1992, p.274) Groupe μ included the verbal modality under the fourfold categorization of operations, which will be presented below, but did not pursue an in-depth analysis of the application of the new typology to verbal figures, as conducted in the first rhetorical treatise. Essentially, the difference between the two taxonomies of operations lies in the absence of permutation in the second treatise. However, given that the field of application of the operations features metaboles in the first treatise, which are absent from the second treatise, operations may be fully leveraged if viewed in conjunction with the metabolic types (which was pursued in Durand’s (1970, 1987) application of rhetorical operations to print ads; see Rossolatos, 2012d). This synthetic approach is complicated by two factors, first, the incidence of combined verbo-visual figures in the case of the filmic text, which is our applied analytical field and second, by the fact that the main field of application of the second treatise was static, rather than moving images.

Operations of rhetorical transformation, in crude terms, consist of operations that alter the semantic content of words or phrases, as regards the verbal modality. In both rhetorical treatises (1970, 1992) the fundamental premise that underpins the
transformational rationale rests with the subsistence of invariant expressive and/or logico-semantic elements throughout modifications.

More precisely, Groupe μ (1970) distinguishes between two types of operations of rhetorical transformation, substantial and relational. Substantial operations alter the substance of the semantic units on which they operate, by adding, deleting or substituting (that is adding and deleting at the same time) expressive elements. Relational operations modify the relative position of semantic units. They are simpler than substantial operations as they only involve changes in the ordering of words or phrases and they are effected by permutation. In addition to the delineation of the two overarching classes of rhetorical transformation and their constituent operations, that is adjacency (which was rendered in the Traité, 1992 as conjunction), suppression (which was rendered in the Traité, 1992 as disjunction), suppression/adjunction (or substitution) and permutation, Groupe μ classified rhetorical figures into four types of metaboles, viz. metaplasm, metataxes, metasememes and metalogisms.

Metaplasm are figures that act on phonemic or graphemic aspects of words. Indicative examples of metaplasm by rhetorical operation are paronomasia and alliteration (adjunction), apocope and aphaeresis (suppression), calembour and neologism (substitution) and palindrome, anagrammatism (permutation).

Metataxes are figures that act on phonemic or graphemic aspects at the level of the sentence (even though boundaries between between metataxes and metaplasm are not clear cut; Groupe μ, 1970, p. 54). Indicative examples of metataxes are polysyndeton, parenthesis (adjunction), ellipsis, asyndeton (suppression), chiasmus, anacolouthon (substitution), tmesis, hyperbaton (permutation).

Metasememes are figures that replace one sememe for another, thus resulting in replacements of semes (or elementary units of signification; Groupe μ, 1970, p. 101, in line with Greimas’s [1966] definition). They affect primarily the plane of content or the signified. Changes of form incur changes of meaning, while figures are produced by the manipulation of the arrangement of semes (Groupe μ, 1970). Examples of metasememes are synecdoche, antonomasia (adjunction), metonymy, metaphor in absentia (substitution), while there is no known figure at the level of permutation.

Metalogisms are figures of thought that modify the logical value of sentences. Examples of metalogisms are repetition, pleonasm (adjunction), litotes (suppression), allegory, parable (substitution) and logical inversion (permutation).

The four operations of rhetorical transformation regarding the verbal modality were interpretively enriched and rendered in the Traité du Signe Visuel (Groupe μ
as in absentia conjoint (IAC), in praesentia conjoint (IPC), in praesentia disjoint (IPD) and in absentia disjoint (IAD). In praesentia denotes the co-presence of two types in a visual sign, whereas in absentia the fact that none of these types operates autonomously in the sign’s meaning. Thus, for iconic signs (plastic and icono-plastic ones aside), (IAC) denotes that two expressive units are completely substitutable at the same place of the message [enoncé] (as in the case of the Haddock painting), (IPC) that two co-present expressive units are partially substitutable (as in the case of the cat-shaped kettle), (IPD) that two entities occupy different positions, without substitution (for example Magritte’s painting Les Promenades d’Euclide —see Sonesson 1996), (IAD) that only one expressive unit is manifested, while the other is external to the message. For the sake of reducing complexity in the context of this expository account, I am retaining the key terms applicable to the three operations that are common between verbal and visual semiotic systems, viz. adjunction, suppression and substitution, as well as permutation, which is applicable both to verbal elements, but also, in the context of the ad filmic text, to visual sequences, such as flash-backs, montage effects, but also techniques, such as jump-cuts, which do effect a reordering of the expected sequence of an event or a state-of-affairs by manipulating rhetorically the text.

### Zero degree as point of reference for gauging operations of rhetorical transformation

In order to discern whether and to what extent an operation of rhetorical transformation is operative in a text, according to Groupe µ (1970), we must posit a zero degree of signification, by reference to which a deviation or distance [écart] may be gauged. In Rhétorique Générale two types of degree zero were propounded, absolute and local. Absolute degree zero is defined as univocal semantic ground or as a convention that binds sender and receiver in a manner that is not dependent on certain literary genres or individual authors’ style and advertising genres/styles, in our case. An example of absolute degree zero is standard grammar and rules of syntax. On the contrary, local degree zero constitutes a text-specific point of reference or genre-specific or dependent on an individual author’s stylistic convention. An extreme example of textual signification by recourse to local rules imposed by a local degree zero of signification is surrealist literature/painting and avant-garde films. The concept of degree zero is a regulative hypothesis and not a strict set of rules. In the course of both treatises, various examples are provided that are indicative of how rhetorical deviations as distances from degrees zero may be
determined (see, for example, 1970, p. 96 on the different ways whereby deviations are generated between metataxes and metasememes), but the process is highly adhocratic and hardly systematizable in an encyclopedic sense. Insofar as figurative language infuses the element of surprise into texts, operations of rhetorical transformation and the figures that partake of each operation essentially constrain the interpretive possibilities that result from expressive irregularities.

In the second treatise (1992) Groupe $\mu$ contended that the general degree zero is furnished by the prior knowledge of a code. The determination of level of codedness in terms of a sign’s distance from a degree zero of signification is crucial as it constitutes a ground rule for the entire theory of visual rhetoric. The level of codedness of a visual sign also attains to address the sign as sign functive or correlation between planes of content and expression, in Eco’s (1976) terms, rather than resting at the level of expression. This point of departure also constitutes the crux of Groupe $\mu$’s hybrid rhetorical semiotic approach, viz. the employment of the semiotic conception of the code as the fundamental rubric under which the classification of rhetorical operations may be effected.  

Groupe $\mu$ posits at the center of its theory of visual rhetoric the need for addressing both expression and content planes, while accounting for how coherence emerges in a visual text. The local degree zero is the element pertaining to such a territory of a message [énoncé], by virtue of a structure that is particular to that énoncé.

For Groupe $\mu$ (1992), the defining characteristics of strongly coded signs consist in clearly segmenting the planes of expression and content, in a strongly stable relation between the units of each plane and in the ability to describe sign systems outside of the énoncé, with the aid of a vocabulary and a syntax. In short, the relationship between the elements of the plane of expression and the elements of the plane of content in the incidence of a strongly coded sign is clear, stable and independent of the contextual contours of an énoncé.

On the contrary, the key features that make up a weakly coded sign include the fluid formalization of the relationship between the two planes, the establishment of a link between them through a ratio diffcillis (in Eco’s [1976] terms) and the fact that no content may be furnishd to the receiver of a visual message by a lexicon that preexists the énoncé. The differences between weakly and strongly coded signs are summarized in Table 2.

1 The same point of departure was assumed by Eco, who posited a theory of the Code as the necessary condition upon which a theory of the production of signs may be predicated (Eco 1976).
Table 2  Differences between weakly and strongly coded signs (Groupe μ, 1992, p. 260)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of semiotic</th>
<th>I. Segmentation of units</th>
<th>II. Relationship between expression and content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly coded</td>
<td>Clear</td>
<td>Stable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weakly coded</td>
<td>Unclear</td>
<td>Unstable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Four types of relationship between expression and content ensue from the above classification:

(a) Strongly formalised expression + strongly formalised content = stable link
(b) Strictly formalised expression + weakly formalised content = unstable link
(c) Weakly formalised expression + strongly formalised content = unstable link
(d) Weakly formalised expression + weakly formalised content = unstable link

Thus, two classes of semiotics are distinguished based on the level of codedness. (a) overcoded semiotics, where the segmentation of the planes of expression and content is clear and the boundaries of units are stable and easily identifiable. (b) undercoded\(^1\) semiotics, which are characterized by fluid and unstable boundaries between the planes of content and expression.

The semic and expressive (lexical or otherwise) inventory of a brand is by definition a weakly coded sign system, insofar as it is constantly enriched by new expressive elements throughout variable ad films. This is why brands are semi-symbolic, rather than symbolic, semiotic systems, as recognized by Floch (2000), which implies that the projected correlations between elements of the two planes is always in a state of flux. In order to render the projected brand associations through surface discursive manifestations, such as ad films, as links between brand semic molecules and expressive elements, ad texts must be encoded with an associative rationale in mind, that brings together the morphologically distinct elements (e.g., semes on a depth structural level, actants on a semio-narrative level, lexemes/videmes on a surface discursive level) of each stratum of a brand’s generative trajectory into a coherent relational structural system.

Insofar as ad stimuli are responsible for furnishing brand meaning and by implication long-lasting brand-related associations, an account of how ad stimuli are transformed into associations at the very initial encoding stage of ad stimuli is called for. The establishment of such a web of associations creates what Kapferer (2008) calls a brand contract between brand and consumers, echoing Greimas’s contractual relationship that binds senders and receivers in an enunciative predicament.

---

1. Groupe μ actually does not employ Eco’s term ‘undercodedness’, but ‘weak codedness’ [sémiotiques faiblement codes], which is a rephrasing of the term initially coined by Eco (1976).
This web of associations must be foreseen and planned from the very first phase of encoding a brand with values, as a reflection of its benefits stemming from attributes with a long-term orientation, coupled with specific guidelines and a rationale for carving these values in concrete advertising stimuli. “It is important to incorporate from the start the higher levels of meaning that are intended to attach to the brand in the longer term” (Kapferer, 2008, p. 56).

This need for planning for relationships between sources of brand equity and superior brand equity qua linguistic value calls for a reorientation from the binarist rationale that underpinned the original Greimasian conception of depth grammar towards a connectionist rationale, as will be shown in the ensuing sections. At the same time, having established that rhetorical figures and operations of rhetorical transformation are essentially responsible for translating semes into surface discursive elements, the potential for isotopically recognizing in manifest discourse ad filmic texts in a relational brand structure presupposes that ad filmic texts as sources of brand equity are encoded in such a form as to allow for the recognizability of invariant brand elements.

Based on the above, the conceptual framework that is put forward in this paper is intended as a rhetorical semiotic brand equity planning platform. In the meantime, let us dwell briefly on how brand associations have been conceptualized and researched from within the consumer research discipline.

**Brief overview of marketing related researches into associative networks**

Brand associations and their qualifying dimensions constitute the outcome of successfully inscribing in consumers’ perception and memory attributes and benefit-related elements in the form of ad textual stimuli. Brand associations contain the meaning of the brand (Keller, 1998). Brand associations are the heart and soul of the brand (Aaker 1996).

Advertising, as a pervasive mode of semiosis (Mick, Burroughs, Hetzel, Brannen, 2004) constitutes an indirect source of brand associations (Krishnan 1996), as against a direct source (e.g., product usage) and can influence brand equity by impacting on consumer’s brand-related memory structure (Edell & Moore 1993). Associations are receivers’ memories and fantasies evoked by advertising stimuli (Praxmarer & Gierl, 2009).

Aaker’s and Keller’s research and discussion of brand associations are rooted in the cognitive psychology theory of associative networks. Associative networks have been referred to as the human associative memory (HAM) model, the Hebbian
model, the Bayesian model, the spreading activation model, and the connectionist model (Till et al., 2011). The majority of stimuli stored in memory are non-verbal, rather than verbal (Coulter & Zaltman, 1994, 2001; Zaltman & Zaltman 2008).

Associative networks constitute a standard mapping technique for portraying relationships among brand image attributes and consumer groups, but also all sorts of relationships in a brand knowledge structure. The central role of brand associations in the creation and maintenance of brand equity is widely accepted (Till et al. 2011). Brand associations are the myriad nodes that are linked to the brand in memory (Silverman et al., 1999). Memory models that have been propounded from various psychological perspectives vary considerably as regards their fundamental assumptions (Krishnan 1996), yet they converge on viewing memory as a network of connections among concepts. Lawson (2002) contends that networks are better suited than hierarchies in accounting for how associations are activated in memory, as they are not constrained, thus reflecting the structure of haphazard experience.

Associative networks consist of nodes and links. The greater the number of links that emanate from a node, the greater the centrality of the node in consumers’ memory. Each node in a network acts in turn as a source node for another node, thus making up a “chain of thoughts” or an “association chain” (Teichert and Schontag 2010).

Associations are retrieved from memory through the process of spreading activation. Once each node passes an activation threshold, it leads to the activation of linked nodes. However, it should be borne in mind that, as Teichert and Schontag (2010) contend, associative networks are merely simplified representations of knowledge stored in the consumers’ minds and cannot be assumed to depict actual neural connections. Associative networks are always already simulated abstractions of actual memory processes and the myriads of stimuli that are processed in brain neurons in a parallel processing mode (Morgan 1997). They constitute a useful heuristic for iterative brand equity planning and ongoing management and not an epistemological panacea.

Keller categorized brand associations into three classes, viz. attributes, benefits and attitudes. Attributes are distinguished in two categories, product and non-product related, denoting respectively the ingredients necessary for performing the product or service function and the aspects that relate to their purchase and consumption. Benefits are distinguished into three categories; functional, symbolic and experiential.

Supphellen (1999) developed a set of practical guidelines for indepth elicitation of brand associations in an attempt to overcome the limits of direct questions, which
are associated with problems of access, verbalisation and censoring. She employed focus-groups, moodboards and object-projective techniques (OPT), while probing for secondary associations in terms of situations with which brands are related.

Henderson et al. (2002) employed network theory in their exploration of associative networks, by connecting cognitive theories of associative structures with literature on structural networks. They used a combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques, such as repertory grids and network analysis.

Janiszewski and Osselaer (2000) coined a connectionist model, consistent with the epistemological assumptions of multi-attribute utility models, for predicting brand associations as salient cues (i.e. brand names, brand features).

Low and Lamb (2000) conducted three studies that aimed to validate Keller’s and Aaker’s multi-dimensional constructs, by drawing on HAM and network theories. Their study consisted in testing a protocol for developing product category specific measures of brand image, investigating the dimensionality of the emergent brand associations construct and exploring whether the degree of dimensionality of brand associations varied depending on a brand’s familiarity.

Coulter and Zaltman (1994) put forward the Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET), which consists in a set of qualitative methods for eliciting metaphorically brand related consumer associations and quantitative methods for transforming insights into actionable input for marketing mix decisions and segmentation strategies. Repertory grids (also see Walker et al. 1987; Henderson et al. 2002), laddering, content analysis and visual dictionaries are integral components of ZMET, as are visual (photographs) and other sensory images that consumers provide. The elicited brand associations are aggregated into consensus maps, which represent brand image facets. Consensus maps portray diagrammatically the linkages among elicited constructs. The linkages, which are drawn by consumers, constitute consumers’ own representations of their brand knowledge structures, which, in ZMET language, are equivalent to causal models. Further research into advertising-related brand related associations with the employment of ZMET was conducted by Coulter and Zaltman (2001), which resulted in five conceptual metaphors about advertising’s role as brand information gathering vehicle, viz. hostess, teacher, counselor, enabler, and magician. ZMET-inspired research into (service) brand associations was also conducted by O’Cass and Debra (2002), who employed a two-stage exploratory/confirmatory research, featuring phenomenological interviews with view to gauging how consumers defined brand image dimensions. Furthermore, qualitative free association, storytelling and collage techniques were used by Koll et al. (2010), while assessing their differential
value in the creation of brand knowledge structures and the elicitation of both verbal and visual brand-related associations.

Roedder-John et al. (2006) propounded a brand-concept mapping approach for managing brand associations with managerial orientation that did not require knowledge of advanced statistical analysis, as a simpler alternative to Zaltman’s (1997) ZMET technique, and a more representative portrayal of interconnections among brand associations than multi-dimensional scaling (MDS) (see Bigno et al. 2002 for a combined application of MDS and cluster analysis in mapping brand associations). They accounted for overall brand associative strength by combining individual with consensus maps, based on frequency tables and aggregate scores by following a 5-step procedure, which involved selecting brand associations, selecting first-order brand associations, selecting core brand association links and non-core brand association links and finally selecting the number of connecting lines among links in brand association maps. They presented their brand concept mapping method as an iterative process with long-term orientation for evaluating brand-related perceptions in the light of the implementation of brand communications programs and competitive activities.

Further to the above exposition of indicative approaches to exploring and mapping brand associations in the consumer research literature, let us turn to an examination of how a brand’s trajectory of signification and a brand equity planning platform that is fabricated on this generativist blueprint may be rendered in connectionist terms.

### Semiotic deviations from the binarist perspective to the organization of a semantic universe

Depth structures in Greimas’s original conception of the generative trajectory of signification are structured in the logical form of the semiotic square (Greimas 1970, Greimas and Courtès 1979). The semiotic square organizes a semic micro-universe in relationships of contradiction, contrariety and implication (see Rossolatos 2012c).

Rastier, who co-created the semiotic square with Greimas, became highly critical of the binarist approach to signification in general and particularly of the square’s ability to function as depth grammar in the generative trajectory (see Rastier, 1989, p. 65). He pursued a connectionist semantic approach to textual signification, while drawing on Sowa’s (1993) existential graphs (Rastier 1987, 1994), which were incorporated into his system of differential semantics.

Four systemic components undergird textuality according to Rastier (1987; also
see Rastier 1989 and 2005c), viz. the thematic, the dialectic, the dialogic and the tactical. The thematic component “accounts for invested contents and their paradigmatic structures” (1987, p. 54). The dialectic component “accounts for the succession of intervals in textual time, such as states-of-being and processes” (1987, p. 66). The dialogic component is concerned with modalities, such as “ontic, alethic, epistemic, deontic, evaluative” (1987, p. 82). Finally, the tactical component accounts for “the linear disposition of semantic units. The tactical component concerns both planes of content and expression, either jointly or in a standalone fashion” (1987, p. 95).

Rastier’s graphs connect aspects of the different systemic components. For example, the thematic graphs constitute a preamble to the dialectic level. Their nodes represent actants and processes, while their links casual relations that are articulated among them. Nodes are represented in rectangular shapes and links in circular ones, in line with Sowa’s graphs. “In a conceptual graph, the boxes are called concepts, and the circles are called conceptual relations” (Sowa et al., 1993, p.15). “The elements that make up this structure are the nodes (the terms), the links (the relations) and the direction of the links. A node is generally labelled with one or more semes and a link is labelled with a semantic case” (Hebert 2012a). The cases used in the semantic graphs are displayed in Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CASE</th>
<th>DEFINITION</th>
<th>POSSIBLE NAME FOR TEACHING PURPOSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACC</td>
<td>accusative</td>
<td>the patient of an action; the entity affected by the action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASS</td>
<td>assumptive</td>
<td>point of view</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATT</td>
<td>attributive</td>
<td>property, characteristic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEN</td>
<td>benefactive</td>
<td>the entity for whose benefit the action is performed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLAS</td>
<td>dassitive</td>
<td>an element of a class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMP</td>
<td>comparative</td>
<td>elements joined by a metaphorical comparison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAT</td>
<td>dative</td>
<td>receiver, entity that receives a transmission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ERG</td>
<td>ergative</td>
<td>the agent of a process or an action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIN</td>
<td>final</td>
<td>goal (result or effect sought)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INST</td>
<td>instrumental</td>
<td>means used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOC S</td>
<td>spatial locative</td>
<td>position in the space represented (LOC S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOC T</td>
<td>temporal locative</td>
<td>position in the time represented (LOC T)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAL</td>
<td>malefactive</td>
<td>the entity to whose disadvantage the action is performed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PART</td>
<td>partitive</td>
<td>part of a whole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RES</td>
<td>resultative</td>
<td>result, effect, consequence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3  Types of cases in Rastier’s semantic graphs (Hebert, 2012b, p. 145)
The following example portrays a simple relationship between two semic molecules\(^{1}\)(A and B), joined by a locative verb (Rastier 1989):

\[
A \xrightarrow{\text{LOC}} B
\]

LOC\(_{1}\) locatif.
A = /sain\(\text{t}\)/, /fragile/, /attirant/, /vivant/, /coloré/.
B = /creux/, /pouissant/, /repoussant/, /mortel/, /sombre/.

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**Brand equity planning with structuralist semiotics: Projecting brand associations with the aid of structuralist operations and operations of rhetorical transformations**

A key difference between the mode of connectivity between links and nodes and the mode adopted in the brand trajectory of signification as put forward in this paper is that whereas differential semantics draws on primitives, such as the ergative and the attributive cases in order to mark the way whereby links are attached to nodes, I emphasize rhetorical operations of transformation and figures. This change in focus allows for operationalizing what was put forward in a schematic fashion by Greimas (1976) as the metaphorical mode of connectivity (among other tropes and schemes) among morphologically distinct elements from the three strata of the brand generative trajectory.

Furthermore, in addition to the portrayal of semantic relationships put forward in differential semantics, where semes are included in squares and modes of connectivity in links, in the context of the brand trajectory of signification, manifest discourse elements of ad films (individual iconic signs, shots, sequences, verbo-visual interactions) are portrayed as triangles. Moreover, the connectionist graphic portrayal of the brand trajectory of signification emphasizes multiple links among semes and surface discursive elements, as well as links among triangles, thus providing a snapshot of both thematic and stylistic/figurative isotopies. A schematic portrayal of the connectionist conceptual framework of the brand generative trajectory of signification is provided in Figure 1:

There are two key dimensions that must be addressed in order to establish a product category’s sociolectal degree zero and a brand’s idiolectal degree zero (see Table 4).

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\(^{1}\) According to Rastier (2005c) “a semic molecule may be variably defined based on the frame of reference, ie dialectical, dialogic, thematic, tactical”.
Figure 1  A connectionist conceptual model of the generative trajectory of signification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Synchronic</th>
<th>Diachronic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Film</td>
<td>Film</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synchronic</td>
<td>Brand</td>
<td>Intra-film/Intra-brand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diachronic</td>
<td>Brand</td>
<td>Inter-film/Intra-brand</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first dimension concerns the establishment of a general degree zero in terms of dominant elements of both expression and content planes, by analyzing diachronically on an inter-brand level brand communications and examining their connection to category image drivers qua the category’s sémic universe. The second dimension concerns establishing a brand’s local degree zero by examining on both expression and content planes a brand’s sémic and expressive inventory and how it deviates from the general degree zero.

Certainly within the limited scope of this preliminary presentation, which aimed to tackle significant facets of the conceptual groundwork that must be covered in order to effect a transition from the binarist rationale that underpinned the generative trajectory of signification to a connectionist rationale, while retaining its merits for the practical purposes of brand equity planning, there is not sufficient space either for expanding to the complexities involved in the full-fledged conceptual model, nor to the methodological implications of its application. However, it is hoped that it does afford to clearly demarcate the research field of sémiotics of brand equity.
Conclusion: The value of semiotics in brand equity research

This paper aims to present the key principles of a conceptual framework for a rhetorical semiotic model of brand equity planning, by drawing on structuralist operations and operations of rhetorical transformation. The connectionist advances in consumer research attain to bring up to date Greimas’s generativist model, which was adapted in the context of the brand trajectory of signification, and complement the semantic graphs propounded by the perspective of differential semantics. By positing an integrated approach to the generation of thematic and stylistic isotopies through the graphic portrayal of associative networks, the dynamic interaction among the strata of the trajectory is highlighted and its operationalization as iterative brand equity planning platform for essentially undercoded sign-systems, such as brands, is enabled. The conceptual aspects of the semiotic framework of brand equity planning that were tackled in this paper pave the way for further researches and call for an active inter-disciplinary dialogue between semiotics and consumer research.

References


Intruding to Introduce: How Subtitlers Comply with the Multimodality of Audiovisual Context and Bridge Intercultural Communication: a Particular Focus on Subtitling Humour

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Abstract: There has been a proliferation in research on audiovisual translation, in which subtitling attracts substantial attention. Scholars have approached the mode from the perspectives of the translator and linguistic analysis, or by answering questions in different aspects of the practice. However, most progress has been made in the subjects related to European languages. Chinese subtitling still attracts relatively less attention, despite active steps taken by the Chinese film industry into transnational cinema. In China, subtitling is replacing dubbing as the preferred mode of audiovisual translation. Besides the transnational tendencies of filmmaking, the spread of fandoms around the world should be considered as another important factor that causes this change. Like their counterparts elsewhere, fans in China gather and form not-for-profit groups and clubs in order to circulate or share their video resources and translations online through organized channels. Although remaining controversial, fansubs shed light on and raise questions in the both theoretical and practical aspects of subtitling. They have also made significant contribution to intercultural communication. Thus it is necessary to study this amateur activity in order to see the complete landscape of contemporary Chinese subtitling. The author intends to define what the product of subtitling should be, and then investigate the strategies of translation in use from the perspective of Chinese. The audiovisual medium changes the subject of translation from the mono-dimensional to the multi-dimensional. It is impossible for this work to scrutinize every aspect of Chinese subtitling, so it will specifically focus on the translator’s strategies in complying with the constraints of a multimodal medium in order to explain, transform or neutralize the ST for trans-cultural purposes. The goal can be achieved through comparing different versions of Chinese subtitles of the same original. Examples will be selected from two American TV sitcoms—The Big Bang Theory and Two and a Half Men.

Key words: AVT; Chinese subtitling; multimodal medium; fansubs; transcultural
1. Subtitling and the Audience

In the Chinese media broadcast and cinema exhibition, two ways of audiovisual translation (AVT) are frequently used to bridge the language barrier. Traditionally, subtitling differs from dubbing in the following ways. Dubbing replaces the SL voice with the TL. On the contrary, the SL elements are preserved in a subtitled version. Subtitles transgress into the original audiovisual medium and make the difference between the meaning of the SL dialogue and its translation more obvious to the audience. In subtitling, translators deal with, not only the language transfer, but also the spatial and temporal constraints of the audiovisual medium.

To the viewers, the original may “remain foreign and slightly strange” (Farrell 1996: 55), even though the subtitles deliver all the meaning of ST with adequacy and fluency. The reception context forces the original to be reshaped through censorship, alternative endings, marketing, and programming practices, and essentially the strategies of translation (Hansen 2000: 12). The expectation of the TL audience may insist on compliance with its socio-cultural idiosyncrasies which can be largely independent from those of the audience from the SL culture.

The viewers of the audiovisual materials are constantly engaged in the dual observation on both the subtitles and the reel (Nornes 2007: 162). They do not have the privilege to stop at anywhere interesting as the readers of books do, though this does not apply to the home-viewing context. However, the subtitle translators are not obliged to consider the coincidental pause or playback, which may be required by the audience. Their task is to immerse the translation into the original narrative and help the audience to understand the SL information within the limited time.

2. The Multimodal Structure of the Audiovisual Text

2.1 From the Binary Approach to the Multilateral Approach

Subtitles should capture as much of the original as possible. However, translating the language will not completely translate an original. A new notion of fidelity should be introduced. Delabastita (1989; 1990) is among the first scholars to have addressed the complicated audiovisual semiotic construction, in which the linguistic component is only one of the objects that the translator deals with.

The meaning of an audiovisual text is manifested through the collaboration between signifying codes. Therefore, a TT emerges from a series of source texts, which can be illustrated in the star-like constellation like that proposed by Cattrysse (1997: 79). This conception changes the traditional binary approach in analyzing
the relation between the ST and the TT into a multilateral approach.

Each mode has its *materiality, affordance, functional specialization and functional load* (Kress 1997; 2003). The materiality of the mode (e.g. the material of “sound” in music or speech) determines its affordance in certain contexts, e.g. the printed media cannot involve motion and sound. In multimodal translation, the ST modes are imposed on the translation process and lead it to the TT and all its modes. The distribution and integration of the potentials meaning show how the semiotic modes in a subtitled version function as an entity to respond to the audience’s expectation, and to the socio-cultural standards of the TL context (Chuang 2009; 85).

## 3. Background

In modern China, the content of audiovisual products such as films and TV programmes has to be “modified” to conform to the local standard. However, the primary limit on the import of audiovisual products is rather out of the consideration of the financial cost in dubbing and subtitling; the maintenance of political control is, however, a subsidiary concern. Nowadays, subtitling and dubbing co-exist (occasionally voice-over is also used) in Chinese cinema and TV. Dubbing has been used for a long time in audiovisual translation in Mainland China. Poor literacy is the main obstacle standing between subtitling and wider public reception (Qian 2001; Zhang 2004). Besides, the linguistic diversity among the different ethnic groups creates more obstacles to subtitling as a mode of audiovisual translation in China, though Mandarin Chinese is taught nation-wide. The majority of the Chinese audience still find dubbed films more vivid and entertaining, though young viewers
from urban areas are used to viewing subtitled versions.

In recent years, online piracy has taken more and more consumers from the pirated DVD market with the ultimate capacity of copy and free circulation. However, this free sharing of video resources online, most of which are provided by the so-called fansubbing groups, is not a typical Chinese phenomenon. It has an earlier beginning in the circulation of Japanese animation among fans in North America and Europe. As Nornes points out in his book *Cinema Babel*

...a massive fandom [...] around Japanese animation (anime) throughout the world. [...] Scripts are posted on internet newsgroups and circulated among clubs and individuals. Fan hackers write software [...] that enables them to take the subtitling apparatus into their own hands. Groups collaborate on not-for-profit subtitled versions of their favorite anime. (Nornes 2007: 182)

Despite being controversial, fansubs promote foreign media products further into Chinese people’s daily life. Their behaviour also contributes significantly to the flourishing popular media in modern China.

### 4. The Practice of Chinese Subtitling

#### 4.1 The Traditional Approach

The punctuation is used sparingly in subtitling. Each turn of subtitle should stay on the screen for three to six seconds. The presentation of a single-word subtitle should not be shorter than one second, otherwise the subtitle would be a flash on the screen, which makes it difficult for the audience to absorb its meaning. In feature films and TV series, one-line subtitles are used. In documentaries or ethnographic films, the translator seems to prefer two-line subtitles because of the amount of information to be delivered in each turn of presentation. Traditionally, Chinese subtitles are presented in white and centred at the bottom of the screen. The number of characters per line is fifteen or less.

#### 4.2 The Fansubs

Subtitles are not supposed to provide any extraneous information besides what has been spoken or presented on the screen. However, the online fandoms produce subtitles with footnotes and explanations in different colors, fonts and sizes to replicate the paralinguistic features in the ST. These amateurs tend to put the nonexistent information anywhere they like in the picture (Nornes 1999: 14), as the image given below shows.
5. Subtitling the Dialogue on the Screen

Subtitling initially deals with the scripted dialogue on the screen. Dialogue is a supporting semiotic sign system in the audiovisual medium, which takes a considerable portion of the original narrative. They build the background information of the characters by giving them different accents, idiolects and registers of speech. Dialogue also creates tension to put viewers on alert or keep their attention. Dialogue in the audiovisual context aims to imitate the actual oral features in the spontaneous speech. However, it cannot replicate the entire reality of the daily communication because the scripted dialogue cannot involve all the hesitations, repetitions and syntactic anomalies in the real oral discourse (Chaume 2004: 850).

6. Subtitling for Chinese Audience

6.1 Subtitles as Supplement?

A subtitled film presents a dual-channel of information in which the subtitles inevitably transgress the coherence of the visual. Subtitles fill the lack of information but also repeat information conveyed through other channels in the original. To the TL audience, subtitles are crucial rather than supplement to the original (Fong 2009). The TL audience can only enter the world of the original through the intermediation of subtitles.

For the duration of the subtitle, the viewers are doubly engaged in absorbing the information emanating from the upper screen space (Hillman 2010: 380). If the original dialogue is stylized and patently false, like the dialogue in many popular
films, the subtitles must show the same exaggeration or ridicule. However, when the dialogue is made with profound thought and artistic refinement, like the meaningful and credible dialogue in some high quality films, the translator should consider the potential solutions carefully before the final decision is made. Consequently, the supplementary role of the subtitles is easy to overdo when the information in the original is plentiful.

6.2 Strategies of Translation

Chinese translators either bring a foreign original to the audience (domestication/naturalization) or lead the audience to ST (foreignization), or let the audience make the decision (neutralization). Among the patterns of cooperation, foreignization and neutralization are frequently used, while naturalization emerges only in situations such as comic effect or the purpose of characterization. Despite the purpose to assimilate the audience to the original narrative, it is crucial to keeping distance between the world in the film and the world presented by the subtitles. The excessive naturalization might achieve the opposite due to the loss of the authenticity of the ST. This is an important reason that makes subtitling more applicable than dubbing in the translation of films and TV drama.

7. The Subject of this Discussion

7.1 Subtitling Humour

In this discussion, we will look at the translation of humour, which is culturally and linguistically bound to the SL context. In facing the SL humour, the choice of subtitle translators is further limited by the audiovisual constraints rooted in the practice of AVT, in addition to the cultural and linguistic constraints of the TL. To replicate the SL humour, subtitle translators have to be more precise in understanding the ST and more creative in using the TL. The TT will either make the TL audience laugh as hard as the SL audience, or leave the former in a state of confusion or even an annoyance—particularly in facing the laughter preserved in TV sitcoms.

7.2 The Data

The data will be selected from two American sitcoms—The Big Bang Theory and Two and a Half Men. We use TV series rather than featured films because the reception of Chinese subtitling mostly takes place in the home viewing context,
where the audience mostly rely on the Internet through their computer or other electronic devices, such as the iPad. In such circumstances, the line between featured films and TV series diminishes, as far as most of the Chinese viewers recognize.

The two series have the widest reception among Chinese viewers, who watch the series on the Chinese online franchise or download the series from the fan’s website. Although being questioned for its legitimacy, the latter’s activity—illegal downloading—has become a component of the daily life in modern China. On the other hand, for the officially sanctioned online broadcast, the local franchises such as Sohu, Sina and Youku, are hiring Chinese fandoms to translate the purchased foreign audiovisual materials, such as the two series in discussion. Such online broadcast is only accessible to Internet users in Mainland China.

![Figure 2](image-url) A screenshot of the Sohu TV. When an Internet user from overseas tries to access to the video resources on Sohu TV, he or she will be informed that the resource is only accessible to the users in Mainland China, as the image above shows.

The quoted Chinese subtitles of *The Big Bang Theory* are produced by the Fansubbing group YYeTs (人人影视 http://www.yyets.com), which is hired by Sohu TV (http://tv.sohu.com/s2012/2402/s353901232/) to translate the series for online broadcast. There are two versions of the subtitles of *Two and a Half Men*
used in this paper. One is used on the DVD released by Warner Bro. Home Video, and the other is produced by the fansubbing group YTET (http://www.sfleydy.com/bbs/index.php). The data used for the purpose of this discussion can be found on the Chinese subtitling database Shooter (http://www.shooter.cn).

## 8. Translating Humour in the Audiovisual Context

### 8.1 The Parameters of Humour

Attardo and Raskin (1991) analyse verbal humour through the following parameters, which are also applicable to the humour in the audiovisual context. “Language” refers to the creator’s choice on each linguistic level.

Sheldon: I want to build a road/But I need wood/Do either of you fellows have wood? (Rajesh and Howard are trying very hard to prevent themselves from laughing)/I don’t understand the laughter/The object of Settlers of Catan.../...is to build roads and settlements/To do so requires wood/

我想修条路/但是我需要硬木（wood 亦指勃起的阴茎）/你俩谁有硬木吗? /我不知道你们在笑什么/《卡坦岛》的目标.../...就是修建道路和房屋/所以需要硬木

Sheldon makes his friends laugh because he frequently brings up the words “wood” and “sheep” while being unaware of the sexual allusions in the two words. Opposite to him, Howard and Rajesh are too sensitive to ignore the connotations. In the example given above, the word “wood” can be used to refer to the male genital. The word and its potential meaning create ambiguity in the SL speech, which cannot be preserved in the Chinese subtitle due to the absence of the same allusive usage in the TL. In YYcTs’ translation, the explanation appears on the top of the screen when the word “wood” is spoken by Sheldon for the first time in the relevant scene. With the support of the visual, in which the three characters involved are reacting differently towards the word, the audience will realize the implied meaning and will not miss the humour again when the doublespeaks is repeated later in the same scene.

Comparatively, “narrative strategy” is the micro-genre of the joke (Attardo & Raskin 1991: 300). In addition, there are “targets” which include the individuals, groups and parties, which are captured by the humorist (Attardo & Raskin 1991: 301; Attardo 2002: 178); “situation” gives the details of the context of the joke, i.e. the objects, the participants, the instruments, and the activities (Attardo 2002: 179); “logical mechanism” resolves into the incongruity in a joke (Attardo & Raskin 1991: 303; Attardo 1997: 409-415).
SHELDON: Hello. I’m here for my haircut with Mr. D’Onofrio 嗨 我来
find Nofero先生为我理发
BARBER: I’m sorry, Uncle Tony’s in the hospital/He’s pretty sick 真抱歉
托尼舅舅还在医院呢/他病得很厉害
SHELDON: Oh, dear, Mr. D’Onofrio’s in the hospital/Why do these
things always happen to me? 天啊 诺费奥先生在医院/我的命运为何
如此多舛
BARBER: I can cut it for you 我可以帮你理发
SHELDON: You’re not Mr. D’Onofrio/I get my hair cut by Mr.
D’Onofrio/(Turns to Leonard)/ Do you believe this guy? 你不是诺
费奥先生/我的头发一般是诺费奥先生理的/你信得过这家伙吗

LEONARD: Sheldon, it’s okay, he can do it/He’s a barber 谢尔顿 没关系
他能行/他也是理发师
SHELDON: He’s not a barber, he’s the nephew/He’s an example of the
type of nepotism.../...that runs rampant in the barbering industry/
Besides, Mr. D’Onofrio knows exactly how I like my hair
done.../...because he has all my haircut records from my barber in
Texas 他不是理发师 他就是理发师的外甥/他就是理发界日益猖獗的…/
...裙带关系的典型范例/另外 诺费奥先生很清楚我喜欢什么样的发型/
因为他有我在德州理发时的理发记录
LEONARD: What are you talking about? 你在瞎扯什麼啊
SHELDON: When I first moved here/I was nervous about finding a new
barber.../...so my mother had all my haircut records.../...sent here to Mr. D’Onofrio 我刚搬来这里的时候/找新理发师这事儿很让
我发愁/所以我妈妈就我的理发记录…/…都寄给了诺费奥先生
LEONARD: There’s no such thing as haircut records 根本没有理发记录这回事
SHELDON: Yes, there are 不,肯定有的
LEONARD: Have you ever seen them? 你见过你的理发记录吗
SHELDON: No, but my mother assured me they were sent here 没，不过我妈妈保证肯定寄过来了

In the example above, Sheldon insists on having Mr. D’Onofrio cut his hair rather than letting the barber’s nephew act as a substitute. This incorrigible life routine is further revealed when he mentions certain “haircut records” which, according to Sheldon, can be preserved and delivered to the barbers who are chosen by him to cut his hair. The humour also lays in Sheldon’s complaint about D’Onofrio’s absence in hearing the latter is in hospital, revealing the speaker’s self-centred perspective.

The translation aims to inform the audience, first of all, of the incongruity in Sheldon’s understanding of his haircut routine, which is core of the humour of this scene and corresponds to the character’s rigid routine and self-centred perspective. In addition, the translation, for the purpose of portraying the character for the audience, also reveals the naïve nature of Sheldon who relies on his mother for many things in his life. The translation uses “我妈妈” rather than “我妈” which is the way an adult refers to his/her mother, to replicate Sheldon’s childish manner of behaving and thinking.

The “script opposition” is on the top of the hierarchical organization consisting of the aforementioned parameters (Attardo 1994: 277). However, jokes can be produced from any knowledge resource. The hierarchical order is not applied to the consecutive stages in the actual production (Attardo & Raskin 1991: 237). Ideally, a translated joke should have the same script opposition, e.g. sexual vs. nonsexual readings, as the sexual allusions in “wood” and “sheep” and their meanings in other circumstances. The translation should also maintain the same logical mechanism, the same situation, the same target and the same narrative strategy as the original, though the language and the scheme are changed.

8.2 Subtitling Wordplay

Wordplay is a typical challenge for non-native speakers as well as translators. Languages maintain the characteristics of polysemy and homonymy, which give birth to the pun or wordplay. As a particular kind of wordplay, puns take advantage of hyponymy or identical pronunciations of different words to create ambiguity, euphemism or metaphor for the purpose of humour. A punning effect can also be
achieved through the modification of sound and spellings, while the close resemblance of spelling and sound always dissimilates the literal meaning from the user’s intention. In the audiovisual context, the meanings of a punning use are alterable according to the pictorial components, which further confounds translatability and challenges the creativity of subtitle translators. Consider the following:

Alan: Uh, no, I—I have other plans 我有其他事要做
Herb: Oh, got a date? 你要去约会?
Charlie: Yeah, Alan, you got a date? 是啊,艾伦,你有约会?
Alan: No, no. a date? Pfft! /Not likely. ha-ha-ha/No, I have a meeting with the, uh, thing about the—About the group/I told you, remember? 不,约会? 不是/不,我要参加一个团体的聚会/我告诉过你,记得吗?
Charlie: No, tell me again 没有,你再说一次
Alan: He’s a little pickle/Uh, well, if you must know.../...uh—I—I belong to a book club that I am going to 他有点醉了/如果你想知道/我要去一个读书会
Charlie: Oh, that’s right/What book are you reading again? 没错/你们今天要念什么书?
Alan: It—I—it’s a mystery/Uh, called Why Are You Doing This to Me 是推理小说/叫做《为何这样搞我?》
Charlie: Oh, yeah/It’s by the same guy who wrote Because It Amuses Me 没错/《因为我爽》的那个人写的
Herb: Boy, I wouldn’t have had you two pegged as readers 天啊,我怎么觉得你们不只是读书
Alan: Well, there you go. Good night 这就是了,晚安
Herb: Hey, Alan 艾伦
Alan: Yeah? 什么事?
Herb: You talk much to Judith? 你最近有跟裘蒂丝说话?
Alan: Nope. See you 没有,再见
Herb: Oh, well, if you speak to her, tell her I said hi 如果你有跟她说话 帮我跟她问好
Alan: Okay 好的
Herb: And that.../...the time we spent together is very special to me.../...and if she needs anything, uh, just call me/I’m there 还有 .../我们一齐的时光,对我来说非常特别/如果她需要帮忙,可以找我/我会在那等她
Charlie: You know what’s a good book? /Under the Dining-Room Table
by Richard Gobbler 你知道一本好书吗？/姚你爽写的《餐桌下的秘密》
Alan: But—But it does not compare to.../Wait Till Your Liver Fails by
Hope Udai 但是比不上.../...王你死的《等你爆肝吧》

In the episode of Two and a Half Men, where the conversation above takes place, Alan revives his old affection for his ex-wife Judith who has married Herb. The couple, Judith and Herb, are living separately due to a family dispute. This temporary separation gives Alan a chance to reestablish his relationship with Judith. In this conversation, Alan is heading for Judith’s place when Herb, who has no idea about the affair between Alan and Judith, calls on Alan and Charlie. Charlie in turn sees the situation as a chance to play his prank on Alan who is afraid of being exposed. When Charlie brings the conversation to the edge of a truth which he has no genuine intention to expose, he and Alan talk in riddles or encrypted phrasing to keep Herb in the dark.

The subtitles on DVD, which are displayed above, domesticate the SL wordplays and contain the sexual allusions which are not intended in the original. The translation of “Because It Amuses Me” responds to that of “Why Are You Doing This to Me” as the SL lines do to each other. However, the TT shows “为何这样搞我”, which means “Why you f * * k me in this way?”, rather than the meaning of the ST. In response to this meaning, “Because It Amuses Me” is translated as “因为我爽” which means “Because I enjoy it so much”. Compared with the DVD’s subtitles in this part of the conversation, YTET’s translation (given as below) is closer to the meaning of the ST, which show “你干嘛老找我的茬儿” for “Why Are You Doing This to Me”, and “因为我高兴” for “Because It Amuses Me”.

However, in dealing with the wordplay in the rest of the conversation, the fansubs cannot replicate the English humour successfully. In the subtitles on DVD, the personal names mentioned in the SL conversation are localized to make them sound natural to the Chinese audience. “Robert Gobbler” is transformed into “姚你爽” which alludes to “咬你爽” (bite for arousing you). “姚”, pronounced as “yāo”, which is a Chinese surname. The character sounds close to “咬” (yǎo) which means “bite”, particularly in the context of this conversation. The translation corresponds to the meaning of “Under the Dining-Room Table” of which the translation is “餐桌下的秘密” (secret under the dining-room table) to remind the audience of the previous event between Alan and Judith. The same strategy applies to the translation of “Wait Till Your Liver Fails by Hope Udai”, in which the name “Hope Udai” alludes to “hope you die”. The word “hope” can be translated as “望” (wàng)
of which the pronunciation is close to “王” (wáng), a Chinese family name. Thus “Hope Udai” is translated as “王你死” which implies “望你死”. This punning effect in Chinese functions together with “等你肝爆吧” (wait till your liver explodes) to replicate the cursing attempted by Alan, in response to the potential telltale in Charlie’s speech.

In maintaining the colloquial register, YTET’s translation contains more modal particles in Chinese such as “哟”, “咧”, “嘛”, “啦”, and “吧”, and the dialectical expressions such as “喝高了” and “啥事” which are rarely used in the DVD subtitles.

Alan: Uh, no, I—I have other plans 算了 我 我…我有约了
Herb: Oh, got a date? 约会?
Charlie: Yeah, Alan, you got a date? 呀 Alan 是要去约会?
Alan: No, no, a date? Pfft! /Not likely, ha-ha-ha/No, I have a meeting with the, uh, thing about the—About the group/I told you, remember? 不是 约会? 不算啦 我是要跟…/某人开一个某会…某个社团
我跟你说过了的 记得不?
Charlie: No, tell me again 忘了 再说一次咧
Alan: He’s a little pickle/Uh, well, if you must know…/uh—I—I belong to a book club that I am going to 估计喝高了/如果你非要我说
那我就告诉你…/我今晚上是要去读书会
Charlie: Oh, that’s right/What book are you reading again? 呀 是嘛/你读的是啥书来着? /
Alan: It—It—It’s a mystery/Uh, called Why Are You Doing This to Me 是
…是关于神秘事件的书 书名叫做“你干嘛老找我的茬儿”?
Charlie: Oh, yeah/It’s by the same guy who wrote Because It Amuses Me
哦 想起来了 不就是那个“因为我高ミヒ” 的作者写的嘛
Herb: Boy, I wouldn’t have had you two pegged as readers 伙计 你俩读的
都是啥乱七八糟的书呀
Alan: Well, there you go. Good night 可不是嘛 晚安
Herb: Hey, Alan 嘿 Alan?
Alan: Yeah? 哈事?
Herb: You talk much to Judith? 你最近有跟裘蒂丝说话?
Alan: Nope. See you 没有,再见
Herb: Oh, well, if you speak to her, tell her I said hi 噢 如果你有跟她说话
就帮我带个好
Alan: Okay 没问题
Herb: And that…/… the time we spent together is very special to
me.../... and if she needs anything, uh, just call me/I’m there 我们在一起的那些时光对我来说 意义非凡 如果她需要帮助 随时找我/我等着她

Charlie: You know what’s a good book? /Under the Dining-Room Table by Richard Gobbler 你知道啥才是好书不？/Richard Gobbler 写的“餐桌之下”

Alan: But—But it does not compare to.../Wait Till Your Liver Fails by Hope Udai 但是...跟 Hope Udai 写的“你就等着酒精肝吧”根本没法比

[注: Hope Udai 音同“Hope you die（你去死吧）”]

9. Conclusion

In this discussion, we have looked at the Chinese subtitles of the English humorous effects. To translate the dialogue, mannerism of speech must be reinforced. Otherwise, the subtitles will jeopardize the quality of the original, and the audience will be suspicious on the credibility of the translation. Only with a profound understanding of the ST, would the translation be able to realize the pragmatic and sociolinguistic issues of the SL.

To make the SL humor accessible to the TL audience, the subtitle translators converge the meaning of the original differently in Chinese subtitles. The SL humour may be omitted due to the linguistic and cultural gaps between the SL and TL recipient contexts. The Chinese audience may react to the SL humour differently, in comparison with the audiences in the SL contexts. The differences between the ST and the TT are visible on various levels of the humorous communication, from slight changes to the complete recontextualization and the transformation in every linguistic unit. When the SL humour cannot be adapted to the TL context, the subtitle translators have to resort to the standard language which at least inform the TL audience about the literal meaning of the SL speech.

The fans’ practice establishes new rules and gives more liberty to the translators. The strategies applied in this amateur activity, such as the translator’s note, inevitably challenge the traditional method of subtitling. Compared with the subtitles produced for the authorized distribution, fansubs are bound to the informal and popular colloquial expressions. However, in dealing with the humorous effect such as wordplay, the authorized translation reveals a more profound learning of the SL and the TL and thus preserves more of the original rhetorical device than fansubs do. Despite this, the fansubs offer the viewers a more endearing experience of the original through re-presenting the SL speech with the expression and register used in the viewers’ daily life. Their strategy of subtitling is to domesticate or neutralise the foreignness of the original, which conforms to the dominant trend of translation in
the present days.

References


Tears behind the Laughter: Construction of Humour and Despair in a Contemporary Portrayal of the Female Condition in the Outskirts of a Brazilian Metropolis

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Abstract: This paper intends to analyze the collective composition created by a needy community in the outskirts of São Paulo (Brazil) that resulted in the production of the video clip “Sí-Mi-Ré-Lá, Vai Ter!” [a double-sense expression whose sonority can be understood both as “Sí-Mi-Re-La, you’ll get it!” and “If you touch me, you’ll get it!”]. Resulting from a social project, the clip portrays with great complexity and richness present conflicts of the female condition in the basis of Brazilian social pyramid. Following a semiotic approach, we investigate some of the procedures that structure the syncretic text in order to produce a chain of meanings compatible with the inner social and existential contradictions of its source of inspiration. We also apply some of the core ideas of Eero Tarasti’s Existential semiotics to comply with the specificities of a text structured around a subject who, in his natural task of making sense of the universe, faces a world that can look quite meaningless to him.

Key words: semiotics; syncretism; song analysis; audiovisual; existentialism

Introduction

This paper intends to analyse the collective composition created by a community in the outskirts of São Paulo (Brazil) that resulted in the production of the video clip “Sí Mi Ré Lá, Vai Ter!” [A double-sense expression whose sonority can be understood both as “Sí Mi Re La, you’ll get it!” and “If you touch me, you’ll get it!“]. The film, that counts thousands of exhibitions on the Internet, is the result of a social project promoting popular culture and education in Brazilian needy

Available on 09/06/2012 at: http://www.youtube.com/watch? v=9WDct0L_L-g
communities. Reflecting the Weltanschauung of its composers, the video clip seems to be at first sight a great and happy celebration in a very idiomatic Brazilian folk style with a casually humoristic theme: a housemaid’s rebellion against the gallantries of the men in her community. Nevertheless, a careful analysis reveals a far more complex scenario: humour is used as a rhetoric resource to express in locally acceptable terms a situation of grave gender oppression against which any kind of rebellion is developed much more in appearance than in essence. Syncretic resources, like the systematic association of precise rhymes with determined intervals in certain passages (homologies), reinforce such an ambiguity by the generation and occasional suspension of semi-symbolic relations (the very concept of syncretism according to Hjelmslev) with semes developed in the verbal, sound and visual instances of the audio-visual discourse. Such homologies permeate the categorical oppositions that structure the meaning of the text in such a way that, if as far as appearance is concerned the conflict is solved in sort of a humoristic rebellion, the essential and existential *Dasein* (cf. Tarasti\(^1\)) of the protagonist will dive into a state of Nothingness (Jean-Paul Sartre’s existentialist concept of the *Néant*\(^2\)) rather than in any degree of transcendence with respect to the personal and social contradictions she is immersed in. The term *transcendence* appears here as a threshold between a present state and the project of a future stage, as formulated by Sartre in his *L’Être et le néant* (SARTRE, 1943), thus establishing according to Tarasti a dialectic between “being” and “not-being”\(^3\). The impossibility of a subject assuming this project of action or reaction would generate a mode of existence that could oscillate from anguish to apathy:

A subject becomes an existential being that creates significations \[\ldots\] He finds himself amidst the objective signs. Let it be simply called *Dasein*. There all the laws, grammars and generative courses of the objective semiotics hold true. But then the subject recognizes the emptiness and Nothingness surrounding the existence from which he has come, that is, which precedes him and comes after him. The subject makes a leap into Nothingness, to the realm of *le Néant*, described by Sartre. In its light, the whole earlier *Dasein* seems to

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2. SARTRE, 1943.
3. “The new essential concept in semiotics is *transcendence*. It creates the dialectics between *being* and *not-being* (or *Nothingness*), which is so essential on everything existential” (In: TARASTI, 2000: 11).
have lost its ground; it appears to be senseless\(^1\).

In this case, the always complex and problematic use of the term *Dasein* seems to be indeed quite proper if we take into account a famous Heidegger’s proposition of his *Sein und Zeit* where he states that if *Dasein* means being self-conscientious and if I myself am also self-conscientious, things are for me nothing but forms of reaching self-consciousness\(^2\). Thus, if *semiosis* is a process by which a subject attributes meaning to his world, Tarasti makes semiotics advance by investigating situations where the subject paradoxically faces a world that he perceives as senseless.

At a first glance, these rather intricate first considerations may appear to be strange to the joyful and lively atmosphere of the video. The splendorous use of colour and light, the rich rhapsody of popular and even histrionic characters, the surrealistic presence of the *boi-bumbá* (a stylized ox that is part from many Brazilian feasts) among other passengers in a crowded bus, the use of musical genders traditionally related with popular feasts like the *cavaloo-marinho*, the *maracatu* and the *côco*, the accelerated tempo with a syncopated rhythmical structure, the orchestration in a gradual crescendo leading to the final climax, all these elements take their part in a rhetoric of celebration constructed by a series of figures of expression in the visual and sound instances of the film. How could a syncretic text with such a festive allure be discussing sensitive issues like the gender exploration and oppression in the outskirts of the great metropolis in the dawn of the 21\(^{st}\) century and still build the effect of meaning of a subject facing a world he would regard as meaningless? This paper aims to investigate how those apparently contradictory contrapositions are ultimately essential to construct these effects of meaning of amazing richness and complexity, and also to study how the relations between categories of content and expression can structure the generative path of meaning in a syncretic text like the *Si-Mi-Re-Là* video clip.

### Verbal figures of expression

The present paper will assume the analysis of the figures of expression\(^2\) of their homologation with categories of content and of the suspension of these homologies

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1. TARASTI. 200;11
(the definition itself of *syncretism* according to Hjelmslev\(^\text{1}\)) as its methodological approach to the study of the generative path of meaning.

First, let us consider some of the verbal figures of expression present in the lyrics of the video clip’s song:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dona Ariana</th>
<th>Si Mi Rê Lá, vai ter</th>
<th>Voltou pra casa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trabalhou a semana inteira</td>
<td>Si Mi Rê Lá, vou dar</td>
<td>Deu por falta do marido</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Já tá voltando da feira</td>
<td>Tô cansada</td>
<td>Achou ele escondido</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E vai Natália visitar</td>
<td>De cabra safado</td>
<td>Atrás da mesa de um bar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>É que a comadre</td>
<td>Chegando por trás</td>
<td>Tinha uma loira aguada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mora longe pra diabo</td>
<td>E querendo encostar</td>
<td>Com olho comprido</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ma’ o presente do afilhado</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ela pensou: isso é perigo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Não pode mais esperar</td>
<td>Si Mi Rê Lá, vai ter</td>
<td>Mas eu vou me controlar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chegou no ponto</td>
<td>Si Mi Rê Lá, vou dar</td>
<td>Toda molhada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Com a cabeça cheia</td>
<td>Liberdade ainda que tarde</td>
<td>Porque tinha caído uma chuva</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De problema</td>
<td>Agora só encosta</td>
<td>Dividiu o guarda-chuva</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veio o Vila Helena</td>
<td>Se eu autorizar</td>
<td>Com o marido beberrão</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ela esticou a mão</td>
<td></td>
<td>Meu Deus do Céu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tava com sorte</td>
<td></td>
<td>Por que esse dia não acaba?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O motô pisou no breque</td>
<td></td>
<td>E o cara ainda se gaba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mas um cara de pileque</td>
<td></td>
<td>Dando uma de machão</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quis subir na condução</td>
<td></td>
<td>Entrou ligeiro</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Ela ligeira | | |
| Se livrando do manguaça | | |
| Na malícia e na raça | | |
| Deu-lhe um tranco e um empurrão | | |
| Com a mão na bolsa | | |
| Foi pegando um trocado | | |
| O busão tava lotado | | |
| Veja só que situação | | |
| O pé-na-jaca | | |
| Veio atrás e na catraca | | |
| A Ariana percebeu | | |
| Que ele tava na intenção | | |
| Pulou De lado | | |
| Pisou no pé do safado | | |
| Deu um grito arretado | | |
| E cantou esse refrão: | | |

---

\(^1\) HJELMSLEV. 2003.
Let us resist the temptation of considering content issues—or rhymes—from the start, as traditional analysis usually do, and begin with the alliterations in the text. In the 1st strophe, we find:

Dona Ariana
Trabalhou a semana inteira
Já tá voltando da feira
E vai Natália visitar

Si Mi Ré Lá (If you touch me), you’ll get it!
Si Mi Ré Lá, I’ll give you!
I’m tired of pervert guys coming from behind wanting to take advantage
Si Mi Ré Lá (If you touch me), you’ll get it!
Si Mi Ré Lá, I’ll give you!
Freedom, no matter how late! Nobody will touch me anymore without my permission

Going back home she noticed her husband was not there
She finally found him hiding behind a bar’s balcony
There was a false blonde staring at him
She thought, this is real trouble but I will not lose control
Still wet because of the rain that had fallen before
She shared her umbrella with her inebriated husband
Oh My God, when will this day finish?
And this guy still boasts playing the macho man
She entered her house quickly dropped him in the shower
rushing to prepare her condiments
and finish her spaghetti but the cachaca came back, fancy as ever, switching on the TV, forgetting to replace the gas cylinder
She was in front of the sink when the pau-d’água approached saying he wanted some water
But she knew what his intentions really were
She jumped aside with the kitchen’s knife and with a fierce scream she sang this Chorus;
Here we detect an opposition between occlusive and fricative consonants, where the initial predominance of the occlusive t and d gradually cedes room to the fricative y and f. Would be there any homology between this categorical opposition in the plane of expression and a correspondent dichotomy in the plane of content? The enunciative scene that corresponds to the predominance of the occlusives displays a character, Dona Ariana, immerse in a situation of an extenuating and endless work routine, whereas the prevailing fricatives appear in a situation where she abandons that first scenario to explore more open and/or friendly landscapes, like the open market or the way to her friend Natalia’s house. Thus, the homologations between categories of expression and categories of content can be summarized in the table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plane of Expression</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Consonants</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occlusive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t, d</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plane of Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Discursive Level</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actantial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dona Ariana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spatial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trabalho (work)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Narrative Level</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to-have-to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Profound Level</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tensivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prosodema</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1

É que a comadre
Mora longe pra diabo
Ma’ o presente do afilhado
Não pode mais esperar

In this second strophe, a similar opposition takes place between sonorant (m) and obstruent (p) bilabial consonants, the latter becoming more and more present until finally prevailing in the last verse. Here, the enunciative scene in the plane of content opposes extensivity—related to Ariana’s will of delivering her godson’s gift and to the distance alluded in the comment that his mother lives “as far as hell”—to intensivity—that appears as punctuality in the urgency of the duty that cannot be postponed anymore. Thus, here we have the following table:
In the 3rd strophe, the opposition between palatal fricatives (ch) and labiovelars (y) is once more homologous to the dichotomy between intension—that appears in Ariana’s emotional saturation, with her “head full of problems”—and extension—the spatiality implicit in the Vila Helena’s bus trajectory. Quite more interesting is the following strophe where we find an opposition between dental (t) and velar (ç; q) occlusive consonants:

Tava com sorte
O motô pisou no breque
Mas um cara de pileque
Quis subir na condução

Here we have a clear polarization between the corresponding enunciative scenes: the first one, euphoric (“I was lucky”) and marked by the “motô” (driver); the second one, disphoric due to the arrival of the drunken intruder, one of Ariana’s main antagonists.

In order to avoid a level of detail and extension that would transcend the objectives of this article, we will now examine our object in a broader and more
general perspective. An analysis analogous to the one we have developed so far leads to the conclusion that the verbal text presents in its structure a systematic homologation of consonantal oppositions to dichotomies in the plane of content—mainly to actantial and tensive contrasts. Thus, if the table above reveals an homologation between the opposition of dental and velar occlusive consonants and the actantial dichotomy between the driver and the drunkard—or between extensity and intensity—, the refrain shows the homology between velar x fricative consonants and Ariana x pervert or intensity x extensity. It is important to reinforce that if the consonantal oppositions and their homologation to dichotomies in the plane of content are in fact an invariant in the analysed text, on the other hand the consonantal oppositions vary from strophe to strophe, and so do the phoric, aspectual and spatial categories they are related to. Nonetheless, there is indeed a persistency in the homologation of the more occlusive consonantal category (e.g.: dental > velar; obstruent > sonorant besides, more commonly, occlusive > fricative) with the related categories of intension in the plane of content, resulting in a general table that can be assigned to most of the lyrics strophes:

There are two remarks that we would like to add here. The first one is that what we have called “actor 01” is almost always affectively more related to Ariana and her closest cycle than actor 02, often associated with her antagonists—especially her husband and the drunkard. When the opposition was between her grandson and her friend Nathalia, he appeared associated with the obstruent consonants—and with Ariana’s deepest and undelayable motivation, whereas Nathalia was surrounded by sonorant consonants and punctually related to the affective and physical distance of a friend that, after all, lives “as far as Hell”. The second observation regards the different pattern of homologation between opposing alliterations and tensive dichotomies that prevails in the refrain. If we consider the refrain’s form as A-B-A-B’. B is the only part where more occlusive consonants do appear associated with intension. In A, the opposition in the alliteration series simply cannot be organized in the more occlusive
\textit{x less occlusive} standard that had worked so far as a rule, being now the rather chaotic S-M-R-L group of consonants associated with extension and the V+ dental-occlusive D/T group related to intension:

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|}
\hline
\textbf{PLANE OF EXPRESSION} & \textbf{seq.01} & \textbf{seq.02} \\
\hline
\textbf{consonants} & S, M, R, L & V, T/D \\
\hline
\textbf{PLANE OF CONTENT} & & \\
\textit{NARRATIVE LEVEL} & & \\
\textbf{modalities} & to-want-to-do & to-want-not-to-do \\
\hline
\textbf{PROFOUND LEVEL} & & \\
\textbf{tensivity} & extension & intension \\
\textbf{prosodema} & modulation & accent \\
\textbf{aspectualization} & opening & closing \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Table 5}
\end{table}

Nevertheless, the most interesting feature in B’ is by far the inversion in the correlation between more occlusive consonants and more intensive categories that takes place there, where differently from anywhere else it is the more occlusive dental velars that appear related to extension, while less occlusive velars are associated to intension.

This inversion is extremely relevant, for it indicates that the alteration in the perception of form both in expression and in content can be related to a much deeper structural phenomenon regarding a change in the regime that regulates the relations between categories of these two planes. It is interesting also to remark that the final

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|}
\hline
\textbf{PLANE OF EXPRESSION} & \textbf{dental} & \textbf{velar} \\
\hline
\textbf{occlusive consonants} & D, T & C, G, Q \\
\hline
\textbf{PLANE OF CONTENT} & & \\
\textit{DISCURSIVE LEVEL} & & \\
\textbf{isotopies} & Freedom & Oppression/Harrassment \\
\hline
\textit{NARRATIVE LEVEL} & & \\
\textbf{modalities} & querido & (não-querendo) cansada \\
\hline
\textbf{PROFOUND LEVEL} & & \\
\textbf{categorias} & freedom & oppression \\
\textbf{tensivity} & extension & intension \\
\textbf{prosodema} & modulation & accent \\
\textbf{aspectualization} & cursivity & punctuality \\
\textbf{celerity} & disacceleration & acceleration \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Table 6}
\end{table}
prevalence of values of extension appears also in the musical instance of the plane of expression, where a general pause followed by an instrumental interlude seems to express a prolongation of Ariana’s aspiration for liberty.

Musical figures of expression

Let us consider now the musical figures of expression in the analysed text—especially as far as harmony is concerned—and the homologations that associate them to categories of content. The first minor tonic chord appears concomitantly to the instauration of the protagonist Ariana. The following chord, a minor subdominant, will coincide with the new spatial shifting in; the moment when Ariana arrives to the bus stop—in agreement with the general view defended by many musicologists like Koellreutter that subdominant chords would generate an effect of meaning of distance and detachment\(^1\). The effect of tension and expectation that Koellreutter assigns to the dominant chord will coincide with the protagonist’s gesture of raising her hand to make the bus stop for her. The following chord, a dominant’s dominant, appears in the different strophes associated to the narrator’s commentaries sanctioning a narrative program—as in the first strophe, when it comes while the lyrics comment how “lucky” (“sorte”) Ariana was for the driver responding immediately to her request stopping the bus so that she could take it. The parallel subdominant is often contiguous here to sudden and unexpected events, like the arrival of the drunkard, corresponding to the rupture of narratives and isotopic paths previously presented in the enunciate. Finally, a last dominant chord prepares the finish of the harmonic cycle keeping its function of announcing tension and expectation, marking the drunkard’s intention to enter the bus where Ariana is.

The question we will discuss now is whether the above-mentioned homologies between harmonic functions and categories of content will remain stable along the whole composition—and if they will, in which degree of invariance.

The second incidence of the tonic takes place when the lyrics presents once more Ariana’s quick and witty reaction, thus confirming its vocation for the instauration of the protagonist in an actantial enuncive shifting in. In the third tonic chord, Ariana is the elliptical subject of the phrase “(she) has gone back home” and, the last strophe brings back a situation quite close to the second incidence, describing how Ariana had moved quickly into her house. Therefore, the homology

\(^1\) KOELLREUTTER, 1980
between the tonic chord and the presentation of the protagonist attributes remains indeed stable throughout the text, in a curious parallelism with the traditional concept that the tonic chord “presents” the “protagonistic” triad of the tonality.

The following incidences of the subdominant chord present an even clearer stability as long as the logic and structure of the homologies are concerned. Thus, the second subdominant appears when the lyrics refer to the sudden approach of the disagreeable drunkard, the third implies the path walked under the rain with the also drunken husband from the bar to Ariana’s house and the last takes place when she is positioned in front of the sink, giving her backs to the next attacker—her own husband. In every case, there was the instauration of an enuncive space presenting common semantic traces as intension, acceleration and disphoria—all related with sudden changes to situations invariably hostile to Ariana, presenting her as someone with “the head full of troubles” and still suffering the sexual harassment of more than one character in the narrative.

As far as the dominant chord is concerned, its suspensive and tensive function are confirmed when it reappears in the second strophe, coinciding first with Ariana’s perception that the drunkard “had evil intentions” towards her, and second when she announces she was going to sing the refrain. In the third strophe, these tensive and disphoric outlines are kept in the aversion to the “drunken husband” and to his following proud “macho” attitude, whereas the effect of expectation that appears quite clearly in the previous situations is now elliptic to become explicit just in the next strophe, when Ariana describes the new attack of sexual harassment she is about to suffer. Finally, in the last strophe the dominant will once more coincide both with Ariana’s perception of the “evil intentions” of her husband and the announcement of the refrain. Thus, with the only exception of the moment Ariana “raises her hand” so that the bus stops, all the other incidences of the dominant come related with situations of conflict, in the middle of polemic relations—and the apparent exception of the contractual bus stop scene can be also understood as the trap that will ultimately take her to the arena against her first antagonist.

The dominant’s dominant presents an even more stable behaviour than the dominant. The function of adding a remark is clear both in the second and the fourth strophe, when Ariana “jumps aside” to finally react to the sexual harassments she is a constant victim of. In the third, it accompanies her comment “Oh my God, won’t this day ever finish?” completing a series of homologations with reactive narrative programs—pragmatic or sanctional—performed by Ariana.

The last harmonic function we find in the song is the parallel subdominant, here attached to a function of rupture with respect to the prevailing isotopic paths.
Thus, the first strophe sees the chord appearing at the same time the lyrics presents the sudden arrival of the drunkard, and the third strophe expresses the perplexity of Ariana's towards the fact her drunken husband was boasting about his "maso" behaviour rather than apologizing for his abusiveness. Both in the second and fourth strophes, the chord corresponds to Ariana's sudden "fierce scream" that will announce the refrain and her reaction against her attackers, thus confirming the chord association to isotopic ruptures.

Finally, let us examine the homologations between harmonic functions and categories of content also in the song's refrain.

Starting with a subdominant chord, the refrain evokes, coherently with the other incidences of that harmonic function, the instauration of a new concrete or imaginary space where Ariana can indeed revolt against her aggressors. Homophony creates an effect of double-sense between the denotation of the lyrics—"Si Mi Ré La" as the main five notes sequence in the melody—and one of its connotations—"Se me relar" or "if you touch me". The usage of such elusive resources to express the protagonist's reaction suggests, among other things, also how unnatural her rebellion sounds in the social and cultural context in which she is embedded. On the other hand, it is mainly in the refrain that the enunciate discourse finally becomes enunciative, with Ariana finally assuming her own discourse in the first grammatical and rhetoric person. Her verbal rebellion—"I am tired of perverting guys coming from behind and wanting to take advantage"—, a novelty in the text, comes also accompanied by an unprecedented harmonic feature: a tonic chord with a minor seventh that breaks not only the harmonic order, but also the melodic syntagm, that starts to obey a modal dorian structure rather than a tonal minor one. It is in this mode that Ariana declares her independence, alluding to Virgil's first Eclogue famous verses that would inspire the unsuccessful attempt from a small group of patriotic rebels of gaining independence from Portugal in the 18th century Brazil: "Libertas quae sera tamen" (Freedom, no matter how late). Of course the fact that the referred rebellion was a well-known historic failure counts more points to the dubious character the song adopts with respect to Ariana's revolt. The following subdominant chord takes place during the proposal that "nobody will touch me anymore without my permission", thus promoting once more the instauration of a new space, where physical contact would be allowed provided it were consensual. The next dominant will also confirm its tense and suspensive character establishing the condition to the approximation ("if I authorize"), and the final tonic will equally reassert its previous function of instauration of the subject Ariana, that appears now in an enunciative ("I") discourse.
Finally, a structural aspect of the semi-symbolic relations discussed above seems to partially respond to the effect of meaning of form both of expression and of content: the functional inversion of the subdominant from mainly intensive and disphoric in the strophes to extensive and euphoric in the refrain. Such a change transcends more superficial observations revealing that deeper structural inversions can be also held responsible for the sense of form. This behaviour appears in the homologations created between figures of expression and categories of content not only as far as harmonic figures of expression are concerned. As we are going to see in the following item, an analysis of the metric structure of the song reveals similar—or even more compelling—results with respect to this most interesting phenomenon.

### Metric and verbo-melodic figures of expression

The first kind of musical figures of expression we are going to consider regards the concept Greek-Roman classic poetry called *metrics*, and involves the rhythmical patterns and structure of the composition. Considering duration as part of the musical instance and the words as belonging to its verbal counterpart, it is thus the first essentially syncretic figure of expression to be analysed here.

In the first musical section—corresponding to the strophes composed by 4 groups of 4 verses each—, the proceleusmatic equal-semiquavers pattern (\(1\,\,1\,\,1\,\,1\)) domains:

![Figure 1](image)

Thus, the change in the metric structure from the strophes to the refrain is homologous to the effect of meaning of form itself, marking the section transition by the alteration from the homogeneous proceleusmatic configuration in the strophes to the heterogeneous three-metrical-pattern refrains, which presents the following rhythmical elements:
i. pyrrhus—iamb—iamb

\[
\begin{array}{c|c|c}
\text{U} & \text{U} & \mid \text{U} & \text{U} & \mid \\
\text{re-lar.} & \text{vai ter} & \\
\text{Se me} & \text{re-lar.} & \text{vou dar} & \\
\end{array}
\]

\[
\text{Si Mi Ré Lá, vai ter!}
\]

Figure 2

ii. Amphibrach (which corresponds in musicology to the syncope)

\[
\text{tô can-sa-da de ca-bra sa-fa-do che-gan-do por trás e querendo encostar;}
\]
\[
\text{Li-ber-da-de a-in-da que tar-de}
\]

\[
\text{Tô can-sa-da de ca-bra sa-fa-do che-gan-do por}
\]

Figure 3

iii. Dactyl (with anacrusis)

\[
\begin{array}{c|c|c|c|c}
\text{U} & \mid \text{U} & \text{U} & \mid \text{U} & \text{U} & \mid \\
\text{só_en-cos-ta se_eu au-to-ri-zar} & \\
\end{array}
\]

\[
\text{só_en-cos-ta se_eu au-to-ri-zar}
\]

Figure 4

The variation from the homogeneous metric structure of the strophes to the heterogeneous patterns of the refrain concern not only superficial issues relating to the form of expression, for they are also homologated with important categories of content, like the prevailing enuncivity that regards time, space and actors of the discourse to the third person in the strophes, and enunciativity, assuming them in the 1st person in the refrains. That enunciative section is also characterized in the narrative level by the enunciator’s sanction—which is a cognitive sanction only during the incidence of the amphibrachs, whereas pragmatic sanctions take place during the other two metric patterns, but in quite distinct ways; in ambivalent
double-sense enunciates coinciding with the iambic\(^1\) and in straightforward categorical statements in the dactylics. So, the homologations between metric categories of expression and categories of content can be summarized in the following table:

![Table 7](image)

Let us now associate the semi-symbolic relations emanating from the dominant metric categories in the text with those originated by the correlations between consonantal and tensive oppositions as we have previously examined in the present article:

Metric figures of expression are not the only relevant musical figures we would like to consider. The French dictionary Petit Robert defines *onomatopoeia* as the “creation of a word representing or intending to represent an object by phonetic imitation\(^2\)”\(^2\). As far as songs are concerned, the melodic and rhythmic intonation of the sung word, rather than simply the Petit Robert’s “word”, can be considered as a matter for the construction of onomatopoeias representing concrete or abstract terms. A very clear example of such a resource appears in the phrase “*a comadre mora longe pra diabo*” [that pal of hers lives as far as Hell], where the word “longe” [far] is intonated with an ascending perfect 4th interval—the largest direct melodic skip in the whole composition. This kind of onomatopoeia is better known in music history as *Wortmalerei* or word painting, defined in the Grove Dictionary of Music

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\(^1\) “Si Mi Rê Lá, vou dar” can be understood in Brazilian Portuguese both as a reaction against the abuse—in a more denotative approach—or a total surrender to it—in a more connotative Reading.

as “the use of musical gesture(s) in a work with an actual or implied text to reflect, often pictorially, the literal or figurative meaning of a word or phrase”. The same interval appears in “worked all over the week”, “coming back from the market”, “arriving in the bus stop”, always associated with a spatial and/or temporal distance, and thus creating a semi-symbolic relation that corresponds to a rhetoric figure like a synecdoche. Nonetheless, two more musical figures of expression demand our attention. The first one appears in the chromaticism that pervades “but a drunkard wanted to get into the bus”, representing almost metaphorically the stumbling steps of the drunken man by the tonal hesitation of the ascending semitones.

The second one uses a rhetoric resource that is so essential to the composition that it takes part from its own title: the homophony between “Si Mi Ré Lá”—denotatively a pleonasm between the lyrics and the names of the sung notes—and

---

“Se me relar”, a Brazilian Portuguese colloquial expression for “if you happen to touch me”;

![Figure 5](image1)

![Figure 6](image2)

In a less punctual and more general approach, the role of the homophony proves to be far more than superficial, extending its structural importance to the syncrhetic text as a whole, as will be clear when we discuss the visual figures of expression. For the moment, it is important to emphasize the semantic enrichment it brings particularly to the refrain, when “Si Mi Ré Lá, vai ter” can be heard both as a challenging “if you harass me, you will suffer hard consequences for that” and as a submissive “if you touch me, you will get what you want”. Were such a figure an isolate in the text and it could be regarded as an accident, despising completely the second above-mentioned meaning. Nevertheless, its reiteration in different forms and spots throughout the video clip and its correspondence to figures in the visual instance completely weakens such an interpretation of its structural function. Besides, the fact that it comes back in the second phrase of the text in “Si Mi Ré Lá, vou dar”—sounding simultaneously and paradoxically as “if you happen to touch me, I will hit you” and “if you touch me, I will make love to you”—confirms categorically the structural role of the homophony in the lyrics. Thus, Ariana’s explosion of rebellion and revolt against the oppression and sexual harassment that victimize her is structurally constructed to remain essentially ambivalent: the same voice that seems to rise menacing her aggressor sounds at the same time as a surrendering acquiescence to his oppressive power and desires—as if a clear and unequivocal expression of a fair social order were simply untranslatable in the sociocultural context and linguistic universe of the semiosphere\(^1\) she belongs to.

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### Visual figures of expression

Among the many forms of semantic enrichment associated with the visual figures of expression, we will focus here in the visual figurative shifting in procedures.

The solar luminosity of the video establishes a temporal *shifting in* that

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\(^1\) LOTMAN, 2004
characterizes the action as taking place mainly in daytime—and, although the luminosity of some scenes suggest a time around midday, a series of other visual elements compound a narrative that seems to initiate early in the morning to finish in the late afternoon (but still before sunset). Morning time is represented also by typical activities related to that period of the day, such as the preparation of Ariana’s breakfast, the brasilíia car announcing fresh products with a megaphone, children arriving at school (the headquarters of the NGO OCA, in Carapicuíba, a distant outskirt of São Paulo), the empty square with a man sweeping the floor, the birds singing (a sonoplastic contribution to reinforce these visual elements). The evening and sunset that appear in the second part of the clip are invariably short in extension and immediately followed by daytime scenes, in a rather inconsistent construction that deeply contributes to the farcical and humoristic atmosphere of the film.

The spatial shifting in is widely enriched by the introduction of visual elements, which bring forth locations inexistente in the verbal text: the historic colonial square; Ariana’s house interior with its decoration saturated by accumulated and juxtaposed objects presenting strong chromatic contrasts and defining the atmosphere of a typically low-class Brazilian house; the brasilíia, a popular Volkswagen model created and produced in Brazil to be later exported to Mexico, Portugal and the Philippines, and that thus contributes to reinforce not only a local atmosphere but also a peripheral and low-class one, since the model production was discontinued 30 years ago[1]. The berimbau (string musical instrument with the format of an arch), the Mateus (disguised character of a folk theatre act called Cavalo Marinho), the capoeira (Brazilian martial art) fighters and even the ethnic traces of the actors converge to represent the presence of the Northeastern Brazilians—the nordestinos—in the composition of the local ethnographic landscape. Migrating to the industrialized Southeast during the catastrophic droughts of the 1940s and 1950s, the nordestinos migration is still today stigmatized as a source of troubles to their host cities, as if they had not been essential to these places’ quick development some decades ago. Their presence, allied to the typical narrow streets of the favela (slum) village or the brushwood growing chaotically along Ariana’s way to the bus stop, reinforce once more the low-class atmosphere of the outskirts of a Brazilian metropolis.

Visually, the first two strophes and the first refrain take place in the interior of

a crowded bus. The following sequence shows the “bar” alluded in the lyrics as a boteco (typical Brazilian lower-classes bar) where Ariana is playing domino. The inner decoration, the painted flowers with strong chromatic contrasts, the shelves saturated with bottles showing poorly-designed labels, the lamp in the roof hanging from an electric wire, the posters in the barely conserved walls, the narrow interior space, the dark drink resembling an aged cahaca (Brazilian alcoholic beverage), everything contributes to the representation of a space associated with the national imagery of a lower-class ambiance. Finally, the last place to be characterized will be Ariana’s kitchen, with its precarious roof, sooted walls, thick wooden windows, pans hanging on the walls, concrete sink, deteriorated oven and furniture, again the lamp hanging from the roof by an electric wire, the net where her husband lazily swings, all these elements come to confirm the above-mentioned social and cultural status.

As far as actantial shifting ins are concerned, the arrival of gestuality and the pathemic contributions it brings largely accentuate the humoristic rhetoric procedures of the syncretic text. Indeed, a series of dramaturgic ruptures detaches the spectator from the characters’ drama, in a procedure comparable to Bertold Brecht’s epic theatre and its “dissonances” between the textual, musical and dramatic instances. Ariana’s characterization as a protagonist follows the traditional procedures of central framing and narrative focus, and her African-Brazilian phenotype is reinforced by her simple and strongly coloured clothes, that she combines with questionable taste—as matching her pink bag with her blue-green dress, her large earrings and the flower in her hair. The gests she makes to her neighbours are another element added by the visual narrative, as much as their ethnic and age compositions. The class in the NGO, the laughers and smiles, everything compounds a scenery of harmonious, pleasant and ludic—and somewhat idealized—familiarity, in an interesting counterpoint with respect to the heavy thematic background of the song. Such a contrast is even more accentuated when the Mateus and many people in the community react to the berimbau’s call starting to dance, characterizing an atmosphere where the abounding smiles and the coloured flags hanging from the poles evoke much more a popular feast than any kind of discussion about gender oppression. A Bakhtinian carnival ambiance is presented in the many incongruences that display the bus driver as a child, in the caricatural gestures of the drunkard and of the varied passengers who react to his presence in

---

the bus—so varied that count among them a Boi-bumbá, the mythologic ox that speaks, dies and resurrects in the ancient traditional popular act that bears its name.

The actor of the enunciation appears as the art-educator Paulo Lotito, a composer and singer who is in charge of the music lessons in one of the educational projects held in the community. The casting is exclusively composed by members of the community, most of them involved with OCA’s social programs.

![Image](image_url)

**Figure 7**

The interaction between the drunkard and Ariana in the bus is marked by a caricatural gestuality, where the man’s smiles and the woman’s firmness evoke much more the reprehension to a trick than the reaction to a situation of sexual harassment—something reinforced by the clapping and singing of the other passengers during the song’s refrain, emphasizing a humorous rather than conflictual atmosphere. Other histrionic tools are the unusual representation of the “loira aguada” (fake blonde) as a mulatto woman with a blond wig, the fact she is peacefully playing domino with friends while the lyrics stresses her preoccupation with her husband, and his ostensive flirt with the fake blond in the presence of his wife. The same kind of irony appears again when the enunciate in the lyrics affirms Ariana will keep her self-control to face the situation while the visual enunciation shows her expelling her husband from the bar by hitting him with her tiny frevo umbrella (frevo is a Brazilian gender of popular music whose dancers traditionally use an umbrella in their acrobatic paces) that is so small that can barely protect them from the rain that suddenly fell upon the couple—as in many other moments where the lyrics describe a situation of hostility and/or discomfort that is openly denied and/or satirized in the visual instance of the enunciation. The climax in the conflicts
of the narrative—the moment when Ariana reacts to her husband’s sexual harassment with a knife in her hand—is also performed in a caricatural style, in a scene followed by a farcical sketch where Ariana appears happily dancing with the drunkard in front of her condescending husband while Paulo and other characters dance a forró (a Brazilian dance somewhat related to the polka) in her kitchen. The smiles and the festive atmosphere deconstruct and void the drama, its conflicts and the antagonism between the characters—despite the pokes and pushes of Ariana against her male harassers (it is interesting to notice that it is always Ariana who is shown aggressing her offenders, in a flagrant and rather symptomatic inversion of the local reality).

![Image of people dancing](image)

**Figure 8** After the conflict with her husband, Ariana dances with the drunkard who had harassed her while her husband peacefully watches the scene sitting in his chair. Humoristic rhetoric procedures like these tend to empty the drama and the condition of the protagonist as a victim.

The following sequence is one of the most interesting in the film, creating a dazzling counterpoint between the visual and sound instances especially as far as gender and age identities are concerned. In it, the low voice of Paulo Lotito appears to come from the mouth of a little girl, while Ariana’s feminine voice seems to come from a boy.

This almost brechtian procedure suspends one of the most elementary homologies of the audio-visual discourse, contributing to detaching the spectator from a more emotive involvement with the drama’s plot and thus consolidating the farcical and carnivalesque—according to Bakhtin’s conception of carnival as a temporary suspension and subversion of social order—atmosphere of the syncretic
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLANE OF EXPRESSION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>VERBAL</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>metrica</td>
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<tr>
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<td>alliterations</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>MUSICAL</strong></td>
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<td>harmony</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>VISUAL</strong></td>
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<td>actantial</td>
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**PLANE OF CONTENT**

**DISCURSIVE LEVEL**

<table>
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<tr>
<td>Sexual Harrassment</td>
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<td>submission</td>
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<td>inaction</td>
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<tr>
<td>causacao</td>
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<td>Shifting outs:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>actantial</td>
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<tr>
<td>enunciciary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uona Ariana (3rd person), cara, motó etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drunkards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>husband</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the “coachaça” (drunkard)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“loira-aguada” (fake blonde)</td>
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<td>temporal</td>
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<tr>
<td>coming back from the market</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>market, bus stop, bus, hmr, horn</td>
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<tr>
<td>“ponõ” (bus stop)</td>
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<tr>
<td>“catraca” (turnstile)</td>
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<tr>
<td>“por trás da mesa de um bar” (behind the bar’s table)</td>
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<td>“pin” (sink)</td>
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**NARRATIVE LEVEL**

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<tr>
<td>programatic:</td>
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<tr>
<td>(not-wanting-to) “cansada” [tired]</td>
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<tr>
<td>“cachaça” (alcoholic beverage)</td>
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<td>no-power-not-to-make</td>
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**PROFOUND LEVEL**

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<td>clarity</td>
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<td>acceleration</td>
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Table 9
text. It is important to notice also that the suspension of the commutation between categories of expression—like the visual representation of the singers—and content—like the recognition of their identities through their voices—corresponds to Hjelmslev’s very definition of syncretism (HJELMSLEV, 2003). This conception of syncretism is vital to the text for it responds not only to the brechtian detachment it generates, but also to a more structural role with respect to how different instances of expression—verbal, visual and sound—relate to each other. After all, the tensions between being and seeming-to-be that were seen in the above-mentioned ambiguities of the lyrics are analogous to the detachment between voices and faces that appear between the visual and sound instances at that moment of the film, thus reinforcing their structural role in the syncretic text. So, such a procedure can be understood both as an occasional phenomenon building a determined effect in a particular moment and as a structural resource that is justified not by local circumstances but by the logic and syntax of the semi-symbolic relations that permeate the text. Taking this into account, let us amplify the previous table to a larger scope, and comment it in the next and last item of the present paper:

### Final Remarks

When we consider the syncretic text analysed here through the fundamental opposition between freedom vs. oppression, we recognize in the previous table two large columns that organize some chains of homologations that pervade the text as a whole, impregnating each one of its instances of substance—verbal, sound and visual—and each level of the generative path in the plane of content. One of the most interesting points to discuss here concerns the semantic enrichment of the audio-visual text with respect to the lyrics of the song—not for the particularities that would necessarily differentiate any audio-visual version from a referential verbal text, but rather for the form by which the syncretic text accomplishes and expresses the syntactic and semantic structures already inherent to the lyrics.

Examining the role of a rhetoric tool here as the double-sense, it is remarkable to see how it emanates to and from the different instances of substance and levels of meaning in the text. The previously discussed ambiguity of the phrases “se me relar [Si Mi Ré Lá], vai ter” and “se me relar [Si Mi Ré Lá], vou dar” as far as the plane of content is concerned (reaction x surrender) had already proved that the homophony between “Si Mi Ré Lá” and “Se me relar” had transcended the surface of the verbal and sound instances of the text to invade also the organization of the plane of content.

Moreover, the inversion of the syntaxic homologation of the occlusive
alliterations to intension and of the non-(or less) occlusive to extension during the refrain points to the fact that the separation between strophes and refrain can not be reduced to a superficial matter of form, for deeper levels of invariation organizing the structure of the text suggest formal issues can be perceived as an effect of the homologies between form of expression and form of content rather than as the origin of the sensation itself of formal separation. Such structural—not superficial or occasional—properties, whose scope we can reinforce adding the oppositions in the metric organization of those two sections, will coherently be projected in homologies reaching the other instances of substance that compound the syncretic text.

But how could the double-sense ambivalence reach, for example, the musical instance? Through the opposition between the minor mode—associated to the strophes and to Ariana’s sorrows—and the dorian mode—intertextually related to various genders of Brazilian North-eastern music and culture, traditionally fond of a reputation of resistance to natural and social adversities. Ariana’s shout can be seen as the affirmation of an oppressed social identity through the gestuality of a tribal battle cry. Nonetheless, affirming her condition as a North-eastern Brazilian woman, she is in an intertextual and interdiscursive approach alluding to the untamed “Paraíba-masculina”—a sort of North-eastern Brazilian amazon as brave as any man can be—, but also to the stereotypes of a sexist society marked by a profound asymmetry between the roles and social statutes played by men and women. Therefore, the ambiguity between the minor and dorian modes appears related to the ambivalence of an identity that affirms itself without clarifying if its merit would be in its rebellion or in its resignation with respect to its fate.

As far as the visual instance is concerned, the opposition between strophe and refrain takes place step by step with the contraposition between two forms of gestuality: a first one, caricatural and stereotyped; and a second one, aestheticized in the form of dance. Dance affirms freedom, and its aesthetic and ludic aspects substitute conflict as contractual prevail over polemic relations, thus solving the asymmetry in gender relations through the harmonious consensus of an idealized common sense. The symmetry and rhythm of the choreographed movement amplify the oddity of the caricatural gesture that permeates the discussions between Ariana and her harassers. At the same time, this caricature also distorts Ariana’s image with respect to her representation in the lyrics; instead of the victim presented in the verbal instance, we see her in the visual instance reacting with hostility and jealousy to the flirtation between her husband and the fake blonde that by no means can be found in comparable intensity in the lyrics. Depicting her as a ridiculous
aggressor rather than a victim, the caricature voids her condition of oppression, banalizing the physical aggressions she—and not her husband or any man—usually suffers.

But it is not in the isolation of the separated instances of substance but rather in their interaction in a syncretic context that those oppositions present their more interesting and complex aspects. The suspension of the commutations between the voice of the singers and their respective images, generating the oddest and most unusual combinations, brings forth not only a farcical atmosphere or a detachment of the spectator with respect to Ariana’s drama; it establishes also a curious correspondence with respect to the previously exposed ambivalences of the lyrics. Coming in the last strophe of the song, they redefine it as a section where some of the shifting in processes are suddenly suspended, while the shifting out will empty the roles—and consequently also the drama—of the now chaotically changing actors. This process seems especially meaningful when, for instance, the husband and the drunkard, both alcoholics and sharing the condition of Ariana’s aggressors, start to look symptomatically alike. Or when a little girl appears singing with Ariana’s voice, as if in a presage that announced her sharing of the tragic destiny women are commonly bound to in those communities. These emptying identities should emphasize even more the return to the affirmation of Ariana’s identity in the refrain, were she not already so impregnated with the essential contradictions previously exposed that declaring her freedom would ultimately sound as declaring her submission.

This is exactly the point where some of the proposals defended by Eero Tarasti in his Existential semiotics seem to show their particular pertinence and applicability. Exhausted by the intense work and by the routine of aggressions that harass her, Ariana’s battle cry is the complex term in which she simultaneously presents and deposes her most precious weapons. This ambiguity impregnates the words, images and sounds as much as all the relations between the different instances of substance homologated to the three levels of organization of the meaning in the syncretic text. Her fatigue appears suffocated in an astounding carnival of smiles, feasts, rhythms and colours. Her shout disappears in the middle of such a parade of outstanding characters, but it still seems to be able to empty their stereotyped celebration by disconnecting faces and sounds until her voice prevails again and in the very end of the film, we see her exhausted body finally relieved from all that burden triumphantly resting on her bed, relieved from silent and alone. Without the harassment of inconvenient drunkards, but also without her dancing and singing community, she seems to ultimately empty the values and modes
of existence that seemed hitherto to confer meaning and direction to the narrative she takes part in. Devoid of her own *Dasein* and facing the *Néant* as if she were the protagonist of Camus’ *L’Étranger*, Ariana, like Meursault, will not succumb to emptiness. On the contrary, in that single and final moment of almost ecstasy, she finds the strength to persevere in the path reserved to her. It is not yet what Tarasti calls *transcendence*—something that the Finnish semiotician defines as a state that comes when emptiness gives place to a *pleroma* that signifies the whole world, bringing back to it what Schelling calls the Weltseele (the soul of the world). But neither is it the fatalistic submission to a reality where domestic violence and alcoholism would claim some kind of consuetudinary legitimacy as “natural facts”. Ambiguous, rich and complex as that dichotomy, the text expresses the present transition of Brazilian women from a traditional and sexist background to a more balanced and modernized conception of the gender roles, as it equally echoes the ascension of the basis of the social pyramid in the so-called emerging markets—or even the dilemmas of a country that, belonging to the presently prestigious group of the BRICS, faces every day the contradictions of a nation that must learn at a vertiginous speed how to differentiate archaism from tradition, novelty from progress, and advance from development.

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Semiotics of Marketing

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Abstract. During this century, semiotics has played an important role in different sciences and fields like Medicine, Economy, Psychology, Advertising and Marketing, of course. Semiotics has interdisciplinary, scientific, cultural and symbolic attributes that permit it to combine in an efficient and conciliatory way, humanity and science; and that’s exactly what Marketing is looking for, to understand a set of human processes for producing, interacting and delivering value to customers and to know how to manage customer relationships in ways that benefit companies.

It is also unquestionable that Marketing is an important part of the cultural and symbolic human world. As human is a symbol, each marketing interchange ritual includes symbolic elements and Semiotic is also interested in studying those kinds of symbolic expressions that people practice during their daily life.

This paper presents in the first place, the Symbolic Characteristics of Marketing; secondly, the concept of the Semiotic of Marketing as a particular semiotic whose main interest is to build senses of the marketing tasks: the market (buyers with similar real, potential and symbolic necessities that could be satisfied by an interchange relationship), its stakeholders (entrepreneur, dealer, marketing researcher, manager, etc.) the 5 Ps (price, place, promotion, publicity and person), services and products in a specific cultural context. Finally, it shows a summary of a Market Semiotic Research of a shopping center analyzed as a narrative text in Bucaramanga (5th largest city of Colombia, South America).

Key words: semiotic; marketing; symbol; sense; market research; shopping center.

Introduction

During this century, semiotics has played an important role in different sciences and fields such as Medicine, Economics, Psychology, Advertising and Marketing. Semiotics has also interdisciplinary, scientific, cultural and symbolic attributes that allow it to combine in an efficient and conciliatory manner humanity and science. These elements can be utilized by Marketing to make possible understanding of human processes for producing, interacting and delivering value to customers and to know how to manage customer relationships in ways that benefit companies. Semiotics of Marketing provides marketing researchers symbolic answers to their symbolic
questions that other disciplines like statistics or mathematics cannot satisfy.

It is also valuable to recognize that Marketing is an important part of the cultural and symbolic human world. If human interaction includes symbols, every marketing interchange ritual includes symbolic elements. This leads to the introduction of Semiotics as a path to study those types of symbolic expressions that people practice during their daily life.

These concepts have their essential foundation in the notion of human being as a symbolic entity, in Cassirer’s words, a “symbolic animal” (1993, 49). Human beings live in a symbolized world, not natural. The symbolic individual lives his daily life in a cultural world; he does not live in a physical universe but in a symbolic one. This scenario leads human beings to accomplish their daily tasks of building themselves as human (Ghelen, 1987, 35-45).

Every day humans require symbolic mediations to survive in the natural world. This is a competence that they develop day after day and it is necessary in order to achieve many human activities. Among those activities, I chose Marketing as a focal point of the discussion here. Understanding the ritual condition of marketing lets us make an approximation to the Semiotic of Marketing as it is indicated in the title of this document. (Moreno, 2001, 16)

Thanks to the study of semiotics of the social actors’ expressions during their daily performance in the marketing rituals, this paper will deal primarily with the following topics: the Symbolic Characteristics of Marketing and the Semiotics of Marketing as a subset of semiotics with special interest in building senses of the marketing tasks. This will lead to exploring the interaction among the market (buyers with similar real, potential and symbolic necessities could be satisfied by an interchange relationship), the stakeholders (entrepreneur, dealer, marketing researcher, manager, etc.) and the 5 Ps (price, place, promotion, publicity and person), services and products in a specific cultural context. Finally, it shows a summary of a Market Semiotic Research of a shopping center analyzed as a narrative text in Bucaramanga (5th largest city in Colombia, South America).

1. Symbolic Characteristics of Marketing

The theoretical approximation to the Semiotics of Marketing implies analysis of the symbolic character of Marketing through its definition as a ritual, marketing as a set of practices with certain conditions of time and space that permits one to build different senses, thanks to symbolic values created by marketing actors in the mediation of their bodies, the establishment of relationships with sacred possessions
or services, interchange procedures, consumption and acquisition of products in daily reality. Here it is important to remember Maisonneuve (1991, 16) who says that every ritual practice is certainly symbolic.

Furthermore, it is essential to keep in mind that marketing relationships are social. They are not individual. And they imply required interaction expressions with others, with objects, with natural and cultural worlds.

It is also beyond doubt that marketing is closely tied to everyday life in the “Products World” (Gongora, 2005, 46). In that world, the human products as human beings acquire the dimension of symbols. They are significant signs, not only because of their function, but also their processes, agents, contexts, history, etc. that are in their production, use, commerce, distribution or consumption.

Finally, cultural world-building is the marketing characteristic that lets us talk about marketing as a symbol that allows humans representations of the marketing actor (consumer, buyer, marketing researcher, seller, entrepreneur, etc.) and his context; the market, products’ world or consumption world. This cultural world is the stage of two important tasks of social actors; to build himself as human and to give a particular and symbolic identity to his reality.

### 2. Semiotics of Marketing

Before giving a definition of the Semiotics of Marketing, it is necessary to clarify that it is not about applying practices of semiotics to the marketing fields (Mick, 1986). Semiotics of Marketing is proposed here as a particular semiotic whose main interest is to build senses of the marketing tasks: the market (buyers with similar real, potential and symbolic necessities that could be satisfied by an interchange relationship), its stakeholders (entrepreneur, dealer, marketing researcher, manager, etc.) the 4 Ps: price, place, promotion, publicity; and distribution of services and products in a specific cultural context (Kotler, 2005, 63).

According to the above, the principal goal of the Semiotics of Marketing would be the construction of senses about ritual marketing practices; promotion, product, place, price, publicity and the marketing social actors; consumers, producers, dealers, merchant, trader, client, user, marketing researcher, etc. in a defined cultural context. (Moreno, 2001, 16)

The secondary goals of the Semiotics of Marketing are the following: to make semiotic studies of marketing, to promote interdisciplinary practice in solving marketing problems, and to make new readings of the actual marketing performance and dynamics. (Moreno, 2005, 74–77)
Finally, some preliminary study lines and categories of the Semiotics of Marketing should be:

- Marketing as a ritual; symbolic products (sacred elements), new marketing interchange processes (based on faith) and new markets (corporality).
- Marketing actors; kinesis, proxemics, kairotic, linguistic sign...
- Advertising sign; chromatic code, subliminal message, icon and image.
- Products World: assets, services and products (objects, kitsch, gadgets, packing...) as semiotic extensions of human symbol...
- Marketing Myths: consumer culture, additional value, fashion, contemporary life style...
- Symbolic Needs instead of basic necessities

HIERARCHY OF NEEDS

MASLOW

Being Needs
Self-actualization
Esteem Needs
Belonging Needs
Safety Needs
Physiological Needs
Deficit Needs

Figure 1 The Hierarchy of Needs

Consulted on: Addiction Research & Theory, Aug 2008, Vol. 16 Issue 4, p305–307, 3p, 1

SYMBOLIC NEEDS

Possession
Hedonism
Seduction
Interaction
Revealing
Feelings

Communication
Lack of interest
Information

Author: Consuelo Moreno
### COMPARATIVE NEEDS CHART

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Needs (Best, et al., 2008, 306)</th>
<th>Symbolic Needs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biological and physiological needs; air, food, drink, shelter, warmth, sex, sleep, etc.</td>
<td>Hedonism (Lipovetsky, 1986, 105); clean air, special food, light drink, alternative shelter (spa, hotel, etc.), unknown people warmth, sex taboo practices, circadian changes...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety needs; protection from elements, security, order, law, limits, stability, etc.</td>
<td>Lack of interest or indifference (1986, 34); psychological, spiritual and health therapies, anti-depressants medicines, no borders, no limits, real world substitutes, anarchy, innovation, new information and knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belongingness and love needs; work group, family, affection, relationships, etc.</td>
<td>Seduction (17-33); plurality of options, sex-seduction, variety, diversity, assortment, interracial, social and cultural relationships...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esteem needs; self-esteem, achievement, mastery, independence, status, dominance, prestige, managerial responsibility, etc.</td>
<td>Interaction and communication; be part of a group, informatics and communication technologies and advances, global connections...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-actualization needs; realizing personal potential, self-fulfillment, seeking personal growth and peak experiences.</td>
<td>Revealing—exhibition-(64); freedom of expression, no difference between private and public space, world, feelings or the performance of social actors, realities shows, brands, symbolic values...</td>
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</tbody>
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Adapted by Consuelo Moreno

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### 3. Market Semiotic Research of a Shopping Center Analyzed as a Narrative Text in Bucaramanga (5th largest city of Colombia)

#### 3.1 Marketing ritual in a shopping center in Bucaramanga

Taking into account that marketing is a ritual or a set of practices with certain conditions of time and space that permits building different senses of the symbolic values created by symbolic products (sacred elements), new marketing interchange processes (based on faith) and new markets (corporality), this paper shows a summary of a Market Semiotic Research of a shopping center in Bucaramanga, Colombia. The Metropolitan area of Bucaramanga city has seven important shopping centers, but the semiotic research was done only about one of them (I cannot mention the name because the information can be used by its competitors).
3.2 Semiotic data collection

3.2.1 Observation process

DAY 1

11:40 a.m.—1:00 p.m. There are more women than men entering the shopping center. People use the shopping center bridge that connects it to other shopping centers. 3% of them are delivery boys.

1:00 p.m.—3:09 p.m. Delivery boys get to Cambiamos S. A., Pepe Ganga comida and Adidas. People buy products; they carry bags from Armi, Ibis, Travel and Tennis. The entrance is a meeting point. People are looking for cash machines. Many old women use these machines.

3:09 p.m.—5:07 p.m. A lot of people get in the shopping center carrying bags from other shopping centers and stores. It appears that there are more shoppers at this hour than in the morning and more buyers from the #2 door. People use the shopping center as a meeting place. A lot of delivery boys enter with packages of food. People enter and go out Cambiamos S. A. People use the shopping center as a corridor to other places around the area. People buy in Armi and Travel stores.

5:00 p.m.—7:00 p.m. People enter carrying bags from others shopping centers and stores. Women enter and go out to the stores, but they do not carry bags. Few men enter the shopping center. Cremas serves clients of other stores because they close at 6:00 p.m.

DAY 2

9:10 a.m. Some workers are preparing a scaffold, a TV. monitor, others are cleaning the place; all stores are closed; only the elevator is operational.

9:20 a.m. A father and his daughter go to Happy City, but it is closed. Mercagan and Cremas are the first places to open.

9:40 a.m. Five people including two children are waiting for Happy City service, but it is still closed.

9:48 a.m. Beijing, Frutos del Mar and Crepes open.

10:00 a.m. Happy City is closed, but the family with two children continues to wait for it to open, so they buy ice cream at Cremas.

10:37 a.m. Stores are all open at this time except Happy City, which opens at 11:30 a.m.

11:13 a.m. Mercagan begins to deliver food orders. Nobody eats, but the six tables are occupied by the parents and children who are waiting for Happy City to open.

3.2.2 Questionnaire representative of the following people: 3 frequently shopping visitors or buyers, 3 non-shopping visitors or buyers, and 3 occasional shopping visitors or buyers
SHOPPING CENTERS SEMIOTIC STUDY IN BUCARAMANGA
UNIVERSITY OF SANTANDER
QUESTIONNAIRE

PARTICIPANT
DATE:
Number 1 to 7 of your favorite shopping centers. 1 is your favorite.

La Florida
Cañaveral
La Quinta
IV Etapa
III Etapa
Megamall
Acrópolis

2. What do you like most about your favorite shopping center?
3. What do you dislike when you visit a shopping center?
4. Why do people go to shopping centers?
5. Write 5 characteristics of your ideal shopping center.

3.3 Semiotic data organization

3.3.1 Narration

It is Saturday and what I am going to do today? Oh! I remember that there is a Song Contest in the shopping center. I arrive at the shopping center. I take a good spot to see all visitors and buyers. I see a family. I listen to the mother, Beth, who is a weekly and frequent buyer of tissues in this place. Beth’s daughter is one of the players in the contest. I see two old ladies window-shopping. They enter a store, and they try on some clothes and accessories time and time again. Their husbands are bored, and they go to have a beer. There is a bar near the kid’s area. I also see three enthusiastic ladies who are shopping for clothes. They carry packages from the stores: Ibis, Travel and Tennis. Employees go in and out of different stores looking for clothes of different colors and sizes. Apparently, they work for the same company which has various stores on each floor of the shopping center. There is a young couple sitting on a sofa. They buy an ice cream at Cremas. The girl Paola is another competitor in the contest. Happy City is near Cremas and both places are full of people, especially Happy City that just opened at 11:30. It is 1:10 p.m. I go to eat lunch at the food plaza buffet. I see a foreign family, the Spanish father named Jose is looking for a cash machine and he finds a Davivienda ATM. The noise is incredible at the food plaza. I see a friend of mine, Mr. Vaca, with his family. He makes a quick purchase of a T-shirt in a clothing store. On the other hand, his wife Ruby has packages from Derek, Chevignon and Moma. It is evidence of a long shopping trip. After Mr. Vaca’s son participated in the contest, the entire family eats lunch
at Mercagan and now they are going to the supermarket to do their weekly shopping. It is 4:00 p.m. I notice a group of teenagers. I sit next to them, and I hear that they agree by Facebook and Twitter to have a meeting at the shopping center. Their nicknames are Anama, Dany, Nati and Lala. The teenagers’ dynamic seems to be to smile at groups of boys and getting interaction between both groups. Two ladies enter the shopping center. They are laughing loudly. They call each other Luz María and Elisa, and they carry bags from Pepe Ganga, Adidas and Oriflame. These stores are leaving the shopping center. The contest is over. Paola wins, and a group of boys claps a lot. The boys’ group walks around all the floors of the shopping center, but they do not buy anything. I go to Juan Valdez, and I finish my day drinking a delicious cup of Colombian coffee. (Authors: Consuelo Moreno and Gustavo Mantilla.)

### 3.3.2 Caricature

![Caricature Image]

Painted by Luis Carlos Medina Nuñez
Marketing and Advertising student of the University of Santander -UDES-

### 3.4 The semiotic interpretation

This semiotic interpretation is based on the Narratology Analysis of Greimmas, exposed by Courtes (1980):
3.4.1 Narrative structure

—Topographic: The shopping center has four floors. It is located in Cabecera, a good area of Bucaramanga. It is connected with another shopping center by a bridge. Its architecture is minimalist. It is big, well-lit, and with comfortable decoration furniture.

—Chronographic: Chronologic; 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. Circadian; restrooms and food plaza. Kairotic: open and close stores’ schedules, artificial lighting, contest and shopping journeys and waiting time at stores.

—Characters; Narrator; visitor and buyer. Beth; frequent buyer. Luz H. and Maria Elisa; visitors, buyer from stores in the shopping center. Employees and delivery boys; company and products. Teenagers, old ladies, young couple, foreign family, families, and boys groups are segments of markets.

3.4.2 Actoral structure

—Action by manipulation. Contest activities, open and close store schedules, kid’s necessities, elevators and movement spaces at the shopping center as corridors or stairs.

—Action by competences. Narrator is capable to look at all marketing dynamic. People are capable to assume buyer, seller, and consumer, or a person who influences marketing ritual or companion role.

3.4.3 Actantial structure

—Syntagmatic relation examples:

\[
\text{Subject 1 (S1) } \rightarrow \text{ Narrator: marketing research-consumer} \\
\text{Subject 15 (S15) } \rightarrow \text{ Children: influence marketing ritual-consumer}
\]

—Paradigmatic relation example

\[
\text{Marketing researcher S1} + \quad \text{Consumer S15} + \\
\text{Influence marketing ritual S15} - \quad \text{Consumer S1} -
\]

3.4.4 Discursive structure

Shopping center as a meeting place: entertainment, shopping habitue, consumer culture, family meeting, friends meeting, interaction and relationships, clients, visitors, and symbolic necessities satisfaction.

Shopping center as a marketing place: buy and sell procedures, seduction, products, bags as BTL advertising, companies, brands, tourists, commercial relationships, services, work, financial activities, and symbolic necessities satisfaction.

4. Conclusions

Shopping center is a meeting point to satisfy symbolic necessities of interaction, communication, hedonism and possession, revealing and exhibition.
Shopping center is an ideal marketing place for marketing as a ritual with sacred possessions (products, packages, companionship and services), faith (buy, sell or look merchandises and services) and body (be part of a group, meet people and be a marketing actor).

The kairotic time helps to create scenery of shopping in the marketing ritual for sellers, buyers and visitors.

Children’s symbolic necessities influence the dynamic of the marketing ritual a lot in shopping centers.

Groups of teenagers, boys and young people compose segments of markets that need seductive marketing strategies for families, old people and adults’ market portions. There are more visitors than buyers or consumers.

Men make quick and effective purchase while women take a long time to decide what to buy and they usually have non-effective purchases.

## 5. Recommendations

The shopping center administration must do architectural modifications by all the commercial scenery and not only the cafe on the first floor and a small kid’s area on the third floor, to improve meeting areas for market segments; families, adults and young people and children.

It is necessary to continue programming entertainment events for visitors and buyers of the shopping center as a strategy of marketing positioning.

Music, comfortable furniture and roof decoration will motivate clients to stay more time in the shopping center and increase purchases.

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Mediatization, Advertising and Subjectivities in Mastercard “Priceless” Campaign: How Childhood Has Turned into a Brand Fetish of the Culture

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Abstract: This paper proposes a critical study on childhood consumption mediatization in the context of access to credit. It aims to present the subject of consumption mediatization so much explored in other areas, through the reflection of psychoanalytical concepts. From the analysis of advertising it will examine credit image explored by the “Priceless” campaign of Mastercard brand. The survey will take two pieces of the “Priceless” campaign broadcasted on primetime television in Brazil focusing on childhood and the relations between parents and children. For this, it will be used as a reference to the discourse analysis psychoanalytically oriented such as Parker (1997) and Barthes (1966, 1985) have suggested. Results are treated in the form of a comparative re-description of idealizing aspects, of denial, of disavow, and of strategies on object formation, which could be perceived in the advertising examined.

Key words: consumption mediatization; credit advertising; psychoanalysis; subjectivities; brand image.

1. Introduction

This paper aims to propose an analysis of the modes of subjectivity from the mediatized advertising practices of credit consumption in primetime Brazilian television. The reference to the conception of desire in psychoanalysis will follow the childhood between parents and children, as it explores scenes that imagine the birth of desire and the birth of the ideal of colonization of the future by the form assumed by credit. The theoretical frame of the analysis will present brand and image studying taking the conception of narcissism based on Freud and also on
Debord, as he proposes the image as spectacle.

The first part of the discussion will bring up with the subject of childhood between parents and children. It is during childhood with the support of parents—or a substitute—that children make their most significative acquisitions (walk, talk, read, write, etc). Acquisitions that allow us to reduce our alienation and dependence on another. It is under childhood that we take decisive steps towards greater autonomy and freedom. The “Priceless” campaign of Mastercard is interested in childhood to say it is priceless, but for the rest you can use your Mastercard. Rather, it wants to match acquisitions with the purchase of childhood.

The next part will bring up the subject of childhood as a brand to end up the discussion with a reflection on what there is in common between words and money. The childhood as a brand depicts the parasite form of the brand’s image, from where we can read the commandment “Don’t save with the shopping of/on the childhood”.

## 2. Childhood between parents and children

The novelty brought by “Priceless” campaign lies at the entrance theme of the relationship between parents and children, and by extension, the universe of childhood. From the formal point of view, we find the introduction of new expressive means as childish scribblings, narrative voice of children are based on jazz soundtrack. It is assumed in this period that what is priceless is a possible name for the desire. In the new year’s ad they emphasize: “There are things that money can not buy. May the new year be full of them.” That is, the desire to vote as a synonym appears replacing what you can not buy. The world of hyper consumption describes Lipovetsky (2007, p. 11-12) is a lax world, full of paradoxes, which is an evolution of capitalism today and is manifested by the search for a new “ism” on the hedonistic consumption, causing continual desires that motivate their achievements through consumption, with the danger of frustration that can generate continuous search. This, according to the author, makes us the “civilization of desire.”

The child appears as an individual consumer. Their demands appear indexed to their own purchasing power, and their allowance. The demands are subordinated to the larger value of parental warmth. It’s a soothing piece. Although consumption is the practice of happiness it seems to have a point where it says “it’s enough”. It is just this point—that point of apparent detention of narcissistic instrumental logic—which gives the commodity its value fetishist. The transvaluation of the objects would have us believe a metonymic extension between credit and continuity of infantile narcissism.
There is an interesting detail that should be noticed. At the end of the animation it is the child’s face interposed between the stylized faces of father and mother. This is in congruence with what is written in the caption, which initially said: “with Mom and Dad,” and that becomes animated by “sleep (again) with Mom and Dad.” Moreover, the voice of the child narrator says a third thing: “Sleeping in the middle of mom and dad.” That is, there is a slight dissonance between what you read and what you hear. Fact inconsequential if not observed that the interpolation of parentheses “(again)” is the realization of the graphical intermediate child’s position between the parents. However, the piece ends with the disappearance of the child’s silhouette, merging the faces of father and mother, and the overlap of these two circular surfaces, emerges the emblem of Mastercard. We
then have three times:

1. intrusion of the child between the parents (in parentheses)
2. exclusion of the child
3. the merger of the parents to the company’s emblem.

Despite claiming manifestly the permanence of the filial lace, the rhetoric of this piece concludes for the replacement of parents by an icon of consumption. First there is the deletion of the child. Soon after, it’s the turn of the parents to be erased by the promise of dreams that soporific torpor Mastercard cause. While the scene erasure of scribbles of child, mother and father goes, is no longer the voice of the child, but the speaker who sentences the chorus; “There are things that money can not buy, for all the others exist Mastercad”. The game of alienation and separation possible to play should end up in alienating ourselves to the brand.

There are two contradictory messages; parents are not objects and at the same time, they are replaceable by an object. At first we read the discourse of psychoanalysis to say that no one is replaceable, so parents are not as commodities. In the second we read the speech of the capitalist to say that no one is irreplaceable, since there are an infinite series of consumer objects capable of bringing the experience of pleasure. Icecream pleasure, excitement in riding the wheel and sleeping in the middle of the forbidden pleasure of parents. We spent thus the logic of consumption of objects on the logic of consumption of brands. The Brand consumer, says Roux, refers increasingly to experiential benefits, making an appeal to seeking exceptional experiences and strong emotions (ROUX, 2005). The rhetorical form of this discourse uses the symbolic separation in order to confirm the imaginary alienation. What sustains this movement is the production of what is more than the real; the brand name.

3. Childhood as a Brand

The next piece accentuates childhood as a brand. Again, the transvaluation of objects would have us believe a metonymic extension between credit and continuity of infantile narcissism.

Objects are toys, accessories, glasses (in part appointed as X-Ray Vision), being branded for the adult professional to ensure the success of the emotion of the adventures of childhood, which perpetuates itself through the brand. It is, once again, to explore situations that imagine the birth of desire, in the scenario that the child will get to know visiting his father’s work, which dominates this block of productions.

As in the movie frames below, which show images from the father getting
ready to go to work until his arrival in office. With a theme of the show *Batman and Robin* in the background, a voice of a boy announces:

“Super disguise: $80.00 with Mastercard
Intergalactic Communicator: $300.00
X-Ray Vision: U.S. $180.00
Meet the hideout of your superhero
Is Priceless
There are things that money can not buy
For all others there is Mastercard
Accepted from video games to office supplies.”
Protagonized between father and son, the scenes of the world of childhood treated as a brand progress on eight takes:

1. the child’s father fascinated looks in the mirror straightening his tie.
2. the father arranging his tie, in front of the mirror, with an emphasis on the wedding ring on the left hand of the father.
3. the child holding hands with his father out of the elevator and into the office.
4. the child fascinated looking at the environment, still holding hands while walking to his father’s desk.
5. the father speaking by cell phone as he walks with his son, still hand in hand, to his table.
6. the father is putting his glasses sitting (the camera focuses especially the wedding ring on the left hand) directing his gaze to the computer screen in front.
7. appears for the first time, the look of the parent toward the child that it calls attention to a sheet of paper bearing the drawing of a man with a “middle layer of medium jacket superhero” in yellow.
8. a smile of recognition of the son, and then the father.
9. both smiling embracing each other, son on his father’s lap in the swivel chair that rotates and the camera moves away from in close embrace.
10. close on the embrace of faces glued to the distance from the camera we see “Crash” written on the red background and “Pow!” Written on yellow background.
11. Fusion in circles Mastercard.

From the formal point of view we find the expressive medium parody episodes of Batman and Robin, introduced by music and culminating in the penultimate scene appears when there it shows written “Crash! Pow!” Inside a red and yellow background than in the last scene will turn in circles Mastercard the “Crash! Pow!” Episodes of Batman and Robin made allusion to the struggle between the heroes and their adversaries. The narrative voice of children and soundtrack based on episodes of urban adventure of Batman and Robin as matrix carry the brand of narcissism in childhood. It is assumed in this period that what is priceless is a perpetuation of the narcissism of childhood. In a society that is losing its shape due to the rapid pace with which things are produced, consumed and discarded, childhood as a brand has become an illusion of shape.

How can we read the familiar saying “The difference between a man and a boy is the price of their toys?” The form of the parasite brand image, in this case childhood, warns the father in order not to spare a dime with the prices of the toys from
childhood. And why is that so? Because the way to perpetuate childhood is through the strategy of perennials spending in order to maintain the brand. Deducting hence the commandment not to save on childhood purchases because his future is here.

“The best place in the world is here and now”, “the most perfect translation,” the brand, while childhood, works towards itself in order to meet the impetus to change to stay the same. It’s a way to capitalize, to parasite power changes of showy numerous acquisitions that occur in childhood, talk, walk, read, write, develop a critical attitude, etc. The brand would be a reflection of the changing consumer himself while seeking some form of permanence. The image fixing this reflex is childhood dressed in Mastercard colours, because the boy wears a red and yellow shirt, the colors of the brand Mastercard.

### 4. What is there in common between words and money?

Words and coins have something in common; they depend on consensus and circulate only where they are known. A word of obscure meaning is as useless as a currency value ignored. In *The Oxford Book of Money*, a compilation of poetry and prose about the money, Kevin Jackson presents a great inventory.

Jackson goes further in raising the commonalities between currencies and words by noting that both run the risk of a devaluation. The coins by inflation and the words by cliché. The value of the first and the sense of the second are neither natural nor absolute, but relative social and arising from a process widely accepted by custom and usage. Otherwise there would be particular coins and words, which is a bizarre idea. After all, if they do not make sense for society they have no life.

The idea that money is the result of social conventions is so old that is in the very etymology of the word, meaning “minted”, i.e., numisma comes from Greek Nomisma. It calls our attention and, not incidentally, Nomisma have the same root as nomos, the Greek term that means law. In the book dedicated to his son, Aristotle in *Nicomachean Ethics*, stresses that “the money is so named because it exists not by nature but by law, and because it is in our power to change it or make it useless.” Money is a metaphor, i.e., something that means something else. A metaphor is a figure of figures, underscores Aristotle in *Poetics*, when he defines that figure is what cuts the void. Neither the capital in its credit form, neither its advertising is able do provoke meaning to empty lives as the ones described by Lasch (1979). Words and coins without meaning are useless to power our lives and fulfill it with meanings.

### 5. Final Remarks

The two advertisings analysed evoke in particular what the credit advertising
evokes in general, which is the ideal of colonizing the future. For your credit today you must assume a debt for tomorrow. The ideal of colonizing the future is priceless. It is a kind of parasite form in which it takes what would be the fruit of another time, a time yet to come, to enjoy it now, subtracting the transformative experience of doing.

Childhood teaches us that we don’t get to stand if we don’t try it several times; we don’t get to talk if we don’t make the experience of trying to talk day-by-day. We can reach a great universe of things and people with the acquisition of childhood. How to walk, to read, to write, to imitate, to play, to invent, to create, once experienced in childhood will serve as guidelines for the rest of our lives when we have to negotiate conflicts, solve problems, overcome impasses, including deciding how much we will spend to sustain our livings.

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Onto-semiotic Analysis of Advergames

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Abstract: As digital products of the contemporary culture that put together hybrid elements from several sources such as computing, hypermedia, culture and history, games are one of the privileged digital forms of communication in the society of the XXI Century. As digital forms, they are based and structured as unit onto-semiotics that transcend the classical model of sender-message-media, following the idea of McLuhan, that shows that when a mode of being of culture and communication enters into a new symbolic space of communication, it opens new ways of being of the subject, of the message, of the communication, and the media itself. This paper aims to present the conceptual basis for thinking the ways of being onto-semiotic called advergames, indicating from a phenomenological point of view the general structures that are present in these digital communication products. Methodologically, the proposal goes from the phenomenological approaches on culture, communication and cyberspace, and sees the perspective of Peirce’s semiotics and his theory of abduction, the play of Musement and the sign as a corollary of the digital object “game” as a cultural object privileged in the contemporary communication. This study applies the methodological structure organized on a specific group of games, called advergames, showing the relevance of the onto-semiotic concepts to its analysis, and especially to the development of a methodology for the production of advergames in communication. Advergames being increasingly used as a part of marketing campaigns, to promote products and brands, especially those already known, we intend to show how this analytical approach helps to build the conceptual design of advergames and assists in the approximation of brand / product / game, and consequently in strengthening the brand and the product.

Key words: advergame; onto-semiotic; digital product; toposophy

Introduction

Videogames are present in contemporary culture in a way that they are taking up more and more space in our lives and capturing everyone’s attention. As a global phenomenon, they have proved they are not a mere passing by phenomenon, but a genuine cultural object (Manovich, 2001) capable of determining and influencing
various segments of contemporary culture, especially after the 1990s.

Based on the idea that they are legitimate digital cultural objects, we are led to observe that they describe and express contemporary ways of thinking and feeling that are structured forms of life (Wittgenstein, 2008) of a culture in an irrevocable and growing digital process (Negroponte, 1995; Murray 2003).

It is in this complex context that digital games have drawn the attention of scholars, from empirical and mathematical sciences as well as from the humanities, thus showing that the game as such has always been present and played an important role in the formation of world culture (Rabin, 2012). Understood as entertainment, digital games have shown to be much more than enthusiastic recreational activities; they proved to be highly reflective activities that show an X-ray of contemporary culture in a spectrum that allows us to view all its complexity and depth. Starting from FPS games like *Unreal Tournament*, passing through academic projects like *Dear Esther* and *Cabu Island* (Figure 1) just to name three examples of many different genres\(^1\), game culture diversifies itself just as other elements of human culture such as writing, for instance, unfolds itself in poetical, scientific, philosophical, literary (and its many genres), religious writings, etc.

![Game Images](image1.jpg)

**Figure 1** *On the left FPS Unreal Tournament; in the middle a reference for Cabu Island*

If the object of the present paper is to speak in favor of an onto-semantic

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\(^1\) A generous list classifying games into genres can be found in Rabin (2012).
analysis of advergames, it does not mean that the possible horizon of the object might not transcend the horizon provided here. Thus, aware of the openness of our general object of analysis, we will take a restrictive approach, that of a genre like advergames. We will approach it by delimiting its scope from a perspective of ontology that is related to semiotics (understood here as a phenomenology) and a philosophical conception of game. All these thematic points converge to the design of a conceptual proposal that speaks in favor of a methodology of analysis and creation of digital games and, in this direction, of advergames, within the broad area of communications.

Entertainment and emergence of advergames

The term branded entertainment used by Deal (2005) is a genre of online entertainment in which the elements of persuasion and entertainment of games are integrated. Two subcategories stand out: that of advergames and the in-game-advertising. The so-called advergames are a subcategory of branded entertainment and should be understood as such. In them, the brand or product is often the central element or aspect of the game, unlike the second category, in-game advertising, in which products are arranged in the game (for example, a sporting goods logo in a football stadium), becoming part of the narrative or structure of the game.

Advergames are increasingly used as part of marketing campaigns to promote products and brands, as we have witnessed an expansion of the public interested in the possibilities of the digital world. They are usually accessed through the company’s own website.

Although they are not yet in a position to match the effects of traditional advertising, advergames work effectively for products and brands that are known to the players and are adequate instruments to improve and change the impression of the brand towards its target audience (Winkler & Buckner, 2010).

While they do not present wide effectiveness in building knowledge of new products, advergames are placed in a position of convergence with the idea of productive consumption (Calabrese, 1987), that is, when they are played, they change the subject and the object of consumption itself. With this perspective we

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(1) The idea of productive consumption was produced by Italian Calabrese from Karl Marx. In *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859), while discussing production and consumption, Karl Marx wrote: “An individual produces an object and by consuming it returns again to the point of departure; he returns *however as a productive individual* and an individual who reproduces himself. Consumption is thus a phase of production.”
can situate advergames as hybrid products, not only with regard to the issue of languages, but especially in their purpose, since they always want to add the ludic power of games to the informative, persuasive and sensory practice of advertising. Furthermore, they are located in a culture of convergence of the media (Jenkins, 2008). Accordingly, advergames intend to change the narrow or limited conceptions of what a game would be, as well as to change the perspective that many people have of advertising, contributing to breaking consolidated pragmatic practices and paradigms.

Finally, here is a very important aspect. As they are structured as a form of interactive advertising, we should study advergames from the perspective of their characteristics as communication objects as well as the qualities that they must present to enhance their effectiveness as games.

### Advergames as nomad digital games

With the change of contemporary habits, especially with regard to multiform worldviews, transmediatic campaigns grow and inaugurate a search for qualitative and quantitative elements which are guided by the understanding of how the audience relates and views the consumed media contents. In this scenario a new placement platform becomes crucial for advertising, since it seeks a public with dedicated attention; the audience of digital games. In this direction, the campaigns started to concentrate on the media preferences of potential consumers.

We also understand that advergames are inserted into our contemporary times as an opportunity to escape the spaces and obligations imposed by work routines and operate in the sphere of leisure (Dumazedier, 2000 cited by Tietzmann & Pase, 2012). On the one hand they function as a moment of relaxation during work. On the other, they are usually found in the same device used for work, initially the computer in the workplace, and then also migrate to smart phones and tablets. The paradoxical ambiguity and versatility of the support for advergames denote the convergence between these two traditionally distant spheres of human action: work and leisure, and this is producing effects in our digital life (Negroponte, 1995).

Another characteristic of advergames related to the incorporation of interactive features in advertising is that at the same time they produce and demonstrate the incorporation of reactive and interactive features in the consumption of products. As the theory of videogames already testified (McGonigal, 2011) and that is in the philosophical discussion about games since Kant (2006), passing through Heidegger (2001), games are not the absence of activity, absence of effort or of tasks be
performed, but they are a space of tasks chosen voluntarily.

### The ontological space in the game

If the games are action spaces of the human subject, it means they are part of the life and of the world of this subject, like all other things that are around him and the contexts he has to face.

This means that starting from an ontological and pragmatic point of view, digital games can be understood as a further development of hypermedia language. Following a clue left by Manovich (2001), we observed that they always aim to put the subject and the digital world to work toposophically (Petry, 2003) through concept-images (Petry, 2008) and concept-audios (Bairon, 2005) in a digital world that tends to organize itself as a Full Opera, whose audience is mixed and identified with their characters. It is no longer an audience for whom a finished work is presented, but a work that only has meaning when its audience inhabits and lives in it. In short, it is a world that becomes more complex through the action of players.

Well, it is precisely at this intersection of positive alienation of the identification between audience/public and characters that its ontological structure emerges. In order for them to exist and to have life, they need the prior viewers (passive consumption audience/public) to pass to a condition of actors in a digital environment that tends to organize itself as a world of possibilities in the midst of the opening of a multiform narrative. If this vision takes shape from a philosophical understanding situated between Heidegger (2001, 2002), Gadamer (1997), Fink (1960), Petry (2003) and Capurro (2009), it could be found in Aristotle (384–322 BC), when he, in his first philosophy, includes the study of being as being, as well as a principal being to which all the other beings were subordinated.

Thus, the organization and study of the general properties of the being, of the beings subordinated to it, of existence and reality, are attitudes or vocations that fall under the domain of ontology—even when we inquire about the concepts that determine things and the world and that make a man wonder. So when thinking about concepts that might be of interest to a certain audience that can be converted into actors of the concept, we are doing nothing more than operating ontologically. When it comes to brands and targets that can be expressed in a digital materiality and in a series of actions into a digital drama, we are, even if unconscious and blind, in the middle of the fundamental ontological operation of man as a being-in-the-world.

The player is a man who inhabits a world (Heidegger, 2002) and as such relates
himself in a practical (Heidegger, 2001) and ludic way (Heidegger) to this world and its objects, and who is equally affected by them. In the field opened by the game, as a live event, he finds the opportunity to become the subject of the game and to be there completely to play the game (Gadamer, 1997). This field that the digital game opens to him, is incorporated into his world, providing him with a more universal and cosmic meaning for his finite existence (Fink, 1960) in a continuous exercise of himself in face of the infinity of time as Aion. In this perspective, the game enables man to exercise a way of moving through the open space of the game world, situating this digital space of the game as an extension of his own living space (Petry, 2003). From the action of man as a player who is thrown in the digital space of the game, the door opens to an independence and action of signs in a system of elements and positions that, at the same time, are articulated, relatable and able to communicate (Capurro, 2009). Here the Aristotelian sentence that says that man is “nóesis noéseos nóesis”; a being able to think about himself.

The contribution of Peirce’s phenomenology to the theory of Games

Advertising, given its characteristics, especially with regard to its planning practices and production, makes use, consciously or not, of the concept of abduction, as discussed by the philosopher and semiotician Charles Sanders Peirce. Although sometimes confused with the idea of intuition (insight), abduction is a phenomenon of a different order. Unlike intuition, which is understood as cognition not preceded by any other cognition, abduction in Peirce is inserted in the continued production of signs. In abduction, a sign preceded it and, certainly, another one will follow it.

Being an inference, the first moment of the research methods, has an instinctive ability that results from the connection of mind and nature. As Heidegger would say, a result of the fact that we are beings-in-the-world. It is abduction that leads us to discover the best way to solve important situations in life (personal and work life) and also holds the typical plasticity of instinct in Peirce (CP 7381); it is capable of development and growth. These, however, depend on experience, having its source in it. In other words, no one can deny that the source of all creation work is in our relationship with the order of phenomena that we are able to perceive.

To be more precise, instinct is the source of the abduction process, and the latter results from our surprise at phenomena for which we have no explanation, or
the wandering of our mind, what he called the play of Musement. As experiences that surprise us are beyond our control, Musement is even recommended by Peirce. Setting aside a time for the mind to wander freely is a tool to open our minds to new ideas: what should we propose, how to conduct the creative process, which are the potential paths and which are not? The answers to these questions are found in a logical way in the abductive path, that is, in a thorough observation of the available data. However, this examination provided by the logical aspect of abduction is preceeded by the free play of our thoughts and feelings.

The importance of abduction in advertising happens because it is the only mode of thought which introduces a new idea (CP 2.97). Peirce initially called it with other names in his work: first cognitions, hypothetical inferences, originating argument and unconscious inferences. “Just because they are unconscious (or uncontrollable), they come into our thinking as if they were original, like they were the beginning of everything. Thus, our findings are derived from unconscious material” (Petry, 2010). For this to happen we need a foundation of freedom, a repositioning in the world, an openness to new understandings.

At this point of Peirce’s thought we find the influence of Schiller, with his On Aesthetic Education of Man. This book greatly influenced Peirce from youth (Barnouw, 1988). In it, Schiller discusses the play drive as the always unstable solution between sensitive/nature and supra-sensitive/reason, that will serve Peirce in building his notion of Play of Musement (Petry, 2010), “Pure Play as free exercise of our forces” (CP 6458).

We call attention here to the fact that domains taken by common sense as apparently distant and dissociated, such as advertising and entertainment, can interact with each other to expand the game beyond its niche of origin, and the points of convergence in which they can occur are: from a consumer perspective; the productive consumption; from the perspective of the advertisement professional; the planning of an advergame.

An onto-semiotic analysis of advergames

Our analysis is related to an understanding of advergames as a medium, one of the aspects mentioned by Ringel & Chen (2001). Just like in videogames, the relationship between aesthetics, gameplay, storytelling and technology (Schell, 2011) build the vital fabric of advergames. These are the existential categories of the game; neglecting one of them inhibits the development and expressive power of the others.
Aesthetics & digital world

A survey by Nelson, Keum & Yaros (2004) identified that those who are against advertising in general, are also against advertising in games. The position of the players surveyed is aesthetic; they want an organized world without disruptive interferences. As for games classified as entertainment games, players tend to be more positive about brands in games with realistic graphics, and products are most effective when used in more subtle and appropriate ways.

The aesthetics of games is directly related to their kinesthetic and haptic aspects, in which each stimulus should enhance the experience proposed by the creator of the game. Thus, it is essential to be aware of the progress of the technical possibilities of game engines, software modeling, digital art techniques so that the expression of the proposed ideas can be leveraged to the maximum. Aesthetics and technique are always together in the production of a game.

One should always remember that the idea of aesthetics in a game is directly related to the concept of the digital world in which the player will develop a digital life.

Gameplay and Narrative

The verisimilitude, a characteristics of the construction of fictional worlds (Aristotle), is a factor to be considered in the production of advergames (Hernandez et al., 2004). The use of any improper or disruptive element in the game just to “add value” to a product, brand or target, produces a strong possibility of players rejecting the advergame (Hernandez et al.).

This emerging resistance produces a progressive inhibition of gameplay capabilities, which can easily lead to the behavior of leaving the game. One cannot build a game like building an advertisement video clip. If in the latter disruptive elements can be inserted to draw the viewer’s attention, in the advergame all elements should make sense; in the aesthetics of the digital world and in its narrative and gameplay options.

Not paying attention to these two precepts usually results in players leaving the game.

The levels of integration of brands in advergames are thought by Hernandez et al. (2004) as follows:

**Associative interaction:** when the brand image is reinforced by the content or
theme of the game and is displayed in the game scenario (product logo on the scene).

A soccer game may very well be sponsored by one or more companies, and their logos and other advertising materials can be spread in the digital world of the game, on the players’ shirts, on lawn signs, posters, stadium billboards, etc.

**Illustrative integration:** occurs when the product itself has a role in the gameplay. A Lego adventure game uses Lego characters and has a relative success with the public, especially those who like Lego toys.

**Demonstrative integration:** is considered the highest level of brand integration. It occurs only when the player is allowed to try the product in its natural context, reproduced in the game environment. A given product can be in a game and be used by the player in their natural state. Then the product is integrated into the narrative-aesthetic-world of the game and will not produce any disruption.

As Winkler & Buckner argue, only in this way, with the demonstrative integration, can the player interact with the characteristics of the product to “live and feel” it within its virtual boundaries, or to select from a range of products.

An example would be a digital racing game that allows the player to select a car model whose performance can be compared with other models during the course of the race. If there is a captivating concept in the advergame that keeps the player immersed, the game can be simple and straightforward. Despite not requiring too much concentration in game actions, in advertising we cannot waive the analysis of narrative discourse. It is within the narrative that the advertising message must be inserted to obtain maximum attention and results, as a mediating instrument of persuasive messages in advergames (Amaral & Pimenta, 2012).

Rescuing the concept of ludema (Blanco & Pinheiro, 2006), Amaral & Pimenta (2012) point out that the development of the narrative in a game depends on two key elements: the system that composes it, that should be understood as a set of rules, goals and predefined procedures; the action of the end user, important for the development of the narrative structure of the story.

This is why the onto-semiotic analysis of advergames as well as of games in general needs to observe the phenomenon of the game at the time it is being played.

This perspective includes the two best-known models of narrative in games: the “pearl necklace” model and the “factory of stories”. “Pearl Necklace” is organized so that the actions in the game are linear and occur toward a single end; “Factory of stories” is designed towards providing greater decision-making options to the player, with alternative paths and multiple paths to achieve the same end (with variations).

According to Murray (2003) computers enable interactivity because they are
procedural and participatory, as they allow participation and feedback to those who use them. They also allow the creation of environments that are so similar to the real ones that they are able to create a strong sense of presence, thus being able to keep its users entertained for long periods of time. We call this feeling of immersion and it is a direct consequence of the game happening in an encyclopedic and spatial environment.

Therefore, understanding the new narrative of games, its complexity, importance and function, is essential to think about the possibility of advertising in games. Only then can advertising editors efficiently and effectively promote products for advertising purposes without generating the unwanted disruption of the immersion experience of the user or ever the devaluation of the narrative of the game. Remember: writing scripts for advertising in general is very different from making a storyboard for games or advergames.

Could advertising add value to the message proposed by the narrative, reinforcing the importance of concepts? Amaral & Pimenta (2012), in an exploratory study on the narratives of games, think that the disruptive pattern of advertising needs to be rebuilt to reach a standard where the media and content merge into a single unit.

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**Technology**

Technology is the physical and conceptual base upon which choices can be made that will allow aesthetics, narrative and gameplay to take place within the game. In the history of advergames, important companies of the gaming industry participated in some productions.

In 1983, a critical year in the videogame industry, Atari developed the game “Pepsi Invaders”, an order from Coca-Cola to be distributed among its employees, a parody of the popular “Space Invaders”. Atari became the first videogame company, but soon it had to find innovative solutions because so many others sought to follow their footsteps. An unfavorable economic and market context, added to strategic business mistakes of the main company, led to the crisis of the young videogame industry and to a much needed reform.

In 1993, Sega launched in North America the game “Chester Cheetah; too cool to fool” for the Cheetos brand. Understanding the new narrative in games is critical to think about advertising in advergames.

Perhaps the first question to be placed on the agenda when planning an advergame is to answer the following:
Should the games be simply thought of as an attraction for a company’s website, either to keep users more time in contact with the brand or to obtain their personal information, preferences, as wrote Kariya (2001)?

Semiotics teaches us the power of convergence of signs. In this sense, working the advergame from the concepts of the brand or product leverages the communication in advertising.

With the mistakes made in advertising which underestimated the ability of the audience with regard to misleading advertising there was a change in the consumer profile in recent years; the illusion of customer loyalty was destroyed.

As noted by many thinkers such as Pascal, Huizinga, Heidegger, Gadamer and others, the game takes up a central place in the existential scheme of man as a being-in-the-world. It has the ability to make something, such as a story, become worth being told or digitally experienced by the player.

In its aesthetic and narrative setting, the game drives the player to perform activities or tasks repeatedly and, yet, results in high levels of gratification. The combination of aesthetics and narrative of the game is translated by the player into a gameplay experience which can always be experienced in other different and fun ways.

**Final words**

When the game and playing the game are removed from the center of the action of the game and replaced by the product or brand, the game itself loses its essence and “soul”; and its most fundamental effects cease to happen.

In order for immersion to occur, playing the game has to be the key aspect of the game, because only then the advergame can be an expansion of the lives of the individuals that are playing. This means putting the subject inside an experience, and when some experience takes the player out of the game, something that is disruptive to the game, the game loses power. The player stops playing and the advergame fails.

To play one needs to be thrown inside the game; advertising should be able to immerse players within the game world in order to reach its full potential. A possible scenario would be to feed a character (with product “X”), during play, to increase his energy level.

To finish, three words that encompass the Greek concept of game must be present: **Agón**: goal; **Athîrma**: fun, entertainment; **Paidiâ**: what is the child’s own, but not unique to him/her, the Aiôn (eternity time). With these words,
certainly we will have a good game, a good advergame.

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Development of Mobile Telephony Market in Brazil and its Marks in Advertising

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Abstract: In this paper, we intend to reflect on the rapid development of cell phones in Brazil in the last decade. Besides the popularization, these devices have incorporated new features (text messaging, Internet access and e-mails, etc.) which contribute to an environment increasingly ubiquitous and permanent connectivity. In order to identify how changes in the market and technological scenario during the last decade impact the advertising approaches, we analyze and compare two TV ads of the same brand from different periods (2003 and 2012) which have the same conceptual structure, but different esthetic conceptions. The analytic roadmap was based on the General Theory of Signs of Charles Sanders Peirce. It is possible to identify the situational differences in which each one was created and released, reflecting the context of the category and the goal to strengthen the bonds of sense with the brand.

Key words: mobility; advertising; semiotics; branding; cell phones

Introduction

The history of mobile telephony in Brazil is characterized by the rapid development of the sector which led to numerous changes in daily life of the population. The popularization of the mobile phone in the country has occurred since the privatization of mobile services in 1997, which was previously controlled by the Brazilian state through a structure named Telebras. The auctions and license grants for regional operations to national and international private groups launched a new era in this industry, more dynamic, competitive and professional. However, it’s only in the 2000s that the sector acquires the current configuration, with four national mobile operators: Claro (Telmex), Oi (Portugal Telecom), TIM (Telecom Italia Mobile) and Vivo (Telefonica), which brought large investments in technology, infrastructure, launch of new devices, features and services, and numerous marketing strategies and advertising. The huge growth of the sector can
be seen by the indicators of last decade; in 2002 there were 34.8 million mobile phones in Brazil; in 2012 that number rose to 256.4 million (July 2012. Source: Teleco). The country is now the fifth largest mobile phone market in the world, following China, India, USA and Indonesia (Source: Teleco). Fierce competition among the four national players is visible in market share; Vivo is the leader with 29.56%, TIM owns 26.89%, Claro, 24.58% and Oi has 18.65% (June/2012-Source: Teleco).

The strong competition led the marketing strategies of the brands focus to the loyalty and profitability of actual customers; operators are now incorporating new services, offering packages of telecommunications services; fixed and mobile telephony, broadband and mobile Internet access, cable television and long distance calls.

In order to promote and stimulate consumption, brands make great efforts of marketing and communication, which require increasingly large investments. The four brands of mobile operators are listed in the ranking of the largest advertisers in Brazil, with a total annual investment volume of more than U.S. $2.505 billion (Source: IBOPE Monitor, 2011.)

Mobile Communication Society

The mobility provided by cell phones is the object of study and discussion due to the changes it brings to the contemporary society. In the book Network Society, Manuel Castells (1999) affirms that the current environment is characterized by the intense change in the flow of information and communication, leveraged with the development of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). The relationship between society and mobile communication is becoming more intense because this is not just a matter of new technologies. According to Castells (2007), mobile communication alters notions of time and space, expanding limits, compressing distances and modifying the communication of individuals—a fundamental process for humans.

About this environment of mobility, Lemos (2007) reinforces the creation of a new relationship with the dimensions of time, space and territory, since the boundaries are less defined between subject, identity, geographic space, culture, politics and economics. The physical or geographical distance, time of Nature (linked to the phenomena of the earth and, therefore, the space) and the absence of actual contact do not seem to be perceived in everyday life. It’s possible to see non-stop stores, delivery systems, ATM machines, telephone and internet banking
that are available 24/7, shopping centers that run all night long... A mobile phone call that is completed and does not respect the time zone or geographic location brings the impression that we are close, even when far away. This scenario expands the possibilities of human beings and bring more dynamism to people’s lives, contributing to the change of habits, social practices and behaviors. We can surf the web and be in multiple places simultaneously without leaving home, for example. With a cell phone in hand, you can be connected to emails, send instant messages, receive text messages, check the internet portals, make a video call and a voice call, all at the same time, without leaving your seat. The cell phone is now a hub for many functions; radio, mp3 player, video camera, video game, etc.

Using all these features in one device, we can spread information anywhere and we can no longer control its speed. “Among all the technical factors of mobility, a particularly important role was played by the transport of information—the type of communication that does not involve the movement of physical bodies.” (Bauman, 1999, p. 21). According to Semprini (2006), the postmodern man has been defined as homo mobilis, with a need for constant movement, as if it were a condition for human existence. Mobile telephony is cited as the major indicator of this trend: “The extremely rapid diffusion of mobile telephony has shown that contemporary individuals are in constant movement, despite feeling the need to maintain contact with their counterparts, these also in motion.” (Ibid., p.65)

Mobility can also be associated with a lifestyle exercised in a more superficial and ephemeral way, with the consumption of products and services with shorter life cycles, in order to open space for new products and new seductive messages. Everything can be quickly replaced on an endless and unsatisfactory journey. It’s not an industry based on the production of goods and services, but in attractions.

This environment of excess (of information, products, consumption and communication, among others) is called by Lipovetsky (1989) as the “Society of Consumption”, characterized by different traits such as abundance of goods and services, the cult of objects and leisure and an hedonistic and materialistic moral. It is a society focused on expanding needs in obsolescence, seduction and diversification of the goods.

The process of consumption proves increasingly intense and instantaneous. The consumers search for satisfaction of their desires, increasingly quickly replaced by other (and new) desires. This process seems to be almost endless, at high speed, making consumption and mobility concepts closer in this process; “the consumer is a person on the go and always destined to move.” (Bauman, 1999, p.93)

The meaning of consumption (and consumer goods) goes beyond commercial
value. There is an increase in the ability to carry and communicate cultural meaning in contemporary society by consumption. This meaning is always in transit, in motion.

This is the current environment of brands, which play a central role in the expansion of the meanings of products, passing to transmit ideas, values and attitudes. Again, the mobility is presented in the complexity of the current consumption, the environment faced by these contemporary brands. Therefore, in the present context, the management of brands becomes more critical, facing new challenges in their construction, especially for dealing with behavioral tendencies that are renewed in every technological change. In the case of mobile telephony brands, changes occur all the time, since the introduction of text messaging, launch of new products and interfaces as the iPhone’s touchscreen, or new mobile data transmission technologies such as 3G and 4G.

Advertising is a powerful tool used to exhaustion by brands to spread their promise and value propositions that are renewed constantly. Beyond the tactical aspect (specific to the briefing and the marketing objectives) each communication effort must also strengthen its brand equity, especially to create stronger associations between consumer and brand—in this sense, we are speaking of closer relations, deeper and emotional bonds. About such links, Gobé (2002, p. 19) points out that in the contemporary environment, marked by the excess of products and with greater competitiveness, brand management must act in emotional branding “By emotional I mean how a brand communicates with consumers at the level of the senses and emotions.”

We will verify in this paper how changes in the mobile telephony in Brazil are reflected in the advertising, and also highlight how communication benefits, sensations and positive associations related to aspects of mobility in postmodern environment are used to create ties of meaning between consumers and brands.

### Methodology for analysis

According to Souza and Santarelli (2008, p. 133) “since its establishment as a science, Semiotics has used advertising as the corpus of its analysis.” There are studies of Semiotics using advertising, especially print ads since the 1950s.

In this paper, we will use the Peircean Semiotics, created by Charles Sanders Peirce, based on the study of signs, understanding, according to Santaella (2002, p. 8) that “the sign is anything of any kind (...) that represents something else, called object of the sign, and that has an effect on an interpretive mind actual or
potential. This effect is called interpretant of the sign.” The Peircean semiotics is established from trilogies, establishing combinations and ratings on three levels. The Peircean Phenomenology is based on three formal and universal elements present in all phenomena that arise in people’s mind, called Firstness (random ideas, not conscious, qualities and feelings), Secondness (ideas of dependence, based on dualities and oppositions) and Thirdness (general idea, reason and mediation).

The Peircean semiotics has as a central point of the conception of sign: “sign is a first (something that presents itself to the mind) connecting a second (what the sign indicates, represents or refers) to a third party (the effect that the sign will result in a possible interpreting mind).” (PEREZ, 2004, p. 127) Therefore, the sign has a mediating function between object and interpretant, approaching them and relating them.

The Peircean triad is formed by the sign, object and interpretant as shown in Figure 1;

\[
\text{Sign or representamen} \\
\text{Object} \\
\text{Interpretant}
\]

In this research, we choose to use an evaluation model of advertising expressivities based on Peircean Semiotics, as proposed by Perez (2004). This model proves to be particularly suitable in the analysis of contemporary brand expressiveness. This model uses the triadic relationship of the sign to its realization, and will take into account the trichotomies of the sign itself (Firstness) and in the relation with the object (Secondness), assessing the following dimensions: Qualitative-Iconic, Singular-Indexical and Conventional-Symbolic.

The Qualitative-Iconic dimension will study the quality of the sign (qualitative-sign) and its relation to the object (icon), i.e., the qualitative aspects that can be perceived on first impression: shape, design, color, volume, texture, composition, lines, light, etc. These qualities (more visible and concrete) may initiate the establishment of relationships compared with other effects of meaning, referring to abstract qualities, e.g., strength or delicacy, something more rustic or elaborate.

In the second dimension (Singular-Indexical), the analysis takes into account the sin-sign and its relation to the object (index), understanding the context of use and existence of the sign in a given space and time, for a particular use and public. In this dimension, we seek clues to identify the origin of the brand, and the benefits
and functions of the product that the brand represents. Furthermore, characteristics of the market in which the brand is inserted can also leave their marks identified in this dimension.

Finally, the Conventional-Symbolic analysis takes into account the relationship with the base of the sign and its relation to the object (symbol). This is the analysis of the broader cultural context in which the product/brand fits not in its uniqueness, but in its most universal.

Additionally, the analysis takes into account specific concepts and theories of advertising, in order to recognize that “the Semiotic application calls for dialogue with more specific theories related to the processes of signs that are being examined” (Santaella, 2002, p.6)

Object of study

We choose to analyze in this paper two spots of the brand Vivo. The choice is based on the fact that both are created with a gap of almost a decade (2003 and 2012). During this period, many changes have occurred in the mobile telephony market in Brazil. Despite the huge differences in the market, both spots have the same creative structure, using a format composed of a jingle (the melody is the same, with changes in the lyrics) and a clip of scenes. The two spot films are created by Africa Propaganda, an advertising agency owned by Brazilian Group ABC.

The first spot to be examined is entitled “Vivo Gesture” and was released in April 2003 to launch the brand. Vivo was created to replace seven regional brands and was launched with 16 million customers, with the positioning of being the leader in the Brazilian market in number of customers and the largest coverage area. It’s important to clarify that the word Vivo, in Portuguese language, means “Alive” or “I live”.

The film has the following lyrics:

As the full moon, like dating, the whales singing, the noise of the sea (Vivo, Vivo)
Like a hummingbird, like the waterfall, the laughter of children, the bass of Mangueira (Vivo, Vivo)
As the sunlight warming life, as a goal in the soccer, the cry of the crowd (Vivo, Vivo)
As an evening, like a spring, like a song, we feel (Vivo, Vivo)
As a smile (Vivo), Like a passion (Vivo)
Like breathing (Vivo), the heart beating (Vivo)
As a city, like the heartbeat, one day, a beehive, as the crowd (Vivo, Vivo)

We will start the analysis of this film in the three dimensions of our analytical roadmap. In the Qualitative-Iconic dimension, the first impression of the spot is provided by a dynamic and grandiose, with cheerful music, accompanied by images of different groups of people, of different ages and ethnicities, living in various regions of Brazil. The colors are vivid, the scenes are outdoors and sunny and warm tones predominate. The lyrics of the jingle use popular and simple words, which refer to the Nature (full moon, waterfall, sunshine) and the emotions and feelings (dating, the boys’ laughter, cry of the crowd, smile, passion). The scenes also evoke the simplicity for showing everyday situations of Brazilian society, reinforced
by the choice of simple and ordinary people (not models or celebrities). The repetition of the word “Vivo” (14 times) draws attention; it contains every piece of music in the form of a chorus of voices with great emphasis and rhythm.

In the Singular-Indexical dimension, the context of use of the product or service advertised (mobile telephony) is not explained explicitly by the lyrics. However, there are words that evoke the interactivity between people (laughter of children, cry of the crowd), and strengthen the sense of “community”, referring to situations with lots of people together in the same space. The scenes with the use of cell phones are subtle and natural. We also note that this interactivity is always associated with positive facts. People who appear in the commercial (all ages, multiple ethnic origins) also indicate that the entire population (all human beings) is included in this message. Furthermore, the use of words and scenes that refers to external environments (“waterfall”, “sound of the sea”) also refers to another feature of the advertised service; mobility afforded by cell phone and the message that this service works (or should work) everywhere. The repetition of the word “Vivo” and the emphasis on arrangement and interpretation each time it appears accomplishes the goal of setting the word (the name of the new brand) and associate it with the spirit and emotions conveyed by the music and the scenes of the commercial.

In the Conventional-Symbolic dimension, the set of images, words, expressions and rhythm conveys the message of a country which is upbeat and happy, with family values and pure spirit. In this sense, the message idealizes the behavior and the life-style of a Nation. It reminds us the speech of government campaigns, trying to create a Brazilian identity from certain features and pictures (sun, joy, happiness, soccer, Carnival, etc). The spot may cause identification by any Brazilian, due to the diversity of people, regional landscapes or due to the use of popular sports and cultural expressions.

The body language of the people who appear in the film is also a highlight; we see people raising arms in a typical gesture of welcome, which transmits receptivity. At the end of the commercial, this gesture merges with the shape of the letter “V” of the logotipo “Vivo.” The merger of girls with open arms in the last scene with the logo can express the warmth of Brazilian people receiving the new company that have just arrived. The interpretation and arrangement of the song also reinforce the effect of “acceptance” of the people for the new brand (and the services that will be offered); the division between the main female voice and chorus seems to mimic the dialogue between brand (female lead vocal) and population (chorus). The chorus seems to call and claim for the brand “Vivo”. Another reflection on voice choir is
the main structure of the letter that explains and exemplifies everything that Vivo brings to people. The use of the composition with the word “like” (“like the sun”) reinforces the associative effect between Vivo, the cellular and life illustrated by the words and the situations presented in the spot.

The second spot that will be analyzed was released in March 2012, almost a decade after the first one. The film, called “Connected, we live better”, was created with the objective of communicating the evolution of the brand beyond mobile services; Vivo starts to offer fixed telephony, broadband Internet and cable television. At this time, the company has 76 million customers (July 2012 data-source; Teleco).

![Image of commercial frames](image)

**Figure 3 Commercial Frames “Connected, we live better”**

Source: Brand Channel on YouTube Live (http://www.youtube.com/watch? v=UwqMT1Hwfs)

This film also uses the clip language; however it uses animation in place of scenes filmed with real people and places. The jingle also gets new lyrics, more appropriate to the new message to be communicated:

- **Connect yourself with life, with the excitement, the joy, the dream and the reason** (Vivo, Vivo)
- **Using a landline or mobile, always connected, everywhere** (Vivo, Vivo)
- **To go further, to be on the side, to live better, live connected** (Vivo, Vivo)
Vivo

On your computer, on cable TV, on the tablet, all connected (Vivo, Vivo)

Location in off: Now, Vivo is mobile, landline, internet and TV. You have more connections with more quality. And you live better.

Whatever you want to do, whatever you want to dream, Vivo connects the world for you.

Location in off: Vivo. Connected, we live better.

We will start the analysis of this second film, following the three dimensions of our analytical roadmap: in the Qualitative-Iconic dimension, the first impression provided by the film is a magical and colorful environment provided by the aesthetics of the animated movie, which leads us to a more playful, entertaining and, in a certain way, childish and naïve atmosphere. The characters represent people of different ages, ethnicities and social groups. They interact happily with technological devices such as mobile phones, computers and tablets. People are in their homes, cars or in the subway, in urban locations in Brazil and abroad, mixing open and closed spaces, country and urban scenes. Among the places portrayed, there are scenes with huge concentration of people such as stadiums and Carnival parades. The design of the animation is rounded, not aggressive, using a palette of bold colors. The camera movements and the movie edition are dynamic, as well as the lyrics and rhythm of the jingle, which also brings a sense of motion and speed. Words from the world of technology (connection, tablet, computer) are combined with other more emotional (dream, what you want to do), in a balanced way. Likewise, female voice (singer of the jingle) and male (voiceover) are jovial and relaxed, and also complement each other.

In the Singular-Indexical dimension, the services offered by the brand are shown explicitly in the business, representing the main message to be transmitted. Therefore, new services (landline, mobile, internet and cable TV), are presented many times, in visual scenes and also in the lyrics of the jingle. The brand also aims to communicate the scope and inclusion of your target audience to represent different people with diverse body types, ethnicities, ages and locations. We highlight the presence of a disabled in the subway and the scene in which Pelé and Maradona (famous soccer players from Brazil and Argentina) are represented in a situation of friendship and harmony. Finally, the visual solution, with the use of animation language (as used by Pixar), refers to a world of high technology and innovation.
In the Conventional-Symbolic dimension, there’s an optimistic view of the possibilities brought by the connection in people’s lives. In the spot, the connection creates more intense relations with their social groups. The use of the services of the brand is always presented in a collective way, amid others, family situations and with friends. The incorporation of virtual resources of cyberspace in everyday interactions is merged with the physical environment, presented in a harmonious and complementary way. We also have a symbolism that unites the local and the global in a balanced manner, expressed in various ways; the animation movie moves the message from a specific location in Brazil (which would occur with the use of actors and real locations) for a broader imaginary. The use of a universal language (animation) is mitigated by the characterization of the characters and places, and the rhythm of the music: the samba. The edition of the spot shows constant movement, which is consistent with the contemporary life style with the use of the technology. Finally, the gesture of “welcome” with the arms opened is also used in commercial and has the potential to transmit receptivity to technology brought in different solutions by the brand.

Final Thoughts

The analysis of the commercials shows the big difference situational where each was created and released. The first commercial (“Vivo Gesture”) in 2003, shows the mobile telephony as something new, offering the possibility of use for all Brazilians, with a clear message about the expansion of the service and its popularization. In this spot, the brand is launched with a Brazilian character, attached to the country.

The goal was to present Vivo as a company that was closely linked to Brazil, with the primary purpose of generating knowledge, rather than sell telecommunication products or generate direct sales. The commercial reflects the mobile market at that time, which already had a significant number of users in upper classes, but still had large demand in the popular classes, which raises an association between the tone of political discourse (propaganda) of the spot and the later “democratization” of mobile communication, with access to a growing number of customers in the following years.

The second film, entitled “Connected, we live better” (2012), shows an extension in the brand’s offer, nearly a decade after its launch. In ten years, cell phone service is already in everyday’s life, and its use is not restricted only for voice calls. The film repeatedly inserts the new services of the brand. The animation
language updates and refreshes the creative structure of the first spot. The situations are more urban and global. The approach, although informative and persuasive to promote the new services, tries to balance this objective with an emotional appeal, in order to strengthen the bond with the brand. The “Brazilianess” also seems more balanced in the second spot, linking the local to the global. The new signature of the brand (“Connected, we live better”) sums up the optimistic view of the brand, consistent with its business objectives. It combines the positive aspects of the environment in which it operates (network society) with their marketing goals, showing consistency between their beliefs and their interests. Below is a summary of the analysis:

Through the Semiotic analysis of these two spots, it is possible to see that the development in the use of new technologies is reflected in advertising, being used to create more appropriate messages to the user’s context and additionally strengthen ties with the brand. It is evident that while that advertising reflects social values, it also influences these same values, giving new meaning to them and reinforcing a connected lifestyle, provided by the services of these mobile telephony brands.

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<th>Dimension</th>
<th>&quot;Vivo Gesture&quot;</th>
<th>&quot;Connected, we live better&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative-Iconic</td>
<td>Brazilian people are cheerful, colorful and simple.</td>
<td>People use technology in order to have a colorful life and magic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singular-Indexical</td>
<td>Vivo connects people, wherever they are.</td>
<td>Vivo is always around, with different connection services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conventional-Symbolic</td>
<td>Brazil receives the new brand with open arms.</td>
<td>Connection improves life and relationships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthesis of potential of emission</td>
<td>Excitement and expectation:   — “Brazilianess” and receptivity — Joy and optimism — Open for new relationships</td>
<td>Balance in the use of the connection:   — Actual and Virtual — Individual and Group — Local and Global</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Risk Communication in Latin America: a Semiotic Approach

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Abstract: This paper aims to analyze the risk communication scenario in the section of alcoholic beverage under the perspective of Greimasian semiotics. To that end, from its different forms of enunciation, a theoretical approach and a later application in risk communication contents in three America Latin countries (Brazil, Chile and Mexico) has been made, in order to understand similarities and differences in the generative process of meaning of the chosen material for this study.

Key words: risk communication; Greimasian semiotics; advertising argumentation; risk prevention campaigns in Latin America.

1. Introduction

The risk communication comprises “messages that express the nature of risk and worries resulting from the perception of a certain situation” (NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL, 1989). Among them, we can include as examples; health prevention campaigns (breast and skin cancer), and campaigns against tobacco and alcoholic beverage. These last two will be handled in this paper aiming at traffic safety campaigns and the use of alcoholic beverage.

According to Brazilian Department of Health, alcohol is one of the most used drugs in the world; besides, it is the one that causes more harm such as addiction, and mental, emotional, and neurological problems. In Brazil, the costs with traffic accidents are more than a hundred million reais per year, according to Abetran-Associação Brasileira de Educação de Trânsito, the use of alcohol is connected to half of all traffic accidents in the country.

While in Chile, 2011 witnessed the highest number of traffic accidents since 1972, when statistics started being measured. More than 62 thousand traffic accidents occurred according to CONASET (Comisión Nacional de Seguridad de Tránsito), considerably alarming data.
Mexico is another country which faces serious problems concerning this issue. There, the traffic accidents are the first cause of death of people between 5 and 35 years old. The IMESEVI (Iniciativa Mexicana de Seguridad Vial) also indicates that 24 thousand people die a year due to traffic accidents, which cost 4% of the country’s GNP.

2. Cultural panorama; consumption pattern and public health

Regarding the presented data in the previous section, the issue of alcohol and its risks linked to the traffic accidents become clearer. In the American continent, the matter is specifically more delicate when compared to global terms. The consumption there is 40% (8.7 liters per capita vs. 6.2 liters per capita in the globe average) bigger than in the rest of the world according to studies done by the Pan American Health Organization, while in the developed countries in America, alcohol is the most important health risk factor.

It is in this scenario that we find the traffic accidents; whose estimate is that from 20% to 50% of them are related to drinking, a number that is especially higher among youngsters and during holiday seasons. (Carlibi-Cotrim, 2000). In addition, a study by Oliveira and Melcop (1997) showed that 80.7% of victims of traffic accidents had positive blood alcohol levels.

Regarding the countries mentioned in this paper, we notice that the average consumption per capita in Brazil and Chile are pretty close to the continent average, 8.8 liters in both countries, vs. 6.5 liters in Mexico. However, when the quantity is restricted to people who drink, the number inverses: the average in Mexico is 13.2 liters, followed by Chile, with 11.8 liters, and by Brazil, with 11.3 liters. The study is from Pan American Health Organization, whose research included people from 15 years old on. The quantity of alcohol indicated is in liters of pure alcohol.

Alcohol consumption pattern in the countries

![Bar chart showing alcohol consumption per capita in Brazil, Chile, and Mexico]

Source: Adapted from Monteiro (2007, p. 13)
Brazil / Chile / Mexico / General consumption per capita (L) / Consumption per capita / drinker (L)
3. Discursive semiotics and analysis of its profitability

Among the reasons that led us to choose the Greimasian perspective for this study, two of them deserve a special highlight. The first one was due to the fact that the objective of the paper is to point out the constitutive line of the text which organizes itself to create argumentation accomplished from certain mechanisms, which are very clear when we look at the generative process of meaning levels, not only in its more abstract and fundamental levels and in the opposition between two elements, but also in the following steps, where we can see the most concrete mechanisms, responsible for the final process of meaning in a certain text.

These characteristics, plus the fact that the risk communication is based on the persuasion for a certain action or position (elements presented in Greimas), turn semiotics into a very relevant methodology for the present paper.

3.1 A brief theoretical Greimasian approach

We don’t intend, it wouldn’t even be possible, to bring up all the aspects that belong to the Greimasian opus. Although many observations are recurrent when analyzing an object under the Greimas’ light, we find it unnecessary to present only the most relevant theoretical points for the paper, which will give the foundation for the analysis of the material chosen. To that end, we will briefly expose the theoretical concepts, trying, whenever possible, to introduce those notes in the risk communication analysis.

The generative process of meaning is the process in which it is possible to analyze a certain text from three levels—fundamental, narrative and discursive—(Fiorini, 2006) it allows an establishment of a gradual path, that is, generative (one of the conditions to the study of signification), going from the most abstract to the most concrete, not leaving behind a relationship of unit between the different levels, in which it refers to the effects of meaning found in the text. It’s not by chance that the Greimasian view defends a text global analysis, in the syntagmatic plan, from which we “extract” a certain effect of meaning, different from studies of lexical units, the one that the researcher used in the beginning of his research, but noticed that the perspective to be considered would be wider. Finally, there is still a third condition, besides the necessity of a syntagmatic and generative view,

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1 We could also consider, according to Fiorini (2006), a fourth level, the level of manifestation, that corresponds to the material plan of expression of a content, but as this essay considers only printed advertisements and it focuses on the argumentative line of the advertisements, we prefer to work with the three first levels related to the content.
which is the “general”, in which there should be a uniqueness of meaning that could be represented in different plans of expression, either in poetry and in prose, or in an audiovisual product (FIORINI, 2006, p. 13).

It’s important to mention the syntactic and semantic components presented in each of the three constitutive levels of the generative process of meaning, so that the more abstract elements linked to the plan of expression be related to the syntax, while the semantic component would be more strongly associated to the most concrete level of the meaning to the content plan. Based on these observations, we go to a deepening already inserted in the material analysis. Before, it is necessary to briefly present the selected advertisements from the three chosen countries: Brazil, Mexico and Chile.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Syntax</th>
<th>Semantics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fundamental (logical-conceptual)</td>
<td>Assertion Denial</td>
<td>Opposition Contradiction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative</td>
<td>Enunciation of being and doing</td>
<td>Modal objects and objects of value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discursive</td>
<td>Actorialization, temporalization and spatialization</td>
<td>Thematization Figuritivization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4. Material description

#### 4.1 Brazil: Campaign for Traffic Safety Awareness (Health Department)

The advertisement is part of the federal government campaign, through Health Department. Relatively simple, the communication piece has three blocks of contents in its layout: over the white background, in the center, there is the outline of a coffin, formed by a car track, seen from an elevated surface, which fills up the figure. In the center of the image, in red, there is the saying: “When you drink and drive, you end up arriving first.” In the footnote, there is the piece signature (Health Department) and a side text that alerts the drivers who are used to driving under the risk of “arriving at the end first”; besides taking the risk of involving other people because of the driver irresponsibility. (Advertisement attached for further details).

#### 4.2 Chile: The impact lasts forever

The Chilean campaign, signed by the “Servicio Nacional para la Prevención y Rehabilitación del Consumo de Drogas y Alcohol (SENDA)”, the Ministry of Interior and Home Office presents, in the center of a greyish environment, a young man sitting on a wheel chair. In the center of the advertisement there is also a saying
that crosses the image of the man “The impact lasts forever. Because an accident under alcohol effects is not an accident.” The signature of the department responsible for the supervision and the SENDA signature complete the image of the campaign. (Advertisement attached for further details).

4.3 *Mexico: Turtle (Instituto Nacional de Salud Pública)*

In the center of the advertisement, over a white background with a green chromatic scale which extends to the superior part of the piece, there is the image of a sea turtle, and in front of it, two glasses of a typical Mexican drink, called *caballito*. Above the turtle, the highlighted text asks “What do the turtle and two *caballitos* have in common?” and, below the image, the answer “After drinking two glasses, your response is as fast as a turtle!” Finally, in the footnote, over a black background, the sayings “Your safety is not a matter of guessing...! Do not cross the red sign!” close the advertisement, along with the institution’s symbols and signature. (Advertisement attached for further details).

5. The fundamental level and the semiotic square

As previously described, it is in the fundamental level where the most abstract relation of the process emerges, but not less indicative of meaning; on the contrary, it is in it that we observe the key aspects of contradiction and implication among the elements that comprise a certain message.

Thus, when it comes to the syntactic category of this first level, we have two operations: the affirmation and the denial. When there is denial of opposite terms there are contradictory terms. The affirmation is the result of the relation between an opposite term and its opposite contradictory. (GREIMAS, 1973, p. 190). Although it sounds a complex thought, such a process becomes easier to be understood when we apply the concepts to the material.

Regarding the Brazilian campaign, we have the opposite terms “life” and “death”, from which denial results in non-life and non-death, in such a way that, in the affirmation, “life” corresponds to non-death, and “death”, corresponds to non-life.

Still in the fundamental level, there is a semantic component that brings the euphoric elements, that have positive nature, and the dysphoric elements that have a negative value. So, regarding the mentioned advertisement, “life” would correspond to the euphoric value, as this is the desired result by the enunciator, that is, the drivers are expected (potential enunciatees) to have their lives preserved if
they don’t drink alcoholic beverage and drive. In this respect, the semiotic square is able to graphically show and sum up the described relations. The oblique lines represent the contradiction, while the horizontal lines show opposition. The vertical lines represent complementarity.

* * * life/non-death/setback (contrariedade)/contradiction/death/complementarity/non-death

When we observe the dynamics in the Mexican and Chilean campaignns, we notice different opposite terms that will be the basis for other later consequences on the following and final levels in the text argumentation and meaning.

**Chilean campaign:** The semiotic square presents the relation between health and illness that, ultimately, would result in the comfort/discomfort created by the serious consequences of a traffic accident.

**Mexican campaign:** In this case, the text shows that the person who drinks goes from a safety situation to a risky one because alcohol leads to a slow response while driving.

* * * health/non-health/setback (contrariedade)/contradiction/complementarity safety/non-risk/setback/contradiction/risk/complementarity/non-safety
6. The second level: narrative

The narrative level can be considered the text procedural core, where we find the transformations of state that constructs the plot (FIORIN, 2008, p. 128). In this respect, we can point out the enunciations of being that indicate state, and the enunciations of doing that are the actions themselves performed to leave a starting point and go to a final point.

These dynamics, however, don’t happen in a fast and straight way, but it is usually made of many narrative steps that will expose the happenings connected to the state transformation, that can be euphoric (positive nature) or dysphoric (negative nature). The steps that construct the narrative level are: manipulation, competence, performance sanction. As Barros (2003, p. 191) emphasizes, not all the steps are always explained in the text, but it’s possible to recover or make the steps that are underlain in the narrative clear. This additional point will be especially valid in the selected pieces analysis that will emphasize one of the described steps more.

The manipulation step is featured by the attempt of the subject of making its determiner do something wanted (BARROS, 2003, p. 191). Therefore, there is an influence process from one over the other, dynamics that will vary according to the structure of a certain narrative. Additionally, this manipulation can happen in four different ways: through temptation (an award is offered), intimidation (a threat), seduction (the target

is complimented) or provocation (the target is criticized).

The second condition which joins the narrative level is the competence step. There, the subject acquires the necessary ability to change the situation (almost always unfavorable, disjunction), that embraces knowledge/being able to do. This condition is crucial for a successful execution in the following step called performance. In this step, the state changes occur, where we can see two narrative values called modal object and object of value. Such elements are the factors that allow the subject to be put in conjunction with something or someone. To do so, the modal object appears as something intermediate that will provide the accomplishment of a goal (money to buy a car, for example); while the object of value is what is really being desired (the car).

Finally, there’s the last step of the narrative level, the sanction, where we find the conclusion of the story, with the awards (symbolic or material) or punishments, depending also on the subjects involved and the acted plot.

The Brazilian advertisement, broadcast by the Health Department, focus on the last step, the sanction, represented by death caused by drinking and driving. In order to avoid that the subject (campaign target audience) be separated from its object of value (life), the enunciatior tries to manipulate the drivers through intimidation, as there is a direct threat (life loss) aimed to the ones who don’t agree with the proposed content in the advertisement. The competence and performance steps are, therefore, underlain in this case.

The Chilean advertisement focuses on the final result, the sanction, in this case, not indicated by death, but by illnesses (physical and psychological) which will be permanent value pointed out in the semiotic square. Likewise the Brazilian piece, the focus is on a state enunciation, created from a manipulation through intimidation (separation from the object of value). However, there is a concealment of the competence and performance steps.

![Image of turtle and drinks]


On the other hand, the Mexican advertisement is different when they choose to be based upon its argumentation using the performance step as the focus, emphasizing that when drinking two shots of caballitos, the drivers’ response will be slower than normal to drive safely. An important point is that this is directly related to the competence step, which will be impacted by the alcoholic beverage intake, and that is implicit in the communication piece. We can consider, in a negative...
sense, the drink as a modal object that will lead the driver to the state of separation (lower speed of motor-response) that will finally lead the driver to a situation of risk in the traffic.

7. Discursive level: the themes and the figuritivizations

The finalization of the process occurs in this last level, in which the abstract aspects presented in the previous levels become concrete. It can be seen, in syntactic terms, through elements of person, space, and time that can or can’t be explicit in the present message (BARROS, 2003, p. 193). In the semantic category of this level, we can observe the presence of themes and figures that sustain the analyzed texts.

Referring to the Brazilian material, the enunciator addresses to a person who is visible through the pronoun “you” that, on the other hand, addresses to the Brazilian drivers that eventually may drive after drinking alcoholic beverage. The advertisement text also provides signs of time, using verbs in the present, like “drives” and “ends up”, which give a touch of truth and continuity in time. Finally, concerning space, there is no true sign of real world because there is a white background where two black lines (road tracks) form the outline of a coffin in a stylistic way. As a result of such representation, traffic accidents and life topics emerge, and it can be unfeasible by the irresponsibility of driving after drinking alcoholic beverage, a fact that results in death, represented by the figure of the coffin in the center of the advertisement.

Such elements applied to the Chilean advertisements are expressed in a more concrete way, mainly when we analyze the subject, that is represented by a man sitting on a wheelchair, showing a supposed consequence to a driver’s integrity who drove after drinking alcohol. The space is also identified easier, being similar to the real environment of an isolated and empty room, whose content is only the person portrayed. Time is also highlighted by the text, through the two main sentences in the advertisement, using the verbs “be” and “last”, and the last one will have future implications (“forever”). These indications show a health and traffic safety issue, duly highlighted by the described elements such as the wheelchair, the driver with health consequences and words like “accident” and “alcohol effects”.

Finally, in the Mexican campaign piece, the aspects of a person are not present, except by the use of the pronouns “you”, as the message is stepped on a metaphor, the turtle, which represents the driver with slower responses. Likewise the Brazilian advertisement, the references of space occur in a non-space, with the
turtle in an endless background, and time acquires a timelessness nature, using the verbs in the present, indicating a statement that is not punctual, but true, permanent, and lasting.

8. Final considerations

With the content exposed, it is important to present some considerations that emerge from this paper.

First, that the issue of alcoholic beverage is, actually, an important public health matter not only in a global range, but also in the regional sphere, mainly in Latin America, representing, among many negative consequences coming from it, a risk concerning traffic accidents. Thus, the role of communication becomes a key-element for the matters of persuasion and behavior, which makes not only pertinent, but also instinctive an investigation that shows the best ways concerning the creation and organization of a risk communication campaign.

In addition, the theoretical referential proposed in this paper is effective in its proposal; the main argumentative lines could be noticed in the light of the discursive semiotics, and we note from them a similar structure in fundamental level in the three studied campaigns, as all of them exposed in a not so straight way, life as the most valuable object for the drivers. Anyway, not only the Brazilian advertisement, but also the Chilean gave more emphasis on the final consequence when driving under alcohol effects (sanction), while the Mexican campaign chose to show the competence and performance aspects that are compromised under the effect of alcohol. Finally, in the discursive level, it was possible to identify the aspects of person, space, and time, as well as the themes and figuritivizations that appear in the message context.

To conclude, the study has its importance in bringing up an important matter, the risk communication associated to alcoholic beverage in a regional level, considering its cultural characteristics of consumption and its context of traffic safety. However, we didn’t have the opportunity to study the efficiency of such campaigns from the point of view of the persuasion effects and behavior, a fact that is registered here for possible future investigations.

References


Typography, Image, Color and Meaning in Advertisements with Children: a Semiotic Study Based on Content Analysis

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Abstract: The aim of this paper is to present a semiotic study and a content analysis of Cypriot advertisements that use children as their main participants. Whether targeting adults or kids as potential addressees, this study builds on a corpus of advertisements collected from four local weekly magazines over a two-year period in Cyprus. Typography as a vehicle transforming verbal into visual language has always been a carrier of ideological significations. From letterforms’ historical associations to their ideational, interpersonal and textual metafunctions as described by Van Leeuwen, the current study investigates how these attributes appear in respect of linguistic messages, colour connotations and images with children. A series of variables that deal with letterform characteristics, meaning of advertising message, target audience, colour and gender of the participating children in the adverts were used to provide a coding scheme. The contribution of this paper lies on the investigation and comparison of significant differences from the content analysis with Semiotic theories of Language, Typography, and Colour symbolism in Cyprus. The data revealed that there are dominant typeface characteristics and colours relating to specific advertising linguistic meanings and target audiences (children versus adults).

Key words: typography; image; colour; content analysis; semiotics; children in Cypriot advertisements

1. Introduction

Image, text/typography and colour are important semiotic systems that work in synergy, to compile messages and evoke feelings in Graphic Communication. Either for print or screen, their connotative attributes are found in many underlying levels and are influential in the transmission of messages. If we take them apart and examine them separately, we will realize that there are unlimited options of subtext
qualities within each constituent like cropping, colour versus black & white images, typeface characteristics, colour values, contrast, iconicity, indexicality, symbolicity, intertextuality, just to mention a few. In any case, most of the infinite semiotic elements and combinations that deal with graphic communication expand out of the seven visual variables as described by Jacques Bertin (2011;42) in his book *Semiology of Graphics*. These are: planar placement, size, value, texture, color, orientation and shape. Image, text/typography and colour in advertising collaborate, borrow and influence one another to construct meaning and signification. We have focused our study on these elements because we consider them as major semiotic systems and we are interested in investigating their relationships in respect of children’s representations in Cypriot advertisements.

Most of the 19th century advertisers didn’t see children as a natural target market. As the market for comics grew and diversified into different genres (including girls’ comics, boys’ comics and war comics) advertisers realized that they presented an excellent way to reach the children’s market. Some of the earliest adverts in comics included notices for everything from stink bombs to improving religious books. By the 1980s, as children grew more sophisticated, they would be joined by ads for pop posters, computer games and digital watches\(^\text{1}\).

Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) introduce the existence of a visual code or grammar of visual design. They believe that both visual structures and verbal structures can be used to express meanings drawn from common cultural sources. Like linguistic structures, visual structures point to particular interpretations of experience and forms of social interactions.

Sometimes, the visual is almost entirely removed and linguistic material is utilized. Bignell (2002) states that photographs used in print advertisements work as a system of signs that gives form and meaning to consciousness and reality. According to Van Leeuwen (2005;8),

A good starting point for studying aspects of visual communication is to consider that there are two verbal and visual modes of communication in print advertising with complex interaction between them.

It can be conceived that the linguistic as well as visual choices made by ad producers are not accidental at all and this is what we will investigate in this paper.

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\(^1\) Matt Chittock-Updated; 26 September 2010 the History of Kids and Advertising [http://www.kidsandadvertising.co.uk/history-kids-advertising.html](http://www.kidsandadvertising.co.uk/history-kids-advertising.html).
as described before.

2. Methodology

In this research we have collected sample advertisements from four weekly magazines (TV Mania, Down Town, OK, Tiletheatis) distributed free with Cypriot weekly newspapers over a period of two years (2009–2010). These four newspapers were chosen since they constitute the top four in sales according to the latest research of RAI Consultants Public Ltd in Cyprus. The repeated ads were excluded from the final sample. Two hundred and sixty six full-page advertisements were collected from four weekly magazines. These advertisements were chosen based on the inclusion of children as characters in the advertisement but not necessarily as “lead” characters. Four hundred and seventy three characters were displayed in these advertisements.

The aim was to start a visual semiotic discussion using selective advertisements from our corpus and compare our comments with the results from the respective content analysis. Interestingly in this way, we can examine whether semiotic thinking is supported or not, by a scientific/content analysis.

According to Bignell (2002) the first step in analyzing an advertisement is to note the various signs in the advertisement itself. We can assume that anything that seems to carry a meaning for us in the ad is a sign. So linguistic signs (words) and iconic signs (visual representations) are likely to be found in ads, as well as some other nonrepresentational signs like additional graphic elements, composition and colour. With similar references to Barthes’s (1977) notion of code in advertising we are also interested for the anchorage that is to see how polysemy—i.e. multi-sign meanings are concluded to interpretation, by the producers for the spectators.

According to Van Leeuwen (2005: 8), “A good starting point for studying aspects of visual communication is to consider that there are two, verbal and visual modes of communication in print advertising with complex interaction between them”.

The Coding procedure

Although all advertisements included children as characters, the target group of each advertisement was not only for children. More in detail, each advertisement was classified as having children or adults as targets. For example, the advertisement of toys was classified as having children as target while the advertisement of an airline carrier was classified as having adults as target, since they are interrelated in this commodity.
The content analysis method was used to examine the advertisements. Content analysis is the scientific, objective, systematic, quantitative and generalizable description of communications content (Kassarjian, 1977). The typographic dimensions were based on the work by Van Leeuwen (2006) so the coding scheme included the following variables: 1) case, 2) slope, 3) color, 4) typeface, 5) weight, 6) expansion, 7) curvature, 8) connectivity, 9) texture and for the purposes of this study the color and meaning of the display text of each advertisement were investigated. The colour category included all the colours that were noted in the analysis of the display text and the category “Meaning” included the following subcategories; 1) Love, 2) Care, 3) Health, 4) Safety, 5) Hygiene, 6) Trust, 7) Life, 8) Nature.

### 3. Results

**Typography by target group**

The investigation reveals that the target group has an effect of the choice of typeface $\chi^2(4, N = 198) = 12.20, p = .016$ and color $\chi^2(16, N = 198) = 36.99, p = .002$ of the message of each advertisement. Particularly, there was an increased use of *Script* typeface when the target was children (25.3%) in comparison to its use when the target was adults (7.3%) even though *Sans-Serif* typefaces were the ones most frequently used independent of the target group.

**Color by target group**

A percentage of 50.7% of the advertisements are targeting children, 38.4% has as target the adults and the rest 10.9% both children and adults. The investigation of the effect of the target group on the color of the text of each advertisement revealed that the target group has an effect on the color $\chi^2(16, N = 198) = 36.99, p = .002$ of the message of each advertisement. Particularly, *White* color was the most common color used in advertisements with either target group (27.3% for children and 32.5% for adults) but differences occurred concerning the use of *Black* colored or *Multicolored* text ($p = 0.016$). In detail, when the target was adults, the use of *Black* color was more often (34.1%) in comparison to its use in advertisements targeting children (13.1%). In addition, advertisements with children as target group use more often a *Multicolored* text (14.1%) in comparison to advertisements of products for adults (2.4%).

**Meaning by target group**

The target group of the product was also found to have an effect on the general meaning of the written text in the advertisement $\chi^2(13, N = 198) = 24.19, p =$
0.029) (p = 0.029). On the one hand, when the target group was children, there was an increased frequency of the categories Education/Knowledge and Quality in comparison to their use in advertisements of adults as target group. On the other hand, in advertisements targeting adults, there was more use of the category Hygiene in the meaning of the text in comparison to the presence of such meaning in advertisements for children products.

Color of the meaning

In advertisements having a text with Hygiene as a general meaning, the color more often used was blue (42.9%). Color blue is related to coldness which most likely leads to a connection with the cool but clean and sterilizing environment of a hospital. The meaning of Education/Knowledge was more often written with blue (25%) or black (18.8%) letters. It could be the case that the choice of colors is not random since these colors also constitute the colors of the formal school uniform. The white (27.8%) and the yellow (27.8%) color were more frequently used in a text with Quality as meaning possibly because these colors are bright and attention-catching so the creators had the intention to emphasize the issue of quality of the product.

A semiotic approach

![Figure 1 Advertisement of Zorbas bakeries 1](image1)

![Figure 2 Advertisement of Zorbas bakeries 2](image2)

Two examples of advertisements were selected from the corpus as shown in Figure 1 and Figure 2. The “Zorbas” bakeries kids campaign in Cyprus is enriched
with second level significations that derive from the three semiotic systems of our
interest: image, text/typography and colour. "Zorbas bakeries" is a chain company
of 53 shops all over Cyprus and mainly sells bread, milk and dairy products and has
numerous shops open on a 24-hour basis.

The two advertisements have the same grid layout as well as use of typography. The
verbal and non-verbal systems are different in each case, obviously based on
their target audience being boys or girls; however parents as a target audience are
not excluded from this campaign. In terms of colour, we can observe earthy, low-
contrast colors in brown shades giving us the impression of old-faded color nostalgic
pictures. Beasley and Danesi (2002: 41) remark on color connotations that brown
works as a symbolism at an unconscious level for "earthiness, naturalness,
primordiality, constancy, etc." This reference to the past through colour is
according to our opinion a vehicle of two connotative messages for the brand; it is
common knowledge that during the old days, the planet was less polluted with bread
made out of purest ingredients, less preservatives and manufactured treatment. The
dominant and pale earthy colours relate with "bakerness" as wheat is also brown and
has a similar aesthetic.

The graphic composition and the grid used interestingly portray what Kress and
Van Leeuwen (1996: 186) discuss;

Elements placed to the left of the page’s vertical axis are presented as
“given” pieces of information, or things that the viewer already knows; “new”
elements on the right are not yet known or agreed upon. The values of given
and new in an advertisement’s elements are assumed by the advertiser, and it is
up to the viewer to accept or reject the roles as presented.

In Figure 1 we have a boy dressed up as a football-player in a brown field
holding a ball with his back turned, whilst in Figure 2, a girl with adult glasses is
facing out and stands in front of a blackboard and smiles. In both cases the
emphasized linguistic message is the same stating "we know what your dreams are”.
The answers to these statements are given through the images and the body text
under the display titles: boys would like to become football players, whilst girls
elementary school teachers. It is interesting how the advertisers put the body of the
boy from his back perspective—thus the reader of the image can not see the gaze of
him but only his body and the active ready-to-play gesture. Comparing with the girl
that does the opposite, one might argue how gender roles are assigned in early ages;
boys are active and mysterious (face is not seen) whilst girls are obvious (face is
seen), friendly and altruistic. The boy also wears a T-shirt with the number nine on it, which refers to the “centre-forward” player that is—in football terms—the tallest team member and highly responsible to achieve the most goals.

Kress (2010:88) points out that meaning can be made through the affordances of font as it can through colour. These meanings are socially made, socially agreed and consequently socially and culturally specific. In both examples the display typography is always on the right and is set in white using serif type. Because of its usage and historical background, this classic old style serif typeface carries the historical and connotative associations of “tradition, seriousness, sophistication and class”. The lower case lettering makes the message more personal and friendly as if it is almost hand-written from the owner. Interestingly, the logotype “Zorbas” which also functions as the anchorage of the advertisement is set in serif regular capitals, a Typography that for the reasons mentioned before, not only adds prestige and elegance to the company, but its linguistic meaning is signifying “Greekness” through its intertextual reference to “Zorba the Greek”. Additionally and through the overall shape and the brown colour used, the logo is also carefully designed to look like an oven, and allude to bakery. White used for all verbal messages is according to Beasly & Danessi (2002:41) a colour that stands connotatively for purity, innocence, virtuous, chastity, goodness, etc. What is more appropriate for writing when it comes to sell food? One aspect of colour that advertisers know and work with is the contrast.

4. Discussion

By using a visual content analysis we can come to conclusions that can be examined, juxtaposed and compared with selective semiotic studies from the corpus, depending on areas of interest with significant results. Advertisers use image, text/typography and colours, to communicate with consumers and make the product attractive and popular among them and achieve the goal of ever-lasting purchase and popularity. There is regularity to be found in advertising phenomena, sets of signs organizing, constraining choice, and these choices are part of social meaning. These sets of signs don’t make up a single, comprehensive and coherent meaning, and the meaning of particular signs is always relative to specific kinds of reader, on specific contexts. In terms of this scheme, semiotic analysis occupies an important place within a common framework of critical discourse analysis in advertising. Here, the attention is to signs as a carrier of ideological meanings. Image, text/typography and colour, seen in this way as the result of social practices, are three of the many
and major semiotic modes through which social meanings of ads are coded.

Advertisers use typography and colour to reflect a specific brand, as well as an attempt to communicate a certain mood dictated by the product itself. It shows the “personality” of a product and its semiotic identity in the market. Colours and their underlying sociological and historical connotation certainly do produce specific reactions in particular contexts—emotions, associations and even physical effects that can help advertisers in their quest for ever more accurate targeting. Using proper colour seems to be the quickest way to create mood without saying a word.

From the content analysis it is observed that many significant results support a semiotic perspective. The increased use of script typography in advertisements that target children portrays how hand-writing letterforms are associated with “the visual speaking to young audiences”, a typographic approach that is related with more personal, direct and friendly connotations. The increased use of Black color in comparison to its use in advertisements targeting children is interestingly reflecting the “adult-world” as Black, according to Beasley & Danesi (2002) symbolizes among other evil, impurity, guilt, immorality. In addition, advertisements with children as target group use more often a Multicolored text. This multicolor approach for children is more cheerful, playful and colourful, a visual practice that is obviously nearer to what they are exposed more through school and media culture therefore acquainted, used and attracted to. In advertisements having a text with Hygiene as a general meaning, the color more often used was the blue. Beasley & Danesi (2002: 41) also refer to blue as a connotative color of sky, paradise, tranquility, calmness, mysticism, mystery, etc; therefore it could be argued to what extent do these notions relate with health issues. The meaning of Education/ Knowledge was also more often written with blue and less with black letters. The white and the yellow color were more frequently used in a text with Quality. With reference to Beasley & Danesi (2002: 41), white works as symbolism for purity, innocence, virtuousness, chastity, goodness, decency, whilst yellow is a colour symbolizing liveliness, sunshine, happiness, peacefulness, etc. We can argue that these Westernized cultural color associations are easily mapped with Quality.

What is interestingly seen from this study is that the results of the content analysis enhance and support the semiotic theories around the cultural and sociological perspectives of colour and typographic theories. It definitely opens opportunities for further researches in the context of examining other graphic communication parameters not just in advertising, but also in other forms of Graphic Communication, either print or screen.
References


Visual references

Figure 1 and Figure 2 advertisements for Zorbas Bakeries designed by TBWA\Entelia, Lefkosia, Cyprus.
Living Spaces of “Chinese Culture”: Alimentary Rituals in Focus

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Abstract: The concrete manifestations of “Chinese culture” and the brand “Li-Lig Chinese Food” (Lig-Lig Comida Chinesa) constitute the context of this paper. We took the ambiance of Chinese restaurant and in order to characterize it we describe the objects that compose this place; we evaluate the potentiality of meanings these objects and other qualitative and referential aspects linked to colors, textures, as well as the arrangement of them, which also lead the user to the symbols of Chinese culture. The corpus of the research is formed with ethnographic photos (Achuti, 2004), collected in the first semester of 2012, in one of the cities where there is a franchise which present architectural aspects of the “Lig-Lig Comida Chinesa” restaurant, and also the visual representations that appear in the advertisements on the front wall of the commercial establishments, promotional materials and available menus. These objects are analyzed from the perspective of semiotics by Charles Sanders Peirce (Collected Papers). By permeating the analysis with theories of Burke (2003) and Said (2007) we can characterize how is the cultural mix in local cuisine and assess the predominant reactions involved in this process like acceptance, rejection, adaptation or segregation. This paper is to understand how brands present themselves as mediators of culturally constructed meanings in food rituals in public and also to show the importance of semiotics to interpretation of the living space built with link of senses of “Chinese culture”.

Key words: advertising; value; living spaces; rituals food; Chinese culture.

Introduction

Languages are social forms of communication and signification and among them we can mention the articulated verbal language, mathematics, art, computer language, cookery, music, etc. In this sense, the food and its rituals can be studied under the perspective of communication. There is a dynamics built by communication and that in certain measure, implies the construction or (re) construction of this modality of language; cookery. Those elements appear as objects of studies for the communication, so the handbooks of product supplying,
the guidebooks of restaurants, the cookery books, the discourses about diets or alimentary programs, either from media or not, the TV programs about food, blogs, kitchen utensils as well as the locals where these several alimentary rituals are prepared and performed.

Concerning culture, in the postmodern context, the tendency to mix and hybridization is enhanced. In a broad sense, according to Burke (2003), culture comprehends attitudes, values, as well as manifestations through artifacts, practices and representations.

Thus, in general, one neither abandons a belief for another, nor substitutes an artifact for another; but there are approximations, mixing, superpositions and resignifications. Such movements can be studied through the variety of hybrid objects, in situations in which the cultural interactions occur, in the variety of possible reactions, as well as through the variety of possible results or consequences of the long term hybridization.

Concerning the variety of objects, Burke (2003) mentions products of architecture and hybrid images. In relation to these images it is worth emphasizing the importance of the cultural stereotypes or schemes for the structuring of perception and interpretation of the world, as well as the affinities or convergences among images of different traditions.

The hybrid practices, for their turn, can be identified in the religion, music, language, sport, festivities, fashion, publicity, etc. Among these practices we highlight the alimentary rituals that we understand as involving also the places where they are held, such as restaurants, bars, snack bars, home kitchens, the streets of big cities, the markets and street markets, etc.

For these reflections, it is pertinent to consider some of our conceptions about the Orient. In a broad sense, the Orientalism is related to the academic tradition with its ways, transmigrations, specializations and transmissions. The Orientalism, according to Said (2007);

is a style of thinking based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between the “Orient” and (most of the time) the “Occident”. Thus, a great number of writers, among whom poets, novelists, philosophers, political theoreticians, economists and imperial administrators have accepted the basic distinction between East and West as a starting point to elaborated theories, epopees, novels, social descriptions and political reports about the orient, its peoples, customs, “mentality”, destiny and so on. (p.29)
In this sense, the Orientalism can be studied as a discourse that provides an understanding of how European culture was able to construct and handle the Orient within political, sociological, military, ideological, scientific and imaginative dimensions during the post Illuminism period. A researcher, a ruler or any person, when writing, thinking or acting over the Orient is not free from the force of Orientalism. According to Said (2007):

In short, because of the Orientalism, the Orient was not (and is not) a free theme to the thought and the action. This does not mean that the Orientalism determines unilaterally what can be said about the Orient, but that it consists of a set of interests inevitably applicable (and thus always involved) in all and any occasions in which this peculiar entity, the “Orient”, is object of discussion. (p. 30)

The media contribute to reinforcing the stereotypes through which the Orient is seen and, for Said (2007), “have forced information to adjust to molds more and more standardized. Concerning the Orient, the standardization and the cultural stereotypes enhanced the domain of the imaginative and academic demonology of the ‘mysterious Orient’ of the XIX century” (p. 58).

The Orientalism, according to Said (2007), “is neither a simple theme or political field passively reflected by culture, by erudition or by the institutions; nor is it representative or expressive of any execrable imperialist ‘occidental’ plot to oppress the ‘oriental’ world” (p. 40). In agreement with Said (2007):

It is foremost the distribution of geopolitical conscience in aesthetic, erudite, economic, sociological, historical, and philological texts; it is the elaboration not only of a basic geographic distinction (the world is composed of two unequal halves, the Orient and the Occident), but also of a whole series of “interests” that the Orientalism both creates and sustains, by means like the erudite discovery, the philological reconstruction, the psychological analysis, the landscape and sociological description; it is more than a certain expressed will or intention to understand, in some cases to control, manipulate and even incorporate what is a manifestly different (or alternative and new) world. (p. 40)

Thus, the Orientalism is much less related to the Orient itself than to “our” world, that is, it is—not only represents—a considerable dimension of the modern
political-intellectual culture.

In the midst of the aspects that refer to the mix of cultures, the predominant conceptions of the Orient and that, somehow, reach the alimentary rituals, we do our research, whose context is cookery as a language, more specifically the “Chinese Cookery”. The corpus of the research is formed with ethnographic photos—collected in the first semester of 2012, in one of the cities where there is a franchise—which present architectural aspects of Chinese bars and restaurants, as well as the visual representations that appear in the advertisements on the front wall of the commercial establishments, promotional materials and available menus.

For this paper, we took the study of the ambiance of a Chinese restaurant. In order to characterize it we describe the objects that compose these ambiances; we evaluate the potentiality of meanings that these objects aggregate to the ambiance and other qualitative aspects linked to colors, textures, as well as the arrangement of them, which also lead the user to the symbols of Chinese culture.

Reflecting on the mix of objects, concrete manifestations of Chinese culture, for the construction of an ambiance, which we denominate “multicultural ambiance”, constitutes the relevance of this paper. So through this practice we emphasize the potentiality of the objects in the construction of conviviality spaces.

Thus, we begin by discussing the concepts that are involved in the research and the methodology of analysis of the visual representations and, finally, the analysis of the photos that were selected to characterize the “multicultural ambiance”. So, let us initiate with the concepts.

Reexamining the concept of ambiance

Baudrillard (2004), when dealing with the processes that involve the objects, as well as the systematic conduct and human relations that result from the interaction objects/people, develops the concepts of arrangement, ambiance and functionality. For this sociologist, the modern object gets free from its function, and, in this case, becomes functional. Let us see this idea in the configuration of the furniture. The pieces of furniture in the bourgeois inner—in the dining room, bedrooms, kitchen—with their functions and connectivity, characterized the patriarchal order. This unifunctional ambiance did not have any mobility, although it had an imposing presence and revealed hierarchies. “In this private ambiance, each piece of furniture, each room, for its turn, incorporated inwardly its function and revested it with a symbolic dignity” (Baudrillard, 2004, p. 22).

The modern interiors, in their inventiveness (through arrangements),
frequently produce the effect of functional ambiances. Now, “the bed is
dissimulated into a bed-sofa, the buffet and the closets, into built-in concealable
closets. Things are folded, unfolded, are put aside, come to the scene in the
required moment (Baudrillard, 2004, p. 23).” Thus, the object is freed from its
function and the human being, as a user, is also freed.

According to Baudrillard (2004), the modern interiors appear as functional
ambiances, due to absence of space and the consequent loss of style, whereas the
functionality, which is maximally demanded, comes as a solution for the loss of
interior organization within a space that still did not lose its confinement, which,
for its turn, determines a new space.

As each object plays its role, there are no relations. In the absence of relations
there is no space. The space, in agreement with Baudrillard (2004), “exists solely
open, generated, cadenced, widened by a correlation of objects and an exceedance
of their functions within this new structure. The space is in a certain manner the
real liberty of the object, its function is only the formal liberty” (p. 25).

The ambiance constitutes itself a space of relations in which the objects surpass
their function, that is, they are no longer function-objects and reach a new practical
order of organization. The predominant element in the ambiance is the
combination, the play. In the inward ambiance of the traditional environments, the
discourse is poetic and the objects, although closed, correspond to one another,
whereas in the outward ambiance of the modern “interiors”, the objects
communicate to one another, according to Baudrillard (2004): “they no longer have
a singular presence, but, in the better cases, a collective coherence made out of
their simplification as elements of code and of the calculation of their relations” (p.
31).

The communication is understood like this due to the structural and
poststructural conceptions of the linguistic sign—extended to the study of the
objects, as instruments and signs, in Baudrillard—in which the meaning of a symbol
(linguistic symbol) comes with its translation to other symbols. Thereby, the
communicational processes are commanded by codes. According to Jakobson
(2007), “the linguist only recodes, translates into metalanguage symbols, the
already existing symbols, which are in use in the language of the referred
community” (p. 78).

Thus, our initial proposal is to review the definition of ambiance given by
Baudrillard, considering that the objects that form it are signs, in the perspective of
the peircean semiotics. In this perspective, the meanings come with “a collective
coherence”, that involves, besides the codes, not only the coded qualitative
elements and references but also the uncoded ones, intense in their materiality and not encapsulated by rules or laws. The significant potentiality of the objects institutes an ambience with a greater power of combination and play. This way, the concept of ambience becomes adequate to the study of interior ambiances that conjugate artifacts of several cultures within a closed ambience, like the ones of the restaurants, elements of the corpus of the research.

We are going to announce briefly, some of the concepts of the speculative grammar, one among the three branches of semiotics or logic, and announce the method of analysis that comes from it.

Method of analysis for visual representations

The sign “represents” something to the idea that it provokes or modifies. That is, it is a vehicle that communicates something from outside to the mind. What is being represented is its object; what it communicates is the signification, the idea it provokes as its interpretative (CP 1.339). The definition of sign, in a diagram, can be seen in Figure 1.

Observing the three branches of the diagram, we perceive that there is no way to relate sign and interpretative without involving object; in the same way, it is not possible to think of sign and object without the interpretative and, finally, object and interpretative, without the mediation of the sign. The sign is in the place of the object, it represents it and, so, it has the power of generating other sign (the interpretative). The sign has the logical primacy over the object, whereas the object has the real primacy.

The representation can be seen as one of the faces of the semiosis—action of the sign or cognition—process that occurs through the interpretation of a sign to another sign and so successively. The interpretative, other sign, is always other representation that relates to the same object. But, for its turn, this sign generates other signs as an interpretative and, so, successively and infinitely, at least under a theoretical point of view.

Due to its triadic nature, the sign can be analyzed in three aspects: a) in itself, in its power of signification; b) in its reference or concerning what it indicates and c) concerning the types of interpretation it can generate. Thence, it happens that
the communicational processes include three faces; the signification, the reference and the interpretation of the messages, since each one of them is linked to the formal properties that enable the sign to work as such; its quality, its existence and its law character.

The analysis of a visual representation requires to center the look on the materiality or on the concretion of the sign, which permits us to enter the deeper levels of the interpretative process. Santaella (2002) proposes that we center the look on the three modes that enable anything to work as a sign; the quality, the attribute of being existent and the character of law, norm or convention, which permit identifying the signs themselves, the objects of the signs/visual representations, that is, what they indicate, suggest, designate or represent, the potentiality of the interpretation.

Initially, the look can capture the qualitative aspects; colors, forms, texture, dimension, movement, luminosities... These signs which have quality as their foundation/nature are denominated in the peircean terminology, qualsigns. Such qualitative aspects of the object can be converted by conscience, which, in this instance is kept in a tenuous state, porous, in terms of qualities of feelings.

The qualsigns, in their relation with the object are characterized by similarity with the object or referent they represent. The suggestion is what emanates from this relation that is expected to be tenuous, kind, and that is going to provoke conjectures, hypotheses about what the object of representation can be in the mind of an interpreter.

The second manner of looking—observational—discriminates, captures existents. Existents, in the visual language, is all that we can capture, all that present and insist to be caught, to enter our perception, all of which is possible to be named. This singular existence nature makes the sign a sinsign. A sinsign is part of the context in which it manifests itself; as it is part of the whole, it stands out for being indexical, that is, it points out the universe of which it is part, therefore, it is an index in the relation with the object. Before a sign of this nature, the mind of an interpreter is in the meanders of verification, this effect may predominate, because according to Perez (2004), the index establishes a relation of cause and effect that leaves no ambiguities, therefore, it is directive.

The interpretative or generalizing look—third way of looking—apprehends the senses of the sign from the associative, cultural habits that the interpreter operates from his repertoire. These are aspects capable to incite properties that are culturally shared. It is the look that is responsible to make the synthesis, to interpret effectively from the qualities that are incorporated in each analyzed existent. The
sinsigns give consistence to the qualsigns, whereas the legisigns work as guiding principles to the sinsigns. Invested with cultural conventions that frame the signs, the symbol predominates in the relation sign/object. The reflections may predominate as interpretative elements in this instance.

These three foundations of the sign are actually inseparable. It happens that, in a certain situation or moment, one of them predominates and provokes in the mind one of the three possible effects: emotional, reactive and the ones that cause reflections, *semiosis*. Finally, these levels of sense are not stagnated: all of them permeate the interpretative process.

Thus, this method of semiotic analysis allows the sign to express and by making possible the elaboration of an inventory of the significant potentiality yielded in it, shows itself advantageous as an instrument to the interpretation of the communicational/cultural processes that generally occur connected to the visual representations.

Our research is made up of photographs. We are going to make a semiotic analysis of photos and with this analysis, in a certain measure, we are in consonance with Achutti’s proposal (2004), the photoethnography, as a methodology that permits exploring the potentiality of the senses latent in the images. In these analyses the photos are not seen as simple register or complement to the word, they come as an index of the reality.

Among studies on photography, like Barthes’ (2006) and Dubois’ (2001), we make use of the peircean semiotics to analyze the photograph as a sign. In this perspective, the photograph becomes a sign either for its qualitative aspects—linked to the qualities of the image that come with light effects—once photography is actually a manner of writing with light—for the referential aspects, that is, because it refers to something external (out of the image, the paper or other modality of support) and for its aspects of law, rules or conventions that are shared in the culture, in the ambiance of our coniviviality, with our habits.

The photograph and the images that are technically produced, like the cinematographic, televised and video graphic belong to the modality of figure as register, once these are flagrant or capturing images that get the existent, either objects or facts, by means of physical and spatial connection.

Since the methodological explanations are concluded, let us present some aspects of the corpus and the analyses of the selected photos.

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**Multicultural Ambiance: “Chinese Restaurant” in Focus**

In the visual representations (ethnographic photos), presented in the “mosaic”
form (Figure 2), with photos of the city where Lig-Lig restaurant is established, collected in September 2012, we observe the predominance of red color and the presence of artifacts: the lucky cat, visual representations of dragons, little statues of Buda. There are also visual stereotypes of the Chinese man in logos and advertisements in restaurants and snack bars. In the central area of the city, there

Figure 2  Aspects of “China” in mosaic form, in the city of Sorocaba
Source: Photos by Lenira Drigo Agostinho
are shops that announce “oriental gifts”, whose prices start in one real. We also find the “Pastelaria Chinesa” (Chinese Pastry)—that is said to have been a traditional place for 40 years—which offers the costumers tropical fruit juices, several snacks (*quibe*, *coxinha* and others) and even the popular *garapa* (sugar cane juice).

For our analysis, we selected “Lig-Lig Chinese Food”. According to available data from the official blog, the restaurant was founded in 1992 by Thomas Liu, a Chinese descendant who is the present general director of this network which has more than 40 shops in several states in Brazil: São Paulo, Santa Catarina, Mato Grosso do Sul, Paraná, Bahia, Amazonas and Maranhão. These are restaurants which offer local and delivery services. They regard themselves as diffusers of the Chinese cookery in Brazil. Diced chicken, bifum, Chop-Suey Noodles (or *yakisoba*) are some of the dishes offered and adapted to the Brazilian taste. Let us see some aspects of one of these restaurants (Figure 3).

![Figure 3 Interior view of "Lig-Lig Chinese Food" Source: Photo by Lenira Drigo Agostinho](image)

The chromatic signs, red and white, along with the yellowish light, turn the place cozy and welcoming, through the heating sensory force that these colors provoke. Red color inside the restaurant is presented similarly to the gateway at the entrance (Figure 4). The colors and the forms are kept, which may provide the continuity of the effect on the interpreter. The objects present in the local, for their turn—a little golden statue of Buddha, a picture of a golden dragon (Figure 5) and the little statue of the lucky cat—turn the local different, exotic, strange for the
occidental view.

Figure 4  View of the entrance gateway of “Lig-Lig Chinese Food”  Source: Photo by Lenira Drigo Agostinho

Figure 5  Golden dragon  Source: Photo by Lenira Drigo Agostinho

Thus, the ambiance is composed of a mix between coziness and strangeness, which may inspire curiosity, interest of the user in enjoying this ambiguity. For a
few moments, the user might stay in a contemplative state, delighted by the effects of the colors and the apparent strangeness of the place.

The objects, as cultural symbols, then the meanings that are attributed to the place are more than mere identification. Let us see how these objects can aggregate meanings to the place.

Let us initiate with the gateway which may lead the user to aspects of the millennial Chinese architecture. The form of the gateway (Figure 4) reminds the viewers of the Forbidden City, for example. The dragon (Figure 5), which also leads the user to the engraved images on the inner and outer walls of the palaces, brings up the Sino power and force of the great Chinese dynasties.

The dragon, in agreement with Chevalier and Gheerbrant (2008):

is a manifestation of the Chinese imperial omnipotence; the face of the dragon means the emperor’s face; the way the dragon walks stands for the majestic presence of the ruler; the pearl the dragon carries on its neck is believed to represent the incontestable brightness of the ruler’s word, the perfection of his thoughts and his orders. (p. 35)

The dragon is also related to the production of rain and storm, which are manifestations of the celestial activity. It is the symbol of the celestial rain fecundating the soil and, therefore, it can be linked to the abundance. In the festivities, the dragons in appropriate colors, provide rain, which is a heavenly blessing.

But, in this place, other aspects of the symbolism of the dragon may emerge. In the West, there are religious images in which the dragon is present. So, for Chevalier and Gheerbrant (2008), “Saint George or Saint Michael fighting the dragon, represented by so many artists, illustrate the everlasting battle of good against evil. In its many different forms, this theme is an obsession to all the cultures and religions.” (p. 352)

The dragon, due to its ambivalent characteristic of a tough guardian and symbol of evil and demonic tendencies, aggregates greater ambiguity to the place. As a frontier place, this ambiance generates doubts, since it is possible to visualize the conviviality of both cultures, oriental and occidental.

The little statue of Buddha and the lucky cat, also present in the place, lead the user to oriental philosophical beliefs, and associate Chinese people with superstition. The lucky cats are present in different sizes and colors and they may show a raised paw, reminding the act of cleaning the face. If the right paw is
raised, it is said to attract money, whereas the left one attracts clients. Thus, besides being given as a gift, it is also placed at the entrance of the commercial establishments.

The little statue reminds the wealth ritual, through the offering of coins to Buddha, which symbolizes the desire of prosperity and richness. As a symbol of the philosophical tradition of the Orient, the little statue may bring up memories of the tradition of the oriental philosophical thought. The appearance of Buddhism, in India, the dissemination of it through Asia and afterwards across the planet.

But there are other aspects that place the user in harmony with practices that are pertinent to the present context, permeated by technologies. The user can taste the “Chinese food”, wherever he is, ordering online or through telephone (ligue = dial). The promotional posters (Figure 6), that are put outside the place, show the package (for the food), the gift that comes along with it and the website.

The stereotype, “as a generalized and equivocal belief regarding a group, generates attitudes of prejudice in relation to this group. But at the same time, it legitimates and enhances them” (Ferrés, 1998, p. 139). Among the stereotypes, there are the visual ones, which can be characterized as “images” that contribute to associating people and ideas, generally, simple, about nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation, physical disabilities, etc. In this case, this image is linked to the kindness (docile and easy to domesticate) and to the agriculture and translates the colonizer’s view, as it is exposed by Jameson (2006).

This image is also in the logo of the restaurant (Figure 7). The telephone—beside

![Promotional poster of “Lig-Lig Chinese Food” Source: Photo by Lenira Drigo Agostinho](image1)

the name “Lig-Lig”—emphasizes the way to access the food, one of the differential aspects of this network. If, in the past, the usual way was the telephone, now the order can be put through Internet, what we show with the poster (Figure 6). The name—besides being an affirmative imperative, claiming a phone call (Ligue-Ligue), that was written “Lig-Lig”—as a sonority that reminds the Chinese language sound, for the occidental, due to the predominance of the vowel “i”.

In all the analyzed representations we observe the presence of red color. The red color is universally considered “the fundamental symbol of the principle of life, with its force, power and brightness. It is the color of fire and blood and however it has the same ambivalence of these ones, visually speaking, according to its light or dark shade” (Chevalier and Gheerbrant, 2008, p. 944). In other reflexive direction, Farina et al. (2006) states that “red color has great ambiguity since it can be connected to life and death, part of this ambiguity can be attributed to the inevitable association with blood” (p. 76).

The shade of red color that is shown in the analyzed visual representations approximates to light red, so it is bright, centrifugal, diurnal, tonic, inciting to action. It sheds its brightness over the things that surround it. Thus, this shade, which is present inside the restaurant turns the ambiance exciting because of its energetic force. Added to other aspects linked to the Chinese culture, red may also remind the user of the popular festivities and specially the feasts related to spring season, marriage and birth.

Red seduces, encourages, and provokes. That is why it is present in many flags. China’s flag is pure redness. In accordance with Chevalier Gheerbrant (2008):

There is no person who have not expressed—in their own manner—this ambivalence that originates all the fascinating power of the red color, which has in itself, intimately connected, the two most profound human impulses: action and passion, liberty and oppression. This is corroborated by the flags that wave in the wind of our time! (p. 946)

Thus, due to the strong presence of red color, it is impossible for the user not to link the place and other artifacts to the Chinese culture, since this symbol (flag/red color, in this case) circulates through the means of communication, they make clothes with it, it is used by athletes to cozy their bodies in sport competitions, so they make the nation a logo. It also shows a strong political-ideological connection, since it is the color that represents the communist party, which has been governing
China since 1949.

Through the referential and symbolic aspects mentioned, we can review the possible meanings aggregated to the ambiance of the place showed in Figure 3. On the one hand, the qualitative aspects that come with the outstanding redness, with the objects that remind millennial beliefs, the power of dynasties make the ambiance exciting, otherwise welcoming, because of the arrangement of the objects and the play of colors.

On the other hand, both the millennial beliefs and the power of dynasties as well as the visual stereotypes of the Chinese man, place the user in a crack between cultures in which the Chinese one comes marked by stereotypes. Another play is established. A chaotic ambiance which claims for the recovery of what is lost in the mixes and that longs for a (re)signification by playing with fragments.

### Final Statements

The colors, the forms, the textures and the play of these aspects, the arrangement of the objects and the symbolic aspects of all these elements establish a web of meanings. This web of meanings is the ambiance. The analyses demonstrate that this ambiance is warm, cozy and at the same time exciting. Since it is constructed among cultures, it is focus of ambivalences, a frontier which permits to experience the mix, the exchange, the transformations, as well as to recognize the connection among them. Retaking Said (1995):

The imperialism consolidated the mix of cultures and identities in a global scale (...) One cannot deny the lasting continuity of long traditions, constant housing, national languages and cultural geographies, but it seems not to exist any reason, apart from fear and prejudice, to continue insisting in the separation and distinction among them, as if the whole human existence was reduced to that. The survival, actually, is in the connections among things; in Eliot’s terms, the reality cannot be deprived from “other echoes [that] inhabit the garden”. (p. 411)

In this sense, the places—like the restaurant “Lig-Lig Chinese Food”—may provide “connections among things”. We observe, by means of analyses, that through fragments, new links are established among the different cultures involved. The restaurant “Lig-Lig Chinese Food” has potentiality to bring up some aspects of the Chinese culture, which go far beyond the kind of food they serve, thus, the
alimentary rituals become closer to the the rituals of this culture through the symbolic reiteration performed in the ambiance. Therefore, there is both acceptance and adequacy to the aspects of the Chinese culture.

Concerning the publicity that involves alimentation, our reflections permitted to review Barthes’ classification which was retaken by Trindade and Brahim (2011), in three categories: celebratory, publicity of situation, nutrition and health, and to invent the possibility to create a new category. Concerning the categories proposed by Barthes, in the first one, the celebratory, the food is linked to festivities or cultural celebrations, which favors the relationships among people; the publicity of situation deals with consumption—buying, ways of preparing and using (ingestion/degustation) of food—and the rituals of buying, possession and use; and in the third category, the publicity of nutrition and health, what is propagated is the idea of preserving health and emphasizing the nutritive value of food.

Evaluating the restaurant—the ambiance destined to the consumption of Chinese food—we propose the category “publicity of nature”. Considering that the term nature can be applied, according to Mora (2011), “to every class of elements; created, not created, finite, infinite, etc., that is, this term can be qualified in so many different ways” (p. 498). Linked to the publicity with food, this category “publicity of nature” would indicate the origin or the recovery of connections with the cookery from different cultures. It is a common characteristic in the communication of brands of Italian food which always promote green and red colors (Italian flag) or even blue color (because Italy is known as Azurra).

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Juan Valdez, the Coffee’s Body: A Semiotic Analysis of the Colombian Coffee Grower Signs Advertisement Uses

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Abstract: This paper is a semiotic analysis of the plastic and figurative dimensions of Juan Valdez’s logotype and the ethics and aesthetics discourse that this character encodes. Rather than a brand and a communication and marketing strategy to place the Colombian coffee in the international market, Juan Valdez is a figure that embodies a social role, a job, a life style, a specific way of working and a set of traditions expressing his cultural attachment and background. Created to “be present” anywhere, Juan Valdez is not only considered as a brand’s name but also, as a part of the country’s cultural identity that is exported all over the world. The hypothesis is that Juan Valdez’s body aesthetics, as a truly visual identity, discloses the community identity issues, the social practice values and the cultural imaginaries of the Colombian coffee culture. The analysis led us to define the Juan Valdez’s figure as a social practice place of projection, asserted through the objects and the spaces valuation that belongs to the main rural and cultural coffee region in Colombia.

Key words: identity; cultural imaginaries; social practice and advertising

1. The Juan Valdez® advertising and marketing strategy

In 1959, at the time of a coffee overproduction on the worldwide, the National Federation of Coffee Growers of Colombia (FNC) launched Juan Valdez, a new ad campaign to highlight the Colombian coffee from the other coffee origins around the world. Managed by the American ad agency Doyle Dane Bernbach, this campaign was about a coffee farmer named Juan Valdez and his mule Conchita, two characters. Their aim was to promote the work of thousands of Colombian coffee famers on television, in print and in social and cultural events. This duo was so

① http://www.juanvaldez.com/menu/advertising/juan.html
successful that the FNC incorporated their images into its logo ever since.

Indeed, Juan Valdez evokes not only a trade name, but also states a social engagement. Juan Valdez is a fictional name but a real man who embodies human investment and the careful and attentive work of around 500,000 Colombian coffee growers by pointing out their life style, the way they work, their code dress, their savoir-faire, and the rural landscape where they live and work as well as the traditional patterns, even rustic patterns, of the coffee agricultural activity in Colombia. His mule Conchita is also a real character. For the ad campaign it plays the role of the co-worker and stresses the fact that since the very early times of the coffee agricultural activity in Colombia, the mule has been a work partner; it helps the coffee grower to carry the coffee bags to the farm and to the trade centers, and even if cars are the most popular means that are now used, the mule is still very important for the coffee culture. Accordingly, the mule can be understood as a rupture between the modern and the old means of transportation and between the modern and the old work techniques.

All those traditional and typical features concern the valuation of subjects, spaces and actions in the past, but together in the logo, they construct a visual identity and story of authenticity.

Nowadays, Juan Valdez continues promoting the authenticity and the high-quality of the Colombian coffee so that the product stands out from the other coffee origins around the world, the Colombian coffee farmers’ work is better paid.

2. Colombian coffee: a cultural identity

The spearhead of the Juan Valdez ad campaign has been, since the beginning, an association of two typical elements: the cafetero or typical coffee farmer from the greatest coffee area in Colombia, Antioquia, and the typical mountain landscapes of the Colombian coffee regions.

The typical coffee grower

The Colombian coffee grower, the cafetero, describes a man or a woman who has the responsibility of the whole agricultural activity, from the plantation of the beans to the final
product sales. Both man and woman have been considered for a long time as the core of the economic and the social spheres of the country.

Their dress codes do not follow general standards because each region has its own dress code. For the Juan Valdez ad campaign, the chosen dress code belongs to the “Eje cafetero” area, the greatest coffee area in Colombia. The coffee farmer from this area wears a machete and an apron tied around his hips, a poncho on his shoulders, a carriel or leather bag, espadrilles and a hat. He is always accompanied by his mule.

**The typical mountain landscapes**

In Colombia, more than a quart of the land is devoted to the coffee agricultural activity. The coffee plantations are mainly situated on the center and the east areas of the country, where the damp and hot weather prevail. This geographical position is so crucial for obtaining a high-quality coffee that the ad campaign made of that is a flagship of the campaign.

Situated over the Andes cordilleras, the coffee plantation landscapes are mainly mountainous. The mountains stress the origin of the product and all the geographical and climatic aspects that contribute to the quality of the coffee. They are printed in the background of the FNC logotype.

**Constructing a cultural identity**

The Juan Valdez logo is a simple graphical structure that focus on three elements only: the high mountains where plantations are situated, the coffee farmer and the mule that helps him with his labor.

All of these three elements together create and enhance a sense of belonging so that the coffee agricultural activity becomes meaningful for the community, for the consumer and for the competition. In fact, the Juan Valdez logo hosts a set of experiences and specific features of a community that is mainly agricultural but also, it points out the main characteristics of the Colombian coffee region itself so that it can be considered as a holder and conveyer of terroir. Moreover, by its graphical structure, the Juan Valdez logo builds an utterance made of patterns of a part of the cultural identity of the country and evokes a specific social practice that is different from the other coffee culture practices around the world.

But this “difference” seems to have not only divergent features vs. common features between the cultures, but an economic and social rupture that leads the country to a successful path. Indeed, the Juan Valdez logo points out the richness of the Colombian coffee agricultural activity by attaching specific features to this work.
and opposing to the other coffee cultures; “local” vs. “abroad”, “traditional” vs. “modern”, “heritage” vs. “acquisition”, a couple of oppositions that the marketing and the advertising strategy use to place the Colombian product in a high rank over the coffee international market.

Nowadays, the Juan Valdez logo is not only a label for indicating an origin, but also an icon that feeds the cultural imaginary of the Colombian coffee.

3. Colombian coffee: the trade name of an origin and beginning of an international recognition

The Colombian coffee is sold in the international market under the label “Colombian coffee” or “100% Colombian coffee”, two designations that help the consumer to identify the product origin and that convey to him the product quality. So, if the labels “Colombian coffee” or “100% Colombian coffee” are equivalent to a guarantee of quality for the Colombian coffee amateur, it is of course because he appreciates the flavor of this washed coffee, but also because the marketing and the advertising strategy have settled it as a trustworthy product over the time. A French businessman says: “The force of Colombia is its marketing strategy. To sell a pure and simple origin and to make it a well-recognized label is a very good blow.”

Definitely, the fact of pointing out the geographical location of the product, the specific features concerning the way of working and the environmental and cultural issues of the product, is a token of guarantee for the coffee consumer who expects to find in the Colombian coffee an Arabic drink with a good density of taste, often described as soft, fine, fruity, scented, velvety and very well balanced.

Despite the fact that Colombia is among the first world ranks of the coffee production, the country is in a permanent competition with other countries like Brazil, Indonesia or Africa. Because of this reason, the labels “Colombian coffee” and “100% Colombian coffee” can be interpreted as a natural and cultural heritage valuation, a source of recognition incomes for the country.

4. L’identité visuelle du logo Juan Valdez

“Like any identity, a visual identity can be defined, in a first analysis, as difference and quite at the same time, as continuity. The visual identity of an

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1 Original text: “La force de la Colombie, c’est son marketing, vendre une pure origine toute simple et en faire un label reconnu, c’est un très bon coup”.
enterprise is difference, in the sense that it assures the recognition and the good attribution of its actions and in the sense that it expresses its specificity. On the other hand, the visual identity is continuity in the way that it shows consistency and stability of its values in the industrial, economic and social environments."\(^1\)

Based on this definition, the *Juan Valdez* logo can be considered as a visual identity. It is difference in the way that it sets specific features of the Colombian coffee agricultural activity and that it allows the country to stand out from the other coffee cultures. It is continuity in the way that it is graphical structure which is unchanged for years and still reproduces the community endurance to keep its traditions as well as it does.

The main feature for assuring the continuity is the logo’s design. By using plas-

tic and figurative figures that allow visibility and easy recognition, the Juan Valdez logo rules out confusions or misunderstandings, and evokes in an efficient way the typical elements of the Colombian coffee agricultural activity. The graphical properties are based on basic shapes and in a monochromatic color that all the proposed versions are able to reproduce the logo components exactly as the original one.

**Plastic and figurative invariants**

Continuity is indubitably expressed throughout invariants. The Juan Valdez logo is designed by following this principle.

Semprine defines a logo as “summary of meaning, not only because of its size, but also because it summarizes the speaker’s philosophy, his values and his commitment towards the client. For that reason, the logo gives access to the totality of the brand meaning. It works according to the condensation principle” (SEMPEHNI, 1966: 65–66)

The Juan Valdez logo fits this definition due to the fact that it summarizes the FNC philosophy and values and its plastic and figurative invariants evoke the society engagement.

In regard to the figurative invariants, the logo always shows the three figures that have been mentioned above: The Colombian coffee farmer, his mule and the background, the Andes Cordillera. They always appear in the same position: the mule on the left side of the logo, the coffee farmer on the right side and the mountains in the background. Also, the coffee farmer’s physical appearance and his code dress are unchanged; a man with a moustache, wearing a hat and a poncho on his left shoulder.

About plastic invariants, shapes and colors are mainly exploited for assuring continuity:

—The Andes Cordillera contours. Without an autonomous figure, the full triangle in the background of the logo seems to gather the two other figures that are in the foreground (the coffee farmer and his mule). It provides certain stability to the image.

—The coffee farmer and the mule shapes. They are hollow figures, designed with curves so that they contrast the straight lines of the mountains contours and its full shape. A basic design that allows

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1. “un logo est un condensé de sens, non seulement en raison de sa petite taille, mais aussi parce qu’il résume en quelques traits la philosophie de l’énonciateur, ses valeurs, son engagement vis-à-vis de la clientèle. Pour la même raison, le logo donne accès à la totalité de la signification d’une marque. Il fonctionne selon le principe de la condensation” (SEMPRINI, 1966: 65–66)
identifying the figures easily.
—Monochromatic colors: The official logo is designed in one color only. The original color is the burgundy like the red coffee beans. This monochromatic feature allows designers to change the colors depending on the support, but to keep the original structure.

To sum up, these figurative and plastic invariants are efficient in the way they allow the observer to immediately recognize the figures and to be concerned by its composition. What means, to identify the figures, to link them to the product origin and also, to feel (or not) interested in the product and in the story it tells. Those cognitive operations correspond to what Fontanille calls “intentional morphology”, a set of figures that belongs to the natural world and that are able to affect the observer and to call his attention to their emplacement and position. (FONTANILLE, on 2003; 21).

5. The story of a savoir-être and a savoir-faire

By means of the Juan Valdez logo, the National Federation of Colombian Coffee Farmers conveys a story of technical competences (savoir-faire) and also, a story of values and personal qualities (savoir-être) that the coffee agricultural activity requires.

Since the beginning of the ad campaign, the Juan Valdez character shows himself as a talented, dynamic, hard worker and expert in his field. On the one hand, he prepares the land, plants the coffee grains, looks after them cautiously, picks the cherries up, sorts them out and selects them. He packs them into bags and finally, he sells them. On the other hand, he conveys a good mood to work and to interact with others, he is of a good disposition and shows a warm welcome. This set of qualities comes from his social interaction with people in events, and from the complicity with his mule. Thus, Juan Valdez and his mule Conchita form a tandem of complicity.

This savoir-faire and the savoir-être helps to better understand the presence of these characters in the marketing field and in the Colombian coffee consumers’ real life. Throughout the Juan Valdez image, the FNC conveys what concerns the cafero’s traditions but also the innovations in the field, what assures authenticity and high quality. In the printed version, the logo evokes the Colombian coffee farmers’ savoir-faire and the savoir-être by the association of the figures; the high hills convey a topographic space (the product origin) as well as a work place where
the coffee farmers spend their time; the coffee farmer and his mule evoke the
characters who work in those spaces. This graphical structure (hills + cafetero +
mule) accomplishes a referential function where each of them evokes collective
terms (coffee plantations and the around 500 hundred Colombian coffee farmers
and their mules). Thus, the Colombian coffee agricultural activity is located in a
specific place and time.

The Juan Valdez ad campaign and logo are based on a story of traditions and
modern issues that co-exist for feeding a cultural imaginary. To sum up, the
narrative content of this logo is attached to the coffee agricultural activity but what
is remarkable here is that, the job is honored in the national and the international
stage by means of a typical work dress code.

Conclusions

This semiotics analysis about the advertising use of the signs of the Colombian
coffee farmer has brought out the Juan Valdez’s logo, plastic and figurative features
as well as the ethical and aesthetic speech that this character conveys to the
consumer. The analysis concludes by stating that Juan Valdez is a place of
projection of a social practice asserted through the objects and the spaces valuation
that belongs to the main rural and cultural coffee region in Colombia.

The set of elements that makes up the Juan Valdez logo, reflects a system of
cultural marks that are based on the interaction between a social practice and the
patterns that build the Colombian coffee imaginary. The analysis has shown that
Juan Valdez integrated into the agricultural activity where the coffee grower’s job,
his physical features, his dress code, as well as the environment where he works and
lives, are considered as “performative” and “instrumental” aspects that co-exist with
his savoir-être.

By insisting on the social and cultural role of the Juan Valdez’s character, the
ad campaign focus on the people who make sense of this agricultural activity more
than the product itself. Consequently, the Colombian coffee culture expresses
through the character a body that conveys the coffee grain and the cafeteros’
 essence.

References

An Ideal Book: The Semiotics of Italo Calvino’s *If on a winter’s night a traveler*

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Abstract: This paper explores Italo Calvino’s rollercoaster of a novel, *If on a winter’s night a traveler*, from a semiotic point of view. It is a book consisting of twelve novels that never end, resulting in a process of infinite circular semiosis, which spirals back and forth between the novels as found in the subjective book. This makes it, as Calvino would call it, an “ideal” novel from which to investigate the semiotics involved in works of fiction. The world of the book is a purely objective reality that stems from another purely objective reality, which is found in the unwritten world. Via Calvino’s book, these and other questions concerning the triadic relationships between reader, writer and book will be investigated.

Key words: purely objective reality; infinite circular semiosis; Italo Calvino; ideal novel; unwritten world

Reading is an experience unique to each one of us. It is a solitary and highly individual process. My favorite book might not be a book that you like at all, and vice versa. So why do we love the books we love? What makes a particular book, as Italo Calvino would call it, the “ideal novel”? Why is one novel “ideal” for you and not at all for me? Where does the semiotic web that fiction weaves within a book emanate from? Calvino’s wild-ride, labyrinth of a novel, *If on a winter’s night a traveler*, explores these questions in an in-depth manner, making it the ideal novel with which to delve into the purely objective, semiotic relationships between ourselves and the books we love. Calvino’s novel creates a world that circles around books like a *Borgesian library*. It is a book about books within books (twelve in total). Eleven of these books are inserted into the actual novel itself, which results in a plot structure that easily lends itself to an investigation of a process that I will call “circular semiosis”. Circles of semiosis orbit between Calvino’s books in a roundabout manner similar to, but different from, the spiral of semiosis that Umberto Eco speaks of, in that these circles loop back and forth between each
other, moving both forwards and backwards within the confines of the book’s text. The intertextual relationships between the fictive books inside the novel and the actual novel itself are explored in Calvino’s book in a manner that is both intellectual and highly amusing. Calvino’s exploration of these ideas is what makes his book the “ideal novel” with which to analyze these concepts from a semiotic point of view.

Our relationships as readers to both the books we read and the authors who write them exist in a world of pure objectivity. We have a subjective relationship with the physical book itself, but our relationships to the author, the world he portrays and the characters within it are purely objective relationships with no ground in subjectivity. John Deely notes the unusual singularity of this type of relationship when he speaks of what happens when an individual exists in only as a fiction;

So there can be fictitious individuals... But fictitious individuals are not individuals... fictitious individuals are really relations, purely objective relations... Norris Clarke, with quite another point in mind, nonetheless describes exactly the condition of purely objective being: the known “is reduced to nothing more than a pattern of relations with no subjects grounding them... a pattern of events with no agents enacting them. The fundamental polarity within real being between the ‘in-itself’ and the ‘towards others,’ the self-immanence and the self-transcendence of being, collapses into the one pole of pure relatedness to others.”

And so it is with the entire world of fiction, where the relationship between oneself, the writer and the world he creates exists only in a purely objective realm. It is an intangible world, which we only know via the writer’s thoughts. The entire world that is caught up in the web of fiction takes place on the level of suprasubjective relationships that can only exist on a purely objective plane. These relationships have no true reality on the subjective level. They are completely fictitious. Here, through the vehicle of Italo Calvino’s fiction, we will grow to know them better.

*If on a winter’s night a traveler* begins with an anonymous narrator speaking, who in the opening paragraph tells you (also referred to as the Reader) what to do in order to begin reading Calvino’s book. Due to this narrator’s nature, he remains

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1 Deely, *Purely Objective Reality*, 27.
forever linked to Calvino as the “I” who wrote the book, especially when it is noted that the first book in a series of books within the subjective book you will end up reading is *If on a winter’s night a traveler*, the new book by Italo Calvino. Thus the book starts out in a circle of semiosis in which one book begets a new book, which then circles back to the original storyline, only to circle back again into a new novel. In quintessential Calvino fashion, the books are all left open-ended, circling back and forth into infinity as the novels are never finished. None of the books have endings.

The triadic relationship between you, your idea of the book you are going to read and the book you have in your hands reading, circles to and fro into other triadic relationships with the other books found in the novel, giving rise to relationships between yourself, the books within the novel and your idea of what a book should be. When the first of the inserted novels turns out to be a different version of *If on a winter’s night a traveler*, the reader is left questioning which is the true version of the book. After the second version of the novel cuts off, the plot then circles back into the storyline of the original where you, the Reader, are in the bookstore trying to find a complete copy of the new novel by Italo Calvino. You are told there has been a mistake. You have actually begun reading a different novel by another author. Its true title is *Outside the town of Malbork*. You begin reading this new book along with Ludmilla (also known as the Other Reader), whom you have met in the bookstore. She is also there to return a defective copy of *If on a winter’s night a traveler*. And so begins a circle of semiosis, which, loops its way back and forth between the twelve books, in total, that you will begin reading.

To clarify, the book you hold in your hands leaves off at the moment of climax of a second version of itself, completely different from the original, which then circles backwards, returning you to the storyline of the original version of the book. This in turn circles forward, leading you back into yet another book that ends at the point of climax. It then circles back again to the original novel’s plotline, where you, the Reader, are searching for a book with an ending. In this manner, you (as the purely objective character, the Reader, and as the subjective version of your physical self reading Calvino’s novel) read the beginnings of eleven novels within the original book, entitled in turn: *If on a winter’s night a traveler*, *Outside the town of Malbork*, *Leaning from the steep slope*, *Without fear of wind or vertigo*, *Looks down in the gathering shadow*, *In a network of lines that enlace*, *In a network of lines that intercept*, *On the carpet of leaves illuminated by the moon*, and *Around an empty grave*.

Each of the novels partakes in intertextuality with the other novels in the book.
Luigi Pareyson notes that “the really perspicacious observation of a work... is aimed not so much at contemplating the detail in itself as at inserting it among other details... in order to examine its irreplaceability in that living nexus where it appears as essential to the whole as it is revelatory of it, and is ready to invoke all the other parts in the very act of being invoked by them.”⁠¹ All the books convey the story of characters falling in love. All the characters are undergoing some sort of personal transformation. The different genres found in the book interrelate with one another as well. A sense of literary history is needed to understand what Calvino is doing. If you don’t know the history of literary genres, you are missing part of the fun of the book. And Calvino’s book, although highly intellectual, is always fun.

The two different versions of *If on a winter’s night a traveler* are both love stories. In fact, all the books are stories about men and women who are attracted to one another. So in a certain sense, all the stories, including the original, are the same story, just under the guise of a different genre. The first, *If on a winter’s night a traveler*, is a postmodern love story about the burgeoning romantic relationship evolving between the Reader, the Other Reader. The second version of *If on a winter’s night a traveler* is in the style of French “noire” nouvelle-roman literature. The third, *Outside the town of Malbork*, is a Polish coming-of-age novel. The fourth is *Leaning from the steep slope*, which is an existentialist Cimmerian novel set on the Nordic coast. The fifth is *Without fear of wind or vertigo*, a suspense novel concerning a counter-communist revolution. The sixth is *Looks down in the gathering shadows*, a Belgian murder mystery. The seventh is *In a network of lines that enlace*, a Swiss crime thriller. The eighth is *In a network of lines that intercept*, a love story of espionage and kidnapping. The ninth book, *On the carpet of leaves illuminated by the moon*, is a Japanese, erotic novel, self-described as non-fiction (a change-the-names-to-protect-the innocent affair). *Around an empty grave* comes in at slot ten and is a Mexican western, and lastly, we find *What story down there awaits its end?* This is an Ircanian apocalyptic novel about a man who erases everything in the world but his lover, then realizes they have nowhere to go on a date.

The wide variety of genres Calvino pulls off successfully is a true testament to his abilities as a writer. The fact that each genre has the potential to interact as a separate book, within a triadic relationship between the various fictional authors of the novels, their novels and the readers, allows for any number of different

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individuals to take away something from their reading of Calvino’s book. Each story, although partial, has the potential to appeal to a wide variety of readers. If detective stories are not your thing, then perhaps you would prefer an existential novel. If you cannot relate to a Cimmerian love story, perhaps a French, Japanese or Mexican one might do.

The books we read are personal. They enter our systems and become a part of us. Once read, a book need not ever be read again to have a huge impact on your life. You have melded with the book and it has become a part of what Umberto Eco refers to, in The Ideal Reader, as your permanent encyclopedia of knowledge. He says, “The ‘ideal reader’ of Finnegans Wake cannot be a Greek reader of the second century B.C. or an illiterate man of Aran. The reader is strictly defined by the lexical and the syntactic organization of the text: the text is nothing else but the semantic-pragmatic production of its own Model Reader.” The encyclopedia of knowledge, shared between the ideal reader and his ideal writer, acts as a learning tool as well. It is knowledge that will stay with you forever, should you wish it to. There is a certain sense of ownership to which you feel entitled after having read a book. The encyclopedia of knowledge you originally shared with the author, which allowed you to relate to the book in a fuller way than another potential reader who does not share this same knowledge, expands as you explore the book and incorporate new knowledge with the old.

You learn from the books you read. You grow, and change and expand your bank of knowledge by reading. But in order to truly read a book as it was intended by the author to be read, your knowledge must be in synch with the knowledge the author brought to the book while writing it. The more this knowledge is shared, the more you get from the book. The more you are able to read the book as it was meant to be read, the more you enjoy the thought process that went behind writing it. You must be an ideal reader, reading an ideal book, to get the most from your reading. The more you agree with the author, feel the same way he does and share his interests, the more that book becomes an ideal novel for you, one that entangles you in a triadic relationship between your encyclopedia of knowledge, that of the author and the book you both share.

In If on a winter’s night a traveler explores the concept of the ideal book through the character, Ludmilla, who shares a mad passion for books with you, the main character. Ludmilla’s feelings about the type of book she would like to read change with the wind, so to speak. At varying times throughout the novel she says

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1 Eco. Role of the Reader. 10.
she wants to read books that “bring me immediately into a world where everything is precise, concrete, specific,”¹ or “a novel in which you sense the story arriving like still-vague thunder, the historical story along with the individual’s story, a novel that gives the sense of living through an upheaval that still has no name, has not yet taken shape,”² or alternately, one that “should have as its driving force only the desire to narrate, to pile stories upon stories, without trying to impose a philosophy of life on you, simply allowing you to observe its own growth, like a tree,”³ or still again, she likes “books where all the mysteries and the anguish pass through a precise and cold mind, without shadows, like the mind of a chess player.”⁴ Conversely, she says, “The novels that attract me most... are those that create an illusion of transparency around a knot of human relationships as obscure, cruel, and perverse as possible.”⁵ Lastly, the book she desires “is the one that gives the sense of the world after the end of the world, the sense that the world is the end of everything that there is in the world, that the only thing there is in the world is the end of the world.”⁶ Obviously, she has a wide variety of tastes in books, as do many of us. Furthermore, each of these types of novels is represented in the book. Still is it possible that each of these can be Ludmilla’s ideal novel? Calvino, I believe, would say yes.

For all of the novels you relate to, there is a sympathetic triadic relationship between the reader, the reader’s idea of the book he wants to read at that given moment and the actual book itself. One’s relationship with novels is a time sensitive matter. It can change over time. Some books you read remain ideal throughout your life, even ones you read as a child. You know an ideal novel when you read it. It is one that speaks to you, echoing your sentiments or bringing to the forefront your not yet conscious thoughts. For my part, Where the Wild Things Are still remains an ideal book, even as Proust’s Remembrance of Lost Times joins the list. Ideal novels do not have to be great literature, although you appear more intelligent if they are.

Calvino adeptly explores the concept of genre via the form of the inserted novels. (Each text is written in a different style and voice.) Midway through the book, an author, Silas Flannery (also known as the Writer) tells of an idea for a book he has in which he switches genres in order to attract the affection of

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¹ Calvino. *If on a winter’s night*. 30.
² Ibid. 72.
³ Ibid. 92.
⁴ Ibid. 156.
⁵ Ibid. 192.
⁶ Ibid. 243.
Ludmilla, who lounges daily beneath his window, reading. While he, a highly productive writer, is doing this, Ludmilla is also being observed by a tormented writer who desires her as well. He changes his style to that of Flannery’s, thinking that this is the genre she prefers. The story, naturally, is never finished and you are furnished with several possibilities for endings. For our purposes, we will look at the following option:

The young woman has always been a passionate reader of the productive writer and has loathed the tormented writer. Reading the productive writer’s new novel, she finds it phony and realizes that everything he wrote was phony; on the other hand, recalling the tormented writer’s works, she now finds them splendid and can’t wait to read his new novel. But she finds something completely different from what she was expecting, and she sends him to the devil, too.1

The triadic relationship that exists between you and an ideal author can occur more than once in a lifetime. You can have more than one favorite author at any given time and favorite authors can also lose their glow as time proceeds.

One normally attributes a specific genre, an aesthetic style and a certain voice to a specific author. When an author speaks to you in his true voice, a relationship between you, the reader, the writer you expect to be reading and your idea of that writer’s voice occurs. The triadic relationship that results, one where author, book and reader share the same aesthetic, leads us in turn to the concept of favorite books by favorite authors. The triadic relation becomes an empathetic one in which the book mentally joins the reader with the author. The book comes to stand as a subjective sign of this purely objective empathy. We expect the writers we resonate with to keep producing books that we relate to. We expect that the truth they speak is their own and will remain in their future works. We expect a specific aesthetic from them. We are upset if they randomly change to a style that no longer meshes with the purely objective version of the writer that we have in our head. We assume that the author writes in a voice that is truly his own.

So does every author have within him a “true” book, a book he is ultimately meant to write, his *opus magnum*? A “true” book is one that lays the author’s assorted truths out for everyone to read. It is the book that will make everyone understand the author once and for all. It is his masterpiece, encompassing all that

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1 Calvino. *If on a winter’s night a traveler*. 175.
he has to say. An author’s “true” book is the book that expresses and exposes all that
the writer has within him, all that he has to give. Silas Flannery addresses this
issue, speaking of himself:

At times I convince myself that the woman is reading my true book, the
one I should have written long ago, but will never succeed in writing, that this
book is there, word for word, that I can see it... but cannot read what is
written in it, cannot know what was written by that me who I have not
succeeded and will never succeed in being. It’s no use my sitting down again,
straining to guess, to copy that true book of mine she is reading; whatever I
may write will be false, a fake, compared to my true book...①

Further on he comes to the conclusion that:

... if an individual truth is the only one that a book can contain, I might as
well accept it and write my truth. The book of my memory? No, memory is
true as long as you do not set it, as long as it is not enclosed in a form. The
book of my desires? Those are also true only when their impulse acts
independently of my conscious will. The only truth I can write is that of the
instant I am living. ②

When the writer’s truth meshes with the reader’s truth, a bond occurs. This
bond results in a triadic relationship composed of the writer, the reader and the
truth found in each. For a writer’s ideal reader, that truth would become
immediately clear. But can anyone write their true book, their masterpiece
containing everything they believe in set down permanently for as long as books are
read? Perhaps Proust succeeded in this, but the great Tolstoy wrote two
masterpieces. Which one would he have considered his “true” book War and Peace
or Anna Karenina? Perhaps it took both to encompass all his truths.

So what is the inspiration for the truths that form themselves out of fiction?
Where does a book, with its ultimate truths, come from? In If on a winter’s night a
traveler, Silas Flannery states that:

At times I think of the subject matter of the book to be written as of something
that already exists... the book should be simply the equivalent of the unwritten

① Calvino. If on a winter’s night a traveler, 170.
② Ibid. 181.
world translated into writing. At other times, on the contrary, I seem to understand that between the book to be written and things that already exist there can be only a kind of complementary relationship: the book should be the written counterpart of the unwritten world; its subject should be what does not exist and can not exist except when written... one way or another I keep circling around the idea of an interdependence between the unwritten world and the book I should write. ¹

The idea that there is an unwritten world waiting to be written creates a triadic relationship between the writer, the idea of the book being written and the purely objective, unwritten world that awaits its final subjectivity as words on paper. The Writer gives us two options; either a book is a translation of an unwritten world, which preexisted the book’s being written, existing thereby suspended between two purely objective realities—or, conversely, a book should be the counterpart to the unwritten world, a creation of pure objectivity that has not yet existed before being written, but which now exists in two purely objective worlds that serve as mirrors to each other.

Whether the relation exists in one of these manners or both, it is triadic and is formed between the unwritten world, the written world and the writer. The concept that there is an unwritten world, a world that exists only in a purely objective manner, one that engenders another purely objective reality, creates a situation where three worlds meet within the text’s subjective existence. At one point, the Writer tells the Reader, “It is on the page, not before, that the word... becomes definite, that is to say, becomes writing. It is only through the confining act of writing that the immensity of the nonwritten becomes legible...”² The act of writing operates by taking a purely objective world and making it a finite, subjective one, via putting words on paper. By being written down, the unwritten world becomes a concrete subjective being, easily transmittable to others due to the availability of books. By being read, that subjective being shifts back into a state of purely objective being. The book exists in a specific form in the mind of each individual reader. The unwritten world, upon being written, becomes confined by the words that make it up, which, upon being read, return to a state of pure objectivity. The end result we call “fiction”.

Towards the end of the book, a list of the books that the Reader has begun reading are read aloud, all linked together, in a library where he has gone to try and find endings for the books he has begun. Upon reading all the titles together as one

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¹ Calvino, *If on a winter’s night a traveler*, 171–172.
² Ibid. 183.
sentence you get: If on a winter’s night a traveler, outside the town of Malbork, leaning from the steep slope without fear of wind or vertigo, looks down in the gathering shadow in a network of lines that enlace, in a network of lines that intercept on the carpet of leaves illuminated by the moon around an empty grave, what story down there awaits its end? The man who is reading this list at the library says that he is sure that he has read this book before, but it, too, cuts off at the point of climax, ending with a question that has haunted each of the various readers, both within and outside of the book. Where, exactly, are the endings to all the stories?

None of Calvino’s books within the book have endings. All cut off at a moment of climax. Thus the Reader and the Other Reader’s dizzying search for the endings of the books they have read leads nowhere. The Reader speaks of his fear of losing the privilege to read books that have endings. He says, “You are gripped by the fear of having also passed over to ‘the other side’ and of having lost that privileged relationship with books which is peculiar to the reader; the ability to consider what is written as something finished and definite, to which there is nothing to be added, from which there is nothing to be removed.” Stories have endings. They are finite. Once finished, they are set in stone, never to change again. If on a winter’s night a traveler is an exception to this rule.

None of the novels within If on a winter’s night a traveler have endings. The Reader’s search for the ending of these books, which takes him to all the corners of the globe, is ultimately fruitless. The endings to the books are never found. It is even questionable whether the original If on a winter’s night a traveler, the book that you, the real reader—not the fictional you who is a character in the book—began reading in the first place, ends. After the Reader and the Other Reader marry, the book concludes with an extremely short chapter that reads as follows:

Now you are man and wife, Reader and Reader. A great double bed receives your parallel readings. Ludmilla closes her book, turns off her light, puts her head back against the pillow, and says, “Turn off your light, too. Aren’t you tired of reading?” And you say, “Just a moment. I’ve almost finished If on a winter’s night a traveler by Italo Calvino.”

So is that enough for us to consider that the book has ended? I would argue no.

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1 Calvino. If on a winter’s night. 115.
2 Ibid. 260.
After all of this, we are still left hanging. The book ends before the reader has finished the book. We never know the ending of *If on a winter’s night a traveler*, because the book cuts off, right as the Reader is about to read it. Perhaps this is the closest a book can get to a true process of infinite semiosis. If a book is left open-ended, if the conclusion is not set in stone, then the possibilities are endless.

That which makes us love the books we love is a highly personal thing. It encompasses specific authors and genres and the encyclopedias of knowledge that fit each one. A favorite author writing in a different genre can miss the mark, while a change of genre might make us love a book by an author we might previously have disliked. Conversely, a favorite author, such as Italo Calvino for myself, might write in any number of different genres and still remain a favorite. Favorite books are realized as ideal novels when all the various triadic relationships between writer, reader and book mesh. Ideal books read as the author’s truth because they consist of the writer’s unwritten world coming to life through his writing. We expect that this world will come to a close, that the book will have an end. But if a book, such as those in *If on a winter’s night a traveler*, is left open-ended, if nothing comes to a conclusion, then a process of semiosis that is truly infinite occurs. In Calvino’s book, this semiotic process is circular, as the books revolve back and forth between each other, never resolving themselves. This infinite, circular semiosis that Calvino’s book(s) partake of makes them the perfect subject matter with which to explore what books represent for us, whether they have endings, or not.

### References

Introduction to Volume 3 of Proceedings of the 11th World Congress of IASS/AIS (Vol. 3)

Editor: Hahong Ji
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Semiotics, as an interdisciplinary research field as well as an independent subject, has been around for a century. However, the concept of signs has a history as long as that of the human race as the human civilization has an inescapable marriage with this deciding factor. Over the time, what is a sign, how a sign is created, and how it works and reproduces have intrigued scholars, intellectuals, and even ordinary people, and an understanding of the nature of a sign is undoubtedly of world-wide importance. Some people felt that they were destined to do something about it, and the result was semiotics which was founded in the late 19th century by Ferdinand de Saussure and Charles Peirce, a Swiss linguist and an American mathematician, separately across the Atlantic, who had no idea of each other’s existence.

The global efforts to unify semiotic studies and promote communication between semioticians led to the set up of the International Association of Semiotic Studies in 1969. And since then there have been World Congresses of the IASS every four or five years held at a different place. For over forty years the semiotic studies more or less have seemed to be “western” as all of the first ten World Congresses were held in Europe, except one in Mexico. The 11th World Congress which took place in Nanjing, China in October 2012 was a magnet for semioticians around the world and an unprecedented four hundred participants representing more than forty countries descended on Nanjing, an ancient cultural city. This Congress was a real venue where the West met with the East, and no previous Congresses had seen more varieties in terms of fields and topics discussed.

This is the third volume of the papers submitted by the participants of the 11th World Congress of Semiotic Studies. This volume covers society, history, religion, to philosophy, science, communication, literature and the semiotic interaction
between any two or three of them. Here in this volume you will find a kaleidoscopic panorama of topics indicating the vast territory of application of semiotic concepts and theories and the ramifications; Mbongue’s semiotic studies of Cameroon, Kim’s historic portrait studies of East Asia, Doncheva’s exploration of waiting in Samuel Beckett’s drama, Huang’s structural analysis of Durkheim’s theories, See’s understanding of Heidegger’s Dasein, Seif’s religious studies, Sonesson’s translation studies, cybernetics research by Dr. Mihaita, translation studies and semioethics jointly done by Petrilli and her mentor Ponzio, cultural translation studies in China by Han, a semiotic study of relations in translation by Kukkonen, Kourdis and Yoka’s intericonicity study, Borges and Alzamora’s Peircean approach to a cell phone game, Souza’s cultural approach to metaphorical images, Reyes-Garcia’s visual semiotics, Rocchi’s work on relations between semiotics and computing, West’s work on abductive reasoning, Withalm’s analysis of semiotic studies in Austria, Meng’s semiotic approach to the camera, Yang’s Jakobson’s approach to an English literary work. Lorenzini’s teatro testimonial in Chile, Kasponis’s research on Lithuanian music, Satkauskyte’s analysis of Greimas’s works, and Macianskaite’s Greimas studies.

Those who submitted are diverse. Some of them are renowned in the semiotic community and beyond, such as Ponzio, Petrilli, Mbongue, Sonesson, Kukkonen, Borges, Withalm, Mihaita, who represent their own countries or regions in terms of semiotic studies, and some of them are young scholars and students who will decide semiotics’ future. Working as vice secretary-general of the Nanjing World Congress, and having attended the 9th World Congress in Finland and the 10th in Spain, I have known many of them and formed warm personal friendship with them.

Back to semiotics. Although important and significant, semiotics has not received the recognition it deserves since its birth. My colleagues and I were asked by four different US visa officials the same question “What is semiotics” when we were applying for visa to attend the annual conference of American semiotics in Houston. And semiotics is not widely recognized as a regular discipline in most universities in the world. So there are a million things for us to do to promote the understanding and application of this useful tool to a larger audience. It is a long way to go, a hard row to hoe.
Part E
Society, History and Religion
The power of concepts, images and symbols of Cameroon: A semiotico-semantic analysis

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Abstract: The world is being increasingly seen as a global village due to increased information flows and rapid technological changes. In relation to this, reflections are going on in order to redefine the concept of identity, whereas each individual is more linked to poly-identities because of his cultural over-bridging. However, in spite of the existence of the best communication tools (Internet, cell phone, etc) as well as the use of the most facilitating communicative languages (English, German, French, etc) information flow remains unshared, is misunderstood or not properly transferred because of the culturally specific values that are not shared between languages, cultures, or peoples. This study addresses the problem of how some culturally specific terms, images and symbols of Cameroon should be conceived, interpreted and transferred to other cultures to increase understanding and thus enable some values to share. Linguistic and Cultural Semiotics is a branch of communication theory that investigates sign systems and the modes of representation that humans use to convey feelings, thoughts, ideas, and ideologies. Semiotic analysis is rarely considered a field of study in its own right, but is used in a broad range of disciplines including art, literature, anthropology, sociology, and the mass media. Semiotic analysis looks for the cultural and psychological patterns that underlie language, art and other cultural expressions. The term “semiotic” stems from the Greek word for sign, sema. The domain of semiotic inquiry has been described by Morris as follows: “Semiotics has for its goal a general theory of symbols in all their forms and manifestations, whether in animals or men, whether normal or pathological, whether linguistic or nonlinguistic, whether personal or social. Semiotics is thus an interdisciplinary enterprise.” Whether used as a tool for representing phenomena or for interpreting it, the value of semiotic analysis becomes most pronounced in highly mediated, post-modern environments where encounters with manufactured reality shift our grounding senses of normalcy.

Key words: culture; identity; semiotics; denotatum; designate; connotate pragmatics

1. Introduction

1.1 Introductory Remarks

The aim of this study is modest and ambitious at the same time and the area
covered is vast, including perceptual and non-perceptual aspects of the cultural semiotics.

Africa is well known as the continent where communities are mostly oral, even after 50 or more years of independence. From one generation to the next, a community’s traditional heritage is passed on uniquely through oral means. Cameroon, as “Africa in miniature,” is no exception to this rule. In this orality, there are some unwritten conventions that different communities use in order to share values and thus facilitate global communication. Some of these values are found in concepts, images and symbols and because they remain unwritten, their relevance remains incorporated only in the oral tradition. Given the fact that the concepts, images and symbols of any given community have not only referential but also cultural meaning reflecting attitudes, values or identity, neglecting to promote them would be like orchestrating the destruction of one’s identity. In a context where cultures are experiencing a highway of interculturality, whereas dominant ones have no mercy for the weaker ones, we have to advocate for the promotion of the unwritten one in order to explain the cultural and situational meaning, as well as the interactional meaning. Cultural studies are more than ever before at the centre of most human activities because of their importance in facilitating information sharing around the world. Although cultural values are no longer seen as essential in industrialized countries because they have been replaced by science, it is not yet the case in most developing countries such as Cameroon with two official languages (English and French) and more than 250 national languages. The world, as it becomes a global village, needs intercultural studies in order to facilitate the transfer of information between languages, people, ideologies, literatures, sciences and cultures and render what is not understandable or accessible to certain cultures or communities by overcoming language or cultural barriers. Since we are in an era of information sharing, the author wishes to reverse the tendency of values sharing which usually goes from the major languages such as English, German, French, etc., to minor languages by proposing a paradigm, a change from minor languages to major ones, a transfiguring approach going from a Cameroonian cultural background to promote some items in European languages. Using a semiotico-pragmatic approach, I wish to illustrate that the semiotic reference of an item in most African countries in general and in Cameroon in particular does not always give only the semantic meaning of the reference. For such a symbol to be well understood, it needs a contextual clarification for the assimilation of the source language (SL) in the target language (TL). This transfer from SL to TL requires linguistic and stylistic forms of expression that lead to the identification of
contextual mismatching or adjusting. The research subject clarifies itself with the fact that each situation related to the togetherness of people can be accordingly explained. According to Erving Goffman (1971: 7) “Die Grundelemente des Verhaltens sind Blicke, Gesten, Haltungen und sprachliche Äußerungen, die Leute ständig in die Situation einbringen, unabhängig davon, ob diese Situation erwünscht ist oder nicht.”

It is man’s constant quest to make meaning out of life. He must feel himself in the mainstream of his people’s historical and spiritual existence, defining himself in the face of given situations, and coming out with what he feels is a true vision of his world and the place he occupies in the world. Given this situation, the present to man is usually a point of reference. His conception of the universe, his notion of the past and the hereafter, are both influenced by the events that are part and parcel of human existence. Among these are concepts, images and symbols.

1.2 Research problems and Hypotheses

Intercultural study is a necessity in the whole world particularly if we want to share values between English, French, German and African languages; this is because, up to now, life has been basically asymmetrical. In such a case, African languages will always remain as a begging hand that will never be satisfied. At times, whether we understand it or not, we have to accept our condition because a begging hand is always under and shows its state of dependency. This project seeks to raise the awareness of people who are used to stretching their hands out to beg, so that they may realize that they too have very real cultural values that are worth promoting.

The following questions will constitute the starting point of my research: What is the practical relevance of semiotics as applied to African cultural values? What can we learn from semiotics that will help us communicate better? In what situations might semiotic theories apply the best in relation with non-written forms? Are semiotic theories relevant to both verbal and nonverbal communication situations? Is the decoding of other forms of communication well understood?

1.3 Methodology

The methodology used for the purpose of this study is an interdisciplinary one with a semiotico-pragmatic application. I judge this approach appropriate for a study like this one for several reasons. First, oral tradition depends on the society that gives rise to it. It occurs only in a social context, as part of a culture, and its material emanates from the general cultural climate of that society. Furthermore, words, images and symbols have a societal meaning, using language as their medium
of transmission, language too being a social phenomenon. This approach consists of defining and selecting some 100 Cameroonian cultural items to be described, analyzed, and classified. Given the role and function of observable things or phenomena, my position will consist of being the one of an observer with a neutral view, but in a collaborative way of field research. My duty will not consist only of gathering data or items and interpreting them, however; the process will be an interactive dialogue between me and the people whose cultural values are concerned—it will be a conversational process. This will require a positive attitude because some of these items belong to a “secret life” of people and it will not be easy to just bring them out into the open for all to see. This experience-sharing approach will help us both to re-explore the historical reconstruction of our cultural values in a mutually beneficial way. This will help us also to take into consideration the unexpected and the predictable in a plurilingual society such as Cameroon. The second thing to be done will be to transcribe, analyze and classify all the collected items.

There are conventions whose roots are traceable only in society, and each society may have its own specific conventions through which its messages can convey. As a result, one must know the sources of the artist’s allusions. Symbols, connotations, and denotations all emanate from a matrix of values of each society, and knowing these helps enhance one’s understanding of the author.

1.4 Semiotics

Semiotics is the study of signs and signifying practices and is largely the creation of the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure and the American pragmatist Charles Sanders Peirce. Independently, they worked to better understand how certain structures were able to produce meaning rather than work on the traditional matter of meaning itself. What major role the language as a system of signs plays in any human community? Language has a key function in the interpersonal communication. Language is an instrumentarium that people use to communicate to one another. For a better understanding of how language as a system functions, different theories of communication have been developed.

1.4.1 Ferdinand de Saussure and Structuralism

Oral vs written language

According to Saussure, it is the language in its oral manifestations that should be the object of linguistics, and he stands against the predominance of the written representation of a language, what he calls the “tyrannie de la letter” (1995: 53):

“Langue et écriture sont deux systèmes de signes distincts; l’unique raison d’être
du second est de représenter le premier; l’objet linguistique n’est pas défini par la combinaison du mot écrit et du mot parlé ; ce dernier constitue à lui seul cet objet. Mais le mot écrit se mêle si intimentement au mot parlé dont il est l’image, qu’il finit par usurper le rôle principal ; on en vient à donner autant et plus d’importance à la représentation du signe vocal qu’à ce signe lui-même. C’est comme si l’on croyait que, pour connaître quelqu’un, il vaut mieux regarder sa photographie que son visage” (1995: 45).

**Language and semiotic**

Any given language has a sign character and the definition of sign according to Mittelge do not exist only in linguistic form, but there are also visual signs, traffic signs which have a particular meaning. The semiotic or semiology is the science that studies signs. The science of language signs is linguistic. The following will describe what signs are in general, and particularly the western view of signs and linguistic signs will be differentiated from non linguistic signs.

**The sign theory**

The use of linguistic signs is unique and specific to human ability. However, the use of non linguistic signs is also done by animals.

The concept of structuralism in linguistics is well known since the beginning of the 20th century and introduced by the Swiss French linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913) in his lectures *Cours de linguistique general* published posthumously in 1916. He laid the fundamental structure of a linguistic symbol looking at the units of a system of human language, and the smallest unit in Saussure’s semiology is the sign that he describes in a dichotomy way as signifiant/signifié and also concept/image acoustique. *Signifié* is the meaning, the content of a sign while the significant is the form. According to Saussure, a language is a system of signs. He defines a linguistic sign as follows;

“*le signe linguistique unit non une chose et un nom, mais un concept et une image acoustique. Cette dernière n’est pas le son matérielle, chose purement physique, mais l’empreinte physique de ce son, la représentation que nous en donne le témoignage de nos sens ; elle est sensorielle, et s’il nous arrive de l’appeler (matérielle), c’est seulement dans ce sens et par opposition à l’autre terme de l’association, le concept, généralement plus abstrait*” (1995: 98).

The sign, as a union of a signifier and a signified, has two main characteristics. Firstly, the bond between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary. There is nothing in either the thing or the word that makes the two go together, no natural, intrinsic, or logical relation between a particular sound image and a concept. The
second characteristic of the sign is that the signifier (here, meaning the spoken word or auditory signifier) exists in time, and that time can be measured as linear. Then we can say only one word at one time. He represented sign as symbol in this way:

![Diagram](image)

**Concerning the semiology**

"La langue est un système de signes exprimant des idées, et par là, comparable à l’écriture, à l'alphabet des sourds-muets, aux rites symboliques, aux formes de politesse, aux signaux militaires, etc., etc. Elle est seulement le plus important de ces systèmes" (1995; 33).

Semiology is a study of signs in languages and signs as substitutes of languages. Signs may be optical or acoustic and stand for something which we use them for. They are bilateral

\[
S = \begin{cases} 
\text{significant} = \text{form} = A \\
\text{Signifié} = \text{meaning} = B 
\end{cases}
\]

Bilateral \(\Rightarrow\) form and meaning belong together.

Linguistic signs are arbitrary, i.e. there is no reason to name this and that in another way. Most of signs were chosen by convention.

**The immutability of a sign**

According to Saussure, a linguistic sign “échappe à notre volonté” (1995; 104), an individual cannot choose signs, but he inherits in their stability. Saussure characterises them as “l’immutabilité du signe” that he justifies with the following considerations:

“1. *Le caractère arbitraire du signe […] met la langue à l’abri de toute tentative visant à la modifier ;*

*La multitude des signes nécessaires pour constituer n’importe quelle langue.*

*Le caractère trop complexe du système.*

*La résistance de l’inertie collective à toute innovation linguistique*”(1995; 107).

Language is in each time the matter of every body. […] On this point, we cannot establish any comparison between language and other institutions.
Linguistic signs are in most cases asymmetric dualism. The relation between form and meaning is not the same:

| F  | 1   | m synonym |
| M  | 1   | 1         |

**Different meanings corresponding to one form**

In setting up language as an independent system of signs, Saussure judges the question of context and reference. He states that only communities can create linguistic systems. Signs gain their meaning with reference to other signs, and once societal meaning is determined, a system is fixed for study.

Signifier/signified combination. Value is thus defined as the collective meaning assigned to signs, to the connections between signifier and signified. The value of a sign is determined, however, not by what signifiers get linked to what particularly signified, but rather by the whole system of signs used within a community.

Saussure’s work on semiotics is better known, and he argued that there was no inherent or necessary relationship between that which carries the meaning (the signifier, usually a word or symbol) and the actual meaning which is carried (the signified). For example, the word “car” is not actually a car—the meaning of car could be carried by any random string of letters. It just so happens that, in English, that meaning is carried by the letters c-a-r.

**Characters of signs**

Signs have particular functions; they are abstract, arbitrary and constant. They are motivated by the convention of those who use them.

Each sign is uniquely used by humans or animals; e.g., the danse of bees communicate the finding of a beehive and the remoteness of the source of feeding. Human visual signs have to operate inside a sign system to have their relevant character.

**Symbols vs sign**

According to Heidrun Pelz (2005; 41–42):

“Unter dem Begriff ‘Zeichn’ warden zwei verschiedene Typen von Bedeutungsträgern zusammengefasst. Den Unterschied mögen eigene Beispiele aus unserer alltäglichen Umgebung illustrieren. Wir sehen, dass beim Symbol zwischen der Form des Zeichens und dem, was es ausdrückt, noch ein gewisser Ähnlichkeitsbezug da ist. Beim Zeichen im engeren Sinne dagegen gibt es keine wesensmässige Beziehung zwischen der Form und dem, was sie ausdrückt. Die Verbindung z. B. zwischen einem Rhombus und der Aussage, Vorfahrtstrasse ‘ist reine Konvention, willkürlich so festgelegt’.”
1.4.2 Charles Sanders Peirce

Peirce’s ideas about semiotics distinguished between three types of signs: icon, index and symbol. Whether a sign belongs in one category or another is dependent upon the nature of its relationship between the sign itself (which he called the referent) and the actual meaning. An icon is a meaning which is based upon similarity or appearance (for example, similarity in shape).

According to Peirce, icons are “the only means of directly communicating an idea”. An index is a meaning based upon some cause-and-effect relationship (for example, a weathervane carries certain meaning because of the wind); “Because the indexical sign is understood to be connected to the real object, it is capable of making that object conceptually present.”

Finally, a symbol carries meaning in a purely arbitrary way—this is the way natural language carries meaning. Saussure’s system is appropriate to language and texts, for the most part, but Pierce’s has a wider application, including not just language but also the visual arts.

An important concept in semiotics is that signs and meaning are unlimited. Called “unlimited semiosis”, this principle makes it clear that one sign or set of signs can take the place of some other signs or set of signs in a theoretically infinite process. If this were not possible, then artists would eventually run out of signs with which to carry meaning, and that would be the end of art itself.

The relevance of this paper can have different directions:

Asymmetric enculturation has given room to asymmetric interpretation or understanding particularly when this is done from one major language to a minor one. Perception is more or less effective, however there are sometimes mismatches. The difference between two languages is culturally different and understanding them is to be highlighted particularly when it concerns cultural values.

On a theoretical side, the semiotic and pragmatic reflections always proceed in a complementary situation, in particular in relation to performance and relevance. The project attempts to bring into semiotic insights from the pragmatic sciences and at the same time to do the inverse, initially investigating what semiotic insights could give to pragmatic models.

On the practical side, the theoretical insights still need some applications to illustrate the relevance of their effectiveness.

The Cameroonian culture is made of mythos and legends, epopes, stories, proverbs, poems and songs that reflect its identity. The culture is not only made of these, but also on signs, words and images that characterized the intensity of the cameroonain cultural diversity.
The adoption of English and French as official languages of Cameroon in 1961, opened the Europeanization of the country in all areas of its existence. The adoption of the Roman calendar with 12 months and seven days for a week was obvious and did not fit into the socio-cultural milieu of our context. Sonaiya (2001: 199) referring to the methods as to how these modern languages were introduced, wrote:

“We simply took whatever methods came to us from abroad. methods that were designed for learners with totally different cultural backgrounds and, possibly, educational objectives than our own and put them to use in our language class rooms.”

According to Dili Palai Clement (2008: 20):

“L’histoire des peuples révèle que, dans la vie quotidienne, chaque individu s’est toujours exprimé en fonction de certains schèmes qui le définissent comme particulier et donc différent des autres.”

This is just to emphasize the role and importance of the oral tradition in our context as a knowledge vector in the aspect of identity and diversity. Some of these schemes will be described in the following:

According to Solomonick (2012: 67); “Signs in sign-systems are not fixed and unalterable; they constantly change both in form and in meaning. Still, the degree of change in the signs and the innovations they engender depend on many circumstances. One type of change in signs is the process I call sign-mergin. This process produces composite signs, which I call compounds.”

In linguistics, a compound is a lexeme (less precisely, a word) that consists of more than one stem. Compounding or composition is the word formation that creates compound lexemes (the other word-formation process being derivation). Compounding or word-compounding refers to the faculty and device of language to form new words by combining or putting together old words. In other words, compound, compounding or word-compounding occurs when a person attaches two or more words together to make them one word. The meanings of the words interrelate in such a way that a new meaning comes out which is very different from the meanings of the words in isolation. According to Matthews (1991: 82) a compound is a process by which a compound lexeme is derived from two or more simpler lexemes. A compound like blackbird can be shown as follows:


\[ N \]

\[ A \quad N \quad \Rightarrow \text{Blackbird} \]

Blackbird
2. Practical illustration

2.1 “Country Sunday” Compound from [country] + [Sunday]

The term “Country” is well known in the European world as;
“A country is a region legally identified as a distinct entity in political geography. A country may be an independent sovereign state or one that is occupied by another state, as a non-sovereign or formerly sovereign political division, or a geographic region associated with sets of previously independent or differently associated peoples with distinct political characteristics. Regardless of the physical geography, in the modern internationally accepted legal definition as defined by the League of Nations in 1937 and reaffirmed by the United Nations in 1945, a resident of a country is subject to the independent exercise of legal jurisdiction.”

Sometimes the word country is used to refer both to a sovereign state and to the other political entity, while other times it refers only to a state. For example, the CIA World Factbook uses the word in its “Country name” field to refer to “a wide variety of dependencies, areas of special sovereignty, uninhabited islands, and other entities in addition to the traditional countries or independent states.”

“Sunday” on its own is; Sunday (Listen/ˈsʌnˈdeɪ/ or /ˈsaʊndi/) is the day of the week between Saturday and Monday. For most Christians, Sunday is observed as a day for worship of God and rest, due to the belief that it is Lord’s Day, the day of Christ’s resurrection.

Sunday is a day of rest in most Western countries, part of “the weekend”. In most Muslim countries, and Israel, Sunday is a working day.

According to the Hebrew calendars and traditional Christian calendars, including the commonly used Gregorian calendar, Sunday is the first day of the week. According to the International Organization for Standardization ISO 8601 Sunday is the seventh and last day of the week.

No century in the Gregorian calendar starts on a Sunday, whether its first year is “00” or “01”. [1] The Jewish New Year never falls on a Sunday. (The rules of the Hebrew calendar are designed such that the first day of Rosh Hashanah will never occur on the first, fourth, or sixth day of the Jewish week; i.e., Sunday, Wednesday, or Friday).

The compound word “Country-Sunday” literally translated will mean the seventh resting day of a political and geographical entity.

The epistemology of country Sunday

The European influence in our cultures has dictated the change of paradigms in value sharing. We have been taught that a week has seven days and the last was the
resting one called Sunday. Maybe it was the fact of resting that brought people to adapt the resting day in the village “Country Sunday”.

I have borrowed this term from the North West Region of Cameroon where I used to survey languages and where the stronghold of the tradition does not only consider the western seven days of the week, but also highly respects the so-called “holy day” or “Country Sunday”. It is a day during which no other activity is allowed apart from celebrating the “juju” or traditional god. The aim here is not to describe all the so-called gods in the Cameroonian societies because of the strong character of animist. The Banen people who are not part of these grass fields cultures also used to commemorate this religious day. They used to call it /sundje ye minu/. /sundje ye minu/, a composi-tum from the borrowed English word /sundje/ (Sunday) and /minu/ (tortoise). Among many different analyses available, I shall briefly consider a few in traditional storytelling, as interdiction, as object of adjuration, as instrument of vengeance, and as a traditional Sunday.

The meaning of tortoise

In the mythology of the people of the two Mbam divisions (Mbam and Inoubou and Mbam and Kim, see maps at the end), the animal called “tortoise” played a key role during the crossing over of the river Sanaga by the concerned populations. The mythology says that the populations of these Divisions were carried on the back of the tortoise to cross the river. Tortoise is also found in traditional storytelling or is considered as a taboo.

In traditional storytelling

/minu/ in traditional Tunen storytelling appears as one of the cleverest animals that exist. It always wins any challenge when it is facing others; e.g., the challenge of the king of the forest; /ngweyi/ (the Lion). One day, the lion invited all the animals and challenged them to give its daughter to the one who will succeed to overcome the challenge. The challenge was to eat sharp peeper without making /aspiration of air/ which is a way of cooling the sharp peeper. Each animal tries, but after just a single spoon, it could no more continue. Then come the tortoise with its malice. While eating the peeper it was aspiring and at the same time criticizing other animals for not being able to resist to the sharp of the peeper. At the end it won the lion’s daughter and was proud of its malice.

As interdict or taboo

In any given society, there are some religious beliefs that surround the daily life of the community. The fact that people refuse to observe those beliefs, generate lot of social consequences. In fact, this innocent animal /minu/ is considered as a
taboo throughout the entire Mbam area (the “Grand Mbam”). In fact, many people
do not like to see, touch or be in contact to it. /minu/ remains a mysterious thing
among the Mbam peoples (including the Bafia, Yambasa, Nuasue, Yambeta, Mala, Tuki, and Banen). /minu/ in Tunen refers to someone who suffers from
leprosy. In this case, touching any/minu/ means being exposed to leprosy, and
anyone who sees a /minu/ may contract leprosy. /minu/ in this sense can be seen
as an object interdiction that is socially forbidden.

As object of adjuration

The Banen people’s strong belief in the /minu/ as a vector of leprosy have
made it popular as an object of adjuration in order to warn off thieves or potential
thieves. In this world where capitalism has relegated human beings to second place,
crops, fruit trees, or any income-generating activity is protected by such adjurative
means. It is believed that a trespasser will be struck with an unnatural illness as a
consequence of his misbehavior. In this case, the adjurer talk to /minu/ his mind
through words directed to any potential trespasser. After adjurating words even an
empty carapace without the/minu/ has the same effect on those the adjuration is
proffered.

As instrument of vengeance

Vengeance is the inflicting of very severe harm or damage to another person in
retaliation for harm that that other person has done to the aggrieved party.
Vengeance is carried out in two different ways: if the person is known, he can be
taken to court for punishment. In that case the law will prevail and the offended
party will ask for reparation. However, if the person is not known, the Banen
people have a traditional way of carrying out vengeance using/minu/. In this case,
the owner who has been a victim of theft can utter words to publically warn those
responsible for the theft. This instrument of vengeance is popularly called
/bokanye/. /Bokanye/ is a mysterious power that act in agreement with the words
that a person is uttering. It is believed that if the thief does not confess his ill deed,
he will be struck with leprosy. Due to its mystical power, it can devastate
generations upon generations.

As a holy day in honor to the king of the village/sunj ū ye minu/

Given the fact that /sunj ū/ is a transliteration of Sunday, which is a Christian
holy day set aside to adore God, the Banen people have also set a day in honor of
their chief. During this day, it was forbidden to go to farm because the chief was to
release his /beyenye/ sort of unnatural forces, that can harm those who trespassed
the chief’s law of /sunj ū ye minu/. These /beyenye/ were made of /bendo
bakititik/, i.e., unseen spirits which were like the messengers of the chief wishes. This day was also reserved for traditional rituals and sacrifices to gods. Can such a consideration be viewed as the Jewish Sabbath or the Christians’ Sunday? Actually the Banen people have reorganized their week as follows:

/Tuno tu sunj ë/ The days of the week
/Hësanj ë/ Monday
/Bikeninie/ Tuesday
/Yile/ Wednesday
/Nëbata imile/ Thursday
/eëmbeëO/ Friday
/nëhumbe/ Saturday
/indili/ Sunday

This recent adaptation of the Roman calendar is a proof that the European cultures and languages play in the change of our cultures and languages. Some Cameroonian tribes such as the Nweh have kept all the ritual of the meaning of “Country Sunday” that they call the esse ritual.

The esse ritual among the Nweh

This rite has its origin in days of old. It started as a chain or ceremonies to appease the gods or the ancestors in case they were angry because of some serious transgressions on the part of human beings. All the ceremonies provided the occasion for men to ask their gods and ancestors to wave away national (clan) disasters such as a persistent drought, a poor harvest, an outbreak of an epidemic, or a general state of barrenness among women. During this ritual ceremony, too, individuals seized the opportunity to ask for forgiveness for a wrong doing against the gods and ancestors or against their fellow men. These ritual ceremonies were therefore used as an instrument for appeasement, avoidance and atonement.

These rites were usually performed on alung (alung is one of the eight days of the Nweh week. It was kept as a Sabbath, but with time passing every Nweh chiefdom had its own Sabbath.) a day considered to be a Sabbath in Nweh. On that day, people were generally expected to remain indoors. Women could however, go to their farm houses and fetch food, but they were not allowed to till the soil. No

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one was allowed to do a tedious or strenuous job.

The principal performer during such a ritual ceremonies was a diviner or medicine-man. There were, also, a soloist (or soloists), a chorus and onlookers who were usually children and strangers. The diviner, to start off, offered sacrifices to the gods and ancestors of the land. These sacrifices were chickens and goats. It was a time, too, for everyone to put forward his or her personal grievances to the gods and ancestors of the land. Childless women asked for children; a man with an unusually poor harvest prayed for fertility of his land; a hunter whose game had not been always fruitful prayed to meet as many animals as there were stones in the forest; and those who were afflicted by some strange disease prayed for health. All these were followed by an opera-like performance during which the diviner or the soloist sang the main complaints and demands of the people while the audience replied in chorus.

Instead of performing these rites on every alung, their frequency became reduced as they came on only in the event of a disaster, or when people were in need, or whenever twin children were born. /.../ people on the whole, therefore, gave special attention to this event. It was thought that these children came from a world of their own and that they were sent to particular families by their “friends” after a judicious scrutiny.

2.2 The Language of the Palm

The language of palm in Bantu mythology symbolizes a means of intercultural communication.

Cultures are all over the world so different and each of these tries to reflect its particularities. In Germany, e. g., people use Girlande to decorate Christmas and some other festivities. In some Asian countries flowers are so common for decoration. In Africa, many bantu tribes have remained closely attached to the nature and use palm for most of their festivities where palm speaks different languages and appears in different forms.

The palm in many Bantu languages plays a multi functional role and changes the meaning according to the ceremony involved. The palm in Bulu language is /ekany/ and in Tunen /netal/ and its plural is /matal/. /netal/ is a branch of a palm-tree called in the Bulu language /alan/ and in Tunen /nibil/. The following lines describe the various symbolisms of /netal/ in the value perceptions of the Banen people.

/netal/ or palm and its derived functions

As row material to make baskets, fish traps and others, human being as a social
being has to adapt to his milieu. He then develops techniques for his adaptation. The Bane people use palm fibers to make baskets /bakan/, sing. /ɛ-/ that can be used to carry crops /belabone/, vegetables /belam/ as well as cash crops such as cocoa, coffee, and banana. The same fibers can be used to make fish traps /tungul/, sing. /hi-/ . The fibers also help to make traditional brooms called /makieki/, sing. /bu-/ . Such a /bukieki/ serves to chase flies to clean the room.

A /bukieki/ on its part is a symbol of power and at the same time a means of transport for some initiated persons.

As a symbol of power: many chiefdoms use this object to reinforce their superiority vis-à-vis other people. A king without a /bukieki/ is a vulnerable person that can be overthrown easily.

As a means of transport a /bukieki/ plays in the astral world the role of an airplane. So with the help of a /bukieki/ , people belonging to the same group can travel from Cameroon to China using instead of the conventional airplane, a /bukieki/ that a common Cameroonian calls “avion de nuit” to say night plane. It is common in Cameroonian TV-news to watch such “faits divers” with an old lady whose plane crashed during her fly, because of lack of enough fuel. This means of transport is commonly used among the Banen, Bafia, Yambassa, Ewondo and Maka’a.

The palms are also used to make /ɛngambẽ/, sing. /o-/ that can help either to carry food stuffs or chicken for someone travelling from the village to a town.

Another way of using the palm is to make /nekat/, which serves to sieve aliments while cooking. Farmers, who do not have enough money to make drying places for their cocoa, make the /bkealokoal/, sing. /ɛ-/ in order to dry cacao. The palm is also used to make another type of broom /ɛhol/, pl. /bɛ-/. This particular one is useful for the cleaning of the compound.

Palm as a gage/caution

In the modern world, people give caution in order to guarantee or secure something they will like to acquire. Banen people use palm as a caution for a place which will from now on belong to the person who discovered the first and occupied a place or someone who bought it. A palm used in a termite place means that there are white mushrooms called /mole/, sing. /bu-/? growing there and the first person to find them, signal to the owner of the place, that someone has already discovered them.

Palm as symbol of protection

The human surviving instinct provokes in man the fear of death that leads him
to develop ways of healing or protection. In reality, there are various ways of preventing cases. The first way is a therapeutic use of palm. A nerve palm called /sok/ is a wonderful vermifuge that treats worms.

As a way of protection, a bundle of fresh palms hanged on a new roof symbolises a signal against anyone or any spirit that has a bad intention coming to that new house.

2.3 Cancan Worm

This compositum made of cancan/kaenkaen/ which is in France in the 19th century a type of gay stage dance in which women kick their legs high and shake their skirts.

Worm is a small thin creature with no backbone or limbs, like a round tube of flesh, especially the one which lives in and moves through earth;

The combination of these two words in a western context does not mean anything. Whereas in the Cameroonian context, they mean a lot.

Worm in Tunen/musiong/

In the Tunen mythology each person coming to this world has a /musiong/, i.e., he/she carries along the cause of a sickness. This worm inhabites in a pocket called/hilubu/, in which it lays eggs. This pocket exists in small animals such as dogs and chicken. That how people know that it also exists in human being. It kills porcs and when goats are attacked, they become thin and pus comes out of their nostrils. When dogs carry the sickness, they bark and if they bite someone /emo ye musandab/ (rabid). When such a dog bite someone, the person falls sick, he begins to bark and finally dies.

/musiong/ can be for good or bad. The good one do not harm people. But when someone is dying, it is believed that the bad one has killed the good one. Where a /musiong/ fixes itself, it bites us and sucks our blood.

Some worms are small and called /mikunyi, mu-/ . They provoke cough/esas/, muscular aches and fieber /esokosok/, as well as boils/yolo, pl. bi-/.

The biggest worm/musiong mungen/ provokes serious sickness. It likes settling in the head of a person, in the cheek/malongolong/ and provokes pains. It provokes also anthrax/etam, pl. be-/ with pus/tul/.

/musiong/ produces also an invisible sickness called/hebas/. A person who has it can easily collapse and become stiff.

There is also an evil spell/musiong/

The evil spell/musiong/ is not the worm that we carry along in our abdomen.
It is an evil called/nebo/. It is a poison/helok/. This one is compared to a gun shot that kills. The bullet is invisible and we realize only when the sickness appears. A victim of this evil spell /munition/ if not quickly treated, his body will swell and become dark. This can finally lead to death.

Cancan refers to anything big, huge, vast, and expanded with some ramifications. It also means sharp in reference to paprika peper. The word worm keeping its semantical meaning is compared to a system that has a network or a mollusk that has tentacles.

These two words contextualized give birth to two merging meanings:

(1) Cancan worm to mean metaphorically “cancer”. Cancer in the medical field is known as a disease that spreads in the body and that cannot be cured; a cancan worm is in this case considered as evil behavior that spreads in the society and that is very difficult to eradicate.

(2) The second meaning which really affects the Cameroonian society is referring to the word “corruption” or/gombo/. Corruption is the evil that affects the whole Cameroonian society and the outcome speaks on its own. Two World Cup of corruption, four General Secretaries at the Presidency imprisoned, more than ten Ministers imprisoned, not neglecting Board members of different para public and public structures; Directors and Deputy Directors, Parliamentarians, Mayors, Teachers and name them. Just to say the cancan worm of corruption has really affected the entire Cameroonian society.

3. Conclusion

The world is full of signs, images and symbols that need to be promoted, transcribed or developed.

Africa in general and Cameroon in particular with their orality have programmed in short or long term the disappearance of their cultural values, if these are not put into a written form. Given the fact that each tribe or community has its own cultural values that should be kept and promoted, our aim of writing this paper is to show some degree of perception of the words, signs, and symbols of Cameroon. This attempt is an introductive work that will be extended for more in-depth study of a rich cultural aspect of Cameroon.

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1. Le gombo (Abelmoschus esculentus) est une espèce de plantes tropicales à fleurs appartenant à la famille des Malvaceae, originaire d’Afrique. In figurative meaning the term gombo denotes a king of bribe where public workers oblige people to pay for service they are rendering.
Through such awareness, many Cameroonian will be able to get more involved in the promotion of the cultural values by using semiotics as their research field.

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Transformation of Corporal Expressions in the Scopic Regime Transition: Modern Portraits and Portrait Photography of East Asia

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Abstract: This paper aims to study the changes of gesture between portraits and portrait photography in the modern era of East Asia where traditionally ancestral portraits have been enshrined and treasured with high esteem. During the pre-modern period, a portrait was required to preserve “a likeness to an object” so that it was considered to represent essential features of the object. Major goal of such portraits is to indicate virtuously ideal figures and to utilize them for the purpose of education, religion, and recording. As the conventional East Asian paintings have placed special importance on expressing a likeness as well as its spirit of the object, “Jeonsin-Sajo” (a theory suggesting that portrait is what transmits spirit by eye) and “Ilho-bulsu” (a theory suggesting that if the portrait is different from the actual person even a single hair, it becomes a whole different person) have strongly influenced the painting traditions. To be specific, the word “Sajo” is to describe a shape of an object and “Jeonsin” is to draw spirit, which is hidden within an object, so that “Jeonsin-Sajo” is a style of painting that expresses the object’s spirit by shape. On the other hand, the word “Ilho” means a single hair that represents the mind of the deceased ancestor.

On the contrary, such portraits present less movement and are lack of emotions. East Asian sitters, in most cases surrounded by empty background, suggest no particular lively gesture. During the pre-modern period, however, there are several specific characteristics derived from the Chinese portraits, which face the frontal view with the hand position of one on the knee and the other holding a belt on the waist, on the chair covered with the whole tiger skin, and with the placement of the shoes on the platform, which is similar to the shape of Chinese character “Pal” (the number eight). On the other hand, the Korean portraits are strongly opposed to the pose of hands, which prefer the folded ones, so that they are interpreted not to describe the self-expression and arrogance conducted by the pose of the hands and the frontal view. Compared to the Chinese and Japanese ones, the Korean portraits particularly served for memorial service and ancestor worship ceremony. However, the chair covered with tiger skin, which signifies social wealth and pride, and the placement of shoes in the shape of “Pal”, were widespread until the early modern age of Korea. The photographic portraiture imported by the Western missionary, eventually had a large impact on the
East Asian portraits as well as the visual culture of Korea, China, and Japan in the modern period. Hence, the changes of gesture in terms of photography were adjusted and modified by the preference of East Asian society.

Key words: portrait photography; gesture; East Asia; visual culture; intermediality

1. Introduction

East Asia in the modern era went through sudden changes in domestic political environment influenced by the rapidly changing world situation. It was also the time when the conversion of the intermediality had been actively accomplished in visual culture, due to the emergence of the photography, the new media, into the traditional media, such as painting. Especially, the characteristics of the photography which could represent subjects in realistic ways rapidly affected the genre of portrait painting that had been focused on physical and psychological correspondences of the human being as a subject matter. Therefore, the portrait photography contributed to the dissemination and spread of the early photography by replacing the traditional portrait paintings. With this reason, I would like to look closely into the formal changes and differences between these portrait paintings and portrait photography along with their technical transition, and will discuss the corporal expression, especially the gesture, which is equally highly focused on both portrait paintings and portrait photography.

2. Tradition of Portrait Painting and Introduction to Photography

The portrait painting in East Asia including Korea has been developed within the culture of the ancestor worship based on Confucianism. The portrait called “the ancestor portraiture” has a few distinct differences from the Western portrait. When comparing the East Asian portrait painting with the Western one during the 14–15th century, it is rather formal and ritual in contrast with the western one which is natural and secular. In the portrait of the monarch such as Zhu Yuan-zhang (1328–1398), founder of the Ming dynasty or Li Song-gye (1335–1408), King Taejo of the Chosun Dynasty, we can see that they were depicted in a formal and inflexible way, and mostly have an unoccupied background. Overall, “the ancestor portraiture” expresses the prestige and dignity in a rather unrealistic way. In the East, people used to make a portrait painting to reinforce the collectivity of the family or clan. Also they combined the portrait painting with the ancestor worship
in Confucianism by developing religious function of the portrait. The rich usually built an ancestor shrine in their house, hung the portrait and regularly did ceremony to worship their ancestor.

Even if those who couldn’t afford to build their own shrine made a room to hang portraits in their house and worshipped those portrait paintings as if they were serving their parents. Therefore, the Oriental portrait painting was accentuated with its ritual character and remained as a symbolized icon. Furthermore, the portrait painting also took the role of the substitution for the subject matter, so the viewer’s attitude would be different with art works for appreciation. The expression admiring persons described in the portraits appearing diversely depends on the subject matter depicted in it. Religious icons or political rulers were often described aniconically for enhancing their high dignity. So, painters used to substitute them with other symbols or omitted in the first place. We can easily see those features in the sculpture of the Buddhist art in non-Buddhist era, the crucifix of Christianity and the royal throne of a painting for commemorating a celebration at Chosun period.①

That is, “the ancestor portraiture” regards the portrait as expressing the true personality as more important than just describing the appearance and verisimilitude of the subject. Therefore, when looking into the critical colophon on “the ancestor portraiture”, we find it is mainly about personality of the subject matter rather than describing the portrait itself such as a diverse criticism on the subject based on its line, color and composition. In other words, devotional self-reflection on the subject matter was its main issue, and they were based on fictiveness of its representation.② Therefore, the self-reflection on the subject matter based on the belief and paradigm of those days called “Ilho-bulsa” (一毫不似) describe every single detail exactly the way you see, without adding any interpretation that is the ultimate point trying to be reached by an appreciator through the portrait. For this reason, the introduction of photography brought the whole new paradigm in East Asian traditional portrait painting. As everyone knows, since the French L.J.M. Daguerre(1789–1851) takes a patent for his daguerreotype photography in 1839, the photography has threatened the unique position of the painting.

Among them, the portrait painting was the first realm to be invaded. Public’ desire to purchasing the portrait at a cheaper price stimulated the rapid dissemination

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of the photography. So the most of the early photography produced were the portrait photography. Because of the invention of the photography, portrait painters felt an anxiety losing their job and most of them became professional photographers after the 1840s. In Korea, the case of Lee Hongkyoung (李弘敬) is a meaningful empirical example, because she founded a photography studio for the first time as a woman and at the same time, her father-in-law Chae Yongsin (蔡龍臣, 1850–1941) was the best portrait painter in his time.

The term “Sajin” (寫真) had been another name of the portrait painting since Tang Dynasty in China. In late Chosun period, it also had been known as the meaning “precisely representation”, which is the way to describe the spirit and body as exactly it looks. By being used in Japan and reported in a Japanese-English Dictionary at 1867 as the meaning of the photography, the original meaning disappeared. The reason why we call the photography as “Shashin” (寫真) not “Kouga” (光畫) literally was that people followed an example which had translated “Camera Obscura” to “Shashinkyo” (寫真鏡) in Japan at Edo period. And also, since the photography had been considered that it has same features with the portrait, people gave more meaning to “Ilho-bulsa” which means drawing exactly same with the subject even a single bristle than the feature of photography drawn by light for this reason, we can confirm why most of the early photography concentrated on the portrait photography. The photography was introduced in the 1840s in China and Japan, and by the delegations coming and going in the Qing Dynasty in China, it also started to spread in Korea in the 1860s.

### 3. Prevalence of the Portrait Photography and Mixture of the Style within the Portrait Painting

In Korea, Hwang Chul (黃鐙, 1864–1930) who intensely worked as a professional photographer learned the photography at Shanghai in 1882, founded a photo studio by reforming his own house at Daean-dong in 1883 and started to work professionally by taking pictures of scenic spots and places of historic interest all around Chosun. And also, there were people who tried to disseminate the photography, for instance Ji Unyeong (池運永, 1851–1935) and Kim Gyujin (金圭鎮, 1868–1933) who did paintings and calligraphic works. Specially Kim Gyujin founded a photo studio named “Natural House” (天然堂) and made an effort to popularize the photography. Meanwhile, owing to the ordinance prohibiting topknots (斷髪令) in 1895, the period of “Kap-o Reform” (甲午更張), the photography entered a new phase in Korea. The photography had been only for the
rich by then, but ‘the ordinance prohibiting topknots’ forcing people to cut their
hair made people preserve their last shape with their long hair. Because of that,
people started to show interest in the photos for the preservation of their appearance
before “the ordinance prohibiting topknots”. At that time, the attention to the
photography was quite high, so there were hundreds of people at the “Natural
House” photo studio in the early 1900s.

The primary interest in photos in Korea, however, couldn’t continue further
due to the canard groundless rumor in “The Gapsin coup” (甲申政変) in December
1884; if you take a photo, it would shorten your life and would make your blood dry
up. In addition, the photochemical and the lens were made with children’s eyes.
Those rumors made Hwang Chul and Ji Unyeong’s studio be burned down. In 1890,
though the Korean word “사진” (Sajin) was written in English-Korean dictionary
published by Underwood, its true prevalence in Korea began with Japanese
professional photo studio in the late 1890s after the Sino-Japanese War. In 1904, 20
Japanese photographers in Seoul lead photographic profession. The early photo was
almost the portrait and it was replaced by the portraits of the high officials for
entering “Giroso” (耆老所, a circle of elderly retired civil officials). With the
highly increasing demands for the portrait photography, the Japanese photo studio
started to advertise in the newspaper, and “the photography art” started to emerge
to prevent discoloration and colourize to give an effect like the painting.

In China, the time when the photography was invented was also the time when
“the Opium War” with the British broke out in 1839. Due to the result of
imperialism’s pillage, China had to open their 5 ports to the Western and give Hong
Kong to Britain. With this as a momentum, the photography began to be introduced
into China and a first photo studio was founded at Hong Kong in 1846. Photo
studios were run by Western photographers and their main customers were the
foreign merchants or the local people who dealt with foreign merchants. Since the
foreigner could travel all parts of China freely after “the second Opium War”,
Western techniques for the photography were propagated all around China. During
the early introduction, most of the photographers were westerners and their
assistants who were native Chinese learned the photographic techniques from them.
In the 1870s, photo studios run by Chinese began to be established. The first
commercial studio was “Tai Feng photo studio” (豐泰照相館) in Beijing in 1892.
Qing Dynasty also showed their interest in the photography, so Empress Dowager
Cixi or the last emperor Pu Yi often took the photos.

Owing to the introduction and the dissemination of the photography, there
were several changes, especially a change in the meanings of portrait painting and
its social status. Traditionally, as mentioned previously, Chinese portraits were very ritualistically related with Confucianism and the function of the portrait also stood on religious purpose. The portrait’s form and function, however, were changed due to the introduction of the photography in the 19th century. Going through the time when people used the photography as subsidiary means with composing the portrait, the traditional portrait painting was dramatically turned into the portrait photography. A new effect of optical technology and a unique feature of the photo such as extreme realism, duplication, dailiness and instantaneity which the portrait painting couldn’t have been provided were applied as the main role for the portrait photography. And also, diverse gestures and facial expressions with appealing emotions of the subject matter, application of backgrounds and the erosion of the front view were outstanding characteristics. In addition, the young, the old, and those who had been rarely in the portrait became the subject in the portrait photography. As a result, in the shrine which had preserved the portrait painting of their ancestor, the old who had passed out recently started to be remained as a portrait photography compared with the ancestor who had remained the portrait painting. It meant that the photography promptly replaced the position of the portrait painting which had the most significant meanings for a long time.

In Japan, daguerreotype had been introduced from the Netherlands or China in the late shogunate and developed their own skills at Satsuma Domain (薩摩藩) afterwards, a genuine dissemination of the photography was mad at the beginning of the Meiji Restoration. In 1862, the early photography studio such as SHIMOOKA Renjo (下岡蓮杖, 1823–1914) in Yokohama and UENO Hikoma (上野彦馬, 1838–1904) in Nagasaki, was founded. The fact that first professional photographers were mostly in a treaty port, and they were the masters of KANO School (狩野派) and at the same time scientists of chemistry, is an interesting factor for Japanese photography history. Renjo and his disciple YOKOHAMA Matsusaburo (横山松三郎, 1838–1884) who had left finest pioneering western paintings learned the photo directly from the westerner. And also, UCHIDA Kuichi (内田九一, ca. 1844–1875) who had been a disciple of UENO Hikoma (上野彦馬) took photos of the Japanese king, Meiji tenno, emperor of Japan who encouraged the modernization of Japan, “Royal Portraits” (御真影). After the Meiji Restoration, under the tendency of civilization and enlightenment, the photography was rapidly spread out and the studio flourished as much as publishing a list of photographers in 1877 (the Meiji 10).

In 1883, when the dry-plate was imported, the print at the dark room got easier than the wet collodion process and the sensitivity on color got higher; thus, they made all the technical processes to be easier. Because of that, the photography
spread widely. For instance, people began to introduce their acquaintances to take their photos and hold exhibitions of ladys’ portrait photography, the same as beauty contests nowadays. Furthermore, there were also demands for press photographs on Taiwan Expedition (台灣出兵, 1874) and Satsuma Rebellion (西南戦争, 1877) along with the assertive governmental acceptance of the photographs to record a data during the war. It meant that the acceptance and the development of the photography was the effort of both the government and the people. However, the real main reason for the dissemination was its practical use and a commercialization of the technology in the recomposition skills. The first plate-making photography was the portrait photo of the congressman. If we remind of the fact that the term “Sajin” originally meant the term “portrait”, it would be interesting to know that, in the Meiji 10th, there was a stream that the word “Shashin” transferred to “photography” and the word “Shozo” also transferred to the word “portrait”, then also the “Sajin” containing meanings of the “portrait” were changed to the own meaning of the “photography” itself with the dissemination of the photography.

This is a very interesting point to be dealt further, not only to study further on portrait photography, but also for the whole Japanese photography history. Generally, in Japan, there was no custom of decorating an ancestor’s portrait so the portrait couldn’t stand itself like other countries. Of course, the noble in Japan had decorated the portrait photo but, when the custom of hanging family portrait in their house started, most of them actually hung up “the hand coloring”, a painting, not the photo. “The hand coloring” was the painting which a professional portrait painter freely transmuted the subject such as clothes or something else based on the photo. The process of making the painting from the photographs was so interesting that the dissemination of the photo made people decorate the portrait in their house. This was because they couldn’t get enough size of the print paper for photographs as they wanted, and at the same time, there were difficulties in its durability.

4. Transformation of Scopic Regime and Changes in Corporal Expressions

It is true that the realm of the portrait has been invaded, but it is not that the entire portrait tradition has disappeared. On the contrary, the portrait was utilized as a intermediate to recreate the photography. For example, if we look into the portrait of Hwang Hyeon (黃玹, 1855–1910) painted by Chae Yongsin in Korea 1911, we can see the fact that it was made by referencing the photographs. Hwang
Hyeon took photos in 1909 at the Kim Gyujin’s “Natural House” (天然堂) photo studio. [Figure 1, 2] In those photographs, Hwang Hyeon holds a folding fan in his right hand and a copy of Juja Daejeon (朱子大全, the book which contains the core of Zhu Xi’s thought) in left hand. Chae Yongsin also painted Hwang Hyeon, and just as the photo, he holds the fan and the book, and also, the twisted shape of his body and the face is also very similar to the photographs.

![Figure 1](image1.png)  Portrait of Hwang Hyeon, 1911, color on silk, 120.7 × 72.8 cm, National Treasure no. 1494, private collection, The Secret of the Joseon Portraits, National Museum of Korea (2011), exh. cat., p. 213, fig. 146-1.

![Figure 2](image2.png)  Photo of Hwang Hyeon, 1909, 15.0 ×10.0 cm, National Treasure no. 1494, private collection, The Secret of the Joseon Portraits, National Museum of Korea (2011), exh. cat., p. 215, fig. 146-2.

Intermediality between the portrait photography and the portrait painting and their intimate relationships can be easily found from the clothes presenting the subject matter’s status, position, the props around him and many more. And also, spreading possession of the photography into public, conventional and decorative deposition of props was standardized. If a old production of the portrait had been a process making precisely copied based on portrait sketches (草本), due to the introduction of the photo, the process was changed into painting the portrait based on the photo. The reference like this could more realistically make not only entire
appearance of the subject but also facial expression of the subject which was emphasized in the existing portrait making. The reason why it could succeed was that the painter successfully painted shade in the subject’s face in the portrait based on the photography. The process like this can be found in Korea and China.[Figure 3, 4] The transitional portrait which painted a face with the photo and the rest part with painting was born in the situation like this.

![Figure 3](image1.png) ![Figure 4](image2.png)

Figure 3 Sketch of Emperor Sunjong (1874-1926)’s Portrait, 1915-1916, ink on paper, 62.0 × 46.0 cm, Korea University Museum collection, *Picturing Spirit: Portraiture in East Asia*, Seoul Museum of Art (2004), exh. cat., p. 76, fig. 54.

Figure 4 Portrait of a Qing Official, Anonymous, Private collection, Korea, Late Qing—Early 20th century, 99.3 × 46.3 cm, *Picturing Spirit: Portraiture in East Asia*, Seoul Museum of Art (2004), exh. cat., p. 33, fig. 22.

However, even though clear context exists in that the portrait referred the portrait photo was confirmed, the result which Hwang Hyeon held the book or the fan and twisted the body comes from the conventional portrait painting. The fan and the book were symbols representing the noble, in Chosun and the twisted posture not seeing straight was a unique style from traditional painting maintained since the past; that is, subjects in the early photography repeated the same in the photography by internalizing the gesture experienced from the conventional portrait themselves. Especially in the Korean portrait, most of subjects in the past portrait had kept folding their hands and such a gesture could be often seen at the early
portrait photography.

In a case of China, we can notify the gesture more easily. Most of portraits, specially bureaucrats’ portraits had a significant feature of frontal view which is different from Korea portraits. The subject in Chinese portraits posed like putting his hand on a knee or holding a chair, grabbing a belt with the other hand and opening his feet outside. The distinguishing pose like this was used similarly in the portrait photography so the subject in the photo posed just as same as. [Figure 5, 6]

![Figure 5](image1.png)  ![Figure 6](image2.png)

**Figure 5** Portrait of a Ming Official, Anonymous, Private collection, Korea, Qing period, 95. 2 × 50. 2 cm, Picturing Spirit: Portraiture in East Asia, Seoul Museum of Art (2004), exh. cat., p. 12, fig. 3.


In short, the portrait photography followed the gesture and style of the portrait painting. For instance, in China, main concern of early professional photographers was how to follow the classical and traditional style of the portrait painting. D. K. Griffith who successfully had run the studio Lai Afong (懐阿峰) founded in 1859 at Hong Kong mentioned as follows in the letter with the Journal Photographic News:

“You should take a photography just as people can see a face and both ears from
the front, and it should be taken within the same proportion of both sides of the face. Both feet also should be taken as exactly the same. You don’t have to consider perspective. All fingers have to be put to be seen clearly. A person whose nail is gorgeous will be happy to see a photo showing his nail well. They will always have flowers so you should put a small vase on a table.”

You can see that the gesture, the placement of furniture and the entire composition in the portrait photo were similar to the conventional portrait painting. The pose of the subject matter in the photography became normative by the custom of the portrait. In a case of female, not only a pose of the figure but also an expression like presenting smaller feet or the bottom of a skirt schematically were also applied in the portrait photography and it made the photo similar with the portrait painting.[Figure 7, 8]

In Japan, a change of a gesture is very distinct from the painting to the photography. Most of the portrait photography’s poses were stand-up compared with the traditional portrait’s pose which was sit-down. (Figure 9, 10) This part
needs more consideration and observation, and at the same time should be researched by collecting more portraits and doing deeper research and analysis. As mentioned earlier, in the 1860s the foreigners should stay in restricted areas and they couldn’t travel freely. Furthermore, there were rumors among Japanese if they take photos, they would be dead or shorten their lives. Thus, most of the figure-pictures and custom photographs were directed and produced with equipments, apparatus with hired model in a studio. The reason why the term “figure-pictures” is more appropriate than “portrait photography” is that most photos with Japanese are not produced for a portrait of particular one and people can’t know who is the model and don’t care who they are.

![Figure 9](image1.png)  
**Figure 9** Portrait of Yoritomo [源頼朝, 1147 – 1199], copy of the 1179 original hanging scroll, attributed to Fujiwara Takanobu. color on silk. Kamakura period, Kyoto Jingoji [神護寺] collection, 140 × 111. 6 cm, King’s face: *Royal Portraits in Korea, China, and Japan*, 社会評論 (2012), p. 317, fig. 3–15.

![Figure 10](image2.png)  
**Figure 10** Sugi Magosichiro [杉 孝七郎, 1837 – 1919] portrait photography, 1862, postcard size, Japan, 幕末明治の肖像写真, 角川學藝出版 (2009), p. 43.

Collected materials until now are in museums and private collections of America. They have been a tool for disseminating Japanese culture and identity what has been secreted for hundreds of years into America and Europe, according to the western’s preference, in forms of albums categorized people of all ages and both sexes, status, profession, custom and lifestyle, a piece of photo without any
explanation, carte-de-visite, postcards, stereographs of stereoscope, books, newspapers or illustrations and advertisements of magazines. By the 1870, due to the fact that the photographic portrait has been in fashion as modern, Japanese photographers such as UENO Hikoma, UCHIDA Kuichi, TAMATO Kenzo (田本研造, 1832–1912), KUSAKABE Kimbei (日下部金兵衛, 1841–1932) who had been trained by the Meiji restoration or western photographers expanded their businesses to the major cities. In 1890, they became a principal agent of picture industry at entire region containing Yokohama. Japanese photographers contributed to publication of certain groups’ photographic portraits like government leaders, people in the leading class including the imperial family. However, it is considered to be advisable to trace the alteration of the physical symbol on the basis of accurate analysis standard, because the Japanese photographers may slightly differ from a traditional portraits’ sitting convention. For instance, if it did not follow a traditional portrait form but a photographic portrait was considered materialization, with that change of format, this would be a process to figure out how a physical position was decided when it took the photography.

5. Conclusion

This paper summarizes how portrait pattern and convention of Korea, China, and Japan, especially a position of person has been maintained and changed within the portrait photography. Within the study of the portrait painting and the portrait photography, a past study and its interest had been concentrated on the face. According to the perspectives on traditional paintings, eventually “Ilho-bulsa” and “Jeonsin-Sajo” were drawing a representation of the inner spirit on the face which is painted not only accurate but realistic. After all, the expression “Jeonsin-Sajo” means a mustache when a hair is covered by a so-called hat. Moreover, it was believed in a faithful reappearance ability that describe a piece of mustache carefully. Therefore, only the body except for the face simply means subject, that which aids to show up the object’s status, identity and class, and on the contrary, it gives rises to increasing external expression by models’ costume, stuff, and accessory. By comparison, an interesting of model’s position and motion is underestimated on a traditional study.

For example, if there was a single medium like a portrait, it would decide models’ posture according to existing portraits naturally. However, considering differences in social standing between subject and painter would reflect artists’ intention much more. In other words, if the target who is painted by the painter
asks his unilateral think would strongly affect when it poses like gesture, including position. Though, a movement of medium from portrait to photographic portrait as well as inflow of the western technology never makes unilateral on a relationship between a photographer and a sitter. In the last analysis, it is a judgment that a model’s posture will be directly connected to the problem of a class. If there is a tradition of pose, there is a stratum which is free from traditions. And this reason makes an assumption that various gestures can be expressed in portrait photography.

If so, it should start from a problem that who is a photographer in a process of deciding the sitter’s position in a photographic portrait. At once, the sitter’s pose can be categorized by himself or instructions of photographer. This is because, it can be inner normative position from the past portrait tradition, but a person who don’t need to keep that position will enjoy shooting with much more free posture and gesture. In addition, a portrait’s production and distribution of dependent variables can be inserted. It is about raising the division in case of a sitter is an orderer, and a photographer produce a picture as commercial purpose. In short, in this study, building a database of visual information, including portraits and photographic portraits relating to language representation of extension, can be expanded to a broader area. It is because a portrait painting and a portrait photography are a visual cultural data to explain human beings, especially the most primitive gesture which is a process identified and standardized by civilization. Furthermore, it can be a function as touchstone for advancing visual anthropology.

References


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Waiting—Samuel Beckett’s Enigmatic Sign of Life

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Abstract: The paper discusses Samuel Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot* as The Phenomena, that erases all signs of Waiting like a temporal and psychological concept. The basic constellation of the Beckett’s play is the meeting between the Subject and the Other, where the Other is a complex Sign-Self, Another, God, that happened in the marginal time-space of Waiting. In Beckett’s Waiting time has turned into space, the Subject is timeless, the space is frozen. The Other fails in its effort to mediate any Meaning of Life.

The waiting is a kind of non-activity, which is self-erasing. Beckett means “self-erasing” in the sense of decentering the subject, exchanging one conventional identity for another in an endless series. But this non-activity also can empty out or erase the contents of the mind more radically, thereby promoting a non-active state of awareness altogether beyond social identity. Beckett’s non-activity reflects and also induces a tendency toward pure consciousness.

The main point is what happens in the process of Waiting. Maybe it is the Life itself.

Key words: Samuel Beckett; Waiting; time

1. The Problem of Time in Beckett’s Works

A major *topos* in Beckett is the experience of time, a topic that intrigued philosophers from Plato and Augustine to Henri Bergson, Martin Heidegger, famous writers such as Proust, Joyce and many others. Time as an important theme in literature of the 20th century. It is generally presented as a problematic problem with which man must cope. Samuel Beckett’s dramas and novels describe the disillusionment in European worldview that was culminating after the events in the first half of 20th century. According to Lyotard the end of modernism causes three kinds of social disorder or cultural vacuum: loss of community bonds, loss of personal identity and loss of sense of the reality. Antirealist modernism is (Lukacs, The Ideology of Modernism) essentially nihilist, because it is a reactionary form of “religious atheism” in which one transcendentally signified has simply been substituted
for another-nothingness having replaced God as the object of all hope for salvation from a history that has twisted the human out of shape. It is a form of religious atheism–wrote Lukacs, focusing of all hope upon a transcendence conceived as a pure absence. Lacking the support of God, the human being finds himself isolated and helpless in a universe which has lost all purposes and order.

In 1961 Tom Driver quizzed Samuel Beckett about the confusion he found in his writing.

   Beckett answered: “The confusion is not my invention... It is all around us and our only chance now is to let it in. The only chance of renovation is to open our eyes and see the mess. It is not a mess you can make sense of ... When Heidegger and Sartre speak of a contrast between being and existence, they may be right. I don’t know, but their language is too philosophical for me. I am not a philosopher. One can only speak of what is in front of him, and that now is simply the mess.”

   The plays and novels of Samuel Beckett are the illustrations of the crisis of modern man and his being in time, of his confusion and his anguish. Beckett’s personage finds himself in a world which lacks an acceptable metaphysical solution, an acceptable goal for his efforts to find meaning in life. The world is empty, scarred by the absence of God, which leaves a void, “the obliteration of an unbearable presence.” Beckett makes time a major theme and structural element of his work. The essay on Proust (1930) reveals that he is interested in major proustian theme. In the essay Beckett describes time as monstrous and ambivalent, ... that double-headed monster of damnation and salvation..., a superior and hostile force in relation to man. All Beckett’s characters live in the anguished world of their minds, wherein time is empty, repetitive and vacuous: “I say I used to say, Winnie, you are changeless, there is never any difference between one fraction of a second and the next.” All the essential experience of modern man is to feel “time as cancer” (Beckett), as an acute sense of the discontinuity of duration and total

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dependence upon a creation continually repeated. These results are very close to non-existence and an endless undefinable anguish, the void of the present.

“There is no escape from the hours and the days. Neither from tomorrow nor from yesterday. There is no escape from yesterday because yesterday has deformed us, or been deformed by us... Deformation has taken place. Yesterday is not a milestone that has passed, but a daystone on the beaten track of the years, and irremediably part of us, within us, heavy and dangerous. We are not merely more weary because of yesterday, we are other no longer what we were before—the calamity of yesterday {...} we are in the position of Tantalus, with this difference, that we allow ourselves to be tantalized”.①

For Beckett life in time is suffering for being born forever; we have been thrown out of eternity and we must really go through time painfully, minute by minute. Timelessness deconstructs or even made impossible the Self and the transcendental signified through the continual annulment of time. Timelessness in Beckett’s works convey the impossibility of reaching the essence (Sartre) and split up the linear time of history and Self, that which is outside time; presence is always overshadowed by the impossibility of making any presence real and at the same time the past is forgotten (or almost), because lack of memory is a typical characteristic of Beckett personage.

“The question may be asked, off the record, why time doesn’t pass, doesn’t pass from you, why it piles up all about you, instant on instant, on all sides, deeper and deeper, thicker and thicker, your time, others’ time, the time of the ancient dead and the dead yet unborn, why it buries you grain by grain neither dead or alive, with no memory of anything, no knowledge, no history and no prospects, buried under the seconds, saying any old thing, your mouth full of sand, oh I know it’s immaterial, time is one thing, I another, but the question may be asked, why time doesn’t pass, just like that, off the record, en passant, to pass the time”.②

This sense of time annihilation expresses the infinite deferral of Signified to

① Ibid
itself. Meaning presents itself as the presence of absence. Time, that Beckett’s personage experiences, could be described with M. Blanchot’s words: “it is a time in which time and all that it contains (for example, the I of experience) is dispossessed of any future . . . hollowing out of the present, a hollowing indefinitely distended, as of a present to which we are no longer present”. And there is nothing like a release, as if we have transcended time, not an epiphany that transports us to the timeless, rather “we are delivered over to another time-to time as Other, as Absence and neutrality... A time without event, without project, without possibility.”

2. Beckett’s Waiting a Double-headed Monster of Damnation and Salvation

According to Paul Ricoeur there is an “intractable reality” (Time and Narrative, vol. 1) to time, which resists all attempts to reduce or internalize it to consciousness. But those aporias find a kind of poetic resolution in narrative. He argued that narrative responds to problems of time, which philosophy of itself cannot resolve, are different and in some respects more fruitful. Waiting (for Godot) represents in a most explicit way this intractable reality with the central theme, that is the subject of my paper; the Phenomenon of Waiting as a sign of damnation and salvation.

Beckett’s Waiting is investigated mostly like damnation. I would stress on Waiting like a Sign of Life and Salvation in the most famous drama of Nobel price winner.

“Waiting for Godot” represents the world of Vladimir and Estragon as one of chaos, devoid of any meaningful structure or pattern. Time cannot be applied in this world where a day can end without notice and where the characters cannot remember their actions from the previous day. Time (and space) is essentially meaningless, as it is only experienced by the terminal repetition of waiting with no end. For Beckett Waiting is not a destruction, but it is the liberation from fear, desire, personality, attachment; It is not only the Void that engulfed the protagonist. It is the only sign of Life itself.

This statement sounds like a paradox, but I will try to explain the power of this

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3. Waiting as the Spiral of the Long Shifting Threshold

We are waiting for nothing. Yet, since we are unable to leave, and since we are waiting, there must be someone or something, that makes us wait.

**Samuel Beckett, Waiting for Godot**

Waiting is the fundamental project of meaning in Vladimir and Estragon lives. Another attribute of what Beckett calls the “Time cancer”, besides habit, is memory or precisely the lack of it. Vladimir often remind Estragon that they are in fact waiting for Godot even then Estragon is very much uncertain about Godot’s identity. They both have some doubts about the fact that they are waiting; the waiting is quite certain, whereas Godot as the object of waiting is quite uncertain. With the displacement of main coordinates personages spinning out of orbit and entered the spiral movement of an endless waiting, that assembles and disperses all structures of drama.

“The themes of waiting and forgetting, taken together, embody the oscillating structure of the trace, and function to negate determinacy, and suspend thought in an incessant search for presence. At the level of syntax, language undergoes a “neutralisation” [...] Forgetting, waiting. Waiting that assembles, disperses; forgetting that disperses, assembles. Waiting, forgetting (Awo 32).”

Waiting (for Godot) could be described as the Spiral of never ending movement, characterized by nondeictic words and the lack of signification; a wrought movement of desultory purposelessness, characterized by the paradoxical play of signifiers voiding themselves of meaning, already always on the way to nothing, but always by way of something.

Some consider the spiral as the symbol of the spiritual journey. It is also considered to represent the evolutionary process of learning and growing. It seems that life doesn’t proceed in a straight line. The path of life more closely resembles a spiral. We seem to pass the same point over and over again but from a different perspective each time. To walk and then stand in the center of a spiral or labyrinth has been a psycho-spiritual exercise for centering the consciousness. But this spiral movement is not meant to evoke the progression. The rhythm it sets is not that of a moving up, it is rather moving up and down without an exit-build up of entropy.

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where morbid motion gives the impression of being alive.

Beckett’s Waiting eschews every point of an origin and an end, putting the personages in the repetition of gestures, conversation, games and failure. When time and space are deemphasized, the conceptual (i.e. abstraction) is foregrounded. In “Waiting for Godot” like in the myth the main point is the recurrence (time and place are without any important significance) of the same or similar concepts. Myth tends to recycle the same elements ad infinitum, just like Beckett’s tramps waiting for ever again and again. Recurrence itself is linked with cycle of life and death. Blanchot wrote in Awaiting Oblivion (L’Attente l’oubli, 1962) that waiting appears as a temporal paradox; the temporality of waiting involves both the deprivation of time and the gift of time, a lack and a surplus and instills a fundamental temporal alienation from one’s self, an image of non-being into being-present (someone putted in situation of Waiting is distanced from the present time and place). On the other side Waiting is the threshold, the image of life into all death imagination in Beckett’s plays and novels; a threshold between time and timelessness, space and not-space, I and Not-I, Life and Not-life. Death, at the same time, is ineluctable and impossible. Because he is already dead, man will never die. As Beckett puts it in one of his poems, peace will come when the treading of the thresholds will stop, and the protagonists will be able to “cease from those long shifting threshold and live the space of a door/ that opens and shuts”. (Beckett)①

Waiting is a hiatus—a black hole in the linear time; it is a margin between present and future. A threshold is used to describe the atemporal, but the people (in situation of Waiting) are still desperately temporal (that is the real connection with life) even though they are drawing ever closer to atemporality. In the second act Gogo and Didi at first mistaked Pozzo and Lucky for Godot. Therefore we are able to see the changes that his coming would have initiated for them:

“Vladimir : We are no longer alone, waiting for the night, waiting for Godot, waiting for waiting. Now it’s over, it is already tomorrow. . .

Time flows again already. The sun will set, the moon rise, and we away from here.”②

4. Waiting as the Sign of Life. Hope and Laugh... with no End

Vladimir : Say. I am happy.

① http://mural.uv.es/sagarru/textos/poems.html
② http://samuel-beckett.net/Waiting_for_Godot_Part2.html
Estragon: I am happy.
Vladimir: So am I.
Estragon: So am I.
Vladimir: We are happy.
Estragon: We are happy. (Silence). What do we do, now that we are happy?

Once I presented a paper, in that I made a comparison between Beckett’s waiting and Dante’s purgatory. Then I revised my opinion. Now I think Beckett’s Waiting has another much powerful side, after I was challenged to find an answer to the question, posed by M. Blanchot in his essay “Where now. Who now”:

“Who is speaking in the books of Beckett? What is this tireless “I” that seemingly always says the same thing? Where does it hope to come? What does the author, who must be somewhere, hope for? What do we hope for, when we read? Or perhaps he has entered a circle where he turns obscurely, led on by a wandering speech, one that is not deprived of meaning, but deprived of center, that does not begin, does not end…”

It is well known that the true despair is only possible if there is hope. Waiting (for Godot) is the brilliant Sign of Hope: If Godot arrive, we will be saved.

Where does it hope to come!? Maybe it is in the “conclusion” made by Vladimir in act 2:

“What are we doing here, that is the question. And we are blessed in this, that we happen to know the answer. Yes, in this immense confusion one thing alone is clear. We are waiting for Godot to come.”

In Beckett’s world the loss and recovery of Self, life and death, joy and sadness is replaced by the risus purus, because Nothingness lies coiled in the heart of Being (Sartre). This margin place, this black hole in time, full of intensity creates the Haven of Hope, which Adorno identifies as the “slightest difference” (kleinste Differenz) within the negative, between nothingness and coming to rest. The genius of Beckett fulfills this in-between-place with humor, but not with laughter itself. The most critics neglected the role of Beckett’s humour, including such famous people like Blanchot and Adorno or have compared his irony with the idea of Eternal Return. Nietzsche’s laughter is the laughter of affirmation and ecstasy, whereas Beckett’s laughter is the sardonic laughter of derision, which is actually

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much more tragic. It is the *risus purus*, which is the true resistance to nihilism and falling in the Darkness. According to Simon Critchley (in his book *On Humour*)\(^1\) the *risus purus* is the smile combining the pleasure and the pain, the sublimity and suffering of the human situation—that is the essence of humour. This is the *risus purus*, the highest laugh, the laugh that laughs at the laugh, that laughs at that which is unhappy, the mirthless laugh.

As usual, Beckett’s audience is confronted with a paradox. Instead of leaving the spectator or reader vulnerable and depressed his agonising vision often provokes quite the opposite effect. The clownish miserable tramps are magically placed within a protective circle. The feeling of extreme despair equals the one of extreme hope. “Nothing is funnier than unhappiness. I grant you that—and his lightning traces of wit illuminate a moonless, starless night; but those traces also allow us to see the night as such.”\(^2\)

We pass the time, Beckett tells us, waiting for a meaning that will save us—save us from the pain, ugliness, emptiness of existence. Perhaps the meaning is God, but we do not know Him. He always promised us but he never recognisably appears. Our life is thus a constant waiting, always essentially the same, till time itself ceases to have significance or substance. The only answer given—apart from suicide, which is reticently hinted at—is to wait.

Waiting is the metaphor of being alive, the unanxious peering into the depths of abyss—that Beckett called Nothingness. It postpones the painful revelation that life has no meaning (according to Beckett). To mask the Void, where his personages are falling endlessly, to postpone this empty time, which is the infinite time of death, Beckett forces them to speak incessantly and to play games at whatever the cost. The brilliance of grotesque humor detaches the characters of the anguish of this meaninglessness being in order to reattach them to the ordinary time of a story or a game. All this is possible during the time of Waiting, because it masks the hopelessness and Void. It is the white color nuance the writer daubed over the black-colored existence of being.

There are a delicate relationship between comedy and tragedy, between pathos and irony, negation and affirmation, despair and liveliness. Often comedy is much more tragic than tragedy and much more about death. Tragedy is about making death meaningful. The public experience catharsis and we all go away with a light

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heart. Comedy is about the inability to achieve that catharsis. So you can’t die in comedy, which is why Waiting for Godot is a tragicomedy: nobody can’t hang themselves and it’s funny. Now what’s the more tragic thought: life coming to an end or life going on forever? The worst thing would be not death but life carrying on forever and Beckett’s comedy is about that. Placed in the perspective of an eternal waiting, in the shadows of darkness and lack of meaning, Beckett’s tramps are ridiculously funny: Estragon’s lament over his aching feet, Vladimir’s complains of his friend’s sweaty socks, games of swapping hats and boots, suicide debates and attempts. “Beckett’s humour at its most powerful—and perhaps verbal humour as such, one thinks of the genius of Groucho Marx—is a paradoxical form of speech that defeats our expectations, producing laughter with its unexpected verbal inversions, contortions and explosions, a refusal of everyday speech that lights up the everyday; estranged, indigent and distorted, as it will appear one day in the messianic light.”³

I do not believe that there are funniest scenes of suicide in the world literature and theatre, then this one in Waiting for Godot. In Act 1 the suicide is contemplated as a distraction, which could result in “an erection... and all that follows.” This is followed by banter about who should be hanged first—who is lighter or heavier—but the tramps decide to do nothing (“It’s safer”). In Act 2, at the end of the play, the topic of hanging themselves reemerges. This time they engage in a sort of vaudevillian routine in which they try to use Estragon’s trouser-cord as a rope, but Estragon’s pants fall down and the rope breaks. A poignant dialogue ensues:

Vladimir: Not worth a curse.
Estragon: You say we have to come back tomorrow?
Vladimir: Yes.
Estragon: Then we can bring a good bit of rope.
Vladimir: Yes.
Estragon: Didi.
Vladimir: Yes.
Estragon: I can’t go on like this.
Vladimir: That’s what you think.
Estragon: If we parted? That might be better for us.

Vladimir: We’ll hang ourselves tomorrow. Unless Godot comes.

Estragon: And if he comes?

Vladimir: We’ll be saved. \(^1\)

It is not coincidental that Beckett greatly admire Charlie Chaplin who makes an entire generation poignantly aware of the perils of being-in-the-world. The metaphysical basis for the comicality of clowns, according to Gunther Anders, seems to rest in their inability to distinguish being from non-being, with the result that they are always falling over non-existing obstacles or treating real obstacles as if they were non-existing. \(^2\)

Waiting for Godot reminds me of the famous Roberto Bernin’s movie (winner of the Oscar for it) Life is Beautiful. Bernini represented one of the most terrible and tragic life history:

A Jewish family is inserted into a concentration camp and how the father makes from this situation a game for his son. And the movie is funny and we laugh all the time.

According to Bachtin the dialogic quality of parody and irony resides in the fact they imply an inner debate between a mocked and a mocking “voice”, each actively eliciting the other, while vying for control. The two may test and contest one another, as well as related aspects of society and culture. In other cases the process helps prepare the way for transformation. \(^3\)

By exploiting the humor and the comic ambivalence of language he uses it against itself to reveal the absurdity if human life and compromise at the same time have the sense of nothingness and despair. Like Simon Critchley wrote “Beckett’s humour is at the level of idiom, in the fine grain of details and its goal is nothing less than the core of the eddy.”

It is the force that operates the endless spiral moving of Waiting.

It’s something that gets in the way of the perfect Aufhebung (Hegel) or synthesis, resolution. And I think that lots of the slapstick in Beckett is about that failure: the failure of tragedy, the failure of matter to get aufgehobt, to go up there and be sublime. We want to go to the heavens as heroes but we trip over our own shoelaces and piss ourselves. Mercier limits the humor and grotesque to

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\(^1\) http://samuel-beckett.net/Waiting_for_Godot


\(^3\) Sylvie Debevec Henning. Beckett’s Critical Complicity: Carnival, Contestation, and Tradition p. 2
the role of guard duty on the borders of our physical existence.

By creating grotesque images, parody, irony, by his clown personages Samuel Beckett reveals the limitations and narrowness of any philosophical interpretation of his works. Undermining the most important and significant concepts like absurdity of human life, nothingness, the problem of identity, he puts into question the favorite critic interpretations of it; the endless despair, emptiness and lack of meaning in human life. The carnivalesque dimension counters this tendency, commenting ironically upon our culture of repeated attempts to do away with the problematic aspects of existence and even mocking our desire to do so.

“The buffoon shares with Hermes the fact that he too is a mediator between life and death, between fertility and underworld... The jester, clown or fool of old has been the character through whom the spectator have been able to vent their anxieties, turning them into liberating and facetiously defying bellows of laughter, who evokes a certain reconciliation, someone who escapes the dance of death.”

Beckett’s grotesque perspective affirms from one hand that human life has no meaning, and it is full of suffering and anguish and on other hand subverts it in a funny and unique way.

POZZO: Up! Pig! (Noise of Lucky getting up.) On! (Exit Pozzo.)
Faster! On! Adieu! Pig! Yip! Adieu!

Long silence.
VLADIMIR: That passed the time.
ESTRAGON: It would have passed in any case.
VLADIMIR: Yes, but not so rapidly.
Pause.
ESTRAGON: What do we do now?
VLADIMIR: I don’t know.
ESTRAGON: Let’s go.
VLADIMIR: We can’t.
ESTRAGON: Why not?
VLADIMIR: We’re waiting for Godot.

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ESTRAGON: (despairingly). Ah!
Pause. ①

The Endless Waiting in Beckett’s drama pervades any signification, because it is impossible the concurrence of the signifier and signified. Derrida insists upon an joyous affirmation. Beckett’s creative world is without origin and truth, without fault.

A great text is like a machine, capable of producing multiple meanings. Waiting for Godot constitutes a temptation to a variety of interpretations, where every conclusion is neither true nor false; it is the Phenomenon of Waiting.

① http://samuel-beckett.net/Waiting_for_Godot_
Durkheim on Laws, Suicide Rates and Symbols

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Abstract: The early development and construction of semiology is associated with structuralists like Saussure and Levi-Strauss. Yet both of them, to some extent, owe to or are stimulated by Durkheim. This study focuses the relative works of Durkheim.

In his early work Division of labor in Society, Durkheim asserts that a society basically is a state of “solidarity”, which, as collective existence beyond the individual, in corporate people together. This collective existence can only be grasped in a symbolic way, while the “social fact” is the symbol. Durkheim refers the “social fact” as a sort of phenomena about people, which yields an influence on individuals. Individuals who obey the “social fact” get the praise or recognition, while individuals who violate it will be punished.

Taking specifically the laws as examples of the symbol, Durkheim points out that the “repressive laws” such as criminal laws symbolize the early human society constituted by similarities among people, while the “restitutory laws” like the civil laws symbolize the modern human society constituted by the differences.

In his later work The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life, Durkheim traces this symbol back to the religion as the root of the society. He points out that, as the basic type of society, the religion makes use of symbols to exert the force. The religion divides the world into the “sacred” and “secular”. In fact, the only difference is whether there is the special cognitive way in a collective atmosphere. The totems with their emblems of many tribes are the object to be worshiped. When people invariably put themselves in the fear or awe of the same objects in a special occasion, it gives rise to the social structures.

Key words: Durkheim; symbol; semiology; suicide; division of labor

1. Durkheim on Laws and Two Types of Solidarity

Durkheim presented two important concepts in The Division of Labor in Society published in 1893: the mechanical solidarity and organic solidarity. The main point of the book is the nature of those two sorts of social solidarity and their relationship, which connects to Durkheim’s view of the social change or so-called
evolution (Durkheim, 1984). Before carefully describing two kinds of solidarity, Durkheim (1982) explains his consideration of research method or strategy. To make the classification or comparison of those two kinds of social solidarity, Durkheim thinks it is necessary to deal with the social facts of them, for social solidarity cannot be accurately or directly observed and measured (Durkheim, 1982). For Durkheim, social solidarity with the nature of its existence of the non-material, does not stay in a state of pure potentiality and will take the form of certain perceptible results to represent itself. Laws, customs, proverbs, or even the statistics of a certain kind of social phenomena, for instance, are such social facts to be percived and obeyed.

Social life, as long as there’s continuity with it, will inevitably lead to the form of organization, the law, as mentioned above, is the most stable and clear form of this organization. Furthermore, laws, together with other social facts, are actually symbols of a society.

The way in which jurists used to make distinctions is convenient but not scientific. Durkheim argues that people must find out some basic characteristics of the legal order and such characteristics change with the legal order, so Durkheim gets the deduction that the law or commands of the law can be defined as regulations which sanctions apply. The sanctions can further be divided into two categories, the first one, referring to basically certain harms, or at least to make the criminals lose something important, is the so-called “repressive sanction”, such as the criminal law or Penal codes. The second category, referring to the reconstruction of the damaged previous social networks which are disturbed and deviated from the normal state, is the so-called “restitutory law”. The examples of such are civil laws, commercial laws, constitutional laws, etc. (Durkheim, 1984: 28–29). Durkheim here concludes in short that the first category and its sanctions correspond to mechanical solidarity, second one to organic solidarity. The mechanical solidarity bases on the similarities of people, and organic solidarity on the differences and, consequently, the division of labor.

The society which the repressive laws corresponding to or symbolizing, is the one in which behaviors recognized as crimes whenever social solidarity is damaged by those crimes (Durkheim 1984: 31). In other words, some criminal behaviors attack the strongly well defined collective consciousness (Durkheim 1984: 39), which is a definite system with its own autonomy and is composed of common beliefs and emotions of ordinary members of a society as a whole (Durkheim 1984: 38–39). For Durkheim, what is the nature of the crime itself? By collecting common traits among varieties of crimes, we can say all crimes are the opposite of the group
common affection. Durkheim points out further that the opposite is not inferred by
the crime itself, but rather the very oppositeness of the society or its social facts or
symbols, constitute a crime (Durkheim, 1984: 40). We can say that, Durkheim is
not in favor of the innate concept of crimes, tring to establish the premium
existence of collective consciousness by way of defining the crime.

While repressive laws tend to stay in the diffusive state and immediately
penetrate the society, what the restitutory law corresponds to, or symbolizes, is
another kind of society. The restitutory law has settled for itself a more specialized
body (Durkheim, 1984: 69–70). The examples of the latter are consular courts and a
variety of industrial and administrative referee. Although these are more or less
beyond the collective consciousness, but not just about the individual or it will be
nothing to do with the society. The social solidarity will inevitably make for such a
law, the establishment of the foundation or adjustment. Every contract in the 2nd
sort of society supposes something behind the participants and is always ready to
intervene and to enable the participants to respect it. It is the social (Durkheim,

The distinction between the two types of social solidarity with two different
laws symbolizing them respectively, can be understood in terms of the directness of
social and personal relationship. The first type directly ties every person to the
community without any intermediary body; the second type makes the individuals
attached to the society by way of the special “part” of a society as the mediation
(Durkheim, 1984: 83). In the second type of society, the society is not absent and
exerts the influence to a certain extent, “from a short or long distance, and through
the intermediary institutions” (Durkheim, 1984: 71), and so each person indirectly
linked to the society.

The two categories of law correspond to two types of social solidarity and to
respectively the similarity and the differentiation. For the similarity, Durkheim
thinks there is a kind of social aggregation which can be traced back to the common
type the consciousness of all people is obedient to. Within the type, members of the
group not only resemble each other and mutually attract each other, but also link to
conditions of existence of the group and to the society itself. To explain in another
way, society also makes members show their basic resemblance, because there is the
social cohesion (Durkheim, 1984: 60–61). According to Durkheim’s perspective,
there is a principle of social organization deriving from the similarity of people, and
that similarity subjects to the maintenance and regulation of what Durkheim called
mechanical solidarity. The term “mechanical” is actually dichotomous to the one
“organic”. The organic solidarity is used to describe another type of society, in
which each one has its own special sphere of action. Especially when the work increasingly separate each person’s specialized activities. Therefore, this organic solidarity assumes the existence of differentiation (Durkheim, 1984: 85). Yet this solidarity does not make people totally individualized, for people still have the common implement and practice in ongoing career, so people are still attached to a society.

2. Durkheim on Suicide Rates and Totems

Durkheim (1966) identifies the suicide rates as another kind of social facts, symbolizing different types of society, in the work—Suicide. Even for people obedient to the authority, it is hard to order them to commit suicide. So suicide seems to be a quite personal decision. Yet, for Durkheim, there is still the space of the operation of social force in such decision. The societies with relatively low suicide rate are those dominated by the strong collective conscience, like the religious code or a long tradition (Durkheim, 1966). Once the members of those societies encounter frustrations, their neighbors, relatives and friends can warm their heart and back them up. As a result, they won’t commit suicide (Durkheim, 1966). These societies belong to the type of mechanical solidarity. Yet for societies with relatively high suicide rate, the education is more popular and people are more confident and busy with searching more individual goals and interests (Durkheim, 1966). While encountering frustrations, people tend to face them alone, taking the accountability by themselves. Yet the accountability is beyond their capability, therefore they tend to kill themselves and the suicide rate is relatively high in these societies (Durkheim, 1966). These societies, different from the former ones, belong to the type of organic solidarity.

In his later work The Elementary Forms of Religious Life, Durkheim traces the origin and meaning of the solidarity. Durkheim identifies the totem as the fundamental classification system and symbolism (Durkheim, 2008). The classification system does not base upon the natural necessity and the individual can’t find that classification system inside himself/herself. The key point to classify societies and everything in societies is not the innate objective property, but the dichotomous dyad—“the sacred/ the profane” (Durkheim, 2008). Durkheim asserts that the principle of classifying animals, plants and other natural objects is the same as the one of classifying the clans or human groups (Durkheim, 2008).

Accordingly, if people can tell a tiger from a sheep, they use the similar standard to divide tough clans from mild ones. Ultimately, all the categories of
classification can be reduced to the fundamental one—“the sacred vs the profane”. For instance, when a flag is drawn with the emblem of a certain totem, it is not an ordinary one, and even anyone touching or taking it becomes an unordinary man or woman. It means that the flag or person partake the sacredness therefore they are no longer the profane things in the world.

3. Durkheim and Semiology

After discussing Durkheim’s theory of the society and the symbol, we now shift to the issue of the relationship between Durkheim and forerunners of semiology, like Saussier and Levi-Strauss.

Just as structuralism is the forerunner of semiology, Durkheim’s theory is the forerunner of structuralism. As a linguistic, de Saussure (2011) presents the dichotomy—“langue vs parole”—for explaining the language learning. We can say that the realm of “langue” is equivalent to Durkheim’s concept of the society or the social facts symbolizing the society. Though individual behaviors may be so diffusive, just like the “parole”, they obey the rule set by the social facts, or individuals will be sanctioned. The sanction has the positive function for people can be reminded and thus get clear conceptions about the rule.

Just like Durkheim divides everything in the society according to the dichotomy—the sacred vs the profane, Levi-Strauss, as a famous anthropologist, asserts that things in the world are recognizable by way of a series of dichotomous terms (Levi-Strauss, 1974), like left vs right, up vs down, male vs female, light vs darkness, white vs black, good vs bad, safe vs danger, positive vs negative, natural vs artificial, etc. So when people mention, for example, male or female, that does not mean there is someone who is really a male or female, but referring implicitly to another dichotomous term, for example, safe or dangerous.

Therefore all the dichotomies are the signifiers without the thing signified. Moreover, all the boundaries between the dichotomous signifiers are determined basically by the force of the society. We can see the shadow of Durkheim in Levi-Strauss’ perspective of those dichotomous terms.

So we can conclude that Durkheim, as a social theorist, explores the nature of the society by way of laws, suicide rates and totems as the social facts, which play the role of the symbol of the society. The original and the fundamental symbol is about the dichotomy of the sacred vs the profane in the society. As forerunners of semiology, Saussure presents the structural linguistics and Levi-Strauss constructs his structural anthropology, both are influenced respectively by Durkheim’s social
theory to a certain extent.

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Heidegger’s Analysis of Dasein in The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics (1929–30)

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Abstract, Heidegger completed and entitled his course The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude. (Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysics: Welt—Endlichkeit-Einsamkeit) in the Winter Semester of 1929–1930 in the University of Freiburg. In 1975, while Heidegger was preparing to publish the course he included a special dedication to Eugen Fink in the course. The dedication expressed how Fink had wished that this text was to be published before all others. This can be read as Heidegger’s own way of emphasizing the overall importance of the course itself. If this is correct, then it raises the question of what justifies the importance of this course above the other 45 volumes of the Gesamtausgabe after more than four decades? Why did Heidegger choose this text over the other texts? In what ways does the text clarify what is expressed in the other texts? And if we take into considered the fact that Heidegger’s magnum opus was Being and Time (1927) published two years before, it raises the question of what is the role of The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics in relation to Being and Time. If the former illuminates the latter, in what ways does it do so? This invites the further question of what remains obscure in Being and Time? In this paper, we will argue that Heidegger’s The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics offers an analytic of Dasein which supplements the account of Dasein, particularly its “ontological distinctiveness” in Being and Time. In the first section, we will revisit Heidegger’s analytic of Dasein in Being and Time. In the second section, we will examine the analytic of Dasein in The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics and in the third section, we will see the extent to which this reading is supported by current scholarship, most notably, in relation to the idea that there were two Heideggers and in relation to Thomas Sheehan’s account of Dasein. Towards this end, we will be examining key texts such as Heidegger’s Being and Time (1927) and The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics; World, Finitude, Solitude (1929–1930).

Key words, Dasein, animal, ontological distinction, captivation, absorption, openness, world-forming

1. Introduction

In Being and Time (1927) Heidegger pursued the question of Being by way of a
long detour through an analysis of Dasein, for the question of Being demands that the question “What is interrogated” (das Befragtes) be answered. Heidegger’s analysis of Dasein, however, remains notoriously incomplete, for, despite his long descriptions of Dasein’s pragmatic, existential and temporal structures in Being and Time, the discussion on Dasein’s uniqueness in contrast to animals remains peripheral. Heidegger simply defined Dasein is defined as a being that is able to question the meaning of its own existence in contrast to other beings, but the question of whether other beings are also able to question their own existence is never adequately addressed in Being and Time. Given Being and Time’s peripheral treatment of the question of Dasein, Being and Time stands in risk of a second unacknowledged “failure” in addition to that of Being’s adequate saying in Part I, Division II. It would be too far to regard this as a “fatal” of Being and Time itself, but this lacunae does problematize Heidegger’s overall project in Being and Time. This would be so if not for the publication of The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics, completed in 1929–1930, which offers a more complete analytic of Dasein’s “ontological distinctiveness” in contrast to that of animals. This paper argues that The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics provides an important supplement to Heidegger’s analysis of Dasein in Being and Time by way of an elaborate account of the animal worlds. In the next section, we will begin by revisiting Heidegger’s account of Dasein in Being and Time and where it is deficient before we examine how the publication of The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics supplements and overcomes this problem. This will be followed by a discussion of how Heidegger’s basic thesis is found in one of his earlier works Towards the Definition of Philosophy and how the thesis is complemented by recent Heidegger research and studies.

2. Dasein’s “Ontological Distinction” in Being and Time (1927)

It is generally accepted that Heidegger was pursuing the question of Being throughout his philosophical career and that Being and Time (1927) forms an indispensible part of this pursuit. Although this is so, it is also important to remember that Heidegger did not pursue the question of Being directly in Being and Time, but by way of a long detour through an analysis of Dasein. This is because, as he explained, the question of Being demands that we answer the question of who or what kind of being is asking that question. In Heideggerian terms, the question “What is interrogated” (das Befragtes) stands in need of an answer. Heidegger’s analysis of Dasein, however, remains notoriously incomplete. Although Heidegger
gave a somewhat long account of Dasein’s pragmatic, existential and temporal structures in *Being and Time*, the question of Dasein’s uniqueness *contra* animals remains peripheral—Dasein is defined as a being that is able to question the meaning of its own existence in contrast to other beings, but the question of whether other beings are also able to question their own existence is never adequately addressed by Heidegger in *Being and Time* but is simply passed over. This throws up questions for the adequacy of Heidegger’s account of Dasein and this in turn makes his approach of the analysis of Being questionable. This section will revisit Heidegger’s analysis of Dasein in *Being and Time*.

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger famously approached the question of Being by way of an analysis of Dasein. This is because the question of Being demands, for Heidegger, an analysis of what kind of being is asking that question. He states:

Dasein is an entity which does not just occur amongst other entities. Rather it is ontically distinguished by the fact that, in its very being, that being is an issue for it... And this means further that there is some way in which Dasein understands itself in its being, and that to some degree so explicitly... Understanding of being is itself a definitive characteristic of Dasein’s being. Dasein is ontically distinctive in that it is ontological (Heidegger, 1962; 32).

Assuming that the “what-ness” of being is crucial for an understanding of Being, then Heidegger’s account of Dasein in *Being and Time* stands at risk of inadequacy, for although this offers a somewhat straightforward account of the difference between the animal and man—in that man is a being that is capable of asking the meaning of its own existence while the animal does not, it remains to be clarified to what extent the animal remains incapable of asking this question. The looming question at the back of our minds remains whether the animal indeed does not wonder about its own existence, and in relation to this, whether we can assert that all human beings indeed ask, or have the potential to ask, that question.

Famously, Heidegger’s determination of the meaning of Dasein is supported by an “existential” account of Dasein. The account purports to elaborate on the meaning of Dasein, probably in contrast to that of other beings, but did Heidegger manage to give an adequate account of Dasein’s “ontological distinction” in *Being and Time*? It may appear, at first sight, to have been achieved with the “existential” account of Dasein. Here, Dasein is explained terms of its subjection to “the They” [*das Man*]. Heidegger uses the term “the They” to refer to those who have established and defined the world before Dasein’s appearance into the world. Dasein
ordinarily determines its own worth in relation to the standards which has been set beforehand by “the They”. This ultimately results in Dasein’s losing its ownership of its own existence—the “mineness” of its existence, and Dasein experiences profound anxiety and lives an inauthentic life. (Heidegger, 1962; 126–127, 163–164). This is also called a state of “fallenness”. Dasein must tear itself away from pull [Zug] of “the They” if it is to regain its authentic existence. Dasein’s liberation from “the They” is related to the recognition of its own “being-toward-death”—Dasein must recognise its own finitude (Fynsk, 1993: 30). When Dasein recognizes that it is absolutely alone in its death, because nobody else can take its place in death, that “no one can take the other’s dying away from him,” a shift in Dasein’s understanding and relationship to the world occurs (Heidegger, 1962; 240). Dasein brings an end to its inauthentic life and regains its own existence. According to Heidegger, the recognition of one’s death is necessary because it is the recognition of the possibility of impossibility—the possibility that all of one’s possibilities come to an end. Heidegger states, “[Dasein’s] death is the possibility of no-longer-being-able-to-be-there. If Dasein stands before itself as this possibility, it has been fully assigned to its most proper potentiality-of-being. When it stands before itself in this way, all its relations to any other Dasein have been undone” (Heidegger, 1962; 250, 294). The entire analysis of death suggests that the other cannot appropriate Dasein’s being. The mineness [Jemeinigkeit] and properness [Eigentlichkeit] that belongs to Dasein suggests the impossibility of ownership and appropriation by the other (Brogan, 2002: 24). Thus, the recognition of one’s death is ironically a limit that gives freedom to Dasein for its ownmost potentiality of being [eigenes Seinkönnen] (Heidegger, 1962; 232). Thus, by comporting oneself in a proper relationship to death, by becoming open and by anticipating the possibility of not being, Dasein comes to exist authentically.

Dasein’s “ontological distinction” is given a social-political significance with the concept of “being-with”. According to Heidegger, Dasein’s liberation from the pull of “the They” is not merely a solitary act that results in Dasein’s isolation from others, and the entire process of gaining liberation from an inauthentic “the They” is meant to bring about an authentic relationship with an authentic other. That is, the pull from mass opinions is a step which opens up possibilities for Dasein to establish authentic relationships with others. This is why Heidegger states categorically: “Knowing oneself (Sichkennen) is grounded in Being-with (Mitsein) which understands primordially” (Heidegger, 1962; 161, 124). Thus, Dasein’s structure is intimately linked with the others, there is no being that exists in isolation from others—this is because when Dasein pulls away from the other and
regains its authentic existence it finally comes to discover that it is structurally related with others in what Heidegger would call “being-with” (Mit-sein). This suggests that any attempt by Dasein to disclose itself necessarily involves a “co-disclosure” of the other, there can be no disclosure of the one without the disclosure of the other at the same time. The disclosure of Dasein of itself may appear to be a solitary act, but it is at the same time a “co-disclosure” of the other (Fynsk, 1993: 33, 116, 153). He states:

If Dasein, by anticipation, lets death become powerful in itself, then, as free for death, Dasein understands itself in its own superior power, the power of its finite freedom, so that in this freedom, which “is” only in its having chosen to make such a choice, it can take over the powerlessness [Ohnmacht] of abandonment to its having done so, and can thus come to have a clear vision for the accidents of the Situation that has been disclosed. But if fateful Dasein, as Being-in-the-world, exists essentially in Being-with-others, its historizing is a co-historizing [ein Mitgeschelen], and is determinative for its destiny [Geschick]. This is how we designate the historizing of the community of a people. Destiny is not something that puts itself together out of individual fates, any more than Being-with-one-another [das Miteinandersein] can be conceived as the occurring together of several Subjects. Our fates have already been guided in advance, in our Being with one another in the same world and in our resoluteness for definite possibilities. Only in communicating and in struggling does the power of destiny become free (Heidegger, 1962: 436).

Thus, Dasein’s departure from the dominance of “the they” is the precondition for their coming together in “communication” and “struggle” which will unleash the power of destiny, so that there will be a happening or “occurrence” of a “community” and a “people”. We will not go into the details of Heidegger’s existential political thought because it has been elaborated elsewhere, but suffice it here to say that Heidegger’s analysis of Dasein reveals that Dasein has an “ontological distinctiveness” which distinguishes it from other beings (See, 2009)

At this point, we must return to our main discussion, given that Heidegger has proceeded on a long discussion of Dasein’s structure and how it can form the basis for a community-to-come, does Heidegger’s “existential” analysis of Dasein explains how Dasein differs from other beings such as animals? In other words, are we convinced by the end of Being and Time that Dasein is “ontologically distinct?” (Heidegger, 1962: 32). Although failure to prove this may not be fatal to
Heidegger’s overall concern with the meaning of Being, nevertheless, failure to clarify Dasein’s “ontological distinctiveness” does raise up questions about the possibility of Heidegger’s project itself. We must remember that in Being and Time, Dasein’s questioning of itself, its “ontological distinction” is based on its own coming to recognize its own finitude, its own “being-towards-death” and its own end of all possibilities. This in turn demands a discussion of other beings which may also be termed “Dasein” i.e., animals. Do animals possess an awareness of their own being-towards-death? It would be difficult to prove that animals do not have an awareness of their impending death, and it would also be difficult to establish that human beings are “ontologically distinct” for that matter—some human beings do not appear to have the capacity to think in the Heideggerian sense. The whole matter does not appear to have any phenomenological basis sometimes, but turns suspiciously on the axis of faith. Likewise, the thesis that animals are unable to reflect on their own existence remains inadequately discussed in Being and Time. In relation to that, it would also be an interesting question if all human beings themselves affirm their own humanity by questioning their own existence, if all human beings are Dasein and if all Daseins are human beings.

If our analysis is correct, then Heidegger did not successfully discuss the ontological status of Dasein in contrast to that of animals, at least in Being and Time. Due to this inadequate treatment of the question of Dasein, Being and Time stands in risk of being a second “failure” in addition to that of Part I. Division II. For, although it would go too far to suggest that it would be fatal, the problematic of not discussing the fundamental difference between human beings and animals undermine Heidegger’s project of finding the meaning of Being. It is our contention that Heidegger was not unaware of this inadequacy in Being and Time for the publication of The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics provides a much-needed account of an analytic of Dasein in contrast with that of animals—what was passed over and remained peripheral in Being and Time is discussed at length in this work, which offers a thorough analytic of the structure of Dasein in contrast to that of animals from another perspective. Thus, The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics provides an important supplement to Heidegger’s analytic of Dasein in Being and Time by way of an elaborate account of the animal worlds.


In The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics, Heidegger made a threefold
distinction between Dasein, animals and the stone in terms of the world in which they inhabit—man is “world-forming” (Weltbildend), the animal is “poor in the world” (Weltarm) and the stone which is “worldless” (Weltlos) (Heidegger, 1995: 192). Much of the text is focused on the differences and identity between these three entities, and it may appear to be quite peculiar if the work is not read in the context of Being and Time. The text, in particular, focused on the difference between man and animal in terms of the “world” in which they inhabit. The word “world” here is given a phenomenological sense here and it signifies the sum total of beings that are accessible to man and animals alike (Heidegger, 1995: 193). Therefore, there are in a sense difference and identity in terms of the “world” that both inhabits—both the animal and man differ from each other in that they do not inhabit the same world as we would normally suppose, but two distinct phenomenological “worlds”, but they are similar in the sense that they are both open to the “world” in contrast to the stone which is “worldless”. Now the distinction between the two worlds, between the animal and man, is that the animal is “poor in the world”. Heidegger is concerned that the word “poor” here, used in reference to the animal, does not mean that it is lesser. It is not a matter of what is lesser or greater but “being deprived” (Entbehren) (Heidegger, 1995: 195). Deprived of what? It is deprived in terms of “mood”, it is “poverty in mood” (Armut). Mood, we must remember, forms one of the fundamental experiences, which characterizes Dasein in Being and Time.

It is in Heidegger’s account of “absorption” where he clarifies the distinction between the two. The animal is “poor” in the world because it is characterized by “absorption in itself” (Eingenommenheit in sich). This is related to a sort of “captivation” (Benommenheit) in which the animal is merely related to what appears in the present without reference to the past and the future—the animal is captivated and operates according to what appears in the present (Heidegger, 1995: 239). This does not mean that the animal is in an enduring state of captivation, but that it is “an essential moment of animality” (Heidegger, 1995: 239). To be sure, this does not mean that the animal is “worldless”. The ontological status of animals is such that it is open (offen) to the world, but there is no unconcealment, the world is for the animal not openable (offenbar). This is because in captivation, for animals, their behaviour is not a relation to beings, beings are open but not accessible—in a nonrelational way. This openness without disconcealment distinguishes the animal’s poverty in the world from the “world-forming” that is man, an idea that is basically disclosed in the analysis of Dasein in Being and Time (Agamben, 2004; 55).
According to Heidegger’s analysis, the animal is related to the objects. the objects are open in sense of “disinhibition” (Enthemmung), but the animal surrounds itself with a “disinhibiting ring” which prescribes what can affect or not affect its behaviour (Heidegger, 1995; 255). Man differs from animals in that they are “world-forming” in the sense that man has a pre-logical openness to being, and he differs from animals in that he acts to “complete” the beings “in the direction of the whole”. This completion is not something like an addition of something missing, but “the prior forming of the “as a while” already prevailing.” This is out of a whole that we do not at all explicitly grasp. Heidegger uses the example of when Dasein sees something that is not “in place” and he acts to put it in place, seeing that the board is badly positioned (Heidegger, 1995; 348–349).

This should remind us of early Heidegger’s critique of the sciences in Towards the Definition of Philosophy (Heidegger, 2008). In the context of this work, it would appear that Heidegger did not deviate from his pursuit of Being throughout his career. The view that philosophy can neither be a “science” that must be read in the context of his account of “worldview” which is related to a fixed way of approaching the world. In Heidegger’s analysis, this push to make philosophy more “scientific” is problematic because the sciences themselves are “unthinking” with regards to their own premises and assumptions. The problem with the sciences is that their content cannot be complete and their use of “methods” already presupposes assumptions which cannot be proven (Heidegger, 2008; 45). Likewise, according to Heidegger, the various dictates of dialectical methods, presumably a critique of Hegel, already presupposes many things, and especially presupposes its goals. Together they enclose us in their “world views.” Philosophy rightly, contra Husserl, cannot be “science” (Heidegger, 2008; 33–37).

Our analysis so far is related to Thomas Sheehan’s basic theory that there were not two Heidegger—Heidegger I and Heidegger II who reversed his position in his “later” philosophy. Heidegger was consistent throughout his philosophy in that he was involved from the beginning with a hermeneutics of Dasein, with the clarification of Dasein’s open structure (Sheehan, 2011). The turn between the earlier and the later Heidegger is not a fundamental shift of perspective but the recognition that human beings do not merely generate meaning spontaneously, but are pulled into it a priori. In a step which reminds us of the need to engage once again with both Kant and Nietzsche, meaning-making for Heidegger is the basic structure of human beings (Sheehan, 2011; 3). This is evident in The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics in which he approached the same question from a different angle, by way of distinctions made between Dasein with its “world-forming” and
animals which are “poor in the world.” Animals, while possessing a degree of this openness in contradistinction from mere stones and plants, are nevertheless not entirely “open” like human beings because they are captivated by what their senses present them with. This captivation (Benommenheit) renders the animals not open to the things as they present to themselves (Sheehan, 2011; 8). Likewise, animals are also incapable of projecting meaning, or creating meaning in what is lifeless.

Thus, the significance of Heidegger’s *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* is that it elaborates at length the nature of animals in relation to Dasein, a project that concerns Heidegger from his earliest concern with the nature of philosophy to his later work on Dasein’s openness. The basic distinction between the two is that while both possess a “world” of their own, they are not related to the world in the same way—the animal is, in a paradoxical sounding sense, related to the world in a non-relational way, while Dasein is “open” to the world in the sense that it is “world-forming”. This is because while Dasein has access to beings in themselves, animals are characterized by “absorption”—they are “captivated” by what they see in presence, and as such, is conditioned by a “disinhibiting ring” within which they have access to the world. This, perhaps, explains why Heidegger in 1975 included the dedication to Eugen Fink indicating how Fink had wished that this text was to be published before all others—because the account provides a fuller discussion of the structure of Dasein necessary for the quest of the meaning of Being (Agamben, 2004; 49).

4. Conclusion

Heidegger’s *Being and Time* published in 1927 purports to pursue the question of Being by way of an analytic of Dasein’s structure. *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* can appear to be quite peculiar in its overall emphasis on the status of the animal, for Heidegger spent a significant portion of the text elaborating on the characteristic of the animal world in terms of “captivation” “absorption” and the “disinhibiting ring” that determines its behaviour. However, when we situate the description of animal world in the context of *Being and Time*’s analytic of Dasein, it becomes apparent that the former is not merely an idiosyncratic text where Heidegger made a strange detour through an investigation of animal world, but forms an important part of Heidegger’s analytic a Dasein, a path which is meant to lead ultimately to an analytic of Being. In other words, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* is in fact an important missing supplement to Heidegger’s analysis of Dasein in *Being and Time*. 
References


Beyond the Fallacy of the Absolute God and Inflexibility of Religions

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Abstract: In global semiotics, religion does not mean belief in the Absolute. To absolutize the Divine in religions is to alienate and isolate God from human beings. The claims for the existence of God in monotheistic religious traditions have gone beyond mere existence into the absoluteness of the “True God.” The resulting religious polarization encourages radical fundamentalism and unhealthy religious experiences. The concept of the Absolute God as a static entity is a fallacy that constructs inflexible religious experiences and fabricates a deficient reality. This notion of the Absolute God puts humans at a crossroad of conduct: whether to obey the mighty God in all their conduct and, consequently, be rewarded by receiving the gift of heaven, or to be thrown into hell for their disobedience. Peirce (1908) rejected the idea of identifying God with the Absolute. As a semiotic sign, the idea of God has been expressed in numerous signs and recognized by many different names and interpretations. The relationship between humans and God is a relationship that constitutes the desire for seeking mutual fulfillment. God’s command to Adam and Eve to be fertile and increase is not only an invitation to seek the act of creation in all endeavors but also an implicit call to make God as one and as many.

Key words: Absolute; God; religion; semiotics; transmodernity

1. The Nuanced Origin of Religion

Since religion brings some kind of spiritual order to the chaos of human experiences (Geertz, 1973), it is almost impossible for any society to exist without it. Renè Girard (1977) claims that without religion, society cannot exist. In fact, nearly 59% of the world population claims to be involved in some kind of religion. Some scholars appreciate the positive aspects of religion but feel that these positive

1 This number is from a press release on the WIN/Gallup International Global Index of Religiosity and Atheism — 2012. Based on global average polls in 57 countries, 13% of respondents identified themselves as atheists and 23% as not religious whereas 59% identified themselves as religious. http://www.wingia.com/web/files/news/14/file/14.pdf Retrieved January 2013.
aspects are far outweighed by the negative ones; they claim that the positives will occur on their own without religion (Stenger, 2012). But because the majority of the world’s population is religious, and because the origin of religion ties with human nature, this claim is only a wishful conjecture.

The origin of religion can be traced to the myth and ritual in the ancient Near East. And because the origin of religions ties to myth and ritual, violence seems to be at the core of many religions (Girard, 1977). The well-known religions include Judaism, Christianity, and Islam (the basic monotheistic systems), and Buddhism and Hinduism. And some religious (or spiritual) practices of the Far East, Africa, and the New World were unknown to Western societies until the sixteenth century. Overall, there are two types of religion: exoteric religion (e.g. Judaism, Christianity, and Islam), which focuses outward and can lead to an inflexible reality and radical fundamentalism; and esoteric religion (e.g. Buddhism and Hinduism), which focuses inward and is oriented toward personal transformation (Anderson, 1990).

However, what is of significance to our argument against the concept of the Absolute God and religious inflexibility is the origin of religion as pantheistic systems, particularly in prehistoric times and in predynastic Egypt. Although the development of Egyptian religion is somewhat ambiguous, most anthropologists and Egyptologists agree that the early Egyptians have a sophisticated theology that transcends subsequent rigid religious systems. Beneath the Egyptian polytheistic systems also lay some form of monotheism, where a single god or goddess might splinter into a multiplicity of other forms. Christianity, as monotheistic faith, draws on many significant concepts—such as the trinity, miraculous conception, resurrection, an afterlife, and a last judgment—that are intrinsic to ancient Egyptian religion.

Even in Coptic Orthodox Christianity, God is not the Absolute; the very nature of God consists of the triadic relation of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, which embraces the whole of creation. Not only are these relations within God, they are between God and human beings and among interacting human beings (Deely, 2011). This coexistence of polytheism and monotheism is indeed a paradoxical issue that contemporary societies are far from accepting, particularly when the Judeo-Christian-Islamic faiths insist on God being the Absolute. Even now, moderate Egyptian scholars are aware that beneath the dominant Islamic monotheism lies a nuanced ancient Egyptian experience of polytheism.

There is no Greek word for religion; the Latin word religio is the source of the term “religion”. However, divorced from its mythical origin, the very meaning of
the word “religion” from *relegere* means “careful observance”, results in an arbitrarily interpretation of the verb *religare* which has become in the Christian nuanced interpretation “to tie back” or “constrain”. In essence, *relegere* has been replaced by *religare*—a concept through which the church for nearly two thousand years constrained human beings and their souls from mythical origins they had outgrown. And the proliferation of highly rationalized philosophy with reduced mythical elements survived in a weakened form in religion and, ultimately, these mythical elements disappeared almost completely in the spiritual tradition (Gebser, 1985).

Interestingly, while this deviation from the meaning of “careful observance” permeated Europe, the Coptic tradition seems to have escaped this interpretation of religion. Coptic Christianity seems to have coexisted with Egyptian pantheism, where God is in all things and all things are God. Thus, the Coptic tradition seems to have integrated the mythological aspects of ancient Egyptian religious systems. Based on the ancient Egyptian myth of creation, the God Ra (sun) of all creation was lying dormant within the fluid dynamic Nun (waters) until the beginning. An all-powerful creator, this entity was able to give birth to other deities and all aspects of life. And all natural phenomena are conceived in terms of human experience—that which is envisaged in terms of the created cosmic events. Consequently, the resilient origin of the ancient Egyptian religion seems to have refrained from absolutism and rendered human beings co-creators with gods and goddesses in the creation of the cosmos. Unfortunately, this resilient quality of the origin of religion has been eclipsed by *religare* (to tie back or to constrain) and has given a binding basis to religions to become inflexible.

2. The Unintended Consequences of the Inflexibility of Religion

Monotheistic religions are perceived by their followers to be the “truth” that has been trusted to humans by the Absolute God. This form of perceived truth seems to be triggered by what Robert S. Corrington (2000) calls the “projection of transference”. Certainly those who accept the transference see no other religious life outside of what they accept, and this fixation on the unequivocal image of religion “is the main reason why religious fanaticism is the most dangerous form of obsession”, precisely because the experience of an absolute religion and meaning of God “seem to transcend any need for validation or even restraint” (Corrington, 2000: 63). This perceived truth has triggered many devastating crusades and holy wars throughout human history.
Religious faith seems to be ingrained in all aspects of contemporary societies, particularly in America today (Stenger, 2012). It has been observed that all main monotheistic religions are formulated on monarchical, imperial, and patriarchal patterns in which man has been considered superior over woman and all other creatures. These patterns result in “God over the secular king, the secular king over men, men over women, and humans over nature” (Korten, 2006; 259). These patterns may have influenced many scientists to challenge the entire premises of religious faith. For example, in his most recent book God and the Folly of Faith, scientist Victor J. Stenger has unequivocally declared that in order for humanity to survive, we need to focus our attention on “the eradication of foolish faith from the face of this planet” (Stenger, 2012; 322).

In addition, the polarization between the two sacred paths—the doctrinal esoteric way of monotheism and the mystical esoteric way of polytheism—has led to an inflexible reality and, worse yet, has produced many dictatorial and radical political powers that have widened the gaps between civilizations and even, as Samuel P. Huntington (1996) warns, have triggered the clash of civilizations. In almost any country in the world, religion is hardly separated from political systems. Although religion might hide behind a new language of politics, it unveils itself in times of social crisis and war. Religion, like the words “God” and “democracy”, is often only a veil to conceal the monstrous forces of murder, oppression, and exploitation (El Saadawi, 1983).

When religion becomes the only thing people take seriously, where the scriptures and religious texts become the absolute source of human knowledge and conduct, society slips into the realm of fundamentalism (Deely, 2011). An exclusive, excessive, and static religious order encourages radical fundamentalism and an unhealthy religious experience, which William James (1902) describes as “the sick soul”. Fundamentalists seem to have overlooked the fact that religions are only metaphorical representations of spirituality (Seif, 2012). Much of what human beings perceive as a “true religion” is a false collective faith and the self-imposed conformity of religare. Spirituality is too rich and complex to be adequately captured or presented by only one religion.

Religions, as relegere (careful observance), are never static or unchangeable. Like ecosystems, religions are forever in transition. Even our entire universe is not unchanging; and in this universe, everything coevolves and is codependent—there is no place for absolutism. Absolutism must give way to “relationalism”, for within this “infinite web of life, nothing is absolute because everything is related” (Taylor, 2007; 355). Everything is in relations. “We look upon a world where relations,
invisible to sense, which sees only related things, have become central to any hope of advance in philosophical understanding” (Deely, 2011: 17) and to developing human sensibilities for perceiving religious transparency.

The rivalry and debate—which in many situations become vicious fights and violence—between believers and atheists, between evolution and creation, between esoteric and exoteric religions, or between Muslims and Christians seem to lead nowhere. In fact, the clash of civilizations is not a direct result of long-held differences of history, languages, cultures, traditions, and religions, as Samuel P. Huntington (1996) has indicated; rather, the clash arises as a result of the fixation of different civilizations on their identities, which are tightly attached to inflexibility of religions and the Absolute God. Religious faith, as John Deely (2011) argues, is not mainly about the existence of God; rather, it is about human beings’ relations with God. Relations are not about the Absolute; as William James (1902) maintains, religion does not necessarily mean belief in the Absolute God.

3. The Nature of the Absolute and the Meaning of God

Most believers in monotheistic religions view God as a kind of supernatural entity who created the whole universe out of nothing. In other words, monotheistic religions are oriented toward the faith that God is not mortal, not finite, not specifiable, not changeable, existing outside space and time, i.e., the Absolute. Although the concept of the Absolute goes back to pre-Socratic times, it was introduced into philosophical discourse primarily in the work of Baruch Spinoza and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz during the Age of Absolutism. Particularly, it was Hegel who re-introduced the concept into philosophy in 1807 in his book The Phenomenology of Spirit.

As an ontological and cosmological argument, this philosophical discourse attempts to prove the existence of God, exemplified in Rudolf Otto’s notion of the “Numinous” or disprove the existence of God, championed by Friedrich Nietzsche and his declaration “God is dead”. However, Otto’s idea of the “holy” (whole and heal) is not restricted to the religious domain, nor does it point to an exclusive and absolute God; rather, it is an inclusive notion of the numinous that grasps the primordial whole experience with the divine essence (cf. Gebser, 1985; Otto, 1923). And a different interpretation of Nietzsche’s declaration, which is based on

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1 In fact, as has been observed throughout history, conflicts are not just between different religions but also inside each religious faith.
the notion of “the will to power”, offers the challenging, yet rewarding, possibility of looking at God and the world through healing lenses and imaginative interpretations. Perhaps Nietzsche’s declaration of God’s death has been misunderstood for even gods and goddesses, who died to make room for God, did not die, they returned home (Gebser, 1985) where human beings dwell.

In their efforts to absolutize the Divine, inflexible religions have isolated God from human beings and human beings from God. In fact, to absolutize is to think “perspectivaly”, which is the ultimate focus of an individual perspective of God’s image that, ironically, opens up as it closes space at the vanishing point (Gebser, 1985). As a reaction to this perspectival isolation and absolute separation, the notion of God has either become negated and even marginalized, or grown to be a dogmatic image.

Paradoxically, the Absolute cannot be defined, since any definition etymologically delimits or sets up boundaries to a term that has no boundaries. Among many other challenges, the nature of the Absolute is (or can be) regarded as a semiotic paradox (Nöth, 2010) and, in some sense, is self-negating (Taylor, 2007). This contradiction and self-negation can be tolerated if we consider, for instance, the mathematical tactic of *reductio ad absurdum*, which proves the falsity of a premise by demonstrating that its logical consequence is contradictory or reduced to absurdity (Seif, 2012). However, this semiotic paradox can be persevered through imaginative interpretations of the Absolute God, which requires what Gebser (1985: 259) calls “paradoxical thinking” which contains both rational and irrational elements, as the most excellent form of religious utterance. Like all other paradoxes, however, the paradox of the Absolute is not to be solved or resolved (Seif, 2005) but to be steadily and relentlessly pursued through imaginative interpretation.

God, for Charles S. Peirce (1908), is a vernacular word that is invariably “vague” likewise all other semiotic signs, which represent reality, necessarily fall under the logic of vagueness (Raposa, 1989). Since the conceptions of God and the Absolute differ in meaning, Peirce has implicitly rejected the idea of identifying God with the Absolute. For him, although both God and the Absolute are real, the Absolute is “nothing like God” (Raposa, 1989: 59). Actually, from a semiotic point of view, God, as a sign, is not an absolute power but is spontaneous, changeable, and creative (Nöth, 2010). Thus, God is far from being the Absolute.

The claims for the existence of God in monotheistic religions have gone beyond mere existence into absoluteness, exemplified by the notion of the only “True God”, the rest being paganism. For example, the Islamic slogan “There is no god but
Allah” has created a dogmatic stance, and well as the Christian interpretation of Jesus’s declaration “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life” has, by association, rendered Christianity a religion superior over all others. Unfortunately, our age seems to have overlooked the idea that “God is to be conceived as one and as many in the converse sense in which the World is to be conceived as many and as one” (Whitehead, 1978; 349).

From the origin of religion in ancient Egypt to the present time, God has been objectified in numerous forms and has been recognized by many different names. For instance, the esoteric religions of Buddhism and Hinduism have no one creator god and the Absolute God has no place; and in the spiritual tradition of the Kalahari Bushmen in Africa, God may be given a different name as often as everyday! Over time, the Absolute has been transformed from mythological gods and goddesses in ancient Egypt and classical Greek, to the mighty Yahweh in the Old Testament, to Christ in the New Testament, to the Allah of Islam, and into digital technology, which seems to possess the power to influence all aspects of cultural and social conduct. Digital technology has become the new god, the Absolute of our time. Ironically, while digital technology is being elevated to the status of a god, we tend to forget that this technology is our own creation (Seif, 2012).

Clearly, there is a philosophical problem with the conventional understanding of the nature of the Absolute and the meaning of God. On the one hand, if the Absolute is the only worshiped God, the human capacity to create and transform is denied, therefore paralyzing humans from acting in the very nature of God’s image—the act of creation. On the other hand, if this entity exists for its own glory, indulging itself by human worship and idealization, then it is self-observed, self-indulgent, and codependent on human beings for its existence. This notion of God, as the Absolute power, puts humans at a crossroads of conduct; whether to obey the mighty God or His representative in all their conduct, and consequently be rewarded by receiving the gift of heaven, or to be thrown into hell for disobedience. Such a God is far from being the loving God. God does not seek self-fulfillment. Instead, the relationship between humans and God is a relationship that constitutes the desire for seeking mutual fulfillment (Taylor, 2007).

The American philosopher William Ernest Hocking (1912) offers a different ontological argument for the existence of God, which states that God is near and remote, one and many, and personal and impersonal. And this mysterious and paradoxical entity we call “God is not the ground of being that forms the foundation of all beings but the figure constructed to hide the (original) abyss from which everything emerges and to which all returns” (Taylor, 2007: 345).
The concept of the Absolute God as an entirely static permanent entity is a fallacy that separates God from humans and, consequently, fabricates a deficient reality of inflexible religions. The creator God changes along with everything else. And as Whitehead (1978) asserts, “God and the World move conversely to each other in respect to their process.” This makes the Absolute without absoluteness. In other words, the Absolute is reciprocal fluid dynamics (Seif, 2012).

The relation between human beings and God implies an active transformation of the Absolute. And considering today’s complex and rapidly changing world, there is a strong desire for an imaginative interpretation and radical reconceptualization of the Absolute (Taylor, 2007), a reinvention of the sacred (Kauffman, 2008). Hence, we might conclude that there is a kind of ever-present reciprocity in which God created human beings and human beings created God. Perhaps this fluid dynamic gives each one of us permission to play God and, yet, stay sensible. Indeed, as Freeman J. Dyson (1979; 236–237) tells us, “We shall be playing God, but only as local deities and not as lords of the universe.” And this reciprocity, in the words of Bruce Wilshire (2000; 146), means that “the universe celebrates itself through us as God—becomes home to itself—and shows itself perfectly adequate and self-sufficient in doing so.”

4. Beyond the Absolute: The Paradox of Intelligent Design and Evolution

According to Thomas Aquinas, natural things cannot achieve the optimum outcome without an intelligent being; i.e., the Absolute God. However, most scientists reject the idea of science as including the supernatural explanation of “intelligent design”, for it lacks empirical support and does not use scientific methodology. For scientists, the theory of evolution is favored over the religious concept of intelligent design, that is, neither does the universe have purpose nor does it need a creator to guide it. One of the most recent arguments of the incompatibility between science and religion is the following statement:

The mechanism of evolution is precisely unguided variation plus natural selection, which explains the observed complexity and variety of life and the clear absence of beneficent purpose—or, indeed, any purpose. (Stenger, 2012: 292)

But the above counterargument against the teleological argument is misleading. What makes one doubt or believe that the universe does or does not have purpose?
The fact that we do not know is not a reasonable basis for dismissing the idea that there might be a purpose for the universe’s existence. Consider, for example, that the phenomenon of gravity was in existence before Newton had discovered the law for understanding it and given it a name. One cannot reasonably dismiss the idea that the universe has purpose. Nor can one ignore the intelligent design behind the universe.

As I mentioned earlier, in Judeo-Christian-Islamic monotheism, God is the absolute creator of the universe. But if God is the creator of this “grand design,” then who created God? Where does God come from? These questions are not to suggest the absence of God. On the contrary, since the entire universe is continuous relations, everything is potentially a sign of God’s presence (Raposa, 1989). While Stephen Hawking admits that the universe carries the appearance of a “grand design” and argues that the universe spontaneously created itself from nothing (Hawking & Mlodinow, 2010), there is certainly no design without a designer; design implies a “designer”, that is, God. Perhaps one of the most robust descriptions is Edgar Mitchell’s experience returning to Earth from his Apollo 14 walk on the moon in February 1971:

How peacefully, how harmoniously, how marvelously it seemed to fit into the evolutionary pattern by which the universe is maintained. In a peak experience, the presence of divinity became almost palpable and I knew that life in the universe was not just an accident based on random processes. [This knowledge] was not a matter of discursive reasoning or logical abstraction. It was an experiential cognition. […] Clearly, the universe had meaning and direction. It was not perceptible by the sensory organs, but it was there nevertheless—an unseen dimension behind the visible creation that gives it an intelligent design and that gives life purpose. (Quoted in Harman & Rheingold, 1984: 155–156)

The debate over evolution and intelligent design seem to go nowhere. Although Charles Darwin explains that adaptation and natural selection occur without the need for a designer, he inclines to consider that everything results from designed laws. Natural selection alone cannot account for evolution and since everything is codependent, “all evolution is coevolution” (Taylor, 2007: 336). It is now appropriate to recall the Platonic concept of “demiurge” in The Republic. This term literally meaning “public worker”, was originally a common noun meaning “craftsman” or “artisan”, and eventually came to mean the creator of the universe.
Since a virtuous public worker, a craftsman or a designer, acts to serve the public and is not interested in self-expression, he/she is concerned with expression on behalf of the other. And paradoxically, even this self-expression can be fulfilled through the expression on behalf of the other human beings. One could reasonably conclude that God has created the universe on behalf of human beings. And since a good designer works with, not for, others, God and human beings have co-created the universe. Hence, everything is an expression (a sign) of the presence of humans and of God. In his Design for Evolution, Erich Jantsch (1975) introduces an important concept where in the evolutionary process human consciousness and the numinous are integrated in self-organizing patterns.

God’s directive to Adam and Eve to “be fertile and increase” is not only a magnanimous invitation to seek the act of creation in all human endeavors but also an implicit call to multiply the Creator’s image, making God as one and as many. Recently, many Jewish, Christian, Muslim, and Buddhist and Hindu scholars have developed interesting connections between evolutionary theory and religious traditions. One of the most controversial concepts is the proposition of “theistic evolution” or evolutionary creation, which asserts that traditional religions are compatible with scientific theory of biological evolution. Theistic evolution is a transmodern concept that makes the idea of God compatible with scientific domains, urging the understanding that evolution is simply a tool for God to guide the unfolding process of life and the development of human beings.

There is a worldwide spiritual awakening that has been called the “interfaith” movement. Although the idea of interfaith understanding has historical roots, it has recently permeated the entire world on both individual and institutional levels. This movement is a clear indication that religions are not closed systems but are perceived transparently. It is through this interfaith dialogue that members of different faiths can reach an interpretive understanding of theological biases and thus discover high-leverage points to transform the concept of the Absolute. As Charles S. Peirce anticipates, such an understanding might be the upshot of discourse between self and others, in which each reaches an approximation of the reality of the other (Nöth, 2001). This transparent perception has the potential to move religious centrality to a polycentric world religion. And since this transparent perception is essential for the dialogue among different religions, it is necessary for bridging different civilizations that would ultimately lead to world peace.

We cannot survive by holding on to the Absolute God and tolerating the inflexibility of religions. Only through integration can human beings thrive. In this sense, as indicated above, integration does not imply mixing and dissolving
differences; rather, integration reveals the qualities of transparency and the metamorphosis of the Absolute God and inflexibility of religions. The human capacity for “divination”—the direct apprehension of the manifestation of the holy (Otto, 1923)—has nothing to do with the actual experience of the Absolute God; rather, it has to do with intuition, feeling, and imagination. The Absolute is purely imaginary and utterly transformative, which again makes God and human beings co-creators of the universe.

5. Bridging Different Civilization by Transforming the Absolute

To bridge different civilizations, contemporary societies must develop transparent perception that sees through multiple metaphorical representations of religions. Transparency, or seeing through, is what Jean Gebser (1985) calls “diaphaneity”, and it is the hallmark of transmodernity which is inclusive of modernity and postmodernity and resonates with Gebser’s “Aperspectival World”. Transmodernity does not reject the characteristics of either modernity or postmodernity.

This idea of transparency is particularly significant in reassessing transmodernity, since Gebser’s notion of aperspectival consciousness is concerned with diaphanous perception of the whole; such consciousness cannot disregard the characteristics of simultaneity and reciprocal perception that go beyond the limitations of the Absolute. Similar to Gebser’s diaphanous perception is Charles S. Peirce’s extraordinary triadic conception of semiotic signs, where a sign or “representamen” brings its “object” and its “interpretant” into a continuous and transparent relation. This makes our perception of the Absolute utterly open, interpretable, and transparent.

The concept of transforming the Absolute has the potential to heal the zeitgeist of our existence in spite of uncertainty. For human beings to live within the confinement of stability and certainty is to be dead even when alive (Taylor, 2007). This way of life opens the everlasting desire that does not seek satisfaction but cultivates the dissatisfaction that triggers endless restlessness for making meaning and significance. To go beyond the Absolute God and inflexibility of religions is to

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It was the Latin American philosopher Enrique Dussel (1985) who coined the idea of transmodernity as a project for transcending modernity and postmodernity, and as a call for social change for de-alienation, de-marginalization, and de-colonization. What catches our attention in transmodernity is the prefix “trans,” which comes from the Latin across, means beyond and through. This seems to be the rationale behind Dussel’s favoring of “beyond” over “post.”
be open to designing for life, a life that does not seek complacency with stagnation but seeks meaningful transformation. Societies need to be willing to engage in the process of metamorphosis, which is essential for bridging different civilizations.

Human beings are considerably more than rational animals. They are semiotic animals (Deely, 2010) capable of developing awareness, relationships, and mediation toward semiosis of an undivided wholeness in flowing movement. Such being the case, humans have unlimited “semioethical” responsibility toward each other and toward more-than-human systems. This ethical implication depends on our ability to engage with the process of transforming the Absolute and carefully observe the transparency of religions—to connect with the original meaning of relegere. This semioethical responsibility is significant for contemporary societies in order to overcome the calamity of declaring that God is dead and rendering the Absolute obsolete. Transforming the concept of the Absolute refers to the radical transformation that does not reject what exists; God with multiple names and forms, religions with diverse metaphorical expressions. For global semiotics to bridge different civilizations, it must consider that there is a kind of ever-present reciprocity in which God created human beings and human beings created God. Transforming the concept of the Absolute is certainly the way we may bridge different civilizations.

References


Part F
Science and Semiotic Practice
Translation as a double act of communication: a perspective from the semiotics of culture

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Abstract: There can be no doubt that translation is an act of communication, but if all communication is translation, it becomes impossible to understand the specificity of the act of translation. Here we will suggest that translation is a double, even integrated, act of communication. The idea rests on a model of communication that the present author has developed in earlier publications, taking his point of departure in the models of communication put forward by the Prague and Tartu schools of semiotics. Starting from this, we will consider the difference in communicating with Alter (which is another potential Ego) and with Alius, considered as the foreigner, the outsider, and/or the friend. Again, we are involved with ideas suggested by the Tartu school, and developed in several publications by the present author: Culture as opposed to Non-culture, to which may be added Extra-culture, all of which could be better understood in terms of Ego, Alius and Alter. Similar ideas, however, are present also in the late work of Edmund Husserl: the Homeworld as opposed to the Alienworld. The idea of translation between cultures, present in the Tartu school conception, would seem to bring in a metaphorical sense of translation. We will therefore investigate to what extent the translation metaphor applied to the exchange of words in one language (Jakobson’s intralingual translation) and the transference from one semiotic resource to another (Jakobson’s intersemiotic translation), as well as to the relation between cultures (according to the Tartu school) is enlightening or misleading—or perhaps a bit of both.

Key words: Communication; Culture; Sender; Receiver; Interpretation; Cultural encounter

It has become customary to use the Peircean sign model, which is perhaps rather a model of communication, to account for translation (Cf. Colapietro 2003; Petrilli 2003). This is suggested by the idea that all meaning is translation, which itself may seem to result from Peirce’s claim that each of the three parts of a sign may be expanded into another sign, as well as from the more specific proposal that an immediate interpretant may be transformed into a dynamic interpretant, and so on until the final interpretant, which is perhaps never reached. Whatever the
advantages of this model, it has a clear defect; it does not tell us in which way translation is different from other meanings. According to the present proposal, translation is a double act of communication. But it is perhaps not the only double act of communication there is. But we must start by trying to understand the act of communication as such.

1. For a New Model of Communication

We must liberate communication in the sense of presenting signs from the sense in which it involves cars, trains, and the like, which change their position in space. Although trains and cars move, change of position in space is not a requisite of communication, in the sense that a meaning is communicated from one person to another, contrary to what is suggested by the mathematical theory of communication still current in semiotics, and promoted, notably, by Jakobson (1960) and Eco (1976). There are things to be learnt about communication from the Prague model; that the receiver is equally active as the sender. And there are things to be learnt from the Tartu model. The latter is really concerned with relationships between cultures, but these can be reformulated in terms of the act of communicating. What the Tartu school says about sender and receiver cultures can be rephrased as two different positions in the act of communicating.

1.1 Beyond the Heritage of Shannon & Weaver

Jan Mukarovsky, the main figure of the Prague school of semiotics in the 1930s, started out from the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl model in order to describe communication, in particular as instantiated in a work of art, but then added to this social dimension. An artefact is produced by somebody, and it has to be transformed by another person into a work of art in a process of concretisation. The most important idea to retain from the Prague school, in my view, is that communication (in the sense of conveying signs) is not necessarily about transportation or encoding, but it does involve the presentation of an artefact by somebody to somebody else, giving rise to the task of making sense of this artefact. Since, to Mukarovsky (1970), this is a social act, the process of creating the artefact, as well as that of perceiving it, is determined by a set of norms, which may be aesthetic (and in works of art they would be predominantly so), but they can also be social, psychological, and so on. The work of art is that which transgresses these rules. Mukarovsky points out, however, that these norms may be of any kind, going from simple regularities to written laws. We could conclude that
there is a continuum from normalcy to normativity, without qualitative divisions being left out.

Since this model builds on the phenomenological conception of perception, it can easily be generalized to the everyday case of communication. All kinds of communication consists of presenting an artefact to another subject and assigning him or her the task of transforming it by means of concretisation into a percept. Simply put, what happens in communication, in the relevant sense, is that some subject creates an artefact, and another subject is faced with the task of furnishing an interpretation for this artefact (cf. Sonesson, 1999). Although trains and cars move, change of position in space is not a requisite of communication, in the sense that a meaning is communicated from one person to another, contrary to what is suggested by the mathematical theory of communication. Nor is recoding a requirement (Figure 1). Indeed, the train and the car do not have much new to tell us, nor does the Lévi-Straussean woman circulate between the tribes. The two senses of communication may overlap in some cases (when a letter is transported by train, for instance), but basically they are quite different. As for recoding, it is sometimes needed, but most of the time, the same (or at least overlapping repertories of) signs may be used at both ends of the communication chain.

![General Model of Communication](image)

**Figure 1** Model of communication integrating the Prague and the Tartu model, as proposed by Sonesson 1999

Of course, when the message is sent as a letter, the train or the airplane has to assist it on its way to the receiver. Sometimes the sender has to go to the same
particular place to create the artefact. The telegraph, still current at the end of the 20th century, requires such a displacement. By contrast, e-mail communication does not require more displacement on the part of either the sender or receiver than sitting down in front of a computer or, more recently, firing up a smart phone. Sometimes the receiver has to go somewhere else to pick up the message. This is still the case if you want to experience original prehistorical cave paintings or Renaissance frescoes. In other words, sometimes the sender and/or the receiver have to move, in addition to or instead of the artefact. Displacement is thus quite a separate issue from communication.

Although displacement is not a requirement for receiving messages—even less so nowadays when you can send an email instead of a telegram or peruse archives on the Internet without going to the actual place where the archives are located—displacement still has the advantage of offering ever new potentialities of messages. Transport may be the occasion for communication. Indeed, movement has always offered new vistas, even to the predecessors of Homo sapiens and other animals. Precisely because movement may be a concomitant of specific kinds of communication, spatial displacement and communication have to be distinguished to begin with.

Another peculiar case, which emerges once we construe communication as a task offered for interpretation, is that the sender may him/herself be (part of) the message (cf. Sonesson, 1999). The artefact created is, in this sense, his/her own body (Figure 2) or parts thereof that are singled out for attention. This applies to all gestures, to all kinds of spectacles, to everyday meetings and indeed to the classical situation of communication. In the latter case, the sender may be saying something or showing a picture, but his/her own body is also part of the message.  

As I have pointed out elsewhere (Sonesson, 2000), the spectacular function can be described as an operation resulting in a division applied to a group of people, and separating those which are subjects and objects, respectively, of the process of contemplation, but, in fact, the subjects and objects of contemplation are often the same, at least temporarily. In the market, on the square, or along the boulevard, observation is (potentially) mutual, as well as intermittent. Yet, this is not true of the official parade or the dismemberment of Damien, or of the sporting event or the theatre. In ritual, there is a difference between those who only observe and those who, in addition to observing, are also observed. In contrast, along the boulevard.

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1 It should be noted that awareness and/or purpose have not been included in the characterization of communication given above. Messages of the sender’s body are of course often not intended.
but also already on the town square, the spectacular function is symmetric and continuously changing. However, contrary to what happens in other parts of everyday life, it is certainly dominant, in the sense of the Prague school; it not only retains the upper hand, but also uses everything else for its purpose.

1.2 Orientation to Target or to Source

According to an idea, suggested by Lotman (1976) as well as by Moles (1981), the sender and receiver of any situation of communication start out with “codes”—or, as I would prefer to say, systems of interpretation—, which overlap only in part, struggling to homogenise the system of interpretation as the communication proceeds. We can extend this idea by referring to the Tartu school conception that cultures may be sender-oriented and receiver-oriented (Lotman, et al. 1975), and by transferring these properties to situations of communication. The communicative act may then be said to be sender-oriented or source-oriented, to the extent that it is considered to be the task of the receiver or target to recover that part of the system of interpretation which is not shared between the participants. It will be receiver-oriented, or target-oriented to the extent that the task of recovering knowledge not held in common is assigned to the sender or source. In other words, a situation of communication is source-directed when it is the receiver (target) that has to adapt to
the interpretative resources at the disposal of the source (sender), and the situation of communication is target-directed when it is the sender (source) that has to adapt to the interpretative resources at the disposal of the receiver (target).

Art, as conceived in the 20th century, has been characteristically sender-oriented; mass media, in the received sense of the term (which is not really applicable to all modern media), have been noticeably receiver-oriented. A dialogue takes place when each of the subjects adapts his schemes of interpretation somewhat to that of the other—that is, in Piagetean terms, when there is both accommodation and assimilation. This would normally suppose there to be a large share of common ground from the beginning. On the other hand, when sender and receiver fail to negotiate the parts of the interpretation system that they do not both possess, the resulting concretisation will be a deformation. One or both of the subjects will then assimilate the message without accommodating to it. In this sense, both sender-orientation and receiver-orientation are deformations, but they are normally deformations that are prescribed by the culture.

Although they derive from a quite different tradition, and even from two different traditions, there are familiar names for these orientations: the adaptation to source, and more generally the whole dimension going from the receiver to the sender, can be termed hermeneutic; it is about the way of understanding the other and/or his works. And the adaptation to target, and the whole dimension going from sender to receiver, can be called rhetorical, because it is about the way of best getting the message fourth to the receiver. The overall dimension, which concerns the resources at hand, is properly semiotic.

2. Semiotics of Culture

Semiotics of culture was invented by Jurij Lotman, Boris Uspenskij and a number of other scholars in the so-called Moscow-Tartu school in the sixties of the last century (Lotman, et al. 1975). In the original version, it concerned the opposition of Culture to Non-culture, conceived as a difference between order and disorder, and many other binary terms. Semiotics of culture constructs models of models of cultures—meta-models of auto-models—as they are created by members of culture (or are implied by their behaviour). These models mainly involve relations that obtain (according to a particular model) between the own culture and other cultures (subcultures, etc.), that is, the models are egocentrically defined. The mutual models of different cultures also determine the way they communicate with each other.
2.1 Ego and Alter

Edmund Husserl’s notion of the Lifeworld, “the world taken for granted”, has by now become so familiar, that it is used by many persons who might not even know who first conceived it. In his later work, however, Husserl made a distinction between homeworlds and alienworlds (as referred in Steinbock, 2003; 296ff.). In this sense, the homeworld (Heimwelt) “is not one place among others, but a normatively special geo-historical place which is constituted with a certain asymmetrical privilege” (ibid.), and which can be identified with a family or with a whole culture. In each case, what is outside of it is the alienworld (Fremdwelt). This seems to be the same conception, clearly without there being any influence, as that formulated by the Tartu school. In this model, Culture is opposed to Nature or Non-culture, as inside is to outside, order to disorder, civilisation to Barbarism, and so on. Elsewhere, I have called this the canonical model, observing that it is defined from the point of view of culture, while implicitly placing the Ego inside it, looking out on Non-culture (Sonesson 2000).

By definition, there is only one homeworld, but according to what I (Sonesson, 2000; 2004; 2007) have called the extended model (Figure 3.), there really are two kinds of alienworlds. There are those you treat as different but equal, with whom you are on speaking terms, those others that are really other egos to you. These represent the second person of grammar, or, in other words, the Alter. And there are those you treat as things, as the third person of grammar, or, in other terms, as Alius. The first is the kind of other that Ego recognizes as being to himself another Ego (cf. Peirce’s “tuism”), the symmetrical or, to coin a term, Peircean other. It constitutes the axis of conversation. The second is the asymmetrical or Bakhtinian other, which is not an other but can be a self. An extreme case might be the Sartrean/Hegelian other; the slave who failed to become master (but this supposes an earlier symmetrical phase, not of dialogue, but of combat). It is the other of reference or nomination.

2.2 Alter and Alius

Emile Benveniste (1966) suggested in a famous analysis that what is ordinarily considered the pronouns of the first, second, and third persons, should really be considered the result of combining two different dimensions, the correlation of personality, which opposes the person to the non-person, and, within the former pole, the correlation of subjectivity, which opposes the subject to the non-subject. The traditional third person, in this sense, is no person at all, and it is opposed to two kinds of persons, the one identified with the speaker, and the one identified
with the listener. \(^1\) Tesnière (1969) later proposed to use the somewhat more enlightening, but more cumbersome, terms \textit{autoontive}, \textit{antiontive}, and \textit{anontive}, respectively; i.e. the one who exists in itself, the one who exists against (the first one), and the one who, properly speaking, does not exist at all. It could be said, then, that Culture is the domain of the subject, or autoontive, while Extra-culture is the domain of the non-subject, or antiontive; Non-culture, finally, is the residence of the Non-person, or anontive. It seems particular proper to describe Non-culture as that which does not properly exist.

Among the classical discoverers of the New world, Columbus, making lists of all kinds of resources and including human beings among precious metals, animals, and plants, is a good example of somebody conceiving the American continent as an Alius, while Cortez, employing an interpreter and using the myths of the Aztecs to integrate himself into their world, took the attitude one has to an Alter. Given these definitions, it might be better, following a suggestion by Cabak Redei (2007), to adopt the terms Ego-culture, Alter-culture, and Alius-culture. As most clearly recognized by Mazur (forthcoming), this makes semiotics of culture into a model of (the difficulties of) communication (cf. Figure 2). In this context, it is interesting

\(^1\) In real grammar, you can of course refer to persons also in the third person, but then you normally do not invite them into any dialogue with you (The third person as a respectful address can be understood in this way).
to us, because sender and/or receiver may be situated in an Alter-culture or an Alius-culture. This will have consequences for translation.

### 3. Semiotics of Translation

A translator has to communicate in two directions. But also the part of the receiver/target is an active part, as we have seen above. What is going on is certainly more complicated than simply substituting a piece of code for another. The act of interpretation has to take place at least twice.

#### 3.1 Translation as a Double Act of Communication

There is something fairly obvious about translation being a double act of communication. Being at the receiving end, I want to read the new novel by Mo Yan, but I am unable to read Chinese. Therefore, somebody must have read the novel before me, and this must have been a person who can understand Chinese. It must also be a person who can write my language.\(^1\) This person, then, is at the receiving end of one process of communication, but at the start of another process. What makes this model more useful for understanding translation than earlier models, however, is the ideas about communication as such which I have presented above: that the receiver is an active subject, who must concretise the artefact produced by the receiver into a percept; that any two parts in a game of communication will only have partly overlapping resources for interpretation at their disposal, and thus one will have to retrieve the resources of the other, or some part of them, for the act of communication to be successful; and that communication may be rendered more difficult by the sender and receiver being situated in different cultures, notably in different Ego-cultures in relation to Alius and/or Alter-cultures, and this is most of the time true for all three participants in the double act of communication.

The translator is a doubly active subject, as interpreter and as creator of a new text. He or she is the receiver of one act of communication and the sender of another one. He or she first has to transform the artefact into an object of his/her own experience. This is a process that cannot be described as encoding, with any intentional depth of the word, because this term suggests a simple exchange of one

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\(^1\) It may also be, nowadays, I am afraid, somebody who cannot write my language, but who writes English, whose version is then read by somebody who can write my language and who translates it a second time. But this is a revolting editorial practice of the present time.
coded item for another. The correspondence often has to be at a much higher level of understanding.

As in any act of communication, the interpretational resources at the disposal of the (as a minimum) three actors involved only partly coincide. In the end, this lack of overlap can never be completely remedied. However, it determines two different strategies of the intermediate subject, the translator. He may adapt to the sender of his first act of communication or to the receiver of his second act of communication—or some combination of this. This means that he must situated himself at some point between the hermeneutic and rhetorical dimension of both acts of communication involved (Figure 4).

![Diagram of communication process]

**Figure 4** The double act of communication known as translation, with its hermeneutic and rhetorical dimensions

The translator can be a member of the same Ego-culture as the sender or the same as the receiver. He will rarely be a member of both. As always, membership in an Ego-culture can be determined at least by two criteria: what you understand best and what you value most. Normally, the translator will better understand either the language he is reading or the language he is writing. He may also identify with the author’s culture which he wants to spread to the other culture, or he can identify with the reader’s culture, which he want to enrich with elements of the other culture. This is turn may partly determined his strategies of adaptation.
3.2 Nida’s Translation Types

Some thinkers, notably Eugene Nida (1959; 2003) have already discussed the possibility of the translator relating in different ways to his source. According to his terminology, there is dynamic equivalence (or functional equivalence) when the translator attempts to convey the thought expressed in a source text (if necessary, at the expense of literalness, original word order, the source text’s grammatical voice, etc.), while there is formal equivalence when the translator attempts to render the text word-for-word (if necessary, at the expense of natural expression in the target language). The latter, in its extreme case, is what we nowadays all know as Goggle translation, and it cannot be said to be adapted either to sender or receiver. Rather, it is a case of mistaking translation for encoding. The former, on the other hand, is a variety of the adaptation to the source, more specifically to what the translator takes to be its intended content.

Nida, however, is a translator with a purpose. He is interested in translating the Bible. Neither the adaptation to source nor the adaptation to target seems quite right here. The task is to bring about the same effect on the contemporary audience or an ethnic group outside of Western culture (which has adopted the Christian message as part of its own) as the Bible had on its first readers. This would imply some kind of adaptation to source, since it is the message of the original writers that is meant to be conveyed. But it requires some kind of adaptation to target, since the effect that was once brought about in one way may not necessarily be produced in our time or in another culture. At the same time, the translator here clearly posits himself in the Ego-culture of the producer of the text (in fact, rather in that of some later followers of this producers, that is, in this case, in that of Baptist tradition of interpretation). This certainly involves a complex interplay of source and target adaptations.

4. From Translation to Transference

A series of situations of communication connected to each other that allows for changes in meaning depending on adaptation to source or target is known as a tradition—in the full sense of hermeneutics. Given a less extended time dimension, it could also be described as the propagation of a rumour (Cf. Figure 5). In both these cases, there is a change of content with each pass from one actor to another. On this level, it is easy to rediscover translation as the infinite Peircean series of interpretants given way to ever-new interpretants. Normally, however, a tradition or a rumour does not require any change of language. We remain within the same...
language sphere and the same culture. Indeed, a tradition can only with difficulty of perhaps not at all be translated from one language to another and from one culture to another.

4.1 Jakobson’s Three Kinds of Translation

According to a famous text by Roman Jakobson (1959), translation does not only take place from one (verbal) language to another. It may also involve one and the same language; and it may relate different semiotic resources. Translation as we ordinarily know it is then interlinguistic translation, also recognized by Jakobson as “translation proper”. Intralinguistic translation is when we change one possible word or phrase of the same language for another. Intersemiotic translation, finally, involves the transference of a content from one kind of semiotic medium to another, such as illustrating a story with a picture, and making a film out of a novel. If we accept these terms, intralinguistic and interlinguistic translations are both intrasemiotic translation (internal to one semiotic resource). In the same way, we will have to envisage the possibility of intrapictorial translation (e.g. exchanging one drawing for another) and interpictorial translation (e.g. substituting a photograph for a drawing).

The translation of a verbal text accompanied by a picture involves all these types of comparisons, and perhaps several more. If the verbal text is determined by, and/or determines, the pictorial one, then it is natural that the translator should feel the need to have access to the latter one, in order to translate the former. In most cases, the linguistic transposition at the same time involves a cultural transposition. Usually, the problem posed by the picture, from the translator’s point of view, is cultural, rather than intrinsic to the pictorial medium, that is, it concerns the way in which the perceptual and/or socio-cultural world is rendered in the picture. It is possible, no doubt, to imagine cases in which the picture type itself is involved, thus, highly codified picture types, like the Russian icon, or a Cubist painting, may have to be translated into some other pictorial style before being useful in other cultures. But these are certainly marginal cases.

Just as in the case of deviant picture types, pictures containing culturally loaded content may be exchanged for others or simply modified. This would involve the work of a professional not ordinarily called a translator. On the other hand, the translator may try to make up for the cultural deviance of the picture by adding elements to his verbal text not found in the verbal part of the source text. At this point, the question whether verbal and pictorial signs system are similarly organised, and thus are able to package the same kind of information, becomes
practically relevant.

The translation from one culture to another still is, in Jakobson’s terms, an intersemiotic translation. However, since it involves the transposition, not of one single semiotic system, but of elements stemming from the whole of culture, it may be better to have recourse to the terms of the semiotics of culture, initiated by the Tartu school, which would call this a case of cultural—or perhaps better intercultural—translation. Typically, the Tartu school would argue, intercultural translation gives rise to deformations, which will only be remedied when the familiarity with foreign texts has made it possible for the receiving culture to set up its own version of the cultural production system first generating the texts.

Translation, in all of Jakobson’s senses, except perhaps for the intralinguistic one, as well as translation in the Tartu school sense, is certainly double acts of translation. An intermediary who is conversant in both media and/or cultures is needed. Yet one may feel that, apart from “translation proper”, as Jakobson still calls it, others are only metaphorically translations. In the case of interlinguistic translation, the path from an expression to a different content may seem too short to count as translation. Indeed, no double act would seem to be needed, at least not acts involving an additional participant. On the contrary, in the case of the intersemiotic translation the path from an expression to a different content may seem too short to count as translation. To go from a linguistic description to a picture, for instance, you would have to retrieve a lot of information that you have no possibility to know, if you were not present at the first act of communication, no matter how much you master the interpretational resources. A “translation” from language to film or even a static picture has to add a lot of new facts (specific looks of the persons, etc.), as Eco (2004) has rightly observed. It is true that this observation may be countered by pointing out that this may also be true when going from one language to another. To take a simple example, there is no way to translate a Finish text referring to its protagonist as “hän” (Finnish differently for he and she), without disposing of some other information, which may only be given to the original writer. But it should be clear that the informational discrepancy between, for instance a picture and language, will necessarily be immensely greater.

The only way to understand the difficulty of “translating” from one semiotical resource to another is to have a closer look at the differences between two such semiotic resources. Gottfried Ephraim Lessing (1766) appears to have been the first to conceive the distinction between painting and literature semiotically, i.e. in terms of visual and verbal signs respectively. According to Lessing, paintings use
signs as the expressions of which are shapes and colours in space, and which have an
iconic (motivated) relation to their contents, whereas literature uses sounds in time
and has an arbitrary relation to the content. This no doubt exaggerates the
capacities and limitations of different semiotic resources. Yet it may be true that
some semiotic vehicles are better adapted to certain purposes.

Lessing certainly fails to observe the distinction between questions of fact and
normative issues: he stipulates that art must be iconic. But if we ignore this issue,
we can learn a lot from his work. Some latter-day semioticians have tried to
reformulated Lessing’s issues in terms of French structuralism (Wellbery 1984) in in
those of Peirce (Bayer, 1975). Both procedures have no doubt been very
enlightening, but, curiously, none have advanced the process of inquiry. Once the
difference of perspective is taken into account, there is, I believe, every reason to
enter into a dialogue, however one-sided, with Lessing. In some of my earlier
writings, I have tried to do this, but here I can only offer a summary (cf. Sonesson,

According to Lessing, verbal language can address any subject matter; it is what
Hjelmslev called a “pass-key language”. Pictures, on the other hand, can only be
directly concerned with—the rather large domain of—everything visible, or
everything having visible homologues. If we are to believe Lessing and many later
thinkers, including Nelson Goodman, pictures are not only able to describe the
whole of space, but they cannot avoid doing so; they can only show “fully
determinate entities”. This is certainly not true: as I have shown, against
Goodman, the “density” of pictures is only relative, and all kinds of abstraction are
found in them (cf. Sonesson, 1989; 226ff and 324ff; 1995). This applies to the
expression plane, in the case of more or less schematic pictures, but is also applies to
the content plane of some pictures the expression plane of which is fully dense.
Thus, for all practical purposes, many pictures are not signs of individuals, but of
abstract roles in more or less generic situations.

According to Bayer (1975) commenting on Lessing, bodies are carriers of
actions, i.e. they are presupposed by them. Actions, however, are continuous, but
can only be rendered iconically as discrete states. The distribution scheme for
pictures does not allow for succession, only for actions rendered indirectly by means
of bodies and collective actions where several persons act together.

The difficulty posed by narrativity in pictures, as Bayer reads Lessing, is that
the picture is unable to abstract; Homer may show the gods drinking and discussing
at the same time, but pictures are unable to convey all this information. To my
mind, it is not the amount of information that is crucial (the picture may easily
carry more), but the possibility to organise it; verbal language is able to convey relative importance, newness, theme, etc., and the picture may possess corresponding mechanism, which we do not know of (cf. Sonesson, 1995). The problem is certainly not to show both the gods drinking and having a discussion; it is to mark one of this activities as being in the foreground and the other in the background. In the picture, the space of representation is, at the same time, the representation of the space of ordinary human perception, which hampers any kind of organisation by other systems. Some modifications to this principle was introduced by Cubism, Matisse, some forms of collages and synthetic pictures, and also by some visual systems of information, logotypes, Blissymbolics, traffic signs, etc.

According to Lessing, using the terminology employed by Bayer, pictures can render “bodies” (spatial continua) directly, that is, as relatively determinate entities, but “events” (temporal continua) only indirectly by means of the traces left on bodies (spatial continua), that is, in terms of pregnant momenta. In the same terminology, language is said to render all units, “events” (temporal continua) directly, and “bodies” (spatial continua) indirectly, but only in the form of a limited number of properties abstracted from the wholes of the Lifeworld, that is, as sensate qualities, in different combinations. If this were true, verbal language, far from being a “pass-key language”, would be defective in the rendering of spatial continuo, just as pictures are in case of the rendering of temporal continua.

Nevertheless, there is a serious error in the whole of Lessing’s reasoning, not detected by Bayer or Wellbury; it is certainly not true that language is particularly apt to render temporal continua an iconical way (cf. Sonesson, 1995). Language is made up of temporal continua (at least in its spoken form), but the temporal continua which it most of the time is called upon to convey to us are not linguistic ones. And for these temporal continua, language does not offer more resources than pictures do. Even though language is basically arbitrary, it does contain some iconic terms, notably onomatopoetic words, but what is iconic about them is rarely their temporality. Syntax may of course be used to introduce some iconic sequence; e.g. “Veni, vidi, vinci”, if we suppose the three acts to have taken place in that order. Perhaps the best example of temporal iconicity on a large scale would be the radio commentator describing a sport events as it unfolds. On the whole, however, gesture comes much closer to being able to render temporal continua with some reasonable extent of iconicity.

Even if pictures cannot really render fully determinate entities, they certainly come much closer to doing that, even in the case of temporal continua, than
language can ever do. The imperfection of verbal language, which is at the same time its big strength, is that it cannot render anything, temporal and spatial continua, or whatever, but as sensate qualities, that is, in the form of a limited set of properties abstracted from the wholes of which the world of our experience is made up. This is why “translating” from verbal language into a picture is a more forbidding task than the opposite; an immense number of properties are simply not available. But the opposite task is also impossible, for another reason: when “translating” from a picture—and from a percept—into language, a number of decisions about how to organize the discourse in terms of thematic hierarchies has to be made, and again the required information is not available to the translator.

5. Translation as a Specific Kind of Transference

In some respects, Jakobson’s intersemiotic translation, unlike the intralinguistic one, retains some of the properties of translation proper; it is a double act of communication. Yet, the kinds and the number of information available to the original sender, which the “translator”, as combined receiver and sender, has to retrieve, go well beyond those required of the ordinary translator. Much more needs to be said about the similarities and differences between the three kinds of “translation” pinpointed by Jakobson, as well as the “cultural translation” characterised by the Tartu school. While we ponder these differences and similarities, I suggest we should use some more neutral terms: intralinguistic transference; interlinguistic transference (translation); intersemiotic transference; intercultural transference; or something of the kind.

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Semiotics and Second Order Cybernetics

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Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to illustrate an example of global semiotics for the 11th World Congress of the International Association for Semiotic Studies. Bridging Different civilizations, the aim specified in the call for papers was a challenge for an endeavor seeking rainbows emerging from semiotics and second order cybernetics domains treated with (triggered by or fueled by and also increased by or stimulated by) simple algebraic tools.

Another purpose of this paper is to exemplify some simple algebraic and corporate policy techniques to help and find the value of information of different states emerging from the process of decision-making. The first part was shaped as a more personal or colloquial approach using the Second-Order Cybernetic concept of Observer INSIDE the black/grey BOX of the process. The second part is about techniques applied beyond the aim of it. The result shows that the uncertainties created by the mystery of the decision-making depend on the doubts created by those chosen to decide and no one else. It illustrates how a combination of simple quantitative methods reveals hidden scenarios and deals with true and false assignments. It is written in the style of a play, and like a mathematical riddle, adds more information to find the bits of information as assumption value and shadow prices for the alternative decision.

Key words: Science; Second Cybernetics; Semiotics; information; knowledge

Quantitative Methods Interaction on Semiotics and Second Order Cybernetics
Homage for the Nanjing Organizing Committee and Students

The Author’s Quest is to find at least one answer to the question: Is Algebraic Theory useful for decision making looking for consensus (agreement, accord, harmony, compromise, consent)? It will be shown that is using a new approach by applying algebraic and Portfolio Analysis, quantitative methods, cybernetics and semiotics paradigms and concepts. In general, organizational theory is unable to create any degree of coherence in the field due to the plurality of its unconnected and unrelated models. This has resulted in the search for alternative approaches (Scherer, 1998).

The problem is, to find new approaches, one has to move outside the traditional field, and other related fields operate with different and incommensurable
paradigms (Burrell and Morgan, 1998). Two promising areas are cybernetics (the study of control and communications) and semiotics (the study of signs and their related processes and signification, especially within the context of communication), and there is often a perceived bridge between them (Brier, 2008).

The reason is that the distinct paradigms that operate within the different fields are by their very nature incommensurable, and one has to create a new paradigm from elementary propositions that encapsulate the desirable elements that are extracted from the collective of paradigms. This is not always seen as an appropriate way forward to the traditional holders of those paradigms, which tend to be constrained by the boundaries that they create for themselves, and therefore the supporters are blind to alternative perspectives unless they are hidden in their own specific terms of reference (Suddaby and Hardy, 2008). For example see Figure 1.

The Engineer is constructivist in the upper part of the figure representing the first order cybernetics. In the lower part the constructivist is doubled by OBSERVER. The article contains an interstitial application of Pierce’s semiotics and Stafford Beer’s Second Cybernetics free-dynamic paradigms in decision-making applications (Magoroh Maruyama, 1963; Scott, 2010). Using concepts such as “feedbefore”, “feedforward” and “feedback”, it is revealed the narrative behind the antenarrative is revealed creating new meaning (Boje, 1991).

The shortest definition of SEMIOTICS is that it is the study of signs, road signs, pub signs and star signs (“visual signs”), drawings, paintings and photographs (the art), words, sounds and “body language” (all these things have something). Everybody “read the signs” they are aware of (Brier Soren, 2008). This important awareness comes from the fact that many words used here are primarily created by researchers and shared among them paradigmatically. For many others they are not, in our opinion, understood to be “words” in English language because they are not in the dictionary.

In fact we follow the opinion expressed by Eero Tarasti in a preface to the Chinese edition of his book Existential Semiotics and aired in Jan. 4, 2011 in
Helsinki; “some terms in earlier versions have not been translated at all from their original languages to preserve their subtle nuances”. Also, this paper investigates the cybernetic implications of a semiotic cyclical analytical model in the tradition of Pierce’s approach.

It emphasizes the role of the Observer (abbreviated Obs in Figure 2) inside the process represented by the “black box” with inputs I and outputs O, perceptions preconditioned by noise & signals (letters N and S in figure 1). The uncertainty created by N and S, forces the Obs to become an Experimenter (abbreviated Exp) using combinatorial tools and then an Interpreter (coded Int in figure 2) of the output results.

The Second Cybernetics principle, implied by the author of this paper inside the black box is looking for semiotic signs and/or supposedly meaningless phenomenon.

I was the OBSERVER attending a show of several excerpts of Kunqu Opera Classics performed by the artists of Jiangsu Arts Group. The venue was Yifang Lecture Hall. NNU and the time and date was 19; 30 October 5, 2012.

I was invited at the 11\textsuperscript{th} World Congress of Semiotics Cultural Event named Quintessential Chinese Evening: Kunqu Opera Classics. I read the evening program. Here is an excerpt from it:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>《西厢记·游殿》</th>
<th>《西厢记·游殿》</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>唐代，书生张珙上京应试，途经普救寺。和尚法聪陪他畅游僧院佛殿，不想遭遇居西厢房的相国千金莺莺和丫环红娘。张珙对莺莺小姐一见钟情，由此无心应试，羁留寺中。</td>
<td>唐代，书生张珙上京应试，途经普救寺。和尚法聪陪他畅游僧院佛殿，不想遭遇居西厢房的相国千金莺莺和丫环红娘。张珙对莺莺小姐一见钟情，由此无心应试，羁留寺中。</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A Temple Tour, excerpt from The West Chamber

In the Tang Dynasty, a young man named Zhang Gong goes to the capital to take the kejukaoshi (an administrative test for selecting bureaucrat candidates). He stops midway at Pujiu Temple where he is having a tour accompanied by a monk Facong. Unexpectedly Zhang Gong can’t help falling in love with Miss Yingying who is the daughter of a local official and stays in the temple with Hong Niang, her maid. He then decides to stay in the temple, forgetting about the test...

法 聡……李鸿良 饰
（著名昆曲丑角演员、国家一级演员、中国戏剧“梅花奖”获奖者）
张 珙……钱振荣 饰
（著名昆曲小生演员、国家一级演员、江苏省“红梅杯”戏曲大赛金奖获得者）
莺 莺……周向红 饰
（国家二级演员）
红 娘……丛海燕 饰
（国家二级演员、江苏省首“加佳杯”表演奖获得者）
Fa Cong—Li Hongliang (famous clown, first-class national artist)
Zhang Gong—Qian Zhenrong (first-class national artist)
Ying Ying—Zhou Xianghong (second-class national artist)
Hong Nang—Cong Haiyan (second-class national artist)

The environment was very simple and wonderful; the lecture hall had a lot of comfortable chairs and two electronic panels at the right and left of audience for the English text of lyrics. The stage was almost empty; the musical instruments were to the left. As the artists sang, each line was translated on special wall panels. As an Observer, I noticed some of the kinesics’ gestures and prosodic configuration from what I’ve read or was able to see. Taking into consideration that the Researcher as OBSERVER detected data and sign or signals in a noisy environment from this new External Reality, I absorbed this feedbefore information as data, and the signs or signals as inputs I, in the cybernetics approach. I chose what I recognized as data and signs, finding them in huge numbers from an external visible and invisible environment.

I had to make some assumptions about what gesture meant as signs, signals, motions, shrugs, nods, or eyes movement and deal with also the translation difficulties of the songs, text, words and phrases. Additionally, I did not know a thing about Chinese instruments. I accepted that I could be wrong in my interpretation as much as one in twenty attempts, meaning 5%, an error that Statistics approved in Social Sciences.

Reading the libretto I could understand the acting only when the artists deny or agree, refute, reject, rebuff, contradict, disagree with, refuse, disallow. Also when they agree or disagree, have the same opinion, concur, are in agreement, see eye to eye, be of the same mind, and be of the same opinion, consent. Many of synonyms must be interpreted as signs S or noises N. First of all, the audience as OBSERVERS collect all the data, signs and create a system of attitudes as artists sing or speak, talk, converse, tell, chat, verbalize, articulate, have a word, address OR listen, pay attention, take note, eavesdrop, listen, snoop. I could use most of my experience to make assumptions and treat them as feedforward (wishes, dreams, hopes, hypothesis, even bets) information as Outputs from processing the actions on the stage. As feedforward information I make assumptions, supposition, statements, postulations, hypothesis, guesses, develop theories, and imagine an after or will be conjecture.

On a scale from 1 to 100 I hope to understand the artists’ gestures around 40 to 50, let us say 47. After a while, the musicians take their place and the scene is animated, and the translation in English language appears. During a short break
between the excerpts I am asked what I enjoyed most. I said I wished (feedforward) I could add more points to gesture understanding and saying that because of the expressive eye movement and face makeup and feet and body language I accumulate more progress. But more than that, the lyrics of songs and the text translation made me more confident to add more than 60 points as an output and 24 for the Chinese music and sounds mixture.

After the performance, as a holistic appreciation I told my Chinese hosts that in the environment there was perfect blending between gestures, text and music I could say that my knowledge was enriched with another 11 points for gestures, 24 for subtle ideas from the text and around 60 for the musicians performance and songs that I understand better now.

The assumptions I made are illustrated in Table 1 as possibilities between zero and 100 for the feedbefore (approximations of what I think I already know) in the first column concerning the gestures, the English translation and music (melody, tune, song, music played by instruments).

The second column contains the fulfillments of the feedforward information, or wishes for enriched knowledge. The third column contains the feedback from the holistic environment, explanations and personal satisfaction of how much information is added at the end of the performance.

As an Experiment, I compute these assumptions taking into consideration that my Knowledge for interpreting the Chinese Kunqu Opera Classics is not greater than 5% for gestures, versification (translation) or music. The Ho, the null hypothesis in statistics let you make an error in twenty trials without hard risk (Type I).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assumptions in matrix A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>info feed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gestures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

So, using the algebraic matrix procedures is obtained the need for harmony, the harmony for obtaining satisfactions equally divided between the characteristics I chosen.

The level of understanding before and after the performance is obtained in matrix form as \((1 \ 1 \ 1)' A\), a line vector of one multiplied with A and then \(A' (1 \ 1 \ 1)\), the
matrix $A$ multiplied with an vector column of one. The results are sums on column 
(63, 99, and 96) which could be interpreted as how much I know, wish to know and
it is possible to know. As sums on rows it is as how much I wish to know about
gestures, lyrics translation and music (69, 96, and 93). The procedure on rows
looks as analytic approach, on columns as holistic ones.

1L is the linear or row vector (1, 1, 1) $\begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 & 1 \end{pmatrix}$

Legend 1C is the column vector of the transposed 1L $\begin{pmatrix} 3 \end{pmatrix}$

$I$ is the matrix with 1 on main diagonal and 0 otherwise

$\begin{pmatrix} 47 & 11 & 11 \\ 8 & 64 & 24 \\ 8 & 24 & 61 \end{pmatrix}$

(1)

$$1L \times \begin{pmatrix} 47 & 11 & 11 \\ 8 & 64 & 24 \\ 8 & 24 & 61 \end{pmatrix} = (63, 99, 96)$$

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2</th>
<th>Knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Received gains</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If we are discussing about harmony, I need to be sure that what I am supposed
to know (input, feedbefore), is what I get as output (and also wished as feedforward) and SATISFACTION received from the environment and the entire
show is the same.

If I look for simple average it is as above 86, but I look for the advice of the
inverse matrix because of the big differences between I know and I have expected.
This matrix multiplied with the original one looks as the first diagonal full with
numbers of unity and zero for other combination.

As decision maker, I wish to find out if the results obtained with an
experimental treatment are so much different from what is going on in its absence to
decide if the experimental variable is efficient. Usually we trust the data if the
independent variables produce expected reactions. In this case we recognize as
recursion Figure 3 where the signals/noises, in our case the lack of communication,
misinterpretations, is treated by OBSERVER as input as he experience by changing himself (feedback), interprets, makes bets (feedforward expectations, hypothesis), receives new request information (coded I) or requests from other observers Obs which are in this case the critics (C from observers as critics) and deliver knowledge (K).

What is this? Because hypotheses is needed as BETS and new developments, concerning each system’s realization of itself, its subjectivity, self-value and semiosis.

In searching for consensus, the EXPERIMENTER composes with the last results equations as that:

I proceed with linear equation in matrix form $A \times V = K$ looking for more knowledge.

$$
\begin{bmatrix}
0.022 & -0.003 & -0.003 \\
-0.002 & 0.019 & -0.007 \\
-0.002 & -0.007 & 0.020
\end{bmatrix}
$$

(2)

Given my square matrix $A$ then as matrix inversion defined, there may exist a matrix $B$ such as $AB = BA = I$ where $B$ is called the multiplicative inverse of $A$.

$$
(1, 1, 1) \times
\begin{bmatrix}
0.022 & -0.003 & -0.003 \\
-0.002 & 0.019 & -0.007 \\
-0.002 & -0.007 & 0.020
\end{bmatrix}
\times
\begin{bmatrix}
0.018 \\
0.009 \\
0.010
\end{bmatrix}
$$

(3)

So, the advice for obtaining harmony is to improve the feedbefore information (0.022) and to concentrate less on translation or noises from the environment (-0.002 each). Understanding lyrics will be improved by focusing less as the acting (-0.003) or on the instruments used (-0.007) but instead reading the translation with the same intensity as listening to the music (0.019, respectively 0.020).
Inverse Matrix

\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
\text{gestures} & \text{text} & \text{music} \\
0.022 & -0.003 & -0.00 \\
-0.002 & 0.019 & -0.00 \\
-0.002 & 0.019 & 0.02 \\
0.018 & 0.009 & 0.01 \\
\end{array}
\]

But harmony for me means the same number of points on each state meaning input, output, and the environment. The advice of the inverse matrix is to pay attention to this new vector of Knowledge resulted from the above last line \((0.018 + 0.009 + 0.010 = 0.037)\) and in percentages this: 49.5% 24.2% 26.3% computed as parts on their sum from the last line.

So the advice is to amplify my knowledge of gestures interpretation. The same advice comes from the vector \(V\) of pure values of the initial states (matrix columns) where \(V\) is obtained by multiplying the inverse matrix of \(A\) with column vector of \(K (5, 5, 5)\). It is beyond the aim of this article but a lot of information concerning pure values (values that pay one monetary unit if is happening that state whom they apart and nil if other states emerge) or applying Lagrange equation for minimizing the risk and looking for equality of states possibility to appear. We recommend Copeland and Weston. Corporate Policy. 1988. Pure values are obtained as in the 9th step in ANNEX 2; The result is the column vector of \(V\):

pure values

\[
\begin{align*}
0.083 \\
0.048 \\
0.052
\end{align*}
\]

With a total of 0.183

With a total of 0.183 for 15% Knowledge, I obtain equal number of assumptions for each column of the original matrix as \((81, 81, 81)\). The calculation is done by dividing 15 to 0.183, meaning that at the end of the first excerpt I understand around 80%.

If my feedbefore information input (first state of the A matrix) increased by 8.3% I could obtain the unity for this state but nil everywhere else. If the increasing is around 5% during the Opera performance, the result is likewise. But I pay attention simultaneously to a very slight difference. So, for 18.3% more I could have the unity matrix on the main diagonal and zero otherwise. The harmony is
resulted as (1, 1, 1). Instead of (63, 99, 96) I receive by less attention at the events other than gestures, (81, 81, 81).

These represent how much now I understand with 5% Knowledge about Chinese culture.

This is the first attempt when the Chinese Students ask: What do you expect? 47 points out of one hundred for sign and gestures, 8% for lyrics and also from music.

During listening and seeing the first excerpt (feedforward wishes) I felt that I was able to add 11 points for gestures understanding (eyes and hands movement), 64 for translation and libretto reading and 24 points for music. The last attempt is at the end, impression (feedback) and explaining more about some instruments and music, (flute, sounds, costumes) so I was able to add 11 points for gesture, 24 for text correlated with music and 61 for the quality of music.

At the end of this, my knowledge has increased, so my evaluation of the next excerpt will be more accurate.

Let us assume that being more attentive and listening to the hosts’ explanation my knowledge increases with 7% for gestures interpretation but keeps the same level for lyrics and music.

I can now modify the initial matrix as

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3</th>
<th>New feeds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

States 277; Average = 92.33
Inverse Matrix with
gestures    text    music in column
\[
\begin{pmatrix}
0.018 & -0.002 & -0.002 \\
-0.002 & 0.019 & -0.007 \\
-0.003 & 0.007 & 0.020
\end{pmatrix}
\]

Now, the sum on column, the percents and the advice is below

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>total advice 0.033</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.013</td>
<td>0.010</td>
<td>0.010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39.9%</td>
<td>28.9%</td>
<td>31.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.79</td>
<td>4.91</td>
<td>5.31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>potential knowledge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The pure values are following

<p>| |</p>
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Harmony pseudo measure is 89.01 resulted from \((6.79 + 4.91 + 5.31)/0.191\); better knowledge.

In conclusion, my knowledge increases interpreting gestures and music and finally constructs an algorithm and a synthesis of techniques used for helping the decision making. In the ANNEX attached is the algorithm that allows me to improve my understanding of gesture, translation and music provided by artists from Picture 1.

![Picture 1](Looking for harmony in my program)
Conclusions

In this paper interstitial methodologies are applied to a theatre play with conversation analysis and the results obtained are very promising for analyzing any kind of communication, narrated or antenarrated in the form of a conversation that substantiate informational statistics dealing. Informational statistics is used to map out systematised opinions or real life situations, reports, or even marketing management documents. Just to see what outcomes one gets. The paper engages in highlighting analogies between second cybernetics and Pierce’s semiotics concepts over the management techniques by practicing quantitative methods, in the future possible under the umbrella of Informational Statistics.

Imagine this paper as a theatre play with the possibility being left with everything in vague appropriate. The situation could be like two performers on a stage, management actions as quantitative methods applied (analytically) on one side and the structure of the YOYO system (holistic) on the other side. There is a dialogue to be sure, but the substance of their lines leaves us wondering about their relationship. It is, after all the essence of the Play. But “what” or “how” this is? Many answers could be done by combining concepts and knowledge given by semioticians, cyberneticians, academics and practitioners.

The second purpose of this paper is to find at least one answer to the question; Information Theory is used in decision-making looking for consensus (agreement, accord, harmony, compromise, consent)? It uses a new approach by applying quantitative methods, cybernetics and semiotics paradigms and concepts. The last part of this paper shows that the uncertainties of the decision-making depends by the doubts created by those chosen among Entropy’s Theory whom is added to the suspicions created about this kind of approach conditioned by those of Chaos Theory.

Methodology approach-Quantitative analysis starting with simple Arithmetic, Advanced Statistics Techniques and Portfolio Theory from Finance, in order to develop a quest for finding strong, hidden, illusory and spurious relationships which reveals meaning or chaos, reduced uncertainty and increased ambiguity. By extending Stuart Umpleby’s insights concerning Science 1 and Science 2 salience defined (Umpleby, 2010) by “purpose to” and “purpose for”, this attempt introduces the Observer inside his observed “black box”. In cybernetics terms, this attempt emphasizes the relevance of the second-order cybernetics in one surprising application in decision-making.

This new approach obtains either complete or generalized synoptic ideograms. Several simulations are carried out to illustrate how the methods combination
clarifies the “black box” of understanding complex processes in decision-making. What follows is one answer to this whitening “black box”.

**References**


The Blackwell guide to research methods in bilingualism and multilingualism.


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**ANNEX** Looking for harmony in my program.

Listening to inverse matrix advice for harmony

1. $A \times V = K$ 
2. States = $1L \times A$ 
3. Average = $(1L \times A \times 1C)/3$ 
4. Knowledge = $1L \times K$ 
5. InverseA = $A^\Lambda (-1)$ 
6. AdviceA$^\Lambda (-1) = 1L \times (A)^\Lambda (-1)$ 
7. Lambda = $[(AdviceA^\Lambda (-1)] \times 1C)^\Lambda (-1)$ 
8. AmplKnow = $1 L \times [AdviceA^\Lambda (-1)] \times Lambda$ 

Initial States pure values
9. $V = [A^\Lambda (-1)] \times K$ 
After Matrix Advice State pure values
10. NewV = $[A^\Lambda (-1)] \times Transpose (Advice)$

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Translation, Encounter among Peoples, and Global Semiotics

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By way of introduction we shall begin by asking ourselves a few questions:

Why a round table on translation in a Congress on Semiotics? The oversimplifying answer would be: given that semiotics as the general science of signs deals with anything relating to signs, just as we can speak of literature, music, cinema, fashion, . . . , we can also speak of translation. On this account translation is one of the possible objects of semiotics. But there is more to the story.

To deal with translation also means to deal with methodological issues in semiotics, issues that are preliminary and essential for semiotics. We can even claim that to deal with translation means to study the conditions of possibility of semiotics itself. And this is the case because to speak of translation means to speak of the sign itself, to say what the sign is. Our claim is that the sign is a translation process. A thing is not a sign if something cannot be translated into another sign. In Charles Peirce’s terminology, this other sign that translates is called an interpretant. And following Peirce the sign does not subsist without an interpretant.

A similar conception of the sign can be traced in Victoria Welby’s writings. She considers translation as the practice itself of signifying.

Considered in this framework therefore, the claim is that this round table dedicated to translation is not just one of the many RTs that can be organized at a Congress on Semiotics, but that it is the one RT that leads the others.

In other words, translation is the pivotal issue in semiotics. To speak of translation is to speak of semiotics and to speak of semiotics is to speak of translation.

The second question concerns the different ways according to which we can understand the sense of translation.

The first is the one we have just formulated. That is, the fact that making signs (whether verbal or nonverbal) presupposes the work of translation for the emitter as much as for the receiver. Our reference here is to the relation between the sign and
the interpretant which, as anticipated, cannot be avoided. This first type of translation is preliminary and essential. We propose to tag it “semiotic translation”.

Another three types of translation can now be added with reference to Roman Jakobson’s typology. In our own scheme the second type of translation (Jakobson’s first) corresponds to so-called “endolinguistic translation” and focuses on verbal expression. We are all involved in the processes of endolinguistic translation as we speak a given language, we are all enacting endolinguistic translation processes as one person speaks and another listens.

The third type of translation in our typology (Jakobson’s second) corresponds to so-called “interlinguistic translation”. This is the type of translation involved when someone who knows English as a foreign language must resort to his or her own mother tongue to understand what someone is saying. This type of transitive process is typically involved in the work of the professional translator.

The fourth type of translation (Jakobson’s third) is so-called “intersemiotic translation” or transposition. This too is recurrent. Verbal signs cannot ignore intersemiotic translation. This is because the meaning of the verbal sign is not engendered inside the boundaries of the system of language. Instead, meaning necessarily develops in interpretive trajectories that transcend the limits of the verbal sign system and connect the verbal to the nonverbal. This is what Peirce indicates as the object. The verbal sign has its interpretant and its object. Even if the interpretant is in the verbal and in the same language as the interpreted sign, the object is generally outside the verbal. In this sense meaning develops outside the verbal and beyond.

The third question concerns translation in the strict sense of the term. Between whom does the relation of translation occur, that is, what are the terms between which translation evolves? We often speak of translation in terms of negotiation, that is, in contractual terms. But between whom does such negotiation occur? The reductive answer would be between author and translator. Instead, our own answer is that the relation is between the translator and the text. The simple reason is that there is no such thing as an author owner of the text, and this is because the text is endowed with its own autonomy and consistency with respect to eventual claims to authority on the part of the author.

The fourth question concerns the specificity of this Congress, a congress that is dedicated to semiotics, but according to a special perspective as expressed in the title, “Global Semiotics” and in the subtitle, “Bridging different Civilizations”.

Moreover, it is no incident that our own Round Table is entitled, “Translation, Encounter and Global Semiotics”.

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In fact, translation, whether intralingual, interlingual or intersemiotic, presupposes a relation of hospitality and listening to the other. That is, translation involves the condition of opening without limits, a propensity for encounter with the other, which is also encounter with the foreigner.

This last aspect is connected with dialogue where “dialogue” is understood not simply as discourse genre and form, but as involvement, participation, commitment and non-indifference towards the other. Thus understanding dialogue implies responsibility in the sense of accounting not only for the self but also for the other. In other words, dialogic implies what we consider as the topic of “semioethics” (Petrilli and Ponzio, 2003, 2010).

1. Sign and Translation

Before being the object of semiotics, translation is a sign operation. In other words, translation occurs among signs, and cannot be reduced to the linguistic-verbal order alone. Translation invests the sign sphere in its entirety. Where there are signs and semiotic processes, there is translation. A semiotic approach to the problem of translation—if we must identify fields and boundaries—does not limit its focus to verbal language, but rather extends its gaze to all human expressions, verbal and nonverbal, therefore to the anthroposemiotic sphere in its totality.

Victoria Welby (1837–1912) describes mankind’s capacity for signification in terms of “translative thinking,” “an automatic process in which everything suggests or reminds us of something else” (Welby, 1983; 34). Translated into semiotic terms we could say that translative thinking is a semiotic process in which something stands for something else, in which different sign systems are related, in which one sign is more fully developed, enriched, criticized, put at a distance, placed between inverted commas, parodied or simply imitated, and, in any case, interpreted in terms of another sign. Translation is a method of investigation and discovery, says Welby, a method for the verification and acquisition of knowledge and for the development of critical consciousness (cf. Petrilli, 2009).

We could develop such intuitions in the light of more recent results of studies in language theory and the science of signs generally and state that semiosis, that is, the situation in which something functions as a sign, cannot subsist without translation, for semiosis is a translation-interpretation process. The role of translation is fundamental in the constitution itself of the sign, both verbal and non verbal, in the determination itself of meaning. The intimate connection between signs and translation is particularly evident when we place the category of
replaceability as a necessary condition for signhood, that is, when the sign is considered not only as something that replaces something else, but that may also in turn be replaced by something else (Ponzio, 2005). Meaning may be defined as a class of verbal and nonverbal signs which replace each other in semiotic processes where an interpretant sign replaces a previous interpreted sign which it somehow develops. As Charles S. Peirce (1839–1914) teaches us, a sign subsists thanks to another sign acting as its interpretant, so that its meaning is its translation into another sign. The sign flourishes in relations of reciprocal translation and substitution among signs with respect to which the original sign is never given autonomously and antecedently.

2. The Paradox of Interlingual Translation

The problem of the interconnection among interpretation, translation, and alterity cannot be ignored by translation semiotics. The journal Athanor (University of Bari, Italy) dedicated a trilogy to translation of which the third issue was entitled Lo stesso altro (The same other; Petrilli, 2001). The paradox of translation is determined by the fact that the text must remain the same while becoming other simply because it has been reorganized into the expressive modalities of another sign complex. The translation (target) text is at once identical and different to the translated (source) text.

From this perspective, translation is a form of reported discourse, of discourse reporting the discourse of the other. Similar to direct discourse, authorial discourse, reporting discourse, that is, translator discourse, is not at all evidenced, but on the contrary is erased or, better, this is the claim. The aim is to allow the person whose discourse is reported to speak directly. Under this aspect, translation resembles direct discourse, however, different from direct discourse translation aims to completely erase any traces of reporting discourse, the translator’s own voice. It ensues that the translator is not expected to comment or resort to expedients that trace boundaries between his/her own word and the word of the other (such as citation marks or dashes). From this point of view, translation is a form of dramatization. Just as the author of a theatrical text makes his characters speak directly, while his own word as author does not emerge (if not in some prescription for the mise en scène), in translation the translator’s word, the word that reports the other’s discourse, that is, the author’s, in another language, is silenced; the translator’s word is made to converge with the direct word of the person whose discourse is translated. Translator discourse is no more than the discourse of the
other, the author, reported discourse in the most direct form possible—at least, this is the claim. The translator aims to completely eliminate any traces of his own voice as author in his own right. Abnegation of the author’s word, that is, the translator’s, to the point of elision, subtends the popular image of the translator as a mere mouthpiece. If the translator deserves to be mentioned anywhere in the translation-text, his role in that text will be acknowledged as marginal, extrinsic to the text, for the translator must deny him/herself as author to the advantage of a single author, the original author, that is, the author of the text object of translation, the source text. Of two voices, one only must remain; this is in the tradition of what is generally considered as a good translation.

To translate is inevitably to interpret, and the translator is no more than one of the many masks that the author of a text can wear. This mask is that of a faithful mouthpiece that neither critically interprets, nor analyzes, nor discusses, nor takes a standpoint, but simply reports, and does so faithfully. In other words, as reported discourse, translation is *sui generis* indirect discourse which presents itself in the “masked” form of direct discourse.

The modalities (with internal differences) of reported discourse foreseen by historical-natural languages include: direct discourse, indirect discourse and free indirect discourse. In line with our discussion, a fourth modality may now be added: reported discourse in the form of translation from the source to the target language.

Translation is indirect discourse if by indirect discourse is understood discourse that analyzes, interprets, explicates, clarifies, solves ambiguities, decides on senses, establishes the intonation, orientation, intent according to which something is pronounced. No doubt the translator does all this. Reporting discourse is pervasive, omniscient to the point that all syntactical and punctuation indicators which distinguish the translator’s word from the word that is translated are eliminated. Consequently, if free indirect discourse is direct discourse masked as indirect discourse, translation is *indirect discourse masked as direct discourse*.

3. Translation as the Relation between the Translator and the Text

*The materiality of the text* is not only achieved with respect to the interpreter. Similar to all communicative processes, the text emerges as semiotic materiality not only in the sense that it resists the interpreter. It is autonomous from the interpreter; it has its own signification that does not depend on the interpreter and may even escape him. The text has its own materiality, objectivity, independence and capacity for resistance and self-signification with respect to the author as well.
The language that the author uses—including the language of literary genres—resists the author, takes the author by the hand so to say, and even says things that the author had not consciously decided to say.

Texts that break through the boundaries of their own time and flourish beyond contemporaneity, in the “great time,” as understood by Bakhtin, develop new meanings and senses.

We can say that neither Shakespeare himself nor his contemporaries knew that “great Shakespeare” whom we know now. But do we then attribute to Shakespeare’s works something that is not there, do we modernize and distort them? Modernization and distortion, of course, have existed and will continue to exist. But that is not the reason why Shakespeare has grown. He has grown because of that which actually has been and continues to be found in his works, but which neither he himself nor his contemporaries could consciously perceive and evaluate in the context of the culture of their epoch. Semantic phenomena can exist in concealed form, potentially, and be revealed only in semantic cultural contexts of subsequent epochs that are favorable for such disclosure (Bakhtin, 1986: 4).

Translation necessarily consists in negotiation and contract, which concerns the relationship between translator and text and not the relationship between translator and author. Negotiation and listening, negotiation and answering comprehension are inseparable. Their dialogic nature is given by the alterity, autonomy, resistance, objectivity, in a word, materiality of the text to be translated.

From a semiotic perspective the text is made of sign material. This means to say that the text, any text whatsoever, is already a translation in itself, is already an interpretation. Translation across languages is a specific case of translation across sign systems, internally and externally to the same historical-natural language. But translation across languages is possible on the basis of language understood as a modeling device, an a priori and condition for verbal language, speech which, instead, arises originally for communication and thanks to the predominance of iconicity in the relation among signs.

With reference to literary translation, if we understand “fidelity” in terms of creativity and interpretation and not just as imitation, repetition, reproduction of the same, of the “original” text, as a literal copy in another language, the translatant text must establish a relation of alterity with the text object of translation, the translated text (Petrilli, 2012: Ch. 8). The greater the distancing in terms of dialogic alterity between two texts, the greater is the possibility of creating an artistic reinterpretation through another sign interpretant in the potentially infinite semiotic chain of deferrals from one sign to the next, to which belongs the so-called
“original.” With reference to Charles S. Peirce’s general theory of signs, in particular his triad “Icon,” “Index,” and “Symbol,” if a translation is to be successful in terms of creativity and interpretation, the relation between the text object of translation and the translatant text must be dominated by iconicity.

A translated text is at once similar and dissimilar, the same other (Petrilli, 2001). This is the characteristic of the icon. Iconic similarity is precisely this type of similarity. To give an example this similarity: it is like that between two banknotes that must be similar in everything, but within certain limits—the serial number must be different, otherwise one of the two banknotes is false. In the case of translation, this would be the situation of the translation of Cervantes by Menard as recounted by Borges.

4. Translation as Encounter

Translation always implies encounter among different languages and verbal texts as well as among different cultures. Translation can be oriented in the sense of “listening” or of “wanting to hear”. The difference is in the attitude implied towards the other with implications of the ideological and political orders. This clearly emerges with migration processes in today’s globalization world. Listening is understood as opening to the other and is connected with hospitality. Conversely, wanting to hear tends to englobe the other, to distinguish, classify and reduce the other to identity, to define and judge the other. This generally occurs on the basis of categories intended to defend one’s own rights to the disadvantage of the rights of the other.

Translation understood in terms of listening is associated with the ethical dimension of semiosis. It evidences the translator’s responsibility which is first of all responsibility for the other. The translator must account to the other and for the other. Therefore, the translator carries out a role of fundamental importance in the encounter among languages, signs and cultures, as it takes place through processes of migration and globalization.

Such responsibility is neither special nor technical, but ethical and global. In fact, whether we like it or not even the person most distant from us is our neighbour in one way or another. This can also be called “semioethic responsibility” given that it concerns signs, signs understood not as a means through which to assert one’s own identity and one’s own rights, but rather signs that are finalized to acknowledging the rights of others and not as a means for asserting one’s own identity and one’s own rights over others.
5. A Semiothic Turn in Translation

Semioethics of translation may be considered as working towards a new form of humanism which cannot be separated from the question of otherness. The new form of humanism we wish to propose is the humanism of otherness (perspected by Levinas in all his writings, see Humanisme de l’autre homme, 1972). Human rights as they have so far been claimed tend to be centred on identity, leaving aside the rights of the other. Traditionally, the expression “human rights” refers to one’s own rights, the rights of one’s identity, of self, and tends to forget the rights of the other. On the contrary, from the perspective of our concern for life (human and nonhuman) over the planet, for the health of semiosis generally, for the development of communication not only in strictly cultural terms but also in broader biosemiosical terms, this tendency must be quickly counteracted by the humanism of otherness, where the rights of the other are the first to be recognized, not only the rights of the other beyond self, but also the self’s own other, the other of self. The self characteristically removes, suffocates, and segregates the other which tends to be sacrificed to the cause of identity. But developed in such terms identity is fictitious and all efforts to maintain or recover it are destined to fail.

From the perspective of what we have designated as “semioethics” (Petrilli and Ponzio, 2003, 2010), the translator is an interlocutor who does not expel but rather welcomes the other with its singularity, cultural difference, values and specific idiom. The semioethic translator is a listening device and favours the practices of hospitality towards the word of the other (Ponzio, 2012)

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On the Cultural Turn of Translation Studies in China in the New Millennium: A Semiotic Appraisal and Prognosis

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Abstract: In the early years of the new millennium, Chinese scholars in translation studies were still debating, belatedly, the “cultural turn”, particularly with regard to two issues: (1) the distinction between the ontology of translation and the ontology of translation studies, and (2) the so-called “paradigm shift” triggered by the cultural turn. Stemming from a critique of the two ontologies and questioning the paradigm shift, this paper serves the following critical purposes. It appeals for a return to textuality by reinstating the role of language in translation studies; i.e., it seeks to clarify how language functions on the boundary between translation and non-translation on both the object-language and meta-language levels, and calls for a new meta-theoretical orientation of translation studies. Scholars participating in the Chinese debate over the cultural turn have regrettably overlooked the fact that semiotics has long since renovated translation studies, especially in terms of the discipline’s system-specificity and inter-systemic relationships. Semiotic input on translation studies may enable the Chinese researcher to better formulate, pose and answer the crucial question: What is translation? Four versions of a semiotic approach to translation studies can be identified or envisaged: (1) the influence of Peircean “semiotics”; (2) a structural linguistics-informed methodology, such as that of the Russian formalists and their Slavonic followers; (3) the impact of biosemiotics; and, finally, (4) the influence of cultural semiotics represented by the Tartu School. This essay provides a critical survey of the Chinese debate on the cultural turn and suggests a prognostic based on the aforementioned semiotic approaches.

Key words: cultural turn; Tartu School; translation studies; meta-language; object language

1. The Debate over the Ontology of Translation and the Ontology of Translation Studies

In the early years of the new millennium I noticed that, while the majority of my Chinese colleagues were still contesting the “cultural turn” in translation studies,
our western counterparts focused more on applying insights from the field of
semiotics to translation studies. In China, a heated debate was taking place over the
notion of “two ontologies”, triggered by the cultural turn’s deviation from the
ontology of translation to, as the critics put it, the “text”. The concept of “text”
was in reference to the ontology of translation itself and the ontology of translation
studies as a science, and an appeal to distinguish them was made at that time.
Recently a tentative consensus has been reached in distinguishing the two kinds of
ontology, namely, that the ontology of translation is the conversion process of two
languages in the translation process, but the ontology of translation studies contains
more than this language conversion process. As Xie (2008: 2–6) argues, translation
involves a historical and cultural bounding, thus determining that translation studies
view the discipline as an inter-cultural transposition.

This apparent concessive position ought to have triggered a new debate over
more developed issues, but it has not; instead it has teased the argument of the two
ontologies. These issues should firstly and most importantly be addressed as: How
does the evolving definition of translation itself relate to the discipline of translation
studies? Secondly, what place does the evolving regard for language possess
concerning the matters of translation?

One weak point in the debate on the cultural turn is my Chinese colleagues’ use
of the notion “text”. As previously mentioned, they use this term in the sense that
text is a linguistics-based semantic entity in order to criticize the cultural turn for
abandoning the concept of text, while ignoring the historically evolving process of
the concept “text”. It is true that the cultural turn has placed great emphasis on the
notion of a cultural rather than a linguistic text, arguing that the text should no
longer be regarded as a material entity such as manuscripts or printed matter. Meta-
thoretical support for this view of text can be found in the works of Julia Kristeva
in the 1960s, when the concept of text was developed into an enunciative and
discursive productivity, as well as in the works of Roland Barthes, where it obtained
the sense of déjà vu, and in the writings of Derrida, in the sense of semiotic mise-
en-abyme (Chang, 2007: 2). These days, it is insufficient to view text as a mere
linguistic-structured semantic entity; thus, the perception of an evolving view of
translation should be a fresh concept among my Chinese colleagues.

This aborted optimism in the debate over two ontologies ought to have led to
further developments in translation studies in China, but unfortunately, it has not.
At this point, I propose that there should be but one thing that merits our attention,
i.e., an appeal for a return to text as a quest for the valid position of language in
translation, which leads us to consider how language functions on the boundary of
translation and non-translation, and a call for a reconsideration of the changes in meta-theoretical orientations of translation studies and other human and social sciences has a close relationship with the system of language. These meta-theoretical orientations are the places where I find an intersection between translation studies and semiotics.

2. The So-called “Paradigm Shift” in Translation Studies

Now, I turn to another issue raised by my Chinese colleagues related to the debate on the cultural turn, and that is the concept of paradigm shift. Some Chinese scholars claim that the cultural turn in translation studies amount to a paradigm shift from the paradigm popular in the 1950s. I disagree and present my views, beginning with a brief historical overview of the notion of paradigm in translation studies from the 1950s to the early years of the 2000s.

From the 1950s to the 1970s, we see the co-existence of paradigms and models from adjacent fields in translation studies, “an influx of researchers from adjacent areas bringing with them the paradigms and models that have proved fruitful in their own field”, but in this period no consensus was reached to form a disciplinary matrix, a “disciplinary utopia” (Holmes, 2000 [1972]: 172).

In the early 1970s, James S. Holmes (ibid.) expressed an urgent need to establish a channel of communication among these paradigms and methods so that at least a name for and the nature of translation studies as a science could be established. He was the first person to envision a disciplinary homogeneity of translation studies in his pragmatic program, which led to four kinds of translation theories. This program was later applied, revised and developed by other scholars in the field.

From the 1970s to the 1990s, paradigms and methods from other fields began to be integrated into translation studies; among them, theories from cultural studies became a major influence in the 1980s and 1990s. The impact of poly-system theories, the independence of translators, and theories of manipulation and rewriting resulted in a rapprochement of meta-languages describing translation activity. It was this latter period that came to be termed the cultural turn in translation studies, marked by the transformation of translation studies into a discipline of intercultural studies and as possessing “inter-disciplinariness” (Torop, 2000; 399–400).

In the early years of the 21st century, in an introduction to the semiotic approach to translation studies, Eco and Nergaard (2001) noticed the phenomenon
of “increasingly adopting an inter-disciplinary approach to the study of translation as intertextual and intercultural transposition” (p.218). We find that interdisciplinarity has sealed translation as a “ tertium relationis” that mediates two “relata” in a semiotic manner. As Eco and Nergaard put it, translation by its very nature is semiotic; it serves as a copula, a link between two entities, two semiotic systems; or, in other words, translation is the third item “&”, called a “ tertium relationis”, which mediates relatum A & relatum B. In short, translation deals with the semiotic relationship between sign systems.

From the brief historical review of translation studies given above and considering the commonly accepted Kuhnian term “paradigm”—based on a clear self-awareness of a homogeneous discipline—we can, at this point, undertake a discussion of the periods of revolution, normal science and crisis in the history of translation studies. The notion “paradigm shift” presupposes that an old paradigm has been replaced by a new paradigm. Thus, one could regard the defining progress of disciplinariness in translation studies as the formation and revision of the first central paradigm in translation studies, and that the cultural turn did not effect a paradigm shift; rather, the first central paradigm originated in the 1970s and has been popularized and revised constantly over the last 40 years, especially in the cultural turn of translation studies. However, when compared with the approaches in the 1950s, the model instantiated by the cultural turn did not replace an old paradigm, but rather developed a “pre-paradigm” into a relatively “normal” period of science. Changes in methods, strategies and epistemological orientations characterize a transition from a normal science to a crisis period.

The misinterpretation of the cultural turn as a paradigm shift reflects a kind of intellectual limbo in defining the notion of translation in an evolving disciplinary matrix; rather, what this notion should be, due to its evolving nature, is interdisciplinary.

3. Aspects of the Semiotic Notion of “Translation” from the Perspective of Semiotics of Translation

Viewing the problem of translation as being at the intersection of different disciplines reveals the shift of scholars’ perspectives from a source-text oriented linguistic approach to a functional target-text oriented one; the latter also reveals a shift of scholars’ interests from relations between two languages and two texts to questions concerning the social and cultural functions of translation activity. A semiotic approach to translation studies at the very beginning focused on culture,
and called for a convenient recourse to cultural semiotics. The origin of the semiotics of translation, however, is a matter principally about a multidisciplinary association rather than interdisciplinariness. Interdisciplinariness, per se, refers to the specific connection between the application of semiotics in translation studies and the interpreting of translation activity in semiotics, but it is still too early to think about this connection as a homogeneous disciplinary whole (Torop, 2000: 399). At this juncture, it is more relevant to discuss the contributions semiotics brings to a new perspective on translation, and to assign it a proper position in the matters related to translation as well as to the new science of translation studies.

It is well known that the cultural turn has directed the shift from the core of translation concerns focused on language conversion to a focus on cultural interference. At present, however, schools of semiotics view translation as a sign-producing mechanism, as either a primary modeling system or a secondary modeling system. Scholars of the cultural turn are criticized as having deviated from the text in its traditional sense, i.e., as a linguistic based semantic entity, while semiotic scholars debate a more developed, yet time-honored, issue, namely, what place does linguistics occupy among the human sciences? Or, to go a step further, what position does language take among other sign systems? I would like to argue that, from a semiotic perspective, four fundamental approaches would shed light on the evolving concept of translation and would be very helpful to clarify this issue.

The first approach stems from the Peircean trichotomy of signs. According to Peirce, a sign consists of three elements: (a) the representamen (b) the object, and (c) the interpretant. A sign cannot exist without an interpretant since the meaning of a sign can only be conveyed by another sign acting as interpretant; that is to say, semiosis—sign activity—is a translation process. The interpretation of any sign becomes a sign in itself that needs to be translated again and again; thus, sign activity, or the translation process, is a never-ending semiosis (Petrilli, 2004: 367-368).

Given that translation is neither merely concerned with acts of encoding nor acts of decoding but also with acts of interpreting signs, translation is a semiosis-grounded process of communication. This is a general sense of translation reaching far beyond human signs, intentional signs, and conventional signs. However, in the field that is at the crossroads of translation studies and semiotics, translation in this context is a form of inter-cultural human communication, a kind of Peircean semiosis embedded in rules and codes of languages, culture, history and traditions. Thus, there is the necessity for a specific interpretant, a “Final logical Interpretant” that must be achieved at some stage to serve as the fundamental translation
mechanism. As Peirce puts it:

My Final Interpretant is [...] the effect the Sign would produce upon any mind, upon which the circumstances should permit it to work out its full effect. [...] The Final Interpretant is the one Interpretative result to which every Interpreter is destined to come if the Sign is sufficiently considered. [...] The Final Interpretant is that toward which the actual tends. (Letter to Lady Welby, SS 110–1, 1909)

As it has been revealed, this specific interpretant could be either a conventionalization of a cultural unit, or the establishment of a new unit. However, regarding the search for this final logical interpretant in the intersection of semiotics and translation studies, Jakobson has emphasized that Peirce himself assigned linguistics, “the vast and splendidly developed science”, a privileged position among the “studies of mental performances and products” (Jakobson. 1990; 453).

Among semioticians, Roman Jakobson must be specifically mentioned here as a firm objector to linguistic-based and language-centered sign systems. In his famous paper “On Linguistic Aspects of Translation” (1971 [1959]), Jakobson regarded translation as a central process in language learning and comprehension, and he took translation as a semiotic action in three dimensions, which he labeled differently as intralingual, interlingual and intersemiotic translation:

1) Intralingual translation or rewording is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs of the same language.
2) Interlingual translation or translation proper is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language.
3) Intersemiotic translation or transmutation is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of nonverbal sign systems.

In the case of (1), translation involves a word-to-word translation in the same particular language; in (2), interlingual translation can be seen as involving language-to-language translation, i.e., one verbal sign is replaced with another sign belonging to a different language. In (3), intersemiotic translation focuses on conveying the overall message; it is information rather than verbal signs that needs to be delivered in the first place (ibid. ; 260–266).

Given that some scholars find Jakobson’s three modalities too strictly bound to linguistics, Gideon Toury later revised this triadic division of translation into a
dyadic division; intrasemiotic and intersemiotic, the former once again can be subdivided into intralinguistic and interlinguistic translation. No doubt that Jakobson is mainly linguistically-motivated, but to make a step further, Jakobson’s three dimensions of translation could be developed into research possibilities of various fields: translation as a tertium relationis could be a mediate process between two natural historical languages, and it would be studied in comparative linguistics; translation could be a translated text that connects two national literatures, and it is mirrored in an appeal for seeking for the position of translated literature in literary history, which is dealt mainly in Comparative Literature; translation could also be a cultural entity, or cultural phenomenon reflecting the difference of two or more cultures, this is the focus of Cultural Studies. The title of Jakobson’s essay “On Linguistic Aspects of Translation” indicates that translation is far more than a linguistics-involved act. However, according to Jakobson, linguistics is linked with other similar semiotic transposition acts, as he explains in other essays, e.g., his “Linguistics in Relation to Other Sciences”. Linguistics is at the center of his interdisciplinary model of human communication in a biosocial sense, and from this perspective, the linguistic aspect of translation should be seen as the center among other aspects.

Nowadays, with contributions by Thomas Sebeok and his followers, it is necessary to expand Jakobson’s interpreting modalities of verbal signs to include both verbal signs and nonverbal signs since, from their perspective of biosemiosis, all of semiotics is immersed in biosemiotics rather than anthroposemiotics. According to Sebeok (1976, p. x), “Biological foundations lie at the very epicenter of the study of both communication and signification in the human animal”. It is likely that Sebeok’s followers might criticize Jakobson’s linguistic-based model as being too rooted in the tenets of Saussurian semiology and too limited by anthroposemiotics, hence able only to deal either with “the signs of unintentional communication (semiology of signification)” or with “the signs of intentional communication (semiology of communication)” (Petrilli & Ponzio, 2001; 9).

On the basis of biosemiosis, Sebeok links his key notion of model with Jakob von Uexküll’s concept of Umwelt to establish a methodological framework for studying the modeling behavior of all life forms (Sebeok, 1976: 45–46), which turns out to be a triadic-strata modeling system. Sebeok distinguishes between primary, secondary and tertiary modeling systems. According to him, language is a species-specific primary modeling system available only to the species Homo sapiens, but since language is too limited to a communicative device, a “derivative exaptation” from language called “speech” comes about to function as a secondary
modeling system; finally, there is the tertiary modeling system, i.e., human cultural systems (ibid.: 46–47).

In the works of Moscow-Tartu semioticians, we find a dyadic distinction made between a primary modeling system and a secondary modeling system. To quote Lotman, Uspensky and Mihaychuk (1978 [1971]; 212), “A key question is the relationship of culture to natural language. In the preceding publications of Tartu University (the semiotic series), cultural phenomena were defined as secondary modeling systems, a term which indicated their derivational nature in relation to natural language”.

In 1969, Benveniste asserted in “The Semiology of Language” that language is the only semiotic system that can be both an interpreting system and an interpreted system, in other words, can be both a meta-language and an object language. Benveniste’s proposition of this privileging of language was criticized and modified by Lotman, Uspensky and Mihaychuk further on in the same passage quoted above:

Recently [i.e., 1969] Benveniste has emphasized that only natural languages can fulfill a metalinguistic role and that, by virtue of this, they hold a distinct place in the system of human communication. More questionable, however, is the author’s proposal in the same article to consider only natural languages as strictly semiotic systems, defining all other cultural models as semantic, that is, not possessing their own systematic semiosis but borrowing it from the sphere of natural languages. Even though it is valuable to contrast primary and secondary modeling systems (without such a contrast it is impossible to single out the distinguishing characteristics of each), it would be appropriate to stress here that in their actual historical functioning, languages are inseparable from culture. No language (in the full sense of the word) can exist unless it is steeped in the context of culture; and no culture can exist which does not have, as its center, the structure of natural language. (Lotman, Uspensky & Mihaychuk, 1978 [1971]; 212)

The perspective of Moscow-Tartu semioticians, especially that of Lotman, is, in my view, crucial for relating Peircean semiotics, biosemiotics and anthroposemiotics, and especially to position their concept of translation and their view of language among other sign systems. Thus, this passage is quoted in length, on the one hand, to elaborate the relationship between culture and natural language, and on the other hand, to raise my Chinese colleagues’ awareness of the importance of the conversion of natural languages within the intercultural and
inter textual transposition acts called translation.

The kernel notion of *semiosphere* should be addressed specifically in an analysis of Lotman’s concept of translation, and it should be noted that this notion always involves a dialectic relationship with language. Lotman’s conception of secondary modeling systems, which assumes that natural language is an initial system, is the most developed and structurally organized language among other languages in the semiosphere, and is at the center of the semiosphere. In his 1990 book *Universe of the Mind*, Lotman writes:

So any one language turns out to be immersed in a semiotic space and it can only function by interaction with that space. The unit of semiosis, the smallest functioning mechanism, is not the separate language but the whole semiotic space of the culture in question. This is the space we term the semiosphere. (pp. 124–125)

[... ] we could talk of the semiosphere, which we shall define as the semiotic space necessary for the existence and functioning of languages, not the sum total of different languages; in a sense the semiosphere has a prior existence and is in constant interaction with languages. (p. 123)

Semiosphere, in Lotmanian terminology, as pointed out by Han-liang Chang (2003), serves as “the possibility of a pre-verbal or non-verbal modeling system. What is significant about this model is its holistic approach as a remedy to the linguistic model’s atomism” (p. 5), and the relationship between semiosphere and language “is not only a fundamental one of semiosis but also one of a hermeneutic circle involving the dialectic relationship between part and whole” (p. 6).

As for the notion of translation, Lotman considers it to be the elementary act of thinking, and the elementary mechanism of translation is dialogue, which presupposes asymmetry in the difference between the semiotic structures (languages) that the participants in the dialogue use; and second, in the alternating direction of message-flow. To replicate this process into a broader sense, translation happens in a given semiosphere. To translate, according to Lotman, means a semiotic entity is interacting with other semiotic entities in a semiotic space in which all of them are immersed. In Lotmanian terminology, this semiotic entity is language, or to be specific: sign, text, mind, or, culture as a whole. And as Lotman (1990: 127) put it, “And since in the majority of cases the different languages of the semiosphere are semiotically asymmetrical, i.e. they do not have mutual semantic correspondences, then the whole semiosphere can be regarded as a generator of information”. Thus,
to translate means to generate new information. Lotman (2002) also has indicated that for its own existence, every semiotic entity needs the other, i.e., “sign, text, culture can exist only among other signs, texts, cultures, and they must be preceded by other signs, texts, and cultures” (p. 35). Thus, translation is inevitable at all levels of semiotic space.

4. Prospects for the Future

As a participant of the 2012 World Semiotics Congress having the sub-title “Global Semiotics” and particularly as a participant in the Round Table titled “Global Semiotics, Translation, and Encounter among Peoples”, I fully acknowledge that semiotics is no longer limited to human signs, intentional signs and conventional signs, but I am also aware of the need to transcend the boundaries between human signs and other signs and between one model and other models, especially when there still exists the opaque realm of terminology as the weak point among my Chinese colleagues seeking a remedy and clarification. We are aware that a clear sense of where boundaries exist is difficult to obtain. This is not an effort to establish a homogenization of differences but rather semiotic transparency so that differences among civilizations may be bridged. If this is the raison d’être of global semiotics, or at least to put a particular emphasis on cultural encounters of human beings, I believe that a renewed emphasis on language, especially natural language, will ever be necessary.

As Peeter Torop (2000) wrote in “Towards the Semiotics of Translation”, it is still too early to talk about the intersection of semiotics and translation studies as an interdisciplinary synthesis, i.e., a semiotics of translation, because it is only a specific connection of the application of semiotics in translation studies and the interpretation of translation activity in semiotics (p. 399). We have noticed that many changes have taken place in the methods, strategies, theory and terminology in translation, i.e., in the ontology of translation, as well as in the methodology of translation in translation studies. However, could we think of this transitional period as a near paradigm shift in translation studies? I think not. According to current trends, translation problems at this stage are dealt with mostly by the semiotician within an epistemological framework. This framework has the capacity for further integration in the future with theoretical frameworks within translation studies. Rather, I believe that we can borrow the term “crisis” from comparative literature to describe the present stage of development in translation studies. That is to say, translation studies as influenced by semiotics shed light on a critical point of
development, especially on the core of translation studies—the ontology of its object and the ontology of its meta-theoretical framework; translation studies is now reaching a period of crisis.

## References


Relations in Translation: Semiotics and Translation in Global Semiotics, the Translating Subject in Semiotic Relations, and Modalities

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Abstract: The dialogue between the interdisciplinary fields of semiotics and translation has several relations in common. The first is that both disciplines deal with semiosis, the act of signification. The second is that these disciplines can be global in bridging understanding among cultures. Both disciplines also examine the issue of semiotizing, that is, interpreting several types of interrelated systems and sign systems in order to construct meanings in communication. The interdisciplinary field of semiotics is therefore the study of signs, with our verbal sign system being only one of the many systems. But semiotics entails particularly two crucial aspects: the study of all systems of signification and the various processes of communication (cf. Tarasti, 2012: 460). Sebeok (1976; 2001a) coins the term global semiotics for the study of life signs. According to Sebeok, the entire universe enters the domain of global semiotics. Modern semiotics has also developed in all interdisciplinary activities in academia globally (Li, 2011: 233). Concerning translation studies, we can say that this discipline has been increasingly adopted as an interdisciplinary approach to the study of translation as inter-and multilingual, intertextual and intercultural transposition. Hence, in analogy to global semiotics, we can coin the term global translation. My purpose in this paper is to analyze the literary translator as a translating subject by adopting the theoretical framework of existential semiotics, cultural semiotics, and translation studies. In other words, this is a study of the translator as a signifying subject in a translation process, where the translator is involved in the semiotic modalities of being and doing, that is, the translator is an individual in a decision-making process who negotiates meanings in relation to reality (cf. Kristeva, 1974, le sujet en proces, proces de signification). I will discuss some literary translators’ self-descriptions in positioning their translation processes with the spatial notion between the source and the target language, text, and culture. By adopting Tarasti’s existential semiotics and his Z-Model with four fundamental modes of being, which includes the body, identity, social practices and values/norms, we can analyze the shifts and interactions between the categories of Moi (body and identity) and Soi (social practices and values/norms), that is, the subjectivity in individuals and communities. In the process of translating, the translating subject deals with various
semiotic moves and modalities, causes and effects both on the *Moi* level (the personal level, the identity of the translator), and on the *Soi* level (the society, culture level, norms, ideology). It is argued that *semiosis* is manifested in the “translator’s space”, in the *semiosphere* (Lotman, 1990), which is the place for sign processes.

**Key words**: translation relations; translation semiosis; translating subject; translator’s space; translator’s semiosphere; logosphere; chronotopos; existential semiotics; cultural semiotics; global semiotics; global translation.

| 1. The Translating Subject – a *Homo Interpres* and a *Homo Significans* in Global Semiosis and Global Translation |

Translation and interpretation as hermeneutic activities are very old, but the term translation studies was first adopted in the 1950s. However, it was not until the beginning of the 1970s that it became firmly established as a discipline involving the systematic study constructed around the translator’s acts and the translating event. Hence, from the very beginning, the activity of translating has focused on one subject’s activity—the translator’s modalities of being and doing—the translator’s knowing how to translate. We can say that the translator is a “Hermes”, an interpreter as a reader, as a (co)author and as messenger between the author and the reader. The translating subject is therefore an interpreting subject, a *homo interpres* who creates meaning (constructing signs) and significance, that is, a *homo significans*. The translator’s role as a subject is to be both a hermeneutic interpreter, a *homo interpres* (cf. *hermenein* “interpret”) and a *homo significans*, living in and dealing with the dialogue between the source and the target language (actually, a real *filo logos*, “loving words”), text, and culture by producing messages and meanings in communication in a process of significance. As Robert Alter (1984: 7) observes in his work entitled *Motives for Fiction*, the signifying subject is particularly a *homo significans*. This means that the translating subject is between the source text and the target text, in a space that I refer to as a *chiasmus of semiosis* (cf. Kukkonen, 2010: 99–121), which is the precise moment where meaning is manifested as a result of many relations. Furthermore, whereas the original source text is a representation of signs, sign systems and meanings, the translated text is yet another representation of a representation. Within this process, the next step is the reader’s representations of the possible world when reading a literary work. As a result, the act of signification, *semiosis*, is manifested by many *semiotic relations* that are in dialogue and in polyphony. This occurs in
translation, and in the scientific study of translation, translation studies (conveying the message, that is, communication). This act of signification also occurs in semiotics, which entails using signs and producing signs to communicate meaning (cf. Morris, 1971 [1938]: 17–71 in his definition of semiotics as sign relations in semantics, pragmatics and syntax). To quote Petrilli regarding signs being in interrelation with each other, she echoes Sebeok’s words (1976; 2001a):

That signs and life—which is made of signs (life = semiosis)—are only possible in interrelation, interpretation, transposition, translation means that the being, the identity of something that signifies and is significant is inevitably rooted in otherness. The same sign is always the same other, for in order to be itself and continue being so, it must become other in intersign or transsign interpretation/translation processes. (Petrilli, 2003: 32–33.)

Sebeok’s (1976; Passim; 2001a; Passim) term global semiotics refers to relations on many levels. Here the entire universe enters the domain of global semiotics. And to quote Charles Sanders Peirce (1839–1914): “all this universe is perfused with signs”, (EP 2.394; CP 5.448n. [1906]), and all signification is but the “translation of a sign into another system of signs” (CP 4.127). From this global perspective, semiotics is the place where life signs (all systems of signification and communication) and the sign sciences converge. Sebeok adopts a global, holistic approach to the life of signs in dealing with studies on the life of signs and the signs of life. In addition, Petrilli argues that the interconnectedness of the sciences in global semiotics may be presented as a metascience concerned with all academic disciplines that are sign-related (2004a: 1–9; 2004b: 23–38). In global semiotics as in global translation, meaning is a question of the encounter of disciplines. The (scientific) semiosphere (Lotman, 1990: 127) is therefore the place where signs meet and obtain their meanings and significance. Lotman observes that in a semiosphere, the semiotizing process of “translation”, occurs on various levels.

The theme for the round table discussion on translation at the 11th World Congress of Semiotics in Nanjing, China (3–9 October, 2012), Translation, Encounter and Global Semiotics, focus particularly on the relations between semiotics and translation as global semiotics. This inherently also includes the issues of semioethics (a term coined by Ponzio and Petrilli, cf. Petrilli, 2004a: 1–9; 2004b: 23–38). Semioethics is concerned with the values and ethical requirements related to using, producing and interpreting signs and sign systems in the act of signification (semiosis), or the translating of signs and sign systems from one language into another language, culture, ideology, and civilization. Today, questions of ethical requirements are inherent in the act of signification in semiosis.
(cf. Welby’s *significs*, 1983 [1903] and 1985 [1911]; cf. also Sebeok 2001b: 145–153; Petrilli, 2009; Passim), where sign processes are manifested, where we use signs, produce signs and communicate with all types of signs (interdisciplinary, interrelated sign systems).

Translation is the *semiotization of signs and sign systems* (cf. Lotman 1990; Passim) into other signs and signs systems (language, culture, society) during communication. Translation is furthermore interpretation and *understanding* as a process and product, as a human activity, as a *heuristic problem solving process*.

If we look back to 1975, and to the publication of George Steiner’s book *After Babel. Aspects of Language and Translation* (p. 507), we see that Steiner discusses, for instance, “Understanding as Translation”, or “The Hermeneutic Motion”, which is the crucial idea of translation as interpretation, a hermeneutic tradition. In the beginning of the twentieth century, Welby (1985 [1911]; vii) defines her discipline significs as “the study of the nature of significance of meaning and communication in all its forms and relations”. According to Welby, in this act and process, translation is a method for the mind, and translation is a multifunctional tool for sense, meaning, significance, and the whole process of signification.

Within translation studies, the semiotics of translation has been proposed as being the sixth paradigm, *the semiotic paradigm* (cf. Hartama-Heinonen, 2008: 70–80; 2010: 71–72). This is natural when we recall Peirce’s observations about translation and interpretation; “But a sign is not a sign unless it translates itself into another sign in which it is more fully developed” (*CP* 5. 594; cf. Hartama-Heinonen, 2008b: 21–24).

As long as we have had knowledge of translation and interpreting, we can say that the very mission of translation as a phenomenon has been, and continues to be, to promote understanding, and conversely to avoid the misunderstanding between people and nations. Indeed, when that is prevented, this also leads to an increase in understanding of mankind. This global and societal impact of the scientific discipline semiotics is found, for instance, in the motto of the 9th World Congress of Semiotics; *Communication: Understanding/Misunderstanding*, in Helsinki and Imatra, Finland in 2007; “Semiotics studies all forms of communication. By analyzing cross-cultural misunderstandings, this promotes the self-understanding of mankind” (President Martti Ahtisaari, Patron of the Congress). The 11th World Congress of Semiotics in Nanjing, China, October 3–9, 2013 with the theme *Global Semiotics: Bridging Different Civilizations*, reflects the mission of both semiotics and translation, as global interdisciplines that build bridges of understanding and communication, linking cultures and civilizations. These two global disciplines also
include the axiological perspective, that is, the semioethics as mentioned above. As Li (2011: 231) states, we consider semiotics to be an interdisciplinary practice because it uses “all established knowledge, synthetically and relevantly connecting intellectual and academic elements from various disciplinary sources”. Li (2011: 229–237) also argues that the new solidified and interconnected possibility for global semiotics is in cross-cultural semiotics, in the encounter of Western and Eastern semiotics, including Chinese semiotics.

Translation can be understood generally as transferring culture, importing and exporting texts and ideas, which represents the very idea of global semiotics. Semiotics is everywhere in the universe, and everything is semiotics, and as Pierce argues, “a sign is only a sign when it is actively interpreted as a sign” (Peirce, EP 2. 4–10, [1894]). Moreover, meaning is constructed through signs and sign systems, usage, production and through the interpretation of them in all communication in terms of “translating” and “interpreting” a sign into a new sign. Peirce concludes; “But a sign is not a sign unless it translates itself into another sign in which it is more fully developed” (CP 5.594). All types of translation consist of using, producing and interpreting “translating” signs from A to B, that is, using signs and sign systems (including verbal, nonverbal and all types of signs, cf. Jakobson, 1987 [1959]: 428–435). As mentioned above, translation is semiotizing (cf. Lotman 1990; Passim) one’s own (text) to the Other (text). Or, translation is the opposite, reflecting the semioethical question of the paradox between identity/sameness and difference. Semiotics also uses signs and communicates with signs, translation reads and interprets signs, uses and communicates with signs, which is semiotizing (“giving meaning”), translating from one sign system to another. Ponzio (2003: 15–16) states the following concerning this relation;

“[...] the type of relation established between the original text and the translated text. These texts are similar to each other, but what is the nature of such similarity? The paradox of translation consists in the fact that the text must remain the same while becoming other simply because it has been reorganized into the expressive modalities of another language; the translated text is simultaneously identical and different with respect to the original text” (Ponzio, 2003: 15–16.).

Both semiotics and translation use systems that are sign systems, and relations. A considerable amount of the literature on translation has concentrated on the various approaches to translation, on the processes of translating (strategies, decision-making, choices) that have been analyzed from various dichotomies that are familiar from translation studies (free versus faithful, adequacy versus acceptability, foreignizing versus domesticating, etc.). According to Peircean
abductive translation theory (Hartama-Heinonen, 2008; Passim; 2010; Passim),
translation is seen as a semiotic event, a sign process, an act of signification, where
a sign is interpreted into a more developed sign. As Welby notes (1983 [1903]: 34),
translation comprises a heuristic problem-solving process that is multi-relational.
Consequently, translation also becomes a method for the mind.

2. The Subject and the Modalities

In the following analysis, I will focus on the existentiality of semiotics in
relation to translation studies, and particularly on the translating subject (le sujet en
procès, procès de signification, Kristeva, 1974; 17–30), which is the translating I. As
subjects, my main aim is to analyze the various modalities that are used by Swedish
and Danish literary translators in describing their work. Towards this end, it is
important to mention Tarasti’s existential semiotics (Tarasti, 2000; Passim) and his
Z-Model (Tarasti, 2010; 2–19; 2012; 13–27, 135–142, 457) with four fundamental
modes of being. These modes are the body (Moi 1), identity (Moi 2), social
practices (Soi 1) and values/norms (Soi 2). Tarasti studies the shifts and
interactions between the categories of Moi (Moi 1, “Me”, the subject, the
individual) and Soi (signifies oneself or itself (Soi 1, or society, the social within
us, Soi 2). The latter encompasses the subjectivity in individuals and communities.
During this process of translating, the translating subject makes semiotic moves both
on the Moi level (Moi 2, the identity of the translator her/himself) and on the Soi
level (Soi 1 and Soi 2, the society, culture level, norms, etc.) and this results in
various causes and effects.

This paper argues, therefore, that signs are everywhere, that translation is
everywhere, and that both semiotics and translation occur on various levels. This
analysis thus concurs with the statement by de Saussure in 1916 when he describes
the task of his semiology as a science that studies the life of signs within society, and
as a result, where there is a sign, there is a system (de Saussure, 1916; 16). In
short, the signs in language and culture are invariably manifested within society (the
social aspect of language use is fundamental and these include the norms, power,
ideology, etc.). Semiotics is the study of signs, sign systems and sign processes, sign
production and sign interpretation. This means that signs have an interpretative and
communicative function in creating and constructing meaning and signification. This
also suggests that from a global semiotic perspective in language, culture and
society, semiotics and translation share many features. Studying translation as an
activity or process necessarily takes into account the many networks of relations that
a translator’s choices are part of when translating signs and sign systems (all systems of signification and of the various processes of communication in language, culture, and society) in creating signification (cf. compensation as translation strategy with difficult culturally bounded information), sign systems and meaning. Reading, interpretation and translation create a semiosis, which is the act of signification in the dialogue between the source text culture and the target text and culture. Therefore, the very challenging task for semiotics and translation is the birth of semiosis, the act of signification in using and producing signs both on the surface and on the deeper level where the flow of meanings produce understanding, or misunderstanding in the process of self-understanding.

The relations between signs and sign systems on the levels of Moi and Soi, where meaning and signification are born and reborn, is “a chain of meaning”, as Bakhtin argues:

“[. . .] there can be neither a first nor a last meaning; it [anything that can be understood] always exists among other meanings as a link in the chain of meaning, which in its totality is the only thing that can be real. In historical life, this chain continues infinitely, and therefore each individual link in it is renewed again and again, as though it were being reborn” (Bakhtin, 2010 [1986]; 146.).

Sign processes are never-ending meaning processes. When discussing the position of the translating subject in translation and semiotics, translation causality necessarily includes the translator’s subjectivity (cf. Tarasti’s Moi level). Applied to translation, Chesterman (2002: 145–158) proposes in his causal (causes and effects) assessment of Greimas’s semiotic modalities (1966, 1970, 1983) the factors that influence the translator’s action (faire). The fundamental modalities (cf. Tarasti, 2012: 457) are “being”, (être), and “doing”, (faire), additional modalities are “can”, (pouvoir), “want”, (vouloir), “know”, (savoir), “must”, (devoir), and “believe” (croire). Hence, in discussing translation as a process and product involving causality on various levels as an issue of the sociology of translation, Chesterman (2002: 145–158; cf. also Kukkonen, 2009: 25–30) describes the translator’s processes of causality as a decision-making process that results in the target text, the product. Chesterman (2002: 158) defines the translators’ positioning in semiotic modalities in the following way: “What translators do (faire) depends on their knowledge (savoir) of how to exploit what is possible (pouvoir) in order to meet the demands of what is required (devoir), in a way that they desire (vouloir) and that is in accordance with their own subjectivity (être)”. This is a short, practical description of the complexity of translation with the many relations that translators have to take into consideration during their
creative process, which results in the other text, that is, the target text.

The paradox in translation semiosis, which involves the interplay of all types of relations (linguistic, textual, cultural, societal, etc.), is that the same text becomes another, as quoted above (Petrilli, 2003a: 32–33; 2003b: 41–53; Ponzio 2003a: 15–16; 2003b: 55–68). The translation process is thus inherently a question of “interpreting” signs in various sign systems between source texts and target texts. As Petrilli points out, one can argue that translation both on the socio-cultural and the ideological level (macro level) as well as on the linguistic and textual level (micro level), is a question of signs and values (Petrilli, 2003b: 47–48). This implies that every semiotic move (using and producing signs) is also an ethical move. This is also true for translation when semiotizing a source text into a target text in the semiosphere, which is the term coined by Lotman (1990: 127):

The structure of the semiosphere is asymmetrical. Asymmetry finds expression in the currents of internal translations with which the whole density of the semiosphere is permeated. Translation is a primary mechanism of consciousness. To express something in another language is a way of understanding it. And since in the majority of cases the different languages of the semiosphere are semiotically asymmetrical, i.e. they do not have mutual semantic correspondences, the whole semiosphere can be regarded as a generator of information (Lotman, 1990: 127.)

Lotman’s (1990: 143) conception of signs in the semiosphere incorporates the concept of translation as the “elementary act of thinking”, translation involves semiotizing texts from “the Other” to “my own” through semiosis:

“[...] the elementary act of thinking is translation. Now we can go further and say that the elementary mechanism of translating is dialogue. Dialogue presupposes asymmetry, and asymmetry is to be seen first, in the difference between the semiotic structures (languages) which the participants in the dialogue use; and second, in the alternating directions of the message-flow. This last point means that the participants in a dialogue alternately change from a position of “transmission” to a position of “reception” and that consequently the dialogue process consists of discrete sections with intervals between them (Lotman, 1990: 143.).

According to Tarasti, crucial aspects of the subject are the role that it plays in existence and in existential semiotics, and the role of the subject and the various modalities of the subject are crucial: “Without the concept of subject there is no ethical choice” (Tarasti, 2000: 88; cf. also Tarasti, 2012: 13–20). The first aspect, the role of the subject in existence can be interpreted in many ways (cf. Lyytikäinen, 1995: 7). For instance, it can be interpreted in grammar as the
grammatical subject: I am a semiotician. I love signs. I translate signs... whereas in philosophy it is a question of knowledge and perception. Furthermore, the subject in existence in society can be seen as a question of power and freedom, whereas in everyday life, the empirical subject acts to establish relations between people, or is a part of conflicts, etc. Finally, in psychology, the subject is discussed in relation to the question of consciousness and unconsciousness. In contrast, semiotics, the “I”, “the subject” and “self” is the semiotic self (cf. Sebeok, 1989; v-xiv in the volume Semiotics, Self, and Society). Actually, the existential subject is constantly le sujet en process of creating significance, and the subject is in the procès de signification (cf. Kristeva, 1974: 17–30; Kukkonen, 2009: 21, 121, 125, 139, 145, 227, 275).

The values of the signs are also inherent in relation to various entities such as the subject in existence, subject versus reality. Or, as Greimas (1983; 19–48) states, the concept of the sign itself is ultimately an axiological entity (value). In existential semiotics, however, as Tarasti (2000; 87, 88, 90) points out, “there is no ethical choice without the concept of subject, the subject of an ethical interpretation is above all, in the semiotic sense, a subject provided with full modal competence, a subject who “will”, “can”, “knows”, “must”, and “believes””. For the translating subject, these choices not only concern the ethical rules of the profession, but constantly emerge as important when choosing between, for example, the loyalty and disloyalty to the source text and to the author of the text on one side, and to the target text and its reader on the other. Moreover, these choices also include the various circumstances the translating subject has to consider during the translation process that leads to the translated literary work.

3. The Translating Subject’s Virtues—Translators’ Savoir-faire between Lightness and Weight

In the following presentation, I will discuss some aspects of the translating subject that have been analyzed from literary translators’ descriptions of themselves in anthologies (cf. under the title “Research material” in the bibliography). Within the theoretical framework of the semiotics presented above, which is interconnected with translation studies, I will comment on the creative processes of literary translators, where they act, as many of them express it themselves, between two entities as a medium in the translator’s space; this is an encounter of the author, the translator, and the reader.

Translation is a question of understanding and interpreting in the encounter of
“I” and “Other”, my word, and the other word, as is well-established by Bakhtin’s dialogism (2010 [1986]: 142–144, 168). As mentioned above, in accordance with Kristeva (1974; 17–30), we can use the expressions of the subject in process; *le sujet en procès*, in the process of signification, *procès de signification*, in the translation semiosis in the semiosphere where sign processes obtain their meanings.

The translating subject is involved in the dialogue or polyphony of the source text and the target text by constructing together a *palimpsest*, a huge intertext of numerous relations. The literary translator’s task is to be a reader (“the translator is the author’s best reader”), to interpret, to understand, and to provide meaning. The literary translator has to read linguistically and culturally specific signs, solving them with various types of professional knowledge (e.g. realia), but solving them also through intuition by listening carefully to the text and to its polyphony of voices. In the loss of linguistically or culturally specific information, for instance, when the author plays with words or metaphors in order to attain a specific style with an aesthetic function, the translator’s strategy is compensation (replacing linguistic and cultural specific “untranslatable” information) in the literary text by attempting to give an illusion of the original. The translator works with relative equivalence, and needs to apply double fidelity for both the author, and the reader.

The Swedish literary translator Ingrid Ingemark (1997: 86–87) offers the following warning: “You have to be cautious with language and listen carefully”. Ingemark also discusses the translator’s virtues, which I interpret as the spatial being between the lightness and the weight of being a literary translator. This concept of lightness versus weight is well known from Milan Kundera’s novel *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* (1984). But developed further, this idea is presented in Italo Calvino’s memos on literary virtues and qualities, as Calvino himself refers to them in his book *Six Memos for the Next Millenium* (1988). As Nilsson (2003: 6) remarks in his Swedish essay *Lätt som en fågel* (Light as a bird), these six memos are not only for individuals (cf. Tarasti’s *Moi* level), but can also be applied to institutions, organizations, and society (cf. Tarasti’s *Soi* level). Hence, the following virtues and qualities by Calvino can be applied in semiotics and translation, in language, literature, translation semiosis, and these are also virtues and semioethic values for a translator of literature:

1. *Lightness—Leggerezza*
2. *Quickness—Rapidità*
3. *Exactitude—Esattezza*
4. *Visibility—Visibilità*
5. **Multiplicity—Molteplicità**  
6. **Consistency—Coerenza** (Calvino 1988.)

Originally, Calvino described only five of these qualities. However, he named the sixth memo, *consistency*, shortly before his death. This last memo consists of the five qualities, and it also emphasizes the oppositions between them. Hence, the mission for literature, as well as for literary translation, is to create *consistency* in a literary work by testing what these virtues and qualities refer to in literature and aesthetics. Ingemark (1997; 87–87) describes her translating process as being a translator’s battle with *virtues*, a battle that takes into account the choices of the semiotic modalities described above. The attributes listed here express well the idea of lightness versus weight in the translator’s decision process. In other words, the translator must listen carefully to the text, must interpret paradoxes; the translator has to interpret and translate exactly achieving a balance between translating freely but exactly. The following attributes summarize these virtues:

1. **precision, preciseness, exactitude, accuracy; punctuality**  
2. **sensitivity, sensitiveness; susceptibility; sensibility; emotionality; touchiness; delicacy; moving quality; sentimentality**  
3. **unpretentiousness; modesty, humility; simplicity, moderatio**  
4. **courage, bravery.** (Cf. Ingemark, 1997; 85–95.)

Hence, translation moves between various paradoxes from the translating subject lists, which are inherently the same virtues as Calvino’s. This refers to being exact, being precise but at the same time having the courage to be creative and sensitive (“I have to trust my intuition”, cf. Outin, 1997; 47), in order to create *consistency*.

4. **Translators’ Space—Metaphors of Space in Translation**

The Swedish and Danish essays by literary translators that contained descriptions of their creative process when translating and their being “a self”, a translating subject, many translators used the metaphors of space to describe the many choices between *loyalty* and *disloyalty* (cf. the various modalities) for the author and the source text (cf. Bjerg, 1997; 77–88; Löfgren, 1997; 63–73). These translators referred to “the translator’s space”, which is why I easily find a parallel with Lotman’s (1990; 127) *semiosphere*, where signs meet each other and together
shape meaning in this specific space. These space metaphors are understood, because everything in being is location. For example, Jackendoff (1983: 209) observes that “[…] time is location, being possessed is a location, properties are locations. Events are locations”. In short, space is location and cognition is location. Bakhtin (2010 [1986]: 42) states, “Everything in this world is a time-space, a true chronotope”, an encounter of time in a specific space.

Translators define their existence, their modalities, and their relations to translation as a process and a product through the concepts of loyalty or disloyalty to the source text or source text author, as well as through the concept of quality (“how loyal/disloyal can/may I be”). The translator describes herself/himself as a person and a personality. The states and qualities of the translator are expressed by the modality of “being”, (être), the translation act is described by verbs and verb phrases as the modality of “doing”, (faire).

Thomas Warburton (2003: 75), a Finland-Swedish writer and a literary translator, uses the concept of logotopos (logos, topos) to demonstrate that every language manifests a specific conceptual background with its cultural knowledge and skills. A translator needs to have specific knowledge about her/his relation to reality; to know (savoir), to know (savoir), to must (devoir), to be able to (pouvoir), to want (vouloir), and to believe that translation is possible (croire). In the translator’s existence with various modalities, the translating subject is metaphorically “in a specific space” or “in a specific landscape”, which is referred to as “the space of a translator”. Warburton’s (ibid.) statement corresponds with the modality of devoir, “must”, which means, that since every culture has its own logotopos (e.g., Finnish culture, cf. Tarasti, 1991: 197–199, 203–216). The translator has to follow the inner soul of a specific language. This means that the translator needs to translate mood, temper, frame of the mind as well as the atmosphere, feeling, portraiture, etc., in a specific way (ibid.). This is also an expression for the semiotic term that Lotman (1990: 127) uses, the semiosphere, which is where all sign processes are manifested. A translator’s semiosis is this space, to shape a space both from the source text and the source culture, and then to translate and to semiotize this space into the target language and culture. Furthermore, a translator’s place is also as Bakhtin’s chronotopos (“timeplace”) (2010 [1986]: 42, 46–53, 134, 142, 168) with many its relations, dialogues and polyphonies (related to cognition, perception, emotion, intuition, and the body, that is, the whole physical and mental space that constitutes the semiosis). Bakhtin also uses the term logosphere to describe the language of discourse where meaning is manifested. Translation entails re-organizing the signs into a new configuration, called trans-
position, or translation, which pertains to the various encounters and relations in the cultural space, which is a space filled by a polyphony of various voices to interpret (Bakhtin, 2010 [1986]: 112–113, 149, 151–152; Bakhtin, 2010 [2002]: 109, 219–221). Therefore, we understand that the many descriptions provided by the literary translators in this study deal with “space”—the translator’s space, in the process of translating literature. The translator’s position is in between, in a chiasmus, in a space where the source and target texts are encountered they give meaning to a new text.

The literary translator Jacques Outin (1997: 43–62), who translates between the language pair of Swedish and French, also speaks of “the translated landscape” with “a translator’s various rooms, spaces—the cultural space”. With all the challenges of the original text, this space is also metaphorically dangerous and likened to “an open sea”, or to “a quagmire”. However, the translator’s task is to create a reliable illusion of the translated text. In addition, the idea of a “good” translation is to think that as a translator, one selects, for instance, a specific expression, because the translator thinks that the author would choose this specific expression if the author had knowledge of the language in question and if (s)he would express him-/herself in the target language in question (cf. these types of expressions of modality).

The original can present many challenges with a great number of alternatives, and opportunities to reword paraphrase. In these cases, the genre, or the context, functions as restricted elements. In the author’s text, the individual style of the author is the dominant (Jakobson, 1987 [1960]: 62–94), that is, the poetic function of the language, which means that the source text author’s language and style provide dominant clues of the author’s specific style. Synesthetically, with all senses, the translating I, the subject, must have the abilities (être) to see, to perceive, to understand (savoir), and to possess the ability to listen when the text “sounds good”, or when it rasps and has dissonance. There are the modalities of what a translator “can do”, (pouvoir), what “will”, (désire) do, and what “has to do”, (devoir).

5. Synaesthesia in Translation

Analogies to music and instruments are repeated in the translators’ descriptions of their literary translating. As Danish literary translator Iben Hasselbalch (1999b; 63–75) asserts, translating means feeling the joy of decoding the source text, of making one’s own translation better through rewriting. This process is similar to a
musician's process when attempting to reveal the secrets of a composer's music. Furthermore, as the musician plays and interprets a composer's music, this practicing results in achieving better results. Caj Lundgren (1997: 10–11) describes his translation process in a similar manner, when he compares translation to "musical interpretation", just as the source text will be interpreted in a new light through practice, by refining and working continually on details. Lindgren notes that the translating subject itself is an instrument. In the following quotation, a Danish literary translator describes her translation ideology as a modality expressing various relations:

"[...] the mentioned sensitivity of the soul for words and in words relation to reality is important. There is the freedom and there is the responsibility. There is not just your head and your mind with the knowledge you use, but there is your body as a whole with its knowledge you use, and there is your body as a whole with its life and experience that you use as an instrument. Because of this, it is true that a translator has to cope with two realities, both the strange and the domestic reality in relation to each other, and the real language work take place in the encounter of the two languages and never anything separately, that is, when a completely new text is born. To let the words in your own language be enlightened by reality, the foreign and the domestic, to let reality be born in the words of your own language, that is the task—and the art" (Bjerg, 1999: 79; my trans. from the Danish original.)

The metaphor used above shows how physical the process of translation can be ("you write and translate with your whole body"). This is paramount, and here we can apply Kristeva's (1974: 22–30) concept of the semiotic chora, the rhythmical chora, the bodily and biological chora. The Moi in both Kristeva's semiotics and in Tarasti's Z-model, is this chora, the body (Moi 1). As Bjerg (1999) above describes, the translation process consists of a firm relation between the mind and the body, that is, in the modality of "being" and "doing" in relation to reality. The translator is compared to an instrument that plays by tones and rhythms. This implies that the words are sounding signs in a literary text. Literary translation is therefore predominately involves rhythm and style and therefore musical analogies in the translator's cognitive and emotional space are essential metaphors to describe translation processes (cf. Merleau-Ponty, 1986 [1964]; Passim: 1987 [1960]: Passim; cf. Kukkonen, 2009: 40, 72, 122, 123, 129, 154, 295). Furthermore, this is true because language and music—as is life—are created by aspects of rhythm, such as the voice, rhythm and breathing in a literary text (Homén, 1954: 88–89; Kukkonen, 2009: 154–158). Therefore various senses are also combined and these are described by the translators who participated in the present study. In the
descriptions of their own creative work, the literary translators reported, using synaesthesia, a union of the different senses, or a synthesis of one or more senses simultaneously.

Moreover, the musical criteria for reliability when listening to words and texts can be found in auditory comparisons in some central everyday Swedish expressions. For instance, Cecilia Björk (2009), a musician, mentions expressions such as “sounds good” (lätter bra), “rings true” (det klingar riktigt), “it rasps” (det skorrar falskt), “you cannot believe your ears” (man tror inte sina öron), “gain a hearing” (man vinner gehör, det stämmer), “be in accordance (be consistent) with...”, etc. Through these music metaphors used by translators in their “listening carefully to their translations”, I can summarize many of the metaphors that were mentioned by the literary translators as follows: they listen to the words and texts, and they play with words as if they were playing instruments. In short, the analogies and metaphors that were presented by the literary translators dealt with music; translation activity is like playing an instrument or conducting an orchestra, as Meta Ottosson (1997; 15–16) also refers to the translation process as trying to “play the author’s melody”. Auditory analogies are described with expressions such as “to listen carefully”, “to get the feeling of the right tone, intonation, sound, or note.” Other references to the process of translation being like music were: “you have to have absolute pith, or have a good ear (for music or texts)”, and “you have to be sensitive, and keenly aware of nuances in language”. Moreover, Ottosson (ibid.) also uses verbs that express concrete actions, which include the metaphor of giving birth, building, or doing woodwork. Furthermore, the Swedish literary translator Viveca Melander (1997; 39) emphasizes the translating process by comparing it to life, which is merely a “process of translation and interpretation”. For Melander, everything in life is interpretation (cf. translation is everywhere, signs are everywhere).

As was mentioned previously, the translators’ descriptions include synaesthesia, which involves’ an encounter of the senses’ (cf. French sens “senses”, “meanings”), but this involves not only the mind and knowledge, but also intuition, feeling and guessing (cf. Peirce’s abduction, “the logic of guessing”). For example, Jacques Outin (1997; 43–62) emphasizes the translator’s courage to preserve an author’s unusual and unique expressions. However, the translator works alone and must rely on intuition, on one’s own relation to the source text and feeling for it, but also on the modality of devoir, e.g. the translator has to take in consideration geographical knowledge (realia) form the translator’s responsibility (authority). Intuition is used as a method in translation to solve the translation problems that are connected to the
cultural space where a translator can use the method of compensation. For example, as Outin (1997: 47) points out: “that I can rely on my intuition”. For Outin, translation is a cultural bridge, and it is a cultural mediation where various cultural spaces (realia, culturally specific knowledge) are mediated and transferred to another culture. As discussed above, Outin (op. cit. 58–59) also refers to various spaces. These include “the translation of landscapes”, “culture as a space”, “language as a space”, “time as a space”, “the geographical space” and “nature as space”. All these spaces can be different in the source and target texts. These are illuminating examples of the concept of semiosphere, the semiotic space (cf. Lotman, 1990; 127) that the translating subject exists in.

The translator’s life is a life between or, as several literary translators describe their profession, “a space between”. This refers to applying relative equivalence to the relation between the source text and the target text. This also means that a translator has to apply double fidelity, which pertains to the author and his/her literary source text on one side, and to the target text and culture and their readers on the other. The Swedish literary translator Anders Bodegård describes this situation as follows:

As a translator you are a medium—you stand in the middle, in the between, but not just between two structurally described language systems. You stand between (at least) two cultures, presumably also between two countries, probably between two different landscapes. And, you move between principally two poles of the ideal translation: either to take the text to the reader ("försvenska"—“to make it Swedish” [domesticating]), or the reader to the text (to expand the Swedish [foreignizing]). But, in my translation work, I also stand between the author of the text and its reader, both as an inevitable obstacle and as a necessary mediator (Bodegård, 1997: 109; emphasis origin.; my trans. from the Swedish original).

The translating subjects describe their creative work in audible and visual metaphors from music, art and theatre. Musical analogies describe the creative and intuitive processes of the decision making that occurs in literary translating with the aesthetic function, with the literary work as art. The source literary text is seen as a musical piece with notes to be read, interpreted and then to be played and performed. This is a chain of interpretations with the goal of an interplay. Furthermore, the translated text should be as unified as an orchestra playing together. Intuition (savoir-faire), or using Peirce’s terms, firstness and abduction, (the logic of guessing; cf. Hartama-Heinonen, 2008; Passim), is listening to the signs of the dominant poetical function in an author’s text, to the rhythm and to the breathing of the source text and then to the target text in dialogue with all the
polyphonies present in the linguistically and culturally specific texts. Literary translators speak of their synaesthetic processes, after knowing, feeling, listening and tasting, the translating subject as mind and soul, mind and body, results in a text leading to knowledge and skills (savoir-faire professionnel). A literary translator listens very carefully, which is evident from as Mats Löfgren’s (1997: 63–64) depiction of his translating of Milan Kundera as, “if I had his [Milan
Kundera’s] voice inside me”. For Löfgren (1997: 72), the role of intuition is
important in shaping the words and the nuances at the same time keeping the
author’s voice and intonation in mind in order to formulate a Swedish translation as
one’s own responsibility and by being aware of having the author’s voice in his head.

Translation means interpreting numerous signs and putting them in sign
systems, that is, testing the verbal signs in their environments that linguistic,
cultural and societal to determine the aesthetical function of that specific word,
phrase, or construction, in precisely that literary context. Indeed, translation
semiosis shows how translation and semiotics belong together. Only in semiosphere,
as Lotman (1990: 127) says, the relations of signification are born only in a
semiosphere. The translating subject is in the semiosis between the author and the
reader. This presents the paradox of creating the same other text (Petrilli, 2003a;
32–33; 2003b; 41–53; Ponzio, 2003a: 15–16; 2003: 55–68) for the other sign
system (other language, society, culture), literary system, and literary field
(genre, ideology, literary and translation norms, etc.) of the target text, language,
and culture.

6. Semiotics and Translation—Semiotizing the Texts to Same Others

What is then the theoretical and methodological consequences of combining
semiotics and translation, or the semiotics of translation? In various handbooks of
translation studies, information about this combination is limited (e.g., Routledge
Encyclopedia of Translation Studies 2009 [1998]; Handbook of Translation Studies
Online 2011 [2010]). Nevertheless, a central scientific issue is to study semiotics and
translation in the context of scientific paradigms. An example is Hartama-Heinonen
(2008: 70–80; 2010: 71–72) when she suggested abductive translation studies as the
semiotic paradigm to be the sixth paradigm for translation studies. If we apply the
concept of semioethics, how can we then notice the crucial aspect of ethics and
translation, or the semioethics of translation as a representation of global semiotics
and translation? Ethics and translation must be discussed from the various well-
established dichotomies that have been presented in translation studies (cf.
Hartama-Heinonen (2010: 73–74) as translators’ ethical duties, as local (micro-level) and global (macro-level) strategies in the translation process.

The essential concept of all types of translational processes—Roman Jakobson’s (1987 [1959]) three modes of translation: intralingual (rewording), interlingual (translation proper), and intersemiotic translation (transmutation)—lies in the dialogue and polyphony (cf. Bakhtin 1981, 1986) of the various relations between the original text (source text) and the new text (target text). These relations are dependent on various semioethical choices and values as well as on cultural and ideological questions at the global level. We can state that every translation is manifested as an ethical solution and that translation invariably transforms a text due to aspects that are specific linguistically, culturally, or ideologically specific (e.g. the concept of eco-translatology) in various semiospheres (cf. Lotman 1990). Translation as an activity, event and process deals with the paradox that the text must remain the same while becoming an other (cf. Petrilli, 2003a: 32–33; 2003b: 41–53; Ponzo, 2003a: 15–16; 2003: 55–68). This involves taking into account the Sameness and the Otherness while simultaneously trying to balance various relations between the source and target texts, cultures and ideologies. Furthermore, the translator constantly balances between loyalty and disloyalty, relevance and irrelevance, sameness and otherness, similarity and difference, and between equivalence and relative equivalence. To conclude, translation and semiotics cover first and foremost the idea of relation.

7. Global Semiotics and Global Translation—the Semioethical Mission

The role of the translating subject has always been crucial in the history of literature. This is evident by the vast import and export of translated literature. Many literary translators have increased our understanding of the functioning in the central space and position in between, that is, understanding both the author of the source text and the language and culture of the target text. All these translation acts and events made by translating subjects are essential in the literary fields of both the source and target cultures and societies. As discussed above, translation creates many relations as thought signs (cf. Peirce, *EP* 1.38–40, [1868]), beginning from the translator as an individual between two texts, the source text and the target text.

Translation is therefore a method for the mind; Victoria Welby (1837–1912), a pre-semiotician, who correspond on semiotics and her signifies with Charles Sanders Peirce, discusses translation as a tool for the mind: “We cannot cancel the automatic
process of translatio


ing thinking. Everything suggests or reminds us of something else” (Welby, 1983 [1903]: 34). Welby also observes that: “all language and all expression is a form of translation” (op. cit. 127 with reference to Nettleship 1897: 86). Furthermore, translation is problem solving; it is a heuristic method in decision-making, and therefore it can help translators deal with the dialogue between the source and target texts and cultures as a concept of bridging cultures and languages. In semiotics and translation, or in the semiotics of translation, semioethical issues, ethical values and requirements are inherent features that have global and societal impacts. Ben van Wyke (2011) alludes to this in his “Ethics and Translation” in the following way:

“There has been a boom of interest in translation all over the world not only from universities, but also from commercial sectors, governments, and many areas of popular culture, all of which are finding it harder to ignore the fact that translation does not merely reproduce ideas and information, but plays an active part in creating culture and civilization. As it gains visibility, and as we explore its complex implications, translation can also help us rethink the ethics of cultural encounters that define relationships among the peoples of the world” (van Wyke, 2011 [2010]).

Semiotics and translation, both being sign-related interdisciplines that deal with signs and sign systems to promote understanding and to avoid misunderstanding among cultures, both represent a global view in bridging understanding in our shared semiospheres (cf. Lotman, 1990: 123-130) among languages, cultures, and civilisations. Consequently, both also manifest many relations on the Soi level, which is the global, social, and scientific level, as well as on the individual level, which is the Moi level.

In the 1980s, Susan Bassnett-McGuire (1980: 13 with reference to Hawkes 1977) analyzed the relation between translation and semiotics: “The first step towards an examination of the processes of translation must be to accept that although translation has a central core of linguistic activity, it belongs most properly to semiotics, the science that studies signs systems or structures, sign processes and sign functions”. Hartama-Heinonen (2008) has demonstrated that translation and semiotics join to form a new paradigm, the semiotic paradigm, as she presents evidence from her research on Peircean abductive translation studies—the art of marshalling signs. Furthermore, according to Kukkonen (2001: 121 – 138), translation uses signs and combines them into a never-ending semiosis, a flux in translation semiosis, signs and signs systems on the surface and deeper). Signs therefore increasingly contribute to the growth of knowledge (cf. the example of

In translation and semiotics, signs are ubiquitous, and signs are translated by sign users and sign producers into other signs. In translation, the translating subject makes many moves that semiotizes one language system to another language system, not only on the linguistic level, but also on the cultural level. We can therefore return to Roman Jakobson’s (1987 [1959]: 428–435) profound article *On Linguistic Aspects of Translation* and his three modes of translation and interpreting signs:

5. Intralingual translation or *rewording* is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs of the same language.

6. Interlingual translation or *translation proper* is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language.

7. Intersemiotic translation or *transmutation* is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of nonverbal sign systems. (Jakobson, 1987; 429 [1959].)

We can summarize the idea of discussing relations in translation in terms of these modes; the first mode concerns the *relations of rewording, paraphrases, or synonyms* in the one and same language in question. According to Welby’s concept of translation as a method for the mind (Welby, 1983 [1903]; 34) this first mode is basic in our thinking—saying and writing something in another way. During this translation semiosis, we use verbal signs by means of the other signs that exist within the same language in question. For instance, the *relation of paraphrase* offers us a vast number of possibilities, depending on the genre and the style. The second mode of translation occurs when one language encounters another in a semiosphere of relations due to the asymmetrical relationship between various languages and this mode enables us to deal with *intralingual relations* combined with *interlingual relation*. In this time and place, semiosis, the act of signification, is created. The third mode encompasses all types of *relations in translation by semiotics*, the study of using and producing signs and sign systems in order to communicate the message and meaning. *Intersemiotic translation relations* take into account all the relations and movements between signs and sign systems, translating from one sign system to another. This can be the sign system of one language to another, from verbal language to non-verbal language or vice versa, from one genre to another, that is, from various communication systems to others. Jakobson calls this *transmutation*. We can also use the term *transposition*, which pertains to the relation of translation
as giving the signs in use a new position in another language and culture. As Lotman (1990: 11–19) defines the position of his central term, *text*, he argues that a text is a network of meanings consisting of numerous networks of relations. Culture then is created by the world of texts, the collective memory of a community, and by the selection of languages and texts. The functions of the text in culture as a whole is that the text mediates meanings, shapes new meanings and new texts, and that the text stores information, that is, forms the memory of the culture. In brief, the *semiosphere* is a translator’s space and landscape of texts and the translating subject translates texts in various worlds.

Lotman (1990: 151) points out that in his cultural semiotics, the sign or its essence, is not studied per se, nor is semiosis but rather *sign systems are analyzed*, and this entails the *relationship* between those systems and their *processes* in a culture. Relations in cultural semiotics pertain to the interaction between structurally different sign systems, the inner irregularity of *semiotic space*, the necessity of the cultural and semiotic polyphony (op. cit.). There are many of these relations and they express multidimensionality, hierarchies, structural heterogeneity and irregularity. This is true for translation both as an act and as an activity. Therefore, the translator’s task is to *semiotize*, translate and interpret, “understand” the *Other*, the Alien, the Foreign in relation to “I” (“my word” versus “the foreign word”, cf. Bakhtin) and to produce meaning and understanding. The *semiosphere* is the relation of space to continuous interaction and change, and the semiosphere makes possible the existence of languages, cultures and texts (*semiotizing*, *border*, *dialogue*). For meaning and signification, the *semiosphere* is as vital for meaning and signification as the atmosphere, hydrosphere or the biosphere are for all living organisms (cf. Lotman, 1990: 123–130). This is the sphere of semiosis in which the *sign processes* operate in the set of all interconnected *Umwelts*. The semiosphere is the world of signs and sign actions; it is vital for creating meaning, it is a pre-condition for sign action, semiosis. A literary translator is a vital part of this semiosis. We can also recall Jakobson’s (1987: 454) statement from the first world congress of semiotics in Milan 1974, when he stated as follows:

“[...] Semiotics, or put otherwise, *la science du signe et des signes*, the science of signs, *Zeichenlehre*, has the right and the duty to study the structure of all of the types and systems of signs and to elucidate their various hierarchical relationships, the network of their functions, and the common or differing properties of *all* systems. The diversity of the relationships between the code and the message, or between the signans and the signatum, in no way justifies arbitrary and individual
attempts to exclude certain classes of signs from semiotic study, as for example nonarbitrary signs as well as those, which, having avoided “the test of socialization”, remain individual to a certain degree. Semiotics, by virtue of the fact that it is the science of signs, is called upon to encompass all the varieties of the signum [ . . . ]” (Jakobson, 1987; 454.).

The interdisciplinary fields of semiotics and the semiotics of translation are based on various networks of meaning relations. These relations in translation, translation semiosis, or the relations in semiotics, semiosis, where the act of signification is manifested, can be described as the many relations Welby (1983 [1903]: 5–6) discusses in her significs as early as in 1903:

There is, strictly speaking, no such thing as the Sense of a word, but only the sense in which it is used—the circumstances, state of mind, reference, “universe of discourse” belonging to it. The Meaning of a word is the intent which it is desired to convey—the intention of the user. The Significance is always manifold, and intensifies its sense as well as its meaning, by expressing its importance, its appeal to us, its moment for us, its emotional force, its ideal value, its moral aspect, its universal or at least social range” (Welby, 1983 [1903]: 5–6).

Semiosis is constructed through the relations in the “universe of discourse” (Welby), the semiosphere (Lotman). Hence, Welby and Lotman share one, fundamental concept: for Welby, translation is a method for the mind, whereas for Lotman, translation is an elementary act of thinking. The translating subject is a semiotician, in the procès de signification, in reading signs, interpreting signs, and in creating signs in the dialogue between the source text and the target text, semiotizing signs and sign systems. A literary translator is, as translators describe themselves above, between x and y. This position of being in the space between is a relevant question in semiotics and translation. The translating subject is a signifying subject, a homo interpres and a homo significans, dealing with the many relations of the Moi and Soi that exist in relation to the reality manifested by many semiotic modalities.

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### Literature


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Intericonicity as Intersemiotic Translation in a Globalized Culture

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Abstract: With the advent of mass communication the way we use images as references and the way we translate them constantly in order to subvert, understand or reinforce them have exploded—no image is innocent of that. Discussions about the originality, authenticity or uniqueness of the images are directly connected to their dependence on the intersemiotic function. We can conceive of no intersemiotic translation that is not iconic and linguistic at once. The fusion of words and images in western culture since modernity cannot allow us to speak of verbal and visual signs as perceived separately from each other. Our examination of three examples of pictorial intersemiosis in mass culture relies on these premises, questioning Paolo Fabbri’s (2008) reluctance to realize the full potential of intersemiosis and his insistence to foreground and prioritize some purely linguistic semiotic system over the iconic/pictorial or the iconic/linguistic one. Furthermore, our inquiry opens up the issue of semiotic terminology, i.e. the relationship between icon, picture, image and the visual sign.

Key words: intericonicity; intersemiotic translation; image text

1. Introduction

The definition of intersemiotic translation, first offered by Roman Jakobson in 1959 [2004], though still the starting point for most studies on this matter, has been broadened so as to include, for most scholars, the transformation between non-linguistic semiotic systems. This position allows the translator to bypass the most powerful semiotic system, which, according to linguists and semioticians alike, is that of language, and to invest in non-verbal forms of communication, which many scholars still consider communicatively incomplete or even illegitimate as types of translation.

Based on a critic of Paolo Fabbri’s definition of intersemiosis, the first part of the paper will examine cases of non-verbal intersemiotic translations in current
artistic and commercial visual culture, i.e. cases in which one non-verbal expression has been translated into another non-verbal expression. This will make clear how the semiotic system of pure language has been rendered almost obsolete as an independent semiotic system. Instead, today’s global culture operates on a system of semiosis where the registers of communication are mixed; they are pictorial (as defined by Sonesson, 1989) and linguistic at once, they incorporate motion, and they have produced a whole new definition of text.

Translation can thus occur across pictorial and icono-linguistic registers; From the photographs from the prisons of Abu-Ghraib to the video-clips of Bin Laden’s addresses, through different types of marketing for women’s health products across the globe, or of soil fertilizers in Africa, India and Europe, the intersemiotic translation of images (as defined by Belting, 2001) has been a powerful tool in cultural communication. Many of the images generated today rely on a well-established system of signification with a rich cultural and ideological history.

The second part of the paper, resting upon the premise presented in the first, will attempt to show how a semiotic ontology can use the hermeneutically derived terms of iconicity and imagentext (as defined by Mitchell, 1994), reclaim intericonicity for semiotics, and discuss mass-cultural translation in a changing world. Indeed, if a lot of today’s mass-cultural rhetoric rests upon a kind of participatory intermediality (blogging, videogames), where does this leave so-called intericonicity, i.e. the condition of translatable and play between images (or between imagentexts)? Is semiosis as open and arbitrary as ever, or is it more controlled and semantically limited within the global icono-linguistic, image-textual nexus of infotainment?

2. Semiotic Systems and the Question of Primacy

The position of many linguists and semioticians advocating the primacy of the semiotic system of language is old and well known; a primacy that had been pointed out by the father of European Semiotics and Linguistics, Ferdinand De Saussure (1979: 45) already at the beginning of the 20th century. Saussure regards language as the most important semiotic system of all. Many leading semioticians, such as Jakobson (1970: 511), Greimas and Courtés (1993 [1979]: 398), Eco (1994 [1976]: 263), Barthes (1964: 40) have come to agree with Saussure’s point of view.

The cultural taxonomy of semiotic systems established by the founder of the Moscow-Tartu school of Cultural semiotics Yuri Lotman (2001 [1990]) is also based on the idea of the primacy of the linguistic system. Natural languages are, according
to him, primary modeling systems. Sebeok (2001; 139) adds that “systems that have
a natural language as their basis and that acquire supplementary superstructures,
thus creating languages of a second level, can appropriately be called secondary
modeling systems”. The language of art, cultural rules, religion etc. are secondary
modeling systems, or more complex languages built upon natural language.

Those semioticians who insist on the primacy of the linguistic system do so on
the basis of certain qualities they do not recognize in extra-linguistic systems. Fabbri
(2008; 42) has summarized these qualities by pointing out one specific privilege of
the linguistic system: “contrary to other systems, such as the optical, the kinetic,
the musical or the spatial code systems, language has the capacity to not only define
itself, but also other sign systems”.

Fabbri (2008; 100) also offers a historical explanation for the idea of the
primacy of the linguistic sign system; “beyond the cases of homonymy or synonymy,
language has long been considered to possess a different semantics than other
systems. This is indeed true, since for a long time language has been thought of as
“natural reason”/ “logos”, i. e. a distinct criterion upon which thought is
grounded”. Fabbri (2008: 66) asserts that language is not the only semiotic system
which carries signification, and that it is possible for other forms of signification to
organize forms of content, i. e., signifiers which language cannot necessarily
produce. This realization is hardly new, yet it is not part of the early theoretical
framework of semiotics, which is somehow assumed that it is only possible to think
what can be uttered linguistically.

3. Intersemiosis and Intericonicity: Different or Equivalent?

If early semiotic theory did not account for non-linguistic semiotic systems, this
does not mean the “era of intersemiotic translation” (Fabbri, 2000: 282) and the
phenomenon of “infinite semiosis” (Peirce, 1931–1958, 4. 127) had not already
started. With the spread of visual and verbal literacy and the intensification of mass
communication technologies, word-image interactions and the integrated
collaboration of linguistic and non-linguistic semiotic systems were already at the
cruc of cultural signification in the early twentieth century.

What semioticians seek to conceptualize now is the space between the interface
and the overlap of semiotic systems. Sidestepping the problem of the primacy of the
linguistic in signification, Petrilli (2003; 31) has attempted a distinction between
what is and what is not a sign;

Trans-, inter-, dia-are prepositions and prefixes that specify the modality of
being of the sign, the sign process, semiosis [...] Semiosis is a transsign process, an intersign process. Something that is not capable of relating to something else that signifies it, utters it, translates it, interprets it, responds to it, is not a sign.

Torop (2004: 64), though speaking specifically of the arts, can assist here in reestablishing the position of linguistic systems in intersemiotic translation by repeating the idea of a “partial overlap” of signs in different systems: “[T]he intersemiotic aspect of culture is due to the partial overlap of signs and languages or sign systems of different arts—first, on the level of independent existence of these languages and texts created in them (e.g. film and theater).” The most characteristic description of such a thesis, supported also by many of the Moscow-Tartu scholars, has been offered by Toporov, though he does not escape from the Soviet academic reflex of presupposing an essentialist view of culture, Toporov (1992: 30) writes: “[Culture] is not only the place where meanings are born, but the space in which they are being exchanged, “transmitted” and seek to be translated from one cultural language into another”.

The first to define intersemiotic translation was Roman Jakobson himself (2004 [1959]: 139): “Intersemiotic translation or transmutation is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of nonverbal sign systems”. His examples ranged from “verbal art to music, dance, cinema or painting” (ibid.; 143). Jakobson might have been among the founding members of the International Association for Semiotic Studies with Algirdas Julien Greimas, Julia Kristeva, Emile Benveniste, Thomas A. Sebeok and Yuri Lotman, yet he was primarily a linguist. He never ceased to consider language as the primary semiotic system and thus never discussed the issue of intersemiotic transposition without placing language as one of the two poles in the translation process.

Neither did Greimas. He could not imagine an intersemiotic translation in the absence of language. According to Greimas (1966: 12), “every signifying totality [ensemble] which is by nature different [has a different character] than natural language can be translated, more or less accurately, in any given natural language”. He explicitly believed (ibid.; 13) that “natural languages occupy a special position as the starting point of every transposition and as the end point of every translation”.

The question remains open: Could we imagine an intersemiotic translation that does not account for linguistic signs? Can we speak of intersemiosis between non-linguistic sign systems and still subscribe to a “classical”, that is to say undiluted, definition of the sign, or, to put it even more strictly, in a way similar to what Sonesson suggests (1992) to a clear definition of the sign that distinguishes between signs and non-signs or “no-yet-signs”?
4. Intersemiosis: Excluding the Primary Semiotic System

Eco makes a remark in order to suggest a new definition of intersemiotic translation whereby translation is to be understood as a metaphor, a transference or an adaptation. Within such an intersemiotic framework he can imagine the operation also of non-linguistic registers. More precisely, Eco (2001: 67) observes as follows:

[... ] Jakobson [when discussing intersemiotic translation] was thinking of a version of a verbal text in another semiotic system [... ] but he does not deal with other cases of transmutation between systems other than verbal language, like for example, the ballet version of Debussy’s Après midi, the interpretation of Pictures in a Exhibition by means of a musical composition by Mussorgsky, or even the version of a painting in words (ekphrasis).

For Petrilli (2003; 18) too, it is clear that “translative processes may be internal to the same language; they may occur from verbal sign systems to nonverbal sign systems and vice versa; or among nonverbal sign systems”, while Tomaszkiewicz (2005; 162) approaches intersemiotic translation as the transmission of the same message from a linguistic into a non-linguistic system or vice-versa.

Fabbri (2008; 113) mentions a lecture in which he discussed his own approaches to translation which echoes the same conflict in almost identical terms. Gianni Vattimo was present and reacted to Fabbri’s insistence on the possibility of iconic signifieds. “Vattimo”. Fabbri remembers, “supported the idea of the privilege of linguistic meaning over the meaning of other types of sign, and could not accept the idea of a meta-painting, i.e., of a painting that can not only formulate through language general theoretical hypotheses, but which can also function through clearly iconic signifieds, which cannot be expressed in words.” Then he adds, “Yet I did believe in this idea and will continue to believe in it”.

Though Fabbri relies more on a semiotic leap of faith in order to hold on to the idea of a non-linguistic sign that can be translated into another non-linguistic sign, he is certain that in the case of pictorial signs we can actually talk of intersemiotic translation. He goes so far as to speak of the “specific expressive essence, an ekphrastic form, which transmits a certain type of content organization” (Fabbri, 2008; 106). Barthes (1964; 40) has of course discussed the ambiguity of the image. According to him, only language could lift the amphisemy of the image. We shall pose the question again: What happens when a pictorial message is translated into another pictorial one? We shall try to address this question through a couple of well-
known examples.

4.1 Intersemiotic Translation from Painting to Painting

For Lotman (2011: 250–251), art is a secondary modeling system which is directly connected to translation due to its content; “The content of art as a modeling system is the world of reality, translated to the language of our consciousness, translated in turn to the language of the given form of art”. In this phrase he allows for the possibility of intericonic translation that is completely unmediated by language.

If we take into account Lotman’s conviction that “there are two opposing tendencies in art; One relies on repeating something that is already familiar, the other is interested in creating something new”, we can establish the terms for intericonic translatability. The tendency to “repeat something that is already familiar” is actually the tendency to translate.

The two images (Figure 1 and 3) bare many resemblances. The second is definitely an interpretation of the first, and, is actually in the strictest possible way, its intericonic translation. Wong Hoy Cheong’s 2009 Days of Our Lives: Reading offers an example of an intersemiotic translation of Herni-Fantin Latour’s 1877 readers. Why are we not content with simply calling Cheong’s work a re-reading, or an interpretation? What do we gain by speaking of intersemiotic translation?

![Figure 1](image1.jpg)  ![Figure 2](image2.jpg)

Figure 1 Herni-Fantin Latour’s, Readers (1877)  Figure 2 Wong Hoy Cheong’s Days of Our Lives: Reading (2009)

Wong Hoy Cheong’s painting chooses to reproduce the specific painting by Henri Fantin-Latour by keeping the general theme of two women, one reading at a table with a vase of flowers, another sitting next to first one; The relative size, the pose of the women, the composition of the picture are identical. Cheong has
changed the clothing of the women, as well as the chairs, the flowers and the tablecloth, in order to create associations with a contemporary interior and two Muslim women, rather than a mid-1870s Paris living room.

Fabbri would definitely connect the issue of translatability with that of interpretation—indeed in his comparison of two paintings, one of which translates the other, he is indifferent to the specificity and strictness of intersemiosis, and relies instead on the terminology of hermeneutics:

We could consider a hermeneutics of semiotic systems that are different to language; A hermeneutics of painting, a hermeneutics of cinema, of gesture etc... These semiotic systems can interpret themselves, but they can all interpret other semiotic systems through expressive concepts which (...) partially re-translate the meaning that was expressed in the initial system (Fabbri, 2008; 112).

Yet in this case intersemiosis is hardly a matter of the specificity of painting. The fact that Cheong chooses to paint his picture and not to simply manipulate Fantin’s image digitally, does heighten the effect of intersemiosis. Yet, the sign of the medium of painting, which enhances, by its association to the tradition of the medium, the gravitas of the subject-matter, is not the primary code used for intersemiosis. A similarly potent effect could be produced through the digital reprocessing of the 1877 painting.

What Cheong really does is painfully obvious, and it has been the task of images at least since Fantin’s time; He uses the signifier of another image as a signified for his own-Fantin’s image which is a readily identifiable set of signs, a combination in the pictorial code which Cheong manipulates in order to produce a new meaning, in the same register. Intersemiosis here aims to alienate from the original, nor to rehabilitate its meanings. It seems we have a clear case of translation from a pictorial sign system into another pictorial sign system, an extra-linguistic intersemiosis.

4.2 Intersemiotic Translation in the Mass Media

The next two cases make this point even more clear. A set of visual codes (in our cases codes of visual composition) is being translated in a new set of visual codes. In the process of intersemiosis certain signs are being translated, yet the aim is to create an effect that recalls and at the same time subverts the original. In the case of Pamela Anderson from the action drama series The Baywatch (1989–2001)
being referenced by Martin Lawrence in action comedy *Big Momma’s House 2* (2006) the effect is humorous (Figure 3 and 4).

![Figure 3](image1.jpg) **The Baywatch (1989–2001)**  
![Figure 4](image2.jpg) **Big Momma’s House 2 (2006)**

In the second case, that of Burt Lancaster and Deborah Kerr in the drama film *From Here to Eternity* (1953) being referenced by a Notos Com advertisement (TO BIIMA MEN, 8/2008), the intericonic transposition exploits the success of a compositional code (figure 5 and 6). Here the question occurs: Are we speaking of purely visual codes as opposed to purely linguistic ones? Is the code of *From Here to Eternity* purely visual, i.e., independent from the linguistic/verbal investment of the film? And is Baywatch merely a series of montaged visual images? It is obvious that neither the still from the film nor the still from the TV series can be understood as self-standing images.

In fact Fantin-Latour’s painting is already pointing to an inescapable fact of perception, namely that there is no visual literacy without linguistic literacy. Rather than leading to an immediate conclusion that there is no primacy of the word over the image or vice-versa, we might like to think of the possibility of a sign that is at once coded *as* a word and *as* image.
All three, in fact all six images we presented are visual signs, yet they are heavily coded with verbal meanings too. Fantin is actually describing the act of reading as an opaque act of deciphering and decoding which the viewer and the painting cannot share simply by looking at the reading person. The environment around the reader (or readers, it is hard to say whether the second woman is participating in this act or not) tries to anchor some of the fleeting signifiers and provides information, albeit necessarily incomplete information, about the reading material itself.

Media theory has long realized that the perception of words on a page or on a screen is in fact determined by the page or the screen itself. This sensory (visual)
experience is intrinsically connected to the decoding of the (verbal) sign, of the word on the page or the screen. The question about the iconicity of the verbal has long returned, yet now it is a question of whether we can really imagine words without images and images without words.

The iconic sign, from Eco through to anti-semioticians such as W. T. Mitchell, and most notably among media theorists such as Latour (1998) (from a non-semiotic point of view) or semioticians such as Lotman and Sonesson, does not make a distinction between the iconic/visual and an iconic/verbal sign. If Eco does so for analytical purposes, he still realizes that from the point of view of perception, a clear distinction is not possible.

Why are the three cases we examined semiotic transpositions between iconic/visual systems and not simple references? This paper has attempted to read Fabbri’s supra-linguistic approach to intersemiosis as wanting in its definition of the iconic sign. In order to read a tree transposition, and understand them as depending on some kind of intersemiosis, we have to allow for a definition of the iconic sign informed by perception theory and media theory.

Fantin’s painting offers an early allegory of the limits of iconic/visual significations. The poses, the gazes and the act of reading address the viewer with an enigma, but also with a series of clues to solve it and look the contradiction in the eye. Cheong’s reworking of Fantin’s image uses the mystery of the cross-and counter-signifying clues (the woman looking into the book interpreted as an act of reading, the other one looking elsewhere interpreted as gazing into the void absentmindedly or maybe listening carefully).

Cheong reprocesses the dialectics in Fantin’s painting-absorption and attention versus absent-mindedness or theatricality, decoding practices involving words—on the part of the reading woman, and involving images—on the part of the viewer. Cheong deactivates the sign (the question mark) that is the listening or absent-minded woman. He does not pose the question of participation of the non-reading woman that is at the crux of Fantin’s work.

Cheong tames the ambiguity of the signs in the iconic/visual system of Fantin’s painting by adding the overriding signifiers of the Islamic headcover. The content of reading and the issue of absorption are not important anymore. The mere act of reading is lead ad absurdum. The participants in the act of reading are not offering their absorption for sensory consumption of the viewer. The Islamic dress code points to the importance of the late 19th century French bourgeois interior—the act of reading becomes an ironic comment against the universality of the liberal values of the Enlightenment: Yes, women are reading, Cheong seems to be saying, but
their cultural refinement (associated with the Enlightenment project) hardly means they are liberated from other social constraints and repression.

As for the other two, much more obvious transpositions, we would have to point out that they share with the iconic/visual signs of the Fantin/Cheong transposition the immediacy of the sensual. In the case of *Baywatch*, the intersemiosis is trying to reverse the code of sensuality of Pamela Anderson’s pose. In the case of the Notos ad, the transposition simply modernizes and recycles the famous pose in *From Her to Eternity*.

5. Icon, image, picture

We do not claim for semiotics a status higher than that of a method. That is the most any approach could offer, (short of metaphysical and theological approaches—though even there, neuroscience, perception theory and biosemiotics can offer their insights). We have attempted a critique of Fabbri’s reluctance to deal with semiotics as a method that can be legitimately employed in terms far broader than the analysis of fundamentally and primarily linguistic registers. Semiotics has followed developments in the analysis of visual and verbal communication that has not only enabled its critical and creative dialogue with other methods, but have made this dialogue indispensable.

The theory of media and of perception have shown, both on the level of developmental psychology, and on the level of cultural history, that we can indeed communicate with signs that are not linguistic, but also that we cannot divorce a complex pictorial sign from an understanding of culture that has been moulded in and created through language, i.e. a linguistic semiotic system in a strict sense. The question of intersemiosis, in linguistic-iconic and/or pictorial-iconic registers, also becomes a historical question.

On the level of individual perception, for intersemiosis to work in the examples we have provided, the viewer requires a degree of media literacy that is by no means merely a linguistic affair. It might still be an open discussion at which stage infants actually produce and perceive of signs rather than merely interact with their environment and to which extent capacity for sign production differentiates humans from other animals (Donald, 2001; Sonesson, 2012), yet experimental psychologists and biosemioticians have shown how hard it is to distinguish pictorial from linguistic signs, given the representational character of both.

On the level of the technological structure of media today, networks of communication and features of participation and perception in these networks have
again undergone a great change, and it is getting harder to speak of pictures isolated from words, or words from pictures. It has become obvious that pictures cannot be discussed separately from their screens or the surfaces upon which they appear, unless they are theorized as images, forming a conceptual triangle with media and bodies (Belting, 2001). The sign of the image can only be separated, in terms of perception, from the materiality of its medium and the perceiving and/or carrying body, when the specificity of the medium and of the body are acknowledged.

The images we have seen are all transferred from one context to another, yet what would context be in this case? Would it simply mean medium? And what would medium mean in each case—would it merely refer to the materials aspect of the image or to the social practice that would include materials, as well as the technology of the communicative act, including viewers and makers? The still from From Her to Eternity becomes a printed advertisement. Fantin-Latour’s painting becomes Cheong’s painting. In the first case the material medium (the carrier so to speak) of the image has changed. In the second it is the same.

Yet in both there is a historical distance and there is also a conscious reference of the later image to the former. The original images are taken for commonplace knowledge (a part of media literacy) and the new images that occur through the self-references add information, while also retaining, information and thus generate another combination of meaning. Which part of the content of the sign remains constant? Furthermore, both the new images have a communicative function also without reference to their sources. In cases of parody and self-reference or self-reflexivity, like in the examples we present, then, the reader should actually be informed about the original source, that upon which the self-reference or the parody relies on. In that sense he or she is already reading a sign that is supra-linguistic and supra-image at once. That unicum of a sign, an amalgam of pictures and words, a unit of perception, often with an incorporated perception of time, is the iconic sign, the icon, a term that might derive from the Peircian icon, yet is invested with many more functions, indexical and symbolic, and can also incorporate imagetext (Mitchell, 1994).

6. Pictorial intersemiosis as intercultural communication

In the case of the 2012, much discussed, IKEA advertisements (Figure 7), the problem of supra-linguistic intercultural communication is posed in clear semiotic terms: The visual sign “woman” is replaced by the visual sign “IKEA product”, just like a word could be replaced by another word in the context of a phrase. Here, the
intericonic exchange functions equivalently to a linguistic one. The alleged primacy of the linguistic or the often assumed directness and sensuality of the visual are of secondary importance in the function of the signifying system of this advertisement. Those viewers/readers who will notice the omission of women and their replacement by pieces of furniture or other advertised commodities will feel the absence of the sign as relying on its connotation with desire and objecthood—they will know that a closet is as desirable as a woman and will thus acknowledge the targeted political message of the company! Those who are not familiar with the original advertisements will not know there has been an omission. The advertisement will nevertheless transmit its message, and this message is as much visual as it is verbal, pictorial as much as linguistic; IKEA sells furniture and the representation of gendered individuals has a culturally defined and therefore commercially significant anchorage function.

![Figure 7 IKEA advertisement (2012)](image)

### 7. Conclusion

Where is the pictorial/linguistic conjunction here? Words and images are inseparable in these cases—and that is indeed why all pictures are not just similar images presupposing one another but actual semiotic transpositions. Like with every intericonic incident, intersemiosis between pictures (visual signs) and images (on
different media) points to the constructedness of the pictorial and the linguistic signification underlying and cross-supporting it.

It is beyond the paper’s scope to discuss the dependence of visual literacy on verbal literacy and of word/image perception to media technology. Yet the point we would like to suggest is that intersemiosis, even when it occurs between pictorial sign systems, is heavily dependent upon the joint perception of word and image.

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A Peircean approach to the transmedia storytelling semiosis of “Angry Birds”

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Abstract: The discussion about transmedia storytelling is usually based upon the theoretical perspective of narratology and the semiotic of narrative, fields that are strongly monomediaic. These theoretical perspectives can handle each medium involved in the transmedia process, but may not be enough to discuss transmedia as an integrated and dynamic system with different sign relations. Transmedia narratives are shaped from a complex group of devices and platforms that cannot be reduced to simply juxtaposing contents that complement or supplement each other. Its main feature and richness, is the crossing of multiple media environments, in which each new text contributes in its own and valuable way to the whole system. The media are at the same time independent and integrated parts of a complex media ecosystem. Although each media environment has semiotic autonomy, for it is not required to know all the media pervaded by the narrative to understand the meaning process in each one, their transmedia dimension can be better understood from a procedural and integrated semiotic perspective that evinces its global, temporal, heterogeneous, and dynamic dimensions.

In this context, we intend to contribute to transmedia subject by adopting C. S. Peirce semiotics. Peirce’s semiotics is a theory of sign actions, that is, a theory of semiosis. According to Peirce, semiosis is “an action, or influence, which is, or involves, a cooperation of three subjects, such as a sign, its object, and its interpretant. this tri-relative influence not being in any way resolvable into actions between pairs” (EP 2: 411 [1907]). For Peirce, semiosis is a continuous and dynamic process of producing signs. This sign process includes the semiotic operations of determination and representation, which make sign mediation a partial and incomplete instance of semiosis. We propose in this paper to view the transmedia narrative as semiosis, that is, as a network of related signs. These signs bring about subsequent signs (interpretants) that represent the previous sign determination (object) by adding new signs to the semiosis (collateral experience) and so on.

To understand the sign relations that constitute the transmedia semiosis we use, as a methodological tool, the Peirce’s classes of sign. The extensive sign classification proposed by Peirce
was built as a classification standard that logically indicates all possible semiosis. Its logical and general structure can be applied to any type of sign. Its classification standard is based upon continuity and relationship of categories, which explains the complex relations of different aspects on the signs. On this paper, we aim to apply Peirce’s sign classification to describe the semiosis of the transmedia storytelling of the game “Angry Birds” produced by the Finnish company Rovio Mobile Ltd. in 2009. The description of the game’s semiosis will give details of signs aspects that distinguish media and language, and the relation among them. The game’s singularity is investigated according to the semiotic operations of determination and representation, which shapes the sign mediation of the sign and convey the development of its transmedia semiosis.

Key words: transmedia storytelling; semiosis; sign action; C. S. Peirce; Angry Birds

1. Transmedia Storytelling as Semiosis

According to Henry Jenkins (2007), “Transmedia storytelling represents a process where integral elements of a fiction get dispersed systematically across multiple delivery channels for the purpose of creating a unified and coordinated entertainment experience.” For Peirce, Semiosis is “an action, or influence, which is, or involves, a cooperation of three subjects, such as a sign, its object, and its interpretant; this tri-relative influence not being in any way resolvable into actions between pairs” (“Pragmatism”, EP 2: 411, 1907). Although it may not be evident, these two concepts have much in common. Our effort is to show how they are related, but not forgetting their main differences.

While Jenkins is a contemporary thinker, professor of Journalism, communication and cinematic art in the United States, Peirce was an American philosopher, logic and scientist that leaved from 1839 to 1914. We may not forget that they are from a different time, as this is fundamental for understanding their ideas. Jenkins is looking at the contemporary entertainment industry and noticing that there is a synergy among distinct media. Peirce observes the dialog between interlocutors in his own time and proposes a theory based on the relation of the signs, which he calls semiotics. Both see that signs are not isolated and that the meaning of something comes from the relation between signs. Peirce, being a philosopher, developed a general theory of signs, very abstract, which he thought as a kind of logic. Jenkins describes a very specific phenomenon in the entertainment industry. However, the phenomenon described by Jenkins has the characteristics of Peirce’s abstract theory, as we will see.

Peirce defines semeiotic, or as we will say henceforth, “semiotics”, as the “science of the necessary laws of thought” (CP 1.444, 1896). The study of signs
begins with the observation of the characteristics of signs that are well known and continues, in the processes of abstraction and inferences, with the elaboration of the more comprehensive general system of all possible types of signs. Any classification is fallible and must be subject to a critical reexamination in processes of abstraction and learning from observation and experience. Therefore, semiotics is not only a theory, but a practice of signs (Nadin, 2007). The relevance of the practice on signs is very important on Peirce’s thought, considering that he conceived Pragmatism. His pragmatic maxim states that “the true meaning of any product of the intellect lies in whatever unitary determination it would impart to practical conduct under any and every conceivable circumstance, supposing such conduct to be guided by reflection carried to an ultimate limit” (EP 2: 551, n15). Then, observing a specific kind of sign and its effects is part of the semiotics studies.

Peirce conceives of his semiotic as a logical discipline, an abstract and general theory for the mapping, classification, and analysis of sign processes. This doctrine deals with any kind of sign and analyses not only the essential nature of the signs, but also the circumstances under which a sign is interpreted. Semiotics is for Peirce “the doctrine of the essential nature and fundamental varieties of possible semiosis.” (EP 2: 413) His semiotic system consists of three parts, Speculative Grammar, Critical Logic, and Methoduteic (or Pure Rhetoric). Speculative Grammar determines “the general conditions of signs being signs” (CP 1.444, 1896), and “its task to ascertain what must be true of the representamen used by every scientific intelligence in order that they may embody any meaning” (CP 2.229, [1897]). Its function is similar to that of the rules of a natural language grammar and its meaningful use. Critical Logic inquiries into the way of how signs may be true representations of their objects; it is the study of the necessary “conditions of the truth of representations” (ibid.). The task of Pure Rhetoric is “to ascertain the laws by which in every scientific intelligence one sign gives birth to another, and especially one thought brings forth another” (ibid.). Under the name Methoduteic, Peirce describes the study of the ways in which we ought to communicate and in which signs grow as the study of the “methods that ought to be pursued in the investigation, in the exposition, and in the application of truth” (CP 1.191, [1903]). These three branches of semiotics show us that the study of the signs is not restricted to a mere classification of the signs. The sign classification is the first step (corresponds to the Speculative Grammar) of a broader theory that considers how the signs can truly represent an object and how a sign brings forth another sign. From observation, Peirce conceives a general system of signs, but he never give up
the work of examine the sign in action. Neither should us. So we might understand what a sign is and how it acts, in order to observe the semiosis on the Transmedia Storytelling.

According to Peirce, sign is “something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity” (CP 2.228). Peirce defines the sign according to its function and not to its matter. Therefore, it is the action of the sign that defines it. “A Sign, or Representamen is a First which stands in such a genuine triadic relation to a Second, called its Object, as to be capable of determining a Third, called its Interpretant, to assume the same triadic relation to its Object in which it stand itself to the same Object. The triadic relation is genuine, that is its three members are bound together by it in a way that does not consist in any complexus of dyadic relations” (EP2: 272–273). Hence, the sign is a mediator between its object and its interpretant; it determines an interpretant which functions as a sign in a triadic relation of its own. The sign determines its interpretant, which in its turn has its own potential of acting as a mediator in a theoretically infinite process of a semiosis.

Another definition of the sign is the following: “A sign, or representamen, is something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity” (CP 2.228, 1897). In this definition, Peirce puts forward that the sign can never represents its object completely, but only partly, in relation to a certain idea. This incompleteness of the sign is the source of the never ending process of semiosis. One of the causes of this incompleteness is that another sign representing the same object in a different way or relative to some other aspect is always possible.

Everything can be a sign as long as it acts as a sign, that is, stands in a triadic relation to something antecedent to it, an object, and to something subsequent to it, an interpretant. Materiality is not a prerequisite for the sign; even thoughts are signs. For Peirce “there is no intuition or cognition not determined by previous cognitions” (EP1: 39). Thought is a flow of ideas, a mental association. Every thought is related to a previous thought (its object) and it must call a subsequent thought. Since his earliest writings on signs, instead of studying thought per se, Peirce has emphasized the notion of thought as a process and of knowledge as a movement. One of his earliest comments in this respect is: “At no instant in my state of mind is there cognition or representation, but in the relation of my states of mind at different instants there is” (W2; 227).

As Nadin (2007) noticed, Peirce’s semiotics is “adequate to the conditions of thinking, working, and creating characteristic of the age of science and technology”. It is very adequate to the transmedia storytelling, too, even though,
the moving narrative Jenkins describes is not exclusive from the digital era, as he himself admits. It does not begin with The Matrix, although The Matrix is a very good example of transmedia storytelling. Then, why it is worth studying it? Why the term is spreading around and being applied to many other fields than entertainment? Jenkins (2009a) answers; “We certainly want to understand what is new about our current push for transmedia entertainment, which to me has to do with the particular configuration of media systems and the push towards a more participatory culture”.

One great difference between the transmedia storytelling and an adaptation of a book to the cinema, for example, is the sense of completeness. That does not mean that the story is completely told, or that there is no change in it at all. An adaptation from one media to the other tries to reshape the story using the particular qualities of the new media. There might be slight differences from the original story to its adaptation. If we think of an adaptation as a sign of a previous story, than the adaptation can never be complete. If it was, it wouldn’t be a representation. Then, there will always be some differences, missing things and additions. That is inherent to the semiotic process, as the signs always represent in part, they are never complete. Although changes are inherent to this process, they are usually called “infidelities”, as if it was a transgression. Being impossible to copy the story exactly as it is, the sense of completeness we refer to is the sense that the new story is complete in itself. That is, it is not part of a more complex story that is being told by different media.

In the transmedia storytelling “each medium makes its own unique contribution to the unfolding of the story” (Jenkins, 2007). That is, each medium makes an extension to the core narrative making the whole story increases. That is different from adapting a story, which does not count on the previous story, neither on the possible subsequent stories to tell its own. Of course, even in an adaptation it is impossible to isolate a story from another, as is it impossible to isolate a sign from a chain of signs. One sign is always related to the other. However, some signs do not make explicit references to the others to which they are related, they overshadow the chain of signs. Other signs, as we can observe in transmedia storytelling, are more translucent making the chain of signs appear.

The chain of signs refers to a complex sign relation that cannot be described by just one triadic relation. Hence, we might observe how one sign gives birth to another, making the growing of signs. That corresponds to the third branch of semiotics called Methodeutic. Transmedia stories “are based not on individual characters or specific plots but rather complex fictional worlds which can sustain
multiple interrelated characters and their stories” (Jenkins, 2007). We might pass from looking at a sign and its triadic relation, to looking at the chains of signs and to all the possible intersections among chains of signs that make the growing of meaning. That is semiosis and that is transmedia storytelling.

Readers and writers of transmedia stories do not expect a built fictional word, but a world-building that always expands beyond their grasp (Jenkins, 2007). The experience with a story in one media shows its incompleteness encouraging investigation for more stories that makes the whole narrative more complex. The transmedia storytelling evinces the incompleteness of any representation and takes advantage of this characteristic to build a more complex story. This type of narrative is not preconceived by a writer. The writer gives the start, but the expansion of the story depends on the participation of other people. This participation is not reduced to reading and interpreting a story, but it includes creating and sharing other stories. Although this process emphasizes the growing of signs, we cannot ignore the triadic relations that compose the chain of signs. To understand the complexity of the narrative in transmedia storytelling we might pay attention to the possibilities of each sign to represent and generate another sign because they show the possible connection among the signs. Specific sign relations can outline the complex system formed by the growing of the signs. That is what we will do next to understand the transmedia storytelling semiosis of “Angry Birds”.

2. A semiose da narrativa transmídia Angry Birds: estudo de caso

In 2009, the Finnish company Rovio released the mobile game Angry Birds. Conceived as “a casual puzzle game for touchscreen smartphones (rovio.com)”, the Angry Birds became a great success worldwide one year before being launched. The company used the success to increase its activities and rapidly the business was expanded to a great number of areas like broadcast media, merchandising, and publishing. The company has also invested on the creation of new games, new levels, and some special editions for commemorative dates and in collaboration with pop stars.

However, the increase of the business has not changed the main features of the game. On the contrary, all the new activities strengthen its characteristics. The great success of this game could be explained for its appropriate use of touchscreen smartphones. The game story is very simple; because green pigs have been stealing and devouring the birds’ eggs, a group of birds, the Angry Birds, tries to eliminate the green pigs and save the eggs. To eliminate the green pigs, the player has to
throw birds using a slingshot. There are many types of birds and each one has a special power that help to overcome the pigs defenses. The player has to stretch the sling with the finger, target and throw the bird. The movement done with the finger is very appropriate for touchscreen. Although it looks very simple, the effects of throwing birds in the scene are very complex and can take some instants to finish. The gravity effect is well simulated and the objects in the scene keep falling one after the other, creating the expectation of the pigs being hit by one of the objects affected by the impact. Because of this characteristic Angry Birds is known as a physics-based gameplay.

The game is also very intuitive, needing little explanation. Most of the communication between the game and the player is visual. It is not necessary to read instructions in order to play the game and there are few words, so the children can also understand and play. Furthermore, the game is very didactic; it always begins in the first level, which has only the simplest type of bird and obstacles, and then, as the user gets experienced, he is presented to the other bird types and learn one by one how to use its special powers.

The objective of the game is to eliminate all the pigs in a scene with a limited number of birds. The less shot, the better score. In three or four shots the game is over and the player either passes to another level or repeats the same one. The match is very quick, which is also very appropriate to mobile devices and the player accumulates points depending on how efficient the shots were.

After Angry Birds great success in touchscreen smartphones, the company launched the game in Facebook stimulating the competition among friends. Facebook is now-a-days the biggest social networking media site (according to eBizMBA Rank). It is very popular and attracts many companies that want to use the social network to publicize itself. Facebook has developed many applications to make people spend more time in it and, consequently, grow strong. Many games have been developed and attracted the attention of the users to play. Being a social media, most of the Facebook games are based on social relations and require that the players interact with each other. There would be no reason to launch Angry Birds in Facebook, if the social network was not necessary to the game. That is why the game in Facebook has some particular features. The first game made for mobile devices did not anticipate any possibility of interaction between players. It was just when the game was rebuilt for Facebook that different tools for sharing scores and rewards for being a fan and sharing data appeared in the game. These are strategies used to create an appropriate game to the new digital platform.

Following cultural events, Rovio made a special edition of Angry Birds, the
Angry Birds Seasons. Christmas, Halloween, Valentine’s Day, and other world’s celebrations were represented in Angry Birds games. However, in this case there is no great change in the game. All we can see is a thematic adaptation, but no change in the rules. In contrast to the creation of Angry Birds Friends, Angry Birds Season is just an adaptation with no great significance to the development of its language.

A little more daring was the creation of the Angry Birds Rio. In association with the movie Rio produced by Blue Sky Studios, Rovio created a whole new story for the Angry Birds to relate it to the movie. In this game the Angry Birds were kidnapped and sent to Rio de Janeiro. They could escape, but their friends Blu and Jewel, two rare macaws (film characters), did not have the same luck. Therefore, the goal of the game is to save them. Notice that the whole story is changed and the main villain, the green pigs, don’t even appear. “Angry Birds Rio will pair the physics-based gameplay of the original game with unique twists based on the film.” (rovio.com)

Challenging gravity, the creators invented Angry Birds in Space. Considering that the main feature of this game is the physics involved in it, the creation of Angry Birds Space is an amazing idea. The game takes place in interplanetary spaces and around planets with areas of zero gravity and orbitary gravity effects. For a physics-based gameplay, this is a great new experience. All the strategies developed to win previous Angry Birds games are not useful in this one. It is necessary to understand rudiments of interplanetary physics to play it. However, no further instructions are necessary. The game continues to be very intuitive and the player will learn how to play with the experience.

Along with these different games created, the Angry Birds were associated with some companies to make their publicity. Rovio and T-Mobile made an incredible marketing action in a huge public square in Barcelona where they created a real-life Angry Birds experience. Using mobile phones and a complex structure that recreated the virtual scene of the game in the real world, T-Mobile invited the people passing in the street to play the game in the mobile device and making the digital action affect a real scenario nearby. A virtual action caused a real effect and a digital game suddenly became a real game for the great joy of every player (to see the marketing action access http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=03r-c0gF30g).

All these experiences show that since the creation of Angry Birds a kind of universe has been invented. As new games are created and new platforms are used the idea of an Angry Birds universe is growing. If we consider that the game Angry Birds is a sign, we might think that there is a general idea of it that is the Object to which the sign refers to. All the singular occurrences in the past, present and future
are part of this object. Then, when a new game is released, or the Angry Birds appear in a page in Facebook, in a product, or in publicity, we are seeing not only a multiplication of Sinsigns—which are actual existent thing or event considering in its singularity, being only once (EP 2; 291 [1903]), but also the increase of its objects.

The Objects—for a Sign may have any number of them—may each be a single known thing or thing believed formerly to have existed or expected to exist, or a collection of such things, or a known quality or relation of fact which single Object may be a collection, or whole of parts, or it may have some other mode of being, such as some act permitted whose being does not prevent its negation from being equally permitted, or something of a general nature desired, required, or invariably found under certain general circumstances. (CP 2.232 [1910?])

We might consider the division of the object in Dynamical and Immediate to better understand its role in semiosis. The Dynamical Object is external and quite independent from the sign and it determines the sign. The Immediate Object is internal to the sign; it is “the Object as the Sign represents it” (EP 2; 482 [1908]). Since we have no direct experience with the Dynamical Object, our perception of it can only be given by the sign. The Dynamical Object can consist of general ideas, possibilities, and potentiality. The fictitious world of the Angry Birds might be an Abstractive Dynamical Object that can determine possible signs. The more experience we have with signs that represents parts of this world, the more we can say about it. The dynamic of this object can be clearly seen in this process that increases the object of the sign.

However, if the object determines the sign, there might be some laws and rules in the object that regulate some characteristics of the signs. All signs that represent the Angry Birds might have some common characteristic that allows the recognition of it. “Real regularity is active law” (EP 2; 197 [1903]), says Peirce. These common characteristics are not given by chance, but they are determined by the Collective Dynamical Object. Although, every single sign has its singularities, if there is nothing in common among them, they could not represent the same object. The simplest visual qualities such as particular forms, colors, sounds, shadows, texture, and light repeated in every sign characterize the birds, pigs and scenes of this game. We may also consider that the movements, actions and framing in the game follows some rules and characterize it. Plus, the game rules also constitute the Collective Dynamical Object.
The Collective shows us the general laws are the “defining cause of real individual facts” (EP 2: 316 [1904]). We could take a singular event (an occurrence in any period of time) and observe the action of the law in it. Then we would be talking about the Concrete Dynamical Object and not about the Collective one.

However, the Object determination in a particular sign is not enough to guarantee the idea of the object in the interpreters’ mind. Peirce says that “acquaintance with its Object must be gained by collateral experience” (EP 2: 480 [1908]) The person who interprets a Sign “must be determined by the Object of it through collateral observation quite independently of the action of the sign. Otherwise he will not be determined to the thought of that object” (EP 2: 493 [1909]) If Angry Birds is expanded from the mobile game to publicity and merchandising, it is because the target of the products associated to Angry Birds has already some experience with the game. A person that have no idea of Angry Birds, has never heard about it, has never seen the game, will not interpret this signs as referring to the famous game, thus the Angry Bird universe will not appear in this person’s mind.

The same occurs with the Rio movie. The players of Angry Birds that did not have any collateral experience with the movie could wonder at the story and the characters of the game. The person could not understand the reason for the pigs’ disappearance. However, the game would continue to be interpreted as an Angry Birds game because of the many other characteristics maintained in the game and would be recognized.

So much for the Dynamical Object, we might now focus on the Immediate Object. The sign represent the Dynamical Object by a hint, which is the Immediate Object. Any type of Dynamical Object (an Abstractive, a Concretive or a Collective) might be represented in some way by the sign. If not, we could never know about it. The Immediate Object can describe, designate, which means indicating like a pointing finger, or express the Dynamical Object by a logical sequence (called distributive). In the examples above, the Angry Birds universe is described when the qualities of the game and its characters are repeated in the sign, and designated when the occurrence of the sign points to the Angry Birds universe, for example, when a new game is launched in the Angry Birds Facebook page. The fact that the new game is in this determined place indicates that it is referent to Angry Birds.

What about the third Immediate Object called Distributive that expresses a logical sequence? According to Peirce, “in that case the Object has to be so identified by the Interpreter that the Sign may represent a necessitation” (EP 2: 480
A necessitant is something of the third mode of being, which is “a habit, a law, or something expressible in a universal proposition” (EP 2: 479 [1908]). The necessitant brings something about; it is directed toward the future showing that something would be. Thus the Immediate Object expresses the power of the Dynamical Object to determine something, not necessarily this particular sign that we are experiencing. We can observe that Peirce says that the Distributive “neither describe nor denote their Objects, but merely express universally the logical sequence of these latter (the Objects) upon something otherwise referred to.” (EP 2: 484 [1908]) That means that this Immediate Object shows that the Dynamical Object has the power to determine signs. All the signs determined might be in agreement to its Dynamical Object and they will function as a collateral experience to other signs determined by the same object.

Furthermore, if the sign represents a necessitation, it is possible that this sign could determine an interpretant which may become a sign of the same object in an endless series. Not all interpretants are able to continue semiosis, but the logical one is, since this is the interpretant related to thought. The Logical Interpretant takes the object power to determine further signs related to the same object, it is a conditional future. This process of creating new signs related to previous objects shows the infinite semiosis.

Being a kind of thought, the Logical Interpretant may produce a habit of thought, which is the capacity to produce new thoughts. It shows the creation of a concept that depends on a context and on a community. The meaning of a sign can only be reached if the sign is in a determined context. Moreover, it depends on its regular use by a great number of people that exchange experience. Thus, a concept is not independent from all the singular experiences given by the Sinsigns. Because of that, all transmedia experience depends on carefully observation on its system of signs. And every additional experience created in a different channel will be a new sign that modifies this network of signs that constitute the whole transmedia experience.

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Metaphorical images and the internet as environment of the support, production and dissemi-nation: living spaces and the otherness in focus

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Abstract: In the convergence culture, from the perspective of Jenkins, the new and old media collide, alternative and corporate media intersect, and the powers of the media producer and consumer interact in unpredictable ways. In this context the concepts of media convergence, participatory culture and collective intelligence are pertinent. If the initial idea of media convergence was that all devices would converge into one central unit, we now watch, in fact, the convergence of contents. Among the content, the images can be mentioned. Photographs, images that come from the cinema, television, art, advertising, newspapers and of others media migrate to the Internet and intertwine with the help of expertise, not counting the large number of photographs that record the daily lives of facebook friends. It is easy to see the proliferation of these images on the Internet. Among the images constructed on the Internet we can find the metaphorical images, the object of this study. To evaluate the potential meanings of these images, we present the methodological procedures for classification and analysis that come from speculative grammar, a part of the semiotic logic of Charles Sanders Peirce, followed by an analysis of two images, the first one is significant to the Brazilian culture and the other displays a mixture of eastern and western culture. Considering the qualitative and the references present in the materiality of the visual representation, this theoretical-methodological inventory allows the different meanings engendered by the image in different cultures, as well as the meanings that are independent of the cultural context of the interpreter, on the other hand, the meanings generated and dependent of the ability of an expertise can approach or not the other, the different, playing with established meanings in cultures. The relevance of this article is in the fact that it thinks about the metaphorical image as a concrete manifestation of convergence culture, examining its significant potential woven in different cultures.
Key words: East/West; metaphor; metaphorical image; Internet

Introduction

According to Jenkis (2009), the culture of convergence comprises both new and old media clash, intercuttings of alternative and corporative, interactions between the power of media makers and consumers. Dealing with these kinds of interactions calls for three notions: convergence of the means of communication, participatory culture and collective intelligence. In this context, the means of communication is taken as a model of media that operates in two levels: on the first, it is a technology which allows communication; on the second, it is a set of P’s and Q’s or social and culture practices that have grown up alone with this technology. (Jenkis, 2009)

The convergence of means refers to, according to Jenkis (2009), “the flow of contents through multiple media platforms, the cooperation among multiple media markets and to the migratory behavior of the means of communication” (p. 20).

Thus, the oldfashioned concept of convergence, that all the devices would tend to an only central device, hence making possible the use of a universal remote control should be abandoned in detriment to the idea that the term convergence defines technological, mercantilistic, cultural and social changes. Convergence must be understood as a technological process that joins multiple functions inside the same devices, but it “stands for a cultural change, as the consumers are stimulated to seek new information and have connections in the mid of diffused media contents” (Jenkis, 2009: 30). So, the convergence of media, in agreement with Jenkis (2009), “is more than a technological change. The convergence modifies the relationship among technology, industry, market, gender and people. It also alters the logic of both the functioning of media and the people’s insight of news and entertainment” (p. 43).

The culture marked by new ways of interaction between consumers and media is called “participative”. Within it, media products and consumers must not be considered separately. The convergence also occurs when people take over the control over media, so, the multiple platforms of media do not yield only entertainment. They are also a flow of life, relationships, memories, fantasies and wishes.

The concept of collective intelligence that was reviewed by Jenkis (2009) as proposed by Lévy (2000) is manifested in the interactions that characterize the culture of convergence. The collective intelligence, according to Lévy (2000):
neither submits nor limits the individual intelligences; just the opposite, it extols them, make them fruitful and open new potentialities. This transpersonal subject does not feel satisfied to add the individual intelligences. He makes a qualitatively different form of intelligence flourish, which comes to integrate the personal intelligences (…). (p. 94)

The means, on this perspective, must provide the coordination of the interaction on among members of a community within the virtual universe of knowledge.

In the culture of convergence, the media products of TV-Reality TV-the movie speeches, for instance, allow interaction among old and new media, consolidate merchandising and establish new relations between brand and entertainment. The producers try to conceive modes of participation that lead the spectator/consumer to use new media technologies to get involved with the contents. It is worth mentioning blogism-a kind of prolonged public dialogue-a sort of alternative media that permits the personal expression. Photoshop is another tool that is available to internet users. According to Jenkis, on John Kroll’s opinion (one of the creators of photoshop), this software makes the media more democratic in two aspects; making possible to small groups to have access to good images at low cost and allowing people to manipulate and to circulate “new” images.

Internet allows user-through softwares and other available tolls-to become a “producer” of images that can be spread very quickly. On this aspect, we view the necessity of understanding the image as a source of meanings, and, especially for this paper, the metaphorical images. Following we see how the “images” can be classified and understood under the perspective of the peircean semiotics.

### The “image” at the stage

According to Durand (2004), the advancement of the techniques of reproduction with images, through photography, video, the “synthetic images”, as well as the means to transmit them, did not permit in the XX century, to accompany the construction of a “civilization of the image”. The kingdom of “Gutenberg’s galaxy”, a Mc Luhan’s expression, was the supremacy of press and written communication. Such a kingdom persisted even in the face of syntaxes, rhetoric, and processes of reasoning involving the mental image-perceptive, remembrances, illusions, etc, and iconic-a painted, drawn, sculpted and photographed figurativeness. These images permitted to elaborate census and
classifications which made possible to study processes of production, transmission and reception of images that were passed, possible both the ones already produced and the ones still to be produced.

For Durand (2004), in the confluence of the occidental iconoclasm and the “cognitive” role of the image occurs the “video revolution”, which began with the invention of photography, afterwards the chemically produced animation of image, the instantaneous transmission of images and films to distance as a result of the application of telecommunication, then the television images and, finally, the discovery of the electromagnetic wave which provoked the “explosion of communication” and the diffusion of images.

The omnipresence of the image has a “perverse effect”, according to the author, however, it was not predicted or even considered. So in agreement with Durand (2004), “although the triumphal research deriving from the positivism has fallen in love with technical resources (optic, physical-chemical, electromagnetic etc) of production, reproduction and transmission of images, it continued to ignore the product of its discoveries” (p. 33).

It has not occurred, in parallel, an “explosion of the imaginary”, because according to Durand, the occident believes it is “immunized by its endemic iconoclasm”, so it continues underestimating the image, limiting it to the distraction field. In according to Durand (2004);

Nevertheless, the diffusers of images, e.g. “media” are omnipresent in all levels of representation and of the occidental or Occidentalized man’s psyche. The media image is present from the cradle to the grave, dictating the intentions of the anonymous or concealed producers; in the child’s pedagogical awakening, in the typological choices (appearance) of each people, even in the public or private uses and customs, sometimes as “information”, sometimes veiling the ideology of a “propaganda”, and other times hiding itself behind a seducing “publicity” (…). The importance of the “iconic manipulation” (relative to the image) however is not unquiet. (p. 34)

However, in the last decades, there is an increasing interest in the studies of the image according to Durand (2004), “a fundamental phenomenon of society and for the cultural revolution it implies” (p. 34).

In Maffesoli’s perspective, however, there is no perverse effect of the images. The postmodernism extremely marked by the profusion of images—the kingdom of images—as Maffesoli (2005) exposes, requires that we learn to look deeply at the appearances, not behind them, but at themselves. To understand the social relations of the daily living involves the construction of “ways of seeing” the “images” that
are formed in the relations of daily living and that also encompass the “images”-visual representations that are disseminated by media.

Thus, for Maffesoli (2005), valorizing the appearance means, on one hand, to write the static forms in play and, on the other, to appreciate their articulations, the dynamics that these forms establish. This author still mentions that this world of appearances contributes to make power and reasoning relative and valorizes the efficiency of image. In this sense, therefore, there is a kind of “decline of the images”-metaphor and neologism-since they permitted to fly to the heaven of ideas or abstractions. “These images, after being put aside in the beginning of science and technique, return with force, diffuse themselves within the social body; with the help of the technological development” (Maffesoli, 2005, p. 133). The images permeate all the contemporary social relations, both because they present themselves and permit their observation or because they incorporate themselves, somehow, to people’s imaginary. Even when they are static, the images have a dynamism that strengthens the feelings (aesthesis) that are experienced collectively. In agreement with Maffesoli (2005):

The image that is experienced in daily living, the banal image of remembrances, the image of daily rituals, immobilizes the passing time. The image of the publicity, the urban theatricalness, the omnipresent television or the consuming objects, which is always insignificant or frivolous, does not avoid limiting an ambiance that highly limits the sequence of passages in moments, places, juxtaposed encounters. A succession of situations more or less accelerated in which each one of them is worth in itself, resulting in an undeniable effect of composition. (p. 112)

Among these “images” there are the ones diffused on the Internet, which encompass also the images of other media. Products of publicity, cinema, newspaper, art in general...daily living scenes, photographs and a great amount of “pictures” within the social nets...are transformed into visual representations. We cannot underestimate them. So, according to Maffesoli (2005):

They have been denied for a long time, now they invade, disorderly and anarchically, the contemporary world. In short, one can say that the posthistory segregates the electronic image, with the quickness and diffraction that this one does not let you see. Should we be disturbed with that? It is not right, because, as I already indicated, the image is the expression of vitalism,
and roots itself in a natural substrate. That is why it is ecologically constructed. That is, it establishes correspondences (social, natural), and favors interactions. (p. 135)

Becoming visible, the image may play the role of a generalized sacrament. In this sense, in its own disorder, the image serves as a pole for aggregating people. Thus, the construction of a “way of seeing” the image is pertinent, not only to evaluate if its effect is perverse, but also to evaluate its aggregating power or its significant potentiality.

This requires a theoretical-methodological referential able to satisfy these specificities of the images.

Concepts of the Peircean Semiotics

The importance of constructing a “way of seeing” can derive from the peircean semiotics. It is suggestive to justify our option for the peircean semiotics, and put clearly the concepts which we are going to use for the analysis of two selected metaphorical images.

Within the language sciences, several areas, like Semantics, Hermeneutics, Discourse Analysis, Semiotics, among others, deal with signification, but they stand out for their own methods, instruments and methodological schemes. Among them, Charles Sanders Peirce’s semiotic theory, stands out for bringing a concept of sign which encompass, besides arbitrary signs—the ones of symbols—signs whose foundation is mere quality or the simple fact of existing; and that produce in one’s mind, since the logical apprehension of a phenomenon until a vague and indefinite feeling or a reaction. Such amplitude comprehends all forms of language-social and historical systems of representing the world, as well as mix of languages, now so prominent with the new technologies.

The representation can be seen as one of the faces of *semiose*—action of the sign or cognition—process that occurs through the interpretation of a sign to other sign and so successively. The interpreter, other sign, is always other relative representation of the same object. But for its turn, this sign generates other sign as interpreter and so successively and infinitely, at least under the theoretical point of view.

The sign “represents” something to the idea it provokes or modifies. That is, it is a vehicle that communicates something from outside to the mind. The “represented” is its object; the communicated, the signification, the idea it
provokes, its interpreter” (Peirce, CP 1. 339). The definition of sign in a diagram can be seen in Figure 1.

Observing the three branches of the diagram, we note that there is no way to relate sign and interpreter without involving object; in the same way that it is not possible to think about sign and object without the interpreter and, finally, object and interpreter, without the mediation of the sign. The sign is in the place of the object and represents it.

In the relation with the object, the sign can be classified in icon, index and symbol. Peirce (CP 2. 304) explains that an icon is a sign that has the character that makes it significant, even if its object does not exist, such as a trace or a pencil. An index is a sign that, immediately, loses the character that makes it a sign if its object is removed, but it does not lose such character if there is no interpreter. For example, a bullet hole on a wall as a sign of a shot is an index, since there would not exist the hole if there was no shot; but there is a hole there, independently on the fact that someone to have the good sense to attribute it to a shot or not. A symbol is a sign that loses the character that makes it a sign if there is no interpreter.

Peirce (CP 2. 306) mentions that the indexes can be distinguished from other signs due to three aspects; they are not similar to their objects, they refer to individual units and they direct the attention to their objects through blind compulsion. The action of the indexes depends on association through contiguity and not similarity (as in the case of the icons) or through intellectual operations (as in the case of symbols).

Concerning the symbol, let us initiate with the meaning of the word itself. According to Peirce, this word has a lot of meanings. “I think that the signification I attribute to it, of a conventional sign, or of a sign that depends on a habit (acquired or innate), is not exactly a new meaning, but the return to the original meaning” (CP 2. 297). He still explains that, etymologically, the Greek used it as “launch together” to mean celebrating a contract or convention. Thus, this word, since the primordial times, was used to mean contract or convention.

So, we can consider symbols, a flag, a banner or badge, a password, an emblem, a religious creed—because it serves as a password or emblem—a note or any coupon that authorizes someone to receive something, a theater ticket. So, the most characteristic mark of a symbol is its conventionality.

To locate the metaphor within the peircean semiotics, we enter the territory of
the iconic symbol or hypoicon, to which the destiny of the meanings depends on many different associations. The senses expose the richness of new senses. Governed by relations of comparison, the iconic sign has three faces: 1) image, 2) diagram, and 3) metaphor. After systematizing each one of these faces, Peirce (CP 2.277) defines them as follows:

Hypoicons may be roughly divided according to the mode of Firstness of which they partake. Those which partake of simple qualities, or First Firstnesses, are images; those which represent the relations, mainly dyadic, or so regarded, of the parts of one thing by analogous relations in their own parts, are diagrams; those which represent the representative character of a representamen by representing a parallelism in something else, are metaphors.

The images are mere appearance, “they are forms presenting themselves”. They are qualities that offer themselves to our look and establish relation of similarity and comparison.

The more nebulous or ambiguous the relation between sign and object, the more the sign refers to it through allusions, suggestions, the more prominent its iconic aspect. In the icon, the materiality of the sign imposes itself and this materiality is perceived as a feeling of what material the thing is made up.

On the second face of iconic signs or hypoicons—the diagrams—the appearance is not the most determinative, the internal relations between sign and object are.

While the image is characterized by the similarity in the appearance; the diagram is characterized by the similarity relations; the metaphor, third face of the hypoicon, is characterized by the similarity for significance.

Let us initiate with the concept of analogy and metaphor to the verbal language. Accompanying Perelman y Olbretchs-Tyteca (2005), an analogy is constituted of two parts: theme and foro, with two terms in each one. Let us consider A and B the terms of the theme C, and D the ones of the foro. The argumentative value of an analogy can be put in evidence if we take it as a similitude of structures, whose formula is this: A is to B as C is to D, or A; B; C; D. Over the theme it lies the conclusion, and over the foro it sets the reasoning. Thus, the foro is more known than the theme, whose structure it must clarify. The examples or simple illustrations are particular cases of analogies, that occur when theme and foro belong to the same area.

Still accompanying the same authors, let us take an example given by Aristotle: “As the eyes of the bats are obfuscated by the daylight, the intelligence of our soul is
obfuscated by the most naturally evident things”.

Let us systematize the analogy, by exhibiting the terms of the foro and the theme:

Intelligence of the soul; evidence; eyes of the bat; daylight

Taking the scheme: “A: B: C: D”, A corresponds to “intelligence of the soul”, B, the “evidence”, C, to “eyes of the bat” and D, “daylight”.

In the analogies there is approximation among the terms of the foro and the theme which lead to an entireness, as well as there is valorization or devaluation of the terms of the theme. In this example there is a valorization, once all the people envisage the strong effect of daylight to the eyes of the bat. The analogy can also be constructed with three terms, as the scheme: A is to B, as A is to C.

As we previously referred to the metaphor, third level of the hypoicon, let us retake it now to understand it as deriving from the analogy. The iconic sign or hypoicon, when it is a sign and, so, classified in its relation with the object, as it generates interpreters, it demands mental operations. Let us see how this operation occurs in the metaphor.

The metaphor is absolutely a trope, that is, according to, “a well succeeded change of signification of a word or locution” (Perelman y Olbretchs-Tyteca, 2005, p. 453). If we consider that there is a link between metaphor and analogy, according to the same authors, we are retaking what was already emphasized from Aristotle to John Stuart Mill and that leads us to conceive the metaphor, at least concerning the argumentation, as a condensed analogy, resulting from the fusion of an element of the foro with an element of the theme. For the same authors, Aristotle presents us certain examples of metaphors in which the analogical relation is fully explicit, as in; What elderliness is for life, the night is for the day. So, we say that the night is the elderliness of the day and the elderliness is the night of the day. Therefore, in the analogy, due to its own prolongation, there is an action that tends to the fusion.

According to Santaella (1995), the metaphors make the parallel between the representative characters of a possible object. Representative characters refers to what gives power to the sign to stand for something that is diverse from it. They approximate the meaning of two distinct things, and transfer, transform the literal language (denotative) into the figurative one (connotative).

Metaphors are also found on visual representations. The visual forms that correspond to the metaphor, “are the ones that, even reproducing the external appearance of things, this appearance is used only as a means to stand for something
that is not visually accessible and that as it usually happens, has a general and abstract character” (Santaella, 2000: 59). The meaning is acquired through an operative and relational exercise, which demands an interpretative mind, able to generate the *semiosis* of the symbolic forms; sign generating a new sign.

Thus, what the eyes see is not necessarily what must be seen. The element that allows this apprehension is the interpreter. In the surrealism, there are a lot of examples of images whose meanings go far beyond what is visible. We can cite Salvador Dali and his capacity to allegorize life and the world, which transforms the very idea of imaginary.

According to Campos (2000), the functioning of the metaphor is the same of the ideogrammatic method of composing. The ideogram is a visual metaphor generated by a set of pictographic hieroglyphs. Each pictogram stands for the real for similarity it does not consist of a copy of this real, but is establishing sorts of relations that suggest the real. The juxtaposition of two pictograms points to a “third term” that corresponds to an abstract concept a new engendered relation of this articulation; the conflict metaphor.

These processes have great affinity with the production of the Russian cineaste, Sierguei Eisenstein. Eisenstein’s production reproduces the same mechanism of clash; two takings (pictograms) arise the concept. These takings, isolatedly, correspond to metonymies that, in a process of collision and conflict, contribute to building a metaphor or to producing a concept. Every metaphor, in Jakson’s understanding (2001), supposes a relation of metonymic traces, and metonymy is always a selective hypothesis, a cut that always means a critical view.

Nowadays it is obvious that, internet makes it much easier to users, to produce metaphorical images, using resources from the new technologies. Thus, the construction of a shared imagery in permanent process of renewing is enhanced.

### The Analysis

The following images, taken from the internet, depict the theme of otherness from metaphorical process. Some qualitative and referential aspects present in the materiality of the image allow us to describe the possible means engendered in the image in different cultures, and the meanings that are independent from the interpreter’s cultural context as well; it may or may not approximate the other, the stranger, the one who belongs to other culture, as the meanings in the game, are instituted in the involved cultures.

Two elements are juxtaposed on these compositions. In Figure 2, the Brazilian
flag extended over the surface disposed at the center of the space-format, occupying a diagonal line, is about to be rolled over by a heavy red cylinder. The cylinder has on its left superior corner a yellow star of bigger proportion which is surrounded by four smaller stars. That is China’s flag.

**Figure 2  Brazil and the “China effect”**

**Figure 3  European Union and The United States under the “China effect”**

In this production, the flags that are originally symbols, establish new relations. Each one, individually is taken as part of a whole: Brasil is part of the
west, China is part of east. Therefore, they are metonymies. The display of these elements, the form each one is presented, proposes analogies. China flag is similar to a steamroller or a farming tool which serves chiefly to ground leveling or eliminate weed that is likely to contaminate the soil, mainly after the planting. Brasil’s flag, on the other hand, is presented as something materially fragile that is offering itself passively to the “other” represented by the steamroller.

Diagrammatically, the relation of similarity between China and steamroller could be viewed in Figure 2. In the diagram, the letter “A” indicates China; “B” indicates the steamroller and “C” indicates the Chinese economic advancement.

The metaphor expects that an interpretative mind is able to establish the relations between the sign and the interpreter it provokes. The metaphor arises from the clash between the two parts A and B standing for a concept C and calling for an interpreter capable to apprehend its potentialities of significance, as he seeks the iconic potentialities of his presentations in mind.

The same relation occurs in figure 3. In it the submitted west expands itself and is represented by the European Union and the United States of American. This expansion is materialized in the thickness of the symbols of these nations that, for their turn, stand for the increase of the economy power. Proportionally, the symbolic value of the “compression” is enhanced.

Well, a steamroller usually acts on the soil in order to compress it, to harden it, to eliminate any possibility of living and moving... the compression extinguishes the nutrient flow in the soil and thus, it dies. These are effects triggered by visual metaphors governed by the sight that captures the opposition between the east and the west, which compels us to reflect on the issue of otherness. On this aspect, we search for SAID’s ideas.

The Orientalism, according to Said (2007), “is not a simple theme or political field passively reflected by culture, by scholarship or by the institutions; neither is it representative or expressive of any execrable imperialist “western” plot to oppress the “eastern” world “(p.40). According to Said (2007):

it is foremost the distribution geopolitical conscience in aesthetic, erudite, economic, sociological, historical and philosophical texts; is not only an elaboration of a basic geographical distinction (the world is made up of two unequal halves, the East and the West, but also of a set of “interests” that the
Orientalism not only creates, but also sustains by means such a erudite finding, the filological analysis, the landscape and sociological description; it is a clearly expressed will or intention to understand, in some cases to control, manipulate or even incorporate the essence of a manifestly different world (or a alternative and new). (p. 40)

Said (2007) advocates that by contrasting the East, the European culture was given strength and identity, since it was viewed (the East) like a kind of “self substitute and even subterranean”. The metaphorical image, in this case, suggests that the “self substitute and even subterranean” is given strength and the relation dominator/dominated is reversed.

In a certain way, this reversal, does not carry any collective ethics. There is neither aggregation, nor union of powers or groups of economy powers intended to solve the world problems, in our case, in the economic aspect.

Once they are disseminated through the internet, these metaphorical images both suggest a new world order in which the other, the East (China), frightens, scares, concerns, since they constitute a local and planetary social, organization granted by the symbolic power, and also cause strangeness and apprehension, since the effect of the steamroller is evident.

In this sense, recalling Jenkis, the internet, with the tolls that are available in it, becomes democratic. Due to the analyses led by the view of the peircian semiotics, the metaphorical images can magnify this characteristic.

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**Final Statements**

The metaphorical image, as one of the contents produced and diffused by Internet, is the focus of this article. The potentiality of senses along with its quick dissemination, due to the reach that is possible through the technology, constitute the base of our reflections.

As the producer of the propitious ambiance to postmodernism, the image performs the “kingdom of appearances” announced by Maffesoli and it weaves itself within the technology, which, for its turn, is marked by the culture of convergence of the means of communication, by the participative culture which, according to Jenkis, now aggregates media producers and consumers and it constructs other modes of relationship. From this ambiance it is possible to deduce the chaining of a collective intelligence that results from an effective mobilization of competences, as well as the great reach of visibility. Once the image is inserted in this culture, its
communicative power is enhanced.

By retaining the mechanism of the metaphor, a figure resulting from the verbal language has analogy as its logical base, and the image also enhances its significant power, as it sets off from the clash of ideas, a concept highly synthetic that approximates the metaphor and the ideographic mode of composing, as well as the eisensteinian mounting.

Presented in its mode of operating as the third face of the hypoicon or iconic sign, in the perspective of the peircean semiotics, the metaphor that comes from the two analyzed images is representative of the opposition between the occidental and oriental cultures. Having otherness as its theme, accompanying Said, such metaphor unveiled the inversion between dominator/dominated. The Occident subjugated by the Orient is the concept that emerges from the “subterranean” involved by all the economic power that the present world order confers on it.

Allied to the operative and relational power of the metaphorical image, the power of diffusion and democratization of Internet, we visualize the emergence of producers (individual and collective) of images, who disseminate “ways of seeing”-democratizing us-that reach different interpreters, who detain several repertoires. Thus, it is enhanced the significant potentiality of these images which claim their exclusion from the obscure side of culture that was already described by Durand, the reason why it is urgent to have a committed look to education or to other ways of “seeing/reading” the world.

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Visual semiotics for media visualizations

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Abstract: Among different types of contemporary information and data visualizations, such as flow charts or word clouds, we have recently witnessed the arrival of a new type called “media visualizations”. Such category depicts visual images in static, animated or interactive fashion and is deeply related to image processing techniques. The aim of media visualization is to approach the analysis of culture by combining statistic data, visual media, and computing capacities into a visual production. From this context, is it possible to observe opportunities for semiotics to study these new kinds of images and, vice versa, what lessons can we learn from those productions? Is it possible to talk about signification models? In this contribution we present some cases anchored on our own recent investigations to reveal and study new plastic properties. From the standpoint of visual semiotics, we try to focus on semantics of indexical and symbolic signs that confer form to resulting visualizations.

Key words: visual semiotics; visual features; plastic formants; indexical signs; symbolic signs

What is Media Visualization?

Media visualization aims at representing visual media in form of visual media (Manovich, 2011). This statement might sound redundancy, but it is not. Typical visualization techniques, as applied to information and data, have been grounded on symbolic forms to convey important properties of data. That is the case of, among others, pie/bar/flow charts, scatter plots, and network diagrams, where circles and lines stand for a signifying unit, namely actors and relationships. On the contrary, media visualization implies the use of visual media itself to create new visual representations in order to discover interesting patterns.

The realm of visual media in culture is abundant. It covers, among others, painting, photography, graphic design, magazines, advertising, comics, animation, film, TV, games, computer art, computer graphics imagery (CGI), the World Wide Web, physical interfaces, objects and devices, architecture, and
industrial design. Of course, culture is not the only application universe; nature and applied sciences have been producing and analyzing visual media as well. Consider mathematics, physics, astronomy, medical imaging, statistics, geography, or computing.

To talk about a new type of visualization we imply the existence of visual features, tools, techniques, application fields, and some theoretical background. Is that the case of media visualizations? Lev Manovich has already enumerated some techniques: image montage (zooming out in time), image slicing (spatial sampling), and image remapping (any other usage of already existing media to create a new aesthetic effect, but taking into account a systematic sampling method). Indeed, the Software Studies Initiative, directed by Manovich, has published valuable free software and scripts that assist in the performance of tasks and workflows to produce media visualizations. One of the main achievements of these tools and methods is to introduce software from other disciplines into culture, such as ImageJ and Mondrian, which have originally been developed for scientific purposes. But until recently, there has been little research on theoretical background and the description of visual features.

In the following sections we discuss and illustrate media visualization techniques, covering pixelation, image slicing, image montage, image averaging, 2D and 3D plotting. We will argument around our main semiotic problems; how can we make sense of media visualizations? Can we depict a signification model? Can we talk about visual methods?

An Approach to Visual Semiotics

If we accept the fact that media visualizations can be read and understood as such, it means there is an underlying signification model that would be common to most productions on media visualization. Accordingly, if we extend the same principle, we can assume there are specific methods and techniques that configure the signification model.

Allow us to make a first glance at signification models from the linguistic tradition. The intention would be to identify fundamental units of meaning. One of the values of determining basic units is to perform analytic and synthetic readings. In the case of visual productions, analytic reading operates by identifying bigger figures and then smaller units that conform them. Imagine a landscape. It usually has mountains and trees. We can recognize trees because they might have green leaves, brown branches, and other characteristic elements. On the other hand, the synthetic reading follows an
opposite direction. It seizes a whole by reassembling different parts. A bunch of trees could be seen as a forest, a part of a hill, a jungle, etc.

We believe this double logic is an interesting departing point towards the study of media visualizations. But before tackling them we must also briefly talk about non-figurative visual productions. As we mentioned, in the case of a figurative example, such as the landscape, we could recognize iconic signs. What about non-figurative and abstract visual images? In such cases we are only confronted with traces and colors, and not iconic figures. Although we can make efforts to recognize shapes or associate them to known objects, this is only a matter of subjective perception. The composition of shapes and color in a non-figurative production is often related to syntactics and pragmatics of indexes. For abstract art, Mitchell has already explained its symbolic dimension (Mitchell, 2005).

The basic units of visual signs have been studied in a more structured way by the Groupe Mu. They distinguished coloremes, texturemes, and formemes. Each of these categories is composed of other sub-elements. For the Groupe Mu these are called “plastic signs”. They give substance and complete the “figurative signs”, which are iconic and iconographic. Table 1 depicts the categories of plastic signs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formemes</td>
<td>Direction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dimension</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texturemes</td>
<td>Textural unit</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Textural rule of repetition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chromemes</td>
<td>Hue</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Saturation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brightness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Algirdas Greimas has made comprehensible insights regarding plastic signs (Greimas, 1984). For him, the exploration of the plastic signifier requires to construct on topologic conditions, both for its production and for its “reading”. This topologic artifact is only useful when articulated as plastic categories, i.e. basic units of signifier whose combinations constitute semi-wholes, recognized through a topological reading. In the large sense, the plastic categories are eidetic and chromatic. Eidetic is related to forms, composition and direction, lines and contours. It helps to apprehend discrete units of signifier. The chromatic category is related to colors; it helps to apprehend the production from its integrality.
Following Greimas, the distinction between the two categories (forms and colors) does not depend on the materiality of the signifier but on the relational choice of the viewer/producer. It is just a matter of selection of path towards the same meaning: one from its discreteness; the other from its integrality. This “same meaning” is the plastic form. And it is in this respect that we can combine both categories into bigger and complex units in order to configure “plastic formants” which are particular organizations of plastic signifiers, defined by their capacity to be joined by signifieds and to be constituted as signs.

In media visualizations one of the goals is to study patterns out of new images produced by means of image processing techniques. We believe the basic units of media visualizations are plastic formants, which can also be called visual features or visual properties. The importance of taking into account both plastic and figurative signs and in any semiotic analysis of information visualization resides in the fact that we do not always deal with figurative images. Indeed, even though we might be working on iconic productions such as photographs or film sequences, their analysis through image processing methods requires to interpret resulting images that could be disrupting, abstract or non-sense for a fresh eye. Previous investigations on information visualizations that depict relationships in form of a network diagram, flow/pie/bar chart, treemap, stack graph, or any other visual method, prove their validity because they tackle symbolic problems (Tufte, 1997). They also recall that images are not universal but combination of analog and conventional modes of reading (Eco, 1997). Regarding indexicality, while diagrams keep an indexical relationship by means of quantification and data, in visual media the indexical signs are related to the materiality of visual images.

## Cases of Study

In this section we present some techniques that have been employed for media visualization in order to detect some hints and first discussions toward reading strategies of visual productions. We employ the term “reading” applied to images as an umbrella term to refer to seeing in a comprehensive way and to understanding a code of meaning.

**Pixelation and color scheme**

In 1982, Adele Goldberg and Robert Flegal introduced the term “pixel art” to refer to a new kind of images produced by using Toolbox, a Smalltalk-80 drawing system designed for interactive image creation and editing (Goldberg & Flegal, 1982). The technique consisted of applying a mask and a combination rule. The
mask could be a square (pixel) or an 8-bit dot and the combination rule would replace the original image with the mask.

Nowadays, we can simply pixelate an image by selecting Pixelate under the Filter menu of most image editors, from Adobe Photoshop to the online Pixlr\(^1\). The resulting image is a colored grid where squares take its sampled color from the original image. Users are able to decide on the size of pixels. As we can see, iconic properties of the image start to disappear and plastic signs become more evident. Of course, this is not to say that plastic signs are not evident at first glance, we do see them but we often focus on the identification of figures before colors, shapes and spatial composition. Figure 1 shows an example of a pixelated image.

Cultural uses of pixelation can be found in artistic styles such as pointillism. Other uses have been seen in broadcast TV, often to hide some parts of the image. For us, this technique helps to get rid of figurative properties and assists on developing a visual literacy grounded on plastic signs. In late 2012, we taught a course on Digital Culture to undergraduate students of Information and Communication at University of Paris 13. Among other activities, students were asked to pixelate images in order to make evident plastic signs such as colors and their properties. Later we employed free and easy to use software such as Rainbow 1.5\(^2\), an add-on for Firefox Web browser. Our aim was to facilitate the understanding of different arrangements of color. The color scheme of the image above can be seen as Figure 2.

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{pixelation.png}
\caption{Pixelation of an image}
\end{figure}

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{color_palette.png}
\caption{Color palette of an image}
\end{figure}

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\(^1\) http://pixlr.com/
\end{flushleft}
A color scheme represents a color synthesis of an image. It shows the main colors, often arranged by frequency, i.e. the most predominant will appear at the farther left. But the scheme can be observed in more detail. Figure 3 shows a fragment of the complete color scheme, now called color palette. It is important to note the table can be arranged according to visual properties on each column.

![Color Scheme Table]

**Figure 3** Complete color palette (fragment) of an image. Arranged by the visual feature white contrast

From this image we also note some visual features extracted by Rainbow 1.5 that pertain to the chromatic category: red, green, blue, saturation, lightness, white contrast, black contrast, luminosity. Recent projects evidence the existence of 399 visual features that can be extracted and quantified using software like MatLab and FeatureExtractor\(^1\).

**Image slicing**

One of the first uses of image slicing is slit-scan photography. Among other pioneers, William Larson produced, from 1967 to 1970, a series of experiments on photography called “figures in motion”. The trick was to mount a thin slit in front of the camera lens to avoid the pass of light into the film. Thus the image is only a part of an ordinary 35 mm photograph. Moreover, if the photographer sets the camera on a movable artifact and makes a long exposure of the picture, the result could be seen indeed as a figure in motion. Golan Levin has been compiling a list on projects and precursors on slit-scanning (Levin, 2005).

Recently, it is possible to take photos directly as slit-scan images. Consider

\(^1\) [http://code.google.com/p/softwarestudies/wiki/FeatureExtractor](http://code.google.com/p/softwarestudies/wiki/FeatureExtractor)
iPhone apps such as Slit-Scan Camera by funnerLabs. But we can also generate a slit-scan from a live or recorded video sequence by using Processing. Figure 4 shows a fragment of the film Inception (Nolan, 2010).

It might be clear to perceive the slit-scan effect. Yet for this particular case it could not be appealing because it was done for a short duration of time. Perhaps interesting patterns may be discovered for entire productions. Figure 5 illustrates a slit-scan, also called orthogonal cut in the software ImageJ. The input was the video “Come as you are” by the band Nirvana (Kerslake, 1992) but converted into an image sequence.

But how would it look the visualization of an entire film according to this technique? The Tumblr site called moviebarcode offers an index of a bunch of movies transformed to slit-scans. Among those we can see the result for Inception.

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1 http://funnerlabs.com/apps/slitscan
Slit-scans are arranged progressively according to the time of an animated visual production. In the case of the video-clips we note variations of colors and forms, but in the case of a film slits have been reduced drastically and we can only see colors. An analytic reading would focus on contrasts of colors. A synthetic reading would be related to textures created by colors. For a viewer familiar to the original production, she could relate colors at any single position of the slit-scan to passages of the film, and that is because she has previous experience with the object. From this image, contrasts of colors of an entire production could then be schematized, pixelated, or we can apply other technique for visual feature extraction in order to make comparisons on styles and rhythm.

Image montage

In 2004, Brendan Dawes presented “Cinema Redux”, a project aiming at showing what he called a visual fingerprint of an entire movie. The main idea was to decompose an entire film into frames and then to arrange them as rows and columns, like a mosaic. In some sense, this technique is related to slit-scanning in which is a zoom out of an entire production. This means we can observe 2 hours of images in one single image. We replicated the same technique in Figure 7. We chose the video-clips “Come as you are” by Nirvana (Kerslake, 1992). First, we generated the image sequence at 10 frames per second resulting in 2,257 image frames. Then, with ImageJ, we rendered an image montage.

![Image montage of the music video “Come as you are”](image)

While the source image is the same as in Figure 5, the result is very different. The chromatic categories are the same but their spatial composition changes. We are indeed in front of a fingerprint, in terms of Dawes: an indexical sign in terms of Pierce. To read this kind of image it is useful to keep in mind the action or event or sound that relates to each position (a pragmatic perspective). Then a new
relationship to the object would rise, in other words, a new semantic of the indexical sign. A simple strategy consists on looking for patterns in time by means of an analytic reading, which implies to visually group sequences by colors and shapes. Do they repeat in another part? If yes, then we are in front of a pattern. In our case, we chose deliberately the number of columns and rows to depict 6 seconds per row. Direction deploys according to timing and should be read from left to right and top to bottom. We may observe that saturated colors appear in the beginning, then low brightness, then again bright colors and at last a fusion of both. Does the same pattern exist for other video clips? Is there a relationship between visual pattern and music tempo? More investigations and comparisons are required to answer this question.

To discuss another example, Figure 8 compares two sequences that employ CGI in the film Inception (Paris slow-motion explosions vs. Paris fold-over sequences). In this particular case, we can identify a pattern of time; the amount of frames by shot is more or less the same. We can also appreciate that shots include less quantity of shapes in the beginning and become more complex in the end. We may also advance a partial conclusion. Nolan, together with visual effects supervisors Franklin, Corbuld, Bebb, and Lockley, insert “rest zones”, i.e. shots without CGI effects in between shots with CGI effects.

![Figure 8 Comparison of two image montages from the film Inception](image)

*Image averaging*

Image averaging is related to the work of Sirovich and Kirby on “Eigenfaces” in 1987 (Sirovich & Kirby, 1987). More recently, Jason Salavon has also produced series of images by averaging 100 photos of special moments (Salavon, 2004). This
method implies to flatten multiple images into one according to the average of some chromatic value. Figure 9 shows the average of a shot in Inception that includes CGI by taking into account the maximum brightness of 30 frames.

![Image](image_url)

**Figure 9  Average of max brightness of a 1-second CGI shot in Inception**

With ImageJ it is easy to average other values by applying simple statistical analysis: minimum, median, medium, or standard deviation. As we can observe, this technique is about extracting and quantifying visual properties and then to perform statistical analysis.

It might be supposed this technique is more adequate when applied to short sequences or on those with small changes on time. Averaging an entire contemporary Hollywood film would produce an image closer to pure white or gray because of the quantity of frames and the movement and changes inside a frame. However, it is possible to average only a small sample of the whole collection of frames. In Figure 11 we show the result of averaging maximum brightness of the entire video clip “Smells like teen spirit” by Nirvana (Bayer, 1991). The image sequence was created by exporting the video at a rate of 10 frames per second. We then imported it by incrementing by 10.

In this case, larger forms appear in the middle of the frame. They also constitute the brightest region. A more detailed examination, taking into account slit-scan and image montage of the same video-clip, leads to conclude for this video an ideographic content. The figure of Kurt Cobain appears in the center, shiny bright and high contrast inside an obscure atmosphere. However, these appearances are not numerous. They are mainly three for the whole duration; the first around the start, the second around the middle and the third at the end.

We present one last example. We have averaged the complete catalog of
Thrasher covers, a popular magazine among skateboarding culture. There are more than 350 images, ranging from 1981 to 2012. As it can be appreciated the position of logo has not experienced major changes; the same can be said for bar codes on the bottom part.

![Image of Thrasher covers]

**Figure 10** Average of sampled images of the music video "Smells like teen spirit"

**Figure 11** Average brightness of all covers of Thrasher Magazine

2D plotting

Plotting data values on two axes is a common type of representing information visually. Generally speaking, the technique consists on locating on a Cartesian plane the crossing points according to data values. Values can be positive or negative and they often allow seeing different positions at the same time, so the decision maker can see variations and symbolic behavior.

Manovich introduces 2D media plotting. It consists on extracting values of visual features and storing them in a tabulated data file. This file can also be amplified with metadata such as author, year, place and other geographical, social or historical information. To give an example, we can extract all hue values for a bunch of images and then map each of them on the X axis. The position on Y would depend on other visual feature or on visual metadata, for instance a year. In that manner we can observe the evolution of hue during a certain period of time.

The software ImageJ includes basic capabilities for extracting visual features. Together with ImageMeasure and ImageShape, both scripts by the Software Studies Initiative, we can assemble an important corpus of eidetic and chromatic visual features, about 112. As an example, consider Figure 12. We have used ImageJ to plot 503 skateboards by Powell Peralta, produced between 1978 and 2012.
What happens when you have more than 100 visual features measured? Is it possible to make an average and to plot them? Manovich has done so by using R language. But in any case, the resulting image depicts images themselves instead of dots and circles. We can of course zoom in and zoom out to see details (the resolution of a media visualization is often larger than 8,000 pixels width). It is also possible to distinguish curves and density zones. Consider figure 12 to approach a semantic reading. Density is related to clustering and perceived through the dimension of formemes. Direction can be seen through curves and lines traced along the graph; images go up and down. Repetition patterns can be seen through repetitions of coloremes and texturemes.

3D structures

One of the common forms of 3D structures are 3D plot diagrams. Plotting on 3 axes has been useful for multivariate analysis. Regarding visual information, colorimetric analysis was a pioneer in developing 3D-based scales to visualize different color spaces. For instance, using ImageJ we can interactively visualize an image in different color spaces. Figure 13 shows the color space RGB (red, green, blue).

How to read such an image? Dimension of bubbles represent the frequency of that color, i.e. its recurrences in the image. The position in space of the bubbles is determined by its value on red, blue, and green channels (each of them ranging from 0.0 to 2.0). The departing point in the bottom angle is, by default, brightness, going from 0, which is black, to 255, which is white.
Figure 13  3D color analysis of an image in histogram mode

Of course 3D plotting is not limited to an organization inside a cube volume. Figure 14 shows two more spaces: HSB and HDD.

Figure 14  HSB and HDD color spaces

Besides 3D plotting, we can also take advantage of 3D spaces to stack images. In this case, we simply overlap images from a sequence. Figure 15 shows a stalk of the all shots including CGI visual effects in the fortress explosion sequence of the film Inception.

Now, imagine we synthetize colors for each image in a sequence and then we stack them and animate them. Figure 16 shows two frames from a process named 3D surface plot in ImageJ.
In this case, we plot the whole surface of the frame and we only see plastic signs. Remember you are viewing the frame as if it were lying on the ground and not in front of you. It may be observed that the highest points correspond to brighter tones, while the darker are located in the bottom. The color of the surface is mapped from the original image. That means yellow and red stand for the explosion effect. Gray and white are mostly snow, buildings, and the sky.

Finally, we are currently working on what we call “motion structures”. For us, motion structures are 3D digital models created out of video sequences. Our workflow consists on transforming images to 8-bit black and white, then to stalk them and to remove dark background. Figure 17 shows three views of the same the object. It is the Paris-fold over sequence seen as motion structure.
Figure 17  Three views of a motion structure

Basically, the resulting visual production puts in evidence the shape of movements. Instead of analyzing camera movements or character performances, we trace the transformations within the image itself. This allows us to explore the form of indexical signs of moving pictures, to construct shapes, and to explore them in 3D fashion. We rely on the software ImageJ to manipulate an image sequence and convert it into a 3D model but it can be easily exported in DAE format and hence imported in other 3D navigating and editing environment such as MeshLab, Maya,

Figure 18  Motion structure imported into Sculptris
Blender, Sculptris or personal-developed applications with Processing, OpenFrameworks, Quartz Composer and alike.

## Conclusion

In this paper we have proposed first steps toward a visual semiotic foundation to approach media visualizations. The basic units for us are visual features. They are material properties of the visuality of images. Indeed, whether contrast, mean values, standard deviation, energy, entropy, among others, they can all be considered “plastic formants”. The usefulness of visual features is, essentially, to elaborate a visual vocabulary of digital images and to foster, consequently, a more rigorous visual literacy in readers. Moreover, we can also tackle visual features from the point of view of objects and super-objects; they can be implied, associated, inherited between them. This facilitates a more flexible analytic/synthetic perspective when dealing with external metadata that integrates as visual feature. As we saw, metadata might be useful for 2D media plotting; they can be parameters to be chosen when producing an image montage or an image average (number of frames, number of rows, visual feature to highlight).

In any case, the visual codes available are still weak. We need textual hints besides images. It is still early to talk about visual methods besides traditional diagrams (pie/bar charts). But once we have defined our main building blocks and general codes, we could agree on assembling larger projects that take into account social, cultural, and political context; we could mix and remix techniques; we could create new software and interfaces. The importance of conducting media visualizations is to navigate in the unknown; to delegate some pre-conceptions about an object to an external agent (a software or programming code). Perhaps this is what new images such as media visualizations are about. Perhaps, like abstract art, they come with an ideological and connotative side; by conferring importance to materiality they are in the same arena of the new realism (Galloway, 2012) or as alien phenomenology (Bogost, 2012).

## References


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How semiotics can improve our knowledge on computing

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Abstract: Computer systems manipulate signs and a straight line links computing to semiotics in point of logic. This connection should encourage computer theorists to resort to semiotics in order to decipher the fundamental aspects of digital systems that appear somewhat unclear so far.

Several computer theorists and professionals share the concepts of “signifier” and “signified” in intuitive terms but are often unfamiliar with semiotics. There is a special digital divide between semiotics and the technology because the semiotic notions are expressed through verbal expressions instead engineers use the mathematical language.

In the first step, the present study suggests the formal descriptions of the signifier and the signified. In particular, the former is defined by an algebraic inequality; the latter is introduced through the graph theory. In the second step, these formal definitions are used to justify the hardware structure of a computer system.

Key words: signifier; signified; computer science; principles of computing.

1. From Suspect to Prospect

In the beginnings of the computer era humanists often saw computing—in the present pages the term “computing” is synonymous with “computer science” and “informatics”—with suspect (Erickson, Teague 1974). Later on, the overwhelming success of the new technology made scholars more receptive. Computers became common tools and the fear that computers would somehow attack the core of the humanistic enterprise lessened.

Semioticians drew on researches toward various directions. They investigated the theory and the practice of computation and related fields. One can quote Goldkuhl and Lytinen (1982) who studied information systems as linguistic phenomena. Winograd and Flores (1987) brought together philosophy, linguistics, and biology in order to illuminate the endeavor of computer designers and the capabilities of computer systems. Andersen (1997) inaugurated computational
semiotics, an interdisciplinary area which tackled issues of artificial intelligence and knowledge representation, which suggested criteria and solutions in the field of computer-human interaction (CHI). Rasmussen’s *theory of cognitive regulation* (1986) explored the relation between the sign types and the kind of cognition necessary to a computer operator.

Computer systems manipulate signs and a straight line links computing to semiotics in point of logic (Kecheng et al. 2002). This idea unifies the investigations beyond the variety of themes that semioticians are tacking. Andersen (2001) emphasizes the intellectual connections extant between semiotics and informatics in this way:

Semiotics is “the mathematics of the humanities” in the sense that it provides an abstract language covering a diversity of special sign-usages (language, pictures, movies, theater, etc.). In this capacity, semiotics is helpful [...] for defining the special characteristics of the computer medium.

This statement should encourage computer theorists to resort to semiotics in order to decipher the inner logic of computing machines, and not merely the communication tasks of those machines.

Computers process signs and the science of signs can but help us to understand that machines in a manner more satisfactory than today.

Non-trivial discrepancies emerge in theoretical computer science. For instance, some classical references appear outdated; the nature of computing seems rather mysterious (Denning 2003); and a number of theories clash with practice. As an example, Shannon’s theory of information rejects semantics and inevitably unfit modern applications such as the *semantic web*.

The present study shares the idea that semiotics can provide significant support to go deep into computer science, in particular I mean to discuss some fundamental features of digital systems using semiotic notions.

### 2. The Digital Divide

Authors coming from different disciplines utilize two common ideas; a piece of information has a physical origin, which hereafter is named “signifier”; and stands for something which I shall call “signified”. Even computer theorists and engineers share this naïf semiotic scheme, however they are very rarely familiar with semiotics. They use the concepts of signifier and signified by intuition and normally show little concern for the science of signs. I am inclined to believe this behavior originates from a precise cause.
I see a cultural gap placed between humanities and the information and communications technology (ICT): the first use verbal descriptions, the second is grounded on measures; the former argue upon the nature of signs, instead the latter needs equations to calculate machines and products. The signifier and the signified are popular ideas in engineering but lie in the background due to methodological divergence. There is a special “digital divide” between semiotics and computer science, and the notions of signifier and signified wait to be redefined in accordance to the rules of exact sciences.

The present study had a start when I suspected that the semiotic concepts could be appropriately used in ICT and could provide an epistemological support to computing experts as long as one began to provide the formal definitions of the signifier and the signified as well (Rocchi, 2011). Shannon considers semantics unimportant in engineering; instead I believe that semantics provide a robust theoretical support on condition that one revises semiotic notions in mathematical terms.

3. How to Express the Notion of Signifier with a Formal Language

Basically semioticians pinpoint the characters of the signifier through philosophical arguments. Commentators establish different definitions—e.g. form, token and sign vehicle—on the basis of subtle cultural distinctions; instead technicians have a different concern. Actually an ICT practitioner calculates the features of stored and transmitted signifiers using equations. Philosophical comments on signifiers appear unimportant for engineers; instead the operational behaviors of signifiers are essential for them.

Once established that a signifier is the meaning-carrier—namely the signifier is a physical object—a technician expects the physical characteristics of this object are exactly established with the mathematical language. Thus I identify the practical properties of signifiers with precision in the first stage.

When one assumes the operational concern, he/she notes that a signifier is detected by an observer, notably a generic element becomes a signifier if a biological or artificial agent perceives this element.

This scheme can be applied even to mental pieces of information. Neurologists discover several areas in the brain dedicated to special contents, thus one can assume that a mental idea is a portion of the neural net perceived by the remaining part of the brain. The former is the signifier and the latter plays the role of observer.

Broad literature—e.g. neurology, artificial intelligence, telecommunications,
and biology—agrees that the material entity $E$ can be detected if and only if $E$ appears distinct from another close entity $E^*$ (Somjen 1983). Gregory Bateson (2000) places the idea of dissimilarity at the basis of his theory. He conceives the “elementary unit of information” as “a difference which makes a difference”. Thus I assume the contrast with the adjacent entity $E^*$ respect to the observer $R$ as the essential quality of a signifier, and formally express this character with the following inequality:

$$E \ NOT \ =_R \ E^*$$

(1)

This algebraic expression says that $E$ is ‘NOT = ’ [literally ‘not equal’] to $E^*$ respect to the observer $R$. When the object $E$—that is any—verifies (1) than $E$ is a signifier.

This formalized definition is in line with the purposes of engineers who adopt analytical approach of addressing problems. Equation (1) complies with the style of technicians since it has the virtue of generating significant equations. For example, when $E$ and $E^*$ are two points of the Cartesian space, inequality (1) becomes

$$E \neq E^*$$

(2)

And then

$$|E - E^*| \neq 0$$

(3)

This is the basic principle of modern ICT and holds that two physical values are perfect signals when they are distant. Digital signals are discrete in accordance with (3), conversely analog signals are continuous and are lower quality.

Inequalities (1), (2) and (3) justify the discretization rule on the logical plane and show clearly the good support of semiotics to digital technologies on the plane of knowledge. It is worth underlying that electrical engineers paid a high cost to discover the discretization rule by error and trial in the arch of decades, thus the above written formal expressions have non-negligible cultural value.

4. How to Express the Notion of Signified with a Formal Language

“A signifier represents something”: this statement appears obvious and trivial to a semiotician instead it sounds rather unsatisfactory to a computer expert. This verbal description raises doubts as a technician can accept the notion of meaning as long as this notion is precisely established.

In operational terms, the signifier $E$ and the signified $NE$ bring forth the semiotic process hence I resort to the graph theory. Whatevver process is normally
visualized by means of a graph, hence \( NE \) and \( E \) are the nodes of the edge \( s \) which itemize the semantic representation

\[
S \rightarrow NE \rightarrow E \rightarrow s
\]  

(4)

With the algebraic language we have

\[
S = (NE, E; s)
\]  

(5)

The formalized models (4) and (5) show how \( E \) stands for \( NE \), and the representation \( s \) consists in substituting \( NE \) with \( E \). The semantic process \( s \) looks like a device that manipulates the input item and carries on an outcome. Technicians can treat the overall semiotic process \( S \) like a machine; they can forecast the physical performances of \( S \) using formal expressions.

Let us outline an application. I assume the redundancy \( K \) as the difference between the number \( n \) of resources—e.g. signifiers—and the number \( m \) of functions \( s \) achieved by those resources

\[
K = n - m
\]  

(6)

The more abundant is the number of signifiers the higher is the redundancy of \( S \). For example, the messages \( x \) convey the same subject content. The signifiers are three, the signified is only one; \( K \) is positive and \( S \) is redundant.

\[
S \rightarrow x \rightarrow x \rightarrow x
\]  

(7)

Definition (6) is flexible to several applications. The notion of redundancy can apply to texts and even to machines, networks, computers and so forth. For instance, the tripled control unit installed in a jet complies with the model (7) and the redundancy is calculated by (6). A technician can treat a redundant device and a redundant message using identical equations thanks to the support of semiotics. The concepts of signifier and signifies lead us toward unified understanding of informational phenomena.

5. Further Inferences

Two methodological cornerstones, which are related each other, provide the basis for exact science; the mathematical language and the deductive logic. The structure of scientific knowledge begins with some axioms (or initial assumptions) that are usually expressed in formal terms. In a subsequent step, one obtains the results from those initial statements using mathematical calculations or alternatively using logical inferences. This deductive organization of knowledge-sometimes named
“economy of thinking”—is essential to engineers.

The present study adheres to the scientific rules. The notions of signifier and signified are the initial assumptions expressed in formal terms and some statements have been derived from these assumptions, i.e. expressions (2), (3), (6) and (7) are obtained from (1), (4) and (5).

I intend to exemplify a more significant result through inferential logic.

A sign is equipped with $E$ and $NE$ therefore one can conclude that a digital system, which by definition manipulates signs, specializes in carrying on two operations, the former activities manipulate the signifier $E$ and the latter the signified $NE$. Incidentally, I remind that modern technologies tend toward high specialization of the devices’ components.

A system should fulfill two groups of actions that have the following profiles:

- The first operation should consist in changing the concrete form of input data, namely this operation transmutes the signifier $E_{in}$ and keeps the meanings of input $E_{in}$ and output $E_{out}$ unaffected.
- The second operation should provide a novel signified form the input. This function elaborates the subject matter of the input messages $NE_{in}$ and delivers original pieces of news $NE_{out}$ through an automatic process while the physical nature of signifiers steadies.

One perhaps wonders: Are the inferences a) and b) true in the world out there?

Universal experience shows how digital systems achieve the conversion a) by means of sensors, actuators, converters etc.; binary circuits fulfill data-processing b). Thus electronic engineers put in practice the theoretical statements a and b with true evidence.

This labor organization appears hard to discern in small systems—such as mobile phones, embedded systems—due to the high miniaturization of electronic components. By contrast, the specialized operations a and b are perfectly visible in the hardware of general purpose digital systems such as personal computers and mainframes. This class of computers has various devices—called peripherals or input/output units—which convert the signifiers in material terms. The so-called central unit specializes for processing information.

The detailed illustration of peripherals—in relation to point a—requires specialist notions that are alien to semiotics’ background; instead the discussion of data-processing turns out to be closer to the perspective of the reader.

There are various forms of data-processing. Experts recognize numerical data-
processing—popularized as computation—visual data-processing, linguistic data-processing and so forth depending on the nature of information.

Numerical data-processing offers a straightforward example and easily can prove how b comes to be true in the physical reality.

Suppose a seller purchase a product and later trades it. A computer executes a subtraction to make the vendor aware of the profit he gained:

\[12 - 9 = 3\]
\[\text{Revenue} - \text{Expenditure} = \text{Profit}\]  \hspace{1cm} (8)

The microprocessor outputs the signifier “3”, which is electrical and identical to the electrical signals “12” and “9” in physical terms; in contrast, the output has very different meaning \((N_{\text{out}}) = \text{profit}\) respect to the input \((N_{\text{in}}) = \text{expenditure and revenue}\). The automatic computation creates a new signified out of two old ones. The central unit provides novel pieces of news through mechanical actions and without any awareness.

As a second example, suppose the author of the text \(X\) is uncertain, as \(X\) could be written by the writers \(A\) or \(B\). A software program makes a statistical survey on \(X\) and computes the occurrences of the word “y” in \(X\). The author \(A\) never used “y” in his entire production instead “y” is abundant in the works of \(B\). This linguistic data-processing leads the researchers to conclude that \(B\) authored \(X\), and provides a piece of news which were previously ignored.

6. Conclusion

Informatics focuses on the mechanical aspects of digital systems, whereas semiotics focuses on the interpretative aspects so far. Semiotics views systems as sign-vehicles whose main function is to be perceived and interpreted by some group of users. In contrast, engineering needs mathematical expressions and currently a certain distance lies between technology and semiotics. The present results have been obtained after the revision of the philosophical tenets, which sound rather strange from the viewpoint of ICT experts.

The revised concepts of signifier and signified cast light on the structure of computers, which authors normally present as a fact, and of which overlook any justification so far.

Experts devised the hardware of digital systems by trials and errors, and now one can grasp the principles that tacitly guided them in clear terms. Electronic engineers searched hardware solutions following pragmatic methods and with great efforts
whereas semiotics clarifies the inner logic of computing machines in easy manner.

The deductive study of (1), (4) and (5) can address a spectrum of issues. It is shown in (Rocchi 2013) how the revised notions of signifier and signified:

1. Answer some classical paradoxes in information science.
2. Specify the dualism analog/digital.
3. Demonstrate the possibilities and limits of systems.
4. Explain the laws of networking.
5. Illustrate the data storage organizations.
6. Calculate the redundancy of systems in a unified way.

Semiotic concepts can offer original lens to interpret electronic appliances on the technical plane. The present study shows how semiotics can influence our knowledge on the hardware of computers and intends to indicate an innovative area of research. This is an attempt to show how semiotics can have an important part in informatics as long as one fills the present cultural gap.

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Lived Experience as the Basis for Abductive Reasoning: A Peircean Developmental Perspective

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Abstract: A case will be made for the indispensability of embodied experience as a foundation for Peirce’s pragmatic semiotic, especially given the place of semiosis in signification. Lakoff and Johnson’s model of space and time, from dependence on physical, embodied experience, to more analogously based concepts in the mental world, is employed as a framework for a discussion of the primacy of Secondness in Peirce’s model of reasoning. Peirce’s later writings reveal that abductive reasoning entails “recommending a course of action”, demonstrating the pivotal place of Secondness in abductive thinking. Nonetheless, recommending a course of action does not stop at experience—it likewise relies on spontaneous insights to trigger a synthesized and acceptable explanatory prediction of a state of affairs. The prediction/hypothesis emanates not from previous direct experience, but from its culminating effects. This “retroduction” ensures the preeminence of self controlled logic (Thirdness impinging on Secondness) over capricious affect in Firstness.

Key words: abduction; Peirce; Lakoff and Johnson; lived experience; secondness

Introduction

In elucidating Peirce’s model of travel toward abductive reasoning, the emphasis is placed on participatory involvement in experiences, or as Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 1999) term it, lived experience. “We have no more fundamental way of comprehending the world than through our embodied, basic-level concepts and the basic-level experiences that they generalize over. Such basic concepts are fundamental not only to our literal conception of the world but to our metaphorical conceptualization as well” (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999; 231). The tenets of Lakoff and Johnson’s model bear resemblance to Peirce’s model of the development of abductive reasoning, in that both squarely rest their assumptions on the Piagetian claim that foundational to higher level reasoning are primary experiences. Piaget (1937/1954: 403) expressly asserts that sensorimotor interactions are the building blocks for mature logic; “Thus, starting with the use of reflexes and the first
acquired association, the child succeeds within a few months in constructing a system of schemata capable of unlimited combinations which presages that of logical concepts and relations.” Lakoff and Johnson likewise follow this rationale in constructing their model of spatial relations. Although Peirce’s claims are in line with those of Lakoff and Johnson (and implicitly of Piaget, as well), they are not explicitly developmental in nature. Nonetheless, the three models are in accord—that lived experience is primary in developing higher level logic. They further agree that spatial concepts/modes of representation are primary skills for developing more advanced reasoning competencies.

### Lakoff and Johnson’s Contemporary Model of Lived Experience

Lakoff and Johnson (1999: 30–35) posit that three reasoning approaches govern children’s involvement in experience: container schema, source-path-goal schema, and bodily projection schema. These lines of reasoning regarding spatial relations between and among the self and between objects arise so that when the higher level becomes dominant, it does not supplant lower level rationale. The result is that higher reasoning simply is integrated with patterns of prior reasoning, to the effect that prior schemas are modified to preclude contravening assumptions within the same system. Nevertheless, the core of Lakoff and Johnson’s assumptions is that spatial relationships are the basis upon which increasingly more complex logic is constructed: “Spatial-relations concepts are at the heart of our conceptual system” (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999; 30).

The initial assumptions of the container schema consist in determining inside vs. outside. The inside-outside determination requires identifying boundaries (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999: 31–32). Children focus on boundaries to specify locations of objects relative to landmarks. Initially landmarks are static—they are not mobile, nor is movement of objects within them a possibility (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999: 32). Landmark parameters are perceived to be relatively unchangeable, and are topological. Upon emergence of the source-path-goal schema, the issue of movement surfaces as a primary determinant of spatial relations (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999: 32–34). Spatial and temporal sequences become paramount, such that spatial trajectories, involving motion to and from a landmark take precedence. During this process, cause and effect relations within event structures materialize as issues to be reckoned with, i.e., which event in the episode preceded other events to logically ascertain the resultant event (state/action).

Bodily projection schemas consider orientations other than a single, egocentric
viewpoint. Perspectives recognizing the import of other points of view (entities, persons) facilitate the appreciation of origos (points of orientation) belonging to a unique perspective. Equal critical is dependence on one’s own bodily interaction with objects and one’s own orientation to entities, forms the foundation for recognition of other’s (persons/things) unique perspectives-appreciating their orientation. “We project fronts and backs onto objects. What we understand as the front of a stationary artifact, like a TV or a computer or a stove, is the side we normally interact with using our fronts” (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999, p.34). This projective perspective depends upon recognition of social roles and the particular physical, affective, and cognitive orientation of the origo. Movement in this genre is likewise critical, since repositioning of origo or of objects with respect to origo alters the relationship of origo to contextualized features. It is evident then that the more contemporary model of Lakoff and Johnson incorporates sensorimotor schemes into higher level reasoning, first by integrating movement into spatial parameters, and afterward when applying origo as the shifting role for the zero-point of orientation. In any case, basic spatial relations continue to serve as a necessary foundation for higher levels of reasoning.

Peirce’s Model of Lived Experience

Peirce’s model highlights the value of lived experience to prefigure higher reasoning skills. Four sequential levels emerge as indicators of abductive reasoning: pure Secondness, percepts, perceptual judgments, and hallucinations. Although these levels of reasoning represent epistemic (cognitive) advances, they do not preclude some components of affect in the mix. Whereas the initial reasoning levels (pure Secondness, percepts) have their foundation in physical interaction with the environment, the latter two levels (perceptual judgments, hallucinations) operate on elements of Thirdness and internal dialogue (with the self).

Peirce characterizes reasoning from a pure Secondness perspective as “compulsive” (1903; EP2; 268). This compulsivity takes flight from the appearance on the scene of unexpected objects/events, and the spontaneous reaction which unforeseen circumstances impose on the human’s response. Action orientation is then another obvious component of pure Secondness for Peirce (1885; CP 8.41). “[Volition] does involve the sense of action and reaction, resistance, externality, otherness, pair-edness.” Pure Secondness does not merely result in reaction to stimuli, but surfaces as “volition”—initiated action. Children take event roles other than that of receiver, as well as agent and the like. At this level of pure Secondness-
based reasoning, Peirce accords direct experience a pivotal role in the emergence of higher reasoning skills (1903; CP 8.266): “The practical exigencies of life render Secondness the most prominent of the three. This is not a conception, nor is it a peculiar quality. It is an experience.”

Peirce’s next level to ascertain abductive reasoning draws on the percept as a point of departure. It is noteworthy, however, that the percept (despite its basis in Secondness) goes beyond raw experience to incorporate some element of interpretation (1903; CP 7.624). Moreover, percepts neither rest on, nor do they fail to rest on belief structures—reflections on interpretations do not encompass belief or disbelief. Nonetheless, percepts do unequivocally consist in mental constructions (1903; CP 7.624): “…Every percept is the product of mental processes…except that we are not directly aware of them…” They require some semblance of recognition of object attributes, but do not reach the level of generalizations or conscious deliberation. This kind of percept might entail an implicit comparison between two objects, without raising any general observation about how certain kinds of objects appear or function. In other words, percepts fall short of a classificatory operation, e.g., all balls are round and bounce. Although Peirce asserts that percepts are “not the first impressions of sense” (1902; CP 2.141). “Not the first impressions of sense” intimates that percepts only slightly extend beyond sense impressions—to rather simple mental operations consequent to individualized experiences. To illustrate, recognition of an object or an observation that a particular ball bounces well, demonstrates mental processes just beyond first exposure to sense data. Any interpretations which ensue do not rise to the level of a “second look back”, given that analysis is unnecessary to experience a percept. All that is necessary is notice of an object and its effectiveness within an action schema.

In contrast, perceptual judgments require reasoning beyond noticing, or beyond an awareness of object similarities, either functionally or perceptually. One of the functions of the perceptual judgment entails revealing the nature of percepts (CP 7.643). This process materializes via exposure to the “percipium” (CP 7.643). As such, perceptual judgments ascribe to a higher order reasoning process than do percepts, such that the former exude Thirdness (CP 7.631), while the latter are still limited to Secondness in direct experience: “There are several other points of contrast between the perceptual judgment and the percept that are calculated to exhibit their disparateness. The judgment, ‘This chair appears yellow,’ separates the color from the chair, making the one predicate and the other subject. The percept, on the other hand, presents the chair in its entirety and makes no analysis whatever.” Thirdness here has its foundation in the use of genuine signs (not
degenerate uses). Short (2007: 90) characterizes the presence of Thirdness within the Interpretant of a sign as the primary characteristic to qualify for genuine signhood—the meaning must be “reducible.”

Signs which are “reducible” derive some of their meaning/effects from factors beyond immediate experience and beyond the immediate space and time of the object’s observation; that is, genuine Indexes derive meaning from the general use of a term, not from the contextual features coexistent with the Object. The general use of a term represents its invariant meaning in the code. Illustrations of genuine Indexes are deictics such as “this”/“that” when their contrastive use is apprehended (West, 2012; 244). Accordingly, these Indexes are genuine by virtue of the rather objective function of their Interpretants—near/far space from speaker’s viewpoint (since according to cultural norms, speaker is origo). Furthermore, Interpretants of genuine Indexes must transcend limitations of haecceity (CP 3.460) accessibility to that which is near. Interpretants must reach a higher representational threshold, that of recognizing (however unconsciously) that speaker viewpoint can be assumed by anyone who actualizes the conversational role. (For further discussion of this topic, cf. West, in press).

Without superseding limitations of haecceity necessary components of perceptual judgments could not materialize, especially the means to “recommend a course of action”. Peirce emphasizes that a primary characteristic of judgments is “recommending a course of action” (MS 637-12): “It will be remarked that the result of both Practical and Scientific Retroduction is to recommend a course of action.” This recommendation is not generated consequent to extensive deliberation; rather it arises spontaneously (CP 5.181). This spontaneous reasoning emerges in a “flash” to preclude any contrivance from infecting the recommendation: “The abductive suggestion comes to us like a flash. It is an act of insight...” Additional support for the inclusion of spontaneity in abductive reasoning, Peirce recounts a particularly relevant incident in which his brother, Herbert, in a “flash” of “insight” made a determination to instantaneously cover their mother’s burning dress with a rug, allegedly to save her from peril (CP 5.538). The judgment then constitutes a relatively undeliberated (perhaps fallible), but viable conclusion (CP 5.181).

This account still does not suffice. Likewise incorporated into perceptual judgments is a recommendation which is functional not necessarily for the self, but for another. Perceptual judgments then must include Lakoff and Johnson’s notion of the means to “bodily project” one’s self into the place of another—a return to space relations as the pivotal construct. Without projecting one’s self into the place of
another, an outgrowth of lived experience, a course of action could not be effectively recommended for another. In short, projecting one’s self into the situation links individual epistemological and deontic issues to social ones, and perpetuates interpsychological advances. Recommending a course of action particular to another (a remedy which is likely to function for another), presupposes knowledge of another’s idiosyncratic knowledge base, as well as an appreciation for their potential emotional reaction(s).

Peirce’s final, and most developed form of lived experience is hallucination. Such extends reasoning of perceptual judgments (CP 7.641 and CP 7.644); “... I proceed to compare the entire host of hallucinations, which there is no good reason to separate into the veridical and the non-veridical, and which there is good reason to account far more frequent than the census of the Society for Psychical Research admits.” For Peirce “hallucination” does not conform to the ordinary or socially normative construal. It is distinguishable from that of the Psychoanalytic model and from common use, in that it necessarily entails the addition of compulsive affect. Such affect though does not by nature give rise to uncontrolled, untrue, unacceptable or destructive forces. Rather its actualization is creative—it stimulates cognitive/epistemic growth (EP 2; 192). This growth demonstrates a primary advance in intrapsychological reasoning, in that it materializes in the sudden synthesis of heretofore unforeseen connections/relations, to offer a novel rendition of or a projective account of events driven by unconventional affect, but without being subject to taboo or cultural sanctions. In fact, affect (which is an artifact of experience) is so crucial to epistemic development that, absent its influence, the inception of novel cognitions/propositions which inhabit Peirce’s sense of “hallucination” are unlikely to come to fruition.

Conclusion

Although Lakoff and Johnson’s model was proposed a century after that of C. S. Peirce, it highlights many of the spatial and experiential components which are only implicit in Peirce’s account of logic construction. In particular primary to the development of abductive reasoning are three factors: personal implementation of experience in participatory action schemas, determining the epistemic and deontic complexion of another to suggest viable alternative approaches for them, and proposing alternative approaches/remedies from those already constructed. In short, advancing to abductive thinking requires both interpsychological (social), and intrapsychological competencies, largely arising from self-to-self dialogue.
Hence, the role of lived experience in this enterprise can not be overstated. It is the catalyst for bodily participation in events, providing social and cultural remedies. Lived experience further hastens abductive reasoning (the proposal of novel, viable remedies) through the exercise of internally mediated problem-solving competencies.

References


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An Overview on Semiotic Activities in Austria and Jeff Bernard’s Role in the Semiotic Community

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Abstract: Though Austria cannot compete with Switzerland with regard to a founding father of semiotics, there are certain well-known scholars like Karl Bühler or Ludwig Wittgenstein — to name but two — who contributed to the theory of signs and sign processes. However, semiotics in the sense of a real enterprise developed only in the late 1970s starting with the foundation of the Österreichische Gesellschaft für Semiotik-Austrian Association for Semiotics ÖGS/AAS in 1976. Some thirteen years later, in 1989, the Institute for Socio-Semiotic Studies ISSS followed. Together they organized larger and smaller conferences, published several book series and two journals and initiated research projects.

Following the subtitle, the major part of my contribution is dedicated to the late Jeff Bernard who initiated, or was at least closely connected to, those activities. The final parts of the paper will deal with his role on the international semiotic scene as shown by the close collaboration with other semiotic groups (especially in the neighboring countries) and by the twenty years of fulfilling different functions in the Bureau of the International Association for Semiotic Studies IASS. The contribution ends with an overview on Jeff Bernard’s (mostly socio-)semiotic research and the major models. ¹

Key words: Austria; history of Semiotics; Socio-Semiotics; Austrian Association for Semiotics; Jeff Bernard

Over the years, several reports and overviews on semiotics in Austria have been published (Bernard, 1986, 1987b – d, 1996; Bernard & Withalm, 1988, 1993, 1994, 1998); in one of the first, Annemarie Lange-Seidl opened her observations on semiotics in the German speaking countries with a remark that is still valid:

More than is usually done in present practice, we should distinguish between the

¹ All the pictures of the original presentation are available as a pdf-file on my website; http://www.uni-ak.ac.at/culture/withalm/wit-texts — link; “An Overview on Semiotic Activities in Austria and Jeff Bernard’s Role in the Semiotic Community”.
history of semiotics as a scientific discipline, and the tradition of reflecting on sign concepts, sign use, or sign constitution, in a given country or culture. (Lange Seidl, 1986: 177)

Accordingly, my paper starts with some short remarks on the latter aspects. The major part of the contribution will present an overview on the activities of semiotic organizations in Austria, mainly arranged with regard to the role of Jeff Bernard.

1. Semiotics in Austria

For most historical overviews, thought and research on sign related topics started in Austria in the early 1800s with the logician Bernard Bolzano. The next scholar in the list would be Ludwig Boltzmann with his philosophical side, followed by Franz Brentano who dealt with psychology and phenomenological fundamentals; Alexius von Meinong, known for his theory of objects; and their disciple Christian von Ehrenfels, a founder of gestalt psychology.

Three more names from the turn of the last century who should not be forgotten in this context are: the philosopher of science and positivist Ernst Mach (Knowledge and Error, 1905), Fritz Mauthner who is best known for his critical study of language (1901-02), and Adolf Stöhr with his philosophy of language and Theory of Names (1869).

In the 1920s and early 1930s the members of the Vienna Circle (also known as the Ernst Mach Society) met on a weekly basis, and these scholars were even more closely connected to the history of semiotics in the strict sense. The group we could characterize by the term logical positivism (or logical empiricism) was chaired by Moritz Schlick; other protagonists were Rudolf Carnap and Otto Neurath; the latter two were among the authors of the 1929 programmatic paper on Wissenschaftliche Weltauffassung. Otto Neurath’s ideas were part of several publications and scientific events of the Institute for Socio-Semiotic Studies in the 1990s (cf. for instance Bernard & Withalm 1996; Bernard & Stadler 1997). With these two scholars, we have reached semiotics properly. Both Neurath and Carnap had close connections to Charles Morris; the three of them edited the initial volume of the International Encyclopedia of Unified Science in 1936.

At the same time, yet another scholar worked in Vienna until he emigrated. He definitely has to be considered a semiotician; Karl Bühler. He developed his Organon model of language in the 1934 book on Theory of Language.

Finally, Ludwig Wittgenstein has to be added to the list of course.
Due first to Austro-Fascism and then National Socialism, intellectual and cultural life in Austria came to a violent halt; luckily, some artists and scholars were able to emigrate and survive in other countries, among them Carnap, Neurath, Bühler and Wittgenstein. This intellectual diaspora created a gap that hindered Austria to catch up with international currents in philosophy, linguistics and semiotics for decades. However, the published overviews remind us of some scholars who joined universities in the 1960s and early 1970s that need to be named as related at least to semiotic questions. In philosophy there are the Austrians Wolfgang Stegmüller who was professor at the University of Munich; Rudolf Haller (University of Graz); and Paul Weingartner (University of Salzburg). Another colleague from Salzburg, who dealt with legal philosophy and had influence on the development of the semiotics of law, was Ilmar Tammelo. Finally, there is the field biological or ethological research, represented by Karl von Frisch, Konrad Lorenz and Rupert Riedl (University of Vienna).

2. Organizational Steps

2.1 The Austrian Association for Semiotics ÖGS/AAS

After the initial legal steps in 1975, the Austrian Association for Semiotics ÖGS/AAS was founded in October 1976. Among the founding members were Tasso Borbé (the organizer of the Second Congress of the International Association for Semiotic Studies in Vienna in 1979) and Erich Fries, a multimedia artist.

Soon two other scholars joined the board, Jeff Bernard and Wolfgang Pollak. The socio-linguist Pollak was the head of the Institute for Romance Studies, and together with Bernard and Fries he shaped the orientation of semiotics in Austria, emphasizing didactical, emancipatory and social aspects of semiotic theory (Pollak, Bernard & Fries 1982). In his own publications in the semiotic book series, Pollak analysed the linguistic identity of Austrians with regard to the bigger and more influential variation of German spoken in Germany (1992, 1994).

Over the years, a number of scholars from different universities were or still are members of the board of the Austrian Association for Semiotics; Wolfgang Bandhauer, Peter Grzybek, Erika Kanduth, Friedrich Lachmayer, Herbert Muck, Wolfgang Pollak, Sigrid Schmid-Bortenschlager, Franz Seitelberger, Robert Tanzmeister, Manfred Wagner, Josef Wallmannsberger, and the author.

2.2 ISSS Institute for Socio-Semiotic Studies

The ISSS was founded in 1989 as the research institute and publication unit of
the Austrian Association, as such it has taken over and increased the publication, organization and research activities of the former section on “Applied Semiotics” of the Austrian Association for Semiotics. The objective is to promote and represent semiotics and neighboring fields both on a national and international level. Since there is (still) no university institute of semiotics in Austria, one of the tasks of the ISSS is to set forth semiotic research and to introduce semiotics to the academic sphere. The ISSS is open for all semiotic traditions, schools and approaches. It serves as a platform for discussion, confrontation, and cooperation. An important task of the ISSS is to act as a mediator in the field of science and research as well as on a science-political and on a geographic level.

The name is programmatic with regard to the main focus of research. With the notion “Socio-Semiotics” particular research fields are emphasized: the societal dimension of sign systems and sign processes and their integral role in communication and interaction.

Initially, the board had the following members: Jeff Bernard, Rudolf Burger, Gloria Withalm, Wolfgang Bandhauer. In June 2010 a new board was elected; I am the new chairperson, deputy chairman is Anton Fürlinger (Austria’s most prominent bio-semiotician), the film semiotician Gabriele Jutz is the Secretary General, and literary semiotician Theresia Klugsberger is the Treasurer.

Among the members and collaborators are the co-editors of *S-European Journal for Semiotic Studies* from Perpignan (Gérard Deledalle and Joëlle Rethoré), Budapest (János Kelemen) and Madrid (José Romera Castillo), together with their editorial committee members, and a few Austrian scholars like Sonja Kral (Romance Studies and literary semiotics), Friedrich Lachmayer (the main Austrian law semiotician), the Peircean philosopher Ludwig Nagl, the semio-historian Hans Petschar who is now the director of the picture and graphics department of the Austrian National Library, the literary semiotician Sigrid Schmid-Bortenschlager, and the historian and film semiotician Georg Schmid.

The latter three together with Theresia Klugsberger, Gabriele Jutz, Carl Aigner (a specialist on the semiotics of photography), and Severin Heinisch were also the main protagonists of another group called SIGMA — *Salzburg Society for Semiology* established in the early 1980s. In 1986 Georg Schmid edited the collective volume *Zeichen der Historie [ Signs of History]* that presented their work. In the early 1990s they carried a research project together with colleagues from the Équipe Sémiotique Cognitive et Nouveaux Médias ESCoM at the Maison des Sciences de l’Homme Paris (cf. Stockinger 1993, Stockinger de Pablo, Fadili & Stockinger 1998). Though the group and its members — as indicated in its name — are more French oriented, they

3. Jeff Bernard & the Semioticians’ Community
A: “Local” = Austria & Neighbors

Since the vast majority of semiotic activities in Austria were initiated by, or at least closely related to, Jeff Bernard (1943–2010), all the following parts of the paper are dedicated to his memory.

Figure 1 Jeff Bernard, “Europe-Image and Concept in Cultural Change from a Semiotic and Transdisciplinary Point of View”, 11th International Symposium of the AAS, 3 – 5 December 2004 (Copyright © 2004 Atelier Neundlinger)

Talking about Jeff Bernard implies three different aspects. The first one is well known to his fellow semioticians: his research and publications. A great deal of his scholarly work might be subsumed under the heading “socio-semiotics”.

Second, there was the organizer of conferences and congresses, the editor of journals and book series, the member of the board of scholarly societies and associations, and last but not least the teacher in seminars; in other words, the science-organizational aspect, the publication aspect, and the educational aspect in his work, connecting those who produced texts with those who received texts, as well as the various groups and semioticians from different countries and schools.

Third, there was an aspect of his life and work which is, most probably, least
known to his friends and colleagues in semiotics; Jeff Bernard’s artistic œuvre—a way of creating texts which was different from academic text production. In this contribution I will omit this facet of his œuvre, but you can find some information and visual sources in my biographical essay (Withalm, 2004), on the part of my website dedicated to Jeff, and in my contribution to the commemorative issue of The American Journal of Semiotics (Withalm, 2010; Withalm, 2011b).

As already discussed, the Austrian Association for Semiotics was founded in 1976, and almost from the very beginning Jeff Bernard took an active part in the section of “Applied Semiotics” (which he chaired 1978–88). As of 1978 he was elected to the Board of the ÖGS/AAS, first in the function of the Treasurer; from 1979–1995 he was Secretary General, and then the successor to the late Wolfgang Pollak as President of the Association.

In 1989 Jeff Bernard initiated the founding of the Institut für Sozio-Semiotische Studien ISSS, and since the beginning he was the director.

Both organizations collaborated closely in publishing several book series and journals and Jeff Bernard was involved in all of them.

3.1 Working on Open Questions and Problems; Research Projects

I will start with some remarks on the research projects initiated and carried out by the ÖGS/AAS and/or the ISSS. It all began in the early 1980s with a programmatic paper on the emancipatory qualities of semiotics authored by Pollak, Bernard & Fries (1982), and the three managed to convince the Austrian Federal Ministry for Science and Research to finance a project titled Theory and Practice of Signs (Bernard & Withalm, 1988), carried out 1984–1986. The project had a strong emancipatory and socio-semiotic approach, presented in chapters by Pollak and his closest collaborators (Wolfgang Bandhauer, Robert Tanzmeister), Erich Fries, Jeff Bernard and myself. In the first part, the main members of the Vienna group of socio-semioticians around Wolfgang Pollak presented various aspects of an integrative socio-semiotics (for details cf. Bernard & Withalm, 1994). The second part consisted of two rounds of an international experts’ survey uniting colleagues from different schools in a modified Delphi inquiry on the status quo and development of semiotics (cf. Withalm, 1991a, 1991b). With this inquiry, Austria certainly succeeded to put itself on the semiotic map (Bernard, Enninger, Eschbach & Withalm, 1991).

Approximately at the same time, the communications and public relations department of the Austrian Workers’ Compensation Board (Allgemeine Unfallversicherungsanstalt AUVA) supported a second large project with the title
Social Rehabilitation and Social Communication (1985 – 1987). Apart from the papers dealing with the representation of disabled people in film, print media and public discourses, the aim was to develop strategies to counteract the (unfortunately still) prevailing deficits in the social integration of disabled people. Accordingly, there were not only ink and paper involved but also some parts of the project which were action research oriented.

Other large projects dealt with the Structures of Autonomous Cultural Work in Austria (Bernard & AutorInnenkollektiv, 1990; Bernard, Winter & Withalm, 1990; Bernard 1995a, Bernard & AutorInnenkollektiv, 1995), or Cultural Semiotics/Semiotics of Culture in Eastern Central Europe and East Europe.

In the middle of the 1990s, the Austrian Federal Ministry for Health and Consumer Protection commissioned a research project dealing with Drugs, Media, and the Public, which unfortunately, was never published. After changes in the Ministry the critical stance toward the drug policy in Austria was no longer appreciated... Though we were not officially allowed to diffuse the results, Jeff Bernard talked about it at the Guadalajara Congress in 1997 (Bernard, 2000a + b, 2005).

The last project so far was dedicated to questions of the Public Construction of Europe. The project was situated within the research focus New Orientations in Democracy in Europe >node< of the Austrian Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture; it was carried out by the Institute for Political Science, University of Vienna, under the direction of Andreas Pipersky, who invited the ISSS to cooperate. “Public construction” aimed at analyzing the political discourses, political campaigns and advertisements related to the EU (in particular the then new member states to be).

3.2 Writings on Semiotics, Book Series & Journals

There are three book series published by the AAS and ISSS — Jeff Bernard was the general editor of all three.

One of the early volumes of the book series “Angewandte Semiotik” appeared in celebration of the first 10 years of the Austrian Association for Semiotics: Semiotica Austriaca (Bernard, 1987a) was the first collective volume presenting more than forty Austrian scholars plus a few colleagues who lived abroad, like Peter Stockinger or Erika Freiberger-Sheikoleslami.

Bernard, Wallmannsberger & Withalm, 1997); in addition there is one monograph (Tanzmeister, 1987), two volumes that show various aspects of semiotic research (Borbé & Krampen 1978; Handl 1985) and a special volume on the Polish School of Film Semiotics and Poetics (Osadnik & Bernard 2001).

Two more series are published by the ISSS.

“S—Addenda” is — as the name suggests — an addendum to the journal S—European Journal for Semiotic Studies that will be discussed below. There are a few edited volumes (Lachmayer, Withalm & Fries, 1995; Harauer & Bernard, 1994), many of them documenting the close collaboration with Hungarian semioticians (Bernard & Kelemen, 1990; Bernard & Neumer, 1994; Orosz 1997; Neumer, 1998), but the majority of the books are monographs, like those written by our Romanian colleague Mariana Net (1997, 2000, 2002), the print version of the habilitation theses of Josef Wallmannsberger (2002) and Robert Hepp (2000), or the volume by Wolfgang Pollak (1992) already mentioned dealing with the Austrians and their language awareness.

As indicated by the sub-title, the volumes of the second series “S—Labor” are Semiotic Pre-Publications, somehow smaller in size. They range from my monograph on self-reflexive television (Withalm, 1995) to Robert Tanzmeister’s booklet on the Italian right-wing and separatist Padania movement (2000), Jeff’s collection on East-European semiotics (1997), or Pollak’s second book on Austrian German (1994), this time in view of our entering the EU.

Since 1978, when the journal of the ÖGS/AAS first appeared, Jeff Bernard was the acting editor of Semiotische Berichte (Semiotic Reports). The journal began on a rather small scale as a sort of bulletin appearing irregularly; in the early 1980s, however, it started to be published in annual volumes of four numbers.

Semiotische Berichte had many open issues, but the number of issues on special topics increased steadily, for instance with “In Memoriam Ferruccio Rossi-Landi (Bernard & Withalm, 1985), or the double issues dealing with Austria’s past “1938–1988” (Bernard & Bandhauier, 1988); some of them were guest edited, like Zeichensetzungen (presenting artistic texts by the Graz Authors’ Assembly, 1990) or “Text & Theory” (Helbo, 1989), and, finally, Semiotische Berichte also presented proceedings of smaller symposia like those on pictorial language, the symposia organized together with the Hungarian Semioticians, or the Open Border conferences.

In 1989, with the founding of the ISSS, a second journal was started; S—European Journal for Semiotic Studies, which was co-edited by four groups or centers: the ISSS, the Perpignan group around (the late) Gérard Deledalle, Spanish
colleagues (first from Barcelona, then from Madrid; José Romera Castillo), and our Hungarian friends (János Kelemen). The journal started with an issue on *Signs, Language, and Meaning*, presented both at the 4th IASS Congress in Perpignan, and later in Vienna at the Wittgenstein House.

As a rule, *S-EISS* published issues on special topics, edited either by a member of one of the four editorial groups or by a guest, with titles like; *Film; Signs & Discourse* (1990; Jeff Bernard & Gloria Withalm), *Dialectics, Semiotics, Materialism. In Memoriam Ferruccio Rossi-Landi* (1991; Jeff Bernard, János Kelemen & Gloria Withalm), *Semiotics & Mentalities* (1994; Mariana Neţ), or *Semiotics in Biology* (1997; Manfred Laubichler). Many issues presented the research done in a country or region, starting from *Semiotics in Bulgaria* (1989; Malina Stefanova); others were *Semiotics in Romania* (1990; Mariana Neţ), *Czech & Slovak Semiotics* (1992; Jarmila Doubravová), *Semiotics in Spain* (1998; José Romera Castillo), *Río de la Plata Semiotics* (2000; Fernando Andacht), or *East-Asian Semiotics* (1998; Gérard Deledalle & Janice Deledalle-Rhodes, Kim Younghae); but also smaller groups and research centers got the chance to publish their texts like as for instance with *Peircean Semiotics in Perpignan* (1989; Gérard Deledalle Joëlle Réthoré), *Berliner Beiträge zur Kultursemiotik* (1990; Günter Bentele, Ivan Bystrina & Michael Kuper), *Semiotic Studies in Bari* (1999; Susan Petrilli), or *New Tartu Semiotics* (2000; Jeff Bernard, Igor Černov, Silvi Salupere & Peeter Torop). Sort of “open issues” were titled first *Semiotik Interdisziplinär* then *Transscientific Semiotics*. Finally, some issues presented the proceedings of symposia, like the one on the *Signs, Music, Society*, organized in Vienna in March 1999 (2001 & 2002; Jeff Bernard & Gloria Withalm).

### 3.3 Talking About Semiotics: Conferences & Symposia

As mentioned with regard to the various proceedings published in the book series and journals, both the Austrian Association for Semiotics and the ISSS organized many scholarly meetings.

Let us start with the national semiotic congresses of the ÖGS/AAS. The first three, held in the mid-1970s presented many well-known international colleagues, like Martin Krampen, Jean-Jaques Nattiez, Jerzy Pelc, Roland Posner, or Tom Sebeok, but there were hardly any Austrians among the speakers. The situation changed after the 2nd IASS Congress held in Vienna. It was decided to organize the national conferences every three or four years under a specific topic, starting in 1981 with the 4th on the “Didactic Implementations of Sign Theory”. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the venues changed in order to intensify the collaboration with

Unfortunately the difficulties to get financial support increased and thus the 11th was, so far, the last one; it took place in 2004, and dealt with “Europe—Image & Concept in Cultural Change from a Semiotic and Transdisciplinary Point of View” in close connection to Public Construction of Europe project.

As it would be too exhausting to present each and every one of the other events organized over the years individually, I just want to mention the conference and seminar series;

There were five symposia on Picture Language-Visualization-Diagrammatics. The series started in 1991 as a tribute to Otto Neurath, thus the first two were held in the Austrian Museum of Society and Economy, founded in the mid-1920s by Neurath.

In 1989 Friedrich Lachmayer began his Seminar Semiotics of Law that brought together international and Austrian scholars. Originally a university seminar at the Faculty of Law of the University of Vienna, the ISSS became gradually more involved until it was held entirely at our premises after Lachmayer retired from teaching.

Finally, the close collaboration with the Wiener Volkshochschulen/Viennese Adult Education Institute led to advanced training seminars for their teachers, titled “Sign/Communication/Culture; Areas of Semiotic/Semiotic Practice”. Usually, Jeff Bernard introduced the group to basic aspects of semiotic, followed by two guest speakers who presented special topics.

With regard to the relations between Austrian semioticians and colleagues from neighboring countries, two more series need to be mentioned.

The longest and closest relations — dating back to the mid-1980s — are definitely with the Hungarian colleagues, most of them members of the Magyar Szemiotikai Társaság, the Hungarian Semiotic Society, and they all participated in the Austrian-Hungarian Semiotics Colloquia that we organized at changing locations in the two countries. Some of the different topics dealt with were for instance: “Sign Construction in Cultural Settings” (1992, Velem / Szombathely), “Semiotics & Theory of Culture” (1994, Vienna), “Re-Presenting the Past” (1996, Graz), or “Media Semiotics Today” (2004, Dunabogdány). As a rule, the proceedings appeared as special issues of Semiotische Berichte, though those organized within the Austrian National Congresses were published as part of the conference proceedings.
Another result of this collaboration that even preceded the meetings were two joint journal issues that turned out to be a real test case for many librarians: Two issues of DOXA and Semiotische Berichte of 1987 and 1988 appeared not only under both titles with a collage of both cover designs but also with both ISSN numbers.

In addition, there were several collective volumes presenting texts written in the two countries (e.g., Bernard & Kelemen, 1990, Bernard & Neumer, 1994, Neumer, 1998).

When we started a new series of small conferences titled Open Borders — again meant to bring together Austrian scholars with colleagues from neighboring countries — it was of course the Hungarian connection that initiated the first one in 1997 in Graz (on Péter Pázmány, the Hungarian scholar and cardinal of the Counter-Reformation who graduated in Graz). In the following conferences we welcomed speakers from Croatia (“Borders, Signs, Transitions”, 1999), Slovakia (“Form-Structure-Composition”, 2001), Slovenia (“Text & Reality”, 2003), and the Czech Republic (“Cultures as Signs-Systems and Processes”, 2006).

But there were two single events organized on special occasions that deserve special mentioning. Already in 1990 such a conference was jointly organized by Austria and Hungary — titled Symbolicity, and it was dedicated to Thomas A. Sebeok who celebrated his 70th birthday (Bernard, Deely, Voigt & Withalm 1993). With another birthday symposium on Signs of Power — Power of Signs held in 2003 the ISSS honored its founder and chairman Jeff Bernard on his 60th birthday (Withalm & Wallmannsberger, 2004).

Finally, there is yet another type of events that shouldn’t be forgotten: the large number of guest lecturers who came to Vienna to present and discuss their research. As of the early 1990s, they were organized under the umbrella term Wiener Semiotische Konversationen / Viennese Semiotic Conversations. Among the guest speakers of these almost hundred lectures were for instance: Vladimír Biti (Zagreb), Hans Bozenhard (Dresden), Tatiana M. Civ’ jan (Moscow), Paul Cobley (London), John Deely (Houston), Gérard Deledalle (Perpignan/Montbazin; Figure 2), Jarmila Doubravova (Prag), Dinda L. Gorléé (The Hague), Rolf-Dieter Hepp (Berlin), Rita Sabine Kergel (Berlin), Rolf Klopfer (Mannheim), Manfred Laubichler (New Haven), Jürgen E. Müller (Bayreuth), Mariana Neț (Bucharest), Katalin Neumer (Budapest), Magdolna Orosz (Budapest), Ivo Osolsobě (Brno), Susan Petrilli (Bari), Augusto Ponzio (Bari), Thomas A. Sebeok (Bloomington, IN), Victorino Tejera (New York, NY), Ladislav Tondl (Prague), Vilmos Voigt (Budapest), Josef Wallmannsberger

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(Kassel), Peter Zajac (Bratislava).

Figure 2 Gérard Deledalle (and Jeff Bernard), guest lecture at the ISSS Institute for Socio-Semiotic Studies, 17 November 1995

4. Jeff Bernard & the Semioticians’ Community

B: “Global” = IASS Congresses & Other International Events

Jeff Bernard’s commitment to the semiotic infrastructure and organization was not confined to the Austrian semiotic community as he was very active in the International Association for Semiotic Studies IASS-AIS and in international semiotics in general.

His first appearance at an IASS event dates back to the 1979 Vienna Congress. Within the artistic program he had an exhibition at the university, presenting two of his performances that were clearly semiotic multimedia art: To Be or Not to Be; No Question and The Medium is Form, Contents and Interpretation. The official involvement in the IASS-AIS began in 1984 with his election to the Executive Committee as one of the Austrian representatives, and 1985 he started both as the co-ordinator of the Presidential Office, run at that time by Jerzy Pelc, and as the co-editor of the IASS-AIS Bulletin. In 1989 at the Perpignan Congress he was elected to the Board of the Association as Vice Secretary General working closely with the then Secretary General Gérard Deledalle (as already indicated by the editorial committees of the S-EISS, the relations to the Perpignan group). From 1994 on until the 8th Congress of the IASS-AIS in July 2004 in Lyon Jeff Bernard was the Secretary General of the IASS-AIS.

Both inside and outside the IASS-AIS he had close collaborations with many centers and groups, among them for instance the Bulgarian semioticians who organized the Early Fall School in Semiotics on a regular basis, and, of course our
friends Augusto Ponzio and Susan Petrilli from the University of Bari.

Throughout his years in office Jeff Bernard worked for the stabilization both of existing cooperations and of the position of semiotics, as well as for the development of closer relations on a truly globalized level — from the two Americas and several African countries to East Asia (Figure 3) with Korea, China and Japan. And it was very satisfying to him, that finally the IASS decided to hold this 11th World Congress in Nanjing.

![Figure 3](image)

Jeff Bernard & interpreter at the Plenary Lecture, 2nd East-Asian International Semiotic Seminar, Shanghai, China, 19–23 October 1997 (Copyright © 1997 Xu Zhong Hua)

No wonder that due to his board functions, he was always involved in the preparation of the IASS world congresses, indeed excessively in the case of the 7th Congress in Dresden 1999 when Jeff and I more or less shaped the entire program.

In most of the IASS Congresses he not only presented his own papers, but also organized (sometimes together with colleagues like Susan Petrilli) sections on particular topics, often related to socio-semiotics, emancipatory aspects of semiotics and the theories of Ferruccio Rossi-Landi.

To complete the story of his relation to the IASS it has to be mentioned that he was elected one of the five Vice-Presidents in Lyon in 2004, a function he fulfilled until the 10th Congress of the IASS held in La Coruña in September 2009 on “Culture of Communication, Communication of Culture”. And I would like to take the opportunity to thank the Secretary General of the IASS, José Luis Paz Gago, that he dedicated the Proceedings of the Congress to Jeff Bernard and to the Argentinian semiotician Juan Angel Magariños de Morentin who passed away shortly after Jeff in early April 2010.
5. Jeff Bernard & the Semioticians' Community
C: Research Theories & Models-Summarized

After dealing with the organization oriented aspect of Jeff Bernard’s role in
semiotics, another moment should finally be discussed briefly: the main paradigms
guiding his work, and the topics of his research, mostly related to particular societal
groups and their position within society, to the entire field covered by a socio-
semiotic approach.

Jeff Bernard studied architecture at the Technical University of Vienna, and
there he was also first confronted with semiotics; One of his professors was Günther
Feuerstein, who wrote a dissertation on architecture and meaning (especially about
archetypical forms). He was one of the few to present the ideas of Umberto Eco,
Max Bense or Roland Barthes in his courses as early as in the 1960s.

Though Jeff Bernard was above all a socio-semiotician, I will start with an
aspect of his work that is most probably least known: he was very much interested in
the history of semiotics or, more precisely, the depiction of this history, the
inclusion or omission of scholars in the various overviews on the pre-history and
history of semiotics as well as in the various encyclopedia and handbooks, as in his
contribution on Barthes at the 2005 conference in Bari (Bernard 2005). The most
complete synchronoptic chart on the history of semiotics was presented in Imatra in
2005 (Figure 4) and John Deely who recalled his paper asked me to include it in the
Memorial Issue of The American Journal of Semiotics (26(1-4)2010) that appeared
in 2011 (Bernard 2011).

When we now turn to Bernard’s other semiotic work we can observe that it can
be characterized both as theoretical or general semiotics and as applied semiotics,
the one influencing and promoting the other. Accordingly, we find a true the
integration of theory and practice in his œuvre as a whole. Moreover, also on the
theory side he adheres to an integrated concept combining social and/or socio-
cultural theories, in particular advanced forms of subculture theory (in the line of
Rolf Schwendter or the works of the scholars of the Centre for Contemporary
Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham, like Stuart Hall, whose work he
actually considered to form a branch of culture and media semiotics), and socio-
semiotics.

Already in 1979 he published a paper on the semiotics of deviance studies, and
ten years later, at the 4th IASS-AIS Congress, he presented a paper offering
“Semiotics as a Theory of (Sub)Culture(s) and Its Material Core” (1992). The
socio-semiotically based subculture approach (or as he has preferred to call it;
differential theory of culture) was the leading concept in many of his research
projects, since subcultures can be open or hermetic, progressive or regressive, etc., and people can be forced into their marginalized position (as it is the case with disabled persons) or deliberately take this societal position. Moreover, Jeff Bernard argued, one could distinguish liminal zones between hegemonic culture and subcultures and among different subcultures, zones which were of great theoretical and practical interest and importance. All these components of culture-at-large constitute complex sign milieus of different makings, and the emphasis must thus be not on culture but on cultures—which opens his theory also to “globalization” phenomena. Among the field research themes related to the subcultural view were: the various works on disabled people as such and on disabled people and/in the media and the development of strategies for an improved communication and interaction in society (e.g. Bernard, 1987e, 1992; Bernard & Hovorka, 1992; Bernard, Pribitzer & Withalm, 1989; Benrad & Withalm, 1990), the already mentioned drugs project, and, almost ironically, a small study on the implementation of semiotics itself as a hitherto relatively marginal phenomenon in academia (in the festschrift for Wolfgang Pollak; Bernard, 1985).

The subculture model was also the theoretical focus of his already mentioned
research on Autonomous Culture Centers. When it comes to a *Differential Semiotic Theory of Culture*, Jeff Bernard referred to theorems of the Tartu-Moscow scholars put in a larger context, for instance by replacing “the singular hierarchy ‘sign—text—culture’ [...] by a plural one, ‘signs—texts—cultures’ (in which culture as such will function only as the intertext, or intertextual space [...] ), to be moreover refined by more detailed gradations of textuality” (Bernard 2007, par. 4).

The various fields and segments of society Jeff Bernard dealt with in his research show the general orientation of his semiotics; a strong emancipatory and enlightening quality, a view he shared with his late friend Wolfgang Pollak, the famous socio-linguist and former president of the ÖGS/AAS. As mentioned earlier, Bernard, Pollak and Erich Fries formulated a programmatic paper “Emancipatory Sign Theory” which eventually led to the research project *Sign Theory & Sign Practice* discussed above.

The question of semiotics and emancipation was a constant topic as is shown by the paper he presented at the last international conference he attended, the 10th IASS World Congress in La Coruña. In the section on “Global Semiotics” chaired by Paul Cobley, he talked about “Late Capitalism in the Mega-Crisis—A Chance for Emancipatory Semiotics?”

One of the parts of the Austrian research project just mentioned, co-authored by Jeff Bernard and myself, dealt with the socio-semiotic concepts of the author who most strongly influenced and inspired our work; the Italian semiotician and philosopher Ferruccio Rossi-Landi (who actually became also our close friend in the years before his death in 1985).

Rossi-Landi’s semiotics, which is a socio-semiotics, must not be read as consisting of isolated or separated parts. The various concepts are rather interconnected elements of one integrated theory, a complex network in which each and every idea, each and every argument has its unique and proper position. As a consequence, even a brief presentation of Rossi-Landi’s work would take too much time. Thus, I will only enumerate some of the concepts that Jeff Bernard took up and developed further.

One of the core concepts formulated by Rossi-Landi is the *homology of material and linguistic production*. Jeff Bernard adopted and expanded it, with regard both to the levels and the areas of production covered, to a general homology model of human production including mental and ideological domains and culminating in the explication of the creation, making and components of *culture* (that is, integrating also the findings of hitherto existing approaches in the semiotics of culture).

A second central concept is *Work* — considered in an anthropological sense and
with regard to both material and sign production. Given the homology just mentioned, the modelling of both sign production (and re-production/consumption) and the entire sign process has to be based on the various forms of work which can be distinguished. This is not only true for the external, visible part of semiosis, but also for the internal sign production in the mind of the sign workers, as shown in Bernard’s differentiated sign model.

Finally, Rossi-Landi dealt extensively with Social Reproduction that can be defined on several levels starting from the most basic of production, exchange (including sign production, sign exchange and sign consumption) and consumption (cf. Rossi-Landi, 1985: 38). Again, Jeff Bernard took the original model and enlarged it to cover both the internal sign production shown already in our sign model and the production of ideology as already done in the homology model. Thus not only “brain work” is based on semiotic procedures, but ideology is deeply rooted in semiotic processes.

Many of the features just outlined with regard to Jeff Bernard’s semiotic and cultural studies apply likewise to his entire œuvre, be it artistic, scientific or organizational. Most prominent among these traits is the true integration of theory and practice, departing from, as well as reaching to, both directions. Another facet is the focusing on semiotic, communicative processes which was not confined to his actual theorizing on signs and sign processes, but pervaded also his artistic and cultural work.

Maybe the most prominent aspect of Bernard’s work summarized above is a strong momentum of responsibility and an emancipatory stance governing his work, his thinking and his life; Jeff Bernard never lost sight of social dimensions and societal implications, as for instance in the paper presented at the 10th IASS World Congress in La Coruña mentioned earlier (“Late Capitalism in the Mega-Crisis—A Chance for Emancipatory Semiotics?”)

In addition he was invited to give a long ad-hoc presentation in another working group dealing with the “Status of Semiotic Theory” that was convened on the spot on the last morning of the Congress. And all our friends were glad to see Jeff back on track. Unfortunately, as was the case more often than not, neither of the papers exists in writing, ready for publication, as Jeff Bernard preferred to lecture and to speak to the audience rather than read from a written text.

Because of the sudden and entirely unexpected death of Jeff Bernard on February 24, 2010, the various manuscripts and notes and diagrams that he used extensively in his argumentation are yet unordered and need a good deal of editing work. Likewise, a thorough scientific presentation and evaluation of Jeff Bernard’s
work in semiotics and socio-cultural studies will have to wait.

Together with a possible publication of texts yet unprinted or difficult to access, it is a task for the next years that I hope to fulfill together with the many friends and collaborators from the semiotic community. And this is not only a task to honor an important figure in the recent history of semiotics in Austria but a necessary documentation of semiotic thinking in my country.

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The View Finder: The Camera as Significal Pedagoge

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Abstract: This paper is intended as an exploratory contribution to the recently retrieved trend in semiotics to relate sign-studies with ethics and values, i.e., “semio-ethics”/“significs”, and to suggest how the “semio-ethical” or “significal” consciousness may be educationally enhanced.

In “Designing the camera” I wrote about ways to shape the camera or photography qua sign for semio-ethical purposes. Victoria Welby spoke of significs not only as a theory of signs, but also as a kind of (moral) educational theory, since she believed that the understanding of signs-in-relation-to-values raised our critical and ethical consciousness. Here is the phenomenological evidence for the claims that the camera is a pedagogical tool just as it enhances significal formation. But not only that; the camera is a self-automating pedagogical tool; through using it, one is helped to discover the significant point of view. It is almost as if it automatically unpacks significs, or the semio-ethical consciousness.

Key words: photography; significs; semioethics; natural law; moral education

The camera as significal pedagogue

In “Designing the camera”, Semiotica (forthcoming) as well as in The Inquisitor’s Manual (www.inquisitorsmanual.com), an online blogging project in which I explore the connection between photography and ethics, I wrote about the ways I sought, through writing this The Inquisitor’s Manual, to shape the camera or photography qua sign for semio-ethical purposes. I explained in CHAPTER 11, TRANSUBSTANTIATION; CONCEPTUAL INNOVATIONS of the Manual:

“Everything is in principle a sign, if it calls to mind something else other than itself. So just as the word, “camera”, is a sign of some object which takes pictures, the physical camera itself, the technology, can also be a sign—perhaps of relaxation—and just as well the experience of taking pictures, and the pictures which are developed, which may recall—and hence sign the realities, or fond memories, etc. And just as (Gunther Kress says) a child may
re-shape words to express new meanings, so also we can re-design these other
signs to point us to new ideas and concepts, in order to have these lead us to
other ideas of interest, besides those commonly, and conventionally signed. We
can, as it were, speak of the possibility of a kind of semiotic trans substantiation; the substantive transformation of this or that sign as sign.
Although it is still a sign, it is changed from one particular sign to another; as
sign it now points in semiosis to something new, and hence is now a new sign.
If we collect all these things—words, tools, experiences, etc.—under the word
“photography”, including the thinking and writing about “photography” (i.e.,
for instance, in our writing of the Inquisitor’s Manual), then we can begin to
see the potential for semiosically trans substantiating “photography”. We can
begin to explore—and hence design and engineer—what all that we have under
“photography” can mean anew. It need not merely mean snapping an image of
something. Perhaps, it could mean-sign-something else.

“In part, the Manual has been an attempt to re-conceptualize
photography, and to consider how it may be re-shaped and re-designed to lead
us to new ideas and concepts that photography conventionally may not sign.
The question that had driven many of its past chapters has been, “what is the
camera?” The answer to this question is not easy; the task is not to discover
through analytic thinking an essence or a definition. Rather it is an invitation
to re-construct, or to re-engineer this thing we call a camera, with its lens,
sensor, body and viewfinder. Such re-construction or re-engineering of this
camera may or may not imply the physical re-modeling of the thing. It may
merely involve the re-conception of how the thing as it is may be used, and for
what end. Though in all appearances nothing much seems to have changed,
such re-conceptualization can be very significant insofar as the complete and
substantive modification of its nature as sign is concerned; it may now point us
to very important ideas.”

Such semio-ethical shaping I call “Significal Design”, is a research method
which translates ideas into senses and meanings which are insightful-in-relation-to
what truly matters. Significal Designing presupposes the possession of certain
viewpoints and normative judgments. These judgments are to be developed
inferentially, but their first principles, which are the first principles of practical
reason or the ‘natural law’, are self-evident.

Nonetheless, I have long suspected that the grasping of such self-evident first
principles of practical reason could in fact be facilitated, rather paradoxically, by the camera itself, or by photography more generally. In other words, one does not simply Design significantly the camera or photography; one could actually discover that viewpoint needed for designing the camera significantly when using the camera or doing photography.

In a sense there is a kind of doing a “theory” (thea-horao; goddess looking at us first, and then our looking back) in the Greek sense when one does photography, in the sense which Martin Heidegger has retrieved it; a pious openness to what is first being unconcealed to us [by the god who looks caringly towards us], rather than research that is merely our aggressive and wilful constructive account of things. (see Richard Rojecewicz, The Gods and Technology: A Reading of Heidegger, New York: SUNY, 2006)

If true, then this suggests that the camera is a very interesting technology; it is a tool which designs itself signification; Pick it up, use it, and it leads you to adopt the evaluative viewpoint for conceptualizing everything you can see through its lenses, thus opening you to the normative prescription of the self-evident practical principles of natural law identifying what is good and ought to be sought and done, i.e., the truly meaningfully important things in life.

Now, Victoria Welby spoke of signifies not only as a theory of signs, but also as a kind of (moral) educational theory, since she believed that the understanding of signs-in-relation-to-values raised our critical and ethical consciousness. In which case, the camera is a pedagogical tool just as it enhances significal formation. But not only that; the camera is a self-automating pedagogical tool; through using it, one is helped to discover the significant point of view. It is almost as if it automatically unpacks signifies, or the semio-ethical consciousness. Since natural law theory, I have argued, amongst others, is a kind of significal theory, then the camera may well turn out to be the natural law theorist’s choice pedagogical, educational—technology that prepares one for, or augments one’s significal theorizing. Amongst cameras, though, perhaps it is the old film (rather than digital) camera which best affords such significal formation—precisely because it amplifies the cost of each shot, and hence encourages more careful and more serious deliberative evaluation of what is worth capturing.

In my work, The Inquisitor’s Manual, I have recorded some of my own experiences that corroborate such a thesis. The Manual is an open-ended project that is ongoingly in the works. But in this paper I select, arrange and present the following extracts from some of its chapters that capture and elaborate on the above ideas.
Chapter 3: signs of good and evil

I have walked about casually with a camera, taking pictures of whatever I come across that seems worth recording. This may sound like a simple task. In some sense it is. There is no thematic restriction. There is no need to look for a particular object of interest. One is free to roam about and collect whatever one encounters. However, fulfilling even a task like this employs some very complex processes, which may repay some reflection.

I am not thinking about how my eyes work, or how the camera’s technology is very advanced, which it is. I am referring instead to the thinking that occurs when we decide to take this picture, of this object, or of this event, or of this person.... In each of these decisions, there is always the judgment that this is worth recording. And, in deciding that this is worth recording, one would have also decided to choose to take a picture of this, rather than that, or its surrounding objects. Even if one directs one’s focus on some other surrounding objects, there are still other objects which one omits. In other words, there is always some kind of selection. One discriminates the possibilities for making a picture and realizes some and neglects others.

This kind of discriminating selection presupposes a judgment of what is valuable and what is not. Put in another way, the selection is not random, but evaluative. When one selects this rather than that to direct one’s focus, one employs normative judgments of ‘worth’. This does not necessarily mean that what one omits to make a picture something, one judges it to be unworthy of recording. However, when one does make a picture of some object, then that object is recorded as something worth recording to the photographer. There may be different reasons why different objects are worth recording, even to the same photographer. There may therefore be different interpretations of what it means to say that something is worth recording. One thing may be worth recording because it is “significant”, another could be worth recording because it is “beautiful”, and yet another can be worth recording because it is “shocking”. These various reasons constitute the evaluative guide that helps the photographer select what he considers worth photographing.

By examining the kinds of objects which the photographer brings into focus, one can infer the evaluative judgments that guided his photographic choices. For example, if he consistently picks out aesthetically pleasing patterns, we could say he had an eye for beautiful things, and that he possibly values beauty as a quality in things. This suggests that a casual photographic task can disclose to others as well as
oneself what one’s normative criteria for identifying what is worth recording. Such a normative criterion may constitute aspects of one’s more sophisticated ideas about what else in other endeavours may be choice-worthy. For instance, what guides our picture taking could also feature in our moral deliberations about what is worth doing and pursuing. In short, there can be overlaps between the normative criteria that helps the photographer select objects to put into focus and the normative criteria that shapes the photographer’s ethical judgments in his other morally relevant choices.

However, casual photography is not just an opportunity for disclosing the ethically relevant ideas that guide one’s photography as well as those which may guide one’s moral life. Photography done casually places us in a mode of thinking that shapes some of these normative ideas. In this mode, our ideas about what really matters and what is valuable can change. This suggests to me that leisurely photography can be done to modify our value systems, and not merely to disclose them.

When using the camera in a leisurely manner, one is not collecting evidence to establish the truth of something. One is not for instance, doing scientific imaging, of which the primary purpose it is to discern the truth of something under investigation, using the photographic medium as a tool to achieve the discernment of the truth. In this latter case, one’s thinking constantly revolves around the question, “is this or that truly the case?”, or “what is the truth about which we are observing—what really happened, what could be a true description of that which has occurred?” By comparison, when photographing without such an investigative agenda (even if one is making a record of something to remember, and therefore, collecting a token if the truth about it having occurred) the truth of the object is not really the primary issue. Here we must remember that I am talking about doing photography leisurely, and not for instance, with the clear purpose of documenting a historical event so that there could be little dispute of such an event having ever occurred. The fact that something is before the lens and an image is made of it is made more than sufficient proof of its truth, and that having been established, one’s thought about the picture proceeds onwards to its other and greater significances. For example, one takes a picture of a “graduation”, and having quickly collected some evidence of this, one’s thoughts no more linger on the reality of the event; instead one then quickly begins to focus on other meanings that judge the graduation as something worth recording; an “achievement”, “making family proud”, a “better future”... In photography done leisurely, our interest shifts quickly from the fact of something, to the value of, point of, the good of...that something.
Because the leisurely use of the camera facilitates this shift, casual photography becomes at the same time a way to enter into a peculiar mode of thinking we could call, following the tradition, “practical thinking”, which is different from another that we can call “theoretical thinking”. The transition of interest marks the corresponding transition from one such mode of thinking to the other. Philosophical psychology has highlighted these two modes of thinking and their distinct interests. Aristotle, for example, talks of reasoning that is “theoretical” compared to reasoning that is “practical”. When reasoning theoretically, one’s interest is in the truth of things. One aspires, in reasoning theoretically, to offer a factually accurate description of a reality. However, when one begins to enquire what one should do in the light of such a truth, one begins to think in the practical mode, and so reasons practically. When thinking in the theoretical mode, some logics peculiar to this mode of thinking guide one’s reasoning; “something cannot be and not be at the same time and in the same respect”, for instance, and hence, one judges contradictions to be unreasonable. Correspondingly, when thinking in the practical mode, some logics peculiar to this mode of thinking begins to guide one’s reasoning; “that whatever is good ought to be done and whatever is evil ought to be avoided; such-and-such is good, and its contrary is evil…”

The logic that guides thinking when we think in the practical mode also identifies to us what is “good”, and what is “evil”. By “good” and “evil” here, I do not mean what we like or dislike, or what we find useful for something else we value or damaging to something else we value; rather I mean that what is desirable in-itself, or undesirable in-itself. This being the case, casual photography becomes a valuable formative tool for our grasp of some very fundamental ideas about what is intrinsically good and evil just as it facilitates access to thinking in the practical mode. The need to enter into a mode of thinking that is practical rather than merely theoretical in order to grasp good and evil has not always been well understood. Some have attempted to derive a theory of good and evil through the study of certain facts about the human being, or facts about the natural world. However, such attempts turn out, on closer inspection, to be logically indefensible. Logicians point out that the attempt to derive an account of what “ought to be” from an account of what “is the case” violates the conservation of logic. Labelled the “naturalistic fallacy”, any such derivation concludes more than what the premises allow. Rather than to deduce theoretically an account of good and evil, good and evil can be known when we think practically. Our knowledge of good and evil is therefore not deduced from any prior ideas. Rather they are “self-evident”. John Finnis’ Natural Law and Natural Rights (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980) is representative of this
view.

Although these ideas about what is good and evil are “self-evident”, this does not mean that we grasp them without any prior ideas. They are not “intuitions” we get from sitting contemplatively in an armchair. While we cannot deduce these moral ideas, we can certainly abduce them. When thinking in the practical mode, our experience of certain facts gives rise to those normative judgments about what is good and evil. This abductive process that gives rise to our knowledge of good and evil is really a semiosis. What happens is that our minds are being pointed to these moral ideas by the facts we experience; see, hear, smell, feel, taste. When we sense facts in the world, and when we do so thinking in the practical mode, certain states of affairs appeal to us as good, and others as evil. If we can analyze this process as a triad of the “sign-vehicle”, the “signified”, and the “interpretant”, then we could possibly identify these three terms respectively as the “experienced phenomena”, the “moral ideas about good and evil”, and finally, what medieval thinkers call “synderesis”.

Now, synderesis, which is that certain habitual capability (habitus) of the mind to yield our foundational moral judgments, operates as the interpretant within the semiotic triad of sign-signified-interpretant. As interpretant, it relates the experienced phenomena to the foundational moral ideas, pointing the sign-vehicle to the signified. Yet as interpretant, it needs to be activated by the sign-vehicle; without the sign-vehicle, synderesis does not of itself achieve the signification of foundational moral ideas. In this respect casual photography becomes all the more pedagogically useful for our formative grasp of good and evil. For, in doing photography we are compelled to go out and collect images, and not only are we put in the practical mode of thinking, we are also put in the touch with all that our senses can take in, especially what we can see. This becomes all the likelier when we use fixed focal lenses and have to be physically present to our subject matter, as one might do say, in range-finder photography. We are out in the streets in close encounter with signs—signs that activate synderesis, and therefore enable the grasp of good and evil. The casual photographer is, as it were, surrounded by signs of good and evil.

Chapter 17: vain studies in studium

I have been struggling with 35mm film photography for weeks now, with my lovely Leica II. Between shooting film, which is rarely—and I will get to that in a while—I’ve also been shooting and enjoying shooting my Leica Digilux, and the
digital workflow is smooth and fantastic, and a couple of my shots uploaded into Leica Fotographie International (LFI) gallery have even been selected for the Master Shots section. It’s easy to shoot and not worry about the cost; it’s free. I take many shots, and even though I remain selective and evaluative, I am less hesitant, and more generous with myself when confronted with any of these picture opportunities.

But no so with my Leica II. I’ve just sent in my first roll of film to develop—after a month, and I nearly decided to not do that. I’ve been extremely selective, and very careful. Indeed scrupulous. Is this really worth a shot? What does this mean? Is it just another pretty image, or nice colors? Leave it to the Digilux. For film, this has to matter a little more. It has become very evaluative. Talk about practical reasoning: what I’m getting is that there are lots of things that, whilst visually attractive—what merely delights my senses—really don’t matter, and don’t deserve my roll of film. Many things pass by, and I pass many things by. I walk around and end up thinking I should go home and save my shots for the people I love, and whom I care about.

And talk about natural law theory: in some sense my reflections mirror the insights deriving from thinking through Robert Nozick’s experience machine thought experiment, discussed by John Finnis in Natural Law and Natural Rights (1980) and Fundamentals of Ethics (1983)—for all the pleasure and delight if I plug in for life, I would rather not; what about the other important things in life?

I have already said much about how the viewfinder and peering through it, i.e., the photographic process, invites such practical and evaluative reflections. But I wish to dwell on this with respect my experience shooting film a
little. For there is a difference between shooting film and digital in this regard.

Roland Barthes writes in *Camera Lucida* (London; Vintage, 1982, henceforth *CL*) that there are two kinds of photographs, one with *studium* and others with *punctum*. I find that distinction helpful. *Studium?* Shots are those which we appreciate but do not *prick* or *puncture* us. They are nice, but don’t *specially* appeal. Barthes writes:

“The studium is that very wide field of unconsidered desire, of various interests, of inconsequential taste; I like/I don’tlike. The studium is of the order of liking, not loving; it mobilizes a half desire, a demi-voilation; it is the same sort of vague, slippery, irresponsible interest one takes in people, the entertainments, the books, the clothes one finds ‘all right’” (*CL*, chapter 11)

The *punctum* on the other hand is different—it grabs us, involves us, and engages us specially. But it is not *shock* either. Hence Barthes notes that news photographs often shock, even traumatis, but “no *punctum*...no disturbance; the photograph can “shout”, not wound...I glance through [these journalistic photographs], I don’t recall them...I am interested in them (as I am interested in the world), I do not love them.” (*CL*) Barthes unfortunately is less clear about what it is exactly:

“certain details may‘prick’ me...A detail overwhelms the entirety of my reading; it is an intense mutation of my interest, a fulgaration. By the mark of something, the photography is no longer “anything whatever” This something has triggered me”. (*CL*)

Whatever it is, it is what is not merely the *studium*. It is that which arrests us, and however it pricks, perhaps it is what matters, and is for us what stands out, and is significant. In any case, I will borrow and use Barthes’ *studium* and *punctum* in this way. I would say that when shooting digital, I am after both *studium* and *punctum*, but when shooting film, I am keen to capture merely the image with *punctum*, and filter out the unworthy *studium*. I want to record and develop only what could puncture—and wounds, leaving an impression, a scar if lost and missed—and not merely what is likeable.

Film teaches me to abstract the *punctum*, and to leave behind the *studium*, much better than does digital, which is quite indifferent to this distinction. Indeed, when shooting digital, after a while I take so much delight when capturing successfully the pretty *studium* that I am addicted to it, and seek no more than the
likeable, but which I would disregard in film. I loose the subject, the meaning, and think of no more than the phenomena: the colors, the shapes, the lines, mostly attractive, but meaningless.

This is not a condemnation of digital. I take great delight in it. Look at this, a wall, taken with my Digilux 2; it’s my masterpiece—so far. I could print it out, frame it, and stare at it the whole day. It is on my desktop now. I am very proud of it.

But what does it mean? For my rolls of film, I hope to capture something of far greater import. For my digital studies in studium, I am keenly aware of their vanity.

Chapter 18: infallible propositions

Here’s a random thought, that I’ve been nursing this couple of days.

Recall that Descartes suggested that one’s doubting is indubitably true, since, by doubting one’s doubt, one is still doubting. So as long as I doubt, that I am doubting, is infallibly true—for even when one doubts that, one proves it is true performatively.

Here’s a more Thomistic example, from John Finnis; suppose someone says that knowledge is good, but is confronted with the skeptical challenge that it is not—well, the skeptical challenge, when not whimsical but careful and considered, even rigorous, ironically demonstrates or proves that ‘knowledge is a good’ to be true, or contradicts the very skepticism, since one is here keen, when skeptical, to grasp the goodness of the truth of knowledge, namely the knowledge of whether knowledge is true or false, or to promote as a good, the knowledge that ‘knowledge is not a good’. (see Natural Law and Natural Rights, 1980, pp. 74–75)

Suppose I say that, Photography affords, semiosically, ethical or religious (to the extent that religiously based moral ideas can be classified as ‘ethical’) consciousness raising. By this I mean that photography, which includes everything I do here—the
taking of pictures, the captioning, the blogging or writing about it, etc.—has the capacity to lead, as a sign-post, to ethical or religious ideas, either by reminding us of these, or by pressing us to think about the latter, or by holding up the latter to our consciousness when otherwise we would not bother with them. So:

“Photography (Ph) affords Ethical (E) consciousness raising, by way of semiosis”

This seems to me infallibly correct, using infallibility in loose way, to suggest that the very posing of this proposition as a question, i.e., “Does photography afford ethical consciousness raising by way of semiosis?” itself adds to its truth.

Proof:

Let P be (Ph affords E semiosically)
Interrogate, question, problematize P.
Hence, {Is it true that P?}
Let ? P be the problematization, the skeptical questioning, or the research question in relation to P.
I.e., Let ? P be {Is it true that P?}
How are ? P and P related?
? P asks if P is True.
Now, because through the posing of the question, Ph and E are held up semiosically, hence Ph does afford E.

Comment: when the question is posed, and put out as a research question, the study that interrogates the connection between Ph and E actually puts before our minds E, just when we explore how E is related, effected, caused by, afforded by, or correlated with Ph. Hence, Ph understood to include the reflective study of how E is afforded, actually affords, by way of this study, E. Whatever the real relationship between Ph and E are (and there may be some or none at all), the very study of Ph in relation with E generates, even if merely nominally, and not metaphysically, a true relationship between Ph and E where Ph leads, as a sign, to E.

In which case, then P is true, even when one questions P.
I.e., ? P implies P.
Hence P is infallibly true, since even if questioned, P is proven, performatively, by ? P, to be true.
In sum:

? P implies P; ergo, P.
Hence, infallibly P

What does this all mean?

Well it means that, even before the question, “Does photography lead to ethical consciousness raising” needs to be answered through extended study, the answer to that is already that it does. And this is because the suggestion that it does is infallibly true when posed as a research question and studied. The very researching or study of this question makes it true. Hence the study of whether photography leads semiosically to ethical consciousness raising (or shortened, photo-semio-ethic studies) is very worthwhile, precisely because it does lead to ethical consciousness raising.

Simply put; skepticism regarding the semiosis of ethical ideas in photography is indefensible. Because: the serious, thoughtful, skeptical challenge, which is willing to test the possibility of photography for signing ethical ideas—that very challenge proves the semiosis of one with the other. We are speaking of such fair minded skepticism which is scholarly, and which is willing to give it a go; to think through and to see if it works, to give it a chance to corroborate itself or to surface a counter-example, rather than the arbitrary, whimsical skepticism which is not to be taken seriously.

The way photography leads to ethical semiosis is precisely through the study of the affordance of one with the other, and in a sense, or at least one can go so far as to say, that the affordances of photography for ethical consciousness raising in the real is not entirely relevant. It is not photography per se which needs to afford such consciousness raising. Rather it is the study of photography in relation to ethics, which leads to such consciousness raising. This is not to say that there are no metaphysically robust claims to be made in relation to the way photography could afford ethical semiosis. But it does mean that, whatever may be said of these, the very ongoing study to unveil these affordances, is what truly matters, and is what needs to be done.

Hence photo-semio-ethical studies need to be done, not for the results of these studies, but for the very performance of such studying, which effects ethical consciousness raising.

Chapter 20: the habit of black and white

I have found, speaking at least for myself, that it is good to have a habit of shooting, on occasion, in just black and white. I say this without prejudice towards digital. Black and white photography, whether in digital or in 35mm film, achieves the same thing with respect a certain way of seeing, which color, whether digital or
film, eschews.

Color is a good thing, but it can be a distracting thing, and could lend itself towards the quest for mere aesthetic *studium*, rather than for meaningful *punctum*. Color is beautiful, whether one speaks of certain shades or of certain combinations. But black and white is more thoughtful. One puts the quest for saturated spectrums aside; in black and white such aspirations for nice colors is from the very start frustrated. Hence one has to look for *something else*: the subject, the story, the action, rather than the mere appearance, or phenomena. The intelligible subject matter is sought after, and abstracted, and the trivialities of the merely colorful left behind. Here there is more likelihood of capturing the meaningfully puncturing, the important subject, because of being encouraged to see the punctum.

It may be possible that shooting 35mm black and white film does a *slightly* better job at supporting such a way of seeing, since once again, film costs, and so presses for more deliberated evaluation. After all, even in black and white, there can be the temptation to capture merely nice lines or shapes, such as trees or branches or the panels of building walls. So one is denied not merely the attractively colorful; one has reservations even of the merely structurally beautiful, which when wasted on expensive film, is venial sin. I did have, recently, a rather expensive Kodak CN400 c-41 processing 36 exposure film loaded, which gave me great results. But when shooting that roll, I was well aware of the self imposed discipline to *not* shoot the merely “visually interesting”. With respect to digital, the beautifully monochromatic can still be a temptation.

Although at the end of the day, when the digital camera is set to shoot in monochrome, my own experience is that one’s attention is still very discernibly deflected from the merely aesthetic, in the search for subjects that truly matter. So for someone shooting in color for quite a while, the transition to black and white effects such a way of seeing powerfully, even if one still has the license to snap away. Hence even if not shooting in film, digital photographers who shoot in black and white would, I think, find the experience recognizably beneficial.

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**Chapter 21: death and resurrection**

(Having revisited) Martin Heidegger lately... I’ve come up with some ideas that I think are rather interesting to me (insofar as they inform my thoughts on photography and ethics).

As I’ve written in (earlier) chapters, photography inclines one in a variety of ways to enter into a kind of evaluative, and hence practical mode of thought, and that in turn
emerges the focal viewpoint, just as our grasp of what truly matters becomes more keen. Now it’s occurred to me that, basically, when one is confronted with a limitation, with the closing down of infinite possibilities, then one enters the focal viewpoint—precisely because one can no more squander opportunities, but must choose.

Now the horizon of death, which we all face, imposes precisely that kind of limitation to our lives; when we are exiting with the knowledge that we will die one day, we begin to take more seriously the time we have, and begin to decide what to put into the time we still have, and to discard what deserves less of our time and attention. We begin also to think through what is important and what is not, what is choice-worthy and what is not, what is good and evil.

Thus the peering through the viewfinder in photography is analogous to one’s being-toward-death. In this recognition that we are dying, we begin really to live: to exist with a consciousness of what matters, and what does not. We become, or are ready to become ethical. In dying, we are resurrected; we are now more fully alive than when previously we were dead in our careless squandering.

In a sense also, there is here, in photography, just as there is in the being-towards-death, a kind of theory, or theoria as the Greeks meant it. That is to say, thea + horao, the looking of the god (dess) at us to disclose to us + our pious looking back. It is not by our sheer will power that this ethical comportment is achieved; rather the dynamism is the other way around. It is experienced as given to us, disclosed to us, un-hidden to us. We did not develop it, or deduce it. We did not work it out. Rather, we looked (through the viewfinder) and that ethical comportment was given, and hence “looked back”. Just as someone looks towards the horizon of death, and then it was given back, saying: “you need to spend your existence meaningfully, on the important things, and therefore, live.”

Heidegger said that only a god could save us, and that is true. In the theory of photography, we the dead may begin to live.

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Trailblazers’ Paving the Way to Semioethics

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1. Historical and Theoretical Perspectives: By Way of a Premise

The first Congress of the International Association for Semiotic Studies, founded in 1969, was held in Milan, June 1974. A widespread interest in semiotic research had officially existed in Italy from the second half of the 1960s in a wide range of fields, though Charles Morris had already been introduced to the intellectual scene in Italy with the translation of his 1946 monograph *Signs, Language and Behavior* into Italian (by Silvio Ceccato) in 1949.

In 1952 Ferruccio Rossi-Landi translated Morris’s epochal booklet *Foundations of the title* Charles Morris. Charles S. Peirce had been introduced to the semiotic scenario in Italy even earlier, at the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century thanks to Giovanni Vailati and to information passed on to him by Victoria Welby. However, this trend in sign studies as delineated by such names, what Thomas A. Sebeok tagged the “major tradition”, was completely submerged in Italy and worldwide by the so-called “minor tradition” deriving from Ferdinand de Saussure. Rossi-Landi’s work of the 1950s was mostly ignored. And the so-called major tradition referring to Peirce was only revived in Europe from the early 1970s.

Appropriate terminology for semiotics was a common topic of debate worldwide from the 1960s onwards and was never just a terminological issue. Words refer to their objects, to the world and our ideas about them and, in turn, are modified by these objects. Important to explore are goals, intentions and orientations in the analysis of signs, meaning, communication, sign behaviour generally—linguistic/non-linguistic, verbal/non-verbal, normal/pathological, vocal/written, intentional/unintentional, human/non-human, responsible/unresponsible, ideological/non-ideological, natural/cultural.
The term “semiotics” was preferred by the Anglo-American and Soviet traditions and was juxtaposed to “linguistics”, “semantics”, and “semiology”. Morris called the “science of signs”, “semiotic”. John Locke had reintroduced the term from the stoic tradition for his “doctrine of signs” in 1690. Peirce used the term around 1897 in Locke’s sense. In 1964 Jurij Lotman founded today’s most ancient journal of semiotics, *Sign Systems Studies*, “Sémeiótiké” and in 1984 he introduced the term “semiosphere” by analogy with Vernadsky’s “biosphere” (1926). However, Jurij Lotman limited the reference of the “semiosphere” to the cultural world, whereas with “biosemiotics” and “global semiotics,” as proposed by Thomas A. Sebeok (2001), the semiosphere coincides with the biosphere. The term “semiology”, which translates the French “sémiologie”, was preferred by the Francophone tradition. Saussure used the term “sémiologie” for the first time in a note dated November 1894, and Barthes Barthes published his *Elements de sémiologie* in 1964. Although sometimes “semiotic” and “semiology” are interchangeable synonyms, some authors, like Luis Hjelmslev, make a point of clearly distinguishing between them.

On Sebeok’s (1976:64) account, the variant “semiotics” was publicly introduced by Margaret Mead in 1962 and thereafter widely adopted. Though regarded by some workers as a needless barbarism, Sebeok accepted it as the title of his series, *Approaches to Semiotics*. In contrast, the International Association for Semiotics Studies decided on the Latin compromise *Semiotica* for its official international journal.

Like the Roman divinity Janus, Western semiotics has two faces, one turned towards Europe inclusive of the Tartu-Moscow tradition, now renamed the Tartu-Moscow-Bloomington tradition keeping account of the contribution to semiotic studies made by Sebeok and his “global semiotics”, and the other turned towards semiotics in the United States (Petrilli and Ponzio, 2001, 2002).

For what concerns Italy, an important line of research is that which is delineated by the philosopher of language Feruccio Rossi-Landi. Going back to the beginning of the twentieth century another important orientation in research on signs and language is that traced by Giovanni Vailati, a philosopher and mathematician, whom Rossi-Landi recovers in his own research. Together with Vailati and Rossi-Landi, other noteworthy figures on the scene of semiotic studies in Italy include the world famous Umberto Eco, but also the philologist Cesare Segre, the writer Maria Corti and the major Peirce expert Massimo A. Bonfantini in addition to many other less known figures, but just as praiseworthy, including, for example, the oncologist Giorgio Prodi, or the philosophers Emilio Garroni and
Maria Elisabetta Conte.

Semiotics today is the result of different phases of development across the twentieth century; these can be summarized in terms of the transition from so-called “semiotics of communication” or “code semiotics”, to “semiotics of signification” through to “semiotics of interpretation” or “semiotics of significance” (given that interpretation is involved in all phases) (Petrilli, 2010: 49–88; Ponzio, 1990; Petrilli and Ponzio, 2007).

A significant issue concerns the role of structuralism in language and sign studies. Structuralism arises with linguistics, therefore with Saussure, the Moscow school, the Prague school, and subsequently extends to other fields as in the case of anthropology with Claude Levi-Strauss. But as Gilles Deleuze observes in “À quoi reconnaît-on le structuralisme?”, structure can only be traced in language, even if a question of esoteric or nonverbal language. If the unconscious has a structure this is because the unconscious speaks and is language, if bodies have a structure this is because bodies speak through the language of symptoms. Deleuze even claims that objects have a structure insofar as they speak silently, through sign language. Structuralism has exerted a profound influence on Western thought on signs, language and behaviour and has developed in different directions. The approach developed by Algirdas J. Greimas in semiotic studies is sui generis, but all the same has exerted a strong influence on semiotic studies in Europe including Italy.

In the framework of Western semiotics as we are delineating it, other authors emerge as giants thanks to the theoretical consistency and originality of their work, in some cases influencing the development of general semiotic research, its goals, methods and trends. Limiting our list to developments from the end of the nineteenth century across the twentieth century through to today, the following scholars at least should be signalled some of whom have already been mentioned: Peirce, Welby, Husserl, Wittgenstein, Jakobson, Cassirer, Langer, Prieto, Saussure, Morris, Sebeok, Rossi-Landi, Gannoni, Eco, Kristeva, also Barthes, Hjelmslev, Levi-Strauss, Lotman, Greimas, Deleuze, Bakhtin, Foucault, Derrida.

No doubt a key role must be acknowledged to Thomas A. Sebeok both for the importance of his theoretical contribution to the advancement of semiotic studies worldwide, and for his commitment to establishing semiotics as a discipline internationally.

In addition to responding to the needs of semiotic studies generally and to the search for new horizons (which are not only geographical), that the 2012 International IASS Congress should have taken place in China and for the first time beyond the boundaries of the so-called “Western world” (and certainly beyond
Europe, is also an outcome of the cultural politics advocated by Sebeok during his academic lifetime. As regards developments across the second half of the twentieth century in particular, it is now time to ask, again like two-faced Janus, what remains from the past, and where lies the future?

Here we will only consider some among the main authors who oriented their research in the same direction as our own (for many years now), leading into that particular perspective in semiotics known today as “semioethics”.

2. Two Italian Forerunners: Vico and Vailati

Now let us return to research on signs and language as they were taking shape at the end of the nineteenth century / beginning of the twentieth century with Giovanni Vailati in Italy. As anticipated, the latter collaborated with Welby in their research on signs and language and thanks to her he introduced Peirce onto the scene of sign studies in Italy. Vailati was among the first in Italy to appreciate the importance of Peirce’s writings. Rossi-Landi, in turn, was a Vailati scholar and edited a collection of his writings in 1967, *Il metodo della filosofia. Saggi di critica del linguaggio* (1967).

Vailati was aware of the need to reflect on the functioning of metaphor. He worked with his colleague Mario Calderoni and was in contact with Welby. He used Welby’s and Peirce’s research for his own reflections on logic and meaning with special reference to the spheres of ordinary and scientific discourse. He also underlined the need to reflect on metaphor and how it works.

In his article of 1905 “I tropi della logica” (in Vailati 2000), occasioned by Welby’s book *What is Meaning*, Vailati examines metaphors used to discuss reasoning or logical operations. Even when we discuss discourse and thought, our discourse (or metadiscourse) resorts to metaphors which condition the way we understand linguistic and logical operations themselves. Reflecting on metaphors Vailati distinguishes between three types of images: images that 1) support (as when we speak of conclusions that are “founded,” “based,” “depend on,” “connect up with”); images that 2) contain or include (conclusions “contained” in the premises); images that express the movement 3) to “come from” or “go to” (conclusions “coming from” given principles). Vailati interrogates the use of such images in relation to reasoning and underlines their connection with a hierarchical view of things (to base, to be founded on), or with the distribution of certainties (in premises) which only call for explication. But the assertion of certainty must be bidirectional, not unidirectional. The associative-metaphorical relation among
concepts is described in terms of attraction and mutual support (see Vailati 2000: 80).

Vailati does not use the Peircean term “abduction,” but speaks of a “particular type of deduction” used in thought processes which has allowed for the development of modern science. In this “particular type of deduction,” as Vailati says in his essay “Il metodo deduttivo come strumento di ricerca,” initial propositions call for proof more so than the propositions eventually reached. Consequently, final propositions, or conclusions, must communicate belief or certainty reached through experimental verification to initial propositions or hypotheses. This is a special type of deduction based on supposition, conjecture, guessing, hypothesis, that is, “deduction as a means of anticipating experience,” and which, differently from deduction proper, “leads to unsuspected conclusions” (Vailati 1972: 80). In this new type of deduction or abduction relations of similarity, which are not immediately given, are established among facts, phenomena, and occurrences. In other words, this new type of abduction, what Vailati tags “hypothetical deduction,” identifies analogies among facts which to immediate experience would not seem to be related. This type of inferential process allows for progress in knowledge at more powerful levels than induction, so that, as an effect of hypothetical deduction, or abduction, according to Vailati “we are able to discover intimate analogies among facts that would seem to be different, and that immediate observation is incapable of revealing” (Vailati 2000: 80).

Pushing backwards even further in time, we must also refer to Giambattista Vico even if briefly. In his *Principi di scienza scienza nuova*, Vico (1999: 444) observes that philologists in good faith believe that natural languages signify “a placito”, that is, by convention. On the contrary, he makes the interesting observation that most words are formed through metaphors and are generated by the senses. Vico cites Aristotle: “Nihil est in intellectu quin prius fuerit in sensu”. In other words, the human mind understands nothing that has not been first perceived by the senses (1999: 363). Languages form words through metaphors; and metaphors generally carry out a central role in all languages (1999: 444). Vico claims that in the face of words that produce confused and indistinct ideas and whose origins are unknown, the grammarians universally established the rule that articulate human words signify *a placito*, by convention (1999: 444). This solution served to remedy their ignorance and was also attributed to Aristotle, to Galen and to other philosophers:

Ma i grammatici, abbattutisi in gran numero di vocaboli che danno idee confuse e indistinte di cose, non sappiendone le origini, che le dovettero dapprima formare
luminose e distinte, per dar pace alla loro ignoranza, stabilirono universalmente la massima che le voci umane articolate significano a placito, e vi trassero Aristotele con Galeno ed altri filosofi [...] (1999: 444).

According to Peirce metaphor is a type of icon. It is an expressive modality that cuts across all languages and connects them to nonverbal expressive systems activating interpretive routes that relate sections in the sign network that may even be very distant from each other, as occurs in inference of the abductive type. With Vico, it becomes clear once and for all that metaphor cannot be reduced to the status of a mere rhetorical device, decorative covering with respect to a given “nucleus of meaning”, presumed “simple and literal” meaning. On the contrary, with Vico metaphor emerges as a device for the generation of sense. From this point of view his work is particularly important. Like abductive inference, the cognitive capacity of metaphor depends on the type of similarity (simple and superficial analogy or structural and/or genetic homology) established among things that are different from each other. Meaning is developed through metaphor, through relations of “interinanimation” among words (Richards, 1936). The processes of metaphorization are present in discourse even when we are not aware of it. In fact, a distinction is possible between metaphorical signifying trajectories that are practiced automatically by speakers and would seem to express simple, “literal” meaning, on the one hand; and metaphorical trajectories that are immediately recognizable as such, with a strong charge of inventiveness, creativity and innovation thanks to new and unexpected associations among interpreters that are distant from each other (as in the case of abduction), on the other (see Petrilli, 2012a: 191–230; Petrilli and Ponzio, 2008).

3. New Semiotics Horizons in Europe Today

3.1 Mikhail Bakhtin: Existence of the Single Individual in Literary Perspective

Our interest in Mikhail Bakhtin, Emmanuel Levinas and Ferruccio Rossi-Landi as much as in Karl Marx, Adam Schaff, and Thomas Sebeok consists in what they share in spite of their differences: the idea that whatever the object of study and however specialized the analysis, we must account for the life of human individuals in their concrete singularity and involvement without alibis in the destiny of others, according to Sebeok in the destiny of life over the planet.

An early text by Bakhtin from the 1920s entitled K filosofi postupka (Toward a philosophy of the act) was only published in Russia in the volume Filosofii i sotsiologii nauki i tekhniki; Ezhegodnik 1984–85, edited by S. G. Bocharov (pp.
82–138), in 1986. This text is of great interest not only because of its intrinsic theoretical value, but also because it yields an understanding of the overall sense of Bakhtin’s research as it stretches into the first half of the 1970s. Furthermore, it is closely related to the first chapter of another text written by Bakhtin during the early 1920s, “Autor i geroj vi esteticeskoj dejatel’nosti” (Author and hero in aesthetic activity), it too only published later, in 1979, in the volume Estetika slovesnogo tvorchestva. However, this chapter was not published in a complete version; the first section was judged too fragmentary and was excluded only to be published in 1986 with K filosofii postupka, in the same volume. The connection between these two texts, K filosofii postupka and Autor i geroj vi esteticeskoj dejatel’nosti (in particular the first section of the latter) is immediately obvious; both are part of the same research project where Autor i geroj vi esteticeskoj dejatel’nosti is the continuation and development of K filosofii postupka and both privilege the same literary text as their object of analysis, the poem Razluka (Parting), by Pushkin.

In the introductory fragment, Bakhtin considers the problem of the possibility of capturing the moment of “event-ness” (1993: 1) of the act in its value and unity in actual becoming and self-determination. As soon as the sense of the act is determined from a theoretical — scientific, philosophical, historiographical — or aesthetic point of view, it loses its character of unique and self-determined event, a truly lived act and assumes a general value, an abstract meaning.

Bakhtin describes the “concrete architectonics” of the actual world of the performed act as a unitary and once-occurent act, the basic emotional-volitional aspects of the latter and the way they are organized. All values, meanings and spatial-temporal relationships are organized as a function of the architectonics of the act and organized in terms of the logic of otherness. The main coordinates include: “I-for-myself, the other-for-me, and I-for-the-other” (Bakhtin, 1993: 54). But according to Bakhtin interpretation and understanding of the architectonics of the act presuppose the other in a relation where the parts are reciprocally participative. This means to say that the centres of value are two and not one, myself and the other, the two value-centres of life itself around which is organized the architectonics of the answerable act. These two value-centres remain reciprocally other in a relation where two spatial-temporal and axiological points of view persist without one dominating over the other. Bakhtin claims that the architectonics he intends to analyse is readily available in literature, with specific reference to the author/hero relationship.

Bakhtin’s reflections on the philosophy of the answerable act shed light on the
itinerary which led him to his 1929 monograph on Dostoevsky.

Dostoevsky carried out, as it were, a small-scale Copernican revolution when he took what had been a firm and finalizing authorial definition and turned it into an aspect of the hero’s self-definition. […] Not without reason does Dostoevsky force Makar Devushkin to read Gogol’s “Overcoat” and to take it as a story about himself […]

Devushkin had glimpsed himself in the image of the hero of “The Overcoat,” which is to say, as something totally quantified, measured, and defined to the last detail; all of you is here, there is nothing more in you, and nothing more to be said about you. He felt himself to be hopelessly predetermined and finished off, as if he were already quite dead, yet at the same time he sensed the falseness of such an approach. […]

The serious and deeper meaning of this revolt might be expressed this way: a living human being cannot be turned into the voiceless object of some secondhand, finalizing cognitive process. In a human being there is always something that only he himself can reveal; in a free act of self-consciousness and discourse; something that does not submit to an externalizing secondhand definition. […]

This text is indicative of the direction Bakhtin’s research takes from his early writings through to his 1929 monograph on Dostoevsky. Bakhtin develops a great interest in the vision of literature, where “of literature” is a subject genitive; the worldview which literature, verbal art, makes possible (cf. Petrilli 2012b; Ponzio 1992, 2008b, 2008d).

3.2 Emmanuel Levinas: the Inevitable Relation to the Other

The problem of otherness and the critique of identity-an imperative category in Occidental Reason—are central issues in the work of Emmanuel Levinas.

Identity contains more than it is possible to contain given that it is founded on otherness; the finite contains the infinite, as Descartes says. Levinas who reads Descartes clarifies that “infinite” means both non-finite and inside the finite.

The relation of otherness according to Levinas is neither reducible to being-with, Martin Heidegger’s Mitein, nor to the condition of being made an object as thematized by Jean-Paul Sartre. Otherness is located inside the subject, the I which is a dialogue in itself, a relation between the same and the other.

The other cannot be separated from the I, the same (Même as described by Levinas); at the same time as the absolute other, as étranger, it cannot be included in the totality of the same. The other is necessary to the constitution of the I and its world, but at the same time it is refractory to all those categories that tend to
eliminate its otherness, thereby subjecting it to the identity of the same.

Otherness is part of the sphere of the I. All the same, this otherness is not assimilated by the I but quite on the contrary acts as an impediment to the I’s integrity, to compact Identity, to the totality, the same. The relation to the other is a relation of excess and surplus. It transcends objectifying thought and is the condition for release from the subject-object relation and from the relation of work and trade.

The same/other relation irreducibly transcends the realm of knowledge, the concept, abstract thought, even though they are all possible thanks to this relation.

Instead, the I/other relation, as proposed by Levinas, has an ethical foundation. But what does “ethical” mean in this context? Levinas gives the following explanation:

We call ethical a relationship between terms such as are united neither by a synthesis of the understanding nor by a relationship between subject and object, and yet where the one weighs or concerns or is meaningful to the other, where they are bound by a plot which knowing can neither exhaust nor unravel (“Langage et proximité”, in Levinas 1967, Eng. trans.: 116, note).

Identity and étrangété, otherness; these are the two faces of the real which realism does not capture. In a paper significantly entitled “La réalité et son ombre”, 1948. Levinas says;

Being is not only itself, it escapes itself. Here is a person who is what he is; but he does not make us forget, does not absorb, cover over entirely the objects he holds and the way he holds them, his gestures, limbs, gaze, thought, skin, which escape from under the identity of his substance, which like a torn sack is unable to contain them. Thus a person bears on his face, alongside of its being with which he coincides, its own caricature, its picturesqueness. The picturesque is always to some extent a caricature. Here is a familiar everyday thing, perfectly adapted to the hand which is accustomed to it, but its qualities, color, form, and position at the same time remain as it were behind its being, like the “old garments” of a soul which had withdrawn from that thing, like a “still life” (1948, Eng. trans.: 6).

Taking his distance from a tradition of thought that thematizes dialogue in terms of an exchange of rejoinders among predefined subjects, Levinas conceives dialogism as an essential condition characterizing human beings and their consciousness, a sort of a priori. This is what Mikhail Bakhtin calls substantial dialogue as distinct from formal dialogue. Substantial dialogue also structures the I. Therefore language understood as contact, proximity, being one-for-the-other, witness, involvement, intercorporeity, exposition to the other, intersubjectivity,
complicity antecedent to accord and to disaccord already involves dialogue. Moreover, the dialogic relation is connected to responsibility (Ponzio 2008a).

Responsibility is involvement, exposition, proximity, one-for-the-other. The condition of unlimited responsibility testifies to our commitment to the otherness relationship, to dialogism. Otherness is present at the very heart of identity, is structural to identity, a condition for the realisation of identity. As anticipated, the I is dialogue in itself, an I/other relationship.

To speak not only means to speak with the words of the other, but also to keep account of the other in a relation of inevitable involvement and implication, such that to speak is always to answer, also in the sense of to answer for, in the first place, to answer for oneself, to justify oneself. The I speaks and in doing so answers to the other. As Levinas says in “Nonintentional Consciousness” (in Levinas 1991, Eng. trans. 122–132), the first case in which I is declined is not the nominative but the accusative (Ibid. 129). The other interrogates the I. The question of being is inseparable from the question of the I which must first answer for itself, for the place it occupies in the world, and for its relation to others.

As Levinas says the main question is not why is there being instead of nothingness? (Heidegger), but rather why is my being here in this place, in this dwelling, in this situation, while another is excluded? The origin of human signification is not “intentional consciousness” (Husserl) but, as Levinas says, consciousness that is not intentional, consciousness understood in an ethical sense and not in a cognitive sense, more exactly “bad consciousness”. Bad consciousness attempts to justify itself, to appease itself, to make itself comfortable regarding questions raised by the other simply by his presence. Bad consciousness thus reconciles itself as illusory “good consciousness” (cf. Ponzio 1996, 2006).

According to Levinas, the real problem in the Western world is not so much to refuse violence as to question the struggle against violence which could be a struggle against the institution of violence (1974, Eng. trans. : 177). “Preventive war” is not a struggle against the institution of violence but is itself violence. In contrast, what we require is preventive peace. War against war, war against terrorism perpetuates that which it wishes to eliminate. War against war consecrates war and its virile values with a good conscience. Developing Levinas’s reflexions, “just” and “necessary” wars, “humanitarian” and “preventive” wars are wars waged with a good conscience.

The path to preventive peace is the path of a bad conscience, of patience that does not ask patience of others and is based on a difference between one self and others, on an inequality in a sense that is absolutely opposed to oppression.
Preventive peace is in non-indifference, non-indifference to the other, to another, non-indifference which is responsibility for the other, “the very difference between me and the other” (Ibid. 178). I am answerable before the other, responsible before all others for all others. I am responsible for the other, although the other is not responsible for me. As Dostoevsky says, I am responsible for another more than anyone else.

Return to a bad conscience, responsibility and non-indifference for the other involves suspension of the rights of identity which deny the other; “a suspension of war and politics which pass themselves off as relation of the Same to the Other” (“Nonintentional Consciousness,” in Levinas 1991, Eng. trans.: 132). The human is the return to bad conscience (Ibid.), to the possibility, as Socrates says in Gorgia, of fearing injustice more than death, of undergoing injustice rather than perpetuating it.

Preventive peace, liberation from the world of war, this opening and beyond is traceable in the proximity of our neighbour. The other, my neighbour, concerns me with a closeness that is closer than the closeness of the being of things, of the world. This is proximity closer than presence, proximity even in absence (cf. Ponzio, 2009). Proximity of the other is responsibility for the other. Proximity implies responsibility that cannot be delegated, responsibility as a unique human being for the other connected with my singularity, oneness, singularity which involves bearing the crushing charge of alterity.

3.3 Ferruccio Rossi-Landi: from the Linguistic Market to Linguistic Work

Rossi-Landi’s monograph Il linguaggio come lavoro e come mercato was published in 1968 (now 2003, Eng. trans. Language as Work and Trade, 1983) and is still topical today in terms of foresight and analytical capacity. Rossi-Landi anticipated problems that are now of central importance in today’s world capitalist system where communication is a constitutive factor in production and so-called “immaterial work” is the principle resource. Communication plays a dominant role in the intermediary phase in the productive cycle, that is, the circulation or exchange phase according to market logic. But it also plays a dominant role in the phases of production and consumption, especially with progress in technology, therefore with automation, computerization and development of the communication network at large. After realizing that commodities are messages and now that messages are commodities, it has become obvious that consumption is consumption of communication and that production is production of communication, and vice versa (cf. Ponzio 2012).
Rossi-Landi elaborated such concepts as “linguistic production”, “linguistic work” and “linguistic capital” in relation to social reproduction and identified homological relations between “linguistic production” and “material production”. Certain expressions now in use in everyday language reveal how such concepts are no less than fundamental in today’s social reproduction cycle. These expressions include “immaterial resource,” “immaterial capital” and “immaterial investment” and circulate with awareness of the importance of education, information and specialized knowledge for development and competition in today’s knowledge society. Until recent times “linguistic production” and “material production” in the form of “intellectual work” and “manual work” were conceived as separate. But, as Rossi-Landi has demonstrated, they are already related homologically at the genetic-structural level. In the world of global communication “linguistic production” and “material production” have at last come together in computers where *hardware* and *software* form a single unit. The connection between work and material artifacts, on the one hand, and work and linguistic artifacts, on the other, is now manifest and the superior capacity of linguistic work, which is “immaterial work”, has also emerged. In other words, linguistic work leads the processes of production and development.

The underlying assumption of Rossi-Landi’s 1968 monograph is that “linguistic production” is a fundamental factor in social life and is homologous with the production of utensils and artefacts. (This assumption was developed more systematically in theoretical terms in his subsequent books including *Linguistics and Economics*, 1975). Verbal and nonverbal sign systems are described as systems of verbal and nonverbal artefacts. According to this approach such concepts as “consumption”, “work”, “capital”, “market”, “property”, “exploitation”, “alienation” and “ideology” originally thematized in relation to nonverbal sign systems are applied to studies on language. Vice versa, concepts developed in relation to studies on verbal language are applied to nonverbal sign systems; these include, as anticipated above, such concepts as *linguistic consumption*, *linguistic work*, *linguistic capital*, *linguistic alienation*, and so forth. Rossi-Landi’s research lays the foundations for an approach to *general semiotics* that unites *linguistics* and *economics* as well as other *social sciences*. He develops a global view on human behavior and evidences with great foresight that separatism among the sciences is untenable and certainly anachronistic in globalized communication-production society.

Rossi-Landi develops an original approach to language with respect to Wittgenstein in *Philosophical Investigations*, though he elaborates on various aspects
of the latter. Rossi-Landi recovers such concepts as words are tools, language globally is an instrument oriented by our interests, speech is a human activity among others with which it interacts, a language has meaning in a public context, to imagine a language means to imagine a form of life, and the like. In contrast to Wittgenstein, Rossi-Landi’s interpretation of language as work underlines, in the first place, the inadequacy of simply maintaining that language is a “public” fact and that linguistic behavior necessarily occurs between two or more persons. Instead, as Rossi-Landi insists the “public context” of language is a “social context”. It will not suffice to describe communication as occurring among speakers who are predefined antecedent to any form of interaction and before they begin speaking to each other; on the contrary, all speakers develop socially into what they are precisely because they speak a given language. As Marx (1953 [1857–58]) says in Grundrisse, the individual only relates to a language as his own insofar as he is a natural member of a given human community.

The theory of “meaning as use” has also proven inadequate insofar as it describes the word use reductively in terms of linguistic games, neglecting to investigate how a given use is produced, that is, the processes of production. This leads to describing the instruments used for communication as given and natural rather than as historical-social. “I would say”, writes Rossi-Landi,

[...] that Wittgenstein lacks the notion of labor-value; that is, of the value of a given object, in this case a linguistic object, as the product of a given linguistic piece of work. From the linguistic object, he moves only forward and never backward (Rossi-Landi 1968, Eng. trans.; 31).

In Rossi-Landi’s point of view, linguistic analysis cannot be limited to simply observing or describing word use. Instead, the focus must be on the “linguistic work” through which any specific meaning comes to exist, and consequently on its various component factors including motives, social relation networks, interests, economic conditions, historically specified needs of the subject using the pieces of language under examination.

According to Rossi-Landi, the production and circulation of commodities and the production and circulation of messages are different aspects of the same social process, that is, the process of communication. No “natural” divisions exist compelling us to allocate messages and commodities to different provinces. In Rossi-Landi’s view this justifies the use of categories taken from the economic sciences and applied to the study of language. It is not only by pronouncing and writing words that we speak to each other and exchange messages. “Man communicates with his whole social organization”, writes Rossi-Landi (1968, Eng. trans.; 67). “The study
of any sign-system becomes useful for the study of any other [...] especially because, in studying one system or the other, what one studies is *fundamentally the same thing*” (Rossi-Landi (1968. Eng. trans.: 57). This becomes clearer when we consider that both in the case of commodities and of linguistic messages semiotics addresses the same problems—the work that produces them and that makes exchange and communication possible.

Rossi-Landi formulated his thesis of the *homology* between verbal and nonverbal communication on the basis of his recognition of human beings as the concrete subjects of history, the responsible agents of culture and communicative systems. Linguistic work and nonlinguistic work can be placed on the same level (cf. Rossi-Landi 1968, Eng. trans.: 36). And given that human beings are constructed historically through the production of tools and verbal messages, the definitions of man as a speaking animal (*homo loquens*) and as a working animal (*homo faber*) at last come together in a unitary definition, where the two modes of social behavior indicated are considered to be homologous.

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Mad Wanderer’s Walking Tactics: A Jakobson Reading of the Image Structures in Iain Sinclair’s London Orbital

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Abstract: The report aims to draw on Roman Jakobson’s basic concept of metonymy and metaphor to analyze the independent use of and the interaction between metaphorical and metonymical structure embedded in Sinclair’s sub/urban writing. I want to demonstrate how exactly Sinclair dismantles London’s dominant sub/urban spatial syntax and proffers his own resistant one with his appropriation of these two aspects of language. On the temporal level, the historical images and inter-textual resources are summoned into the text to from a montage effect with the present spatial images and create a metaphorical analogy of irony. And yet I want to point out that such analogy or similarity is repetitively constructed on the basis of the metonymic relationship between the center of London and the margin along the M25. On the spatial level, the dispersed spatial images scattered along the circuit of the M25 motorway that have lost their primary meaning in the original social context are collected and combined by the writer in an arbitrary fashion to form an out-of-the-ordinary syntax of space. The over-determined process of combination in the text reflects Sinclair’s bitter attitude toward the dominant urban spatial grammar and his intention to produce a homogeneous space that is uninhabitable for all men in order to mock the society run under the logic of instrumental rationality. At the end of the report, I want to draw an affinity between Walter Benjamin’s concept of dialectical images and Sinclair’s sub/urban writing to argue that under the surface of melancholy and nihilism throughout the book, Sinclair is brewing a personal revolution against the linear, “irreversible” notions of historical evolution epitomized by the Millennium Dome, and sponsored by capitalism, with the hope of awakening people with the historical consciousness that might lead to the dawn of salvation.

Key words: metaphor, metonymy, dialectical image

Contemporary London writer Iain Sinclair’s London Orbital: A Walk around M25 is an ambitious literary endeavor that comprises Sinclair’s numerous and repetitive perambulations along the entire M25 motorway circumscribing Greater London. Sinclair’s long march as well as his writing project are heroically launched
with a clear intention to wind back the clock of time with a counterclockwise hike around the 120-mile long circuit. The book comprises eight chapters, each chapter devoted to a part of the expansive geography covered by the walking tours. The resulting prose writing in this book inevitably is teeming with fragmented patches and overwhelmingly intricate records. However, under the surface of documentary descriptions as typical of the genre of travelogue, Sinclair’s prose is constantly accentuated by poetic images and montages that repetitively refer to an overarching metaphor of madness, shaping the periphery of London into an empty place, an echo of the center of civilization, a place for no man.

During this 120-mile journey undertaken within two years (without counting the detouring distances), the narrator assumes the role of a mad walker, a “fuguer” in Sinclair’s own term, wishing to run away from the original life and find his way out by walking the strange land. Ridiculing himself as mad and the walking journey as an act out of madness on the one hand isolates himself from the motor-centered civilization that loses itself in speed, while on the other hand presupposes the singularity and limitation of the narrator’s vision.

The report aims to draw on Roman Jakobson’s basic concept of metonymy and metaphor to analyze the interaction between metaphorical and metonymical structure embedded in Sinclair’s sub/urban writing. I want to demonstrate how exactly Sinclair dismantles London’s dominant sub/urban spatial syntax and proffers his own resistant one with his appropriation of these two aspects of language. On the temporal level, the historical images and inter-textual resources are summoned into the text to form a montage effect with the present spatial images and create a metaphorical analogy of irony. And yet I want to point out that such analogy or similarity is repetitively constructed on the basis of the metonymic relationship between the center of London and the margin along the M25. On the spatial level, the dispersed spatial images scattered along the circuit of the M25 motorway that have lost their primary meaning in the original social context are collected and combined by the writer in an arbitrary fashion to form an out-of-the-ordinary syntax of space. The over-determined process of combination in the text reflects Sinclair’s bitter attitude toward the dominant urban spatial grammar and his intention to produce a homogeneous space that is uninhabitable for all men in order to mock the society run under the logic of instrumental rationality. At the end of the report, I want to draw an affinity between Walter Benjamin’s concept of dialectical images and Sinclair’s sub/urban writing to argue that under the surface of melancholy and nihilism throughout the book, Sinclair is brewing a personal revolution against the linear, “irreversible” notions of historical evolution epitomized by the Millennium
Dome, and sponsored by capitalism, with the hope of awakening people with the historical consciousness that might lead to the dawn of salvation.

**“The Two Folds of Language”—Selection and Combination Principles**

Following Saussure’s distinction between the syntagmatic and paradigmatic axes, Roman Jakobson formulated a new theory on the basis of the opposition between selection and combination in the communication of message. Along the horizontal syntagmatic axis, each sign is combined into a syntax string with other signs in virtue of their contiguity or juxtaposition whilst along the paradigmatic axis, the signs are selected because of similarity or analogy. As Jakobson defines tersely in his *Fundamentals of Language*, a “selection between alternatives implies the possibility of substituting one for the other, equivalent to the former in one respect and different from it in another” (Jakobson, 74) while, in the case of combination, “any linguistic unit at one and the same time serves as a context for simpler units and/or finds its own context in a more complex linguistic unit”. “A given significative unit may be replaced by other signs of the same code, whereby its general meaning is revealed, while its contextual meaning is determined by its connection with other signs within the same sequence” (75). This remind us that the meaning of every unit relies on two axis at the same time and should be considered internally with other similar or dissimilar units and externally as part of a syntactic context.

Jakobson further elaborates on the network of the two axis by involving the two most dominant rhetoric terms, metaphor and metonymy, which are not used as speech figures but pervasive linguistic forces. Jakobson suggests that the metonymic mode tends to be foregrounded in prose whereas the metaphoric mode tends to be prominent in poetry (95–96). In his opinion, “so-called realistic literature” is viewed as “intimately tied with the metonymic principle” (92). The events in such literature are usually based either on cause and effect relation or contiguity in time and space. While metonymy is associated with realism, metaphor is associated with romanticism and surrealism (92). Yet the distinction does not aim to generate an absolute or binary opposition, but to mark a certain tendency and to trigger a rethinking of the inter-relationship between metonymy and metaphor. Metonymy and metaphor are not two distinctive mechanism in human cognitive understanding. The fact is that they form a complex and inseparable mechanism on the cognitive level.

This double axis is also employed by Gerard Genette in his famous analysis of
Proust’s novel and his stylistic scheme. In the essay, “Metonymy in Proust”, Genette tries to demonstrate how Proust’s metaphors find its sources from the metonymic chain and how the metonymic structure helps to reinforce the metaphor. According to Genette, “far from being antagonistic and incompatible, metaphor and metonymy sustain and interpenetrate each other.” He pointed out that the similarity of Proust’s metaphors also derives from the perceptual or spatial contiguity. For example, the various bell towers in different towns are attributed with different place-bound analogical character. The tower located in a drier country is compared to two uprising fish because the narrator’s perception was affected by the hot weather typical of that place. In another case, the tower in the vineyard looks purple, which also illustrates how the metonymic contiguity triggers the narrator’s imagination. In this sense, the poetics of metonymy kind of echoes the “Xing”（興）as in the three traditional Chinese poetic principles, side by side with “Fu”（賦）and “Bi”（比）. Though the basic definition of Xing has been much debated by critics, yet the most essential idea of Xing is its reliance on the concept of contingency, which initiates with the perception of outside objects and ends with a subtle imaginative urge. In other words, Xing first requires the situational or external stimulation to human perception, in contrast to Bi, which can accomplish the analogy without necessarily being dependent on direct perception. In Proust’s case, the spatial contiguity is blended into the metaphors through the channel of the writer’s specific ability of perception. Hence his metaphors are like “chameleons” that adapt to the tune or feeling of the environment the writer is situated in and produce an effect as unconventional and personal as no other writer can emulate.

Genette proceeds to point out that the metonymic net also helps to reinforce the power of the metaphor. For instance, the cupcake that evokes Marcel’s childhood memory and arouses the feeling of bliss does form a metaphorical relation with the cupcake he ate in the past. However, “Proustian miracle”, in Genette’s words, indeed lies in the power of the cupcake to re-present and re-live the childhood bedroom, the house, the village, the country by a kind of metonymic enlargement and contagion to the extent that the real room in the present is shattered and displaced by the one summoned through the involuntary memory. In this way, “the vertical axis of metaphoric relationship” is intersected by “the horizontal axis established by metonymic trajectory” (Genette). It is also through such a contiguous contagion that the writer spatializes his experiences and accomplishes the geographical inscription through his writing.

Inspired by Genette’s reading, this paper will try to reconsider the independent use of and the inter-relationship between metaphorical and metonymic structures in
Sinclair’s *London Orbital*. The author’s ways of employing metaphor and metonymy, as we see in Genette’s reading, determine the author’s writing style and distinctive sensibility. In Sinclair’s case, the sources of poetic association on the vertical axis do not derive from first hand sensual or personal perceptions, as characterized by Proust, but from historical repertoire or inter-textual resources. Also the co-existence of metaphor and metonymy in *London Orbital* has its textual effect to weave together a unified map of madness with the power to disturb the map of urban/suburban “rationality”. The following are the elaboration of these textual effects in the book.

**Map of Madness. Echo of Civilization**

*London Orbital* starts with the author’s candid resistance against the government’s political agenda and its development project of the urban space epitomized by the construction of the Millennium Dome on the Peninsula of Greenwich. For Sinclair and many other British people, the building project of the gigantic monumental structure is totally a waste of money and an effort out of vanity on the part of the ruling government to promote their unrealistic political fancy and to uplift the public’s sense of pride. Therefore, Sinclair decided to circumvent the M25 Motorway that encompasses the Greater London by simply walking on foot and took the “monstrous” Dome as both the starting and ending points of his walking tours. And to demonstrate his resistance, he walked counterclockwise in order to “wind back” the progression of time that the pompous and empty Millenium Dome project aims to celebrate. Besides these symbolical gestures, Sinclair also redefines his walking identity by revising the notion of urban walker, the frequently employed Benjamin term, *flaneur*, claiming himself to be a “*fugueur*”, a mad traveler driven by the lunacy of city life, fleeing away from his original living place to different places with the hope of recovery or redemption.

I found the term *fugueur* more attractive than the now overworked *flaneur*. *Fugueur* had the smack of a swear word, a bloody-minded Tommy muttering over his tobacco tin in the Flanders trenches. *Fugueur* was the right job description for our walk, our once-a-month episodes of transient mental illness. Madness as a voyage. The increasing lunacy of city life (in my case) and country life (in Renchi’s) forced us to take to the road... The fugue is both drift and fracture. The story of the trip can only be recovered by some form of hypnosis... The fugue is a psychic commando course... that makes the parallel life, as gas fitter, hospital carer, or literary hack, endurable. (*London Orbital* 120)
For the mad walker, the center of the city from which the fugueur escapes is actually the incubator of lunacy, and what is deserted on the desolate marginal lands is only the resulting wake of it. On the periphery of London city along the M25, the walker finds, as Foucault said, “in the margins of the community, at the gates of cities, there stretched wastelands which sickness had ceased to haunt but had left sterile and uninhabitable.” (Sinclair, 136) Wondering if there is a “shortfall of derangement” which leads to the abandonment of these asylums in the modern times, Sinclair summons into his text other mad urban residents from his historical knowledge and memory, fictional or historical figures as the victims of the city, such as the Jewish immigrant David Rodinsky who mysteriously disappeared from his attic in the East End, his sister who died in one of the asylums, as well as the famous Romantic peasant poet John Clare who also died in the Northampton Asylum. More than these distraught “urban victims”, for Sinclair, hardly anyone is immune to such madness. The motorists trapped behind their wheel and suffering road rage while orbiting on the M25, voted as one of the ten worst and most stoppered highways in England, “underwent the sort of voyage toward insanity, breakdown and reintegration”. (Sinclair, 13) With the modern mad walker, the past psychotic patients, and the maddened mass running the mill on the M25, Sinclair weaves together a “map of madness”, in his own words, intersected with present and past traces of madness. It is more than clear that the irrationality of Quixotic journey around a road not designed for pedestrians is a parody of the rational irrationality characterized by the motorist civilization and its suffering motorists caught in the meaningless orbit.

Semiotic Contest: An Introduction of Historical Consciousness

In the eyes of the mad walker, the compass points on this map that direct the present mad walker are not the modern road signs but the (ruins of the) asylums. On his walking journeys, Sinclair bumped into Levesden Hospital, Shenley Hospital, Clayberry Mental Hospital, and Harefield Hospital. To his astonishment, several of these former asylums are being or have already been restored into private estates. The ruins of these deserted and non-functioning asylums are either eradicated, burned up or manipulated when considered still possessing commercial value. In his description of these past asylums and present private estates, Sinclair shows his resistance against the capitalist re-ordering of the spatial syntax and counters back with his strong historical consciousness and knowledge.

In London Orbital, Sinclair came across several gated communities on his
walking trips. The gated estates that draw his greatest attention are mostly the accommodation of the upper class and celebrity. Instead of probing into the inter-relationship between these modern fortresses and their neighborhood, Sinclair attempts as usual to dig out the history or back story of these gated estates. For Sinclair, the city or urban space is saturated with unseen histories and the ability to see what most people cannot see is the only way to defy the shallow and monotonous reality presented and re-presented by popular media functioning in accordance with capitalist logic. When he sees a gated community, he sees not the paradise-like life pictured by the real estate developers. Rather, his perambulations usually confront him with some unexpected fragments from the hidden past. For instance, the Shenley Hall illustrates how Sinclair’s diachronic reading can sniff out the airbrushed layers of history. Shenley Hospital, which used to house mentally ill patients had been eradicated within a very short time, refurbished and even renamed in order to promote itself as a splendid housing development to first time house buyers. The two giant water towers, part of the old time asylum, have been luckly preserved, thanks to preservation orders, and not built over like other buildings. Yet the developers of Crest Homes attached a new clock to a side of the tower so that they can rename it “The Shenley Crest Clocktower”. In Sinclair’s words,

history is being revised on a daily basis, through the northern quadrant of the motorway, by copywriters employed by the developers... To qualify as “historic” you need green belt development permissions, new estates across a bowling green from an old church. History is an extra zero on your property prices. (124)

In analyzing language as a system of signs, Ferdinand de Saussure proposes two distinctive approaches, synchronic and diachronic linguistics, the former focusing on the relationship between signs present at a given point of time while the latter studying the changes of meanings across time. From a semiotic perspective, Sinclair and the Shenley estate developer’s promotion campaign represent two kinds of contesting discourses or narratives of Henley hospital, which employ diachronic and synchronic interpretation of the place respectively and uncompromisingly. The Shenley hospital or asylum used to function like a concentration camp in the archaic pictures and the sharp and bleak contrast to the white-washed image promoted by the developers now is astounding for Sinclair and people who know about the local history. Yet the developers are good at associating what is available at present, like the historic water tower and commercializing history, neglecting its historical
significance and turning it into something of value.

The example of the re-construction of the picturesque Italian style water tower in the Shenley hospital also points to certain confrontation between two ways of thinking. The tower as a sign is an open site for interpretation. Its meanings can be incurred by every reader, including Sinclair and the developer who resorts to his/her own life experience and personal value to give meaning to the tower. From the perspective of the developer, the act to transform a water tower into a clock tower is based on a contextual or syntactical consideration. That is, since the old water tower has lost its practical value for modern residents in the community, its function is bound to change in accordance with the surrounding constructions. To cater to the new needs and purposes, the developer has to reorganize the horizontal relationship of contiguity between the remaining structures by erasing, destroying, renaming and reconstruction. Yet from Sinclair’s viewpoint, these interventional acts of re-invention and re-naming of the water tower have violently wiped out part of the past traces. Indeed, Sinclair usually has to stretch his metaphoric chain of madness to the extent to overthrow as a whole any current re-ordering or development projects because he deeply believes that these projects pushed forward with the capitalist logic are blindly accepted by most civil residents as sane, natural and reasonable.

In another case, the hospital of Claybury which used to accommodate the patients of East End was rebuilt as luxury apartments and condo complex, renamed as Repton Park, after the British landscape gardener, Humphrey Repton in the 18th century, in the hope of beautifying and gentrifying the once miserable pathetic neighborhood. In Sinclair’s words, it is “a stylish no place that is everplace. No attachment to the local, an easy commute to the centre”. (138) With the distance between the central London and Claybury shortened by convenient motorway, the gated community emerges as a place with no memory, one of the social conditions that Sinclair ranted against most. To show his anger, he sharply compares the silence in the gated community maintained and watched under the humming surveillance cameras to that in old-time asylums. The gated community becomes a stifling space like an asylum where patients are repressed and silenced. The difference is that the residents in the fancy community pay for their “prison” out of their own will. Both the old - time asylum and the modern estates share the similarity of isolation. The ironic contrast between the past and present status of the structures appallingly reveals the arrogance of the property developers to erase and manipulate the past history and the ignorance of the modern space users. The asylum for the mentally challenged and forsaken minority and the high ended community for the financially privileged class, though with seemingly contrasted
purposes and functions, are drawn together poetically to form a paradigmatic relation based on the principle of similarity. The sign of the community becomes inter-exchangeable with that of the asylum on the invisible or hidden axis of linguistic structure.

Besides the contrast between the asylums and modern gated communities, another prominent analogy between the past and present is embodied by the Millenium Dome, the monstrosity of which the whole journey around the M25 aims to “exorcise”. The construction plan of the Dome has been initiated as a smaller project by the Conservative government led by John Major and later expanded by Tony Blair’s New Labor government. Part of the redevelopment project of Greenwich Peninsula, the Dome does not attract previously expected numbers of visitors to its big belly after its opening and becomes disparaged by the public as a complete waste of time and money. Contrary to the politically promotional rhetoric by Blair that the Dome marks the birth of a “New Britain” and the achievement of the Labor Party, the Dome has been bombarded with criticism from nearly every corner of the British society, especially in a time when economy was recessing around the country.

The peninsula of Greenwich used to house one of the largest production sites of coal and oil gas in the world since the late 19th century for over 100 years. After the closure of gasworks and power stations, the heavily contaminated land had been a deserted wasteland until the construction of the Dome to celebrate the new millennium and the development projects of the surrounding areas. In Sinclair’s reading, the political agenda that sponsors the magnificence of its appearance and attempts to make the Dome an “emblem” of New Britain and a new era is purely empty and preposterous. To contest with the political naming, Sinclair gives a series of metaphors of the Dome in the pamphlet devoted to his excursions to the Dome, *Sorry Meniscus*:

Blocking out the memory of discontinued industry, the Dome is a blob of congealed correction fluid, a flick of Tipp-Ex to revise the mistakes of 19th century industrialists. What could not be revised, and what drifted across the water on a light breeze, were the ancient stinks, the ‘corrosive vapours’ that made East Greenwich infamous; molasses, guano, bad sugar. (Sinclair, 1999, 12)

The magnificent outer shell of the Dome can conceal the past topography but not the smell of the place. The traces of the old-time industrial toxic land and air once again overlap with the present image of the Dome in the textual space and
forms a metaphorical chain of association.

**The Interaction between Metaphor and Metonymy**

So far we have seen several analogies drawn between the past and present spatial images as demonstrated above. Yet I would like to proceed to say that the similarity or contrast that associates the two cross-time spatial images usually stems from the contiguity between the center of and the periphery of the civilization. In other words, but for the contiguous relation, or more specifically, the cause-effect relation invested by Sinclair to the center and the margin, the analogy of the images would not hold. Throughout London Orbital, the author’s descriptions are centered around the metaphorical relations in the margin land and yet the axis of association requires the support of the axis of combination. In Sinclair’s reading, the bleak topography he beholds on the periphery around the M25 is the consequence of the central power system. The isolated mad men in the asylum, the lonely rich men in the communities, the meaningless Dome that cannot respond to the local people’s needs and the heavily polluted land that can never get rid of its stinks all can find their roots in their contextual relationship with the central London. And hence proves the intersection and interaction between the metaphor and metonymy in *London Orbital*’s textual space.

Jakobson’s double axis framework also leads one to think about another aspect of the textual space, the old and new spatial syntax embedded in *London Orbital*. Sinclair’s attention is usually drawn to those images whose meaning is exhausted through the change of time and awaits refreshing significance with the changing environment. These spatial constructions that originally had their pragmatic functions in the network of the ordinary urban life are combined together by the narrator to present a distinct syntax of the London periphery. In the first section of the chapter, “Colne & Green Way”, for example, the narrator came to Watford district to visit the Leavesdon Hospital which used to house the imbeciles in the 19th century and the Grand Union Canal. Longer passages are given to the description of the historical development of the hospital, which, after its closure, is to be restored into private housing estate. Then the narrator came to the Canal and the surrounding area. Suddenly the unusually tidy and clean environment of Gallows Hill Lane caught his attention and was compared to “a funeral procession held at traffic lights that will never change” (149), because he found the avenues “don’t smell like Hackney”, where Sinclair has lived for more than twenty years. The paving slabs are firm and not rocking as the worn-up ones in the city, and the cars in
this neighborhood “sit serenely on wide pavements, each in its own space-within meticulously observed demarcation lines”. Then his vision was caught by a fancy car parked on the clean pavement. Right in the next paragraph, without knowing anything about the car or its owner except its state of the art appearance, the narrator asserts that car is “nothing more than a trophy, going nowhere, wheels sunk into grooves on the pavement.” (150) When it comes to the Canal, it was asserted as “a Faustian contract, which allowed ruffians into the garden” and “a conduit for runaways, disappearances, the adoption of new identities”. Then the narrator fuses together a passage from Charles Dickens’ novel Our Mutual Friend, in which two characters chased after each other and tumbled into the weir together, and the description of a notice pinned to the wall near the bridge, searching for a missing man. Finally he came away from the Canal and headed to a greasy café for breakfast, where he believes “some of the best British conspiracies were hatched”. At the end of this section, in the remote background on the M25, “solitary drivers are hunched into themselves, coming down from the buzz. Tapping like speed-freaks. Waiting for the horror” (155).

On the first metonymic level, the hospital, suicide canal, deadbeat suburb, useless fancy car, conspiracy cafes and crazy motorists on the motorway are pieced together into a textual space that reflects a mad walker’s mind, presenting altogether to the reader an uninhabitable place where people cannot meaningfully fulfill the basic needs of eating, living and moving. This new alignment of the signs presented in Sinclair’s text is built upon its reflection and opposition against the previous signifying chain under the logic of modernization and urbanization. For example, the Canal that used to serve as the major transportation channel between the city and the country is replaced by the M25 motorway. Deprived of its primary significance, the meaning of the half deserted Canal is open to other associations and interpretation, including Dickens’ and Sinclair’s pathological reading. Its metonymic relation with the center of London in the old time water-oriented social context is disrupted and finally abandoned as a whole and is now waiting for new meanings. This is the moment that Sinclair grasps and connects with the missing notice under the bridge to create his own criminal syntax of the space. In contrast to the obsolete metonymic chain signifying in the context of industrialization, Sinclair is presenting a setting of crime fiction. Actually, the purpose of mapping the sub/urban space into crime scenes is mainly to suggest the resemblance between the instrumental rationality and the irrational power of violence.

If we divide these bleak images spatially dispersed in the district into different metonymic axis of time, we will see another level of Sinclair’s perspective of
modernity. With the non-functioning Canal system that is suitable only for suicide, and the fancy cars that can go nowhere connected into a temporal relationship on the horizontal axis, the reader finds the writer’s sarcasm toward the development of transportation systems and admonishes the future of the evolutionary process a dark demise. Likewise, the temporal gliding connection from the old-time asylum to modern private estates marks not a path to better future of housing but only the turn from a passive isolation to active alienation. In short, the optimistic progressiveness of human civilization is harshly questioned here, which symbolically echoes the mad walker’s counter-clockwise circumvention around the M25 orbit.

Walter Benjamin’s Dialectical Images: a montage of vertical association

Sinclair’s preoccupation of history inevitably leads one to associate with German thinker, Walter Benjamin. Critic Robert Bond draws on Benjamin’s conception about history to describe Sinclair’s approach to history as a materialist immersive one that reconstructs, rather than passively accumulates, historical moments. For Benjamin, the past is beyond grasp and can only be approached through personal revelation. Renouncing historicism that believes in the past as the pieces of a scattered jigsaw waiting for historians to re-connect, Benjamin takes history from a more interactive perspective. Since history can never be understood as a whole, its meaning emerges at the moment the historian has a “unique experience with the past” (Benjamin, 262). For materialist historian, history is revealed as a constellation that presents itself according to the specific temporal and spatial condition which the historian is situated in. It is thus dynamic in nature and open to re-alignment and interpretations. In this sense, Benjamin has realized the historical situatedness of historians. Instead of accumulating pieces of historical fragment to fill in the eternally lost past, materialist historians aim to inquire into the past and stop in a “monad”, “a configuration pregnant with tensions”. (Benjamin, 262) The monad is where the dialectical images exist. As soon as they recognize the monad, they glimpse at “the sign of a Messianic creation of happening, or put differently, a revolutionary chance in the fight for the oppressed past”.

In the analysis of Sinclair’s metaphorical language, one finds that the analogy he draws usually do not come from perception or personal memories. Rather, it is a leap between the past and present, history and current, fictional and real as in the case of the analogy between the old-time asylum and modern private estates, or that between the Canal and the ditch in Dickens’ novel. History especially serves as the never drying source of inspiration for Sinclair’s metaphorical magic. Just as
Benjamin’s concept of dialectical image tries to encourage, the “re-alignment” between the past and present nodal points, the montage, or in Jakobson’s words, the paradigmatic relationship ushers in a special moment with the past. It is only through the introduction of the historical consciousness into the naturalized syntax of space that a new alignment between man, time and space can be reflected and refreshed.

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Teatro Testimonial in Chile: the Semiotic Status of the Body in the Intersemiotic Interpretation

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Abstract: This paper examines the semiotic status of the body in teatro testimonial in Chile over the past two decades. I begin proposing a reflection on the epistemological status of the notion of testimony by comparing European testimony and Latin American testimonio. Then, I introduce the term testimonial practices as an alternative that may work better to describe the scenic re-elaboration of testimony in teatro testimonial. I then apply this notion to analyze three cases of testimonial theater in postdictatorship Chile, focusing on the body as the principal semiotic device of the articulation of the “real” and its scenic representation.

Key words: theatre testimony; body; semiotics

About Testimony and Testimonio

The last decades have been characterized by an explosive increase in academic studies regarding memory, trauma and testimonies, perhaps to an extent that the issue may seem saturated with thoughts, definitions, and controversies. Gugelberger (1996) offers a plausible explanation for the academic popularity of testimony, in that it is installed at the crossroads of all institutional battles in recent years; postcolonial versus postmodern/genre versus non-genre/interest on autobiography/authenticity and realism/race, class, gender, othering discourse, etc. All these aspects are somehow engaged in testimony, so the discussion about the status of testimony is vast and complex and I cannot address it here in detail, but I will highlight some distinctions that may contribute to our discussion.

The first distinction is between the use and practice of testimony in Europe and testimonio in the Latin America. In Europe, since the Adolf Eichmann trial in Jerusalem, which was a new form of witnessing that burst into the public scene,
testimonial practices flourished and were seen to be supported by the historical and judicial imperative of reconstructing the past. Testimonies become a literary genre since the Second World War, of which Primo Levi and Ana Frank are paradigmatic examples. It’s in this context that Wiesel (1977) considers testimony to be the new artistic product of contemporary culture, stating that if Greeks invented tragedy, Romans epistle and the Renaissance the sonnet, the new contemporary literature is testimony. The act of giving testimony served to visualize the atrocities of the Shoah and the pain of its victims. As Demaria and Macdonald assure in a few decades, testimony abandoned its marginal condition and was installed as an important type of contemporary discourse, changing from a supposedly individual need to a social imperative (2009).

While in Europe testimony aroused in the context of the Shoah, in Latin America testimonial practices were originally linked to the left-wing revolutionary utopias. At first, testimonio originated in Cuba during the revolution, then upraised in Bolivia, to migrate then to Central America and the rest of South America. As Leonidas Morales explains “testimony served to rescue and articulate a revolutionary horizon by denouncing the suffering of marginal subjects subordinated to economic and cultural domination.” (2008: 78, my translation) During the 1980’s testimonio upsurged in Latin America as a political tool to preserve and communicate the experience of the victims of dictatorships throughout the continent.

There are many differences between European testimony and Latin American testimonio, but what is crucial is that in Europe it worked to support a hegemonic official history, while in Latin America it was rather used to resist hegemones, by informing the population about power abuse and imperialistic domination.

Today’s world is very different from the world of post-war Europe and the period of dictatorships in Latin America, so in the past years we witnessed a wide spectrum on different kinds of testimonial practices that no longer circumscribe to literature or written texts. Can we consider videos of suicidal people their last testimonies? To what extent an autobiographical performance may be considered a testimonio? As practices and texts (and here I’m referring to the semiotic notion of text; a significant articulation that may be supported in different kinds of languages and expressions that extensively exceed the verbal language) diversificate also the use of the terms testimony and testimonio have been variously employed, making it very hard to precisely define what testimony is nowadays.

Patrizia Violi (2009) suggests that it is crucial to read and redefine the new textual forms and textual genres that are emerging, along with the hybridization of their forms and the common issues that underlie them. The heterogeneous variety of
texts, documents and practices that are not confined to written language, but often include oral speech and performance and that aim to restore a particular subjective story about the past certainly makes it very difficult nowadays, if not impossible, to use the word “genre”, even in a broad semiotic conception, to define *testimony*.

I could suggest shifting the focus from the object-text to the action of giving testimony; I would rather think of *testimonial practices*, which include, but are not limited to, texts. *Testimonial practices* are hybrid, homeless and extraliterary, or even post literary. They may also refer to the act of giving and listening to testimony as a nomadic intersubjective practice that produces different syncretic types of textualities. *Testimonial practices* are authored without having an author; they are transitory, and dynamic filling the gaps that exist between individuals/issues in that pre-discursive moment of encounter with alterity. In testimonial practices, the other’s universe of reference and experience that diverges form one’s own becomes shareable and falls into the territory of the intersubjective belongings. In this sense, *testimonial practices* may be considered to be syncretic semiotic devices capable of staging and also performing inter-subjective bonds, transducing the pre-individual, the individual and the collective subjects.

*Testimonial practices* explore different ways in which personal experience may be semiotized. To study testimony today implies inquiry into the significant modes of articulating experience and its forms of representation. These kinds of practices entail the transformation from experience to discourse and in that sense involves one of the most crucial aspects of our capacity to live and communicate with others.

The semiotization of experience in the act of giving testimony is essentially dialogic; the witness expresses to someone the reality of a scene that he/she has been at as an actor or a victim. In this sense, testimonial practices respond to what Bakhtin (1984) described as a polyphonic text; the author is not single, but intersubjective; there’s no author, but rather a complex authorial instance. To give testimony is to pose to another our experience, and thus the listener is already incorporated in the act of speaking or performing and at the same time the person who’s giving testimony is modified by the relation with the receiver.

To acknowledge the source of the work implies then admitting the existence and agency of multiple authorial voices and bodies. Rather than thinking about one author, *testimonial practices* are originated by an authorial instance that functions as kaleidoscopic array, which makes it difficult to distinguish what comes from the original source and what from the mediation.

As Ricoeur (1994) assures, this dialogic structure of testimony immediately implicates a trusting dimension: the witness asks to be believed; he does not only say
I was there but he also says believe me. As a phenomenon of mediation, testimonial practices do not aspire to be exact or mimetic, but instead gives feedback on reality, transforming the social representation of a past event and sometimes even transforming the event itself. These practices reintroduce a political and ethical dimension in the act of representing the real; their agency can produce effects on and transform reality.

What becomes relevant in testimonial practices is the subject’s experience and the expressive strategy he or she finds to construct a narrative or a performance of the past in which he or she may or may not have partaken. The legitimacy of testimonial practices does not rest on ethical claims to historical truth but on the presence of the witness, in Ricoeur’s formula; I was there, believe me. From this point of view, the act of giving testimony is in close proximity to theatre, in the sense of staging memory. So even before becoming an artistic mise-en-scène, testimony is already theatrical.

Teatro Testimonial en Chile

If the definition of testimonio is difficult and problematic, the notion of teatro testimonial implies other bunch of controversies. When can theatre be properly considered testimonial? Isn’t every piece a testimony of its creation genealogy and the artist’s vision? Are there specific criteria to label a piece as teatro testimonial?

Some related concepts to teatro testimonial are: documentary theatre, verbatim theatre, docudrama, reality-based theatre, theatre of witness, tribunal theatre, nonfictional theatre, and theatre of fact. Carol Martin uses the term of dramaturgies of the real to describe these kinds of practices. According to Martin, dramaturgies of the real have “multiple stories, aesthetic legacies, artistic forms, and sociopolitical purposes” (2010: 1) but the common factor is that they all relate to “the real” by telling stories of events that actually occurred, by recreating testimonies, biographies and autobiographical material.

The notion of teatro testimonial differs from Martin’s conception of dramaturgies of the real in the fact that it recovers the idea of testimonial practices I recently describe as the semiotization of a life experience. Looked at in this light, teatro testimonial does not address reality but memory, both in its individual and collective forms. Martin’s notion admits that in theatre of the real “truth is contextual, multiple, and subject of manipulation” (2010: 3), and thus pulls attention to its constructivist postmodernist claims. Still, she insists on using the word “real,” which from my perspective turns out to be extremely problematic.

Another interesting distinction is that Martin concentrates on dramaturgy; she affirms that testimony consists of verbal communication and, thus, theatre that
works with it should somehow work within this dimension. Understanding teatro testimonial implies recognizing from the very beginning that much of what is going on in a performance is far beyond the words and the dramatic structure. What happens in teatro testimonial is a new encounter with alterity, this encounter is generally not dyadic, but multiple.

The teatro testimonial that interests me has no pretension of reflecting or representing reality or what is real, but it rather engages with the political necessity of interpreting reality, thus assuming a position to resist and re-invent what the hegemonic culture considers to be reality. As John Beverley (2004) points out, testimonio is not about representing the subordinate as subordinate, or the victims as victims, but it aspires to change reality, more than a gesture its a weapon. So what we find in teatro testimonial is not reality as such, but rather a “reality effect” created by specific mechanisms and conventions of the text, which include a semiotic simulacrum of direct address.

## The Intersemiotic Interpretation

From a semiotic point of view theatre of the real is a kind of transposition or *puesta en cuerpo* of the oral or written texts, which needs to transfer the meaning of the original text into another, allowing something to survive and something to change. Paolo Fabbri (1998) characterizes transpositions as intersensitive processes that require understanding the meanings of the original texts and finding a way to purpose another text that has some degree of continuity with the source text. In *Dire quasi la stessa cosa* (2003), Umberto Eco proposes an exhaustive semiotic conceptualization of translation and interpretation. Following Peirce’s semiotics Eco affirms that every translation is first of all a form of interpretation. Using Eco’s typology we may say that in theatre of the real there are at least two levels of translation or interpretation:

1. **Intralinguistic Interpretation: Edition or Reformulation of the Verbal Text**

   The intralingual interpretation responds to the edition of the verbal dimension in different degrees, depending on the type of theatre of the real and its pragmatic purposes. In verbatim theatre, for instance, the edition is minimal and actors are requested to say the same words in the same way as the original subjects. Despite the mimetic pretension in verbatim theatre there’s an inevitable semiotic mediation of the actor’s body that in representing other’s words transform them. In other types of theatre of the real the stories are edited in more radical ways, for instance to fit into a dramatic structure (with characters and an aristotelic structure) or in more
radical performances the text is de-constructed in a way that it presents scares continuity with the source text.

2. Intersemiotic Interpretation: the Transposition of Words to the Scene

Umberto Eco (2006) defines the intersemiotic interpretation as the interpretation of signs of one semiotic system by another semiotic system. According to Eco the intersemiotic interpretation occurs when the expressive substance of a text is transformed, as for instance in the theatre of the real were words transformed into action. In these cases, the source text submits to the limitations and potential of its new expressive substance. According to Eco there are two complementary operations in the intersemiotic interpretation; to show what is not said and not to show what is said.

The translation of the verbal texts into performative practice requires to show what is not said; there are several details that the verbal story may omit but that the performative practice cannot avoid to show. For instance, the following testimony was included in Pajarito Nuevo la Lleva (2012): “We went to buy some bread and suddenly the square was full of them, they had their dark sunglasses, they ran towards us and took my father’s crutches, so he falls. Military were so mean in the dictatorship”. The testimony of this aggression did not specify how many military were in the square; 2? 10? 60? Nor if they were women or men. The performative transmutation needs to define and show what is not said so it’s inevitable to make an interpretative bet in order to construct the scene. Of course the result is radically different if the director chooses to have 3 or 20 military on stage and if they are men or women.

The second operation is that of not showing what is said or in other words editing what will be finally represented in the performance. The material of the real contains lots of information; not only the verbal aspects but also the intonation of the original’s subject’s voices, the gestures that accompany the verbal story, the way subjects look, etc. A mise in scene of these kind may not re-present every single aspect but it must necessarily select what is important.

While in literary translation the translator’s point of view usually tends to remain hidden, in the intersemiotic interpretation the point of view of the enunciative instance becomes predominant. The scenic enactment of actors does not only give a voice to what is said by the original subjects but it offers a body that re-lives them. The embodying of other’s memories and stories implies to go further beyond the verbal stories and to make the untranslatable and non-representational into communication.

The performance of other’s memories requires a crucial role of the authorial
artistic instance. Despite the intentions of the artists and creators, the memory material is always manipulated in one sense or another, it passes through a re-semiotization. Therefore, even when the directors themselves claim to be transparent, mediation is unavoidable. The authorial instance corresponds to the mediation instance that interprets and transforms the memory material to originate a theatrical work. So again, we may criticize the notion of theatre of the real, these practices are never Naive or mimetic but always respond to a political and ideological comprehension of the memories, of the role of theatre, and above all of the conception of reality.

The Role of the Body

Now, I will discuss three different ways of working with testimonies, which illustrate three different modes of embodiment of ideological repertoires and political concerns.

1. The Abstract Body

In 1990, after 16 years of dictatorship, Chile transitioned difficultly to democracy. In the same year, the Teatro la Memoria theater company presented the first play “La Trilogía Testimonial” directed by Alfredo Castro that included three pieces based on “real material”. The choice made by the Teatro La Memoria was very interesting and particular to the transition that was going on in the country. “La trilogía testimonial” did not directly address victims of political repression; instead it surfed into the depths of marginality. Without explicitly confronting Chilean politicians, Teatro La Memoria was able to pose a profound political critique about how the dictatorship repressed every kind of differences; both subaltern and marginal subjects were permanently subjugated and intimidated. “La Trilogía” is about the segregations of segregations and, in this sense, it is extremely political. The political operation here is to inform the spectators of a highly segregated population, which was permanently silenced, but more importantly, to create a sense of collectivity in the population that in one way or another suffered the injustice of repression.

The first play of “La Trilogía Testimonial” was “La Manzana de Adán” based on testimonies of socially vulnerable and marginal drag artists living under dictatorship. The performance was based on the photographs and testimonies collected by Paz Errázuriz.

The actors and director approached to this material in a very interesting way. The monologues and dialogues on stage exactly reproduce the texts of the original
interviews. Of course they selected what to stage but anyway the fragments they worked on are preserved as they were originally said.

The work with the body, though, avoided any intention of realism or mimesis. Paulina Urrutia, an actress in the “Trilogía”, was initially very worried, because she had to play an old woman when she was just 21. She tried on wigs, different types of make-up, old-fashioned clothing; but quickly realized that characterization also propelled folklore, and portrayed the other as someone profoundly different and strange. So she and the rest of the company preferred to interpret the photos and interviews and traduce them into her own understanding “passing testimonies through my own body and experiences”, she said. Her character was the mother of two transvestites, who died of cancer all alone. Urrutia found that what summarized her life and testimony was a type of archaic pain. To embody it, she decided to move slowly and constantly during the performance. Most spectators understood that she was an old woman, even if Urrutia expressed a more fetus-like sensation. The actress’ interpretation allusively elicited and evoked the body of the testimony giver without “representing” it.

“Historias de la sangre” (1992) was based on the testimonies of convicts that had committed passion crimes. In this work the director and one of the actors collected the testimonies so they did have access to the testimony givers. Unlike “La Manzana de Adán”, in this piece the director asked the actors to explicitly work with their own personal imaginaries. This director’s approach is interesting in that it examines how testimony echoes in the actors’ and actresses’ bodies of memories. The work becomes more auto-reflexive and less documentary; it is not only about the testimonies but also about the authorial instance that interprets them.

Also, the body here was abstract and not mimetic, the actors that didn’t access the testimony providers had to create a corporeal image of a written testimony. This way of speaking was a reaction to a sentence in the character’s testimony, in which the tormented testimony giver confessed to have killed her father, because she was abused as a child. The testimony giver said that since she was abused she felt her father’s penis in her throat every single second of her life. So the actress did not reproduce or document the kinetics of the testimony provider, but interpreted her by synthetizing in her body a sensation and a concept.

The last play of “La Trilogía” was entitled “Los días tuertos” (1994). This last piece mixed a series of testimonies by circus artists together with a reportage of a murderer and autobiographical texts by the actors. Unlike other plays, this one was based on interviews that were already published in clinical and daily journals. According to Castro, the heterogeneity of the material made it too difficult to
articulate a fabric of the different testimonies; so, in his opinion, this performance didn’t work out at all. In this case the link with the real starts from an already mediated material. The edited and published interviews probably were translated into another kind of discourse to fit in another genre and maybe this explains the failure in the staging process.

Anyway in all of the three plays there was no fictionalizaton. The company didn’t create a dramatic situation to frame the testimonies. In this sense, “La Trilogía” was less theatrical and more performatve; what mattered here was not only the others’ words, but mainly the words of the artists that interpreted such others, and mainly the bodies of the performers that embodied the memories of the others.

In the absence of a dramatic text, action and movement became the protagonists of the scene. The actors’ bodies blended many different dimensions, namely presentation and representation, fiction and reality, the memory of the others as well as their own memories. The body on stage, thus, became a liminal device that could transition through different semiotic configurations. The construction of subjectivity here is multiple and hybrid, unlike documentary theatre there is no representation of the real subject, but rather a complex mixture between the reality of the actor’s presence, the veracity of the testimony and the fiction of the performative device.

2. The Aestheticized Body

“Pabellón 2: rematadas” (1999) and “Colina 1: Tierra de nadie” (2002), directed by Jacqueline Romeau, were both performed by convicts in jail. “Pabellón 2: rematadas” was performed by five women. The play had successful performances in Santiago’s theatres and continued to tour even after the convicts completed their sentence. “Colina 1” was performed by six convicts with substance of abuse problems. This play was even more successful and toured in Spain and Germany.

The main political intention of this kind of work is to inform the rest of the population about the lives of these convicts, willing to promote more tolerance and acceptance toward their reinsertion to society.

Unlike “La Trilogía”, in these pieces the testimony givers are on stage, so that their bodies are not fictional or abstract, but “real”. Therefore, the audience faces real bodies or those of real people; no abstraction, no mimesis, but complete identity. The effect is strong, since it appears as an opportunity to directly address marginal subjects. This of course is not raw reality on stage, nothing would ever be so, but it responds to a “reality effect”, a semiotic simulacra that creates the sensation of a direct address but actually respond to mediations so it is not “natural”
but completely constructed. In these performances, several mediations are involved as we will see. The creation process of these two plays is basically the same: Romeau works on eliciting testimonies from the convicts, she then selects some of the material according to a “theatrical criteria”, that is, in her words, what could interest and entertain the spectators more. Then she writes all by herself the text, composing and arranging a dramaturgy. Finally she casts roles that don’t necessarily correspond to the original testimony providers, since she may decide that someone else should interpret another actor’s *testimonio*. They could also have to play characters of their fellow actor’s testimonios in a sort of psychodrama.

The degree of manipulation of the testimonios in teatro testimonial determines the visibility of the authorial instance, which may vary from near transparency (in cases where the intervention is minimal, creating a reality sense effect) to a hypervisibility produced by evident arranging, editing, transformation and fictionalization of the original material, without any specific apprehension of misinterpretation.

“Pabellón rematadas” and “Colina 1” respond to an interesting combination of transparency and hypervisibility: in what regards the body presence, the effect is of total transparency, that is, there is no simulation; the real convicts are on stage, but there is a hypervisibility of the authorial collective in the dimension of the dramatic text. It is interesting to note that the major manipulation occurs at the verbal level, since the bodies are presented more or less as they are, but the testimonios are recomposed by somebody else.

According to the director, the convicts couldn’t perform the testimonies “as they were” since this material wouldn’t be “theatrical”, and from her point of view the political aim could only be accomplished if common people were interested in seeing the performance and could be emotionally moved by what they saw. So to her view the better way to achieve this communication with the spectator was by standing to the theatrical conventions.

The particular articulation between the real bodies and the fictionalized text results in what seems to me a problematic “folkloric” approach. Common people are invited to attend the performance, so they can have contact with another reality. But such contact is very poor and it pretty much resembles a freak show, where the powerful go to see the subjugated, but not listen to them in a testimonial sense. The convicts slightly displace their subaltern position (they can exit jail to perform, they give interviews and acquire another status in their community) but not enough to be allowed to speak through their performance. They are allowed to appear (as bodies) but not to speak. The one that assumes to be capable of articulating an effective
political discourse is the director-listener-mediator, as if the political power of the convicts’ presence itself were not sufficient.

In this case testimonies are “aestheticized” at the expense of their political force and urgency. These plays are mediated practices that create a dramatic simulacrum of the voices of the subaltern, but who is speaking in these plays? The convicts or the director who shows the world her political view? The fictionalization supports a political engagement that stands for the subaltern, but the spectators are not, for sure, addressed by the subalterns.

3. The Other’s Body

The recent “Ni pu tremen; mis antepasados” (2008) directed by Paula González is performed by five old Mapuche women and their young grandchildren. The play has been very successful and has toured in Europe and Latin America.

The creation process of “Ñi pu tremen” started in an indigenous park in a peripheral district in Santiago. The director, Paula González is Mapuche so she decided to work with her ancestors. She initially invited mostly old women of the Mapuche community which then by their own initiative invited their grandchildren and nephews. In the process Gonzalez’s grandmother and aunt also participated.

González said that her purpose was to revalue the Mapuche culture, not in front of an audience, but inside the community itself. She grew up hearing her aunts and grandmother denying their origins, and she wanted to work with them in order to awake their sense of belonging to the community.

After four months of collecting testimonies, Gonzalez and her sister, who is a psychologist, selected the material according to what they wanted to communicate, namely the stories of women that lived in the margins of society, because of their gender and ethnical origins and that moved from the countryside to the city. Each Mapuche woman preserved some fragments of her testimonies, and unlike the convicts’ theatre pieces, testimonies were performed by the original witnesses, so there was no exchange of testimonies.

The process of structuring the play was completely oral, that is, they never wrote a script. Two of the old women didn’t know how to write and Gonzalez didn’t want to exclude them from the ongoing editing process. So, the creation process was completely based on oral expression and repetition, and this transcended toward the final result that weaved different stories in fluent temporalities, without any pretension of logical structure.

During the first three minutes of the performance, a woman speaks in Mapudungun, which is the native language of the Mapuches people that is not spoken or understood by most of the Chilean spectators. This initial provocation
strips the audience of any instrument to understand the other’s world. This is the starting point and from here the mutual understanding is constructed gradually throughout the performance.

The testimonial operation is two-fold; it appears in the verbal dimension as well as in the presence of the real bodies. In this case, the reality effect is present at every level; from the spectator’s point of view there is a powerful effect that binds the reality of life with the reality of the stage. The possible world is not elsewhere, but is created in the here and now of the evanescent event. This *teatro testimonial* goes even further in the construction of veracity, through a powerful reality effect that binds the reality of life with the reality of the stage. The possible world is not elsewhere, but is created in the “here and now” of the evanescent event. As Ana Elena Puga comments:

When *testimonio* is performed, rather than presented through a text, the sense of the Real is heightened. If textual *testimonio* derives some of its resistant potential from its strong link to oral tradition, then the performative *testimonio* has even more resistant potential. The oral, and ephemeral nature of performance creates the illusion that one is actually face to face with a previously voiceless voice, unedited and unencumbered by anthropologists or novelists or other intellectual helpers. (Puga, 2008: 197–198)

However, even if the spectator sees real bodies on stage, there is a mediation and “theatricalization” that actually allows the emergence of a fictional temporality. The way the performance is constructed, from its technical devices to what is selected to be shown, determines a semiotic construction that is not neutral and that aims to produce this “other time” and “other space” effect.

However, as I said before, even if the spectator sees real people on stage, this doesn’t mean that there is no mediation or fictionalization. The way the performance is constructed, from its technical devices to what is selected to be showed, determines a semiotic construction that is not naive. The fact that it restores behavior and that it is a repetition implies a degree of semiotization. What’s different is that in this case the mediation is far more collaborative and engaged the testimony givers actively. But we have to admit that here as in the convicts’ plays, there’s an appropriate use of the words of the others by artists. What may be different is the fact that here the director is also a Mapuche and has a familiar and more intimate bond with the actors. Thus, the approach is not folkloristic, but implies a more comprehensive understanding of the differences portrayed. Maybe, we could think about it later in the discussion.
The bodies that appear in “Ñi pu tremen” are others’ bodies empowered by the possibility of speaking and showing their own reality. This is, perhaps, the most testimonial approach we’ve reviewed today.

Conclusions

The rich corpus of testimonial plays in Chile raises many different semiotic questions and issues. First of all it shows how enunciation is no longer a narrative aspect, but it becomes an embodied practice that waves within different levels of reality and fiction. The embodied enunciation operates the performer’s construction of the “I-in-presence”, who borrows the words from “Others” and, in doing so, can install himself or herself as an individual. In this context, testimony is at the same time the practice of a performative subject and what allows the installation of the individual per se.

Teatro testimonial is testimony to its own genetics, the personal motivations and memories of its creators, and the particular space and time context. More than just engaging in providing proofs and corroborating reality, the testimonial status in performance poses a reflection of the re-invention of reality by means of performance. The here and now of theatrical performance and the live presence of the actors on stage enhances the connection between the real past and the fictional present.

In a sense, every interpretation is a falsification. What teatro testimonial actually stands for is not the reality of the past, but the way we interpret and live through that past. In theatre of the real the signifier remains instable so what is enhanced is the experience of the intersubjective and collaborative re-invention of the past, and the body is the privileged device that may intertwine subjects in the now and here of the performance.

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Mathematical Statistical and Comparative Research Methods of Melodics

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Abstract: This paper presents a new method of melody analysis where comparative and mathematical statistical methods has been applied. Differences and identity of melody intervals, frequencies of intonation direction, intensity of metric function were defined using the criterion of reliability $\chi^2$. This method is tested with Lithuanian folk and professional music as well as with other European musical cultures. After the research is done the following main conclusions have been formulated:

1) The specific peculiarities of melodies are revealed in the order of its elements (behaviour, i.e. frequency, intensity, dispersion).

2) This method may be applied also to the melodics of any chosen music, because the combination of mathematical statistical and comparative research methods (using criterion $\chi^2$) has revealed and comparatively proved these factors of common traits and the functions of differences which cannot be ascertained in any other way.

3) Presumptions have been made in the use of computers for further research, and thus increase the effectiveness of the investigation.

Key words: melodics; mathematical statistical analysis method; criminalistics; comparative research

[...] The common traits and differences are overall.
The main problem is the proportion of common traits and differences,
which determines the general evolution [...]
2010). The research of such nature can be done by the persons of several different specialities or a researcher who has several specialities. The Interdisciplinary musicology group was founded in the Lithuanian Scientists’ Union on the ground of these works (11 October, 2011). It is a branch of the art sphere, of the interdisciplinary musicology, attributed to the trend of the art study. A partial stagnation of the traditional musicology conditioned its appearance.

Millions of sounds and their correlations, which are being ranged with difficulty, occur beyond the researcher’s eyeshot in the researches, in which the entire music cultures, regions, school of composers, creational trends, genres, creation of entire centenaries and of even longer periods, the entirety of the worldly, religious and liturgical music are being analyzed. The probability theory, which redeems from repetition of plentiful similar research operations, the statistics, with the help of which the research material is being systemized, the comparative researches, which assist in finding the overall factors of common traits and the functions of differences, can significantly assist in getting a handle in such abundance of the phenomena. A number of the other circumstances urge to choose such research methods.

While construing the specific national peculiarities of the Lithuanian music, the musicologists, first of all, turn their attention towards the tune-intonation texture of melodics and towards originality of rhythmics. However, the identical intonations, the structure of intervals and the rhythmic formulae, which exist in the Lithuanian melodics, are being met in the folklore of the music cultures of the other nations. Rimantas Astrauskas (1985; 50–69; 2000; 141–156), Moisejus Goldinas (Moisej Goldin) (1978), Augustas Robertas Niemis (August Robert Niemi) (1974; 324–339), Izalijus Zemcovskis (Izalij Zemcovskij) (1975; 138, 145, 146, 149), etc. are trying to prove it.

The new researches present more and more arguments, which prove that the above-mentioned means cannot be treated as the exceptionally specific Lithuania ones. However, our ear, the musical volume and perception single out specific peculiarities of the Lithuanian music (as well as of the other music cultures), which the music theory fails to explain to the full extent.

Nowadays another serious problem, which musicology is faced with, is consolidation of the mechanism of arguments, of the proving part of the research. For example, the mechanism of proving, comparisons are almost missing while considering the items of harmony in the works of the Lithuanian musicologists (for example, in Algirdas Ambrazas’ (1981; 288–338), Julius Juzeliūnas’ (1972) and the other researchers’ works), whereas, after having submitted one or another typical
example, the wide-scale generalizing conclusions are drawn without any grounds. The undoubted conclusions, drawn by the famous Lithuanian ethnomusicologist Jadvyga Čiurlionytė (1969), which we nowadays refer to, are also submitted without the proving mechanism of the nowadays scientific level. This mechanism remained in her memory, which she carried away while making her final exit from this world.

One of the main drawbacks of the nowadays musicology researches is that the odd events and facts are being too much referred to while describing the peculiarity of music, whereas “... the facts can be researched only in their interrelation; only the systems, but not the odd events or facts can be researched” (Greimas, 1991: 40). The matter is that in the XX-th century the science of music, the theory of music occurred in a particular isolation, which had been making too little use of the other scientific branches, especially the precise sciences, the potential. Let’s have a look at the other scientific branches—the situation is really different therein. The research results in the majority of researches, done in the other scientific branches (for example, in medicine, biology), without having calculated the probability distribution, the indication $\chi^2$, are even not being considered and announced; they are not referred to. Thus, seeking for breaking isolation of the science of music, theory of music and aesthetics in the arts, it is expedient to invoke the potential of the other scientific branches, to turn musicology into the university speciality of the fundamental science.

While combining the elements of several scientific branches, which have been developing and estranged from each other, the glance tends towards their springs, points of contact and more favorable cognitive combinations. Stability of the problem is also important. For example, approximately two thousands years ago the pathfinder of logics Aristotle, having touched all scientific branches of his time, had been devoting the utmost attention towards the items of generality and oddment; after the millennium Avicena (Ibn Sina) had been researching the same subject.

However, while applying the theories of the other scientific branches, the question about their reliability (sureness) arises. Thus, while preparing this model of research of melodies, the applied theories were checked by method of comparison to the possible extent and the revealed generalities were referred to, seeking “... to unify the knowledge, but not, ... , to change it.” (Greimas, 1991: 94).

This research (Kašponis, 1992: 26–82, 1998) is grounded or is related to the following scientific or practical spheres:

a) musicology (Čiurlionytė 1969, Milka 1982);

b) mathematics (Bikelienė 1986, Kubilius 1980, van der Waerden 1960),

reliability (sureness) theory (Kudzys 1992, Serapinas 1969, Žukauskas 1969,
1970);
c) criminalistics (Kuklianskis 1998, Kučerov 1972).

(Theoretical substantiation of the research is schematically presented in example 1).
The research is related to certain conclusions, drawn as a result of practical experience in homeopathic medicine (Stankus, 1998). The methods, assigned for investigation of the specific features of melodies are prepared in the present work, having invoked the comparative and mathematical statistical methods: the methods are applied to analysis of the Lithuanian and the other European nations' music and the model is submitted herein.

The methods, which are aimed at ascertaining of the factors of peculiarity and identity by applying the criterion $\chi^2$, the defined formula (van der Waerden 1960: 275, 276) at exposure of features of the interval frequencies, of the frequencies of intonation directions and of intensity of metrical intensity, are used for the purpose of research of melodies.

While comparing frequencies of the elements of music of the Lithuanian and other European cultures with the help of the mathematical statistical method, the identical phenomena and generalities, which are expressed by the corresponding formula (Kašponis 1992; 36), are ascertained in the present work. The differences and peculiarities are also expressed by the corresponding formula (Kašponis 1992; 36).

Seeking for substantiation of generalities and differences, the criterion $\chi^2$ was applied to comparison of two statistical groups and statistical essentiality of the difference of frequency of the events was evaluated.

The order of positioning of the elements of the music speech and behavior influences perception of music directly. This order of elements forms the system of expected music, it influences the preliminary preparation for perception, for the attitude. All these factors influence the listener psychologically; the listener differentiates creative works (with taking into consideration identities and differences) and attributes them to one or another music of the nation, composer, composite school, style or to the other music.

After having done the research, the following conclusions are drawn:

The order of elements of melodics reveals the specific peculiarities of melodies (behavior, i.e. frequency, intensity, spread).

The methods to be used could assist in ascertaining of statistical dependence or independence of the definite creative work from the creative work of the definite composite school, creative trend or certain times, by analyzing the artistic peculiarities of individuality, the items, pertaining to novelties, etc.
The methods, used in the present work, can be applied while analyzing not only the Lithuanian music, but the melodics of the other national music cultures or of any chosen music because as well, because, while combining the mathematical statistical and comparative methods of the research (having used the criterion \( \chi^2 \)):

a) such factors of generality and functions of differences are framed, compared and definitely proved, which cannot be ascertained by other methods;

b) the preconditions are created for usage of the computer in the research; thus, efficiency of the research can be increased;

c) the possibility to present the results of the research concisely expands; thus, it is easier to accumulate them in the internet archive and to use them operatively.

Several official estimations of the method under consideration are to be mentioned. The topics of the work meet the trend of research, done by the musicologists of the Kiev National Academy of Music; the method is positively evaluated. Though the dine research served as a project of scientific works of the Lithuanian Academy of Music, it does not meet the real trend of the Academy’s works, in which the comparative research, attributed to the level of the dissertation, is absent. Thus, the conditions for doing the qualified expertise are not created.

The head of the Jesus Society, of the Curia of the Lithuanian and Latvian province, a doctor in the sciences of physics and mathematics, a diocesan Jonas Boruta S J states that “... application of melodics will help to solve the problems of separation of the Lithuanian church religious music from sacredness of the secular and liturgical music” (Boruta, 1994). While talking about the expanse of application of the model, the Finnish musicologist and an expert in semiotics prof. Eero Tarasti thinks that “... something similar must be done with the Finnish music as nobody has touched this problem at such level of generalization yet” (Tarasti, 1993).

The mathematical evaluation was applied while ascertaining reliability of the ferro-concrete constructions (Kudzys, 1992), of the Ignalina atomic power-plant (Almenas and others, 1994, Leonas, 2000).

I wish to submit the example by applying the comparative mathematical statistical method, and by defining the metrical functionality. After having investigated metrical functionality of the melodies of folk-songs of 17 European nations in 1000 bars, it is ascertained that pulsation of the weakest metrical part most vividly reveals the specific peculiarities of the Lithuanian folk-songs (Kašponis, 1992; 61–69). It can be presented schematically (example 2, which reflects 500 bars; the dotted line symbolizes the Lithuanian folk-songs, whereas the continuous line—the folk-songs of the other nations). The generalizing conclusion
can be illustrated by comparison of the Latvian folk-song “Pūt, vē jini” and the Lithuanian folk-song “Oi tu rūtele” and “Šė riau žirgel?” (Goldin, 1978: 44) (example 3). There is a certain chance to state that more ancient elements remain in the both Lithuanian folk-songs—it is proved by pulsation of the weakest metrical part—thus, the Latvian folk-song is of the later origin and originates from Lithuania. This example illustrates the metric-rhythmical alteration of the phenomenon within the large historical period; it illustrates archaism of the Lithuanian melodies.

After having applied the comparative and mathematical statistical method, it was ascertained that the Lithuanian music was preserved more ancient peculiarities of melodies in itself, if compared with the other European music cultures under comparison in the present work; this conclusion is drawn on the ground of the independent research. It meets the main analogous feature of the Lithuanian language, i.e., that the Lithuanian language preserved the ancient sounds and the majority of morphological peculiarities best of all, if compared with all the other alive Indo-European languages (Kašponis, 1992:197).

The Lithuanian language is considered to be the most important (the first) attribute of the Lithuanian ethnos, whereas the Lithuanian melodies is, probably, to be considered as the next (the second one). Jadvyga Čiurlionytė (1964: 1–2) thought that the melodies of the Lithuanian folk-songs are less changing and more stable than the texts of the songs especially in such cases, which are closely related to the defined work and the agricultural feasts of the calendar year. A doctor, anatomist and anthropologist prof. Gintautas Česnys, who had been researching the features of a Lithuanian’s skull, stated that “... it is impossible to retrace the direct anthropological inheritance of inhabitants within the recent millennium” in Lithuania (Česnys, 1991:9,10). Thus, a Lithuanian’s constant is kept somewhere deeper, more solidly and mysteriously.

Great French linguist Antuanas Mejė (Antoine Meillet) said; “The one, who wishes to know how our ancestry had been talking, must come and listen how a Lithuanian peasant talks.” (Mokslas ir gyvenimas, 1982:15). Having rephrased these words, we may say; The one, who wishes to hear how the ancestry of the European ancestry used to sing, must come and listen how an old Lithuanian peasant sings.

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Example 1

Theoretical background of the research (Scheme of links)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRIMINALISTICS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Criminalistic identification</td>
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Min($x_1^{AI}; x_2^{AI}$)
Factors of common traits
$[x_1^{AI}; x_2^{AI}]$
and functions of differences
in melodics

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>MUSICOLOGY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical fundamentals of functionality of music</td>
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<td>Research of the Lithuanian folk-songs</td>
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<th>MATHEMATICS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Probability theory and mathematical statistics</td>
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<td>Reliability (awareness) theory</td>
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Example 2

Metrical functionality of two groups of folk-songs (3/4 meter)
Example 3

Three folk-songs

1. The Latvian folk-song “Pūt, vējiņi” (J. Vitols, 200 latviešu tautas dziesmas, I. No 51).
Text, Context and History in Algirdas Julien Greimas’ Works

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Abstract: There is an opinion that semiotics, including that of Algirdas Julius Greimas, by contrasting system and process, ignores and even neglects the context and historical aspects of the discourse as well as social dimension of it. This attitude is strong enough in popular reception of A. J. Greimas semiotics as well as in the works of the most famous sociologists (Pierre Bourdieu, for example, starts many of his works by criticising the so called “phonological model” of investigation and the whole structuralist episteme of social sciences). In the paper we are discussing the reasons of this prevalent opinion. We try to show how Greimas incorporates the context, social and historical aspects in his scientific project.

Key words: Algirdas Julius Greimas; Pierre Bourdieu; Yuri Lotman structuralism; semiotics; sociosemiotics; semiosis; sociology; text; context; history; literary discourse; connotation; sociolect

It is still a very popular opinion that semiotics mainly attempts to reduce the text to a linguistic construction and extract its meaning like a mathematical radix. To put it differently, it is presumed that semiotics ignores certain conditions of formation of the meaning that cover historical and social domains as well as subjective experiences and capabilities to interpret the text. Thus semioticians enclose the meaning into textual structures that do not communicate with the external world and whose quintessence is in popular reception quite discredited semiotic square. No doubt, such a vulgarizing attitude cannot only be put down to interpreters of semiotics who have such superficial knowledge of the object of their analysis that completely identifies it with production of semiotic square and treat the immanence of the text as an ontological condition rather than a methodological principle. Circulation of this kind of reception has also got much to do with epigonalus appliers of the method who very frequently turn semiotics into a process
of construction of semiotic squares or ceaselessly search for the only true and unquestionable meaning of the text.

However, to explain the reasons of discredit of semiotics is not the object of the paper. I aim to show how in semiotics or, to be more precise, at the origins of Greimas’ semiotic school and in his works written in Lithuanian context becomes participant in the process of semiosis.

Most certainly, semiotics, either that of Greimas or any other kind of school, is primarily oriented to description of meanings that are generated by textual structures proper. Nevertheless, right from the beginning of the process possible effects of external parameters on the functioning of these meanings is never overlooked. Different semiotic schools differently approach this possibility.

For instance, Yuri Lotman whose theoretical position is initially very close to that of hermeneutics in his early study Structure of Artistic Texts already completely openly includes non-textual structures into the process of signification (Chapter “Text and Non-textual Artistic Structures”). In a later period of semiotics of culture this tendency will develop into the concept of memory of the text. Therefore, as far as contexts are concerned, Lotman’s strategy can be considered a strategy of inclusion from the very beginning. So it is not very surprising that John Frow regards Lotman as a sociologist of culture at the same time (Frow, 2010, p. 238).

Greimas’ strategy, especially at its early stages, is a little different. It most probably could be called a strategy of taking into brackets.

Let us try and reconstruct this strategy to some extent and, to do that, let us start with a little more serious than the above-mentioned discussion with the semiotic tradition.

For example, famous and popular sociologist Pierre Bourdieu reproaches semiotics and the entire Saussurean episteme (another term that has been fiercely criticized by the sociologist) with opposing external ascription (which covers contexts) to internal interpretation; the text in this case is perceived as totally achronic, i.e., its historical context (first of all, its social and economic aspects that are the primary concern of the most part of sociological theories) is eliminated; and cultural works such as language, myths, art, etc., are treated as structured structures without a structuring subject which in Bourdieu’s terms is called a social agent (Bourdieu, 1994, p. 62–68). Ergo, semiotics cannot explain the things that can be explained by sociology. However, does semiotics, which always emphasizes the social essence of language, set for itself the same goals as sociology? Bourdieu seems to forget that semiotics and sociology, according to the paper “Sociosemiotics” in Semiotics and Language. An Analytical Dictionary, are
methodologically heterogeneous disciplines that analyze different layers of the society (Greimas & Courtés, 1989, pp. 302–304).

In 1971, when Greimas gave a lecture at Vilnius University, he was directly asked about interrelationship between the semiotic and the sociological analyses. His response was like that: there are systems of values as axiologies (this is a sphere of semiotics) and as organizations of functioning of the values, which Greimas calls ideologies and ascribes to the field of sociological research. These two systems, according to Greimas, are methodologically “convenient to distinguish” (Greimas, 1991, pp. 48). A semiotician does not analyze correlations of social and economic structures with, for instance, scholarly ones (correlations of this kind are meant by Bourdieu’s concept of the field), but instead, looks at “a dimension of signification on whose basis a certain type of society exists” (Greimas, 1976, pp. 51). It is exactly this point, to my mind, that gives the ground to the modern sociosemiotics or, to put it differently, according to Erik Landowski, semiotics of situations which analyzes the ways in which a subject experiences signification. At the first sight it may seem that in modern semiotics facts of the social reality as well as experiences of a social individual are treated as texts, too. Despite the fact that the text is more and more often invented rather than discovered, according to Italian semiotician Gianfranco Maronna, the main principles of textuality such as expressiveness, delineation and composition are still valid while constructing a text as an object of analysis. Hence, the shift of semiotics is more evolutionary than revolutionary: it extends the conception of the text which is no longer restricted by the natural language without essentially transforming it. Despite the deceptive impression made by the first affix of the word (socio-) and incorporation of the action into the field of analysis, this semiotics is much closer to phenomenology than to the sociological line which is pursued by, for instance, Bourdieu. In respect to sociology, it defines itself as a metatheory.

It is necessary to mention that, “for the sake of convenience”, having sidelined from semiotics the systems of functioning of values, which is one of the possible manifestations of the context, Greimas does not eliminate them from his “scientific project” (projet scientifique) from the very beginning. Structural Semantics already gives us a hint that analysis of structures and systems of signification does not deny their historicity. The distinction between the system and the process is more of a

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1 At the international summer school for semiotic and structural studies (10-15 June 2006, Imatra, Finland) this semiotician’s presentation “Invention of the Text” (L’invention du texte”) was dedicated to a new conception of the text.
methodological than of an epistemological nature. The last chapter of the book under the telling title “History and Permanence” concludes as follows:

The structural definition of the diachronic transformations of the structures of signification is indisputably one of the tasks of semantics; not only because men and societies are both permanent and historical and any exhaustive description must not lose sight of these two aspects, but also because imaginary structural transformations play a considerable role in all types of ideologies—individual or collective—with the help of which men justify the world or explore the future. Thus, in the previous chapter devoted to the examination of models of transformation, the problem of interference and of possible double interpretation of achronic and diachronic structures was already presented in comparable terms (Greimas, 1983: 293).

Of course, Bourdieu would immediately make a reproach that in this case social agents, subjects and structuring structures are being replaced by anonymous and abstract structures, and in this particular case he would be absolutely right to do so. However, what, according to Bourdieu, are structuring structures, according to semiotics, fall under the category of the so-called macro contexts and are excluded from the field of research. What semiotics does include into the field of its research are the so-called micro contexts or, to put it differently, non-textual structures that take a direct part in the process of signification (the bluntest example of such micro contexts would be the literary genre or the cultural code of a certain epoch)\(^1\). Ignorance to such traces of the process would be more of a theoretical obscurantism than methodological rigorism. We can see that even the so-called macro contexts are openly included into some interpretations made by Greimas. For example, in *Maupassant* the French revolution and Christianity participate in such a macro context, and very important one (Greimas, 1976a). In the paper “Tear and Poetry” written in Lithuanian Greimas analyzes a poem “Tear, it is too early for you...” written by famous Lithuanian poet Marcelijus Martinaitis. The soviet regime and the status of literature in Soviet Lithuania are inevitable macro contexts of the interpretation (Greimas, 1991: 135–165).

The interrelationship between the system and the process is even more evident in Greimas’s study *Semiotics and Social Sciences* (Greimas, 1976). As Greimas puts it at the very beginning of the book: “It is only a thorough acquaintance with realized processes that to a certain extent explains the overall economy and organizational forms of the system” (Greimas, 1976: 10). This statement is not a mere declaration. The main goal of the book seems to be the attempt to emphasize

\(^{1}\) The author thanks Erik Landowski for the terms of macro context and micro context.
new directions of the development of semiotics, which is now, according to Landowski, much closer to anthropological research than to the so-called “formal” sciences such as logics, linguistics, cognitive sciences, etc. (Landowski, 2005: 117). It is suggested that semiotics should openly confront social and historical changes and the challenges that, according to Greimas, are raised by the industrial (or, as we could add now, “postindustrial”) society.

It is not very difficult to notice a certain shift. The main Greimas’ concern in this book is not abstract systems and their diachronical transformations (although the afore mentioned quotation could make such an impression), but a “social individual” or, in other words, a sociable human being who is neither, in terms of Romanticism, absolutely free nor socially or historically determinate. Greimas’ mythological study Of Gods and Men (first published in Lithuanian in 1979) was written at approximately the same period and can be considered a representation of a certain nostalgic attitude to the culture of the past and, simultaneously, commitment to the homeland’s culture. In the “Foreword” of this book Greimas more clearly and simply speaks about the interrelationship between the social and the individual realms in the (most probably, not only mythological) text, therefore, indirectly, about the interrelationship between the text and the context.

The common opinion that fantasy is able to invent anything and to speak any in a way which is nothing more than one of the myths of Romanticism, of unrestricted individual freedom. Positivism, which succeeded it, only interchanged the signs, replacing the plus and a minus and killing the desire of individual to tear him or herself from the stereotypic norms of thought. Irrespective of these altering ideological connotations in history, figurative language appears to be compromise between individual freedom and social necessity. It is possible to consider the abundant collected works of Frazer—in the field of mythology—or of Bachelard—in the field of poetry—which point to the universality of mythic and poetic figures, and their membership in common “fantasy” of humanity from several perspectives. The strictness of their theses must, it seems, to be tempered by introducing variations, explaining the relativity of cultures in time and space, though the common “vision” about the fire and water, of earth and sky as a figurative base remains unproblematic (Greimas, 1992: 15-16).

Hence, a very trivial conclusion; in his discussion about the social realm Greimas is a very consistent structuralist: a semantic category for him consists of two parts, thus the social realm and historicity (or social and historical conventionality) always appears in the face of individuality, which is a stable and
vice versa. The dialectics of these two aspects is the engine of culture\(^\text{1}\). Both these aspects are undoubtedly embodied in the structure of the text. Signification is a compromise or negotiation between the fluctuating and the stable. To illustrate this statement, I will quote only one sentence: “Different cultures, places and epochs treat the same modal arrangements differently” (Greimas & Fontanille, 1991: 154). However, taking into account the different, semiotics makes a methodological decision to analyze the stable.

One can acknowledge that although the social dimension that is the object of sociologists’ research is sidelined for the sake of methodological and descriptive coherence, but at the same time it is inevitably taken into account. This double interrelationship is most clearly revealed through the concepts of connotation and sociolect. Whenever connotation is mentioned, it is done so in connection to the social convention, which is not an object of semiotic research. Similarly, sociolect is a marginal concept which closely relates to extra-semiotic (i.e. sociological) objects of research:

... sociolect characterizes semiotic activity in its relations with social stratifications. If the organizations of a given society are viewed as extra-semiotic phenomena, the semiotic configurations that correspond to them constitute the signifying face of these organizations, for they reveal how society, classes and social strata or groupings are distinguished from one another (Greimas & Courtés, 1989: 301).

What could be called the object of sociology (cultural, historical and social conventions) “sinks” into Greimas’ semiotic project as inevitable and clear knowledge and as a matter of contract with and confidence in other research fields (sociology, for example). There would be no need to re-emphasize that cultural or social parameters of signification are under no circumstances left aside (on the contrary, at certain historical moments they become exceptionally clear), if not for the popular opinion that Greimas’ semiotics rejects the context and historical dimension of signification.

In a slightly different light the aspect of the social appears in one of the last works of Greimas On Imperfection. At the first sight it may seem strange that assumptions about the social dimension are being made in a study that almost phenomenologically analyzes the sensual experience, la saisie esthétique. But let us open the chapter “Expelled Aesthetics” which in a very different, more elegant and more literary style discusses the same problem of the social and the individual, worn

\(^{1}\) Yuri Lotman pursues a very similar attitude in his study of semiotics of culture.
out significations and liberation from them. We will easily detect what is attributed
the social or socializing dimension: the taste, the uniqueness, the literary
generations and, of course, the connotation. This study even more clearly than
“Dictionary” defines the position of connotation in the field of semiotic research:

Quant à leur statut sémiotique, ces grilles de lecture “gestative”—ou socio-
esthétique—paraissent comme des langages de connotation. [...] On étend
généralement par langages de connotation de sortes de taxonomies, projetées sur des
organisations discursives premières et articulées comme des systèmes hiérarchisés
(Greimas, 1987: 83–84).

It is indirectly acknowledged that primary discursive structures are a matter of
theoretical and methodological reconstruction. In reality the discourse manifests
itself as a fusion of these structures as well as connotations and codes of all possible
kinds (including personal) and as a result of a particular act of reading. To
acknowledge that the text is only coined from the fixed primary structures (for what
semioticians are often gratuitously blamed) would mean nothing other than the
aforementioned theoretical obscurantism, and to argue that the text only exists as
an empty vessel into which every reader pours whatever he or she wants would stand
for the anti-scholarly position of the impressionistic criticism or a theoretical
“terrorism” which is propagated by some aggressive followers of deconstruction.

However, it is immediately added that there are spheres where this definition
of connotation is invalid or insufficient. Such a sphere is the experience of esthèsis
which is not based on the “binary foundations” that is considered by Greimas a
sphere through which an individual can liberate him or herself from the net of
socialization and connotative hierarchies. Can la saisie esthétique be, in terms of
Paolo Fabri, blamed to be a utopian device for violation of the common rules that
govern the society and the subjectivity (Fabbri, 1998: 168)? The answer is “yes”
and “no”. Even in this study Greimas denies neither existence of the rules of
socialization nor, as Bourdieu would put it, inevitable subject’s dependence on the
structure of a social field. Any feverish attempts to confront this system through the
search of originality or sorties “almost always are socialized and inclined to submit
to the circumstances” (Greimas, 1987: 169). As Fabbri proves it, the common
nature of aesthetic experience or, as in the case of mythical figurativeness, its
common structural basis is not denied either.

Nevertheless, aesthetic experience is the unique experience which trespasses
social and structural conventions and becomes a short flash of freedom, the real
victory over determinism, no matter that “the rupture of the aesthetic isotropy and
the return to the reality inevitably appears as the passage from the beauty to the
republic of taste” (Greimas, 1987; 33).

Thus it is the trajectory of a scholar to move from what could relatively be called the search for laws and regularities in the discourse (a search for structural semantics, a composition of the narrative scheme) to the attempt to understand how the description discloses our sensual and social experiences (semiotics of passions, concept of esthésis). It is the matter of the other studies to discuss interrelationships between the text and the context in terms the latter field.

References


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Being Ninety Percent Lithuanian and Ninety Percent French, and Extensive Expression of Greimas’ Lithuanian Discourse

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Abstract: The idea of this research is determined by Greimas’ assertion that his life is split into two isolated periods of living in Lithuania and France, and that he spends most of his mature life as a schizophrenic. Methodological basis for the paper is Brøndal’s concept of complex term and Hjemslev’s theory of intensive and extensive expression of meaning which gave basis for Greimas’ *Structural Semantics* and was implemented in his life project. Through an analysis of Greimas’ Lithuanian texts, namely, his paper published in the Lithuanian Diaspora’s liberal press, studies on Lithuanian poetry, different essays that appeared in the Lithuanian press during the period of independence restoration (1990 – 1991), letters and speeches in the documentary film *Greimas* (1991) by Saulius Beržinis, it is attempted to understand characteristics of the intellectual biography and personality. It is concluded that in order to describe relations among the meanings created by Greimas, not dichotomy principles but logics of the mythical participation structures suit better as preconditions of the triumph of the unpredictable reality over logical schematism. Greimas’ biographical experiences that urged to look for meaning, and his constant desire to maintain “communication of participants” are assumed to be the most important conditions that formed Greimas’ semiotic style and support vitality of his tradition around the world.

Key words: communication of participants; complex term; extensive expression of meaning; Greimas; Hjemslev; Brøndal; Lithuania

I cannot answer your question if it is to be understood as dividing my life into two isolated periods; one when I lived in Lithuania, was a Lithuanian and behaved as such and the other when I lived in the West, in France, as a Frenchman. Such problems could be understood better in the light of the co-existence of two cultural worlds completing each other and opposing one another. I have spent all my nearly mature life as a schizophrenic, both geographically and spiritually (Greimas, 1985: 13; Greimas, 1995: 32). This is what Greimas admitted in his interview with Lithuanian émigré sociologist Prof. Kavolis in “An Attempt at an Intellectual

This ratio of Lithuanian and French identity is the most important issue that interests us, and we have to acknowledge it cannot be revealed using the system of binary privative oppositions relished by Roman Jacobson. For such research, Louis Hjemslev’s model is more relevant as it is based on the dichotomy of extensional and intentional definitions of meaning as well as Lucien Lévy-Bruhl’s sublogical system based on the principle of participation (Nastopka, 2010; 38).

Following Viggo Brøndal, Greimas in Structural Semantics provided several examples of complex isotopy and noted that The simple or complex character of isotopies of the discourse depends in addition on individual variations. From the point of view of the speaker, the more or less important isotopic complexity of his discourse is a function of ideological structure of his personality (Greimas, 1984: 115).

Greimas’ description of himself as dual personality is recurrent in the memoirs of his contemporaries, so the famous statement by Greimas that he is 90 percent Lithuanian and 90 percent Frenchman supports the hypothesis that Greimas’ self-understanding is close to the mythical understanding where taxonomy is optional and the boundary between the worlds or—as it can be added—communication systems was routinely transgressed. While examining Greimas’s works in both languages, we notice the unity of the author’s personality despite his declarations on his Lithuanian and French lives being isolated from one another. Different experiences overlap and influence each other, maybe even him being not absolutely conscious about it. The aim of our article is to investigate this expression of the extensive meaning, and of course we don’t expect to fully achieve that.

Nevertheless, we think that the concept of complex term can lead to a better understanding of communicative levels in Greimas’ discourse and of the uniqueness of his personality.

For this purpose, Greimas’ research of Lithuanian mythology this time will remain outside the scope of this discussion since it deserves an especially thorough and comprehensive consideration. We will limit ourselves to Greimas’ Lithuanian essays abundant in his writing in exile and later in Lithuanian publications, his letters, memories of his friends and recollections captured in Saulius Beržinis’s documentary film Greimas (1991).

Initially, it may be started with a short revision of Greimas’ biography.

Algirdas J. Greimas was born in 1917 in a family of ethnical Lithuanians who lived in Tula (Russia). A year later, Lithuania declared its independence, and in
1918 his parents returned to their homeland. In Lithuania, Greimas finished high
school and entered the Department of Law at Kaunas Vytautas Magnus University.
On a grant from the Lithuanian Ministry of Education, he went to France for
language and dialectology studies. In 1939, he graduated from the University of
Grenoble, with a paper on Franco-Provençal dialects and returned to Lithuania for
his military service. Just like many other citizens, he soon experienced occupation
of the country first by the Soviet Union and then by Germany. From 1940 to 1944,
he lived in Šiauliai City, taught in a high school for girls, created the literary
almanac Varpai (Bells) and joined the culture and anti-Nazi movement. In 1944,
Greimas fled to the West to escape war front, and came back to France. He
received the doctoral degree at the Sorbonne in 1949, defending his thesis on the
vocabulary of fashion in the 1830s. Together with the future famous French linguist
George Matore, he published a paper “A Method in Lexicology” which marked the
beginning of his scientific career. From 1950 to 1965, he taught at Alexandria
(Egypt) school, as well as at Ankara, Istanbul (Turkey) and Poitiers (France)
universities. In 1965, he became professor at the École des Hautes Études en
Sciences Sociales in Paris where he taught for almost 25 years. Greimas died in 1992
in Paris, and was buried at his mother’s resting place in the Petrašiūnai Cemetery in
Kaunas, Lithuania.

The first publication which appeared when he was still living in Lithuania (in
1943) was the review of the Lithuanian translation of Don Quixote by Miguel de
Cervantes published in the magazine Varpai. Basically, the reviewer
enthusiastically welcomed publication of the book despite that Don Quixote’s fights
that were subject to Greimas, interpretation were understood as political allegories
by the readers at that time. Later on, in the interviews for French or Lithuanian
journalists he admitted that the publication was a political allegory in the context of
anti-Nazi resistance. Similarly he spoke in the documentary film by the Lithuanian
filmmaker Beržinis:

Lithuanian resistance movement against the Germans is Don Quixote fighting
windmills. The only way to come out winners was to preserve your honor. ( . . . ) Such
is a tragedy of resistance; searching for choice when there is none. We had to choose
either going to the woods and fighting the Soviets or fleeing away (the latter presented
a possibility to salvage Lithuanian values); or joining the German army facing
defeat. It was life and death philosophy for our generation and evaluation of life
according to the criteria of death was worse than skepticism.
Greimas repeatedly pointed out that his search for meaning was stimulated by the absurd experience determined by historical circumstances. In 1941, his parents were deported to some marginal areas of the Soviet Union and he never saw them again. His father died three months later in Siberia in the Corrective Labor Camp while his mother spent years in the mines of Altay region. After the death of Joseph Stalin in 1953, his regime was condemned, and deportees were allowed to come back. Greimas' mother returned to Lithuanian and lived for the last two years of her life with her daughter's family in Kaunas. Speaking about destiny of the future semiotician Greimas, he was recruited into different armies participating in the anti-Nazi activities and was related to the anti-Soviet resistance at the end of the war.

Thomas F. Broden who reviewed the biography of Greimas in his paper “Toward a Biography of Algirdas Julius Greimas” (published in the Lithuanus journal in 2011) quoted such reflections by Greimas from the interviews:

Greimas says that his wartime experiences spawned two notions that proved to be important to him throughout his life. First, his Candide-like successive integration into warring Russian and German forces inspired in him a transnational European identity: “I had the feeling of being an European. Two armies were struggling against each other, and I was right for both of them”. Secondly, the conflict inspired him to devote his career to the search for the fundamental conditions of signification and values: “I looked at everything that was happening with consternation... I felt very intensely the feeling of the absurd, of non-sense, which impelled me toward a quest for meaning” (Broden, 2011: 32-33).

Broden mentioned that Lacanian psychoanalyst Moustapha Safouan, Greimas' friend, emphasized the importance that the occupations and the deportation of Greimas' parents had on him, but judged that on balance, “the entire experience of the war years was a character builder for Greimas” (Broden, 2011: 33). Another close collaborator Eric Landowski noted that Greimas liked to take risks, and was totally unafraid of lucky or unlucky incidents as he was ready for anything and perhaps even sought after them. This of course concerns not only the so-called “humanities” sphere and “aesthetic events” but also events of the history that he had lived through. He told Landowski and another member of the Paris research group: What you need is a good little war (Landowski, 2009: 18).

There is no need to be a psychoanalyst to notice traces of the historical experience in Greimas’ work. Interested in heroism, beau geste, authenticity, resistance, and honor issues appeared in his Lithuanian essays and even in his
research texts devoted to semiotic analysis of the French literature, such as *Two Friends* by Guy de Maupassant, where, according to Landowski, charisma of Greimas’ personality related to his way of life shines through (Landowski, 2009: 15).

Actually, Greimas’ moral values were formed in Lithuania during the war and remained basically unchanged. Perhaps the greatest impact was made by Hania Lukauskaitė, a poet and translator who belonged to the left-wing writers but did not approve of the Soviet invasion. She upheld the highest standards of humanism and ideals of personalism. Greimas explained his choices:

*During the Civil War in Spain I admired the determination of the Catalonians and started considering myself an anarchist-syndicalist. During the German occupation, thanks to Hania Lukauskaitė, I drew close to the ideology of the Socialist Revolutionaries.* (Greimas, 1985: 15; Greimas, 1995: 34).

Lukauskaitė was not only a moral authority for Greimas, they also enjoyed a romantic relationship that was interrupted at the end of war when they parted as Greimas flew to the West and Hania decided to stay in the Soviet-occupied Lithuania. Greimas always harbored enormous respect for Lukauskaitė, they exchanged letters, and when she passed away in December of 1983, he wrote in émigré monthly journal *Akiračiai* an obituary for her with sincere sympathy (Greimas, 1984). During the war, Lukauskaitė helped people persecuted by the Nazis, and at the end of the war she participated in the Soviet anti-Nazi movement. From 1948 to 1955 she was imprisoned in Siberia; when she came back from the labor camp, she continued to participate in the resistance activities. In 1976, with four other anti-Soviet resistance movement participants she co-founded the Lithuanian Helsinki Group (Human Rights organization). In Soviet Lithuania, she was persecuted by the Committee for State Security (KGB) until her death in 1983. “She did not know what fear is”, Greimas said with admiration in the obituary stressing moral values revealed in *beau geste* for her was the only source of beauty, as well as for the other poets expressing ideology of social-revolutionists (Greimas, 1991: 276).

Speaking about the romantic isotopy of Greimas life, it is interesting to notice that in his letters there were four women identified as the most important women in his life. They were the already mentioned Lukauskaitė, Greimas’ first wife Ona Bagdonaitė, Teresa Mary Keane who later became his second wife, and Aleksandra Fledžinskaite-Kašubienė who as his pen pal was close to him during his last three
years of life (she was his former student in Lithuania, and later on, a famous artist in America) (Greimas, Kašubienė, 2008, 102). In the above mentioned Greimas’ paper “An Attempt at an Intellectual Autobiography”, he formulated his thoughts as follows: The significance of women is extraordinary; it is they, and not men, who are able to decide what is important in life and what is not, what is honest and what is dishonest, what is worth undertaking and what is not. In this respect, a man is his wife’s child (Greimas, 1986: 21; Greimas, 1995: 38). Or, as Greimas somewhere else ironically stated, a man can be judged by the women with whom he associated with (Greimas, Kašubienė, 2008, 102).

It would be wrong to give too much importance to these passages as Greimas’ humor pervaded them, but the fact that three out of four important women in his life were Lithuanian speaks for itself. Particularly worthy of attention seemed the correspondence between Greimas and Aleksandra Kašubienė during 1988—1992 published as a separate book in Lithuania. In Kašubienė, Greimas found an equal dialog partner and a sensitive, reflective individual with whom he discussed aesthetic issues and questions on semiotics, pondered the meaning of work and life through the perspective of “being-towards-death”, and to whom he opened the door to those secret corners that, according to the recollections of some other people, were not accessible to others. It was not the correspondence between the teacher and his pupil but rather a conversation seeking real openness, unafraid to name an uncomfortable truth, expose self-image, which threatened to disrupt the relationship, but luckily, this never happened. This communication was equally necessary for Greimas as well as for Aleksandra.

And now let’s go back to Greimas’ thought expressed in his text “An Attempt at an Intellectual Autobiography”, namely, that in his life Lithuanian world does not come into contact with the French (Greimas, 1958: 16; Greimas, 1995: 35). Touching this issue related to the process of his own intellectual and emotional formation, Greimas stressed not only the role of a woman but also the importance of reading poetry when he was young. There remains an invisible but deep connection between his French research activities and his youth experience.

Unfortunately, it was only in France that I could start raising questions concerning beauty; the problems of production and perception of beautiful things probably continued throughout my whole intellectual life, yet it was only this year that I had enough courage to raise them publicly by giving the title “A Look at Aesthetics” to my seminar. Again, this does not signify any specific French influence, it’s just a gift from God or push of Fate’s finger — a meeting with people
older and wiser than myself who had become my friends; Kossu, Churginas, Radauskas (Greimas, 1985: 15-16; Greimas, 1995: 34-35).

In his autobiographical essays, Greimas recognized the influence of the Lithuanian poets who wrote in the period between the two World Wars. In his words, the first important encounter was the three years of breaking bread with poet Jonas Kossu-Aleksandravičius. Older than Greimas, Kossu taught him to study what could be useful and not what one might like; linguistics and not literature (Greimas, 1986: 21; Greimas, 1995: 38). Greimas admitted that under his influence he got acquainted with the cultural horizon relevant to the youth of his own generation and gained “the complete emotional range of interpersonal relations” (Greimas, 1986: 21–22; Greimas, 1995: 38-39). Two poets, Aleksys Churginas and Henrikas Radauskas, opened a completely different world for him. Churginas introduced a new classical dimension of culture and put Greimas’ perception of culture into a broad historical framework. In Greimas’ opinion, Radauskas completed his sentimental education; Being not just a Lithuanian but a trans-Lithuanian poet, he initiated into me a world of values, of quality, both in literature and in life. At least it seems so to me today, that after that I could try walking on my own. (Greimas, 1986: 22; Greimas, 1995: 39).

Greimas devoted very important texts of his analysis in Lithuanian to the poets who were mentioned above, and published in the émigré press these and other critical or analytical papers concerning the Lithuanian literature. In them, Greimas drew attention to the “uncanonized” authors, and taught Lithuanians how to read poets close to the Western tradition. Greimas emphasized that Lithuanian literature (especially poetry) could appeal to an international audience as well, because his primary criterion for textual analysis was its “European” quality.

His analysis of poem by Marcelijus Martinaitis “It Is Too Early For You, Tear, To Fall Into Sand” (published in 1980), remains a perfect example of close reading and brilliant interpretation, and object of learning of literature analysis for philologists studying at Lithuanian universities. His view is quite unusual, because the object of analysis here includes sounds and their features, and not feelings or ideas (Greimas, 1980: 70). It is attempted to describe what “poetical” means, and to highlight what makes poetical language different from the common literary language, and in the end the level of expression is linked to the level of content. Seeing connection between the poem in the form of prayer and narrative program of the looking for the Sender, Greimas formulates an original hypothesis about faith as construction of object which is believed in (Greimas, 1980: 72). Finally, the
concept of such faith is inscribed into the context of spontaneous formation of the prayer communities that started in France after the Second Vatican Council, encompassing the common strands between the analyzed poetic text and so-called Eucharistic prayers that replaced or complemented the traditional mass in church service (Greimas, 1980: 72).

Double glimpse in some way or another manifests itself in the other papers devoted to Lithuanian poetry. For example, writing about the Lithuanian poet Henrikas Radauskas, Greimas introduced the French approach involving “wisdom of the poet” as alternative to the non-rational Lithuanian attitude.

When you mention Radauskas to a Lithuanian poetry fan, you (...) get an unexpected reproach: they say he is too clever to be a good poet. A French teacher, talking about Verlaine would tell the opposite: “Even if Verlaine was not a deep thinker, he was a great poet” (Greimas, 1954: 20). Speaking about the poet Antanas Mackus, Greimas introduced the concept of Le Degré zérode l’écriture by Roland Barthes, and also Stéphane Mallarmé. Albert Camus as preoccupied with the epoch in the background of which poetry of Mackus should be evaluated (Greimas, 1963); analyzing Tomas Venclova’s poetry that he called “almost meaningless” in the paper written in 1972. Greimas did not hide his semiotic tools and used the semiotic square capabilities, and associated the problems of this poetry with the epistemological break, and partly with the aspiration of the new novel (nouveau roman) creative attempts to escape reality (Greimas, 1972: 12-13).

Greimas’ poetry analysis has played a very important role in the history of Lithuanian literary criticism; statements formulated by Greimas have become reference points for other researchers further developing the concepts regarding Lithuanian literature development, and discovering the rules of functioning and changes of the poetic vocabulary: The task of literary criticism is simple, actually the same as that of the teacher of foreign languages. It is to make phenomenological description of poetic vocabulary, morphology, syntax; to highlight verbal values, and structure (...) vision of the world bringing out the main topics/subjects (Greimas, 1954: 20).

Greimas also wrote a few texts of the denouncing character on the graphomany in exile, demystifying the existing stereotypes or destroying idols of the Lithuanian literature during the Soviet period. Characteristic features of these texts are sharp insight and subtle irony. It was not coincidental that one of the writers in exile called Greimas not only a top-level researcher but one of the subtlest Lithuanian humorists as well. Interestingly enough, Greimas himself liked such evaluation as he constantly reminded that nothing should have been implemented with a serious face,
especially what was related to philosopher’s work (Greimas, 2009: 162).

Lithuania and its future were always one of Greimas’ constant intellectual concerns. After he left Lithuania in 1944, Greimas was always involved with “cultural life in exile”; He created a principle for himself to answer all invitations, and to use every opportunity to make connections; he wrote to the Diaspora press, and gave lectures. The range of Greimas’ writing was incredibly broad. He discussed questions of Lithuanian culture, identity, morality, politics, the necessity for communication with Lithuania... and all of these questions were analyzed in the context of the Western Civilization cycle (Mačianskaitė, 2010: 332).

Reacting to different issues of public life, Greimas declared that the main task was strengthening of rationality and consciousness in different spheres. In 1958, he already diagnosed problems of Lithuanian consciousness that had not lost their relevance even a half century later:

First of all, we need to teach the Lithuanian nation to analyze their human and national values with their minds, and not only with their feelings. Learn to look at themselves critically, and more importantly, to hold onto that critical view (Greimas, 1991: 323).

In exile, Greimas interacted with representatives of liberal circles where he met some prominent scholars (such as philosopher Algim Mickūnas and sociologist Vytautas Kavolis) who were working in American universities and seeing phenomena of Lithuanian culture from the Western perspective. In many ways Greimas’ so-called schizophrenic consciousness (feeling 90 per cent Lithuanian and 90 per cent French) was not exceptional if compared to Greimas’ liberal-minded colleagues; however the overall context of the Lithuanian community in exile was dominated by a narrowly understood patriotism. At the end of the 1960s, the public organization of Lithuanian emigrés “Santara-Šviesa” began to proclaim ideas that it was necessary to communicate with Lithuania. The famous slogan “Facing Lithuania” was invented by Greimas, and it was the title of his paper that he presented in New York in 1965. On two occasions in 1971 and 1979 Greimas went to Lithuania, and he also supported philosophers and literary critics that used to come to Paris for internships. In comparison, conservative groups of Diaspora held the belief that the occupied homeland should not be maintained and called those who belonged to the liberal organization “Santara” servants of Bolsheviks.

In Greimas’ papers published in exile for the Lithuanian community, there are abundant references to French intellectual life, and quite often his academic
activities are mentioned: the books that he was writing at some time and seminars that were planned. Greimas regularly received parcels from Lithuania with culture magazines, books, dictionaries, and tried to maintain as much as possible his contacts with the Lithuanian intellectuals, looking for opportunities to cooperate with them.

During the Awakening, Greimas together with his colleagues published the journal Baltos lankos (White Meadows) named after the well-known Lithuanian proverb saying that reading is like herding black sheep in white meadows (the first edition of the journal was published in 1991). Until then, from April till December of 1991, Greimas initiated and practically himself filled a column of “Baltos lankos” in the weekly cultural newspaper Literatūra ir menas (Literature and Art); the last text of the column was published posthumously in July of 1992. Around that time, Greimas published papers in Lithuanian and émigré periodicals, which at that time, and nowadays seem controversial.

“If you’re afraid of Greimas, don’t go to the West”, such was the title of publication of the intellectual discussion in Literatūra ir menas in commemoration of Greimas’ seventy-fifth birthday, and published on February 29th, 1992, only two days after his death. The phrase for the title of this discussion was taken from the Lithuanian proverb: “If you’re afraid of the wolf, don’t go to the forest”, and exactly described the relationship that most Lithuanians at that time had with the West (a forest) and with Greimas (a Wolf). According to it, Greimas was associated with the West as a competent subject and delegate, who could either help Lithuania, or become Lithuania’s enemy. In his column “Baltos lankos”, Greimas openly declared his role as a helper, explainer, mediator, taking on the “dirty work” of culture. In our opinion, his role often might be described using Lotman’s term as a semiotic translation (Mačianskaitė, 210, 335). Greimas, attempted to adapt Western approaches in order to understand Lithuanian realities, sometimes he transferred what might have appeared to be rather banal concepts, such as “position” and “opposition”; or “right”, “left” and “centre”. Looking at the experience of the Western countries, Greimas predicted that there would be hard times in store for Lithuania; American-style capitalism, price inflation, unemployment, disappointments, and maybe workers’ strikes. He invited intellectuals not to be silent, that is, to raise their voices and engage in discussion as Western intellectuals would.

Unfortunately, Greimas did not succeed in creating a real intellectual polemic, although his contradictory statements received various reactions. The most typical reaction was silence. People sometimes took offence, but there were only a few
cases of openly expressed opposition or protest.

Greimas’ opinions on Lithuanian Catholicism raised even more controversy. His reflections on Christianity occasionally appeared in the émigré press long time before Lithuania’s independence. For example, in 1968, Greimas spoke about technological or ideological myths that gained enormous scale in Europe because humanity has lost theological dimension; he recalled the Second Vatican Council, in its context interpreting the youth rebellions as a protest against what this world has become (Greimas, 1969: 115–166). However, when in 1991 he compared European religious practices and theology with those of Lithuanian, he could only state that Lithuanian Catholicism was very poor (Greimas, 2009: 177). He called it a return to Catholicism’s most outdated, “Polish” form, which is to say, to a pre-Second-Vatican-Council Church. In the period of newly-gained independence, Lithuania experienced a transition from the authority of the Communist party, to that of the Church, and as public politics became intertwined with the religious sphere, Catholicism became almost obligatory (Greimas, 1991 b: 5). The scholar associated the victory of obscurity and the deformation of the Faith with the fact that Lithuania had been cut off from the development from the European development of Christianity, especially from the mystical and contemplative traditions. He was misunderstood, and called an atheist. Nevertheless, he later wrote a special notice published posthumously in the weekly Literatūra ir menas, on that subject, proving his competence and defending Christianity from the ignorant and intolerant, explaining his relatedness to research of the theological discourse:

I began my career at the university with the translation of the story of St. Celine life from Provençal to French (…). After becoming a professor, he carefully managed a doctoral dissertation on St. Eudxei who is known to have been one of the mystics who developed the cult of the bleeding Sacred Heart in 17th century. […] Then there was St. Therese of Lisieux […] St. Teresa of Avila, St. Anthony of Padua and others (Greimas, 1992, July 25).

Greimas used Paul Ricoeur as an example of an authentic relationship with religion: Ricoeur, although he believed in God, did not mention the Holy name even once in his ten volumes. Greimas considered this the best way to glorify God. Another example he gave was that of Michel de Certeau, semiotician and Catholic priest, who, when asked if he believed in God, answered; I’m sorry, but that’s a personal question. Greimas explained that You see, there are such forms of faith as well, and such ways of expressing love for God. These people are called liberals,
though not in Lithuania of course. (Greimas, 1992, July 25). It is important to remember that in the document “Interpretation of the Bible” issued by Pontifical Biblical Commission in 1993, interpreters of the Bible in the entire world were advised to use the method of semiotic analysis developed by Greimas. However, as it is officially recognized by the Lithuanian clergy. Unfortunately, the Lithuanian theologians (especially Blicists) show little interest in this method and do not follow the advice of the Pontifical Biblical Commission concerning the use of semiotic analysis for the interpretation of the Holy Scripture (Jurevičius, 2011: 278). Thus even twenty years after the death of Greimas, his method recognized worldwide and popular in Lithuania, remains terra incognita to the Lithuanian Catholic clergy.

Greimas attempted to positively influence revival processes in Lithuania and for this purpose in 1990 he wrote “Pro Memoria Concerning the Project of Lithuania’s Future” devoted to Vytautas Landsbergis, the former Chairman of the Parliament who declared independence, and whom people perceived as the President of the country. It was not known whether Greimas’ proposals were taken into account or whether the text was disregarded (the text had to be passed on to Vytautas Landsbergis or someone from his environment in Paris). Without any doubts, Greimas’ advice is still relevant; his Pro Memoria remains interesting as a piece of cultural design and Lithuanian utopia genre. Greimas repeatedly asked to follow France’s experience, for example, for harmonization of science and technologies in the future perspectives according to the plan of irrevocable commitment proposed by Charles de Gaulle to the nation dealing with the education of the specialists of new administration (Greimas, 1997: 144). Greimas proposed to use the experience of France who was in a similar situation of Lithuania in the process of regaining its independence from the Soviet Union, where the École Nationale d’Administration founded by Charles de Gaulle educated several generations of young and energetic personnel, and—what was more important—educated them as civil servants devoted to nation and state (Greimas, 1997: 146).

Greimas did not just suggest Europe as an example for Lithuania, but he also thought that in some cases Lithuania itself could be held as an example to Western Europe. Greimas’s follower Paolo Fabbri in the interview for Beržinis’ documentary film (1991) testified to that fact. In Greimas’ opinion, the Lithuanian nation was the nation that possessed imagination and original ideas, who showed the world a peaceful path to regaining independence. In his opinion, Lithuania had managed to hold on to the ability to expect the unexpected, the ability to believe in a value system, and a concern for morality, while the Western World had reached the end of its imagination. As he wrote in the “Baltos lankos” column of Literatūra ir menas
weekly on 27 July, 1991: *And what can be done in a quiet post-modern society where there are no longer values or sins, friends or enemies? Enemies simply must be found, and invented.* The most distinctive example of such a fierce fight against the unworthy enemy in the Western society that has no enemies or values is desperate fight against tobacco (Greimas, 2009: 179). Greimas’ students remember the way he constantly stressed that Lithuania could give to the West more values that the West could give to Lithuania. By the way, Greimas similarly spoke about himself: *In fact, if one can put it this way, it was I who brought me to Paris and not Paris that brought something to me* (Greimas, 1985: 17; Greimas, 1995: 36). Greimas initiated sending his disciples to teach in Lithuania, and thus at this country lectured Greimas’ disciples and coworkers: Eric Landowski, Jacques Fontanille, Teresa Kean, Heidi Toelle, Louis Panier, Jacques Escande, Jean-Marie Floche, Ivan Darrault, Jean-François Bordron, Paolo Fabbri, Jacques Geninasca, and Eero Tarasti. Vilnius University (Lithuania) is the place where the Center of Semiotics is opened and works especially successfully. The name of Greimas inspires the members of the Centre to continue the traditional cooperation between Lithuanian and French semioticians. Scholars from France and other countries representing current semiotics research are invited to the Centre to help ensure the quality of studies and the development of a critical and sound approach. In collaboration with French semioticians, the Greimas Centre conducted research on the *Body in Contemporary Social Discourse* (Advertising and Politics) and *Social practices of taste*. Since 1991, the Centre organizes annual academic weeks held in Druskininkai implementing Greimas’ idea of an event that should stimulate interdisciplinary and disciplinary cooperation between researchers and students, the interchange of ideas and projects and the development of culture. The international conference *In Search of Greimas* commemorating Greimas’ 90th birthday anniversary was held in 2007 at Vilnius University; students and followers of Greimas, who are spread throughout Europe and beyond, and who know each other but rarely have an opportunity to get together, were invited to his homeland for discussion and debate.

Since 1993, the Greimas Centre continues the tradition of interdisciplinary seminars held on Thursdays. The workshop involves representatives of different fields, and bridges are built between different disciplines. In this context, it is important to stress that art semiotics is developed together with literature semiotics, and it is under a strong influence of Greimas’ ideas on plastic and figurative semiotics that the style of Lithuanian art criticism underwent significant changes. Since 2005, the Centre hosts a graduate program which attracts a huge number of students despite the fact that humanitarian studies are not very popular.
Finally, it is worth remembering Broden’s insight that in contrast to the newer Western trends, Greimas retained the Old World tradition of long-term close friendships; throughout his life, he maintained an active communication with a number of family members and friends from his youth, and after leaving Lithuania established a number of new bonds and close collaborations that lasted three decades or more (Broden, 2011: 35). The researcher of Greimas’ biography provides an assumption that the unique style of Greimas’ semiotics was endowed with the quality typical for the scholar, namely, fellow commitment and ability to abandon minor individual ambitions for the common goal. According to Broden, it is hard not to be struck by the parallels between Greimas’ participation in resistance movements and his later work with semiotics. As he constructed the latter project, it also required deep commitment to a collective effort focused on daunting long-range objectives pursued in the face of tenacious, entrenched adversaries. The semiotic enterprise entailed an almost impossible goal: to develop a new scientific project and to get it recognized as a peer discipline with linguistics, psychology, anthropology, and philosophy. *The underground struggle proved to be an excellent training for the academic battles of the Latin Quarter, France, and the globe* (Broden, 2011: 36).

Developing this thought, it could be assumed that the collaborative work style of Greimas may be associated not only with his experience of resistance but also with the Lithuanian culture traditions reaching back to the 19th century. These traditions that merged with individual ambitions of intellectuals in the Western world were unexpectedly successful in Paris.

Fortunately, such synthesis of collectivism and individualism become also successful in the Greimas Centre, which is famous not only because of the results it produces but also because of its aura that might be called Greimas’s spirituality. Greimas’s tradition goes on speaking about its psychological and spiritual forms, proving that semiotics is a bridge between disciplines, different cultures and intellectual biographies, and that even the demarcation line drawn by the schizophrenic history might be crossed, and the divided sides could be integrated.

### Conclusions

Finally, it would be appropriate once again to mention the dichotomy proposed by Louis Hjemslev that Greimas described in the introduction of the French translation; the first member is a description of enclosed linguistic universe and already realized combinations, and the second—of the universe with practically inexhaustible combinations (Hjemslev, pp. xxxiii). It is obvious that Greimas
represents the second position of this dichotomy, also referred to as an extensive expression of meaning. Such expression can also be described by using a concept of Brøndal’s complex term. According to Greimas, in this case of the manifestation of the complex semic term, the two semes which are present can be […] either balanced or in a relationship in which one dominates the other (Greimas, 1983: 26).

Domination of identity semes—Lithuanian or French—may be observed only on some specific levels of communication, for example, domestic and professional (for example, as Greimas says in the above mentioned documentary film, “My relationship with guests from Lithuania and French people is different; with you, filmmakers, I act as a Lithuanian, and with the French I could not act like this”. In the especially personal epistolary discourse of the last years the very category of sema gradually lost its sense.

However, in the extensive and diverse Lithuanian discourse of culturology, literature analysis, political discussions or social criticism Greimas can not be described as the Lithuanian with some French admixture or the French who retain partially Lithuanian identity. Some different logic prevails—he is Lithuanian and French at the same time, and the very definition of the proportion becomes impossible because of the constant circulation of values. Similarly, Levi Straus has spoken about extensive prevalence of the opposites in the ritual, mythical structures of participation that we can also recognize in the manifestation of meanings of Greimas’s Lithuanian discourse. According to Kęstutis Nastopka, Greimas’ successor who continues developing Greimas’ theory in Lithuania, the complex term ultimately implies the triumph of the unpredictable reality over logical schematism (Nastopka, 2009: 5).

For the reflection on Greimas’ intellectual biography, his own concept of “the communication of participation” mentioned in the book On the Meaning II may be useful. Like in the case when a Queen delegates her rights to the constitutional bodies remaining not less omnipotent monarch, and in the case of multiplication of bread loaves in the Gospel of John (Greimas, 1989: 263), being Lithuanian did not cause diminishing of Greimas’ French identity, and vice versa, being French did not cause diminishing of his Lithuanian identity. In his words, such transferences may be only explained by inexhaustible nature of the properties of Sender; and semiotician taking into account universality of such concepts can not have any doubts concerning reality of the powers or actions, and can only indulge in proper description of them (Greimas, 1989: 263).
References


transl. by Rolandas Povilionis, Vilnius; Mintis.


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第 11 届世界符号学大会论文集

总 序

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2012 年是一个特殊的年份，因为它见证了符号学界非常重要的事件——第 11 届世界符号学大会在中国顺利召开。这是国际符号学学会主办的世界符号学大会首次由欧美以外的国家承办。第 11 届世界符号学大会对中国和全世界符号学的发展都具有重大意义。一方面，中国学者借此机会向全世界展示了他们在符号学研究方面取得的成果；另一方面，全世界的符号学家首次将目光聚焦于中国这一重要的亚洲国家，并与中国学者就共同感兴趣的符号学问题展开充分的学术交流与探讨。随着中国以及其他亚洲国家在符号学领域发挥着越来越重要的作用，我们真正实现了符号学全球化，架起了不同文明之间的桥梁！

2012 年 5 至 9 日，来自全世界 53 个国家和地区的 400 多位专家、学者齐聚东方最美丽的校园——南京师范大学，参加第 11 届世界符号学大会。

本届大会持续了 5 天时间。大会邀请了 15 位杰出的符号学专家做主题发言，收到了来自全球作者的 422 篇论文摘要。会议期间组织了 53 场圆桌会议，分属七大主题：一、认识论与符号学；二、艺术；三、文学与语言学；四、文化、传媒与比较研究；五、社会、历史与宗教；六、科学与符号学实践；七、区域符号学。这些圆桌会议为来自不同领域的学者们提供了交流思想、分享成果和学术论辩的绝妙舞台。

不仅如此，就在本届世界符号学大会开幕前一天，即 2012 年 10 月 4 日，南京师范大学主办了首届中国符号学论坛暨第 10 届全国语言与符号学研讨会。参加论坛的学者有 120 多人，他们绝大多数参加了接下来五天的世界符号学大会，这正是大会主办方的初衷。我们可以将 10 月 4 日中国符号学学者的盛大聚会视作第 11 届世界符号学大会的成果之一。

根据七大主题以及这些主题之下的圆桌会议议题，我们将第 11 届世界符号学大会论文集编为三卷。第一卷包括一、二两大主题；第二卷包括三、四两大主题；第三卷包
括五、六、七三个主题。另外还有一卷，即第四卷，收集了首届中国符号学论坛暨第10届全国语言与符号学研讨会参会者提交的汉语论文。

第一卷包括主题一和主题二。主题一（认识论与符号学）包括以下圆桌会议议题：

- 作为全球符号学的生物符号学
- 塔尔图符号学：文化符号学与生物符号学的融合，洛特曼与魏克斯库尔
- 通讯学和符号学：文化话语模式和实践的现象学传统
- 认知符号学
- 符号学与认知科学的互动
- 皮尔斯：沟通文化的记号链
- 皮尔斯符号学
- 皮尔斯的象征主义：从手势到经文
- 语言处理的符号学评估：诱导模仿范式的功效
- 时空的概念模式化

主题二（艺术）的议题则包括：

- 电影理论和符号学：回顾和展望
- 戏剧的新符号学
- 文学和数字通讯
- 音乐意指：风格、类别、叙事
- 视觉艺术和符号学
- 符号学与美学：艺术问题

第二卷包括主题三和主题四。主题三（文学与语言学）包括如下圆桌会议议题：

- 叙事与符号过程
- 非洲符号学：现状和展望
- 语言和语言学：比较视角

主题四（文化、传媒与比较研究）的议题则包括：

- 符号学和人文科学的重建
- 符号学和文化研究
- 汉学和符号学：中国古典人文学研究的理论方向问题
- 中西比较哲学和符号学：从分析哲学观点看
- 传媒和符号学
- 跨文化符号学
- 符号学在市场交际与消费者文化中的应用
- 符号学、中介、广告
- 符号学意义、文化、文学

第三卷包括主题五、六、七。主题五（社会、历史与宗教）的圆桌会议议题如下：

- 社会符号学
- 古代历史、考古学、考据学和符号学
• 宗教学和符号学: 信仰和理性的互动

主题六(科学与符号学实践)包含的圆桌会议议题有:

• 符号学与数学
• 全球符号学、翻译、民族之间的接触

• 互联网和符号学
• 数字时代的符号学和设计
• 符号学与计算机

主题七(区域符号学)包含以下议题:

• 美国符号学: 当前研究方向
• 德语国家符号学研究: 建筑、音乐、艺术、绘画、传媒、风格
• 欧洲极端意识形态、哲学、符号学: 沿着德法两个方向的发展
• 法国符号学及其在亚洲的影响

• 欧洲符号学: 旧的和新的流派
• 台湾符号学: 文化、文学、艺术比较研究

• 拉美符号学新趋势

• 格雷马斯符号学在立陶宛

如前所述，第四卷是中文撰写的论文集，讨论的内容包括如下议题:

• 符号学理论研究
• 文学符号学研究
• 文化符号学研究
• 电影符号学及其他研究

本次大会的四卷本论文集给我们呈现的是来自全世界的符号学研究各个领域的最新成果。论文集的出版是对南京师范大学成功举办的第 11 届世界符号学大会的纪念。

同时，这也将促进学者们在符号学领域的进一步交流与对话。我们相信，通过符号学学者们的共同努力，可以进一步促进符号学全球化，真正架起不同文明之间相互理解的桥梁。
前言

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西方符号学的发端可追溯至古希腊时期，但作为一门独立的学科，其历史不过百十来年。一个多世纪里，符号学发展迅猛，其生命力源自它探讨着人类所面临的一个根本性问题——意义的生成、传递和创新。一切与意义相关的活动都离不开符号；反之，符号也不可能脱离表意对象而存在。因此，一方面，语言学、文学、文化学、哲学、逻辑学、人类学、心理学、美学等人文学科的思想、方法、原理无不渗透到符号学理论体系中；另一方面，符号学又为人文学科提供了新的方法论，它在与人文学科的碰撞与融合中，已经从根本上改变了世界人文学科研究的面貌。

21 世纪的人类比以往任何时候都渴望解答，诸如，如何面对文本？文本的符号结构背后隐藏着怎样的意义？这种隐藏何以实现？文本与现实的关系如何？文化符号拥有怎样的创新机制等系列问题。几乎所有人文学科的研究都是从分析、解释和评价文本开始的，因此，也都无一例外要对上述问题以各自的方式做出回答。探寻意义的本质和规律，并以此去探寻各类文本的表意之路，去诠释各类文本的意义生成、记忆和变化，已经成为新世纪人文学科发展的潮流和方向。这是符号学作为一门独立学科存在与发展的意义，是 2012 年金秋十月来自全球数十个国家四百多名专家、学者齐聚东方最美丽的校园——南京师范大学参加第 11 届世界符号学大会的意义，也是我们这本论文集撰写的意义。

中国符号学研究虽起步较晚，但却在特定的历史时期迎来了发展的大好契机，尤其是近 20 多年，得以蓬勃发展，在符号学基础理论、语言符号学、文学和文化符号学、应用符号学和将西方符号学与本土文化相结合等几方面均取得了令人瞩目的成就，这一特征也鲜明地体现在该论文集中。

中国符号学的成就首先源于我国学者的锐意进取和不懈努力，同时也得益于我们幸运地处在了一个有利的时间节点上。中国进入世界符号学版图之时，西方和俄罗斯等符号学大国的研究之路已走了很长一段。从索绪尔提出创立符号学的思想起始，与其他一切独立的学科一样，符号学致力于构建自己的理论体系，并竭力使之走向严密和
完整。各国符号学家在理论构建之路上尽心竭力，上下求索，并卓有建树。符号学逐渐明确了自己的研究宗旨，创立了一系列理论、方法、原理和规则，诞生了一批卓越的符号学家，形成了享誉世界的符号学流派——塔尔图-莫斯科符号学派。这使得中国符号学能够在较短的时间大量引入和吸收世界符号学已取得的理论成果，同时也使我国学人有机会站在历史的角度去审视某些在特定历史时期曾经繁荣和作为主流的思想和理论，去考量它们对后来理论的影响，探寻新意生成的路径。理论的构建离不开对以往的经验和理论的反思，构建离不开质疑、重释甚至解构。这是一切有生命力的理论的本质特征。有价值的理论体系中最伟大和深刻的思想往往源自质疑与重释，符号学也不例外。时间给了我们机会站在更高的平台上对既往的概念、规则和理论进行比较、反思与重释，由此衍生新的思想。

虽然各国符号学家上百年的努力，符号学理论的构建依旧任重道远，至今今日，其理论体系尚处形成之中，研究方法和规则等仍然毫末。但这并非没有实践意义。事实上，一个学科中可以并存多种理论和思想，它们都将不断时间与智慧的检验，并彼此碰撞融合，吸收并蓄，去芜存精，各自博采众长，将构建未来思想与理论的基础和重构。一切认知都发生于我们在生活的特定的文化符号系统中，离开这个系统，既没有认知也没有思维。这个系统不是某个人创造的，不以个人的意志为转移，不会被任何人影响，这是语言的特质，也是我们所处的文化符号系统的特质。但生活于其中的每个人都可以平等共享、自由运用这个文化符号系统中的代码、规则去表达、赋予和创造出新的意义。因此，世界的面貌又是无数个体塑造的结果。基于事实的思考和求索应当是个性化的，有创意义的，而非单一的归总和对权威的膜拜。符号学给每一个真正的学者畅所欲言的自由，当然也给这种自由设定了边界。建构、反思、质疑、重释与解构均应服务于“逼近真理”这一目标，“真理”这个词在这里或许不够确切，未能传达出目标的开放与本意，但它无疑应是一切学术活动与研究所需的内在精神。这本论文集是二十五位中国学者各抒己见、思想碰撞的园地，希冀它带给其他学者和广大读者以思维的乐趣和启迪。

中国符号学也幸运地处在在一个有利的空间位置上。符号学让我们清楚地意识到自己独特的文化身份——世界上持续时间最长的古老华夏文明的传承人。源远流长的华夏文明与西方文明之间有着明显的差异，这深刻地反映在两者的表意系统、哲学体系和思维方式等方面。著名文化符号学家尤里·洛特曼强调，孤立的文化无法存在。意识需要意识，符号需要符号，文本需要文本，文化需要文化。失去“他者”，文化就失去了所有发展和创新的动力。这是文化最根本的精神，是不以人的意志为转移的非选择性生存方式。只有在有“他者”的对话与交流中，文化才能获得、发展并丰富自己的个性。对话越活跃、越多样化，文化的意义就越是丰富。文化的性质如斯，符号学的性质亦然。失去类型相异的其他文化符号系统，离开作为西方文化参照物的东方文化，作为一名独立学科的符号学本身便失去了一种重要的发展动能，失去了新意生成的基础。21世纪既是东西方文化交融互补的时期，也是冲突对抗的时期。不同类型的文化之间应平等交流，客观比较，这俨然为老生常谈，但实际却很难达成。强势文化有根深蒂固的强权意识，弱势文化又被恐被同化消融。正是在这个意义上，符号学彰显出自己独特的方法
论优势，它旨在探寻普适于一切文化的深层结构模式，揭示文化意义生成和发展的普遍本质和共性规律，这就为不同类型文化的对话与交流搭建起了有效的平台。在这本论文集中，中国学人发挥自己的文化优势，将符号学理论和中国文化相结合，或从丰厚的本土文化现象和事实出发探寻文化的共性和普适规律；或运用西方符号学理论对自己的文化进行重释；或以符号的基本结构模式为立场进行东西文化对话。毋庸置疑，中国符号学已经成为东西方文化交流的不可或缺的桥梁。

符号学仿佛一个母体，衍生出文学符号学、文化符号学、逻辑符号学、艺术符号学、心理符号学等等。是否一门什么都研究的学科其实什么都不研究？我们究竟如何理解符号学的广而泛之、无所不包？一方面，符号学在研究现存的、具有交际意义的记号及其系统的功能，力图建立具有普适性意义的符号、传递、记忆和变化模式。因此，一切能实现该目标的现象或者事实均可作为丰富的材料，作为产生模型、原理和规则的沃土；另一方面，符号学的原理是人类交际的规则，是意义运行的图示，是有力的方法论工具，可以让我们从机制上对各种类型的文本进行释义，理解文本的本质。例如，罗曼·雅各布森的交际行为六要素和六功能图式源自这位卓越的语言学家和符号学家大量的诗歌分析实践；反过来，这一符号学的基本模式又极大地指导并推进了诗歌文本、交际行为、意义生成、对话模式等的研究。符号学中这些为数不多的原创性概念、交际行为模式、文本功能、对话渠道等的提出和运用莫非如此。研究者有可能旨在以均属于符号系统的各人文学科的事实和现象为材料来推演、比较和反思符号学的原理和模式和规则，也有可能信任并运用某种符号学原理、某个符号学家的思想或某一符号的运作模式进行文本阐释，重在发掘未曾发现的新意或揭示文本意义生成的奥秘。无论哪一种研究旨趣，其存在的意义都不言而喻。此外，文本的阅读和阐释，不仅是为了追求释义的深度和广度，也是一切有兴趣深入文本背后的读者自我教育的重要途径，因为理解符号及其系统的本质，训练的不只是我们的文本阐释技巧，更培育我们独立、自由、丰富和探索的心灵。在这本论文集中，符号学者和文学研究者将符号学的原理和模式与文学、文化、电影、思想等结合进行了可贵的探究与思考，希望这些成果会带给我们所期盼的收获。

中国符号学的开端令人鼓舞，它已经成为世界符号学界一股重要的强大力量。20多年前我们刚起步时，无法预见 2012 年会在中国南京召开世界符号学盛会，无法预见今天符号学在中国的蓬勃发展，不可预见性正是文化新意生成的特质之一。我们的未来同样充满了不确定性和不可预见性，但可以坚信的是，中国符号学人将在这条道路上不断奋斗和努力，向世界展现自己的才华和风貌。

最后需要说明的是，本论文集全部取材于参加南京第 11 届世界符号学大会的中国学者的与会论文，短短 25 篇论文远不能反映出中国符号学的全貌，却是一个重要的缩影，其中难免存在缺失，但好在中国符号学之路已经开始向远方延伸，未来值得憧憬。

2014 年 3 月于南京
一、符号学理论研究
神话分层结构的符号学研究

——与列维-斯特劳斯“唯一神话”结构的比较

蔡爱梅（1）

摘要  应用数据挖掘，研究比较与列氏“唯一神话”结构相同的中国“义神与鸟”神话。义神的根、株、叶、花等、花、果、枝、子房、雌雄蕊、种子、植物等植物构件被赋加“神话”后复合造形。以器形、纹饰、图形文字与图像铭文形式镌刻在殷商青铜祭器上。将“义神与鸟” 神话的研究范围扩展至远距离商区区域，对典型祭器传器进行共时和历时分析。此结构图保持不变。将神话结构符号映射至神话信息层、表示层（信息格式化、符号化）、解释层、运分层、网络层、物名与谱系、族属层（族属定位）、物理层（二元结构）、沟通层（沟通思维/云处理）、伦理层，此九层结构作为多方信息过滤器和话语通分交流器，前者进行纵向信息标准化、标准化、符号化。后者以层为水平与各方展开思想碰撞并对等交流。本文关于神话结构符号隐喻“唯一神话”的论述是以运分层为中心展开探讨的。

关键词  数据挖掘；知识发现；神话思维；甲骨文金文；义神

1. 唯一神话透视东方文化

“神话意指心智。”（生食和熟食，中译本 P440，法文本 P346）

无论是过去，现在还是未来，不管承认与否，神话都是观念世界最大的领主，创意世界的云中月地。它繁衍、生息并充斥在各处；神话既不站在真相一边，也不站在虚幻一边，神话将人类心智全盘托出并展现其意义，其最令人困惑，值得被首先追问。当抚今追昔，从文学、历史、哲学、艺术、宗教到社会、政治、经济：从农业、林业、渔业、牧业到医学、数学、化学、天文学、度量衡等，都不约而同地以神话作为其历史的起源。神话是什
么？神话从何而来？关注当下，神话已成为这个世界无所不能的创意手段，已成为最取
之不竭的智库宝藏，已成为最具致幻魔力和吞噬之力的蘑菇云。超空间尚未成熟的未来
科学，已被提前引入人文领域，并充斥于游戏、电影、动漫和大众生活中，其影响波及到
未成年人，如似照影视以死亡玩穿越，成为当下时尚。

网络神话每天以兆级生产，从消极的角度看，一切都不可判定；一条真理或一个真
象在上亿条信息垃圾面前，被认知的可能性是亿万分之一。即等于零。从积极的角度
看，不可判定却对所有观点起到警戒和审视作用。

在虚拟渠道花样百出，人人有权在线发语，立异神话随时标出（Markedness）的网
络文化时代，瞬以兆级，泥沙俱下的信息制造量使得技术不断升级，以适应在线处理；符
号娱乐化大潮消费和经济主导的云计算，正在形成一场如火如荼，毁灭思想与灵魂的虚
拟大洪流。

洪水神话，过去与现在，似乎永远在考验人类心智能力与认知水平，换句话说，向人
类智慧内核，精神领袖力和自主承受力发出一次次讯息。在此情况下，进一步探究列
维-斯特劳斯唯一神话，具有不可估量的意义。

### 1.1 唯一神话和文化一元

#### 1.1.1 唯一神话

列维-斯特劳斯神话学系列（①②④⑤）研究，模拟神话思维的自然运动，寻找统一
性（《生食和熟食》，13）。列氏从《野性的思维（La Pensée Sauvage）》(1962)构想，到
神话学4卷本《生食和熟食（Le Cru et le cui）》(1964)、《从蜂蜜到烟灰（Du miel aux
cendres）》(1966)、《餐桌礼仪的起源（L’Origine des manières de table）》(1968)、《裸
人（L’ Homme nu）》(1971) 面世，再到补充二卷本《嫉妒的制陶女（La Potière
jalouse）》(1985) 和《狩猎的故事（Histoire de lynx）》(1991) 发表，历时近30年着力
于神话和神话思维研究。其4卷本共动用1336个神话（笔者统计），到补充2卷
本，一条贯穿全书的主线是不断以明结构、暗结构和变形结构的任一神话出发，并
回归这一神话，证明存在唯一神话。到1991年代，神话学系列基本给出了唯一神话
的主题内容和一般结构（图1上半部的大部分），并在其中探讨了狩猎与郊狼两大
谱系间神话的关系。

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条

1. 克洛德·列维-斯特劳斯. 生食和熟食[M]. 李幼蒸总序，周昌忠. 译. 北京：中国人民大学出版社，
2007.
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2007.
3. 克洛德·列维-斯特劳斯. 餐桌礼仪的起源[M]. 李幼蒸总序，周昌忠. 译. 北京：中国人民大学出版社，
2007.
图1 唯一神话在神话时代和后神话时代模型框架
列维-斯特劳斯对于唯一神话主题内容和一般结构的简单描述见诸于《狩猎的故事》（中译本 38–47,法文本 74–77）；尽管创世记的许多情节都遗失了，但通过已知内容，我们足以理解其整体结构并相信已知部分的结构非常牢固。……两次洪水的性质不同：一次是修复性的天水（扑灭破坏性的天火），另一次是破坏性的陆地洪水。神话中提及的第二场毁坏性的大火源自上天。第二次大火（造物主Demiurge）在柴堆上被烧毁，则源自陆地。可以将其按叙述顺序排列如下：①毁灭性的天火（结束了人类的第一次存在）；②修复性的天火（海洋和水系的起源）；③毁灭性的地火（木柴）；④毁灭性的地火（从地下喷出）；⑤家用灶火（被驯服的地火）；⑥距离适宜的太阳（被驯服的天火）。……神话中不断出现的造物主，他们都从事同样的工作，即将不同要素分离：创造物/创造者（créatures/créateur）、印第安人/白人（indiens/blancs），同胞/敌人（concitoyens/ennemis），工人/敌人（bons/méchants），强者/弱者（fort/faible）。

综合上述：创造物端，最强者出现，上帝意识形成。而造物主端，人成为永远的主题。

上述造物主在柴堆上被烧死。在神话中隐喻烟草起源（《从蜂蜜到烟灰》, 中译本 P17, P20, P31），造物主决定到天上定居，在地上他由烟草取代（《从蜂蜜到烟灰》, 中译本 P11–12, 法文本 P16）。对列维-斯特劳斯唯一神话进行更深入研究，可以发现一个如影随形的、稍纵即逝的唯一神话的灰色背景。换句话说，唯一神话最普遍的意义在于：存在一个隐含的助力人类认知的云结构，即结构的前虚拟结构。

本文拟经由这一学界尚未涉及的场域入手，重新并由中国材料进一步深人探究唯一神话更内在的符号学意义；并通过深研唯一神话，追溯中国史料至后神话时代——文字符号系统的起源，书写（纹/字/书）权威的建立及其影响。

1.1.2 文化一元

列维-斯特劳斯唯一神话对于东方文化一元的凸显是立见其效的。

列维-斯特劳斯唯一神话 & 两大谱系（狩猎与农耕）与中国历史学家顾颉刚一个层累 & 两大谱系（昆仑与蓬莱）神话学研究之结论形成共振效应（见下表 1）。

表 1 列维-斯特劳斯神话学与顾颉刚等东方神话学的比较

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>列维-斯特劳斯神话学</th>
<th>顾颉刚等东方神话学</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>认识论与方法论，符号学（结构主义）</td>
<td>认识论与方法论，准符号学（见李运英文③）</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>唯一神话</td>
<td>文化一元⑤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>掌握神话者：传承人</td>
<td>掌握神话者：宗教家</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

① 译者应当将造物主（Demiurge）---神话人物，创造者（créateur）---人区别开来。
② 李运英. 顾颉刚学与历史符号学——兼论中国古代学的理论发展问题[J]. 文史哲, 2007(3).
③ 顾颉刚. 中国古代神话研究·序[C]/程模著. 中国古代神话研究. 顾颉刚, 整理. 陈明越, 编订. 北京: 北京大学出版社, 2011.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>系统性(甲骨/竹简)</th>
<th>系统性(甲骨/竹简)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>两大系统(昆仑/蓬莱)</td>
<td>两大系统(1)(昆仑/蓬莱)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>架构相反⑧、系统改造与意义各异</td>
<td>架构相反、系统改造⑧与意义各异</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>材料审伪、折出神话</td>
<td>材料审伪、折出神话</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>地理位置、族系</td>
<td>地理位置、族系</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>材料涉及(美洲神话、欧洲及其它地区音乐文字诗歌传说及故事等)</td>
<td>材料涉及(中国神话、历史、传说⑧、民歌民谣等全域)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>广义符号学</td>
<td>广义符号学</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

注: 上表涉及神话符号学和历史符号学等相关学术课题，本篇不拟展开讨论。

由《唯一神话》8到10个造物主⑧和文化一元(三皇五帝或10个造物主)，对比甲骨文所出现的神话造物人数和层级，如表2所示，可以发现，诸如汉代司马迁(约公元前145—87)《史记》中所载微之于项之前的身世之变，是其附加在唯一神话上的结构。传统主流释意群体一般揭示其政治用途，借“君权神授”巩固其统治。

[1] 顾颉刚.《庄子》与《楚辞》中昆仑与蓬莱两个神话系统的融合[J].原载：中华文史论丛，1979(2)．后收入：顾颉刚民俗学论集[M].钱小明编，上海：上海文艺出版社，1998：41—80．中国古代留传下来的神话中，有两个很重要的大系统，一个是昆仑神话系统；一个是蓬莱神话系统。昆仑的神话发源于西部高原地区，它那奇妙瑰丽的故事，流传到东方以后，又将阴阳学说的太古这一自然条件结合起来，在燕、吴、齐、越沿海地区形成了蓬莱神话系统。此后，这两个神话系统在各处流传中发展，到了战国中后期，在新的历史条件下，又被人结合起来，形成一个新的统一的神话世界。这个神话世界的故实和事物，在它的流传过程中，有的被逐步演化为人的世界中的历史事件和人物。因此，探索昆仑与蓬莱这两个神话系统的发展和融合，对揭示复杂多变的古神话系统，复原古史的本来面貌有着极其重要的意义。


[4] 顾颉刚.战国秦汉间人的造伪与辨伪[A]//古史辨：第7册．上海：上海古籍出版社，1982(影印本)．第4页：凡是没有史料做基础的历史，当然只得出言悖理的传说，这种传说有的真，有的假的；会自由流传，也会自由改变。改变的故实，有无意的，也有有意的。中国的历史，就集结了这样的交错错综的状态之中。

表 2 甲骨文与神话中的造物主

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>造物主Demijang(虽然区分人类和动物之间)</th>
<th>人</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>附加结构 如《史记》</td>
<td>未列出</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>神话中的10个造物主</td>
<td>(10 Démiurges)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(10 Démiurges)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>人类</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.2 唯一神话和部落聚力

1.2.1 谱系映射与居住符号学

将列维-斯特劳斯神话材料与东方材料进行系统比较, 同时将列维-斯特劳斯神话研究路径进行信息技术非线性特征数据和图论分析, 可以得出一个惊人的——对应的东方26山海经模型和美洲24+2博罗罗族模型的全方位映射(图2)。这给史料与考古分析提供了网络层(物名与谱系)、族链层(族属定位)基础网络框架。

这具有“强意指性的居住空间概念”(巴尔特, 李幼蒸译, 2008:162), 可以引向中国的, 特别是诸如“土楼模式”及其演变。

本节以下面内容意在标出其全局共项。

1.2.2 部落聚力与各具特征

特殊植物(又草)被奉为神草, 可以全方位地从古文字、考古和出土文物得以证实, 所涉历时与共时意义需另论。本处拟强调指出, 模型所聚焦的, 是一个已经制度化了的共项——又草祀法。由图3可以清楚地看到, 精神聚合于唯一符号(依用途决定供奉又草的品种和其相应部位)。换句话说, 氏族或部落圈的凝聚力, 依靠的是统一的精神力量。

谱系各模块可以开拓更广阔的意指空间, 如曾国与伊图博雷, plusplus与巴科罗罗等等。

1.3 唯一神话和另类古史

1.3.1 谱系标出

由前述, 可以进一步提纲挈领, 映射列维-斯特劳斯的神话谱系关系(见图4), 对于中国青铜器纹饰的符号学释意, 是立见其效的。亦即, 青铜文物与古文字表明, 东方神话中的昆仑和蓬莱与列维-斯特劳斯的狩猎与郊狼是完全对应的(见表3)。(详略)

① [1][1]山海经, 景明本编, [2][1]山海经, 文光堂本, 笔者采用景明本编, 文光堂本等多个古本对照。
图 2 圆形模式

【美洲博罗罗族 24+2 模型】& 【中国山海经 26 山系模型】环图
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>位置</th>
<th>标记</th>
<th>中国山海经 26 山系模型</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>东</td>
<td>伊桐博留</td>
<td>京次8经</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>北东1</td>
<td>上建村者</td>
<td>人身羊角</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>北东2</td>
<td>上建村者</td>
<td>人身龙首</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>北东3</td>
<td>上建村者</td>
<td>东次3经</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>北东4</td>
<td>大鼓人</td>
<td>东次2经</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>北东5</td>
<td>大鼓人</td>
<td>东次4经</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>北东6</td>
<td>大鼓人</td>
<td>东次3经</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>东北7</td>
<td>人面蛇</td>
<td>东昌首经</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>东北8</td>
<td>人面蛇</td>
<td>东次1经</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>东北9</td>
<td>人面蛇</td>
<td>东次4经</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>东北10</td>
<td>下建村者</td>
<td>东次2经</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>东北11</td>
<td>下建村者</td>
<td>东次3经</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>东北12</td>
<td>下建村者</td>
<td>东次6经</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>西</td>
<td>巴科罗罗</td>
<td>东次3经</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>西南13</td>
<td>威震</td>
<td>东次5经</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>西南14</td>
<td>鹿</td>
<td>东次3经</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>西南15</td>
<td>蓝啄鸟</td>
<td>东次4经</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>西南16</td>
<td>蓝啄鸟</td>
<td>东次2经</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>西南17</td>
<td>蓝啄鸟</td>
<td>东次3经</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>西南18</td>
<td>鹿</td>
<td>东次1经</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>西南19</td>
<td>鹿</td>
<td>东次4经</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>西南20</td>
<td>榖嬷树主</td>
<td>东次1经</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>西南21</td>
<td>榙嬷树主</td>
<td>南山首经</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>西南22</td>
<td>榙嬷树主</td>
<td>南山首经</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>西南23</td>
<td>吠猕</td>
<td>马山首经</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>西南24</td>
<td>吠猕</td>
<td>马山首经</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

图 3 【美洲博罗罗族 24+2 模型】VS【中国山海经 26 山系模型】展开图
表 3 神话关系的通分项: 义草与鸟

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>聚合轴</th>
<th>组合轴</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>短尾：</strong> 领带形象/口角形象</td>
<td><strong>长尾：</strong> 领带形象/口角形象</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. 商代晚期 兽面与鸟 (左)</td>
<td>10. 商代晚期 领带形象 (美国华盛顿弗利尔美术馆藏)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>神话人物、动物、植物被组合在一起</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. 商代晚期 义草与鸟 (义草)</td>
<td>11. 西周早期 长尾带花 (芝花), 风与鸟 (西风)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(左)</td>
<td>(左下)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. 商代晚期 兽面与鸟 (义草)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>日本京都泉屋博物院藏 (右)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. 商代晚期 兽面与短尾之鸟</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. 商代晚期 兽面 (义草)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>河南安阳大司司空539号墓出土</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. 商代晚期 兽面与鸟 (义草)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>河南安阳大司司空439号墓出土</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. 蛇身文头耳带义草之动物</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. 蛇身文头耳带义草之动物</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. 短尾：</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.3.2 纹录制式与青铜符号学

探究图录标出的图样参照项，可以得出结论：又瓦的根、株、叶、花萼、花、蒴果、子房、雌雄蕊、种子等植物构件被赋以“神话”后复合造形，以器形、纹饰、图形文字与图像铭文形式铸造在殷商青铜祭祀礼器上。将此研究范围扩展至遝距商史区域，对典型祭祀礼器进行共时和历时分析，此结构仍保持不变。参见(图 5) 和(表 4)。换句话说，即又瓦的多态变形在青铜器物上诸纹样的体现不仅形成了青铜语义学，而且发展成为特有的青铜符号学。

图 4 神话谱系的关系模型映衬

顺便提及，从中国历朝历代器物(包括那些被学者们误认为是源自阿拉伯或印度的瓷器纹样)都可以清楚地体现出流变。此标准化情形完全命名为“纹录”。

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② 陈梦家. 殷代铜器[Ⅱ]. 古考古学报，1954,7(23). 其他涉及的数十部文献(略)。
图 5 《草与鸟中的纹样及其演变一瞥》
表 4 义草的多态变形在青铜器上的表现（商代 1600BC-1046BC）

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>序号</th>
<th>形式描述</th>
<th>图片</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>内容所指</td>
<td>定的形式—义草</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>形式描述</td>
<td>大义草的变形（浮现时与、实存，相对，过速，程序等变形），下面由动物足支撑。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>内容所指</td>
<td>神的化身—义草</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>形式描述</td>
<td>大义草的变形（浮现时与、实存，相对，过速，程序等变形），下面由动物足支撑。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>内容所指</td>
<td>神的化身—义草</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>形式描述</td>
<td>大义草的变形（浮现时与、实存，相对，过速，程序等变形），下面由动物足支撑。</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*标本例*
续表

10. 盔
- 内容所指：神的化身-又草
- 形式特征：巨大的双面獠牙的又草（浮雕对立，对称，对称，有单个立柱）支撑的世界。
  - 标出例

11. 瞪
- 内容所指：神的化身-又草
- 形式特征：巨大的又草圆柱（浮雕对立，对称，有单个立柱）支撑的世界。
  - 标出例

12. 聚
- 内容所指：神的化身-又草
- 形式特征：巨大的又草圆柱（浮雕对立，对称，有单个立柱）支撑的世界。
  - 标出例

13. 聚
- 内容所指：神的化身-又草
- 形式特征：巨大的又草圆柱（浮雕对立，对称，有单个立柱）支撑的世界。
  - 标出例

14. 瞪
- 内容所指：神的化身-又草
- 形式特征：巨大的双面獠牙的又草（浮雕对立，对称，有单个立柱）支撑的世界。
  - 标出例

15. 聚
- 内容所指：神的化身-又草
- 形式特征：巨大的又草圆柱（浮雕对立，对称，有单个立柱）支撑的世界。
  - 标出例

16. 聚
- 内容所指：神的化身-又草
- 形式特征：巨大的又草圆柱（浮雕对立，对称，有单个立柱）支撑的世界。
  - 标出例

如图所示：十个神有一个进入。不二之神子咸其神。考宫有言与人足为“正主”，就其为来向王配主，实在就算。
2. 云灰模型反射心智世界

人类使用烟草的历史多长？人们受烟草的影响有多大？一直是人文研究领域的盲区。

2.1 智幻植物与神草时代

2.1.1 度量衡溯源

笔者在研究度量衡历史时发现，商代度量衡标准是用草种子（帝种）决定的。换句话说，可由现代烟草种子遗传学等证明，出土的商尺长度①（安阳殷墟出土商尺，一支牙尺长15.78厘米，另外一支长15.8厘米。可知商朝尺长为15.78—15.8厘米）和楚最小权码重量（0.69克左右）是以草（烟草）的100粒种子排列和2个葫芦重量为标准的。（详细证明从略）

2.1.2 生物学考古

长久以来，烟草的起源被学院派主流释群体限制在大航海时代，或以美洲为起源。前者可以在商业史，后者在植物起源方面继续展开研究与讨论。1979年，德国乌尔姆大学病毒学家斯韦塔·巴拉班诺娃（Svela Balabanova）发现3000年前古埃及拉美西斯二世【Ramesess II (1279—1213 BC)】木乃伊尼古丁残留，仅揭示出烟草在远古巨大作用之冰山一角即遭遇连篇累牍的炮轰。但生物前沿研究毕竟在时间和研究范围上显示出积极的阶段性成果，并给进一步的研究带来希望。

① snoRNA 数据显示烟草物种起源不超过1000万年 1989年，爱尔兰遗传生物学家肯尼思·亨利·沃尔夫（Kenneth H. Wolfe）发表了将植物核仁小分子 RNA（small nucleolar RNA，snoRNA）U3 用于生物进化时间的研究。该研究指出，单子叶植物（小麦、玉米）和双子叶植物（番茄、烟草、A. thaliana）的 U3 基因序列是由 RNA pol. III 转录，U3 基因启动子特异性的转变发生在被子植物中单子叶植物与双子叶植物分化之前，大约在2亿年以前。作者与沃尔夫博士连线请教，他认为，烟草的祖先种和其他一些茄科物种的起源时间不超过1000万年。

② 遗骸数据显示人类使用烟草的地域与历史久远 1979年始至今，斯韦塔·巴拉班诺娃（Svela Balabanova）等研究者们将古代和现代人类遗骸尼古丁残留比对实验

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扩展至世界主要考古区。实验数据一而再三地前推人类使用烟草的历史：哥伦布前几个到几十个世纪，直至公元前到上古时代的亚洲、非洲、欧洲、美洲、澳洲，人类已经使用烟草（如图6所示）。实验数据暂时表明，中国使用烟草的年代最为古老。

图6 人类遗骸尼古丁残留显示的人类使用烟草的时间与区域

2.2 隐含模型与字权文威

本节拟推动唯一神话向符号系统产生初始探究。以求从符号学意义上揭示书写（纹/字/书）符号系统是如何规范整个世界的。

2.2.1 明暗双结构意义文本

《说文解字·序》①第一部分文本，主流释义群体基本上沿袭清代传统释读（抄略）。从表面上看，文字化为创始人，与世界各民族文字起源说法类似，腓尼基人奉Cadmus神为字母的创始者，诺尔斯人奉Odin神为Rune字母的创始者，希伯来人奉人
类始祖亚当为语词的创始者等等，旨在强调“文字是神造的”。

但，只要简单地设问：什么是什么，啥是啥，义/於/于，“一”的大批量同音字所涉指
的意义等，即可知道，迄今尚未见学界有全面而兼有说服力的理论研究，来解读《说文解
字》所传达的书写学的谋篇布局。

将前述线索归结，深究唯一神话的形成（神话思维）则可以发现，《说文解字·序》第
一部分文本显结构的背后，有一个自成体系，可以独立运维，为支撑显结构而存在的潜
结构参见图7框出部分。

图7 《说文解字·序》文本之明暗双重结构

注：除三个造物主外，框格内均为文史（烟草）异名

概要分析图7框出部分的结构与意义（暗结构），可知：

① 详参（约公元58—147）及其《说文》，其版本和各种传本的材料诸多。本文提及《说文·前序》采取几种版
版社，1981。按：“文者物象之本”句，出自段玉裁（1735—1815）注本。而《说文解字》徐铉（916—991）（大徐本）均无
序研究另可参见：指国锋，从《说文解字》的前序看传记的语义哲学[A]//论语言和语言学。北京：商务印书馆，2001
年2月第2次印刷（1997年5月第1版），第208—216页。按：此文有一错误：第208页文章第二行209字统计错误，
所附原文中无“文者物象之本”，正文释读中却有。
第一阶段(A): 云思维, 芝草权威。
借助义(芝)草, 分出上系统(芝天)和下系统(芝地), 得到四类符号: 象、法、天文级
的复杂计算(八卦)和复杂的多维模型(结绳)。
第二阶段(B): “言者”作用, 神话运维。
第三阶段(C): 写书。同时诞生芝文/芝字/芝书。其顺序如下。
第一步: “依象形故谓之文(芝文)”。此处象形前的象是芝天之象, 即云思维中的
象, 其为名称抽象前的图形符号。
第二步: “其后形声相益即谓之字(芝字)”。音像产生(如易经者所言), 表达出“语
素—音节文字”特性。
第三步: “著于竹帛谓之书”。“纹/字/书”书写成为符号系统权威。“书者如也”“达
神旨”(语见至慎逊之末)。“以迄五帝之世(芝世)”。用芝草的气或烟管道通告造
物主, 即回到开始, 完成这个自主系统的生产循环。

2.2.1 唯一神话与汉文字符号学

当代古文字学家裘锡光强调: 文字是语言的符号(《文字学概要》, P10)。作为语
言的符号的文, 即文字本身所使用的符号是不同层次上的东西。讨论汉字性质的时
候, 如果不把文作为语言符号的性质, 跟文字本身所使用的符号的性质明确区分开
来, 就会引起逻辑上的冲突(P11)。指出汉代“六书”、唐“三书”和陈梦家“三书”问题
所在(P99-107)。提出汉字为“语素—音节文字”(按: 与赵元任内涵不同, 见裘氏书注),
“语素”是“意义”的载体, “音节”是对应的有声事实(P16)。可分为表意(意符), 形声
(音符), 假借(意符音符兼有)三类(P107)。裘氏说显然与索绪尔有共通之处。

神话, 一直是文字符号系统不能回避的现象。符号学理论开辟了解决此问题的
途径。

列维-斯特劳斯指出(《生食和熟食》, 中译本 P21, 法文版 P20): “神话乃是基于二
级代码, 一级代码是构成语言的代码。”巴尔特提出: “神话是一种云语(parole)”, 并给
出了语言结构（langue）与神话在能指与所指上的符号学关系（Roland Barthes, Mythologies, 1957, 182, 187）。按：我将此处 parole 译为中文的云语，一是因为巴尔特所言包括了图片、音乐、电影等所有媒体；二是因为中文“云”是一种意味多重的“说”。

综上所述，书写与语言、与神话的关系，可以表达成符号学模型（图 8）。由图可见，唯一神话所深测的是更深层结构，源自思维内核问题。而语言、神话和书写（纹/字/书）都是思维的伺服器。

图 8 书写（纹/字/书）符号学模型
注：①心智核基因 Mental nuclear genes ②：汉字六书各项所在的场域

2.2.3 索绪尔式与指事模型
将图 7 与图 8 内容加以比较，可以明显看出二者在场域上的对应。

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>许慎文本 (图 7)</th>
<th>书写符号学模型 (图 8)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>前件：云思维</td>
<td>前件：云思维</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>第一阶段：上下结构（名为指事）</td>
<td>第一级：语言结构 langue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>第二阶段：神话思维与运维</td>
<td>第二级：神话 parole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>第三阶段：书写（纹/字/书）</td>
<td>第三级：书写（纹/字/书）</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

与索绪尔式进行对比（图 9），可以发现，联接思维与语言结构的有重要的一环，指事。其


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Langue</th>
<th>MYTHE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. signifiant</td>
<td>II. SIGNIFIÉ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. signifié</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. signe</td>
<td>III. SIGNIFÉ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. SIGNIFIANT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
索绪尔式与云思维模型

许慎曾经说过：“一曰指事。指事者，视而可识，察而见意。《上丁》上，《下丁》下是也。”只简单举出了指事“字形”外在简约明了的一面，却隐含了字形形成背后宏大的
思维与语言结构背景。

借由图论技术分析（过程略），可以将许慎从“一”的文字和从“|”的文字排列成树状结构（图10）。由图可见，上下，不仅仅只是主流释意群体一直认为的“指上、下两个字”，而是一个心理世界（帝），其位置对立统一，带有组合段和聚合体，是独立自主的话语共同体（谛），赋予宇宙万物名称和秩序（缔造）。

图10 “又帅与黄种律”（声像）引事结构
学术界只愿意注其字的一面，忽视了其思维与语言的一面，而后者却正是其涵盖整个符号系统的系统。其所指“一”(思维自运行)，能指“上”—系统(宿主系统)和“下”—系统(支撑系统)。

◎ 语言结构(一帝根本，控制上下)

帝，中东等百多位学者讨论过此字，结论多。帝，从帝到上帝(Di 字符上加了“一”字符符)。从神兽学的角度，木神花簇结构是木神界最为稳定的聚伞结构。从九茎花，帝位置被安置于中心花位，此花一开，九花即开；从单花看，帝又被安置于株蕊位，其他 5 枚为雄蕊(称“帝 x”或“x 帝”)。作为 66 个二元符号以至宇宙万物的缔造者和化身，其法力无敌的权威，只有在看其统治符号宇宙时，方显现出来。

上，作为上层建筑，上一花部分(1 裳 +26 结点)。

下，作为支撑基础，下一花部分(华表)与树(4 裳 +35 结点)两个部分，共 66 个结点。竖轴上的时间，用“鸟羽”风表现四季，有 12 个月和 10 个月两种历法。

可以举出大量文物与文字证据。图上附二例，三星堆神像表现上层建筑——花枝结构(9 花 9 朵，亦称九茎芝草，即又草)，曾侯乙编钟以线形结构表现全结构(66 声符；65 结构 +1 个省)结构。

这个造字系统，虚拟了一个宇宙。从符号学角度，其在元语言和涵指双重系统以天文级数量扩展，但无限放飞的风筝始终带有人类智慧核心正能量的 DNA 因子。

◎ 心智核心域

神话隐喻精神旅行：神话英雄“经过向上运动(通过攀援悬挂的藤蔓)之后制造了天上起源的水。经过被迫的向下运动(被他所支撑着的重物即一棵在生长中的树压得向下弯曲)之后创造了地上起源的水。次水是有害的，因为它产生于暴风雨。”(生食和熟食，中译本 P69；法文版本 P58)“水是灵魂的居所，灵魂生存的必要媒体。”(生食和熟食，中译本 P77；法文版本 P65)

由图 11 可知，有五个区域形成人与神、人与人，人与植物，人与动物的混同与对立，并形成虚拟的过去、现在和未来的时间与空间。

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图 11 语言结构心智模型简图
“含英咀华，一字百炼乃出”，造字者经历精神上的酷暑严寒，战胜死亡和非人状态，回到自身并超过我成为精神造物主。古代巫师在致幻品的作用下，从思维短路到返至理性，是常人难以驾驭的。神话描述了萨满整个身心被药物摧残，亲人无法辨识，靠信物指认的情形。用其生命换来了产品——书写（纹/字/书）符号系统，使人类从此在符号化生存中认识了精神和物质世界，使人类走向文化与文明；而以致幻品致幻人类大脑，进行虚拟思维的梦工厂却也如影随形。换句话说，巨大的文化遗产在让人类自豪的同时，生成数以亿计的文化资产越来越成为符号化恐慌。

### 3. 唯一神话 给力心智引擎

试将胡塞尔、海德格尔、列维-斯特劳斯、德里达、李幼蒸相关研究场域等列成简表，如表5所示，可以发现，思维核心处的胡塞尔、列维-斯特劳斯和李幼蒸理论极为重要，有待更深人的理论符号学研究。

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>不同学者的核心场域</th>
<th>胡塞尔</th>
<th>海德格尔</th>
<th>列维-斯特劳斯</th>
<th>德里达</th>
<th>李幼蒸</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>内核</td>
<td>范畴指行为记录系统</td>
<td>(\text{Being and Time})</td>
<td>(\text{神话结构})</td>
<td>(\text{言学/仁学})</td>
<td>(\text{仁学符号学})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>外核</td>
<td>现象学</td>
<td>存在与时间</td>
<td>神话结构</td>
<td>(\text{解构})</td>
<td>(\text{人文科学})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>核心外层</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>理论走向</td>
<td>意识科学</td>
<td>诗学 &amp; 玄学</td>
<td>思维函数</td>
<td>解构</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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列维-斯特劳斯在最后一部神话学补充卷书尾悲观地说（《狗的故事》，P226）：不断地类推使得边缘如此虚渺，根本抓不住结构。……对于这个世界，我们应仅限于从远方构想它的存在，彻底放於进入其中的计划。中国材料或许可以告慰列氏，其研究将永远是知识的绝对基础的补充。

从海德格尔和海迪查来看，他们的共同基础是把现象学范畴向以行为记录系统（Kategorische Intentionale Akte）作为已知条件，从而展开自己的理论架构。从表5可以看出，海德格尔《存在与时间》，如果核心基础问题没有得到彻底解决，思维程式将在其生存域形成无限或死循环而无法回归于真值。“1973年，海德格尔（暨：84岁）在其弗莱堡镇赫尔根区的寓所组织了最后一次讨论班。他在这次讨论班中，试图从胡塞尔人手探讨存在问题。”（《海德格尔》，P15）这或许是这部书成为一部未能完成的著作的原因。

网络和云计算时代，日新月异的载体不断构建着新媒介与释意体——释意成为一种伺服，所见为无论是现实主义绘画中的形象与模特原型间的关系——绘画服务；镜中的影像与原物间的关係——镜子服务；照片中的形象与原物间的关系——照片服务；电影中的形象与原物间的关系——电影服务；还舞台上形象与实物原型间的关系——舞台服务……

以信息技术数据结构对人文非线性知识体系进行映射，并以九层划分（图1局部、即图12）：神话信息层、表示层（信息格式化、符号化）、解释层、归元层、网络层（物名与谱系）、族链层（族属定位）、神经元（物理层二元结构）、过渡层（云思维/云处理）、伦理层。符合学的核心问题表现在1—3 三层。总而言之，核心和运维成为首要课题，符号学任重道远但充满希望。

图12 局部符号学核心及相关层级
图像理据与“普天同文”理想①
——论皮尔斯完美符号的理论与实践

胡易容

摘 要  语言的分化并不仅仅存在于古老的巴别塔寓言中，更是文明分化和诸多纷争的深刻原因。人类一直企图创造一种“超语言”跨越交流障碍，以实现所谓“普天同文”的理想。本文指出，“普天同文”的本质是文化的平等或大同，它不可实现的深刻原因在于，割裂了语言与文化的内在同一。

在各种方案的世界语未遂后，情况发生了变化。传媒和技术导致世界信息内爆为地球村，读图成为这个时代的标志。图像语言成为这个后语言中心时代交流的新途径——它是否会成为实现普天同文理想的完美符号？本文通过分析图像符号的核心基础——理据性来讨论有关完美符号探索的价值与局限。重要的结论是，连同图像语言在内的任何一种符号语言都无法对现有自然语言构成替代性关系，它们只是高度符号化的当代文明中涌现的又一组符号系统，而不是凌驾于语言之上的“无语言”。从某种意义上说，“普天同文”已经在地球村以新的方式实现。

关键词  世界语;图像符号;元语言;符码

1. 语言乌托邦理想与现实

语言的分化并不仅仅存在于古老的巴别塔寓言中，更是人类文明分化和诸多纷争的深刻原因。如巴基斯坦建国后的语言冲突，卢旺达以语言为界限的种族屠杀。

不过，人类从未停止弥补语言鸿沟所造成的文化分裂以及语言本身的沟通屏障。翻译恐怕是一种最简单的办法，但直观上认为，翻译中总的释译过程是一种对本意的篡改。因为翻译语言背后存在太多文化背景所赋予的意义差别。显然，建立起一种无需翻译的共通世界语言更具理想主义色彩和诱惑力——这就是所谓“普天同文”的理想。

① 基金项目：国家社会科学基金项目西部项目（11XWW001）; 广西哲学社会科学基金项目（11FXW005）。
实现普天同文理想当然不止一种途径，现实情况是英语自然而然地成为了世界语，以至于人们建立通用语言的首要任务，某种程度成了对抗英语帝国主义。实际上，要消除文字分化，消除通用语言的潜在不平等，归根结底是要消除文字发展中的社会规约。这种文化个性差异消除得越彻底，越接近于一种普天同文的理想。文化个性的消除有两条策略，一种是从文化本身着手；另一种是从文字符号本身着手。

前一种策略在历史上有诸多的案例可循，如秦灭六国统一文字就是普天同文的一次以国家政权自上而下的强制性统一，其成功地消除了文化差异，但代价是用另一种自然语言完成对其他语言的统治。然而，这种统一是强制性和压迫性的，其不对等的暴力性和强权理念已经不适用于现代文明。

现代文明所追求的普天同文转而诉诸于一种非现存语言。在理想主义者看来，实现真正的平等应当有文化相互的新语言。早期的著名尝试如英国人文主义者托马斯·摩尔在创造“乌托邦”这一理想国时，一并创造了“乌托邦语”。他甚至以乌托邦语创作了文学作品和音乐，不过他的乌托邦语并未成为一种全新的语言，而是借用了拉丁语和希伯来文的22个字母系统创造了一种看上去不同的字母（如图1所示）。摩尔并未真正对语言进行深入的研究，因此，这种乌托邦语言也只是一种语言乌托邦的纯粹象征，因而只是一种虚拟语言。

![乌托邦字母表](image1)

图1 乌托邦字母表

由于字母数量有限，一种虚拟语言的创造并不困难，它们常常出现在各种虚构作品中，如20世纪80年代日本著名漫画《超时空要塞》中创造了一种名为“Zentlarly” 的外星文字，其中的字母和数字就是英文和阿拉伯数字一一对应的关系（如图2所示）。

![超时空要塞中的外星文字——Zentlarly](image2)

图2 超时空要塞中的外星文字——Zentlarly
更复杂一些的虚拟语言不仅要求有字母符号，还应当有成体系的语法规则。例如非常著名的古汉语教授 J. R. R. 托尔金在他的《魔戒》等魔幻作品中创造的精灵语、霍比特语、昆雅语等多元语言，其中数种语言发展得非常完善，几乎到了可以完整交流的程度，甚至一些托尔金谜语在这些语言上写作。不过，归根结底，出现在这些文学作品中的语言仍然是一种虚拟语言。

与这些虚拟语言不同，人们也试图创造以实际使用为目标的通用语言，如沃拉普克语、伊多语及诺维亚语，至今仍有一定影响力的是已延续百年的“世界语”，创立者柴门霍夫以理想主义者的情怀创造了一种消除彼此隔膜的“平等”语言。一百年过去了，世界语作为一种群体行为艺术是成功的，但在实践上，无疑没能取代现有的实际上的语——英语。事实上，即便语言本身来看，柴门霍夫的世界语也绝非“世界化”，他创立的世界语基础上是“印欧语”，这种“世界的普通话”实际上仍然是“西方的普通话”。时至今日，世界语成了名副其实的“少数民族”语言，从这个意义上来说，世界语是失败的。

不过，世界语的失败未必完全由于它以西方自然语言为基础而偏离文化中立。在创造世界语的过程中仍然需要通过政治或其他手段，而非完全依靠这种交流工具自身之无阻碍。当没有政治力量推动这种语言的应用时，这些人工语言就自然无法抗衡自然语言的丰富表现力。因而，它在总策略上是有缺陷的。

之后创立的逻辑语（lojban，又译作逻辑语）更强调文化的中立。它通过奠基在词的逻辑，消除了语法上的文化倾向；在词汇来源方面，为了尽量做到文化中立，它选用了来自六种世界上使用人数最多的语言：其中汉语约占 34%，印地语约占 20%，英语约占 16%，西班牙语约占 12%，俄语约占 9%，阿拉伯语约占 9%。即便如此，逻辑语也未成为一种普罗大众的通用语，而成了少数人的语言实验。也许这种失败恰恰是由于它标准化而缺乏自然语言的“文化语境”，因此它只能成为某种特殊场所的“标准语言”。

创建过多种虚拟语言的托尔金对国际辅助语言持悲观态度。早在 1956 年他就断言，连同世界语在内的各种人工语言（沃拉普克语、世界语、伊多语及诺维亚语等）注定是枯萎死亡的语言，并且是远比现在不被使用的古远语言更死亡的语言，因为这些语言没有神话故事。“没有神话故事”，即没有一种像自然语言那样在使用中形成的文化规约。正如赵毅衡所言，文化者，文而化之；文明者，文而明之；文坛者，文而谈之——哪能离得开一个‘文’字？

简单而论之，在符号表意的三分式过程中，人工语言缺乏符号释义的文化过程，而偏重指向对象的映射过程。这就好比一套“密码”或“信号”，并不直接生成文化意义，只有转化成文化大背景下的自然语言之后才产生丰富的意义。因此，人工语言不仅不是“超语言”的，反而是“次语言”的。这就不能解释当下的现实——英语成了毋庸置疑的世界语。无论人们如何反抗所谓“英语帝国主义”，全世界的人们仍然疯狂地学

习英语，而如何更快速学习英语方面的书，也总是书店卖得最好的一类。

人工语言也并非没有优点，相对自然语言的不确定性，人工语言恰恰最适合成为没有歧义的标准代码。这种优点令人工语言能够得到标准化的确切解读。如果我们采用“广义语言”的概念，将其视为一套共同采用的沟通符号、表达方式与处理规则，就会发现，人类已经创造了许多跨越文化规约的“共同语言”，例如数学语言可以精确地实现建模和运算，而化学公式在可以得到理论上完美的物质生成结果。电脑编程采用的C语言或Java语言，都可以精确无误地传递信息，并实现零误差解码。不仅是科学领域，在人文、艺术领域也是如此，如音乐记谱符号可以在全世界任何地方实现理论上无差别的再现。同样，根据曼塞尔表色系统建立的色彩模型也是无误差的色彩还原。这些精确的语言有一个共同特点：即无论他们应用于何种领域，就其本质而言，都是一种科学语言——它是一种代码式的编码和——对应式的解码。从某种意义上说，它们都是全球通用语言。

显然，这些精确编码的科学语言与我们前面所说的“语言乌托邦”有明显质的差别，即我们虽然希望建立起一种人工语言，但并不满足于其作为简单的沟通代码，而是希望它进入人们的日常生活，并成为文化的一部分，亦即希望这种语言有属于自身的“神化”。这是可能的吗？要回答这个问题，必须从自然语言本身的分化入手，以理解语言本身为何发生分化以及其是否可能回归统一。

2. 语言分化与符号的生成理据隐退

以现代语言为基础的符号学家们虽然承认符号有理据性存在，但又不约而同地将符号指向对象的关联过程视为是“任意武断”的，并将“任意武断性”作为根本法则。“任意武断性”概括的是符号意指的自由关系，是一个共时系统的确切真理，但它的缺陷是不能概括符号的过程性演变。符号的创制过程往往有可追踪的理据性。以本文探讨的对象文字符号为例，文字符号的早期起源几乎都与图像有关，因而必然是有理据性的。只不过这种理据性随着时间推移慢慢变得不可追溯，因而在使用上就只剩下任意和武断了。由此，文字符号的发展过程就是“生成理据性逐渐隐退并让位于任意武断的过程”。

图像与文字并非一开始就是两套截然不同的符号系统，中国上古符号“河图洛书”中“图”与“书”意义相同。在中国书画艺术史上的著名论题“书画同源”也以河图洛书为最早依据。实际上，古埃及文字，苏美尔文字，玛雅文字等早期人类文字的起源都是基于像意性的，亦即它和符号是理据性明确的像意符号，只是在发展中因书写效率或其他原因，逐渐发生了演变。后来，西方世界的象形文字为拼音字母所取代，汉字符号在发展过程中也逐渐发展出复杂的“六书”造字法，而象形只是其中之一。这似乎给人一种直观的印象——人类文字系统越成熟，其像意性越弱。正如赵毅衡指出，“中文实际上沿
着皮尔斯的符号三分法，从象似符号演变成指示符号，再演变成规约符号。”①这并非说，早期的文字是“非规约”的，实际上，“到具体使用时，全部词类都必须是规约符号”。②

需要指出，不仅在使用时，即便在造字过程中，所有的文字符号也必须是规约符号，否则造字的沟通目标就无法实现。不同文明的象形文字并不相同，这种不同乃是各自生活环境或文化环境的差异所造就的。例如“女”字在同为象似符号的不同文字符号中写法的差异，他论证道，“女”在中国的甲骨文是一个下跪的形象“女”，而在埃及文字中则强调其长发等生理特征像似“entifier”，而美索不达米亚的闪米特语则是用女性下腹三角和生殖器构成的形状来生成象似文字符号“(identifier)”。这种差异已经显示出文化背景的不同规约。丁尔苏据此认为“象似性与理据性是并行不悖的”。③实际上，这种“并行不悖”在图像符号上体现得更加明确。在皮尔斯的符号三分类中，图像符号与象似符号是同义语，但并不否认图像作为规约符号的属性。换言之，作为象似符号的文字符号并不因此而稍减其规约符号的基本属性。简单同意理据性与任意性的并行不悖，并不能表明图像文字是一种更易于普遍认知的文字，内在结构才是两者的根本差异。

文字与图像符号都承认规约性这一符号学的社会心理基础，两者都包括象似、指示、规约三种特性。图像符号与文字符号的分流就在于，图像符号是以象似性为特性的符号类型，而文字符号则是“指示性偏向”的。这里的“指示倾向”并非说文字符号必然都是单纯的“指示符号”，广义而言，文字符号是通过一种对象性的映射关系来指出对象或概念。汉字六书中的造字法中，除了象形是一种象似关系，指事、会意、形声也是通过或接合或因果逻辑而形成不同指示关系。④而字母和拼音文字，同样可以视为一种广泛的指示符号，因为文字符号的重要作用在于勾画世界的次序。其在使用的基础上与对象建立了一种“映射”关系。这种映射关系并不限于皮尔斯所列举的代词和名词，所不同的仅仅是，动词的指示关系是动作而非一个静止的固定对象，而副词和形容词则指向更抽象的程度和概念描绘，即它们分别对应指示和概念指示。

图像和文字符号的象似性和指示性偏向，导致了图文发展路径的巨大差异。基于象似性基础的图像符号无论怎样变化，因其无法完全脱离象似性而呈现出某种宏大的时空连续性和某种程度的文化语境跨越能力，即使是出自完全不同的文化语境，其象似面依然是易于理解的。如埃及象形文字的解读争议的一个焦点就在于，这些文字符号完全象形的还是有表音成分？如果承认象形的前提，则古埃及文字符号不那么难解读。因此，规约性导致的语义分化在“象似性”前提下是有限的，而且是易于跨越的。正如上文提到，在象形文字阶段，不同古代象形文字因各自文化背景不同而有所差异，但这种差异显然

② 同上。
远远小于现代汉字与西方拉丁字母语言。例如：古美尔象形文字“水”“日”的写法与中国
的甲骨文就比较接近。文字走向指示性和抽象性之后，类似特性便迅速湮没在文化
背景和规约之中，以至于在漫长的发展过程中，造字初期的理据性微乎其微了，文字语
言间的疏离是社会规约作用下的结果。

由上可知，社会规约性造成的语言分化，是由于语言脱离了原初的理据性——像
似，而类似符号有可能在一定程度上超越社会规约性而获得相应的跨文化识别效果。
这是否暗示了实现普天同文理想的必经之途？换而言之，要实现普天同文的理想，是否应
当回到造字之初、回到图象性符号文字？有关问题需要从符号传播和符码类型与传播
效率的技术层面上分析。

3. 理想符码与“完美符号”

从符号的传播效率来讲，一种能为全人类通用的符号（广义语言）应当具有高而广
的传播效率。传播效率的获得除了前文所说的外在力量的推动，还需从符号的编码／解
码加以分析。整个文字符号识别过程可以看作一个编码／解码的双向过程。从符号代
码的传播策略来看，一种符码要获得有效的传播，应当具备高壁垒和低解码率：高壁垒
指编码过程本身简易，对传者者在开放性较高，而受者者率开放性则来源于解码成功率较
高。高开放性提升参与度，从而实现使用群体的扩张。这就需要用两对术语来说明
如何获得高传播效能：

第一对是“详制符码”（elaborated code）和“限制符码”（restricted code）。详制符码
和限制符码是社会语言符号学家伯恩斯坦（Basil Bernstein）提出的术语，主要用于研究
社会阶层的习得语言关系。详制符码是一种描述清晰而较少依赖交流环境的符码，它
所陈述的问题较为复杂，其获得依赖于系统性的教育训练，在交流中“碗”值更高，能更
有效地提供信息；而限制代码则依赖于会话者的共同性，其会话内容的组织不是语法逻
辑，而是友情（一种交际）。用雅各布森的符号主导功能理论来看，限制性代码是倾向于
交际性的，因此其交流内容会有大量冗余。对于建立一种更易于传播的广义语言，详制
性代码的优点在于不依赖小群体的文化共同背景，但其缺点是需要编码者的高素质。能
力元语言壁垒更高；限制性壁垒也并非完全没有优点，其简化的特征和形成关系纽带的交
际性功能也是语言不可或缺的功能，一种理想的通用语言应当能综合两者的优点，既
具有较低文化背景依赖，又无须复杂的教育以获得习得经验。

另一对概念是“宽播符码”和“窄播符码”（narrowcast codes）。详制性符码与限制
性符码是由编码特性所决定的，而宽播代码与窄播代码则取决于受众结构。宽播符码
对异质性受众具有普遍的传播效力，而窄播符码则针对特定群体。如果说宽播代码
是易于传唱的流行音乐，而窄播代码则是阳光白雪的歌剧，只有少数观众能欣赏。符号的详制性/限制性与符号的宽播/窄播有一定关联，但并不是简单的对应关系。

就表意清晰性来说，详制符号有助于克服文化壁垒，形成宽播效应；但详制符号往往编码复杂，对编码者要求较高，因而又导窄播符号。而限制符号则因其是简单诉求，且对元语言能力无特殊要求而易于形成宽播效果。上述编码特性落实到建立一种完美的通用语言，我们就需要寻找低的编码解码壁垒和较高清晰的表意能力，也就是要灵活取上述符号的优点。可以皮尔斯所分的三类符号来比较何者更具优势。

首先，规约符号在编码过程中接近详制符号，具有表意准确的特性，但对编码者要求较高；而解码时要求接受者参与到规约体系中，又接近于限制符号。如一只狗之所以叫 DOG 是任意武断的。因此，解码者如果未进入英语语言这一符号系统，就无法实现有效解码。但规约性又提供了最准确的表意指向，否则狗如何成为狗就必须诉诸较低效率的表意性指称。

指示符号就是一种具有表意性的指称方式，它是指向对象但不加描述的符号类型。只是符号的指称有赖于秩序或关系的建立，可以是邻接、因果或印迹等关系。指示符号对编码的要求低于规约符号。但以一只狗为例，雪地上的爪印能够让猎人循迹而找到自己的猎犬。在这个过程当中，猎人无须参与社会性文化规约，他因自身习得经验和对“狗”这个事物某种特性的理解而获得这个指示符号的解码能力，而这种能力是动物甚至生物都具备的一种信号捕捉和解码能力。应当说，指示符号是一种实现通用语言的良好选择，且具有较高的编码效率。

再次，像似符号的表意性比指示符号更为直观，因而其对编码和解码者的教育、文化背景要求最低，也通常是最能跨越文化界限的符号类型。从一个线描的卡通狗到一张狗的高清照片，不同文化背景的人都能较为容易地实现有效解码。不过，像似符号的问题在于编码效率较低，信息冗余度较高。例如，一张有狗的照片用来传递“狗”的信息显然不够经济，似乎缩小或“狗头”即可。那么，是否还可以缩减到只有一条狗腿或者一条狗尾？又或者仅仅用狗比较有代表性的耳部？在简化的过程当中就出现了抽象和规约。实际上我们不可能完全抛下任何一种符号。不过，通常并不是完整而纯粹的符号类型，而是三种符号性质的融合。

我们发现，任何这三种符号在表意过程中均具有自身的优点。赵毅衡曾总结为①：像似性使符号表意生动直观；指示性使对象集井然有序；规约性让符号表意准确有效。结论是，假设理上存在一种较为理想的通用语言，那么这种通用语言的表意符号类型则应当是三种符号特性的结合，而使是应当取得一定程度的均衡。这就契合了皮尔斯的完善符号原则，他认为上述三种关系“尽可能均匀混合”才构成最完美的符号。我们很难确切地论证怎样是绝对均衡的，但兼有三种特征的符号则在表意的通用性与效率上能够取得较好的效果，最有可能成为一种“普天同文”的理想语言。

目前的自然语言尤其是拼音字母语言来看，其最大问题莫过于规约性过强而两

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种理据性符号处于弱势地位。按照上述原则，构建一种理想语言，就是要回归理据性。
直观的办法是“部分地”回到文字发展的原初——图与文尚未分化的阶段。那时的文字
尚处于任意武断性较弱而理据性较强阶段，具有较高程度的指示性和像似性。例如埃及
等象形文字比甲骨文或苏美尔文字具有更高的像似度，而在圣书体基础上发展起来
的僧侣体文字就因表音文字的增加无法再完全象形，其识别难度也增加。其与中国的
甲骨文的差异化程度就逐渐增加。反之，可以推论：对文化发展过程中规约性消除得越
彻底，文字符号的易识别程度就越高。
之所以说“部分地”回到，是因为必须保留规约性这一根本特性。完全依赖更高程
度的像似并不直接带来更高程度的解码效率。埃及象形文字的像似程度高于中国的甲
骨文，也高于苏美尔文字，其确切意义却并不见得比甲骨文容易解释。这是由于这种文
字在传承过程中的断代，其亲缘语言失传，可参照的规约依据失传了。同样情况的还有
苏美尔、汉等古代象形文字。即便是最象形的文字，也在解读时出现严重的误读。例如，庞德
等西方学者曾根据汉字中已经不再具有实际使用意义的像似性发明“会意文字法”，认
为汉字相对于其他语言多少保留了造字法留下的像似理据性痕迹。但从其解读结果来
看，这无疑是一种误解。规约性是难以摆脱的符号本性。
由上，回到文字的图形化的策略，优势和劣势都相当明显。一方面，图像化语言仍
是一种特别的有效路径，因其像似性、非逻辑性、开放性、自然性而接近一种自然语言。
不过，消除所有文化规约，回到图像本身的抽象概念表意效率并不高。云南仍在使用的
“东巴文”是一种易于解读的原始象形文字。从实践来看，其能表达抽象概念与现代语
言是不可相提并论的。同样情况的还有至今仍活着的图画文字——同样被列为文化遗产
的云南“诺歌书”。可见，回到图形文字并不是真正地消除文化规约，而是借助图
像、指示等符号指示方式来丰富和加强抽象文字语言的形象化、生动化。
社会公共视觉符号就是这样一种通用语言。图像语言与文字语言不同，某种意义
上说，图像语言因其理据性而从未发生类似于文字语言的根本性剧变，具有连贯性。原
始部族图腾符号的形式与今天的企业标识在本质和使用上都极其相似。最原始的指路
牌所用的指示符号与今天奥运场馆中的指向箭头也不会有天壤之别，结绳记事与今天
的二进制代码虽无直接继承，却依然是同一种结构原理。可见，混有理据性的符号信息
往往更能够跨越时间、空间和文化的冲击。
迄今最为典型的一套通用视觉语言是“国际文字图像教育系统”（ISOTYPE，全称
“International System of Typographic Picture Education”），由奥地利哲学家和社会学
家奥图·纽拉特（Otto Neurath）于1925年发布。这一系统的提出目的是为了利用“语
言似的”图像设计，达到教育及统一公共图形符号设计的目的。这一系统对公共设计影
响深远，成为后来公共交通、国际活动、公共场所等图形设计的基础。1939年，维依纳
团队确定了信息图形设计的一般标准。二战和纳粹使得这个维依纳团队难于世界各地
一部分设计到了苏联，为苏联政府的五年计划设计图形表述；另一些到了美国、
荷兰及欧洲各国，开始以该系统的思想从事公共视觉设计活动。1971年，Isotype
Institute 将档案和设计稿捐给了英国雷丁大学（University of Reading）字体设计与平
面沟通系，由此开始了现在影响全球的公共图像符号（pictogram）和信息图形（infographics）的设计，如图 3 所示。

图 3 公共图像符号和信息图形

今天我们看到的地铁、公交、飞机等诸多公共指示标识系统都可以视为该系统的直接或间接的演变。最近艺术家徐冰出版的《地书》就是他基于“普天同文”理想追求的一个艺术实践。《地书》是艺术家用搜集整理出的一套公共“标识语言”写成的艺术符号文本。看上去，几乎任何人都能通过他的图像符号理解其中的意思。不过，不难看出，这套语言对于表达复杂的抽象概念仍然有较大局限，其所依赖的并不是完全的像似或指示，而是人们在公共中使用的通用标识，可以做是 ISOTYPE 系统在“类语言叙述”方面的尝试。在否定其艺术价值的前提下，可以发现这种尝试实际上是对图像符号的“扬短避长”，因为图像符号的表意不是线性的逻辑结构，而是总体性的模式识别。这种缺陷不是由制作者的能力所能解决的，而是根源于图像符号这种“完美符号”本身的固有缺陷。

最近，有学者尝试通过机器语言和形语语言结合的方式创制新的“完美语言”。可以断言，这个了不起的工作依然会面临这样的基本局面：图像符号文字无法替代自然语言本身。任一种所谓“完美”符号均有自身缺陷，或者说每个符号都是相对完美的。一
4. 结论：语言范畴观念的转型

从传播角度而言，一种对现有语言的绝对替代性方案是不可能的，它将陷入通用（be in common use）与使用（actual use）的悖论。前文所提及的所有人工语言，究其创制的根本原则，是创造一套类似密码的通用性符号，因而其必然是“共时性”的系统，以实现通用和易于掌握的目标。而我们所使用的自然语言则是一套历时性的发展动态系统。众所周知的大英百科全书已经停止出版纸质版本而改为网络出版，因为网络时代词汇的涌现太快。语言符号是一个典型的复杂系统，而复杂系统是无法通过归纳、约简的方式加以概括的。也即，所有的人工语言所努力的方向，都走向一个根本性的向度悖反。自然语言在使用中越来越复杂化，意义越来越为其当下使用所决定，并不断生成新的表意词汇，而人工语言则对现有自然语言实行“去复杂化”，成为托尔金所说的那种“枯死的语言”。

实际上，这就涉及到我们如何去界定今天的语言，以及如何看待“普天同文”的政治学意义和文化学意义。就技术策略来看，我们早已实现普天同文，并正在以更丰富的形式实现之。实现方式之一就是被视为“普天同文”理想语言的对立面——英语。反对的理由通常为，英语是一种基于西方文明的自然语言。实际上，现代英语发展到今天，是吸收了350多种语言中及词汇逐渐形成的。今天，中国已成为使用英语的第一大国。英国语言学家安德森（Clive Anderson）指出，英语实际上已经与原初的那个政治性国家概念关系相当疏远，甚至这种语言可以停止被称为“英语”，今天如果要给这种语言一个新的名称，或者这一新的名称会来自中文。以此来看，英语岂不是一种文化中立的大同语言？

“通用”与“使用”的矛盾还带出普天同文理想的另一个悖论——“标准化”与“文化化”。标准化语言应当是去文化的，而现实中一门语言的发展又是文化语境当中的涌现。我们只能通过文化的博弈去实现文化的保存、抵抗。而标准化的人工语言，并不会带来文化平等和政治平等。将语言乌托邦作为政治乌托邦实现途径的思路一开始就错了。如果从去文化的技术标准化来看，普天同文理想已经实现了。二进制语言不仅可以再现所有文字，还可以再现图像，对于机器阅读来说，是“外星人都可看懂的文字”。近年兴起的“二维码”也是一种通用语言。输入的文字迅速可转成二维码，而手持通讯终端设备随时可以加以识别——机器语言是跨系统、跨文化的。就文化与人类语义交流语言的符号类型来看，大致划分为三个大类：
科技符号符号——科学语言（数学语言、音乐、化学、物理、逻辑语、曼瑟尔表色系统、音标系统）与机器语言（C语言、java、二进制、二维码）。
文化规约符号——自然语言（图像、自然语言、网生成符号、艺术创作语言）。
混合符号符号——传播语言（公共标识系统、手语、旗语、各种指示符号、图像混合语言、图像化音乐记谱语言）。

这三种符号实现全球通用的路径又不相同，科技符号是相对纯粹的指示符号，倾向于指向对象的指代，拒绝文化阐释；科技符号实现全球通用的方式是直接进行世界规约；它本身没有明显的文化差异；没有地方属性。文化规约符号的来源最为混杂，是在不同文化和亚文化群体中不断涌现的交流符号，它的全球化是通过文化博弈和自我保存抗争来进行的；而混合符号介于两者之间，它是一种皮尔斯所说的完美符号，它会在公共领域获得最有效的识别。由于它混合了像似性、指示性和文化规约性，既不会象文化规约符号那样“任意武断”，也不会想科技符号那样全球彻底一致。因此，我们可以看到，伦敦奥运会与北京奥运会的项目图标设计，既有文化北京的差异，也有相似和指示的清晰连贯的理据而易于识别。

最后，人类语言系统在符号化的方向上正在全面突破，其路径是多元的，最终实现科技语言（包括机器语言）的标准化，并在这些语言之间形成专业化隔膜，这是人类社会分工的进一步深化的必然结果。一套医学术语对于一个物理学专家来说，可能如外星文字那样难解。而身处地球村的人类文化生活中的自然语言，不仅不会趋向一个简单的标准，反而会个性化、复杂化，并在使用中成为不稳定的多元杂语（图形语言、多文化语言、计算机语言、亚文化圈的小众语言……），而这一结果正是由于生活本身的不可规约。
普通符号学初探
——认识和改造世界最基本的思想方法研究

摘要 西方符号学研究世界领先，但对皮尔斯和索绪尔双学如何统一，未有良策。应以能动反映论为指导，吸取双学精华，建构科学符号观和统一的符号学理论。
符号是不代表自身，而代表与自身不同事物的事物。不同事物是无限多的，只有解释才能把符号跟对象联系起来。尽管为了有效地思维和传播，解释常常功成身退，使符号呈现出二元结构假象，没有解释，符号跟对象是联系不起来的。所以，符号结构只能是由符号、对象和解释三者构成的真三元结构。
符号只存在于认知之中，认知之外无符号。认知是一种符号效应，符号之外无认知。一事物（包括语词）在认知中作为符号、对象，还是解释是可变的，视具体的认知过程而定。
符号根据解释中是否包含非建构因素分为：引符和意符。意符中赢得社会公认部分，获得了类似引符的性能，具有意引双重性，称为意引符，是传播的基石。
符号活动有：语言符号活动、数学符号活动和逻辑符号活动。
真三元符号认知结构是物质进化的自然产物。

关键词 符号；认知；符号学；普通符号学；符号结构；符号类型；符号活动

符号学研究西方一直领先，但对皮尔斯的三元结构符号学和索绪尔的二元结构符号学如何统一，西方至今还无良策。以马克思主义的能动反映论为指导，吸取古今中外关于符号的认知中的精华，建构科学的符号观和统一的符号学理论是夯实符号学研究基础的大事。对此，本文进行了相关探索。

1. 符号与认知

1.1 符号是什么

符号不代表自身，而是代表与自身不同的事物的事物。
我们生活在其中的世界，发展进步到今天，不仅已形成了形形色色的无生命事物，还出现了种类繁多的有生命事物。在有生命事物中，还出现了对事物的认知。所以，现在世界的事物（实体、属性和关系，物质的和非物质的，具体的和抽象的，简单的和复杂的，静态的和动态的等等）在认知中都具有两个最基本的功能：①代表自身；②代表与自身不同的事物。

当符号只代表自身时，就是我们通常所理解的事物，是客观世界（物质世界和精神世界）的组成部分。当它（A）不代表自身而代表与自身不同的事物（B）时，它（A）就成为了被它（A）代表的那个事物（B）的符号，那个事物（B）就成了它（A）代表的对象。

例如，长在地里的、做成的和泡茶的玫瑰花，只代表玫瑰花自身，只是客观世界中一个普通普通的事物。一个小青年送给女朋友的那束玫瑰花，代表的不是玫瑰花自身，而是与玫瑰花不同的爱情。在那个小青年和他女朋友的心目（认知）中，那束玫瑰花就成了象征（代表）爱情的符号。

所以，我们参照皮尔斯的符号观，把符号界定为：①代表自身，而代表与自身不同的事物的事物。

1.2 符号只存在于认知之中，认知之外无符号

世界上的事物，当仅代表自身时，可以存在于认知之中，也可以存在于认知之外，通过认知过程来认识。而当它们不代表自身而代表与自身不同的事物时，它们的符号身份（符号角色或符号功能）只在认知中有效，认知之外没有符号，也不可能有符号。

玫瑰花，只有在知道并认可玫瑰花象征爱情习俗的人群的认知中，才能获得代表爱情的符号身份；在认知之外的世界中，在不知道玫瑰花象征爱情习俗的人群的认知中，都不可能获得代表爱情的符号身份。

见面彼此拥抱，在西方人心目（认知）中，是善意和友好的表示；而东方人，特别是在东方年轻姑娘的心目（认知）中，正好相反，异性之间的拥抱，是十足邪恶和不友好的表示。在认知之外的世界中，拥抱只代表两个身体拥抱在一起的动作自身，其他什么也不代表。拥抱代表善意或邪恶、友好或不友好的符号身份，只能存在于认知之中。

世界上有许许多多符号的物质载体，如正在朗诵着的或写在纸上的诗，画在纸上或布上的画，正在演奏的交响乐，耸立在广场中心的人民英雄雕像，庙宇、教堂和清真寺等等。它们只有在已经积累了相关认知的人的认知中，才能起符号的作用。在认知之外，缺乏相关认知的人的认知中，例如在孩子认知中，在动物的认知中，它们只是一些普通普通的事物，成不了符号载体，起不了符号作用。对此，我们的祖先已有所觉察，所以创造了“知音”和“对牛弹琴”等等生动而又深刻的词语。

1 注：表示符号与对象之间关系的词有好几个，如：象征、意指、指称、表征、相似、征兆、标示、标志、踪迹等等，但这些词只能表示部分符号与它们的对象之间的关系。为了能表示所有符号与对象之间的关系，我们参照皮尔斯的选择（represent），选用“代表”一词。
世界上，有许许多多的事物没有获得过符号的身份，这不是它们不具备获得符号身份的能力，而是认知实践没有给它们获得符号身份的机会。一旦有了机会，这种能力就会显示出来。一匹衡山老白干、多少年来，只是一匹老白干，一旦得到上电视做广告的机会，就获得了代表男人味的符号身份。

世界上，也有一些事物的符号身份似乎是“终身”的，如语言、数字、逻辑和科学中使用的符号、古代用来调兵遣将的虎符、茅山道士画的用来镇邪的符等等。这是因为人创造它们的唯一目的是把它们作为代表其他事物的符号来使用的。它们除了被用作符号外，没有其他使用价值。在它们起不了符号作用时，如英语对于不懂英语的人，逻辑符号对于不懂逻辑的人，化学符号对于不懂化学的人，茅山道士的符对于无神论者等等，人们不知道除了称它们为符号外，还能称它们什么，所以仍然称它们为符号。但这时的符号已不是科学意义上的符号了。

### 1.3 什么是认知

认知是一种符号效应，是在把两个不同的事物当作符号与对象联系起来建构符号时所产生的效应。认知只存在于符号之中，符号之外无认知。

这是说，要认识某个事物，单靠该事物这一事物，是无法产生对该事物的认知的。只有把该事物跟与该事物不同的另一事物联系起来，把另一事物作为该事物的符号（或对象），对该事物的认知才会发生。而且，只要把这两个不同的事物联系起来，也就是把符号跟对象联系起来，认知就会立即自动（无意识地）发生。认知是建构符号时产生的效应，除此之外，别无他法生成认知。即符号之外无认知。

一个陌生人初次见面，如果你的视觉系统正常的话，在你的大脑中，就会自动（无意识地）生成关于这个人的视感觉。会把这个人看成是同一个人，而是两个不同的事物。要靠两个不同事物的联系，才能知道面前有这么一个人。如果你的视觉系统不正常，是一个盲人，在你的大脑中，无法生成关于这个人的视感觉，如不借助其他感觉系统，你就不可能知道在面前站着一个人。

再次见面时，由于你会无意识地把当前关于这个人的视感觉，跟已存储在大脑中的由初次见面时关于这个人的视感觉转化而成的表象，这两个不同事物联系起来，你便知道这个人我见过。认知到此为止，你的认知还不甚清晰，你自己还认为，这个人没见过，但不否认。

如果这时有人给你介绍，这位先生叫张三。当“张三”这个符号跟你大脑中关于这个人的视感觉联系起来时，你的认知就会清晰起来，认为自己已认识这个人了。这时如果有人问你，你见到过吗？即使张三已离开现场，你也能立即回答：“我见到过张三。”如果问你的人也认识张三，他便能准确地知道你见到的是谁。

如果有人除了告诉你你在面前的人叫张三外，还告诉你张三是某名牌大学的博士后，留校任教，已出版过三部专著，发表过二十多篇论文。当你把这些符号所代表的对象融入张三的表象之中，使张三的表象转化为具有你个人特征的意象时，你就对张三的特征，认识到你面前站着的是一个学术上很有造诣的教授先生，并诱发你产生
对他肃然起敬的感情。

如果此后由于共同开发一个项目，你与他共事了一段时间，你还能从他的日常言语和行为符号中知道：他作风严谨，待人和蔼；对学生循循善诱，经济上有吝啬等等，进一步深化对张三的认知。

以上这些说明，认知的发生离不开符号，是一种符号效应；认知的深化也离不开符号，也是一种符号效应。

如果你不仅是盲人，还是一个聋哑人，既听不到张三的言语和别人关于张三的介绍，也看不见张三的形象，甚至连张三这个人是否存在也无法知道，那你就不可能对张三有所认知。这就是符号之外无认知。

对人的认知和深化离不开符号，对其他事物的认知和深化也离不开符号。

“知其然不知其所以然”这句话的本义（字面意义）是说只知道事情本身，不知道事情发生的原因、出现的条件、当事人的动机和目的等等；转义（引申意义）是说对事情的认识比较肤浅。怎样才能使认识深化呢？那不仅要知其然，还要知其所以然。也就是不仅要知道事情本身，还要知道事情发生的原因、出现的条件、当事人的动机和目的等等。事情本身跟事情的原因、条件、动机和目的等等都是不同的事物，把不同的事物当做符号和对象联系起来，就会使认识深刻起来。我们的祖先能创造出“知其然不知其所以然”这样的语词，说明他们已经觉察到认知跟“然”与“所以然”这两个不同事物之间的联系有关。

大众传媒报道几十人丧生的 2011 年“7.23”甬温线特大高铁交通事故等重大事故时，常常拖个尾巴，事故原因正在调查中。这当然是事发当时的实情，也反映了一条符号认知规律：只有弄清原因，才能正确地、更好地认识事物。

根据初步调查，“7.23”列车追尾事故的直接原因是有关信号灯因雷击失灵，在显示红灯时，显示了绿灯。到此为止，事故会被认定为天灾。进一步追问，为什么信号灯会因雷击失灵？便会发现其原因是信号灯的设计有严重缺陷。为什么信号灯设计上的严重缺陷在设计、生产、安装和调试等过程中没有被发现？人们便会认识到天灾背后的人祸。待其他如铁路运行实时监控等等方面方面的原因，原因的原因，原因的原因的原因……一一调查清楚之后，人们才能全面、深刻和准确地认识这次事故。

牛顿力学问世后，一直被认为是放之四海而皆准的真理。随着相对论的问世，人们才逐渐认识到牛顿力学只有在宏观低速条件下，才是正确的。条件可以使人的认知更加准确。

司法人员在审判凶杀案时，要设法弄清楚犯罪嫌疑人的作案动机。只有弄清楚了犯罪嫌疑人的作案动机，才能正确认识案件的性质，做到定性准确，量刑恰当。

美国是一个以商品经济为基础的资本主义国家。俗话说：千金散尽，折本生意不做。美国为什么愿意花费巨资，不怕本国人员的伤亡，甩开联合国，单边主义远涉重洋，派兵到伊拉克去打仗？这件事，如果孤立地看，令人费解；只要把它跟世界霸权、输出西方民主和伊拉克石油等目的联系起来思考，就不难理解了。
认知不仅只在符号与对象的联系中才能发生, 才能深化, 而且也只有在符号与对象的联系中, 才能保持。一旦与被联系起来的符号和对象失去了联系(如遗忘, 失传等), 认知也就随之失去。

这在成人生理学的过程中, 表现得很清楚。成人开始学习符号, 记外语单词, 常常不是一劳永逸的。今天记住了, 认知生成了; 明天忘记了, 已生成的认知也就随之消失。查字典再记, 过几天又忘了。要反复多次才能记住, 以后也很难保证不再忘记。

符号与对象的联系, 无论正确与否, 都会生成认知。联系正确, 生成正确认知; 联系不正确, 生成不正确的、错误的认知。

中子的发现过程是一个比较典型的实例。卢瑟福在 1911 年提出原子行星模型后, 在 1920 年又提出中子假设。在某种情况下, 可能有一种由一个电子与氢核组成的中性子的穿透力很强的粒子。1930 年澳大利亚物理学家博特用 α 粒子轰击铍时, 得到一个不带电而且穿透本领很强的中性辐射。他错误地把这种辐射与 γ 射线联系起来, 以为这是高能 γ 射线。1932 年, 法国物理学家约里奥·居里夫妇重复了博特的实验, 他也错误地把这种辐射与 γ 射线联系起来, 并声称发现 γ 射线能产生一种新的作用。与此同时, 查德威克也进行了类似的实验。他把这种辐射与十几年前卢瑟福预言过的中性粒子——中子联系起来。在 1932 年 2 月 27 日, 他以题为《中子可能存在》的论文在《自然》杂志上发表, 展示了其研究成果, 查德威克成为了物理学发展史中中子的发现者, 获得了 1935 年的诺贝尔物理奖。中子的发现打开了核结构的大门, 约里奥-居里知道后连说: “我太笨! 太笨了!” 结果, 博特和居里夫妇都与诺贝尔奖擦肩而过。

2. 符号结构和符号身份

2.1 符号结构是由符号、对象和解释三者构成的真三元结构

我们已把符号界定为不表示自身, 而代表与自身不同的事物的事物。这是说, 符号和对象不可能是同一个事物, 必须是两个不同的事物。可是, 世界上不同的事物是无限多的。在认知中, 任何事物都可以代表无限多的与该事物不同的事物中的任意一个, 获得符号身份; 也可以被这无限多的与该事物不同的事物中的任意一个所代表, 获得对象身份。只要不同, 就能代表。可能性是无限多的。

在这无限多的可能性中, 你怎么知道事物 A 作为一个符号代表的是事物 B 而不是其他呢? 由此可见, 符号的结构, 不可能只是由符号和对象两者构成的线性结构。其间, 有而且必须有一个起穿针引线作用的, 把一个具体的符号跟一个具体的对象联系起来的第三者, 才能生成具体的符号。符号学把这个第三者称为解释。

所以, 符号结构是一个由符号、对象和解释三者构成的真三元结构, 可称为真三元符号结构。图示如下:
所谓三元的意思是：三元要共存，任缺其一，其他两元都不可能存在。在认知中，符号不能离开对象而独立存在。没有对象，无所谓符号，同样，没有符号，无所谓对象。符号和对象只有通过解释才能联系起来，虽然解释在把符号与对象联系起来之后，常常功成身退，从显性转化成隐性，隐藏到记忆深处，甚至被遗忘。没有解释，符号与对象联系不起来，也就不可能有符号和对象。

2.2 事物在认知中的符号身份、对象身份和解释身份是相对于具体的认知过程的

具体的认知过程或认知过程中的具体位置改变了，事物在认知中的身份也可能随之改变。

所谓符号、对象和解释，实际上只是指事物在认知过程中的功能，即所起的作用，或所扮演的角色。我们称为身份。事物的符号身份、对象身份和解释身份都相对于具体的认知过程。具体的身份过程改变了，或在同一认知过程中的具体位置改变了，同一事物在认知中的身份有可能也随之改变。

在英语的过程中，“book”是符号，“书”是对象；而在汉语的过程中正好相反，符号易位，“书”是符号，“book”成了对象。

在由目击者口述的陈述给犯罪嫌疑人画像的过程中，目击者的大脑中犯罪嫌疑人的表象是符号，目击者的口述是解释，画像是对象。在侦查人员拿着画像到人群中去寻找犯罪嫌疑人的过程中，画像成了符号，对象是犯罪嫌疑人本人，解释是画像是本原之间的相似性。同一型画像，放在同一认知过程中是对象，到了另一过程中成为了符号。

南方人知道外婆是谁，不知道姥姥是谁。有人告诉他；姥姥就是外婆。在这过程中，姥姥是符号，外婆是解释。北方人，正好相反，知道姥姥是，不知道外婆是谁。有人告诉他；外婆就是姥姥。在这过程中，符号易位了；外婆成了符号，姥姥成了解释。


这是一个符号把自己的对象的对象，直接作为自己的对象的过程，是最短的符号推导，我们称为为符号三段论。可以图示如下：

```
A -------- B -------- C
V        V        V
(英汉字典) (已知) (书)
```
在这个过程中，“书”的身份随着位置不同而不同。它相对于“book”是对象，相对于书是符号，在③中又成了符号。
事物的符号身份有时是可以得而复失，失而复得的。例如一条白围巾，一般是不会获得符号身份成为符号的，但在城市地下工作的特殊环境中，有可能被指定为秘密接头人的标记。这时，它获得了代表自己人的符号身份。但这种办法只能偶尔一用，否则容易被识破。所以，它的符号身份很快会失去。过了一段时间，换了一个地方，这种办法可能又会被偶尔一用。白围巾的符号身份，又会经历一次失得。

3. 符号类型

3.1 符号的基本类型：引符和意符

解释是把符号与对象联系起来的中介，是建构符号的关键。解释的性质决定符号的性质。
在能动反映论看来，符号可以根据在符号与对象的联系（即解释）中，是否包含自然形成的、非建构的因素（即人只能认识不能建构的因素），区分为引导符号和表意符号两类，简称引符和意符。
引符是指在符号与对象的联系（即解释）中，包含自然形成的、非建构的因素的符号。这类符号，只要符号使用者认识解释中自然形成的、非建构的因素，能把符号使用者从符号引导到对象。所以将其命名为引导符号，简称引符。
意符是指符号和对象的联系（即解释）全部由人建构，其中不包含非建构因素的符号。这类符号的解释，全部都是人按照自己的意愿建构起来，表达人的意愿的，所以将其命名为表意符号，简称意符。

3.2 引符

引符是指符号与对象的联系（即解释）中包含非建构因素的符号。引符又可以根据解释全部都是自然形成的、非建构的，还是在自然形成的、非建构的基础上，由人加工而成，区分为自然引符和人工引符。
自然引符是指符号与对象的联系（即解释）全部都是自然形成的、非建构的引符。
因明给我们提供了一个古老而又经典的自然引符的实例：山那边有烟，故山那边有火，如灶。这是说，虽然符号使用者在山这边只能看到山那边的烟，看不到山那边的火，但是由于他从烧灶的经验中已认识烟与火的联系，所以，他这时对他就起一个引导到火的引符作用。
人工引符是指符号与对象的联系（即解释）是在自然形成的、非建构的因素的基础上，由人加工而成，整体上具有类似于自然引符的非建构性质的引符。
生产线上都是人工引符。生产线上各个基本环节都是自然形成的，而整个生产线上是按照人工设计组装的。经过设计和组装，完成调试投入生产后，作为人工引符的生产线上就由自然形成的自然引符一样，整体具有自然形成的非建构性质。多少原材料能生产多少成品，是可以事先计算的。

自然引符和人工引符的区别主要是理论性的，在实际的符号活动中两者都有很高的可靠性。如在自然科学研究中，在自然条件下，观察所得的引符与在实验条件下观察所得的引符，可靠性是一样的。而前者是自然引符，后者是人工引符（实验是人工设计的）。所以，如果没有必要，一般不加区分。

因此，我们界定引符时，只强调在符号与对象的联系（即解释）中是否包含着非建构的因素，不强调有没有包含非人工因素。

引符跟阳光、空气和水一样，是人须臾不可或缺的东西。人活着，除了需要阳光、空气和水外，还需要感觉。连己失去知觉的植物人也还有某学感觉。而人的视听嗅味触等所有感觉都是引符。感觉与被感觉的对象是由被感觉对象发出的光波、声波或气味刺激相应的感官器官，或被感觉的对象直接接触相应的感官器官，引起相应的感司系统一系列物理反应和心理反应联系起来的。感觉的生成过程是物质进化的自然产物，是一个非建构的过程。不论不同的人或同一个人对同一个对象的感觉有多么不同，如对同一个圆柱体，从上向下俯视的人感觉对象是圆形的，而侧视的人感觉对象是矩形的；对同一个事物的色的色觉，色盲的与正常人有很大的差别；一个人先左手伸入热水，右手伸入冷水，然后，两手同时伸入温水中，左手中感到水冷，而右手感到热水等等。但这些不同感觉的生成过程的非建构性没有改变，所以人的所有的感觉都是引符。

在现代化的日常生活中，人们都在大量使用在符号与对象的联系中包含着非建构因素的引符。电话、手机、电脑和遥控器上的键盘，对于会使用者来说，都是引符。汽车上的方向盘、油门和刹车，以及各种仪表，对于会驾驶者都是引符。数码摄像机和手机摄像功能都已很普及，摄像机实际上是在进行建构引符的活动。

在生产和技术领域，所有机器、仪表、半自动和全自动生产线，对于会使用者来说，都是引符。使用机器、仪表、半自动和全自动生产线进行生产活动，实际上都是在使用引符进行引符活动。甚至手工生产者的一举一动，即所谓动作思维，实际上也都是在使用引符，进行引符活动。一块凹凸不平的铁皮，要怎样下锤才能有效锤平，一个有经验的钳工，在下锤前，就已选好对锤平最有效的锤法，所以，只需几下就能把铁皮锤平。这是因为他已经知道，什么样的锤法会产生什么样的结果，锤法与结果之间的联系是自然形成的，是非建构的。人可以选择锤法，但对锤法与结果的联系，却只能认识，无法改变和建构。所以，选择锤法锤平铁皮，实际上，是在选择引符，使用引符，进行引符活动。在生产活动中，所有依靠所谓动作思维来进行的技术活，实际上都是在经验的基础上（即已认识符号与对象的联系的基础上）使用引符，进行引符活动。在生活领域的技术活也是如此，茶道和烹饪本身都是技术活，都是在经验的基础上进行的引符活动。

在商业领域中，买进卖出，几乎每一个环节都要计算。尺子、天平、杆秤、电子秤、量
杯和量筒等量具上的刻度和数字，对于会使用者都是引符。

在管理领域，我国使用的第一代身份证的照片是粘贴上去的，容易造假。第二代身份证把照片连同姓名等都拍摄在一起，强化了身份证引符化程度，再要造假，难度就大得多了。

在医疗领域，除了一般症状和各种化验结果外，医生还常常借助 X 光片、心电图、脑电图和核磁共振成像等进行诊断。症状、化验结果和各种片上的图像都是自然形成的、非建构的，都是引符。医生借助这些诊断疾病，实际上是在使用引符，进行符号活动。中医的望、闻、问、切，实际上是通过引符认识疾病的引符活动。

引符是自然科学赖以建立的基础。

自然科学原理都是在观察、解剖、仪器和实验的基础上提出来的。

所谓观察，其实就是在建构和使用感觉引符（主要是视感觉引符，广义的还包括其他感觉引符），进行引符活动。解剖、仪器和实验归根结底也是一种观察，不是在自然条件下，而是在人为条件下的观察，因而也是在使用感觉引符，进行引符活动。

人的感觉是有限度的，如只能看见事物的外貌，看不见事物的内部；只能看见近的，远的看不见；只能看见一定大小的，过大的和过小的都看不见等等。因而只靠在自然条件下的观察，对于科学研究是远远不够的。解剖是能使人看到事物内部的东西（如动物的内脏），生成不解剖无法生成的引符。仪器（如望远镜和显微镜的目镜成像）和实验（如原子的光谱实验）都是为了生成在自然条件下无法生成的引符，从而扩展并加深人的认知。

哈维的血液循环理论他在对从左心室流出的血液进行计量实验的基础上提出来的。

细胞是虎克在自制的显微镜中被发现的。

林奈的分类是他在自然条件下，以及在解剖和显微镜的条件下通过观察提出的。

达尔文的进化论是在环球旅行，对动植物和地质的大量观察和采集的基础上提出来的。

门捷列夫的元素周期表是在古代化学和近代化学大量的无机和有机化学实验的基础上提出来的。

DNA 的双螺旋模型，是沃森和克里克在富兰克林等人所做的 DNA 纤维 X 射线衍射实验的基础上提出的。

地质学中的板块理论是在经观察，发现大陆海岸线之间有惊人的相似性的基础上提出来的。

引符也是推动自然科学发展的动力。

如果观察、解剖、仪器和实验的结果（引符）与已有的原理相矛盾，或显示已有原理有缺陷，就迫使人们去提出新的原理，推动自然科学向前发展。

哥白尼的日心说是他在凭借肉眼和简陋的天文仪器，长期观察天象的基础上，发现托勒密地心说的缺陷而提出来的。

卢瑟福的原子的核模型是根据 α 粒子散射实验的结果提出的。后因它不能很好地
解释原子光谱，导致原子的量子模型的提出，推动原子学说的发展。

迈克尔-波拉彼证实了麦克斯韦电磁场理论，但与牛顿力学相矛盾。这矛盾推动着爱因斯坦提出狭义相对论。

社会科学和人文科学也都在尽可能地强化自己的引符基础。

边际分析是经济分析的基本方法，以实证为基础。最佳的施肥量和作物的最佳产量，不是经济学家拍拍脑袋就能知道的，必须经过一系列田间试验才能知道。

政治家都很重视对当前社会实情和人心背向的了解。中国领导人不忙，总要抽时间亲自下基层，作点面结合的社会调查。不少国家都有专门机构经常对物价、居民收入、失业率、对领导人和重大政策的支持率等进行社会民意调查。

法律都是人按照自己的意愿制定的，打老婆合法不合法由人自己确定，但不论法律有什么样的规定，法律的制定都不是无的放矢。如果在社会上从未观察到打老婆的现象，就不会制定关于打老婆的法律。如果在社会上从未观察到偷盗现象，就不会制定关于偷盗的法律。不仅如此，在执法过程中，还非常重视证据，特别是引符性质的证据。审判盗窃案，如果有犯罪嫌疑人作案经过的现场监控录像为证，那就铁证如山。

地下遗存及其与四周环境的联系，是考古学的基础。考古学不仅强调田野调查，还重视利用自然科学的成果，如使用碳-14、热释光和古地磁分析测年，从遗存中提取 DNA 等。

人类学不仅跟考古学一样重视田野调查，还重视生活在“他者”之中。

历史学不仅强调史料考考的多重证据，还重视与地下遗存的协调。

被西方称为“美学之父”的鲍姆嘉通在 18 世纪称美学为感性学，认为感性认识的完善就是美，不完善就是丑。审美可追溯到古代，审美对象发展到今天已有扩大到整个人类的生活和自然界。除了传统的艺术美和自然美外，还有技术美、饮食美、服饰美、发型美、时尚美等，但不管什么美，审美活动总是在相应的审美对象的感觉引符的基础上才能进行。一个自小就盲的人，可以有听觉美、触觉美、嗅觉美和味觉美，但不可能有视觉美。

文学艺术的虚构要靠深厚的生活积累，文学家和艺术家很重视生活体验。文学艺术，即使是现代抽象派的绘画和雕塑，无不与自然现象和人类社会生活有千丝万缕的联系，这种联系只有靠感觉引符才能建立。清代大画家郑板桥的“眼中之竹”（自然物象，引符）、“胸中之竹”（画家心象，意符）和“手中之竹”（艺术物象，意符）的三竹说，具体生动地说明了艺术源于外部世界，意符源于引符。

正是因为人的社会行为有善恶之分，宗教虚构的本意是劝人为善，充满着伦理元素。佛教慈悲，用轮回说劝人行善积德，修个好的来世；又用“放下屠刀，立地成佛”劝人弃恶从善，普度众生。天主教用天主创世，人有原罪，应信教行善赎罪，善人上天堂得永生，恶人下地狱受永罪来劝人为善。伊斯兰教用全能真主公正的赏罚分明的末日审判：行善死后享福于乐园，作恶死后受罪于火狱来劝人为善。宗教虚构中的伦理元素都源于人类社会，只有通过感觉引符才能获得。

艺术虚构和宗教虚构说到底都是在感觉引符的基础上进行的意符加工。
哲学的基本问题是意识与存在的关系问题。不论这种关系是存在决定意识，还是意识决定存在，或者两者合二为一（天人合一），这个问题本身已经预设了意识知道在意识之外有存在，否则意识与存在的关系就无从谈起。意识怎么知道在意识之外还有存在？办法只有一个：通过感觉引符。世界上古今中外的唯物的、唯心的、可知的、不可知的、辩证的、形而上学的、天人合一的、分析的、现象学的、存在主义的、解释学的等等形形色色的哲学理论，说到底也都是在感觉引符的基础上进行的不同的意符加工。

总之，所有的感觉都是引符，整个人类文化（含文明）不是渗透着意符认知的引符活动，就是在引符提供的素材的基础上进行的意符加工。

引符的使用有如下特征：
① 引符使用者对引符的符号与对象的联系，可以在经验的基础上，只知其然，不知其所以然。驾驶汽车只要有刹车的经验，就会使用刹车，不一定要知道刹车的原理（当然，知道原理更好）。
② 引符使用者除了自觉地、有意识地使用引符外，还经常在不自觉地、无意识地使用引符。到菜场去买菜，要过称。医生看病时要借助心电图、脑电图、核磁共振和 X 光片子等进行诊断。这些都是在自觉地、有意识地使用引符。每天醒来就能听到声音，张眼就能看到东西。这些都是不自觉地、无意识地在使用引符。

所谓动作思维，在符号学看来，都是以经验为基础的引符活动。婴幼儿的动作思维，往往开始是无意识的，有经验后转化为有意识的，如婴儿偶尔一拉床单，心爱的玩具就变近了，反复几次后有了经验，要玩具时，便会有意识地去拉床单。而成人的动作思维，正好相反，开始不熟悉时，是有意识的，熟悉后转化为无意识的。如手工织毛衣，初学时要全神贯注地一针一针慢慢地织，熟练后可以一边与人聊天或看电视，一边飞快地织。

引符由于解释中包含自然形成的、非建构的因素，所以可靠性较高，造假难度大。但这不等于不能造假。倒穿鞋走路生成的脚印，可以伪造行路方向；迷彩服可以躲过空中的眼睛；隐形术可以使雷达失灵等都是利用引符作假的实例。兵不厌诈，军事中和谍报部门还要专门培养利用引符作假的专家。

3.3 意符

意符是指符号与对象的联系（即解释）中，不包含自然形成的、非建构的因素，符号与对象的联系完全由人按照自己的意志建构，表达人的意愿的符号。所以，将其命名为表意符号，简称意符。

由于意符的符号与对象的联系之中不包含非建构因素，也就是说意符的符号与对象的联系已摆脱了非建构因素的束缚，所以，意符认知（意符的认知能力）与引符认知（引符的认知能力）相比，有了极大的提高，发生了质的变化，使人从动物界中脱颖而出成为人。体现在：
（1）引符认知是人与动物，特别是高等动物共有的，而意符认知则是人独有的。刑警人员能够只凭一张照片，在挤满人群的候车大厅里，就把犯罪嫌疑人找出来。
同样地，狗也能在闻过毒品气味后，在堆满货物的仓库里把毒品找出来。但侦查人员能找到的是犯罪嫌疑人，而狗却不可能知道找到的是毒品。这是因为侦查人员不仅有图像这个引符，还有“犯罪嫌疑人”这个意符。不仅有引符认知，在引符认知中还渗透着意符认知；而狗只有毒品气味这个引符，没有“毒品”这个意符，只有引符认知，没有意符认知。

（2）引符认知是一种模糊的认知，意符认知是一种清晰的认知

一张 X 光胸片，不懂医的人，看上半天，除了看到一个胸腔轮廓外，其他就看不出个所以然来。而神科医生一看就知道：肺上有一个空洞，核桃大小，需要住院治疗。这是因为医生能根据多次看片的经验，把胸片这个引符与相应的意符“空洞”联系起来，使引符认知上升为意符认知。所以，对疾病的知识就清晰起来，从而可以设计治疗方案，采取相应措施。不懂医的人，除胸腔轮廓外，其他与意符挂不上钩。只能停留在引符认知水平上，模模糊糊，不知发生了什么，也不知道干什么好。

关于引符认知与意符认知的区别，索绪尔已在对语言的心理直观上注意到了。他在《普通语言学教程》的“语言价值”中说：“从心理学上看，思想如果离开了词的表达，那么就只是毫无形状的、模糊的一团。......没有语言，思想就是一团模糊不清的星云。......语言出现之前一切都是不够清楚的。”（2009 年版，第 137 页）遗憾的是，索绪尔没有认识到这正是引符认知与意符认知的区别。

这里需要注意的是：索绪尔讲的没有语言的思想，是指没有渗透意符认知的引符认知。如高等动物的认知，还未掌握语言的婴儿的所谓动作思维的认知，在狼群中长大的狼孩的认知等等。已经掌握意符认知的人的引符认知，由于己渗透着意符认知，也是清晰的。所以，你能在繁华都市的大街上，迅速准确地摆弄方向盘（进行引符活动），自由地驾驶你的汽车。这种清晰是渗透在引符认知中的意符认知效应，不是纯粹的引符认知效应。让马戏团训练有素的黑猩猩摆弄方向盘、驾驶道具车，最多只能在演出场地完成几个经过多次训练的规定动作，它无法在大海上自由驾驶。这是因为它的引符认知中没有渗透意符认知。它的认知是浑浑噩噩的。

（3）以感觉和表象为基础的引符认知，只能认识能被感知的具体的事物、属性和关系；只有以意象为基础的意符认知，才能认识不能被感知的抽象的事物、属性和关系。认知是从认识一个一个具体的可以被感知的事物开始的。

当你看见一个人 A 时，A 发出的光波，刺激你的视网膜，引发你大脑中视觉系统相应的生理反应和心理反应，你的大脑里便生成了关于 A 的视感觉。生成视感觉的过程是一个由物理过程、生理过程和心理过程串联而成的，非建构的过程，所以，关于 A 的视感觉是引符。当 A 离去后，你大脑中已生成的关于 A 的视感觉不会随之消失而保存在记忆中，称为表象。表象是记忆中的感觉，所以，也是引符。

感觉和表象生成的认知是引符认知，受解释中的非建构因素的制约，只能认识能被感知的具体事物。只有在感觉和表象的基础上建构起来的意象生成的意符认知，由于摆脱了非建构因素的束缚，才能认识不能被感知的抽象事物。

建构意象是从无意识地自动建构物类意象开始的。你的大脑中关于一个一个具体
人的表象积累到一定的数量时，会自动从中抽象出一些相似的元素，整合成一个一般人的意象。一般人的意象，是各人按照自己大脑中关于具体人的表象的积累建构起来的，有个人特征。不同的人的大脑中的一般人的意象不是完全相同的。如：只见过黄种人的人，一般人的意象是黄色的；只见过白种人的人，一般人的意象是白色的；只见过黑人的人，一般人的意象是黑色的。只有见过各种肤色的人的人，一般人的意象是无色的，因为肤色已被排除在人的共性之外。

各人的人脑中，一般人的意象跟自己大脑积累的具体人表象之间的相似性，是由各人自己无意识地选择的，不包含非建构的因素，所以，一般人的意象是意符。

一般人的意象类似于画师笔下的肖像画。肖像画与本人之间的相似性经过了画师的选择和整合，是建构的，肖像画是意符。而关于具体人的视感觉和表象类似于照相机生成的照片。照片与本人之间的相似性是非建构的，所以，照片是引符。

关于某一个具体人的视感觉和表象，由于包含着非建构因素，只能代表某一个具体的人，而一般人的意象，由于已摆脱了非建构因素的束缚，既可以代表所有一个具体人中的任意一个，也可以代表所有一个一个具体人的全体，即人类。

一个一个具体的人是能被感知的具体事物，人类是不能被感知的抽象事物。靠感觉和表象生成的引符认知，只能认识一个一个具体的人，只有靠一般人的意象生成的意符认知，才能认识人类。

大脑中生成的感觉、表象和意象都是大脑的符号认知结果。这些认知结果，除了本人自己能够意识到外，别人无法感知。人是社会的动物，只有在人际互动中才能生存。那么，一个人大脑中的感觉、表象和意象，是怎样告诉别人，在人际传播呢？当然，可以画出来。用画出来的办法在人际传播，有很大的局限。第一，只能在能看得见的近距离中传播（在没有现代传播工具的时代）；第二，能否画得像需要技巧；第三，只能传播具有视觉形象的感觉、表象和意象。而在人视感觉和视觉表象以外的其他感觉和表象以及意象中，大量地存在着视觉形象模糊或缺乏视觉形象的感觉、表象和意象。

视觉表象以外的听觉表象、味觉表象、嗅觉表象和触觉表象都缺乏视觉形象。张三的声音，李四的声音，甜的，苦的，香的，臭的，软的和硬的等等感觉和表象都只能自我意识到，难以用画画的方法在人际传播。

对具体事物的抽象是有层次的。从具体人的表象中，抽象出一般人的意象，只是抽象的开始，抽象还要继续和深化。

从人的意象、牛的意象、鹰的意象、蛇的意象、鱼的意象等意象中抽象出动物的意象时，动物的意象已很难像一般人的意象那样，用画画的办法在人际传播了。因为在人牛鹰蛇鱼等意象之间已缺乏形象相似性，只有属性相似性。如：会动的，属性“会动的”的意象，已比较模糊，缺乏清晰的视觉形象。

从动物的意象，植物的意象和微生物的意象中抽象出生物的意象。从生物的意象和非生物的意象中抽象出物的意象。用画画的办法传播，越来越困难了。

除了能被感知的具体事物从具体的表象到抽象的意象外，还有不能被感知的抽象的事物，属性和关系，都没有具体表象，只有模糊的意象。如部落、民族、国家、善良、聪
明，内向，伙伴和敌对等等的意象都缺乏清晰的视觉形象，很难用绘画的办法传播。

好在我们的祖先，早在漫长的初民时代，就已在劳动和社会互动中，发现了用不同的声音代表不同的事物在人际传播的方法。创造性地建构了一类最具有认知和传播潜能的意符——语言。

让我们来设想一下：没有语言和文字，也没有科学和技术的初民时代，只能靠自己的双手谋生，个人只有参与社会互动才能生存。见了猎物，常常需要多人围捕，才能成功。当一个人发现了猎物，就要通知其他人。近的可以做手势，远的很自然地只能用张口发声的办法了。一个人在遇到猛兽威胁时，会本能地吼叫。别人听到吼叫，意识到有人有危险，便从四面八方赶来相救。在围捕成功时，大家会情不自禁地会呼。在漫长的初民岁月中，我们的祖先慢慢地体会到不同声音可以代表不同事物的妙用，便不断地琢磨这个方法，终于发明了命名法：给每一个不同的事物，分配一个不同的声音。不仅语言随之萌芽，自身的发音器官也随之得到改善和发展。这样一来，大家发现交流起来方便有效得多了。

既然可以对能被感知的事物命名，想必也可以对不能被感知的事物命名。原先要靠画画来传播的关于具体人的表象和一般人的意象，现在可以给它们起个名字。一般人的意象，叫做“ren”。无需多少技巧，通过“ren”就可以在人际传播了。具体人的表象，叫做“Zhangsan”。即使此人不在现场，大家也可以谈论他了。

能被感知的和不能被感知的事物都可以通过命名来认知和传播的发现，给人的认知的扩展和深化打开了大门。

通过对可以被感知的物体和动作的命名：这是地，那是天，这是山，那是河，这是森林，那是草原。天上白天有太阳，晚上有星星和月亮，狼在嚎，山羊在跑，青蛙在跳等等，正像索绪尔所说的那样，使人感到原先对周围世界的模模糊糊的认知，变得清晰起来了。

通过对不能被感知的具体事物的类的意象和抽象事物的意象的命名，使人的认知，从认识一个一个具体的事物扩展到认识事物的类。如从认识张三李四，扩展到认识人，动物，生物和物；从认识具体事物扩展到认识抽象事物，如从认识一个一个具体人扩展到认识部落，民族和国家。

通过对事物属性的命名，使人深化对事物的认识。如，原先只知道这是张三，现在还知道张三善良，勤快和大方等等。

通过对事物之间的关系的命名，使人深化对事物之间的关系的认识，如原先只知道一男一女，现在还知道他们是夫妻，或兄妹。兄妹中还有亲兄妹、堂兄妹和表兄妹等等。

通过命名不仅能认识具体的事物，还能认识不在场和不存在的事物。对不在场或不存在的事物，虽然有时可以用插牌手或摇摇头，也可以用画出来再打上叉等办法来传播，但最普遍有效的认知和传播的方法还是命名法。设置否定语词，如不、非、不是、没有等。例如“非生物”传播的是在当前事物中缺乏有生命属性的认知；“不是张三”传播的张三不在场的认知；“没有玉皇大帝”传播的是玉皇大帝不存在的认知等等。

大脑生成关于具体事物的感觉和表象，衍生的是引符认知。以感觉和表象为基础
的引符认知只能认识能被感知的具体事物，具体属性和具体关系。在感觉和表象的基
础上，可以建构意象。只有以意象为基础的意符认知才能认识不能被感知的抽象事物，
抽象属性和抽象关系。

意象是不是人独有的，高等动物有没有物类意象，动物心理学等相关学科的专家们
正在研究，还未形成共识。

但借助从命名开始建构起来的意符——语言生成的意符认知是人独有的。人的认
知之所以能高于其他动物，是得益于掌握了建构和使用意符的方法，特别是得益于创建
了人类独有的意符——语言。

值得注意的是，我们的祖先是分散居住在全球不同的地方的，彼此远隔千山万水，
世世代代，互不交流。但他们却不约而同地发现了用声音代表事物的妙用，创造发明了
语言。不同的语言有几千种之多，充分地体现了语言是人的意志的自由创造；但不同的
语言都是使用语音来代表事物，这种现象出现在语言之间，就不可能是偶然的巧合，
说明人的意志自由在无形之中是受物质在进化过程中自然生成的规律制约的。

语言与画面相比有许多优点，但也有不足之处。那就是：语言在古代不能保存，而
画面可以保存。人们可以扬长避短，把语音与对象之间联系的任意性，与画面的可保存性
结合起来，创造发明了文字。文字发展到今天，只保留了拼音文字和表意文字。象形文
字具有过渡性质，已成了死文字。

意象、语音、文字和图画（含模型）作为符号，都是意符，因为它们与它们代表的对象
的联系中，不包含非建构因素。但它们各有自己的特点：

感觉和表象与代表它们的语音、文字或图画一起只能认识能被感知的具体事物，只有
意象与代表它们的语音、文字或图画一起才能认识不能被感知的抽象事物。感觉、表
象和意象自身都缺乏传播能力，只有借助代表它们的语音、文字和图画才能在人际
传播。

语音和文字有很强的传播能力。人类的认知成果主要是通过语音和文字在人际传
播和代际传承的。但语音和文字没有认知功能，它们的认知源于与被它们代表的
感觉、表象和意象的联系。语言和文字一旦离开了被它们代表的感觉、表象和意象，它
们就失去了认知价值。例如：英语不能使不懂英语的人产生认知。

在认知和传播中，虽然有了语音和文字，图画还是不能或缺的，例如在思考和传播
比较复杂的方位时，有时只用语音和文字思路不一定能清晰。这时若使用一张方位图，
一目了然，思路便会清晰起来。当然，图画离开了语音和文字，认知能力也是极其有限的。

（4）以感觉和表象为基础的引符认知只能肤浅地认识世界，只有以意象为基础的
意符认知才能深入地认识世界、建构世界和改造世界。

感觉和表象只能生成对事物的“模糊一团”（索绪尔语）的纯引符认知。即使有语词
介入，也只能生成对事物的渗透着意符认知的清晰的引符认知，还不能深化对事物的认
知。要深化对事物的认知，必须在感觉和表象的基础上建构意象。只有意象及其相应
的语词生成的意符认知才能深化对事物的认识。例如遇见一个陌生人，只能生成这个
人的模糊的感觉和表象（纯引符认知）。即使知道他叫张三，也只能生成“这是张三”的
渗透着意符认知的清晰的引符认知。只有把“北京人”“四十年”“大学教授”“学术造诣
很高”“勤奋”“谦虚”“待人诚恳”“平易近人”等等符号所代表的意象融入张三的表
象之中，在张三的表象的基础上，建构关于张三的意象，才能深化对张三的认知。又如
只靠感觉和表象及其语词，只能知道木头浮在水面，铁块沉入水中。不能知道为什么。只
有“体积”和“重量”等意象及其语词的介入，才能知道与水同体积比水轻的事物浮在
水面，与水同体积比水重的事物沉入水中。

不仅深化对事物的认知要靠意象，建构事物和改造世界也要靠意象。感觉和表象
之所以无法深化对事物的认知，无法建构事物，从而改造世界，是因为它们都受非建构
因素的制约，是引符。而意象是已摆脱了非建构因素束缚的意符。

怎样建构意象？建构意象是人的以反映为基础的能动性的体现，是一种创造性的
劳动，没有具体固定的格式。其共性是：意象取材于感觉和表象，主要是表象。没有感
觉和表象，不可能有意象。常见的建构意象的方法有：①从同类感觉和表象中抽取出
元素，整合成物类意象，如从关于一个一个具体的人的感觉和表象中，抽取出相似元
素，建构一般人的意象；②把意象化入表象或意象之中，如把“北京人”“大学教授”“平易近
人”等意象，融入张三的表象之中，建构张三的意象，把“勤劳勇敢”等意象融入中国人的
意象之中，使中国人的意象充实起来；③对感觉和表象，主要是表象，进行分析或分解，
取其相关的元素整合成意象，如把已有建筑物的表象分解，取相关建筑元素和其他元素
整合成新建筑物的意象。

在感觉和表象基础上建构的意象，能够外化为实物或能够证实在外部世界存在着
对应物的，称为实构或科学。如建筑设计师用建筑元素整合而成的建筑物的意象转
化为建筑物，能如期实现的规划（大到水坝、桥和气压输等巨型工程规划，小到单位和
个人的日常工作安排）等等，都是实构，或科学的。又如日心说、原子、分子、元素周期
表、血液循环、进化论、相对论、基因等意象先后被证实在外部世界有对应物，称为实构
或科学。

在感觉和表象基础上建构的意象，至多只能外化为文字、音响、图像和雕塑等文
艺作品，不能外化为实物，也不能在客观世界中找到对应物的，称为虚构，如吴承恩建
构的孙悟空和猪八戒等艺术形象，佛教建构的阎王、阴间和地狱，基督教建构的上帝，伊斯兰
教建构的真主等。

在感觉和表象的基础上建构的意象，虽然自身不能，但从它们推导出来的意象能够
外化为实物，或在外部世界中有对应物的，称为科学的虚构。如：中医建构的经络意象，
既不是血管，也不是神经，与解剖和电生理都对不上号，但以经络意象为基础的针灸，能
通过刺激体表的穴位，治好体内脏腑的疾病和其他的疾病；牛顿的惯性定律，匀速直线
运动，在外部世界没有直接的对应物，但由它推出的推论，外部世界有对应物等；此
外，物理学中的理想气体和刚体，几何学中的点线面等等也都是科学的虚构。

在感觉和表象的基础上建构的意象，一时无法判定能否外化为实物，或在外部世界
中找到对应物，称为假设。如，伽利略建构的中子假设，笛卡尔引入物理学的以太假设，
圆周率是有理数还是无理数的假设等等。假设一经证实，便转化为实构，转化为科学，一证伪，便转化为虚构。卢瑟福建构的中子假设，后来被查德威克的实验证实，外部世界存在着对应物，转化为科学。笛卡尔引人物理学的以太假设，后来被迈克尔孙-莫雷的光速不变实验和爱因斯坦的狭义相对论排除掉了在外部世界存在着以太对应物的可能性，转化为虚构。圆周率至今无法证明是有理数还是无理数，因此圆周率是有理数和圆周率是无理数，都仍然保留在假设状态中。

实构、虚构和假设之间的相互转化，不仅仅是假设向实构或虚构转化，还有实构与虚构之间的相互转化，如原先十拿九稳的双休日旅行计划，由于天气的突变，航班被取消，而泡了汤；原先人能像鸟一样在天空飞翔的幻想，随着科技的发展变成了现实。实构、虚构和假设之间之所以能够相互转化，是因为它们都是在感觉和表象基础上建构起来的意象。意象，与感觉和表象一样，只能自我意识和自我认知，只有与语词相联系或外化为图像，才能在人际传播。房屋、桥梁和水坝的等等建筑物的意象要外化为图纸，才能组织人力施工。科学的思想和理论，艺术和宗教的虚构，以及假设都要外化为语言，文字、乐谱、图像和雕塑，才能在人际传播。语言、文字、乐谱、图像和雕塑跟它们所代表的意象之间，不包含非建构因素，都是意符。

没有以意象为基础的意符，人对事物的认识无法深化；没有以意象为基础的意符，人无法建构事物，改造世界。

（5）引符认知只能生成反映性认知，意符认知不仅能生成反映性认知，还能生成评价性认知，规范行为和自觉地表达意愿。

所谓反映性认知是指：①外部的客观世界的事物刺激机体的感觉器官而生成的感觉；②由感觉转化而成的表象所生成的认知；③由感觉表象跟代表它们的语词联系起来所生成的认知；④在感觉表象的基础上建构的意象跟代表它们的语词，所生成的能不断地深化的认知。其中，有引符认知，也有意符认知。这一类认知，不管是深浅，都是一种反映外部的客观世界是什么的认知所以称为反映性认知。

反映性认知的深化有助于形成世界观。

世界是主客二元对立的：唯物的，唯心的；还是主客合二为一的；现象学的，存在主义的；世界是辩证的，还是形而上学的；世界是可知的，还是不可知的等等。

意符认知不仅能生成反映性认知，还能在反映性认知的基础上生成评价性认知。

评价性认知主要是对反映性认知的认知，也可以是对评价性认知的认知。

评价性认知的生成要有关联，这个关联系就是生成评价性认知的解释。只吃过一个品种梨子的人，只能生成梨子的滋味是什么的反映性认知。只有吃过几个品种梨子的人，才能生成哪一个品种梨子好吃的评价性认知。评价性认知是意符认知，不受非建构因素制约，可以因人而异。好吃不好吃，不同的人可以有不同的评价。四川人说“辣味菜好吃”，苏州人说“甜味菜好吃”，也有人说“辣味菜和甜味菜都不好吃”。

在反映性认知的基础上生成的评价性认知，不只是好不好，还能衍生出值不值，该不该和美不美等等。

评价性认知有助于形成价值观：
我们认为，在错综复杂的社会现象中，坚持中国共产党的领导，坚持走中国特色社会主义道路，坚持让一部分人先富起来的共同富裕的方针，坚持以人为本，平等、互利、共赢，构建和谐世界的外交政策，好，值。于是，我们就形成了中国特色的国家价值观。

美国有些人认为，在错综复杂的社会现象中，坚持多党竞选、轮流执政，坚持世界霸权，顺我者昌，逆我者亡，好，值。于是，形成了美国特色的价值观。

在各种各样的人生选择中，有人认为，一生为共产主义理想，为他人，为全人类谋福利，好，值。于是，形成了共产主义人生观。有人认为，人不为己，天诛地灭，好，值。于是，形成了个人主义人生观。

价值观和人生观还会衍生出伦理观：

人与人之间，义字当头好，值，还是利字当头好，值，形成不同的伦理观。

价值观、人生观和伦理观落实到行为上，人的行为便有应该和不应该之分。见义勇为，有人认为应该，也有人认为不值。

美也是一种在反映性认知基础上的评价性认知，要有参照系作为解释。在上海市区单调的高楼大厦环境中生活久了，初到杭州西湖边上，会感到：西湖有水有山，真美啊！搬到西湖边上住了一段时间，天天面对西湖，对西湖的美感便会渐渐淡薄，甚至消失。这是对原有的参照系的记忆在逐渐淡忘的缘故。

只有一个，无所谓美不美。只有在人与人的比较中，才会生成美最美的认知。美不美，跟好不好和值不值一样，也是因人而异的。同样一群人，有的说“张三最美。”有的说“李四最美。”

评价性认知，好偏好，值不高，值不该和美不美等等都是因人而异。表达评价性认知的符号，跟它们所代表的对象之间的关系中，不能受非建构因素的制约。因而，表达评价性认知的符号，不可能是引符，只有摆脱了非建构因素束缚的意符，才能胜任。

人除了生成反映性认知和评价性认知外，还要表达自己的意愿。如：提问、请求、命令、承诺和祝愿等等。人的意愿不仅因人而异，还因时、因地、因事而异。所以，也只能使用意符表达，引符无法胜任。

人发明创造了意符，获得了建构意符的能力，所以，能深化对事物的认识，能评价事物，形成世界观、价值观、人生观、伦理观和审美观，能规范自己的行为，自觉地和有控制地表达自己的意愿。动物只有引符，只能模糊地反映性地认识事物，本能地表达意愿，没有意符，不可能有评价性认知。动物中的弱肉强食的行为，只是一种求生存的本能，无所谓好坏。人类的战争行为，因有评价性认知，有价值观支撑着，所以有正义和非正义之分。当然，不同的价值观，可以衍生出不同的正义观。人的思维的复杂性的最根本原因是人创造发明了摆脱非建构因素束缚的意符。

总之，意符是一把双刃剑。它摆脱了非建构因素的束缚，获得极大的能动性。它既

能使人深化对世界的认识，形成科学的世界观，有效地改造世界，并获得评价事物的能

力，树立正确的价值观、人生观、伦理观和审美观，成为一个具有自知灼见、高尚品德、优
美情操、充满创新激情、真正美好和情意全面发展的人；也能使人成为无恶不作、坏事做尽的人渣。说谎、欺骗和诡辩等等，无一不是意符的杰作。

当然，说谎不都是坏的。对临危病人隐瞒病情，是一种人道主义的做法。

### 3.4 意引符

意引符是意符中符号与对象之间的联系已得到社会公认，不能随便更改，因而具有类似引符性质的意符，是具有意引两重性的符号。

意引符正是由于符号与对象之间的联系已赢得社会公认，解释便功成身退，成为只留下符号和对象，呈现出二元结构假相的符号，称为已知符号。

自然语言的语词都是已知符号的意引符，是意引符的主体。任何语词，作为已知符号的意引符，除了无需解释在场，就能与一定对象相联系的引符特性外，还有能借助解释，跟所要表达的另外任意一个对象相联系的意符特性，例如“姑妈”通常被认为是一个只代表父亲的姐妹，而无歧义的语词。即使这样，在毒贩甲对毒贩乙说“姑妈明天上午九点到，你去接机”时，其中“姑妈”仍然可以被少数人用来代表毒品。

意引符是传播、传染和密码的基石。

#### 3.4.1 原始的语音传播

原始的最简单的人际语音传播是两个人之间的口头直接传播。关于这种原始的最简单的人际语音传播，索绪尔在《普通语言学教程》中有过经典的描述：

“这种行为要求至少两个人参与。这是完成整个循环所必需的最少人数。假设两个人，A 和 B，正在谈话：

假定循环从 A 开始，这里心理事实（概念）是和用来表达这些事实的语音（语音形象）的表现形式联系在一起的。（注：索绪尔在这里的描述，其实只是把符号跟对象联系起来后，解释已功成身退，只留下符号和对象，呈现出二元结构假相的已知符号。）一个已有的概念在脑子里开启了一个语音形象，这是一个纯粹的心理现象，在该现象之后的是一个生理过程；在发出声音时大脑把一个和语音形象对应的刺激传输给发音的器官，然后声波就从 A 的口中传到 B 的耳朵里了；这是一个纯粹的物理过程。接下来呢，循环继续在 B 身上发生，但是次序刚好是颠倒的，从耳朵到大脑，这是语音形象的生理传输；在大脑里面，便是这个语音形象和相应概念的心理联系。”（《普通语言学教程》中译本 2009 年版，第 13-14 页）

在上面这一段话中，索绪尔只是对原始的最简单的人际语音传播过程：

1150
“心理过程—生理过程—物理过程—生理过程—心理过程”

作了一般性的描述，没有给出被传播的具体实例。

让我们来配一个实例：譬如被传播的具体内容是“guma”（姑妈）一词。那么，这过程就会这样呈现出来：发送者 A 大脑中一个已有的姑妈的意象（概念；父亲的姐妹）开启了语音形象“guma”。这个心理过程，经“生理过程—生理过程—生理过程”，在接收者 B 的大脑里激发一个把语音形象“guma”跟姑妈的意象（概念）相联系的心理过程。

现在的议题是：在“生理—物理—生理”的传播过程中，特别是在物理过程中传播的只是“guma”（语音形象）。作为父亲的姐妹这一姑妈的意象（概念）没有被传播。“guma”（能指）跟姑妈的意象（所指）的联系是心理的。这个联系没有被传播、传播的只是语言的语音一端。也就是说，被传播的只是符号、对象没有被传播。那么，为什么在 A 的大脑中把符号“guma”跟对象姐妹的意象联系起来，而在 B 的大脑中不是把符号“guma”跟对象姐妹、舅妈等的什么意象联系起来，偏偏跟 A 一样，也把符号“guma”跟对象姐妹的意象联系起来呢？这只会巧合，还是带有规律性的？由于这样的传播，在会说汉语的人群中，不仅在 A 和 B 之间，在 C 和 D 之间，在任意一个 X 和任意一个 Y 之间，传播结果都一样。由此可见，这是一种规律性的现象。

这种规律性是“guma”这个意符的引符特性的体现。符号“guma”跟对象姐妹的意象的联系，是语言的语义的、结构的。符号“guma”初始是意符。后来，当这个联系在社会实践中赢得了社会公认之后，就获得了不可随便改变的、类似引符的性质，这时，“guma”这个意符就转化为具有意引重性意符。

意引符虽然具有类似引符的不可随便改变的引符特性，但它毕竟是意符，还有可以任意改变其代表的对象的意符特性。

当毒贩甲通知毒贩乙“姑妈明天上午九点到，你去接机”时，毒贩乙一听就知道，他们要的毒品明天上午空运到达。

这时，“guma”对局内人代表的已不是父亲的姐妹，而是毒品，显示了它的意符特性；对局外人仍然保持原有的引符特性，使局外人无法把它跟毒品联系起来。这就是密码之所以能够存在的根本原因。

3.4.2 原始的文字传播

两人之间的文字传播过程与语音传播过程一样，也是“心理过程—生理过程—物理过程—生理过程—心理过程”。只是在发送者和接受者心理过程过程中，作为对象心理事实（意象或概念）不是与作为符号的语音形象，而是与作为符号的文字形象联系在一起，发送者的生理过程不是用口发出音，而是用手写出文字，物理过程不是声波而是光波，接受者的生理过程不是从耳朵到大脑，而是从眼睛到大脑。

文字传播过程与语音传播过程的符号学特征是完全相同的。两者的符号学特征都是：

① 只传播符号（语音或文字），不传播对象（心理事实或概念或意象）；
② 要求接受者大脑中符号跟对象的联系，与发送者大脑中符号跟对象的联系相同。
如果接受者接受传播过来的符号后，不能与对象联系起来，那么传播失败。如一个不懂英语的人，在听别人给他说英语，或看别人写给他的英文字时，不知道应该把符号跟什么样的对象联系起来，也就无法知道传播过来的是什么。

如果接受者接受传播过来的符号后，符号跟对象的联系与发送者的不一样，那就产生误解。如在发送者大脑中，“dujuan”或“杜鹃”是与杜鹃鸟的意象相联系的，当“dujuan”或“杜鹃”传到接受者大脑中时，接受者把“dujuan”或“杜鹃”跟杜鹃花的意象联系起来，这就产生了误解。

语音和文字的传播过程的这两个符号学特征告诉我们，在传播过程中，符号与对象要经历一个“联系一分开一联系”的过程。成功的传播，分开前的联系与分开后的联系是相同的。这便要求符号与对象的联系必须具有稳定性和社会公认性。这正是具有意

有需要时，可以通过解释，使传播中的符号代表与被社会公认的对象不同的对象，成为对局外人保密的密码。这是具有意引两重性的意引符的意符特征的体现。

原始传播也可以一对一（如教师在课堂里，不用扩音器讲课，不用投射仪板书等）和多对多（如团队之间互赠名片，不用扩音器开展辩论等）地进行。一对多或多对多，实际上只是若干个一对一的并列，或交织而已，没有改变传播的符号学特征。

3.4.3 现代化的语音和文字传播
现代语言和文字传播过程（如：广播、广播、电话、手机、电脑和互联网等等）与原始的语音和文字传播过程相比，心理过程完全相同，生理过程基本相同（差是发送者发送文字，不是在纸上手写，而是在手机和电脑上手写，或使用手机和电脑上的键盘发送），不同的只是物理过程。

在原始传播中，语音和文字靠声波和光波直接传播。在现代化传播中，发送语音，先要把发送者口中的发出的语音声波转换成电磁波，才能有线者或无线地传播，到达后，再转换成声波，传入接收者耳朵里。发送者发送的文字，要经编码后，才能转换成电磁波，有线者或无线地传播，到达后，经解码恢复文字形式，传入接受者的眼睛。

传播的现代化没有改变传播过程的符号学特征。
现代化的语音和文字传播过程，与原始的语音和文字的传播过程一样；
①只传播符号（语音或文字），不传播对象（心理事实或概念或意象）；
②要求对象大脑中符号与对象的联系，与发送者大脑中符号与对象的联系相同。

现代化的语音和文字的传播，也可以一对一和多对多地传播。如：播音员广播、开电话会议等等。与原始传播一样，现代化的一对多和多对多，实际上也只是若干现代化一对一的并列或交织而已，并没有改变传播的符号学特性。

3.4.4 话语和语篇的传播
语音和文字传播，通常不是以词句形式传播，而是以音节（语音集）和语篇（文字集）的形式传播。

话语和语篇是由语句构成的，语句是由语词构成的。话语和语篇有长有短，最短的
可以只有一个语句。长的有成千上万个语句，具体数量则没有限制。

话语和语篇的传播的符号学特征，与单句语词的语音或文字的一样，也是通过“心理—生理—物理—生理—心理”的过程来传播的；在“生理—物理—生理”这一段，是只传播符号，不传播对象。符号和对象的联系在传播过程中同样要经历一个“合一分一合”的过程。不同的是，发送端和接收端心理过程都是多层次的。因而，符号和对象的“合一分一合”的情况要复杂得多。

话语和语篇传播的心理过程可以分为本义（字面意义）和转义（引申意义）两大层次。本义层次又可以分为词义或字义、句义和篇义三个层次，在话语和语篇中短，只有一个语句时，句义与篇义合二为一。转义层次又可以分为转 1、转 2……等若干层次。转义层次有没有，有几层，视具体的传播内容而定。

发送端的心理过程一般是从转义到本义，从对象到符号。而接收端的心理过程正好相反，一般是从符号到对象，从本义到转义。

如果在话语和语篇的传播过程中，发送端和接收端在本义的三个层次和转义层次中所有的符号和对象的联系都完全相同，当然是最理想最成功的传播。例如给节目主持人朱军设计一个谜语：“红色之旅”。

灯谜设计者首先要把“朱军”作为本义，寻求它的转义。“朱军”中的“朱”，经查词典知道，不仅可以代表姓，还可以代表朱红或朱砂。朱红本身就是一种红的颜色，朱砂也是一种红色物质。这样，“朱”这个词，就可以转义为红的颜色。“朱军”中的“军”，经查词典知道，可以代表军队或军旅。这样，名字“军”就可以转义为军队或军旅。两者连起来，“朱军”就可以转义为“红色军队”或“红色军旅”。谜底出现在谜面中，太直接了当然，需要把“军”字隐去，而“朱军”的转义就成了“红色之旅”。再让本义和转义互换，使谜面“红色之旅”成为本义，谜底“朱军”成为转义。再给谜面加个上一个限制性说明“打一个节目主持人的名字”，灯谜就设计好了。

传播的只是谜面“红色之旅”和说明“打一个节目主持人的名字”。

猜谜者看到谜面和说明后，首先要弄清楚谜面“红色之旅”的本义，即字面意义：红颜色的旅游，或者红颜色的军队。然后考虑转化成哪一个节目主持人的名字。节目主持人有名的话，董卿、周涛、朱军。慢！朱，不是红的颜色吗？朱军，朱军，红颜色的军队，红色之旅。噢，谜底是朱军。

这个猜谜过程，发送端和接收端的本义和转义都完全相同，是一个理想的，成功的传播过程。但这样的传播过程少见，一般很难做到。

一般地说，一个话语和语篇的传播，只要本义的字面、句义和篇义三个层次中关键的符号和对象的联系，发送和接受两端相同，传播就算是成功的了。至于转义层的符号与对象的联系，可以仁者见仁，智者见智，因人因事而异，两端相同固然好，不同也可以，一般不作要求，有时还最好不同。

例如张三出差去外地，原定一周，三天后，因本单位临时有事，必须提前连夜赶回。

①（注：此灯谜的谜面和谜底，都引自一本书灯谜。特此说明和致谢。）
为了避免半夜敲门惊吓家人，先发回一条短信：“原定出差一周，今因单位有事要我处理，必须连夜赶回。今晚 11 点到家。张三。”家中接到短信后，妈妈和孩子关心的只是其中对他们来说关键的一句：“今晚 11 点到家。”妈妈便说：“我得赶紧准备点夜宵。”孩子说：“我得赶紧把作业做好。又有好东西吃了。”

发送端：
张三 本义：今晚 11 点到家 ———— 转义：避免半夜敲门，惊吓家人
   √
解释：对家人的关爱

接收端：
妈妈 本义：今晚 11 点到家 ———— 转义：赶紧准备点夜宵
   √
解释：家庭主妇的责任感和对丈夫的爱
孩子 本义：今晚 11 点到家 —— 转 1：做好作业 —— 转 2：有好东西吃
   √   √
解释：过去的经验   解释：过去的经验
（爸爸每次出差回来） （作业检查通得过就能吃
都要检查作业）       爸爸带回来的好东西）

一条三十个字的短信，只有六个字起作用。这条短信的传播，算不算成功？当然是成功的。因为关键符号“今晚 11 点到家”的本义层，符号与对象的联系，发送和接受两端是相同的，传播的目的已经达到。至于短信的其他部分，接收端有没有体会到发送端的担心（半夜敲门，惊吓家人），单位发生了什么事情等等，对于传播的目的来说，都是次要的。

3.4.5 图像和实物的传播

图像可以以原始的方式传播，也可以以现代的方式传播。—张照片可以通过光波直接传入人的视觉系统，也可以通过互联网来传播。而实物只能以原始方式传播。现代传播工具只能传播实物的图像。

图像和实物的单渠道单编码传播，与语音和文字的传播，其符号学特征是一样的：
① 传播过程是一个“心理—生理—物理—生理—心理”的过程；
② 在传播的“生理—物理—生理”过程中，符号和对象只能传播其中之一，不能同时都传播。符号和对象的联系在传播中要经历一个“联系—分开—联系”的过程；
③ 要求接收端心理过程中符号跟对象的联系，与发送端心理过程中符号跟对象的联系相同。

从理论上讲，语音、文字、图像和实物都可以作为符号来传播，也可以作为对象来传播。实际上，语音和文字通常是作为符号来传播，而图像和实物通常首先作为对象来传播。

在实际传播语音和文字时，接收端接收到传播过来的语音和文字后，通常考虑的是这些语音和文字作为符号代表的是什么，一般不会把它们作为对象，去考虑代表它们的符号是什么。所以，语音和文字的传播过程通常是一个传播符号，不传播对象的过程。
例如在传播语词“五星红旗”(语音或文字)时，接收端接收到语词“五星红旗”后，通常考虑的是语词“五星红旗”代表什么，不会去考虑代表语词“五星红旗”的符号是什么。

在实际传播图像和实物时，接收端接收到传播来的图像和实物后，首先考虑的是：这些图像和实物是什么，也就是先把它们作为对象来考虑代表它们的语词符号是什么。如果接收端弄不清楚代表这些图像和实物的语词符号，也就是不知道这些图像和实物是什么，其他也就无从考虑起。接收端只有先把传播过来的图像和实物当作对象，弄清楚代表它们的语词符号，也就是知道它们是什么(本义)后，才能考虑它们能代表什么(转义)。所以，当信息单编码传播图像和实物的过程首先是一个传播对象，不传播符号的过程。

例如，在传播五星红旗(图像或实物)时，接收端接收到传播来的五星红旗后，首先考虑的是：这是什么，也就是先把五星红旗作为对象，考虑代表它的语词符号是什么。只有把五星红旗跟代表它的语词符号“五星红旗”联系起来，也就是知道了这是五星红旗(本义)之后，才能把五星红旗作为符号来考虑它能代表的对象(转义)；中华人民共和国。

只有在传播熟悉的图像和实物时，接收端才会把图像和实物直接当作符号来考虑它们代表什么，例如来了客人，主人端上杯茶，客人就不会先去考虑端上来的是什么，而立即意识到这代表着主人的以礼相待。

在传播中，与语言和文字通常扮演符号角色不同，图像和实物扮演的角色，首先是对象，其次才是符号。但不管作为对象，还是作为符号，在单渠道单编码传播中，只传播图像和实物自身，代表它们的符号和被它们代表的对象都不传播。所以，不管图像和实物作为对象，还是作为符号，在传播过程中，符号与对象的联系都要经历一个“联系一分开一联系”的过程。图像和实物作为对象，与图像和实物作为符号的区别在于：前者(相当于本义层)，符号与对象的联系在发送和接收两段必须相同，否则，不是传播失败，就是产生误解；后者(相当于转义层)，符号与对象的联系在发送和接收两段有时必须相同，有时最好相同，有时可以不同或最好不同。

把图像和实物作为对象的实例：

远在美国的儿子寄回(传播)一台小型老年手写电脑给国内的老爸。如果老爸也知道这是老年手写电脑，传播成功；如果老爸不知道这是什么东西，束之高阁，传播失败；如果老爸把它当成电视机，只用来看看电视电影，不知道可以手写输入，这是误解。本义层上的误解，会影响传播的成功率。所以，要求本义层的符号与对象的联系，在发送和接收两端，必须相同。

把图像和实物作为符号的实例：

把图像和实物作为符号的前提是，发送和接收两端都已经知道图像和实物是什么，也就是本义层的问题已解决。把图像和实物作为符号时，要解决的是转义层上的问题。所以，有时必须相同，有时最好相同，有时可以不同或最好不同。

有时必须相同：

世界上大部分地区，摇头代表不同意，也有一些地区，正好相反，摇头代表同意。在
这种情况下，摇头作为符号，代表什么，发送端和接收端必须相同。
有时最好相同：
甲请乙吃饭。发送端的甲认为：吃饭只是代表朋友间叙一叙。如果接收端的乙也认为：吃饭只是代表朋友间叙一叙，这当然好。如果接收端的乙认为：吃饭代表甲有求于乙，这显然也是误解，但不会导致传播失败。因为这是在甲乙都已知道是吃饭（本义），即传播基本成功的前提下的误解，是转义层中的误解。
有时可以不同或最好不同：
男青年送给女青年一束玫瑰花。男青年的本意只是表示一下友情，女青年却理解成向她求婚。这虽然也是一种双方都已经知道是送一束玫瑰花（本义），即传播基本成功的前提下的误解（转义层中的误解），这种误解却是男青年不敢奢望，而又求之不得的。
图像和实物传播成功的关键在于：在传播中，图像和实物在扮演对象角色时，发送端和接收端的符号和对象的联系（本义）必须相同。
由此可见，图像和实物，跟语音和文字一样，传播的基石也是意符引。

3.4.6 多媒体传播
所谓多媒体传播，在这里我们用来指多渠道（主要是视听两个渠道）同时传播，也包括单渠道多编码的同时传播。如：传播带有文字说明的图像。
多媒体传播的原始形式是一种不借助传播工具的多渠道和单渠道多编码的直接传播，如老师在课堂上，在直接用口讲的时，用手在黑板上写写画画，或示教具和实物。演员在台上演话剧，评弹，特别是京剧，台上的语音、乐器声、锣鼓声，演员的身姿和台上的布景等等通过视听二觉同时传入观众的大脑。国画的画面完成后，通常还要题字题名，写几个字。
多媒体传播的现代形式是借助传播工具的多渠道和单渠道多编码的传播，如电影、电视，多功能的电脑和手机。
多媒体传播能同时传播符号，对象和解释，所以，具有促成认知发生的能力。例如你不认识金丝猴。有人领你到动物园。在用手指着金丝猴的同时，告诉你：“这是金丝猴。”你耳后并用，把耳朵听到的“金丝猴”，跟眼睛顺着手指的方向看到的金丝猴联系起来，便生成了对金丝猴的认知。
多媒体传播能同时传播符号和对象，可以使符号与对象的联系在传播中避免经历一个“合一分一合”的过程，因而可以大大地提高传播的成功率。例如传播一幅清明上河图。如果图上有“清明上河图”的字样，接收端一看就知道是一幅清明上河图，传播成功率就高。如果只有图没有字，接收端就很难理解图，毫无疑问，传播的成功率就会大大提高。但传播的成功率的基础仍然是“清明上河图”与清明上河图之间联系的稳定性和社会公认性，“清明上河图”必须是意符引。
又如在电视机上出现了高楼林立的都市画面，画面上还有字幕“上海”，你便感到上海原来是这个样子的。当画面变成日本富士山时，画面上的字幕还是“上海”，你便感到大错特错了。为什么？这是因为你在看电视之前，已经知道，“上海”代表的对象是大的城市，不是山。“上海”跟大的城市之间的联系，具有稳定性和社会公认性。
由此可见，多媒体传递过程，与非多媒体的单渠道单编码传递过程一样，要求符号跟对象的联系至少在本义层要具有相对稳定性。如果符号跟对象的联系只有随意性，没有稳定性，那么，什么传递都实现不了。所以，多媒体传递的基石同样是意引符。

3. 4. 7 共时传递和历时传递

传递通常是指共时传递，历时传递称为传承。

传递和传承的区别是：传递的接收端，如果遇到问题，还有可能与发送端进行沟通；传递的发送端已经作古，接收端的问题只好自己单方面进行分析，甚至猜测。为了使传递的接收端能够尽可能地正确理解发送端，便形成了考古、考证、诠释和解释等学科和各种解释理论。

所以，意引符不仅是共时传递的基石，也是历时传递的基石。

意引符虽然具有类似引符的性质，从而保证了人类认知成果的传递和传承，但毕竟不是引符，而是意符，所以还具有意符性质，从而保证人类认知能够与时俱进，思想能够及时解放，不拖科学和社会发展的后腿。例如“原子”代表什么？人们关于“原子”代表的对象的意象，随着 1904 年汤姆生提出原子的面包夹葡萄干模型，1911 年卢瑟福提出原子的行星模型，1926 年薛定谔提出原子的电子云模型，在短短的二十多年，改变了三次。

又如随着邓小平理论的提出，大家改变了“商品经济”只能代表资本主义的看法，改革开放，把商品经济引入我国的社会主义计划经济，建立了中国特色的社会主义市场经济，大大地促进了我国经济大发展，人民生活水平大大提高。

4. 符号解释

解释是把符号与对象联系起来的中介，是符号生成的必要而又充分的条件。没有解释，符号跟对象联系不起来，也就不可能有符号。解释是符号学中最复杂最难把握的环节，是符号学的精华。

解释也是符号利用的依据。以解释中是否包含着非建构因素，可以把符号区分为引符和意符，相应地解释也可以区分为引符解释和意符解释。

4.1 引符解释和意符解释

引符解释是包含着非建构因素的解释。所谓非建构因素是指人只能认识，不能建
构的因素。这些因素，在认知中可以扮演解释的角色；在认知之外，都是一些客观规律。例如，山那边有烟，可以指有烧灶经验的人的认知，引导到知道山那边有火。在这里，烧灶，在认知中扮演了解释的角色；在认知之外，是关于氧化的客观规律。人只能认识客观规律，不能建构客观规律。

把握引符解释的难点在于认识客观规律。几千年来，人认识客观规律的速度是一种加速度，越来越快。到现在为止，人已经认识的客观规律，绝对数很大，但相对数还是不大的。认识过程是一个从易到难的迭代过程，已认识的客观规律，是相对地以比较容易认识的居多。世界中还有大量的、认知难度大的客观规律在等待着人去认识。

意符解释是人按照自己的意愿建构的解释。不包含非建构因素。正是由于意符解释摆脱了非建构因素的束缚，它具有极大的灵活性。你可以充分发挥你的主观能动性，建构一系列真真假假的解释，把任意一个人捧上天，也可以把在他贬得一文不值。所谓“欲加之罪，何患无辞”，在符号学看来，指的就是意符解释建构的任意性和灵活性。

4.2 把握意符解释的难点和要点

4.2.1 建构意符解释，取材面广，自由度大，涉及面广


关于意符“意思”的解释，上网百度一下，就有14个选项：思想、思想、意思、道理、意图、用意、意志、神情、心情、情绪、迹象、苗头、象征性的表示和贿赂。

关于意符“信息”的定义，在唐世伟和刘贤梅主编的《信息论》的第一页就可以找到14个:

信息是实物之间的差异。
信息是实物联系的普遍的形式。
信息是物质和能量在时间和空间中分布的不均匀性。
信息是物质的普遍属性。
信息是收信者事先不知道的报道。
信息是用于消除随机不确定性的东西。
信息是负熵。
信息是作用于人类感官的东西。
信息是通信传输的内容。
信息是加工知识的原材料。
信息是控制的指令。
信息就是数据。信息就是情报。信息就是知识。我们再加一个：信息是符号认知效应。

这里需要说明一下，意符解释和定义的关系。定义的结构用语言学的术语来说，是由被定义项和定义项构成，定义项必须是已知的；用符号学的术语来说，是由符号和解释构成，被定义项相当于符号，定义项相当于解释，解释必须是已知符号。所谓下定义，用语言学的术语来说，是用词“是”把被定义项和定义项联系起来；用符号学的术语来说，下定义就是通过建构解释来建构符号，把构成解释的已知符号所代表的对象，转移到符号名下，成为符号代表的对象。

从以上几个实例中，已可窥见建构意符解释，取材面的广泛和选择的自由度大。

出现这样的情况是因为一个人在给一个意符建构解释时，不受非建构因素的制约，自己大脑中的全部认知积累都可以是建构意符解释的选项，可以充分发挥自己的主观能动性，按照自己的意愿自由选择。

建构意符解释，不仅选材面广，自由度大，涉及面也广。

郭沫若之所以能够给曹操定名，靠的就是给意符“曹操”建构了新的意符解释。原先，人们把曹操“宁可我负天下人，不可天下人负我”来解释“曹操”的，“曹操”就代表奸雄。郭沫若用“三统一，有利于社会生产力的发展”来解释“曹操”，“曹操”就不是奸雄，而代表社会进步的有功之臣。铁案翻过来了。

法庭上的辩论，在符号学看来，双方都在选择和建构对己方有利的意符解释。

在日常生活中，建构意符解释的现象随处可见。

妈妈对孩子说：“要做好孩子，就要按时完成作业。”当孩子把妈妈建构的意符解释“按时完成作业”所代表的对象，转移到意符“好孩子”名下，使“好孩子”代表一个能按时完成作业的孩子时，妈妈的意符解释就会外化为孩子的按时完成作业的实现行为。

爸爸对孩子说：“偷点东西算什么！”当孩子把爸爸建构的意符解释“算什么”转移到意符“偷点东西”的名下，使“偷点东西”代表无关紧要的小事时，爸爸的意符解释就会外化为孩子的有持无恐的偷盗行为。

所谓灵感和顿悟也常常跟建构意符解释联系在一起。

有一天，清代名儒纪晓岚风度翩翩地站在一条用橹摇的小船的船头，悠闲地欣赏两岸风光。一只扬帆的快艇，从后面快速赶上。当两船快要齐头时，快艇上一名武夫抛来一个上联“两船并行，橹速不如帆快”。话音一落，快艇已去远了。纪晓岚一听就知道对方在调侃自己，苦于一时对不上来。

“橹速”和“帆快”，在这些满腹经纶的名儒的大脑中，飞快地以谐音为中介，跟三国时代孙权的文臣鲁肃和东汉刘邦的武将樊哙联系起来，说“橹速不如帆快”，在这种解释下，就等于在说“鲁肃不如樊哙”，也就是“文臣不如武将”。“
纪晓岚苦闷了几天。一日，朋友做寿，请他去听堂会散心。当他听到台上热闹非凡的鼓乐声中，高昂清脆的笛音，伴随着柔和的箫韵，特别动听，突然灵机一动，同样以谐音为中介，把笛音清脆和箫韵柔和跟北宋大将狄青和汉初宰相萧何联系上了，下联也就有了“八音齐奏，狄青怎比萧和”。也就是说武将怎么能跟文臣相比。

这个例子，表面上只是对对联，是建构符号，不是建构解释。实际上，只有通过建构一系列意符解释，才能把棉帆笛箫跟相隔甚远的文臣武将联系起来。

（注：本例中的上下联引自卢明寿主编的《创新思维学引论》第30页。）

4.2.2 解释的功成身退和意符解释的可替代性

(1) 解释的功成身退

解释虽然是建构符号不可或缺的必要而又充分的条件，但在它完成了把符号跟对象联系起来的任务，使符号成为已知符号之后，为了有效地思维和传播，解释需要，有时必须功成身退，从显式转化为隐式，退居记忆深处，甚至被遗忘。例如说“赶快去中亚饭店，老板请你吃饭。”这是一句大家都听得懂的话。如果我不这样说，硬是要像语文老师给小学低年级小朋友上语文课那样，逐字逐句地解释的话，大家听听，感觉如何？

我这样说：“赶快就是抓住时机，加快速度。去就是从这里到另外一个地方。我讲的另外一个地方就是一个名字叫‘中亚’的饭店。饭店是出售饭菜供人食用的店铺。老板就是我们公司的财产所有者。请是邀请。你就是你本人。吃饭不光有饭吃，还有菜吃。”

显然，这样说话，思维和传播都无法有效进行。

实际上，在人的思维活动和传播活动中，建构符号的活动虽是基础，但数量不多；大量的使用已知符号的活动，也就是选择和使用已知符号的活动。道理原本很简单：一个辛辛苦苦造了一栋房子，不去住现成的，每次都要重新造，岂不是傻瓜！人是很聪明的，一个符号花了力气建构起来后，不仅自己一代一代使用，还要让子子孙孙一代一代使用下去。只有在需要时，才建构新的符号，修改或重构某些已知符号。一直到一种语言完成自己的历史使命，成为死语言后，已建构起来的已知符号仍然保留着。

这种现象之所以会被误解是在于：一个符号，在它的解释功成身退后，只留下符号和对象。符号使用者无需解释在场就能把符号与对象联系起来，呈现出二元结构假相，好像不需要或者根本不存在解释似的。这种误解连大语言学家、符号学的创始人索绪尔也没有幸免，以偏概全地提出了能指加所指的二元结构符号观，尽管从他说的如下话语：“我们可以设想有一门研究社会生活中符号生命的科学；……我们管它叫符号学，它将告诉我们符号是由什么构成的，……因为这门科学还不存在，我们说不出它将会是什么样子，……”中可以看出，索绪尔对他自己提出的能指加所指的二元结构符号观没有最终肯定。

这些显示出解释的功成身退不是那么容易把握的。

(2) 意符解释的可替代性

由于意符解释摆脱了非建构因素的束缚，可以选择和建构不同的解释，使同一个意符代表不同的对象；也可以选择和建构不同的解释，使不同的意符代表同一个对象；还可以选择和建构不同的解释，使同一个意符代表同一个对象。
同一个意符代表同一个对象的不同解释之间具有可替代性。例如有人问：“土豆是什么？”你可以答：“马铃薯。”也可以说：“洋山芋。”两种解释可以彼此替代，这好比从甲地到乙地的通道不止一条，其中任意一条都可以从甲地到达乙地，这些通道之间便具有可替代性。

意符解释的可替代性的作用：

a. 可以使原始解释已经失传的已知符号得到传承和传播。

意符的主体是语言，语言的基础是语词。语词绝大部分是原始解释已经失传的已知符号。它们之所以能够传承至今并能顺利地传播，除了它们自身具有意引双重外，靠的就是意符解释的可替代性。

可替代性最强的意符解释是直指解释和模仿解释。

有人问你：“狮子是什么？”如果你说来说去说不清楚的话，领他到动物园，把狮子指给他看，他就知道了，尽管为什么狮子叫“狮子”已经失传，无从考证。

大人们对婴幼儿指着猫，说：“mao。”指着狗，说：“gou。”少数一多，婴幼儿便会把“mao”跟猫，把“gou”跟狗联系起来。


一位中国妈妈，一边说“pingguo”一边把苹果递给婴幼儿。次数一多，婴幼儿便会把“pingguo”跟苹果联系起来。一位英国妈妈，一边说“apple”一边把苹果递给婴幼儿。次数一多，婴幼儿便会把“apple”跟苹果联系起来。

直指解释和模仿解释是婴幼儿最初习得母语的主要手段，也是成人常用的符号认知方法。

b. 可以调控人的认知深度。

人可以在不同的认知深度上认识一个意符所代表的对象。即所谓从感性认识上升到理性认识和从理性认识返回感性认识。认知深度如何调控？人是通过选择和建构不同认知深度的意符解释来调控的。例如用如下不同认知深度的解释来解释“人”：

“无毛，两足，直立行走的动物”；
“会说话的动物”；
“有理性的动物”；
“能制造和使用工具劳动的动物”；
“各种社会关系的总和”。

人对“人”的认知就会随着解释的更换和替代，从感性认识状态上升到理性认识状态，或者，从理性认识状态返回到感性认识状态。要把人对“人”的认知定位在什么样的认知深度上，就使用相应深度的解释来解释“人”，也就是把相应解释所代表的对象，转移到“人”的名下，作为这时的“人”代表的对象，人对“人”的认知也就被定位在相应认知深度上。

4.2.3 建构意符解释的局限性和能动性

建构意符解释，虽然摆脱了非建构因素的束缚，但也不是绝对自由的。这是因为建
构意符解释只能从已有认知积累中选材建构，而人的认知积累不仅自身有时代局限性
和个人局限性，而且在从认知积累中选材建构意符解释时，还受外部客观存在和内部主
观能动性的制约。

（1）认知积累的时代局限性

人对世界的认知过程是一个加速度的过程，越来越快；同时也是一个无限的，没有
穷尽的过程。所以任何时候的认知积累都有时代局限性。在发现细菌和病毒之前的年
代里，人就不可能选用细菌和病毒来解释疾病。

（2）认知积累的个人局限性

自然界和人类社会都是极其复杂的事物。而一个人的一生中，时间和精力都是极
其有限的。一个人只能认识世界的某一个很小的部分，所以每个人的认知积累，都不只
有时代局限性，还有个人局限性。一个经济学家能够对经济现象作出解释，不一定能对
疾病做出解释。同样，一个医生能够对疾病作出解释，不一定能对经济现象作出解释。

（3）认知积累选择的能动性

存在决定意识。一个人在从已有认知积累中，选材建构意符解释，通常有意无意地
受制于他所处的外部客观环境，即存在。

十九世纪末列强侵略中国时，美国的实力不如英国，美国便选用“机会均等”作为
“国际关系”的解释。在那时的美国看来，“国际关系”应该代表一种弱肉强食，机会均等
的关系。到了二十一世纪，美国成了世界上唯一的超级大国，便改用“美国领导世界，顺
我者昌，逆我者亡”来解释“国际关系”，在现在的美国看来，“国际关系”应该代表一种美
国领导世界的顺我者昌、逆我者亡的关系。

这些是典型的存在决定意识，身不由己让存在牵着鼻子走的实例，也是所谓意识形
态的实例。

（4）认知积累选择的能动性

存在决定意识，意识也可以反作用于存在。一个人在从已有的认知积累中选材建
构意符解释时，有时主观能动性起决定性的作用。例如解放前，中国有些出身于大地
主、大资本家家庭的热血青年，不选用“人不为己，天诛地灭”，而选用“为他人，为全世界
劳动人民谋福利”来解释价值观和人生观，不惜血液、抛头颅，心甘情愿地放弃优厚的
物质生活，去建辛的革命征途。

这些是典型的意识反作用于存在，充分地发挥主观能动性的实例，也是世界观和意
识形态可以改变的实例。

### 5. 符号活动

认知是建构符号的产物，是一种符号活动。思维是认知的运作，也是一种符号活
动。
符号活动的基础是建构符号的符号活动。但在人的实际符号活动中，建构符号的符号活动只占少数，大多数的符号活动是使用已建构的符号，即使用已知符号的符号活动。所谓已知符号是指：解释在完成了把符号与对象联系起来的任务后，已经成身退，只留下符号与对象，符号使用者无需解释在场，就能把符号与对象联系起来，表现出二元结构假相的符号。出现这种情况的原因前面已经提到：一方面，好比一个人造了一栋房子，不去住成的，每一次都要重新造，岂不是傻瓜。人是很聪明的，辛辛苦苦建构了一个符号，不仅自己一代一代地使用，还要让子子孙孙一代一代地使用下去。只有在需要时，才建构新的符号和修改或重构某些已知符号。另一方面，如果解释在把符号与对象联系起来，完成了建构符号的任务后，坚持不功成身退，在每一次使用已知符号时都要解释一下的话，那么思维和传播都无法有效进行。

符号活动可以根据符号所代表的对象能在符号活动中起作用的属性的多少，区分为以自然语言为代表的多属性对象符号活动，以数字为代表的单属性对象符号活动和以逻辑符号为代表的符号化符号活动。

以自然语言为代表的多属性对象符号活动的特征是：符号所代表的对象，在符号活动中保持自然状态，所有已知属性都可以起作用。例如同一个姑娘，有人说她漂亮，因为她五官端正，唇红齿白，皮肤水灵；有人说她不漂亮，因为她身材矮小肥胖；有第三者站出来说，你错了，这位姑娘漂亮就漂亮在有矮又胖，我就喜欢又矮又胖的，跟我很般配，情人眼里出西施呗！她是我的女朋友。在这个例子中，“姑娘”代表的姑娘，有许多属性在符号活动中起作用，而且，对不同的人不同的属性在起作用。这是不同的人对同一事物会有不同看法，产生歧义、模糊和矛盾的根本原因。

以数字为代表的单属性对象符号活动的特征是：符号所代表的对象，在符号活动中，只有一个属性起作用，其他所有可能有的属性都被忽视掉，例如数字1, 2, 3, 4。不管这些符号实际代表的具体对象是什么，在符号活动中起作用的只是一对象的一个量的属性，而且所有对象的量的属性都是相同的，除了量的多少外。这就保证了符号活动的无歧义性和结果的准确性。

以逻辑符号为代表的符号化符号活动是自然语言的多属性对象和数字的单属性对象的人为折衷。其目的是企图清除自然语言符号活动的歧义性，推广数字符号活动的准确性。其特征是符号代表的对象，在符号活动中只保留几个（至少两个）属性起作用，其余的都通过形式化被忽视掉，例如不管命题具体代表什么，在符号活动中，只保留真和假两个属性起作用。

5.1 以自然语言为代表的多属性对象符号活动

在以自然语言为代表的多属性对象符号活动中，符号代表的对象，保持自然状态，所有已知属性都可以起作用，所以不论是建构符号的符号活动，还是使用已知符号的符号活动都是符号活动中最复杂的。

5.1.1 建构符号的符号活动

建构符号的符号活动是指，通过解释把符号跟对象联系起来的符号活动。常见的
有如下四个类型。

① 直指：通过直指使符号跟对象联系起来。
例如有人问：“张三是谁?”你把张三指给他看看，他就知道了。有人问：“老虎是什么?”你领他到动物园，或者拿张老虎挂图，把老虎指给他看看，他就知道了。

② 模仿：把符号跟对象的联系本身作为示范。只要模仿就可以了。
例如你学英语单词“pen”，查查英汉词典词条“pen①钢笔……”，你就会把“pen”跟“钢笔”联系起来。你听到有人叫他“朱明”，你便会把“朱明”跟他联系起来，知道他叫朱明。

③ 搭桥：通过已知符号的穿针引线，把符号跟对象联系起来。
例如有人告诉你：“这孩子在某中学读高中。”你便会把“高中生”跟这个孩子联系起来，知道这孩子是一个高中生。有人告诉你，“这姑娘是去年去的，在小区当清洁工。”你便会把“外来打工妹”跟这姑娘联系起来，知道她是一位外来打工妹。

④ 转移：把作为解释的已知符号代表的对象，转移到符号的名下，成为符号代表的对象。（请注意：转移的不是作为解释的已知符号本身，而是作为解释的已知符号代表的对象。）
例如没有读过《红楼梦》和《水浒传》的人，听到或看到《红楼梦》和《水浒传》时，对于它们代表什么，大脑一片空白，一点都不清楚。在读过《红楼梦》和《水浒传》之后，再听到或看到《红楼梦》和《水浒传》时，便知道《红楼梦》代表贾宝玉和林黛玉等大观园的故事，《水浒传》代表水泊梁山一百零八将的故事。如果要他讲故事，一般多多少少能讲一点，要背书，一般都背不出来。为什么？因为小说中的文字作为小说名称的解释，转移到小说名称名下不是作为解释的文本身，而是作为解释的文字代表的对象。书中的人物和情节。

同理，在“认知是一种符号效应”中，“一种符号效应”作为“认知”的解释，转移到“认知”名下，作为“认知”代表的对象，不是一种符号效应”语或文字自身，而是它们代表的对象。

5.1.2 使用已知符号的符号活动
使用已知符号的符号活动，可以根据对符号和对象的侧重不同区分为：符号象合、合象找符和符象互动等符号活动。

(1) 符合象合
符号象合是以符号侧面对为主导，对象侧面跟上的符号活动，主要是符号接收者的符号活动。这类符号活动能够实现的前提是：符号必须是符号接受者已经知道的已知符号，也就是符号必须是符号接受者认识的。

对于语言符号来说，符号只有一种形式，即线性组合。象合有两种形式：主从组合和并行组合。

所谓对象的主从组合是把符号的符号代表的对象融入或移入为主的符号代表的对象之中，如当你听到或看到“蓝蓝的天”时，你会把“蓝蓝的”代表的对象融入“天”代表的对象之中，脑海浮现出一片蓝色的天空意象。当你听到或看到“怀抱婴儿的母
亲”时，你会把“怀抱”和“婴儿”代表的对象，移入“母亲”代表的对象之中，脑海中浮现出一位怀抱婴儿的母亲意象。当你听到或看到“金山”时，你还是会按照符号的主从组合结构，把“金”代表的对象融入“山”代表的对象之中，形成一座用金子铸成的山的意象。尽管现实中不可能有金子铸成的山。当你听到或看到“方的圆”或“圆的方”时，你将会尝试把五形融入圆形，把圆形融入方形，只是由于对象自身的属性，形不成统一意象而已。

所谓对象的并行组合是把线性组合的符号代表的对象，依次组合成并立或串行的意象，如当你读唐诗读到“朝辞白帝彩云间，千里江陵一日还”时，脑海中便会出现白帝城的意象，然后浮现出千里的江陵的意象。

（2）合象找符

与符号象合相反，合象找符是以对象侧位为主导，符号侧位跟上的符号活动，主要是符号生成和发送者的符号活动。

如果说符号象合是从符号到对象的符号活动的话，那么，合象找符是从对象到符号的符号活动。合象找符能够实现的前提是：对象必须是符号生成和发送者已经知道的已知符号的对象，也就是对象必须是符号生成者和发送者认识的。

让我们借助巴尔特用过的例子来说：有一期《巴黎竞赛画报》的封面画是一个身穿法国军服的黑人青年，正在敬军礼。要把这个封面画作为对象，找到能代表它的符号的前提是：对象的组成元素，如法国军服，黑人和军礼，符号的生成和发送者必须是已经知道的，即认识的。只有在这样的前提下，符号生成和发送者才有可能为这个对象找到代表它的符号，“一位身穿法国军服的黑人青年，正在敬军礼”。一个不认识法国军服，不知道什么是军礼，或不知道世界上有黑人的人，就不可能为这个封面画找到能代表它的符号。

合象找符是日常的社会生活中经常能够见到的符号活动。如：记者在天安门城楼上现场报道天安门前国庆阅兵分列式盛况：“……威武雄壮的陆海空三军战士方阵来了！战士们双目注着天安门，手持着枪，迈着整齐的正步，喊着嘹亮的口号：‘祖国万岁！’正在通过天安门。飒爽英姿的女兵方阵来了！炮兵方阵来了！装甲兵方阵来了！……现在正在通过天安门的导弹方阵，展示着各种型号的导弹，都是有自己知识产权、世界领先的导弹……”

（3）符象互动

符象互动主要也是符号生成和发送者的符号活动，但只有在符号生成和发送者同时扮演符号接受者角色时，才会符象互动。符象互动是在写作和讲话中常见的符号活动。

“诗言志”的说法，在《尚书•舜典》中已有了。在《诗经•周南•关雎》的序中还说：“在心为志，发言为诗。”这些说明，我们的祖先很早就知道了，诗是在志的基础上形成的，最初是一个从对象到符号的合象找符的符号活动。但诗常常不是一蹴而就的，形成后还要反复斟酌。最典型的例子是唐诗诗人贾岛反复斟酌自己写的一句诗“鸟宿池边树，僧推月下门”中，“推”好，还是“敲”好。有一天，
贾岛骑着一头毛驴，在京城东安的街道上行走，一边低着头，思索“推”好，还是“敲”好，一边用手做着推门和敲门的动作。行人见了十分惊讶。韩愈看了，十分生气地对贾岛说：“你骑驴子怎么低着头，也不朝前看看？”贾岛一惊，慌忙下驴，说明原委，向韩愈赔礼。韩愈一听，转怒为喜，深思片刻后便说：“敲字好！在万物人睡，沉静没有一点声息的时候，敲门声更显得夜深人静。”在这里，可以看到，“推”和“敲”是在与手的推门和敲门的动作，以及韩愈描述的夜深人静意境的互动中被斟酌的。显示了改诗是一种符象互动的符号活动。

写文章跟写诗一样，也是从对象到符号的合象找符符号活动开始。我们可以套用《诗经》中的话：“在心为志，下笔成章。”这里的志是指思想、意向和目的等等意象，是写文章的基础，是文章代表的对象。

一气呵成，一字不改的文章，不能说没有。但一般地说，文章写成后，多多少少要修改修改。修改文章，跟改诗一样，是符象互动的符号活动。

口语也跟吟诗和写文章一样，是“在心为志，出口成句”。先有意图，意向和目的，然后发音讲话。

你只要稍加注意，便会发现：一个人在讲话时，常常会发现自己讲错了，即所谓口误，再重新讲过。例如妈妈对孩子说：“今天吃过中饭。不！现在，妈妈就领你去儿童乐园。”这句话不长，妈妈可想了不少。妈妈首先想到的是：丈夫今天中午不回来吃饭，家里还有一点剩饭剩菜，和孩子在家里吃了中饭，再去儿童乐园。所以，她说：“今天吃过中饭。”话音刚落，新的想法就冒出来了：丈夫不在家吃中饭，自己有点空闲的机会不多，还是早点去，让孩子玩个痛快，于是就改口：“不！现在，妈妈就领你去儿童乐园。”

又如老师一上讲台就说：“李小明！”紧接着又说：“对不起，我说错了！李小冬这次作文有创意，应该在全班表扬。”这是老师在说：“李小明”，李小明的意象跟着在老师脑海中出现时，发现弄错了，立即改口。

这些都是符号生成和发送者同时扮演符号接受者角色而产生的符象互动符号活动。

（4）建构符号与使用已知符号相结合的混合型符号活动：符象推导

符象推导是一个符号把自己的对象的对象，对象的对象的对象，……，直接作为自己的对象的符号活动，是一种建构符号与使用已知符号相结合的混合型的符号活动。符象推导的次数理论上是无限的。

最短的符象推导是符象三段论，例如：

```
(1) "door" "门" "门" "门"
(2) "door" "门"
(3) "门"
```

注：(关于贾岛诗，可参看网络百度一下。)
这个符号三段论先用英汉词典词条为解释，建构符号①，再使用已知符号②，然后推导出用“门”为解释建构的符号③。

符号推导时每个人，只要不是处于不求事的睡眠状态，须臾不能没有的符号活动，否则我们无法生存。这是因为人的任意一个识物过程都是一个符号推导，而且还是一个符号四段论。

你早晨醒来，只有先识物，才能行动。只有知道，这是衣服，才能穿衣。只有知道，这是房门，才能走出去。只有知道，这是早餐，才能吃早餐。

拿认识衣服来说吧！你要认识放在你面前的是衣服，必须以前见过衣服，并且知道衣服叫“衣服”。你认识当前衣服的过程，可以图示如下：

“衣服”——此前见过的衣服的表象——当前衣服的视感觉——当前的衣服

————> “衣服”——当前的衣服

四个环节中，任意一个出了问题，或者“衣服”这个名称忘记了，或者衣服的表象记不清了，或者眼睛盲了，无法生成关于当前衣服的视感觉，或者当前没有衣服，你就不可能认识衣服。

跟认识衣服一样，其他所有识物过程都是一个符号四段论。

关于符号推导的图示，三元结构符号观与二元结构符号观是不同的。让我们再次借助巴特尔的例子来说明：

“我坐在理发店，有人给我一期《巴黎竞赛画报》。封面上有一个身穿法国军服的黑人青年在行军礼，双目向上，可能凝视着飘扬的三色旗。这就是画面的全部意义。但是，不论是幼稚与否，我非常清楚地看到它对我指示的东西；法国是一个伟大的帝国。她的全体国民，不受种族歧视，踏实地在她的旗帜下效力。这个黑人在为所谓他的压迫者服务时表现出来的热忱，再好不过地回答了那些诋毁所谓的殖民主义的人。因此，我又遇到了一个更大的符号系统；有一个能指，其本身已由先前一个系统形成（黑人士兵致法国军礼），还有一个通过能指而获得的所指存在。”（注：巴特尔的话转引自王铭玉著《符号语言学》第128页。）

在这里，巴特尔描述了一个符号推导。这个符号推导，在我们三元结构符号观看来，应该图示如下：

\[
\text{黑人士兵致法国军礼} \rightarrow \text{三色旗} \rightarrow \text{法国是伟大的帝国}
\]

但巴特尔是持能指加所指的二元结构符号观的符号学学者。在他看来，这个符号推导，应该图示为（ERC）RC 即：

（黑人士兵致法国军礼 ⏮ 三色旗）→ 法国是伟大的帝国

（意指） （意指）
（请注意：在这个示例中，能指越滚越大，理论上具有无限延长的可能性。）
在这个示例中，没有解释的位子。

二元结构符号观的符号推导：只有能指意指所指、没有说明能指为什么意指这个所指，而不意指那个所指的解释。所以，只能说明只知其然，不知其所以然的认知。只有三元结构符号观的符号推导，有符号、有对象、有解释，才能生成不仅知其然，还知其所以然的比较深化的认知。

其实，在具体的符号活动中，实际上三元结构的符号推导是回避不了的，二元结构的符号推导很难有生存的余地。上面引用的巴特尔的话，就是一个证据。当巴特尔把“我非常清楚地看到它对我指示的东西：法国是一个伟大的帝国”时，实际上已经完成了他的符号推导，即最后的所指是：法国是一个伟大的帝国。但他总觉的此为至，好像话没有说完。或者还没有说清楚。接着又说了几句：“她的全体国民，不受种族歧视，踏实地在她的旗帜下效力……”来深化对最后的所指的认知。这几句话，很难放到巴特尔的示例中去，因为它不是能指，也不是所指，而是解释。

我们认为，这个例子说明：巴特尔的符号学理论与他自己的符号学实践不那么协调。

一般说来，符合象合、合象找符和符象互动都是语词、语句、语篇和图像的本义层的符号活动。从本义生成再义、就靠符象推导的符号活动。

在上面的例子中，从封面的画面、到找到代表画面的语句“黑人士兵致法国军礼”是一个在本义层的合象找符的符号活动。从画面到越出画面的三色旗，再到法国是一个伟大的帝国，是本义层生成的转义层。这个生成过程就要靠，不仅有使用已知符号的能力，还有建构符号能力的符象推导符号活动。

5.2 以数字为代表的单属性对象符号活动

以数字为代表的单属性对象符号活动是指：符号所代表的对象，在符号活动中，只有一个属性在起作用的符号活动。例如数字 1, 2, 3, 4。不管它们具体代表什么对象，在符号活动中，它们的对象只有一个量的属性在起作用，其他的属性都被忽视。而且对象间的量的属性除了量的多少外，是同质的。

数字也是一种已知符号。在作为已知符号被使用前，数字也有一个建构符号的过程。由于日常使用的十进制的基本的数字只有十个，只要在初始阶段（在学会数字段后）通过直指和模仿等建构符号的符号活动，使这十个基本的数字成为已知符号后，在以后的数字符号活动中，只有使用已知数字符号的符号活动，不再有建构新的基本的数字符号和重构已有的基本的数字符号的符号活动。

在使用已知数字符号的符号活动中，主要是符象推导活动。如：

$$1 + 2 + 3 + 4 = 3 + 3 + 4 = 6 + 4 = 10$$
$$64 + 76 - 112 = 140 - 112 = 28$$

由于数字代表的对象是同质的单属性对象，数字与数字、数字与数组和数组与数组
之间的关系，只有相等，不等，大于，小于四种。数字、明确，无歧义。数字的基本运作只有加和减两种。也是简单、明确、无歧义。二进制的其他运作都是这两种基本运作的重复和复杂化。没有改变明确和无歧义的特性。

数字符号活动的准确和无歧义源于：数字代表的对象，在符号活动中，只有一个量的属性起作用，即数字代表的对象是同质单属性对象。

如果把数字符号代表的单属性对象，改为多属性对象。数学运作的准确性就失去了基础，难以保证。1 + 1 不一定等于 2 。有可能大于 2。如一个人的能量加一个人的能量，常常大于两个人能量之和。

电子计算机使用的机器语言二进制，是日常使用的十进制的简化和繁化。说简化是指：基本的数字符号从十个减少为两个 (1 和 0)。说繁化是指：二进制的推导次数比十进制多得多。

二进制和十进制虽然各有特点，但它们的符号学特性是相同的：当基本的数字代表同质单属性对象时，运作便具有准确性。如果把对象改为多属性对象，运作的准确性就难以保证。

二进制在高速运转的电子计算机互联网上：在基本数字符号 (1 和 0) 代表同质单属性对象时，能准确无误地汇总海量数据，深入细致地进行各种各样的统计分析。效率之高，人工运作望尘莫及。但当二进制在电子计算机上转化为代表多属性对象的自然语言时，运作的可靠性就失去保障。“鸡吃人”这样的语句也会造出来，使人哭笑不得。

### 5.3 以逻辑符号为代表的符号形式化符号活动

形式逻辑、数理逻辑、生成转换语法和形式语义学等等都是对自然语言形式化后的形式化符号。形式化符号的对象是自然语言符号的多属性对象和数字符号的单属性对象的人为折衷。其目的是：企图消除自然语言符号活动的歧义性，推广数字符号活动的准确性。办法是：通过形式化减少符号的对象在符号活动中起作用的属性的数量。

形式化符号活动的特征是：符号代表的对象，在符号活动中，只保留几个（至少两个）属性起作用，其余的都通过形式化被忽视掉。例如：

1. 形式逻辑中的词项三段论推理：
   (a) 所有的 B 都是 C，
   所有的 A 都是 B，
   所以，所有的 A 都是 C。
   (b) 所有的 B 都是 C，
   所有的 A 都是 C，
   所以，所有的 A 都是 B。

在这里，A、B 和 C 都是词，但已不是自然语言中代表具有无限多属性的对象的词，而是形式化后的词。它们代表的对象，在符号活动中只保留包含和不包含两个属性，其
余的属性都没有形式化被忽视掉。
由于保留的不是一个属性，而是两个属性。所以，确定性不彻底，即(a)具有确定性，而(b)不具有确定性。
② 形式逻辑中的假言命题推理：
(a) 如果 p 那么 q，
    p，
    所以，q。
(b) 如果 p 那么 q，
    非 q
    所以，非 p。
(c) 如果 p 那么 q，
    q，
    所以，p。
(d) 如果 p 那么 q，
    非 p
    所以，非 q。
在这里，p 和 q 都是命题，但已不是自然语言中代表多属性对象的命题，而是形式化后的命题。它们代表的对象，在符号活动中只保留真和假两个属性，其余的属性都通过形式化被忽视掉。同样，由于保留的不是一个属性，而有真和假两个属性，所以，即使在大小前提都真的情况下，(a)和(b)的结论确定为真，而(c)和(d)的结论则真假不定。

把形式逻辑中的推理形式应用于自然语言，对提高自然语言使用者的认知确定性是有帮助的，但没有完全解决问题。在近几十年出现的逻辑向实践转向中，涌现出许多所谓非形式逻辑的构想。这些构想是模糊地意识到，认知的确定性与符号代表的对象在符号活动中能起作用的属性的数量有关，都在试图通过选择或建构意符解释，限制语言符号代表的对象的，能在具体的符号活动中起作用的属性，从而提高语言符号活动的确定性。

6. 真三元符号认知结构是物质进化的自然产物

真三元符号认知结构是物质进化的自然产物。
物质在无生命阶段，对外部刺激处于完全被动状态，反应结构是二元的和不容错的。水在标准大气压下，加温至摄氏 100 度，必然汽化，降温至摄氏 0 度，必然结冰，不容错。

当物质进化至有生命阶段，生命体最初的新陈代谢就显示了对外界刺激的有选择的反应。变形虫遇到了小东西，不管是有机物，还是无机物，先伸出伪足把小东西包围在虫体中，然后分别对待，消化有机物，放弃无机物。
这时，虽然反应结构已经开始从二元反应结构向真三元认知结构转化，但生命体的主观能动性刚萌芽，反应结构还处于亦此亦彼的过度状态中。变形虫遇到有机体消化，遇到无机体放弃，跟水遇到高温汽化，遇到低温结冰相比，主观能动性已有所显现，但还
不明显。

物质进化到昆虫阶段，蜜蜂用圆舞表示近距离蜜源，摇摆舞表示远距离蜜源，用舞蹈转速表示距离；15 秒转 9～10 圈代表 100 米，7 圈代表 200 米，4 圈半代表 1 公里，2 圈代表 6 公里。用摇摆舞中的位移直线与太阳光线的夹角表示蜜源方向。这时真三元结构的引符认知本能显示出来了。

到了鸟类阶段，候鸟依靠鸟嘴皮层能识别磁场的神经细胞与地球磁场的联系，依靠高空开阔视野对天空太阳和星星的位置和地上地貌特征的识别，能南北数千里、上万里地迁徙。这也显示了明显的真三元结构的引符认知本能。

到了高等动物阶段，真三元引符认知结构已经成熟。给警犬闻一闻目标物的气味，以此为解释给它建构一个引符，警犬就能凭借对气味的记忆（解释），识别目标物潜逃时沿途留下的气味（符号）追踪目标物（对象）。目标物的气味与目标物的联系是自然形成的，非建构的，所以，在引符结构中，警犬是凭借引符认知进行追踪的。如果在追踪前没有给警犬闻目标物的气味，没有给它建构引符，或者，在引符建构起来之后的追踪途中，目标物涉水过河，其沿途留下的气味中断，真三元引符结构遭到破坏，警犬追踪就无法进行。

巴甫洛夫在给狗喂食的同时响铃。次数一多，狗听到铃响，不见食物，也会口生唾液，称为条件反射。铃响与食物之间，没有非建构的联系。铃响是人给狗建构的一个意符。这个实验说明，狗虽然自己不会建构意符，但已有使用意符的潜能。这也说明，人建构意符的能力是在物质进化过程中，从潜能到能力，经过一个漫长的进程的。

当人在漫长的初民时代，在人际互动的集体劳动实践中，逐步地发现了不同声音可以代表不同事物的妙处时，意符潜能就水到渠成地转化为建构意符的能力，创造发明了建构意符的基本方法——命名法，导致语言的诞生和自身发音器官的改进。人就从动物界脱颖而出，成为万物之灵和世界的主宰者。

①关于蜜蜂舞蹈，参看（德）佛烈希《蜜蜂的视觉、嗅觉、味觉和语言》。
符号的数学原理

孙家军

摘　要　点、线段、三角形、四面体、正反四面体、这五个几何符号，彼此之间前者为基础，后者为前者之上的建筑。这种数学关系式，只是几何的这五个符号之间的规律，还是一切符号之间的规律？

关键词　符号；数学；原理

引言——一个新支点

索绪尔符号学与皮尔斯符号学是整个符号学的两大源头。索绪尔符号学可以简单地归纳为：从语言这个相对比较特殊的现象之中，从人类的语言行为这个相比较狭小的论域上抽取的有关符号的普遍规律；皮尔斯符号学可以简单地归纳为：从符号这个更加一般的现象之中，从人类的符号行为这个更加宽广的论域上抽取的有关符号的普遍规律。索绪尔的符号学用一句话来概括就是关于符号的二元论学说，与中国哲学学术中的一分为二能对应上；皮尔斯的符号学用一句话来概括就是关于符号的三元论学说，与中国哲学学术中的一分为四能对应上。我国学者要对符号学有所发展、有所贡献，不能走此即彼的路径，而是要学习此亦此彼的路径，具体来说就是不能厚此薄彼，而是要把这两个理论有机地结合起来，才是正确的道路。元朝有一首《我侬词》“把一块泥，捏成一个我。两个一齐打破，用水调和。再捏一个你，再捏一个我。我泥中有你，你泥中有我”能够形象贴切地表达我的观点。如果能把索绪尔理论与皮尔斯理论有机地结合起来形成一个新理论，无容置疑，这个新理论就会为符号学提供一个新支点。一分为二哲学观的创立者庞朴老先生认为，一分为二是第一步，是基础的基础，一分为三是对一分为二的深化和发展，一分为二中的一元再加上二元之间的关联就是三元，也就是一分为三。索绪尔仅仅看到了二元，但他忽略了二元之间的关联；皮尔斯不仅看到了二元，并且极其重视二元之间的关联，于是就形成了三元。把索绪尔二元论与皮尔斯三元
论有机地结合起来生成的这个新理论，是符号学新的支点。这个新理论用最简单的语言来表述，就是这样一个说法：每一个符号都是一个系统，是以记忆痕迹及其生成为元素的系统，任何系统都需要至少两个元素才能建构，符号这个系统也是如此，该系统的每个元素都是一个索绪尔的二面实体，都是一个包裹着心理信息的心理信号体。

1. 魔力泥的四种形变

一丸泥，对它进行牵拉可以拉出线来，拉出的线还可以扯出另外的线，无论怎么牵引扯拉，它的线都不会断，这是一丸魔力泥。现在，就让我们对它进行操作。

1. 将泥丸固定在纸面上，不难想象它就是这样一个形象：

2. 从泥丸上牵引出一条线，丸泥就会生成这样一个形象：

3. 在线段上，从两个端点之间任意选取一点向上拉，线段就会生成这样一个形象：

4. 在三角形平面内，在非边线的区域任意选取一点，先将该点分别与三角形的三个端点相连如图，然后拉着该点向平面外的空间上移动，三角形就会生成这样一个形象：

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5. 在四面体空间内，在非边线的区域任意选取一点，先将该点分别与四面体的四个端点相连如图，然后拉着该点向下移动并穿透底面向四面体外面的空间中移动，四面体就会生成这样一个形象：

![四面体示意图](image)

让我们给这个形象一个名称——正反四面体。

2. 几何中的四维生成

0 级生成：符号形式：点；名称：点；定义：一个标记位置、引导思维的视觉形象，具有基元、原始的含义，是几何体系的基础。点在数学中还被定义为 0 维的单形（Zero dimensional simplex）。

1 级生成：符号形式：—；名称：线段；定义：两个点之间最短的连线，是基于点而建立的，是点的进阶生成，是表达二元及其关联的数学方式；线段的两端是点，是两个不同点的连线，在数学中还被定义为 1 维的单形（One dimensional simplex）。

2 级生成：符号形式：△；名称：三角形；定义：用线段连接不在一条直线上的三个点所成的图形，是基于线段而建立的，是线段的进阶生成，是点数、线数最少的平面图形，是表达三元及其关联的数学方式。三角形在数学中还被定义为 2 维的单形（Two dimensional simplex）。

3 级生成：符号形式：□；名称：四面体；定义：用线段连接不在一个平面上的四个点所成的图形，是基于三角形而建立的，是三角形的进阶生成，是点数、线数、面数最少的立体图形，是表达多元及其关联的数学方式。四面体在数学中还被定义为 3 维的单形（Three dimensional simplex）。

4 级生成：符号形式：■；名称：正反四面体；定义：一个四面体置于镜面上，把这个四面体与它在镜子里的影像看成一个整体所成的图形，是基于四面体而建立的，是四
面体的进阶生成，是四维世界里的拓扑单形（Topology simplex）在三维世界里的表达。点、线段、三角形、四面体和正反四面体这5个几何符号，彼此之间是前后相承的关系。没有点的生成，线段便无基建立；没有线段的生成，三角形便无基建立；没有三角形的生成，四面体便无基建立；没有四面体的生成，正反四面体便无基建立。我们的问题是：这种前者为基础，后者为建筑的关系式，只是几何的这5个符号之间的规律，还是一切符号之间的规律？

3. 符号中记忆痕迹的四级生成

0级存在：符号形式：名称：记忆的痕迹；定义：符号得以生成的基元，是一切符号的前身，是0维的符号。

1级生成：符号形式：名称：一级符号；定义：将记忆痕迹对象的心理影像作为所指，能被人工操作再现，能被人的感觉器官感知的某种符号，将这两端规范成一个不可分的整体而形成的一种符号。肖像、手语、旗语、盲文、形体语言、语言中的口语等等都是这一类符号。

2级生成：符号形式：名称：二级符号；定义：将记忆痕迹对象的心理影像作为符号对象，能被人工操作再现，能被感知的某种符号作为符号形体，将另一种能被人工操作再现，能被感知的符号作为符号解释项，把这三端规范成一个不可分的整体所形成的一种符号。照片、图形、标识、语言中的文字等等都是这一类符号。

3级生成：符号形式：名称：三级符号即概念；定义：将文字的音作为符号形体（就是概念的名称），将文字的形作为符号对象，将文字的意义即解释项一分二：一分为给出一个严格的定义（指概念的内涵），二是约定一个所指对象的范围（指概念的外延），把这四端规范成一个不可分的整体所形成的一种符号。

4级生成：符号形式：名称：四级符号即哲学范畴；定义：将一个主概念作为符号形体，将有固定关联模式的另外三个概念作为符号对象，再将一个与主概念构成对立统一关系的概念作为解释项，把这五端规范成一个不可分的整体所形成的一种符号。充当符号对象的三个概念固定的关联模式是正、反、合的关系。比如有理数、无理数与实数这三个概念就是正、反、合的关系。

4. 四级概念系统

0级存在：符号形式：名称：0级概念系统；定义：赋予每个对象的名称，是概念系
统得以生成的基元。

1 级生成：符号形式：一口；名称：线段概念系统；定义：把任意两个概念直接合起来就生成了一个新概念，这个新概念就是一个线段概念系统。比如把名为“陕西”的概念与名为“甘肃”的概念直接合起来，就生成一个名为“陕甘”的新概念，这就是一个线段概念系统。

2 级生成：符号形式：△；名称：三角概念系统；定义：把任意三个概念直接合起来就生成了一个新概念，这个新概念就是一个三角概念系统。比如把名为“陕西”的概念，名为“甘肃”的概念与名为“宁夏”的概念直接合起来，就生成一个名为“陕甘宁”的新概念，这就是一个三角概念系统。

3 级生成：符号形式：□；名称：四面体概念系统；定义：将三角概念系统中的三个概念正向进阶，生成一个能够反向统摄这三个概念的新概念，这个新概念再加上三角概念系统中的三个概念，就形成了一个四面体概念系统。例如名为“健康（Health）”的概念，名为“安全（Safety）”的概念，名为“环境（Environment）”的概念与名为“HSE”的概念，就构成了一个四面体概念系统。

4 级生成：符号形式：□；名称：正反四面体概念系统；定义：每个哲学范畴都是一个正反四面体概念系统。

5. 正反四面体概念系统的实例

1. “存在”是一个哲学范畴，因此是一个正反四面体概念系统，表达出来就是：

2. “物质”是一个哲学范畴，因此是一个正反四面体概念系统，表达出来就是：
图中的“天”是指地球的环境，“地”就是地球，“人”指一切生命。
3. “文化”是一个哲学范畴，因此是一个正反四面体概念系统，表达出来就是：

4. “哲学”作为一个概念，它本身也是一个范畴，从世界观的角度来表达就是：

5. 哲学作为一个范畴，还可以从方法论的角度来表达就是：
6. 不同维度的符号

0 维的符号：就是记忆的痕迹，是隐藏在内心的记忆，是符号的前影，是原始的还未被思维操作的记忆，是一切符号得以生成的基元。

1 维的符号：最重要的一种就是语言中的语言，是思维对记忆痕迹的第一次操作，是记忆痕迹的第一次显现，是使用频率最高的一种符号。

2 维的符号：最重要的一种就是语言中的文字，它的范围不仅指文字本身，还包括生成文字的部件和文本中的标点，是思维对记忆痕迹的第二次操作，是记忆痕迹的第二次显现，是标志人类不同于动物的一种符号。

3 维的符号：就是科学文本中普遍使用的各个概念，是在文字的基础上建立的，是思维对记忆痕迹的第三次操作，是记忆痕迹的第三次显现，概念是存在和本质的统一，抽象和具体的统一，主体和客体的统一，内容和形式的统一，现象和本质的统一，个别和普遍的统一，无限和有限的统一，自由和必然的统一。

4 维的符号：就是哲学的范畴，是外延无限大，内涵无限小的一种概念，是最高级别的概念。

7. 关于记忆的痕迹

动物的生命体里面有一个依靠神经的生理机制与记忆的心理机制共同支持而存在大脑上的客观存在，这个客观存在在认知神经学上被叫作记忆的痕迹。人关于符号的数学思考是以记忆的痕迹为基元来建立的，因此，对记忆痕迹进行简要论述不仅是必要的，而且是必须的。
就人而言，与其说自然是人的环境，不如说社会是人的环境；与其说文化是人的环境，不如说社会是人的环境。在动物与环境的二元世界里，让动物与环境保持长久、不间断接触的并不全是实在物，往往是那些具有流质性质的连续相，比如阳光、空气、声波、气味之类的东西。这些东西与其叫作物质不如叫作能量，与其叫作能量不如叫作信息，于是把物质、能量和信息三者合起来，正向进化生成一个能够反映信息三者的新概念，这个新概念被叫作信号。信号作为物理世界的使者，它来到动物的世界里，分别通过动物的感觉、觉听、听觉、嗅觉和触觉器官进入到动物的生命体里面，经过动物生命机能的感知和转换，就变成记忆的痕迹。生命将这些从外面来到里面的东西看成外面世界许许多多的变化。外在世界即环境的变化实际上是一条时间线上的事件串，动物为了把这条时间线上的事件串记下来，它的生命机能动脑皮质的、化学的、电位的、生理的、心理的一切机制来记忆这个事件串，因为这个事件串对它未来的生存至关重要。为了牢牢记住这个事件串，动物的机体之中出现了一个记忆线上的痕迹串，记忆线上的痕迹串有些是物理机制生成的，有些是化学机制生成的，有些是心理机制生成的，它存在在的地方，并不遍布机体的各个器官，而是集中在组成动物大脑的单元即神经元上；它们并不是遍布神经细胞的各个区域，而是出现在彼神经元与此神经元彼此接触的突触上。记忆痕迹的具体形态并不是解剖层面上机体的变化，我们无法用解剖的方法把这个痕迹分离出来给人们观看、观察，它只是表现在两个相邻的神经元互相摸索着接触起来的突触上，是微观到细胞、分子层面上的变化，这个变化本身是突触的连接强度得到了加强，这种变化是基于短时记忆而发生的，当短时记忆通过神经回路到达大脑皮层变成长时记忆的时候，记忆的痕迹就转移到大脑的皮层上。

来自外界的信息传递了一个时间线上的事件串，动物的机体中生成了一个记忆线上的痕迹串，这两条线一内一外，互相对应，时间线上一个重要的点所代表的那个事件，必定在记忆线上相应的点上对应着一个记忆痕迹。这条记忆线上的痕迹串不单独基于人类而存在，对动物的所有物种都存在，这是就巴普洛夫的第一信号系统。对人类来说，由于有第二信号系统的特殊作用，能够极大地加速、加深、加长那条记忆线上的痕迹串。

应该说，引起人类心智提升的那些外部因素，其影响力是微小的、平均的和恒等的，但这种微小的影响也从不间断，经过上亿万年时间的累积就形成了巨变。人类获得了有智力基础支撑的、发明符号的心理机制，而语言、文字等符号的发明及使用让人类从自身内部获得了超过外部影响力数倍、百倍、千倍的人格提升力。

记忆的痕迹是动物生命中的一种客观存在，是被生命记忆和保存了的事件，是一切现实符号的身世和来历，是符号成长的起点。

参考文献
广义叙述者的“人格—框架二象”

赵毅衡

摘 要 在任何叙述中，必须有叙述者作为叙述的源头。但是至今对叙述者的研究，只在各别体裁范围中进行，尚无人作出一般规律的理论总结，确定一般叙述者非常困难，是因为叙述源头形态各异。本文从叙述者“人格化”程度出发，将所有的叙述分为五类：其中叙述者形态各异，从极端人格化，到非人格性叙述者框架。但其共同特点是兼有“二象”，既把叙述源头不同程度人格化，又建立对文本进行选择加工的叙述框架。

关键词 一般叙述；叙述者；叙述框架；人格—框架二象

叙述者之谜

叙述者是故事“讲述声音”的源头。至今一个多世纪的叙述学发展，核心问题是小说叙述者的各种形态，以及叙述者与叙述的其他成分（作者、人物、故事、受述者、读者）的复杂关系。卡勒说，“识别叙述者是把虚构文学自然化的基本方法……”这样文本的任何一个侧面几乎都能够得到解释。”这种看法适用于任何叙述体裁；找到叙述者，是讨论任何叙述问题的出发点。

叙述者形态，至今似乎只是个小说研究的课题，走出小说之外，叙述者几乎无影踪可循。从历史新闻到戏剧电影，到幻觉梦境，叙述者就几乎无法寻找；如何在每一种体裁中找到叙述者，已经是争论不休的难题。而要建立一般叙述学，就要找到一般叙述者，即提出各种体裁的叙述者的综合形态，就更为困难。一旦走出小说，我们就像走出充满生命的莽林，突然来到大片沙漠蓝天；一切都似乎单纯透明，但是叙述者似乎完全消失了，原先的各种纠缠讨论完全不适用。叙述学在这一无限的空旷前，几乎哑口无言。

叙述者是叙述的发出者，找不到一个通用的叙述者形态规律，对各种叙述就只能作

① 乔纳森·卡勒, 结构主义诗学[M]. 北京：中国社会科学出版社，1991：299.
描述，无法说明它们的本质，如果我们不能在一场梦、一场法庭辩论、一出戏剧、一部长
篇小说之间找到共有的叙述者形态（不管差异有多大），我们就不可能为各种叙述建立
一个共同的理论基础，也就不可能建立一个一般叙述学。

诚然，分门别类讨论各种叙述体裁，这种做法已经延续了一个世纪，延续下去也无
妨。但是理论思维应有的彻底精神不允许我们这样敷衍了事。更重要的是，只有找出
这样一个叙述者的共同形态，才能看到某种体裁与总体规律的关联方式。

寻找叙述者，是建立一般叙述学的第一步，却也是最困难的一步。在全球学界，建
立一般叙述学的努力至今没有进展，因为无法找到叙述者的一般形态规律。①这个被
叙述学界称为“源头叙述者（originator，或 illocutionary source）”或“逝去叙述者
（fundamental narrator）”的功能，是叙述之所以为叙述的先决条件之一。找到这个一
般叙述者，我们理解叙述本质的工作就开一个头。

### 叙述源头

从信息传达的角度说，叙述者是叙述信息的源头，叙述接收者（即“受述者”）面对的
故事，必须来自这个源头；从叙述文本形成的角度说，任何叙述都是选择经验材料，加以
特殊安排才得以形成的，叙述者有权力决定叙述文本讲什么，如何讲。

从这个观点检查各种体裁，我们可以看到叙述者呈二象形态：有时候是具有人格性
的个人或人物，有时候却呈现为叙述框架。两种形态同时存在于叙述之中，而框架应当
是基础的形态。在特殊时刻，人物形态会“夺框而出”。究竟什么时候呈现何种形态，取
决于体裁，也取决于文本风格。这种二象并存很像量子力学对光的本性的理解：光是
“波-粒二象”，既是电磁场的波动，又是光子束。二者似乎不相容，却合起来组成光的
本质。

检查各种体裁中叙述者的存在，首先要说清什么才是叙述。自然状态的变化不是叙
述，对自然事件的“经验”也不构成叙述，自然现象如火山爆发、地震雪崩，如果不被中介
化为符号文本，而且叙述作为一种文化表意行为，必须卷入人物，描述不卷入人物的自
然变化，就是科学报告，就不构成叙述。也就是说，某种符号（文字、言语、图像、姿态等）
组合，表述卷入人物的事件，才形成叙述。

因此，叙述必然是某种主体安排组织产生的文本，用来把卷入某人物的变化告诉
另一个主体。只要满足以下两个条件的符号文本，就是叙述：

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一、叙述主体把有人物参与的事件组织进一个符号文本；
二、此符号文本可以被接受主体理解为具有时间和意义向度。

它包含两个主体进行的两个“叙述化”过程。第一个叙述化，把某种事件组合进一个文本；第二个叙述化，在文本中读出一个卷入人物的情节，这两者都需要主体有意识的努力。两者是否相应是很难肯定的，但是解释出文本中情节，是叙述体裁的文化形式的期
盼。叙述文本具有可以被理解为叙述的潜力，也就是被“读出故事”的潜力，所以许多单幅图像（例如漫画、新闻照片）文本中似乎无情节进展，只要能被读出情节，它们就是叙述。

这样的叙述文本本身不一定能告诉我们叙述源头在那里。乌莉·玛戈林（Uri Magolin）提出，文本叙述者可以从三个方面寻找：语言上指明（linguistically indicated）；文本上投射（textually projected）；读者重建（readerly constructed）。① 玛戈林是在小说范围里讨论此问题，认为小说的叙述者必定在场，所以她要求“语言上指明”叙述者（即所谓“第一人称”与“第三人称”人称代词）。对于非语言的叙述文本，这个源头叙述者可以从以下三个方面加以考察：

“文本构筑”：文本结构暴露出来的叙述源头；
“接受构筑”：受读者对叙述文本的重构，包含着对文本如何发出的解释；
“体裁构筑”：叙述文本的社会文化程式，给同一体裁的叙述者某种形态构筑模式。马戈琳的“语言上指明”，应当泛化为体裁规定性。
叙述者就是由此三个环节构筑起来的一个表意功能，作为任何叙述的出发点。当
此功能绝对人格化时，他就是有血有肉的实体叙述者，当此功能绝对非人格化时，就成为构成叙述的指令框架。叙述者变化状态的不同，是不同体裁的重要区分特征。本文提议把各种叙述体裁，按叙述者的形态变化分成五个类别：
一、“实在性”叙述（历史、新闻、庭辩、汇报、忏悔等），以及拟“实在性”叙述（诺言、
宣传、广告等）；
二、书面文字虚构性叙述（小说、叙事诗等）；
三、记录演示性虚构叙述（电影、电视等）；
四、现场演示性虚构叙述（戏剧、网络小说，游戏、比赛等）；
五、心灵“拟虚构性叙述”（梦、白日梦、幻觉等）。

这五种分类要求五种完全不同形态的叙述者，五种体裁大类从叙述者极端人格化
到极端框架化进行排列。

### 实在性叙述：合一式叙述者

无论是书面的还是口头的实在性叙述（新闻、历史、庭辩、报告等），以及“拟实在性”

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① 见 Living Handbook of Narratology. (University of Hamburg) “Narrator”条。
叙述（诺言、宣传、广告等），无论是口头还是书面，都具有单一性的叙述者——作者即是叙述者。历史家、新闻记者、揭发者、忏悔者等各式人等，文本就是他们本人说出或写下的。整个叙述浸透了他们的主观意志、感情、精神、意见，以及他们对所说事情的判断，哪怕偏见也是他们的偏见，哪怕谎言也是他们的谎言，无法推诿于别人。除了文内引用他人文字外，没有其他人插嘴的余地。

与实在性叙述正成对比的是，在小说中，所有的话都是叙述者说的，没有作者说话的余地。当然实在性叙述的“作者-叙述者”可以翻悔，可以推诿，可能声称讲述该文本时“受胁迫”“受蒙骗”“一时糊涂”等。主体意图会在时间中变化，因此应当说这个叙述者是作者在叙述时的“第二人格”，即叙述时的“执行作者”，是在写作时的本人，不一定是作者的全部和整体的人格。

实在性叙述具有单一性的叙述者；叙述者即执行作者。既然此类文本的所叙述内容被理解为事实，必须要有文本发出者具体负责。所谓“实在性”，不一定是“事实”；“事实”指的是内容的品格，“实在性”是文本体裁的“本体定位”。具体说，是文化规定受述者把此类文本看成在讲述事实，这就是作者在另一篇文章中提出的“接受原则”。

此种约定的理解方式，是文本表意所依靠的最基本的主题间关系。内容是否为“事实”、不受文本传达控制，要走出文本才能验证（证伪或证实）。可以用直观方式提供经验实（例如法医解剖），或是用文本间方式提供间接证实（例如历史档案）。不管是否去证实，作者-叙述者必须为实在性叙述负责；法庭上的证人，对他的案情叙述负责；新闻记者，对他的报道负责。对于非实在性叙述的文本（例如说者言明“我给们说个笑话”），就无法追责，也无法验证。

有一段时期“泛虚构论”（panfictionality）盛行。提出这个看法的学者，根据的是后现代主义的语言观：“所有的感知都是被语言编码的，而语言从来总是比喻性的（figuratively），引起感知永远是歪曲的，不可能确切（accurate）”②，也就是说，语言本身的“不透明本质”使文本不可能有“实在性”。这个说法在学界引发太多争议。很多历史学家尖锐地指出，纳粹大屠杀无论如何不可能只是一个历史学构筑，③南京大屠杀也不可能是。多勒采尔称之为对历史叙述理论的“大屠杀检验”。④ 历史叙述必须是“实在性”的；不管是把李鸿章说成是卖国贼的历史，还是把李鸿章说成是爱国者的历史，在文本构成上都必须“基于事实”。尽管历史学家对引证材料必然有选择性，或者说有偏见（不然历史学家之间不会发生争论），但体裁上既然为“实在性叙述”，哪怕“编造”历史，也必须作为“事实性材料”提出。在法庭上，无论是原告方、被告方，还是证人，他们有关

事件的叙述，可以截然相反（因此不会都是“事实”），却都必须是“实在性”的，都要受到对方的质疑，最后根据叙述中的道义问题，受到法庭的裁决。

固然，在实在性叙述中，作者—叙述者可以有各种规避问价的手段；例如记者转引见证者，律师传唤证人，算命者让求卦人自己随机取签。这些办法都是让别人做次一级叙述者。不管用什么手法，作者—叙述者依然是叙述源头，此人格依然必须对文本整体的实在性负责。

那么，如何看待所谓“匿名揭发”或“小说诽谤”？此时法庭就必须裁定该文本已经脱离虚构，成为实在性叙述。涉及诽谤的如果是传记、历史、“报告文学”等文体，庭审就直接按案情处理，不需要作文体鉴定道这手续。

因此，哪怕是蒙混过关的检讨，美化自己的自传，文过饰非的日记，逻辑狂乱者的日记，依然是“实在性”的（虽然不是“事实”），因为这是休裁要求的文本接受方式。也就是说，接收者面对这个叙述，已经签下“文化契约”，是把它当做事实来接受的。正因为如此，他才能心存怀疑，才会去检验此叙述是否撒谎。

谣言或八卦也是一种实在性叙述，人们不会对已经宣称不是事实的故事感兴趣。

2011年7月默多克集团的《世界新闻报》卷入窃听丑闻，其中一项罪名是用电话窃听来“确认流言”。一旦确认了流言之实在，该报社就会拿原谣言者诉讼有关人物。正因为谣言是实在性叙述，谣言是否与事实对应才值得去确认。

日记或笔记这样写给自己看的叙述，是不是实在性叙述？依然是的。如果写者捏造一个故事记在日记里，此段日记是否依然是实在性记述？这就像上面说的法院判某本小说犯诽谤罪，叙述者——作者心里明白他在写的已经不是日记，而是虚构，这属于超越休裁的犯规。

预测、预言、宣传、广告，这些关于未来事件的叙述，事件尚未发生，因此谈不上是否是“事实”，是“预事实性未来叙述”。作为解释前提的时间语境尚未出现，因此叙述的情节并不是“事实”；但是这些叙述要接收者相信，就不可能虚构。因此这些是超越虚构/非虚构分野之上的“预实在性”文本。之所以不称为“预虚构性”，是因为发送主体不希望接收者把它们当作虚构。因此，预言将来会发生某种事件的文本是“预实在性叙述”，其叙述者就是作者本人。正因为作者用自己的“人格”担保，而且听者也相信预言者的“人设”（例如相信算命者的本领），才会听取他们的叙述，而且信以为真。

分裂式叙述者之一：记录的虚构叙述

任何叙述的底线必须是“实在性”的，如果不具有实在性，叙述就无法要求接收者接受它。一旦叙述是“虚构性”的（如以小说为代表的大量虚构文本），受述者就没有必要

1 中国经济周刊，2011-07-26.
听一篇自称的假话。那么，如何解释人类文明中如此大量的虚构叙述呢？的确，虚构叙述从发送者意图意义，到文本品质，都不具备实在性。此时，叙述必须装入一个框架，把它与“实在世界”隔开，在这个框架内，叙述保持其实实在性。例如小说，作者主体分裂出来一个人格，另设一个叙述者，并且让读者分裂出一个受述者当作实在性的叙述者接受。此时叙述者不再等同于作者，虽然叙述是假的，却能够在两个替代人格中作为实在性叙述进行下去。

例如，纳博科夫虚构了《洛丽塔》，但是在小说虚构世界里的叙述者不是纳博科夫，而是亨伯特教授。此角色写出一本忏悔，给典狱长雷博士看。书中说的实事实是不是“实在的”？必须是，因为忏悔这种文体必须是实在性的。在这本小说框架内的世界里，亨伯特教授的忏悔不是虚构，所以《洛丽塔》有典狱长雷博士写的序，他对亨伯特的忏悔一个“实在性”的道德判断，“对养育下一代责任者读它有益”。

纳博科夫已经说谎（虚构）了，他就没有必要让亨伯特再说谎。麦克尤恩的小说《赎罪》魅力正在于此。叙述者布里尼奥小时候因为嫉妒，冤枉表姐的恋人强奸，害得对方入狱并发配到前线，使她一生良心受责。二战期间，她有机会与表姐和表姐夫重新见面，她同意去警察局推翻原证词以赎罪。但是到小说最后，她作为一位已经年老的女作家承认说，这一段是她脑中的虚构，表姐和表姐夫当时都已经死于战争。

这里的悖论，也是此小说的迷人之处，就在于: 无论实在段落，还是虚构段落，都是小说中的虚构，那一段是“虚构的实在性叙述中的非实在性段落”。但在这个小说虚构世界中，赎罪依然必须用实在性叙述才能完成，当事人（作为人物）已死，就无法做到这一点。叙述者作那一段叙述时，是靠想象自己的人格再次分裂出另一个自己作为叙述者，她对自己编出一段“作为事实的虚构”，用来欺骗地安慰自己的良心。

我们百姓在酒后茶余，说者可以声明（或是在语气上表明）: “我来吹一段牛”，听者如果愿意听下去，就必须搁置对虚假的挑战，因为说者已经如钱钟书所言“献疑于先”，即预先说好下面说的并非实在，你既然爱听就“当作”真的。所有的虚构都必须明白或隐含地设置这个“自首”框架，即此时发送者的意思就是：你听着不必当真，因为你也可能分裂出一个人格来接受，然后我怎么讲都无不“不诚信”之嫌，我分裂出来一个虚设人格作叙述者，与对方的虚设人格进行“实在性”的意义传达。

### 分裂式叙述者之二：演述的虚构叙述

叙述文本的媒介可能是记录性的（例如文字，图画），也可能是演示性的（剧场演出、

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2. 钱钟书. 《管锥编》[G]//太平广记·卷一九六·北京: 三联书店. 2007; 1343-1344.
口述故事、比赛等），两种媒介都可以用于实在性的或虚构性的叙述。如果是实在性叙述，无论是记录式媒介（例如文字新闻）还是演示性媒介（例如口头讲述）、本质相同，即叙述者与实际发送者合一。

一旦用于虚构叙述，记录式媒介与演示式媒介情况就很不同。上节已经讨论过以小说为代表的记录式媒介。演示式媒介虚构叙述，情况就很不相同。此时表演者不是叙述者，而是演示框架（例如舞台）里的角色，哪怕他表演讲故事，他也不是“源头叙述者”。

我们可以从戏剧这种最古老的演示性叙述谈起。戏剧的叙述者是谁？不是剧作家，他只是写了一个剧本；不是导演，他只是指导了演出方式；他和剧作家在演出时甚至不必在场；不是舞台监督，他只是协调了参与演出的各方；这个“叙述者”也不是舞台——舞台是戏剧文本的空间媒介。

我们可以设想一个演出场面：舞台上的演员在表演排练经历，此时他在给出一个实在性叙述，他是这段叙述的“作者—叙述者”。然后出现演出开始（例如灯光转暗，或是锣鼓声起）作为指示符号，舞台就不再是一个物质的舞台，一个“叙述者框架”已然降下，罩住了演出，把它变成叙述，该演出了就成了角色。到谢幕时，他退出这个虚构叙述的框架，返回演员身份。所有的演示性叙述，都需要这样一种框架；儿童都知道从某个时刻开始，泥饼就是坦克，竹签就是士兵；而从某个时刻起，虚构结束，一切返回原物。几乎所有的当场演出（非记录媒介演出）都必须在这个框架里进行。

就因为叙述方式的明显再现方式差别，亚里士多德认为史诗是叙述，而悲剧是模仿。西方叙述学界至今认为亚里斯多德的这个区分有理，至今坚持戏剧非叙述。①这样就必须把电影、电视等当代最重要的叙述体裁排除到叙述学研究范围之外。而本节讨论的“演示虚构叙述”，最重要的体裁就是戏剧和电影。

电影的叙述者是谁？是《红高粱》中那个说“我爷爷当年”的隐身的声音？或是《最爱》中那个已经死于艾滋病的半身鬼魂孩子？或是《情人》中老年作家讲述年轻时的故事？这些讲故事的人格，如希腊悲剧与布莱希特戏剧的歌队，元曲的“副末开场”，电影的画外音（Voice Over）都是“次级叙述者”，而不是整个文本的源头叙述者。它可以设置，但是不一定必须设置。大部分电影没有画外音叙述者，哪怕有画外音叙述者的也只是用得上时偶然插话，其叙述并不延续，因此这个声音源不能被认为是“源头叙述者”。

在电影理论史上，关于叙述者问题的争论，已经延续半个多世纪。1948 年马尼提出的看法是，电影如小说，导演—制片人（film-maker）就像小说家，而叙述者就是摄影机（camera）。②这看法很接近阿斯特鲁克的“摄影机笔”（Camera-Stylo）之论，他认为导演以摄影机为笔讲故事。③五六十年代盛行“作者主义”（Auteurism）理论，巴赞是这一派

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的主要理论家，他认为“今天我们终于可以说是导演写下了电影”。① 以上理论忽视了故事片作为虚构叙述的特点。如果是纪录片教片等“实在性”叙述，才可以这么说；影片的拍摄团队集体组成的“电影作者”就是影片叙述者，纪录片必然有的画外音讲述者，是代表这个集体性作者—叙述者的脚声。但是故事片、动画片等虚构电影中，画外音叙述者只是说故事的角色。

70年代后，“作者主义”理论消失了，出现了抽象的“人格叙述者”理论。科兹洛夫提出，电影的叙述者是一个“隐身讲述故事者”，可以称作“浸像创造者”（“image-maker”）；② 麦茨在当代电影理论的经典之作《电影语言：电影符号学》一书中认为，电影叙述者类似戏剧中的司仪（虽然可以不出现），他称其为“大形象师”（grand imagier）。③

当代西方电影理论家，在电影这种重要的叙述者的形态上，有两种意见：一种是“机构叙述者论”，例如波德维尔认为电影的叙述者“最好被理解为构建故事的整套指令（cues）”。④ 另一派则拥护“人格叙述者论”，布拉尼根认为：“理解文本中的智性体系，就是理解文本中的人性品格。”⑤ 九十年代列文森提出电影叙述者应是一位“呈现者”（Presenter），这个叙述人格“从内部呈现电影世界”。⑥ 古宁则把这个人格称为“显示者”（Demonstrator）。⑦

笔者认为，按照本文的叙述者的“人格—框架二象论”，这两种意见并非不可调和，而是相反相成。波德维尔的“指令集合”机构叙述者论，与列文森等人的“呈现者”人格叙述者论，可以结合成一个概念：电影有一个源头叙述者，他是一个做出各种电影文本安排，代表电影制作“机构”的人格，是“指令呈现者”。电影用各种媒介（一般认为是八个媒介：影像、言语、文字、灯光、镜头位移，音乐、声音、剪辑）传送的叙述符号，都出乎他的安排，体现为一个发出叙述的人格，即整个制作团队“委托”的一个人格。

非虚构的纪录片与上面写的故亊片叙述者不同。纪录片也有创作团队，也有各种媒介如何结合的指令集合。拍一部纪录片，所有拍摄下来的材料，在本质上（不是在美学价值上）都可以用进片子里。而拍一部虚构的故事片，不按指令进行的部分（例如演员放任不禁笑出来，例如不应进入叙述框架的物象或声音），必须剪掉。如果保存《大话王》（Liar Liar）或是《杜拉拉升职记》的片尾，把穿帮镜头（所谓 NG，No Good）放到片尾，只是偶一用之的“元叙述”手法，即自我揭穿虚构的组成方式，这个部分实际上是实在性的纪录片。

体育比赛也属于此类演示叙述。比赛指令有严格的规则，但是在框架内运动员认

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④ David Bordwell. Narration in Fiction Film. 62.
以努力影响比赛的叙述进程，运动员只能在这个框架内尽力表现，争取按规则做到“血洗”“屠城”“横扫”的胜利。但是，一旦超出虚构的“作假”原则，例如拳王泰森咬伤对手的耳朵，曼联队长基恩踩断对方的腿，就是超越虚构叙述的框架。裁判的任务就是把个人的表现限定在框架之内。

**互动式叙述：受述者参与叙述**

在演示叙述中已经出现的“戏剧反讽”张力，在互动叙述中进一步延伸，成为必须依靠受述者参与才能进行下去的叙述。

所谓“戏剧反讽”，是充分利用演示叙述的“受述者干预可能”设置的手法。《罗密欧与朱丽叶》中，罗密欧误以为朱丽叶已死，绝望而自杀；当喝了迷药的朱丽叶醒来，发现罗密欧已死，只能真的自杀。人物不知底细被“情景”误导，但是观众却知道，戏剧力量就在于让观众为台上的物悲焦急，甚至冲动到大喊出声，以影响剧情发展。此种反讽只出现于演示性文本的接收中；结果未定，才能引发接收者的干预冲动。

演示叙述可以有人格化的观众，观众处于叙述框架的外面，是场外的受述者。演示叙述有一个特点，就是可以被这种场外受述者打断。这种戏剧、相声等口头表演中非常明显，场上观众可以干扰叙述的进行。著名的“枪打黄世仁”就是个例子。郭德纲在相声说一个盗墓者，正说到开棺的紧张关键时刻，他说“这时手机响了”，原来他此时观众席上有手机铃声，郭德纲顺势甩一个包袱，这是无奈的互动。

演示性文本中这种“被干预潜力”，在互动式文本中被发展到极端。互动式叙述文本最典型的是游戏（包括历史悠久的各种游戏，如运动、赌博、比赛，以及当代的电子游戏），包括邀请读者参与的互动文本如“超小说”（包括是互联网上的“可选小说”）。此类叙述在框架中没有完成，究竟如何进行下去要靠受述者参与。受述者不仅是欣赏叙述，而是参与叙述进程，与叙述框架联动。《神雕侠侣》等电子游戏，让游戏者选择做什么人物，用什么装备和武器，一步步练成自己的“武功等级”，推动叙述前进，最后演变出来的叙述，是受述者参与到叙述框架里来互动的结果。

**受述者接受的拟虚构叙述：梦叙述**

受述者扮演主要角色，在梦叙述中最为极端，以至于对梦叙述（梦、白日梦、幻觉等）无法追寻叙述者。我们说做梦像“看”电影，这种直观的感觉是对的，幻觉者不是叙述者，而是受述者；我们说自己在“做梦”，是因为梦的叙述者也在我们主体之内，是主体的另外一部分，隐藏得很深，需要详梦家或精神分析家来探寻。梦者接受的梦，是梦主体发出的叙述。梦中情节再杂乱，也是经过“梦意识”这个叙述者的挑选、组合、加工
的结果，渗透了叙述者的主体意识。因此从远古起，梦就是一个重要的窥见主体秘密的途径。

对梦叙述的叙述者，我们了解最少，因为无法直接观察。经常梦者并不能意识到自己处于做梦状态，但是有梦者朦胧地意识到在做梦（所谓“透明的梦”），但是依然无法控制这个梦中的任何情节。梦的受述者不可能改变叙述的内容，有点像无法改变“戏剧反讽”戏剧的观众。梦的叙述者必然是梦者主体意识的一部分，但是却隐而不显。

因此，梦叙述是梦者（梦受述者）获取的叙述，类似电影观众所得到的叙述。梦叙述者却无法探究，因此，从定义上来说就无法全部揭示：对其本质的探查本身，是用意识语言来解释无意识，因此就改变了这个叙述的构成。

结论：叙述者永远存在于“二象”之中

以上讨论可以引出一个结论：作为叙述源头的叙述者，永远处于“框架一人格两象”。究竟是“象”更明显，还是“人象”更明显，因叙述体裁而异，无法维持一个恒常不变的形态，但是两象始终共存：一端是“实在性叙述”（新闻等）叙述者几乎完全等同于作者，到记录性虚构（小说等）的分裂人格叙述者，到演示性虚构（戏剧等）的“指令呈现者”，到互动性叙述（电子游戏）的内外参与，到受述者接收的梦意识叙述。

这五种叙述者，不管何种形态，都必须完成以下功能：

① 设立一个“叙述者框架”，把叙述文本与实在世界或经验世界隔开。在框架内的任何成分都是替代性的符号，而把直观经验连同其对象现象世界隔到框架外面；

② 这个框架内的材料，不再是经验材料，而是通过媒介再现的携带意义的叙述符号；

③ 这些叙述元素必须经过叙述主体选择，大量“可叙述”元素因为各种原因（例如为风格化，为道德要求，为制造悬疑等等）被“选下”；

④ 留下的元素则经过时空变形加工，以组成卷入人物与变化的情节，此即“（叙述者的）一序叙述化”；

⑤ 受述者把叙述文本理解成为具有时间向度与伦理意义的情节，此即“（受述者的）二序叙述化”。

因此，叙述主体在叙述框架内完成叙述：没有这样一个叙述框架内或叙述人格，能单独执行如此复杂的叙述者功能。因此，叙述者在任何情况下都是双态的：既是一个人格，也是一个指令框架。合起来述，叙述者是一个体现指令框架的人格。叙述者框架必须存在，这是叙述成立的前提，但是对每一个具体叙述文本，或对每一种叙述文本来说，叙述者可以在人格一框架这两个极端间位移：不同体裁的叙述文本，叙述者人格化一框架化程度不一样。哪怕是一篇控告或忏悔，叙述者都必须等同于作者，叙述框架
依然作为背景存在。

我们最熟悉的叙述体裁，即小说，其不同变体一样会展示叙述者的“人格-框架二象”。传统小说叙述学一直在讨论的叙述者基本变体——第三人称（隐身叙述者）与第一人称（显身叙述者）——就是这种“二象”。哪怕在同一篇小说作品中，两种叙述者的形态可以互相转化，但是不管如何转化，两者永远同时存在。第三人称叙述，实际上是“非人称”框架叙述。在这个框架内，叙述者可以现身成各种形态。例如在干预评论中，叙述者突然局部人格化；在“第一人称叙述”中，叙述者稳定地人格化。在小说这种最典型的叙述中，叙述者的二象变换其实最清楚，只是至今没有学者注意到叙述这个基础问题。
“图”像认知与符号的观念

朱永明

摘 要  “图”像视界是介于物质世界与心理世界之间的人类独有的第三世界——符号的世界。作为被建构的符号化视觉“图”景，其意义的表征和中介性与客观对象的解读有着本质的不同。这种形而共生的符号体系不仅可以模拟再现与美化客观对象，还具有创造性的象征寓意功能，被赋予了较高精神价值与文化意义。然而，由于长期以来在图像本体与对象关系上的某些错误观念，不仅割裂了形式与寓意共生互补的图像本体，还形成了以模型说为核心的图式至上与热情符号论思想，也为现代符号学兴起以来的泛符号思潮提供了重要的精神武器。需要我们在形而共生的符号本体观念基础上，高度警惕与辩证。

关键词 图像;符号;认知;语言;观念

人对世界的符号建构、感知与表达是由大脑神经元活动以及因此形成的思维与信息组织决定的，有着复杂的生物性和社会性机制，这已经为现代认知科学大量研究所证实。这种介于精神与物质之间的符号形态，有着符号能指（形式）与符号所指（语义）共生统一的中介特性与“文化”功能，不仅是人类认知与交流的基础工具与基本手段，也成为开启人类文明的基础。

然而，由于符号的创制是以指代认知对象、表明意义和社会规约为前提，如果不能坚持这一符号的基本规则，就可能造成对图像符号本质及其本体特征的不同诠释，甚至影响到对符号本体的认识与理解。这典型地表现在对我们视界中“对象”与“图像”关系的认知上，需要我们在跨学科视域下深入反思与探讨。

1. 被建构的符号化视觉“图”景

1.1 客观世界与主观世界之间的第三世界——符号世界

如何运用符号来表达情感与相互交流，如何运用符号探索世界与认识世界，是人类
符号文明发展基本逻辑。人文领域杰出的符号运用者时指称为优秀的学者、文学家、诗人、画家、画家、画家或者音乐家，而自然、社会科学领域的优秀研究者则体现出运用符号探索表达自然、社会规律的超凡能力。

然而，在西方二元对立哲学传统影响下，精神与物质、心与身、主观与客观、思维与语言常常被割裂，客观物质世界与主观精神世界的关系也是如此。如果我们把自己的主观意识偏执地理解为纯粹精神的非物质世界，不能够认识意识产生的生物性机制与生理性载体，就难免将人类的意识、心灵与精神世界神秘化、玄虚化，甚至归结为上帝的意志与恩赐；如果不能认识到人的意识形成必然经过符号化的心理活动以及语言信息载体的判断与运算，同样，会混淆客观世界与心理世界的真实关系。

普遍的观点认为，主观与客观属于认识论的一对重要范畴。主观是指人的感觉、意识、思想等；客观是指在人的意识之外，不依赖于人的意识而存在的一切客观事物。主观与客观的关系问题是思维与存在、精神与物质的关系问题。长久以来，人们总是是主观决定客观，还是客观决定主观的问题上相互争执不休。辩证唯物论认为主观和客观是辩证统一的关系，客观决定主观，主观反映客观，并动地反映于客观。显然，辨证的观察能否人觉到认知的基本状态与规律。主观与客观之间关系的形而上于依赖于借助器官摄取的脑内运动活动，而脑内运动活动所产生的意识与思想又依赖于符号化信息语言介质，也就是说，符号化的，感性、经验、概念与符号语言信息系统的连接着主观与客观世界，在客观与主体之间建构了我们的认知与精神的符号的第三世界。

1.2 图像符号观

毫无疑问，“图”像是被建构的。当我们试图通过文字或图像等符号系统来阐释或理解我们世界意义的时候，必然是通过物质的符号载体来进行。我们这里所说的符号，是以心像感受为基础的被建构的义相生的媒介系统，不是对象本身。

尽管我们生活在视觉的世界里，但并不是一切的视觉对象都能在大脑意识中建构意义，即使它在某个特定时期或阶段被有效地采集和记录，只有在一定的环境和语境中被特定地感知或使用，并获得意义的对应、象征或解释的时候，对象的符号化语言价值才能实现。它可以是深入描绘，可以是象征符号，也可能是一种视角选择后对选择与取舍，或者就是主观意象的自由发挥，即使是偶然的成像与灵感显现，也必定是其后对其意义判断后的选择与启用。

表1 从物象到影像，再到心像的视觉认知机制

表1 从物象到影像，再到心像的视觉认知机制

在这一过程中，视觉对象通过视觉神经传输系统的生物性影像编码与解码向心像
的复杂认知转化（朱玉明，2011：29-44），也因此建构了人类视觉参与下精神的宇宙，产生了有别于物象本体的新视觉模式和视（表1）。正如密克（Schlick）曾指出的，“我们对于空间的全部表象完全是由感觉空间，所服用里吸取来的，广延在直观的意义下只是心理的量的属性，而不是物理事物的属性。”（洪谦主编，1984：55）

显然，客观物象和图像不是一回事。图像属于视觉符号体系的建构形态，是人的主观意识与行为参与的结果。自然环境中的客观物象与变化，作为群体性社会经验与个体意识的信息来源，都具有符号化的可能，但在未被人观察与意识的时候，它们并不具备符号化的价值。我们经常被那些这样的微妙差异，并因为思考的角度不同得出不同的结论。罗丹（Rodin）和他的学生曾经为自己的作品是模仿自然的作品还是主观自然的作品发生过一次有趣的辩论：贡布里希（Gombrich）在《木马沉思录》中以木马为例也探讨了图像与自然物的关系；而傅拉瑟（Flusser）曾经感慨：“图像原本应该是地图，却变成银幕。图像不但没有将世界呈现给人类，反而以自身取代世界而使重新呈现的是图像，其描绘的程度有如人活着是为了配合他制造图像。他不再读图像，而是将未经解读的图像再往‘外在世界’投射。世界变成类似图像的东西，成为场景和情境的关系。”

符号总以一个事物代表或象征另一个事物，但这个事物并不因此成为另一事物，而只是另一事物某一视角下的特定信息与意义的指代。尽管视觉世界的物象无限丰富，但如果不将视为有心象意义的视觉符号，使之可以驻留、复制并超越现场进行传播，它仅是个体感知的对象，只是心象的元语言状态。也就是说，符号之所以可以成为符号，必须在可以脱离自身条件下跨越时空传播的表征中介与样态。

巴赫金（Bakhtin）1929年在《马克思主义与语言哲学——语言学方法基本问题》中指出：“任何一个物体，任何一个生产工具本身并不是符号，但如果它们被赋予某种反映或替代的功能，它们就可以作为某个东西的象，但可以理解为一种表象，被接受，可以转换为意识形态的符号。如面包和酒，既是消费品，也可以是基督教圣餐仪式中的宗教符号。”在这里，巴赫金所指的被赋予某种反映或替代的功能，实际上就是指该物被作为符号表达的介质，就是符号的意义属于整个意识形态，就如同被展示的实物、雕塑和装置作品一样。（萧静宇，2007：55）

中国文化中的“文”通“纹”，“纹”即指文饰和符号，是谓“关乎人文，以化成天下”。也就是说，我们的祖先很快就认识到“文化”的本质就是“符号之化”。文化总是体现为以符号方式标注、演绎、创造各类事物与对象。文化的创造在某种程度上说就是符号创造。

随着人类对自然的不断开发与创造，纯粹自然的领域不断被压缩，而人工的、特别是被心理经验所渗透的符号化的世界面貌越来越多地进入人类的视野与思维。因此在人的视界，视觉对象一旦变为符号化的心像便可能转化为物质载体的符号图像，所涵盖的就不仅是审美意义的视觉，历史意义的视觉，还有现实意义上渗透于政治、经济与社会各个层面的视觉。它所承载的是人类感觉经验与社会记录的重要历史。

由于被建构的“视觉景象”本身是在社会和文化的大环境里产生的，因此不仅具有显性的直观形象，也包含隐性的感觉体验资源，不仅有物化事物的再现与反映，也有抽
象的视觉概念、移情与象征，更隐含着丰富的政治、经济和社会价值。必须承认，今天当我们“凝视”世界景象的时候，已很难摆脱经验的符号世界的控制与影响。“人是符号的动物”，人类符号化的形意共生的本体语言形态、物质环境以及其传承、创造与发展构成人类文化的核心要件。

由于受西方镜像论与形式本体论影响，基于模仿再现艺术视角下的美学传统习惯于把图像符号双重特性理解为内容客体与形式本体关系；在符号观念深入人心的时候，将之理解为符号客体和形式本体的关系；而在语境研究广受欢迎的学术思潮下，又理解为情境客体与文本本体的关系（注：这里的“文本”是指形式语言的结构组织，而“情景”指意义的话语环境）。这都是镜像观念的变种，沿袭着分离图像形式与语义的二元对立传统，继续从理论上延续所谓的形式的艺术本体地位。这种观念错误地将图像符号形式属性与语义属性相分离，将图像的内涵意义与物质形式看成对立的两极（表 2）。

表 2 传统镜像论和形式本体观念下的符号形式与符号语义关系处于被割裂的二元对立（本体与客体）状态

事实上，图像符号是物质形式与信息语义的高度统一，它呈现给我们的视觉感受不仅是有审美价值的空间样态与组合关系，还包含丰富的情感乃至多元的经验意义。作为图像本体的符号语义与符号形式之间是共生而非对立关系（表 3、表 4）。

表 3 符号形式与符号语义的关系
表4 符号图像观念下的图像形式与符号语义是共生统一的本体关系

符号语义的形成，依赖于符号形式物质载体，也依赖于人自身生存经历和文化经验的积累。符号语义从单纯的象形和指示作用发展到象征寓意的表达，从单一符号诉求发展到组合符号创意，视觉语义超越了传统意义的“内容”，包容了感觉、意象、概念等多层内涵。可以说，经历千万年历史沉淀的图像符号形态所建构的语义内涵远远超过形式本身可以显现的样貌，如果我们不重视运用符号的观念与视角来认识反思我们的图像价值，就难以真正把握图像与人类文明的密切联系，把视觉图像创造提升到人类文化的更高层面上。

理解这一点很重要。如果我们仍仅仅停留在图像形式的孤立思考，只能深陷于纯粹形式的审美与情感状态，不仅容易导致图像创作过度追求形式与“趣味”的误区，也容易削弱，曲解图像作品所隐含的丰富信息与内涵，割裂时间和历史，割裂社会联系和作品环境，无法从图像本体的层面认识理解其深厚的文化和社会价值；同样，对图像意义的探寻也不能脱离形式的载体与表现样态。图像不可能是对象的简单镜像模拟，视觉形式的建构具有高超的技术要求与风格情感的表现特性，是人对心像认知的创造性结构与表达，不是人的认知态度与价值观，具有塑造和提升对象意义的重要作用。

2. 传统图像认知中的几个误区

2.1 镜像说与形式本体论

不论东西方图像文化在形式与观念上如何不同，在过去历史上，模仿再现自然对象的创作理念是相近的。在中国有应物象形的艺术传统，而在西方，主导的观念则是模仿再现的镜像说（朱永明，2011：198-221）。

由于对视觉世界的神经镜像能力是人类认知基础，在西方文化主流思想中被赋予高贵的价值。具有模仿意义的景象重现与塑造在人的心目中不仅是对上帝创造万物的崇敬和对真理的揭示与追求，也是人精神性情感与智慧的源头，具有主导与启示人的情感与想象的象征。

这种自古希腊以来的视觉文化传统在欧洲文艺复兴时期被推向巅峰，模仿再现的绘画、雕塑作为“艺术”的核心被关注、神话和教化。而简化、抽象的图形与器物造型被认为是辅助的、审美的应用装饰，无论在人的精神深处，还是学术研究领域都被边缘化。
这事实上造成镜像的模仿再现艺术在传统上的主体地位，相关学术也以此为基础形成庞大的研究体系，其影响之大甚至超出它原所指涉的范畴。

人类图像文化的发展可以概括为从模仿、再现到表现的漫长时间过程。在这里，模仿、再现与表现我们可以理解为一种隐喻，一种源自对象描述的实现方式。而模仿自然物象是人类视觉图像的最初来源。由于模仿再现式绘画的典型特征在于描绘形象和真实对象的肖似度。于是以镜子等为隐喻的镜像论开始大行其道。

关于镜像论的起源有多种，其中最著名的是纳西索斯（Narcissus）的故事。纳西索斯是希腊神话中的美少年，溺爱自己在水中的倒影，并为之沉浸而死。有人将纳西索斯的倒影故事形容为人类对自然描摹最原始的内在冲动。阿尔贝蒂（Alberti）提出，除了对那个水面的巧妙的拥抱，绘画还会是什么？模仿与再现的镜像冲动构成西方写实绘画发展的一种重要的理论依据和隐喻。从奥维德（Ovid）、菲洛波诺斯（Philostratus）经验法则、阿鲁尔特的窗口理论、达芬奇（Da Vinci）镜子的比喻，从借助工具网格、成像暗箱到透视、光影技术掌握，人类对于现实世界的再现逐渐成熟，也构成文艺复兴时代伟大的历史贡献。

传统镜像论最有意义之处是，将图像理解为画面，一幅可以映射事物与对象的镜头或水面，而镜头和水面的映射物象时候，是幻象的，它的价值只在于再现对象的能力。如果一个图像只是如镜子一般的投射或肖似，那就不能作为符号指代对象，它的价值不在对象的意义，而在自身对对象所使用的表象形式，它是对自然事物的客观写照与模仿。

由于视觉形式长期被作为一种镜化隐喻，图像被视为对世界的再现或镜像，这样的逻辑意味着，如果一个图像有意义，不会是图像本身，而在于镜像式表达的对象。在此逻辑下，图像似乎只是展现了对象事物的视觉样貌，只具有形式本体价值，意义则属于客体对象，图像的内容成为言语与文学表述范畴，对象意义的领悟与解读是通过对传统概念上的言语文字的符号“语言”来完成。也因此，传统上视觉创造的意义，被理解为再现记录世界，继而在于提供直观的情境和激发审美情感。它作为独立的“艺术”形式，在西方文化语境中与语词意义相区别。情感、风格与技巧成为形式美学与价值研究的核心内容。以卡西尔的话说，艺术就是纯粹的形式。

在模仿再现的写实绘画时期，视觉作品的创作题材多是历史的文学主题的。作为画家不需在创作内容上有更多变动，只需在构图、表情与形式技巧上进行处理和创造。因此，情感、风格与技巧的传统美学观与文学性的意义阐释相组合，形成了所谓传统图像形式与内容的合体，但这种结合的有效性以作品意义的从属性、依附性表达为前提。

尽管西方传统文化中形式至上的观念牢固地统治着人们的思想和精神，但旧有的观念还是受到现代科学发展严重冲击并出现裂痕，它突出体现在对视觉符号形态的定性问题上。

值得注意的一个动向是，随着现代符号学的兴起，图像是否具有符号性的争议已经逐渐平息，但究其本质则更多是折中与妥协的产物，例如形式主义盛行不衰就是一个典
型的特征。虽然给予了图像以符号的名分，图像形式开始被理解为具有情感的属性，但却仍将表意功能归功于镜像的对象（如情感符号论），视觉符号的语义主体仍然被剥夺与抛弃，形式仍是图像作为“艺术”的唯一合法身份。

从镜像论的视角看，符号的对象总是不在场的，而镜像的符号对象“在场”。所谓符号的存在一定要有能指与所指之间的差异关系，而这种差异曾经被简单理解为不能有外在形象上的近似。一些学者坚持，由于图像与现实物体过于接近，其能指就是所指，或者说它就是所指，其指的特性被弱化甚至消解。因此，以镜像理论为基础所推演的逻辑认为，凡形象的图景都是试图镜像事物本身，但它不能替代对象，事物的意义依然属于对象自身。图像徒有形式的本体价值。这也为传统认识中拒绝图像形式为符号或者拒绝承认图像符号体系具有语言价值提供了理论参照。这种对图像符号与艺术本质的认知假位，促成了视觉艺术的形式本体论长盛不衰。形式论的影响波及，导致许多艺术家以此为目标进行了大量纯粹形式表现的创作，还留下丰富的关于形式探索和审美的文论思考。

与视觉领域艺术本体论争执不同，传统文学领域本体论之争主要是在形式、文本与语言关系上展开，并以语言本体论为支流。需要特别提高的是，文学中的形式本体论是相对较“语言”关系的不同认知，是对过去重内容轻形式的语言观的反动，但都不否认形式与文本是语言外化之物，具有紧密的一体关系，而传统视觉研究领域对形式本体的认识，是处于内容的，也就是对对象意义的客体化。

正如前文所述，符号学兴起的一个重大贡献，是从理论上确立了“语言”形态的媒介性质以及符号形式与符号语义共生统一的关系。同时促成了社会对视觉图像的符号性的认同。不论传统“语言”观念如何否认图像的符号性性问题，图像作为符号表意系统的价值已经渐成共识。这就意味着我们必须承认这样一个基本事实：人类社会任何通过媒介方式建构的符号形式，必然有其符号形式与符号语义的双重属性，图像也例外。在话语实践中形式与语义都是视觉图像形态的本体。这不仅破除了“镜像说”剥夺图像意义本体的魔咒，也验证了形式本体论的荒诞，并间接驳斥了情感符号论和泛符号观念的立论根基。

承认图像的符号性，也就是承认图像对客观世界的一种再造和诠释。例如，即使逼真镜像的摄影，也只是对对象特定角度的描绘，它具有符号性的典型指向与意义描述，呈现的是时间上的瞬间，空间上的某—面向。从这个意义上讲，“镜像”永远只是对模仿事物的一个隐喻。

2.2 情感符号论

西方19世纪以来颠覆传统的艺术实践以及多样化人类学研究发展，导致许多学者对传统镜像观念自身缺陷产生质疑和检讨。形式本体和形式至上论在变革中被迫寻找新的理论依据。艺术意志论就是其的重要修正与补充，而借壳出世的情感符号论和泛符号论则以另一种面貌出现在学术领域。

19世纪末，现代绘画实践已逐渐颠覆了模仿再现的观念。视觉表现不再是模拟物
象，而是转换为形、色独立的主观创作。观念的改变导致图像语言表述方式的巨大变化。但从这两者相互转换实验中，对形式的困惑则无以复加地压倒在研究者心中。形式的神话逐渐转向，以模仿再现为价值取向的“形式”本体论所颂扬的形式、风格与情感的至高无上地位没有了着力点。面对大量“荒诞异类”的现代派先驱经验和新的视觉样态，人们无法用旧有模式阐释其中的奥妙。传统语境中的规则因为得不到合理的解释。使画面“形式”所流露的特殊“意味”与情感“特质”为形式的力量，继而上演了一场新形式主义的“造”神潮流，也成为影响至今的艺术家。

因此，同样兴起于 19 世纪末的现代符号学尽管给西方艺术研究带来冲击，但因杂七乱八，限制了传统以及在后现代主义语言观下的历史重负，导致了被改造的形式至上论变种——情感符号论的抬头。

颇有意味的是，索绪尔在论述语言和非语言符号时，历数了语言和非语言的各种形态，就是对视觉图像符号不涉及。这还是一脉相传的镜像论与形式至上观念的悬空理论，并延续了图像事实上的非语言符号“镜像身份”的定位。

苏珊·朗格（Susanne K. Langer）在上世纪 50 年代提出情感性符号理论，想以此寻找路径与方法解决视觉符号语言研究中视觉表现性阐释的困境。她引用了纳盖尔（Nagel）对符号的定义：“按照我的理解，一个符号，可以是任意一种偶然生成的事物（一般都是以语言形态出现的故事），却一种可以通过某种某种不言而喻的或约定俗成的，或通过某种语言法则中标识某种与它不同另外的事物的事物。”然而说：“艺术符号是一种有别特殊性的符号，它不能具有符号的某些功能，但并不具有符号的全部功能，尤其是不能像纯粹符号那样，去代替另一个事物，而存在于它本身之外的其他事物发生联系。”(苏珊·朗格，2006：145-147) 苏珊·朗格无法对应符号本体应有的内容和意义，因此，她试图通过对文字和图形语言两种符号的区别来自圆其说。她提出语言文字符号系统是一个理性的符号系统，而艺术的符号是感性的或是情感的符号系统，两者有区别，又有相辅相成，相互补充，不可相互替代。语言文字负责陈述那些可以确切无误地讲得明白的东西；而艺术的形式则是向人陈述那些只能感受的东西，只能意会不可言传的东西。

情感艺术观形成的基础，源自镜像说和形式本体论以来图像本体形态的人为割裂（表 2），而这一脉相传的逻辑起点又为泛化意义与符号关系论提供了重要的精神武器。由于这样一个隐性的甚至是反符号的逻辑漏洞，导致泛符号思想大行其道。

2.3 对泛符号思潮的影响

泛符号论的核心思想是将一切可感知意义的对象信息都视为符号。如前所述，在镜像说和形式本体论影响下，既然视觉图像的语义本体都可以是对象的，那么对象的意义感知与表述也可以无需指代的中介。这在艾柯的符号学定义中非常明显，他列举的一般性符号学研究就包括从动物符号到大众传播符号等 19 项内容。而到了西比奥克（Sebeok）那里，甚至试图将自然界和社会生活中一切事物与现象都纳入到统一的符号系统中。这时候，符号的观念已经蜕变成为意义本体的孤立形态，语言被混为思维或感
知本身，形式中介被消解于感知和对象之间的无形地带，符号与可感知意义的对象相互叠合，甚至实际地合体，对象成为符号，成为意义，而符号成了感知的结果，甚至感知本身。这看似荒谬的论断，正是自镜像论以来泛符号思想滋生的根源。如果确实如此，图像确乎是无言的镜子。

在语言学领域，“非语言符号”范畴界定是除去“语言符号”以外的所有符号指涉，范围极其广泛。但一个匪夷所思的现象是，索绪尔（Saussure）虽然提出“非语言符号”的概念与定义，但并没有涉及图像的任何概念与符号称谓。如果我们将其纳入前文所言的西学语境就会豁然：在西式镜像观念下，图像的语义（意义）本体只属于对象，仅存形式的主体身份，因此，图像只是镜像记录视觉性非语言符号的手段，仅具有形式的、情感的、风格的艺术价值。随着现代符号学的兴起，特别是皮尔斯（Peirce）符号思想提出以来，“图像”开始越来越多地被认同为符号的体系。但这看似进步的观念却隐含玄机。

皮尔斯划分了三种信息符号呈现模式：符号(symbol)、图像(icon)、索引(index)，这三种模式最接近于图像、圣像的概念，可以理解为具体的形象，索引则具有指示的性质，而西比奥克将符号分为六种：信号(signal)、症状(symptom)、图像(icon)、标志(index)、象征(symbol)以及名称(name)。他们都特别把symbol单列出来，认为其是替代性的符码（西方传统观念里，替代性的符码才更具符号性），与其他几项相区别。

W. T. J. 米歇尔（Michelle）显然也意识到这个问题。他指出：“图像是一种伪称为不是符号的符号，从而假装成（或者对相信者来说，事实上能取得）天然的直接性和存在性。”（Michelle，1986：43）

西方社会对图像符号身份的疑虑与困惑，实际是困扰于图像与客观物象关系的历史逻辑。因为将图像视为物象镜像的传统，已经将图像语义本体的地位与价值消解，且至今未从理论上彻底清理与否定，这恰是物我不分的泛符号思想生生不息的重要原因。

我们知道，不论是症候迹象，还是人视界中的具体对象，它们所呈现的只是事物本身的样貌与状态，揭示的是事物自身信息的自然关系与属性，如果我们不能通过符号化的言语、文字与图像等符号手段去揭示它、分析它与认识它，不是以之指代或象征另一事物，则它只是客观实在。可是，泛符号思维混淆了媒介与对象、符号与对象、感知与意义的关系，也模糊了符号世界与现实世界的差异与界限。这种泛化的思维固然可以表现出对人类经验世界的全面关注和探究，具有一定的积极意义，但因为忽视了符号媒介性，只会导致对现实世界与人类经验世界认知上的混沌和错乱，造成形义割裂、物我不分的困境，并因为在感知与意义关系的无限衍义中沦入唯心主义、教条主义和玄虚化的文本游戏之中。

不管如何，情感符号论和泛符号论依然具有进步的意义。对于视觉文化研究来说，它有一个重要贡献，就是承认了图像的符号性和表意功能。许多人并未意识到，这已经为颠覆传统镜像观念基础上的形式至上理论埋下了伏笔。它首先动摇了传统形式至上理论，否定了图像意义本体的价值观，转而关注视觉艺术的语义情感、观念价值，面对图像符号意义的思考，又部分地为后现代思潮提供了观念性探索的理论支撑。
结   语

图像非物象，也非物象的镜像，而是经由影像、心像的符号化的意义编码与媒介转换，是人类认知水平与态度的建构和呈现，具有形式与内容共生的双重性特征。正确认识图像这一符号本质，不仅有利于我们建立起科学的图像文化与艺术实践的研究路径，也可以反证更广泛的符号学研究领域泛符号思想的荒谬，为我们建立更为普适性的科学的符号观念与符号学研究方向提供有益的思考。

参   考   文   献

文学符号学研究
乔治・佩雷克小说《生活使用说明》的空间解析

戴秋霞

摘要 乔治・佩雷克的小说《生活使用说明》打破了传统的小说形式，通过细致的空间格局描写和对拼图、文字游戏、迷宫、画中画等多种文学意象的引入，极力凸显了小说的空间特性。与此同时，作家将小说空间作为其空间的辅衬，在空间描写中延展出时间维度，由此使该小说具有了历史的厚度。佩雷克借助于小说空间的强化，以空间关系维系并反思已逝的人际关系，窥探了人们空虚的精神世界，呈现出一幅发人深省的西方社会全景图，启迪人们以自己的方式抵御现代精神危机。

关键词 乔治・佩雷克；《生活使用说明》；空间

现代法国作家乔治・佩雷克（Georges Perec，1936—1982）因其先锋创作而颇受关注。佩雷克在写作中尝试多种文学体裁，执着于各种可能的作品形式的探索和发掘，创作了大量令人耳目一新的作品，主要包括《物》《睡觉的人》《消失》《归来者》《W 或童年的记忆》《生活使用说明》等。1982 年，佩雷克因病早逝，留下许多未竟之作，让人深感惋惜和遗憾。在作家生前已发表的文学作品中，小说《生活使用说明》① 最负盛名，问世后一时洛阳纸贵，被誉为是一部辉煌的巨著。阅读后不难发现，作家在小说中十分注重空间的运用，借助对空间平无前例的关注力求实现将整个现实生活纳入该作品的理想。

1. 空间维度的凸显

佩雷克的小说《生活使用说明》发表于 1978 年，荣获当年的美第契奖。“小说以巴黎‘西蒙-克吕布里埃大街 11 号’（11 rue Simon-Crubellier）公寓大楼的各个房间为经，以上下百间间历代房客的人事兴替为纬，描绘出一幅现代西方城市社会的巨型画卷。”

① 《生活使用说明》的中译本名为《人生拼图版》。佩雷克，人生拼图版[M]，丁雪芳，译，合肥：安徽文艺出版社 1999 年版。
在文学史上，不乏借助某住所空间展现世间百态的先例，巴尔扎克笔下的伏盖公寓就是其中为大众所熟知的一个典型。不过，佩雷克的小说并非是前辈创作模式的简单模仿，他有自己独特的写作风格，并且在整体规模和涵盖的时空范围上都大大超越了前人。

《生活使用说明》的篇幅长达 700 页，共分为 99 章，通过讲述一个虚拟的地点——西蒙-克吕布里埃大街 11 号的一幢公寓内近百年来各个房间的房客更替，引入了大量人物以及各个人物背后形形色色的故事。“这幢楼的平面图像个棋盘，有十乘十个方格，佩雷克像玩棋那样按一定顺序从这个方格（即一个房间或小说的一章）跳到另一个方格……”(张永义，2003：24)。佩雷克按照国际象棋棋盘上“走马”的顺序描写各个房间，这种“走马式叙述”正是小说颠覆传统叙事中因果链条的一种策略，它大大弱化了小说中时间、事件和人际关系本身就脆弱的连续性，取而代之的是一种与故事逻辑完全无关的叙述顺序”(张永义，2003：251)。作者将小说设定为 99 章，而非在完整的棋盘上跳到个方格，耐人寻味。99 既意味着数量之多，也象征了一种无限性，使合作者将整个现实生活纳入小说的宏伟构想。该小说描绘了社会各阶层人物形形色色的不同生活，提供了一种模板型的生活指南，各种不同阶层的具体生活几乎都可以在其中找到范例。佩雷克开创了一种先锋式的创作写法。小说各个章节以公寓内的某个具体地点或某一人物的名字作为标题，在描写同一空间或同一人物的各章节名称后添加了阿拉伯数字以示区分（譬如第二章标题为“博德莫 1”，第三十一章再次描写该人物的生活时标题定为“博德莫 2”）。小说的前后章节之间不存在线性的连续性，犹如“一个崩裂的整体，一个必须由读者自己拼凑起来的七巧板”(普洛坎，2002：194)。读着既可以按章节的先后顺序沿着“棋盘”上的路线前进，从总体上了解这座公寓的整体生活，也可以选择描写公寓内某一地点或同一人物的各个章节，按后面标注的阿拉伯数字将这些章节连接起来阅读，了解其中的各种具体生活。因而与传统小说相比，读者在阅读小说时拥有相对的自由性。

《生活使用说明》中出现了公寓内的历代房客以及与之存在关联的亲友等数百个人物，不过他们并非如传统小说中的人物那样形象鲜明、各具特色。佩雷克的小说颠覆了人物的中心地位，人物退居成为细节描写的附属，其形象的立体性不复存在，属于“功能性人物”或福斯特所说的“扁形人物”。在这众多人物当中，值得一提的是手工艺加斯巴尔・温克勒。他闲暇时的爱好是将印有不同旅馆名的一堆标志进行分类，先后尝试按时间顺序、字母顺序、渊别、国别或某个共同特征、相反特征进行分类，均以失败告终。因标签分类的难度困难性，温克勒最终放弃了这一分类工作。龚斐在研究中指出，正如温克勒“始终无法在旅馆标示牌的分类活动中为某张特定的标示找到位置一样，我们在漫长的阅读过程中，……不知道如何‘安放’，归并和理解那些过度膨胀的细节、知识话语和人物群体，不知道它们是否可以依据某种规则附属于一个有意义的……

整体。从这个意义上说，温克勒是一个典型的‘元小说人物’，他的存在隐喻了这部小说在读者眼中的形象（龚觅，2008：217）。

2. 控制叙事的描写

在传统小说中，描写为叙事服务，佩雷克在《生活使用说明》中彻底颠覆了这一关系，描写从叙事中得以解放。在该小说中，“叙事出自于描写，是描写产生并控制叙事。描写再也不是热奈特所说的‘古老的叙述（ancilla narrationis）’，那种受到束缚、不能被放任自由的必不可少的奴隶”（Adam，1993：62）。描写在小说中占据了主导地位，作家对室内陈设以及油画、菜单、纸盒、装潢工具等数以千计的各式物品进行了详尽的细节描写，如同狂热的收藏者一般，企图将现实世界的所有物品都纳入同ㄧ部小说中。“具有长期资料员从业经验的佩雷克充分发挥自己的优势，动用了包括考古学、历史学、语言学、化学、心理学、生物学、地理学、艺术史、社会学、经济学甚至数学等在内的众多学科的知识语汇，在作品中体现出一种意趣盎然而又极度庞杂繁芜的风格。整个文本仿佛是细节的海洋、知识的万花筒、语言和词语盛大的狂欢。”（龚觅，2008：214-215）详尽的细节描写能够令人产生一种幻觉，读者仿佛身临其境。作者的叙述让这座公寓，走进每个房间，观察各式物品最细微之处，触摸墙上的壁纸，或精致或粗糙的摆设、椅子圆润的红色流苏，感受公寓内房客的各色生活。文本中描述的一切似乎真实地呈现在读者面前，具有高度的逼真性。

在令人眼花缭乱的大量描写中，关于墙壁的描写以看似不经意的方式被顺势提及，但倘若细细想来，则不无深意。在公寓内各个房间的内部环境描写中，墙壁并非以本真的面目出现，而是经过了这样那样的装扮粉饰，主要可以概括为三种方式：绘画、壁纸和油漆。有些房间的墙壁以绘画点缀，如德博蒙客厅内几幅镶嵌的广告画，法尔沙斯室内的钢笔肖像画、水墨画和几个图案各异的挂盘，阿尔塔蒙家的整个墙壁更是被一幅表现欧洲人想象中的十九世纪下半叶印第安人生活场景的豪华全画幅覆盖。有些房间的墙壁以壁纸装扮，如四楼右侧空房间内的金属箔壁纸，马尔基佐客厅内的仿若伊地区麻布墙纸，布雷台尔房间内绘有各种小灌木的壁纸等，还有一些房间则用油漆进行简单的粉饰，如莫尔曼房间墙上黯淡无光的浅棕色油漆，尼埃多和罗杰斯房间内墙壁上的浅绿色油漆等。

毋庸置疑，绘画、壁纸和油漆作为室内环境的装饰，可以体现出居住者的生活质量和财力身份。然而，若认为描写绘画、壁纸和油漆的用意仅止于此，这样的理解未免过于浅显。“关于人的自我保护心理对痛苦体验的遮蔽，佩雷克另有一处隐喻：‘我将绘画悬挂在墙上，为的是忘记墙的存在……必须忘记墙在那里，而再没有什么比绘画更能完成这一任务的了。’如果一个人细心读过《W或童年的记忆》的结尾，特别是其中描写的集中营毒气室‘墙上’受难者的斑驳印指，那么就会立刻明白‘墙’的喻指是什么。”（龚
觅，2008:89)佩雷克出生于上世纪30年代的巴黎，父母为波兰犹太裔移民。二战期间，
年幼的佩雷克便失去了双亲，父亲死于战场，母亲死于奥斯维辛集中营。无情的战争给
佩雷克的童年投上了一层挥之不去的阴影，母亲在集中营的悲惨经历他无从知晓，也是
他不愿去触及和想象的痛苦疤痕。而墙壁便是这一惨烈命运的一种映照。对墙壁的视
而不见，正是对童年经历的逃避。佩雷克曾坦言：“几乎所有我的作品都不能完全避
开某种自传的印记。”(转引自李洪峰，2003:69)壁纸和油漆的作用略于绘画，不过同
样也能够遮蔽作者不愿面对的墙壁，而阿尔塔蒙家展现印第安人生活场景的壁纸已在
整体上形成一幅巨型绘画，它所发挥的功能甚至超过了悬挂于墙上的小型绘画。

对于墙壁的遮蔽和作品中其他大量的描写反映了作者的矛盾心理。一方面，佩雷
克不愿去触及痛苦的往事，不愿去设想父母在集中营内遭遇和承受的一切，因而在作品
中竭尽所能地遮蔽其极度恐惧战栗的墙壁。而另一方面，佩雷克幼年时便失去了双
亲，由姑母抚养长大，并且在针对犹太人的种族灭绝中，只有祖母和姑母一家幸免于难。
因此，他对父母和家族的记忆与认识十分模糊且少之又少。这也构成了他人生的遗憾，
他强烈地渴求找回缺失的记忆，由此衍生出另一种恐惧，即对遗忘的恐惧。这种恐惧在
写作中则体现为，将目光所及的所有事物一一记录下来，“他特别把对日常现实的搜集
当作抵御‘对遗忘的恐惧’的武器”(龚觅，2008:52)，借助大量的描写定格和保存画面，
以期通过这种方式留住回忆。将对过往伤痛的逃避和对失败记忆的追寻融合起来，并
通过后者辅助实现前者，形成矛盾的统一。强迫症式的巨细无遗的细节描写起到了移
焦的作用效果，转移了佩雷克内心对伤痛的聚焦，写作的行为在不知不觉中超越了写作
的目的，成为作者关注的焦点。

写作聚焦的转移造就了人类两大不同倾向的心理活动在作品中的融合，即抽象倾
向和投射倾向。“抽象倾向，即主体利用已经形成的心理结构和能力，运用概括与简化
等心理机制，试图认识外界事物的本质、规律和现象……投射倾向，即主体时时地在寻
求契机，将主体的心灵图式向外投射，寻找与主体生命特征相契合的对象，将生命意志
与生命情调投射在它身上，使之成为主体自身体世界的延伸，成为主体观照自身的场所。”
(巫汉祥，2002:33-34)这两种倾向是一组互逆的心理过程。投射通常被划入文学艺术
的范畴，而抽象则往往被归入科学的领域，二者长期处于分裂状态。而佩雷克在作品中
将这两种倾向完美地融合起来，在投射主体世界的同时，运用棋盘式的几何结构呈现文
本的空间，并以走马式的叙述连接公寓内的各个房间，将投射与抽象机制并用，达到出
奇制胜的效果。

3. 空间意象的运用

在小说世界的空间呈现中，作者借助几个特殊的文学意象展示文本的空间特征。
在该小说中最引人注意的当属拼图这一意象。拼图是佩雷克笔下常见的一个意象，用
以指代整体与其构成要素之间的关系。作家就曾以拼图来喻指他的文学创作：“我模糊地感到，我的书源于文学在我眼前展开的全景图，它们从这幅图画中获取意义，然而我似乎从来不能准确地抓住它。对我来说它位于写作之外，是关于‘我为什么写作’的问题，对此我只能通过写作本身来回答，并因此不断推迟那个最终停止写作的瞬间——在那一刻，图画显现出来，就像一幅无可挽救的被完成了的拼图板样。”（龚凯，2008：55）

佩雷克已经完成的这些文学作品只是其创作规划这一庞大整体中的一部分拼图块，他的创作规划因为英年早逝而被迫终止，因此无法了解文学在他眼前展开的“全景图”是何面貌，但就其已完成的创作而言，这些作品本身又各自构成了一幅幅小拼图版，可以让我们窥见其魅力。《生活使用说明》正是如此。各个章节犹如一块块散落的拼图，读者通过阅读拼凑出整个公寓的生活全景。该小说的中译本则直接以《人生拼图版》为题，点出了该小说文本结构的最大特色，而拼图这一具体物品的出场也由巴特尔布思和温克勒这两个人物的相关描写贯穿了小说文本的始终。百万富翁巴特尔布思尽其一生的时间来完成一项心中的宏伟计划。他花费十年时间研究水彩画，再用二十年时间周游世界，每半个月游历一个地方，绘出一幅水彩画，共计500幅大小一致的风景画，每完成一幅画就寄给手工艺者温克勒，由其绘制出一幅幅拼图版。待周游完世界返回法国后，巴特尔布思再用20年时间拼完所有的拼图。在后来的日子里，巴特尔布思长编令地独自一人待在屋内拼图，禁止任何人的打扰。作者在第七十章中用大量篇幅描写了巴特尔布思在进行拼图工作时遇到的重重困难，似乎也映射了读者在阅读该小说时同样遇到的问题。作者在此处给出了一些克服障碍的方法：“解决问题的关键在于保持中立、客观，尤其是要随机应变，而不要有成见。”（佩雷克，1999：340）作者也借此暗示读者应撇开成见，寻找不同于以往的新方法来面对和阅读该小说。巴特尔布思在拼图过程中时不时会迷失其中，在不经意间掉入拼图制作者温克勒预先设计的陷阱，陷入百思不得其解的困境，进而焦躁不安，催生出难以抑制、毫无由来的怒火。直等到生命的最后时刻，巴特尔布思仍未能走出自己设置的这个困境。在告别人世时，他依然坐在桌前，桌上摆着一幅还差一个拼图块就将完成的拼图。拼图版上空缺的那部分呈X形，然而他手中紧紧攥着的最后一个拼图块却是W形，这似乎是上天和他开的一个玩笑。巴特尔布思曾经对自己的人生有如此宏伟详细的规划，终究还是未能按自己的意愿实现这一计划，带着无尽的遗憾离开了人世。巴特尔布思耗费一生的时间和精力力求完成心中的宏伟人生计划，不过死时手中攥着的那最后一个与拼图空缺部分不相匹配的拼图块似乎是对其他人的讽刺，他的人生及其间付出的努力在这个拼图块面前显得如此滑稽可笑、苍白无力。

小说中还出现了一个有趣的意象，即填字游戏。作者将阿尔塔蒙家晚报上的一个填字游戏搬到了文本内，成为文本的一部分。巧合的是，填字游戏10×10的规格与公寓大楼的平面图正好一致。“这页的填字游戏虽然没有填满，但是已有不少进展。”（佩雷克，1999：121）这一描述也暗示了小说此时的状况：虽然没有结束，但公寓内房间和人物的描写还处于进展当中。填字游戏的图象在此出现，仿佛是记录此刻小说文本的一张定格像片。当然，我们还可以为此处填字游戏的用途提供另一种解释，即为读者暂时的
偏移提供机会和可能。在此，读者可以按自己的兴趣和意愿，选择暂时敞开正在阅读中
体验的小说世界，开个小差，饶有趣味地做一做这个填字游戏。读者在循着作者这个小
说拼图制作者的创作构思构建小说世界的同时，也能够拥有部分的主动性，选择在此处
的阅读方式：视而不见地继续阅读小说，或是停留片刻，实现短暂的偏移。

我们也可以认为，翻开这本小说就如同进入了一座迷宫，读者的阅读就是在迷宫里来
回穿梭，找寻出口的过程。“迷宫故事的读者可以置身于俯视迷宫的位置；他可以俯瞰
迷宫的全貌，用双目将它览遍”，或是“从内部遍访迷宫，迎击陌生事物，翻开每一页就像
转过一条道路的拐角，走上一条岔道”，因而可以“在不同的分叉之间作选择”（阿达利，
2004：101，105）。正如前文所说，我们既可以结合书末的公寓平面图，总览这座公寓的生
活全貌，也可以选择公寓内的某一地点或某个人物，将相关章节串联起来阅读，了解公寓
整体生活中的某个方面。因此，我们要学会“以迷宫方式思维”，“忘却直线性和透明性，因
为现实世界不是这样造就的”（阿达利，2004：16）。这种迷宫式的故事编排更接近于现实生活，
也启迪我们运用这种迷宫式思维重新审视其映射出的现实世界。

无论是拼图、填字游戏、抑或迷宫，都能反映出这部小说的结构特点。不过，倘若说
这些意象都趋于平面化，那么有一个意象则更为立体：画中画。小说第五十一章叙述了
画家瓦莱纳的作画构思。瓦莱纳将要给自己画中画中，画中可以看到公寓内的各式家居
物品，“而在这些物品周围，画上一大群人物，画上他们的故事，他们的历史及经历”
（佩雷克，1999：245）。随后，这些人物形形色色的经历浓缩成一个个小标题，以数字标
记一一列举出来，共计 179 个小标题。总括了整座公寓内各个房客的生活经历，而最后
一个小标题回到这幅整体画作的重头，“打算把全公寓都画在人的画布中的老画家”（佩
雷克，1999：254）。小说描述该公寓内的整体生活，公寓内的人物之一瓦莱纳意欲在他的
画布上画出整个公寓的生活，而这块画布中也出现了画家自己的形象，画中的老画家
正在作画，打算把全公寓都画入画布中，由此层层相叠，如深渊般无穷无尽。这正符合
安德烈・纪德（André Gide）笔下的“纹心结构”（mise en abyme）。在西方艺术中拥有
悠久传统的这一手法运用于文学作品中，也为小说平添了一份艺术趣味和美感。佩雷
克对这一手法的运用更为巧妙。表面上看，这一纹心结构出于人物瓦莱纳的画笔下，仍
属于绘画中运用的手法，而实际上绘画内容正好符合小说的整体内容，因而也为文学作
品所用，其运用之自然与精妙耐人回味。纹心结构的运用增强了小说的空间立体感，空
间维度在此处得到了特殊的放大。同时，在小说的 99 章内容中，这一章刚好位于中心
位置，以对内容的总体概述将小说分为前两大部分，结构十分工整，符合佩雷克将投
射与抽象机制并用，以抽象的数理结构展现文学世界的意图。同时，对即将迷失于书本
迷宫中的读者而言，正好可以借此暂时抽离出来，俯瞰小说内的公寓全貌。因此，此处
纹心结构的运用也为间离效果的产生提供了一个契机。

《生活使用说明》中，佩雷克通过细致的物品描写及多种文学意象的运用，凸显了小
说的空间维度。然而，要凸显空间维度并不仅止于对空间本身的描写，作者在注重空
间描写的基础之上，引入了时间维度，通过时间维度进一步强化人物经历的深度和小
说的立体感，深入展现公寓生活的全景。
4. 时间维度的辅衬

小说由空间中延展出时间维度，在时间上也打破了线性，以空间维度为主导，随着空间的变换在时间里来回穿梭。作者在空间的转移中介绍不同人物过去的历史，由此拥有了时间跨度，为小说增添了历史深度。并且，由于时间跨度的增大，作者介绍人物过去的经历时，必然不会局限于某一个单一日空，从而又进一步拓展了小说覆盖的空间，扩大了小说的空间维度。我们仅以雷米·罗尔沙斯这一人物为例。第十三章描写的空间是罗尔沙斯夫妇的双层套间的门厅。在提及罗尔沙斯曾请一位专业作家帮他撰写了一部回忆录这一事件时，作者借这部回忆录叙述了罗尔沙斯先生一生充满冒险和误会的不幸经历。人物经历的叙述一直追溯到第一次世界大战刚结束时，前后的跨度长达半个多世纪。人物从事的职业先后经过了数次更替，从喜剧演员、乐队成员、杂志记者的经理人、进出口贸易商人，到电视节目制作人等，罗尔沙斯遭遇了多次失败。正因人物经历的丰富性，叙述空间覆盖了欧洲、北美、近东、西非、中非等多个地区，大大拓展了小说的空间维度。

上面提到，画中画的描写将小说分为结构对称的两部分，事实上，小说结构的对称性并不仅于此。小说的开头出现了一样物品，即公寓大楼的平面图，小说的中间画中画又一次展现了公寓的整体面貌，而在小说的结尾，公寓的全貌与空间维度的结合再次呈现于读者面前，前后呼应，实现了完美的对称。在小说的最后一章，画面定格于一个确定的时间点：1975 年 6 月 23 日晚上，将近八点钟。作者分别描写了在这一瞬间公寓不同房间内的各种生活画面，通过时间的重合实现空间的并置，如同公寓的一张剖面图，在小说的尾声再一次呈现公寓的整体空间。

5. 强化空间的意图探寻

在时间维度的辅衬上，作者通过空间的变换，介绍众多人物的生活经历。虽然人物的经历各不相同，却又具有普遍的共性：小说人物的生活充满死亡和失意等负面因素，始终被愁云笼罩。

在对人物经历的叙述中，死亡成为时常出现的字眼。多个人物的命运以自杀或被谋杀终结。以德博蒙家为例。考古学家费尔南·德博蒙为了找到一座传说中的城市“勒勃第特”的遗址，在西班牙开展了五年多的发掘工作却收效甚微，最后选择以自杀的方式告别尘世。德博蒙的女儿伊莉莎白离家出走后与泥瓦匠布雷台尔结婚。某天邻居发现两夫妇双双于家中被害。人物生活与情绪上的失落、绝望或暴力事件紧密联系。
作者对某些人物的死亡描写甚至融入了黑色幽默，读者在阅读时丝毫没有恐惧或悲伤感，反而会不禁哑然失笑。埃沙尔夫妇与儿女女婿挤在同一屋檐下，生活十分艰苦。某天，夫妇因被一根鱼刺卡住而意外死亡，家人并未感到悲痛。恰恰相反，埃沙尔先生一直盼着脾气怪异的太太早些去世，全家的生活也在她死后得到改善。门窗和死者的丈夫死在阿尔及利亚。出乎意料的是，这位职业中士长并非死于战场，而是因为他的好友给他投稿，吃了太多的橡皮，引起不可逆转的肠胃炎而丧命。字句中透露出荒诞的意味，人物的死亡折射出现个体存在的荒诞性。

除却关于死亡的描写，小说人物的生活中亦有诸多的不顺意。无论在生活还是事业上，人物时常扮演失败者的角色。罗尔沙斯夫人先后经历了5次婚姻，丈夫来自5个不同的国家，之前4次婚姻均很短暂。热罗姆先生花费5年时间研究西班牙天主教士，撰写了1200多页的资料。然而在四处寻找出版社为其出版时遭到了46次拒绝，热罗姆愤然焚毁自己的手稿，而后以翻译初级儿童读物为生，直到离开人世。丹特维尔先生用4年时间潜心研究，撰写了300多页手稿，试图出版自己的研究成果却屡次遭拒，最终放弃了学术理想，决心只当一名普通街道医生。然而，数年后，曾帮丹特维尔审阅稿件的知名教授剽窃了他的成果，以自己的名义公开发表，而热罗姆和丹特维尔都在现实的挫折和打击下无奈地放弃了理想，郁郁不得志，在失意中庸庸碌碌地度过余生。

不仅如此，小说人物在人际关系方面也存在明显缺陷，是一个个孤立、封闭的个体，生活鲜有交集。作者用许多笔墨反复描写楼道这一公寓内的特殊空间。与各个住户相互隔绝的私人寓所空间不同，楼道是公寓内的一个公共空间。人们不慌不忙的一点共同生活就局限于此。然而，即便在这个特殊空间内，人物之间仍然几乎不存在交流。小说开篇便将楼道空间内人物相互之间的冷漠封闭状态呈现出来。“人们每天经过，但相互视而不见”，在这里居住时间最久的瓦莱纳也对一些住户一无所知，“从楼道里擦肩而过也不认出来”，这是“一个冷冰冰的，几乎是有敌意的场所”（佩雷克，1999：15，80，15）。楼道空间内尚且如此，人们的交流在其他空间内更是难见其踪。

不仅生活没有交集的房客之间不存在交流，作者通过相识多年的巴特尔布思和瓦莱纳这两个人物之间交流的缺失让人们感到孤独、封闭状态进一步凸现。巴特尔布思跟随瓦莱纳学习水彩画，每天一课，共学习了十年时间。在如此漫长的相处时间中，同龄的二人偶而未能成为无话不谈的知己，也应该相熟彼此了。然而，“除了这种严厉的教学关系以外，巴特尔布思和瓦莱纳相互之间几乎不说话”（佩雷克，1999：132），人与人之间的淡漠在此表现得淋漓尽致。

小说中的公寓生活可以看作是20世纪现代人生活的缩影，呈现出前所未有的高密度生活状态。这种现代生活状态客观上拉近了人与人之间的距离，为相互交流提供了有利条件。不过事实上却恰恰相反，在高密度的人口空间内，人们好似一个个相互排斥的孤立个体，对理解不关心，封闭在各自的世界之中，拒绝外来个体的骚扰，个体之间出现了难以逾越的交流障碍的鸿沟。这一悖论体现了现代生活的复杂性和荒诞性。

佩雷克借巴特尔布思这一人物的经历述说了现代个体对其所处的荒诞现实世界的
反抗。巴特尔布思“以自己抉择的荒诞去对抗和超越世界客观的荒诞”（龚冕，2008，225页），尽其一生完成自己的宏伟计划，先后学习水彩画、在周游世界的同时创作五百幅水彩画，找人将画制成拼图，自己通过拼图再复制这些水彩画，而后再将画作放入由新作画的地方，再将画作进行褪色处理，还原成一张白纸。在巴特尔布思的理想规划中，他五十年努力不会留下任何痕迹，如同在世界上未曾发生过一般，一切归零。然而他并未从中获得精神上的彻底自由和解放。每次拼完拼图后，成就感和满足感带来的狂喜只能维持片刻，随即又无奈地开始另一幅拼图，再度陷入沮丧、绝望的焦躁情绪中。最终，在其告别人世时，小说也以一种同样荒诞的结局宣告了这一宏伟计划的失败。尽管如此，该人物仍以自己的方式试图掌握自己的命运，对抗现实的荒诞，在一定程度上获得自主性。

由此看来，我们也可在人物巴特尔布思的身上找寻到佩雷克的身影。作者通过小说呈现了现代个体精神空虚、孤独封闭的现状，并借此寻求能让自己摆脱现状的途径，即在文学世界中尽情地放逐自我，探索各种前所未有的文学表现形式，在对新型文学结构的不断追求中获得身心的愉悦。

在现代生活中，高密度的生活空间催生出孤独、封闭、冷漠的现代个体，维系这些个体仅剩的一点脆弱的关系就是空间上的方位关系。这一悖论凸显现代世界的荒诞与现代人的精神危机。佩雷克通过空间的强化，真实地反映了现代人的生存现状和心理状态，以独特新颖的结构使该小说在同类作品中脱颖而出。作者在客观呈现现代生活的同时，也孜孜不倦地追求精巧的结构构思，以这种方式为自己找到一条摆脱现代人的精神真空现状的途径。他的小说引发了人们对现代人的普遍孤立现状进行反思，同时也启发人们，在无法凭一己之力改变整个现代社会个体现状的情况下，为自己找寻一条合适的解决路径，以各自的方式抵御现代世界的普遍精神危机。

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一则故事的叙事符号学分析：格雷马斯模式

姜奕村

摘 要 本文旨在运用法国符号学家格雷马斯的符号学分析框架，对一则短篇故事 Get out of That Car 进行符号学分析。笔者将故事分为两个部分，按照格雷马斯提出的框架，从三个层面对故事进行剖析。这三个层面分别涉及语篇的语词层面、叙事层面和深层层面。产生故事的结构逻辑从这三个层面中体现出来，而故事所表现的价值体系在符号学矩阵中体现出来。

关键词 叙事符号学分析；结构逻辑；三个层面；符号学矩阵

引 言

以格雷马斯为代表的巴黎符号学派主要关注的是在给定的语篇中符号与符号之间的相互关系以及这些符号以何种方式生成意义。“正如著名符号学家雅克·冯丹尼所指出的那样，符号学的终极目标是探求能够概括所有符号指称结构的价值评价体系。在当今这样一个科技与社会经济快速发展的时代，这一工作成为了当务之急的使命。”（Martin & Ringham, 2006: 2）格雷马斯提出了叙事语篇的三个层次，即语词层面、叙事层面和深层层面。我们从不同的角度来分析语篇。语词层面又称现实层面，是指将叙事层面进行形象化表达的过程。在这一层面上，通过对同位素性再现的归类和对对比项的考察，我们可以探究作品的语词形象维度。在对语词层面进行分析之后，我们接着分析叙事层面。与语词层面相比，叙事层面是更抽象也更具普遍性的结构，这种结构是统领整个语篇的叙事语法。在这里，我们将故事放进包含六个主要叙述功能的行动叙事模型中，这六个叙述功能分别是主体与客体、发出者与接收者，以及带手和对手。然后再将其放。

① 本文系山东工商学院青年项目“格雷马斯叙事符号学视野下的话语分析应用研究”（2011QN127）的阶段性成果。
入规范叙事模型中，这一模型包括任何追求过程都必须经历的四个步骤，即契约，能力测试，具有决定性意义的测试和成败测试。在深层次中，整个故事的价值体系将通过符号学矩阵体现出。最后，语篇将被放入社会语境当中来评价，这些评价包括语篇所呈现出来的价值和观念体系以及可能对读者产生的影响。

1. 语词层面

要分析一个话段的表现结构，我们就必须通过对具体的词语和表达或语法结构和语法项进行检验来发现其中的符号学关系。（Martin & Ringham, 2006: 67）

显现成份：

“显现要素属于文章中反映现实世界并且能被五种感觉器官所感知的要素。这些要素对于建立一种现实效意或对真实世界的感觉具有至关重要的作用。”（Martin & Ringham, 2006; 258）

首先，我们从语词角度来分析一下本则故事，并研究地点、时间和人物的同位索性显现。

整个篇章中的形象显现分类如下：

地点
South Salina Street  the store’s dairy case
the sidewalk  home
Kirkwood  living room
Syracuse  New York
checkout

事物
car  plaques  gas pumps
computer  window  license number
red 1993 Dodge Spirit  a red spot  the passenger door
van  milk and bread  brakes
Groceries  tiny braids

时间
One morning  Now
Last August  In 2004
Today  These days
At just that moment  Moments later
Ever since her own childhood
人物
ten-year-old Chiara Rufus            a middle-aged man
her mother                            Jerry Searight
James, H. Gilkson                     Monique Williams
police                                 a man stopped to help
police chief Gary Miguel               neighborhood girls
a stranger                             regular visitors

过去时
Loved                                  asked
Was                                    called
Banged                                 passed
Thought                                paused
Got                                     leaned
Hurried                                walked
Followed                                saw

现在时
has                                     hosts
Call                                    is
Reads                                   love

对话
asked                                   called
hollered                                speculates
said                                     added

感情
love                                     lure
trembling                               exploded
yelled                                   ordered
affectionate                             coolly

社会活动
Sleepovers                              a homicide

a child molestation

通过考察我们可以得出，地点、时间、人物的同位素性复现将阅读文本的人们拉近到现实世界。现在时的功能在于构建一个现实世界的形象指，而过去时和将来时的功能又分别在于构建出过去世界和将来世界的形象能指。我们知道，在汉语里这三个时间维度是通过时间标记来划分的。在英语里时间标记只是个辅助性划分工具，主要的工具还是语法时态标记。这些时态标记实际上反映出人们对现实世界中时间的三个维度的心理划分。从这三个语法标记中我们得出三个对过去的叙述、对当前的叙述和
对将来的叙述。本来都是发生过的事情，作者通过三个维度的分割，也就是通过三种叙述的构建营造出一个可以使读者身临其中的并能够时刻提醒读者注意的时间性。列出了一份主要的同位索引复现的清单之后，我们可以转入对对立项的考察。格雷马斯同意索绪尔的观点，认为意义在差异中产生，没有差异就没有意义。因此，对立项的差异对比在意义产生过程中起到了至关重要的作用。

对立项：
地点：
1) 高 up the store's dairy case 对 低 down the sidewalk
2) 里面 living room 对 外面 South Salina Street checkout

时间：
延时性 对 即时性 in 2004 one morning ever since her own childhood at just that moment these days today

人物：
1) 熟悉的 对 陌生的 regular visitors a strange
2) 年长的 对 年轻的 a middle-aged man ten-year-old Chiara Rufus
3) 男性 对 女性 James H. Gilkson Monique Williams a man stopped to help neighborhood girls

时态：
过去时 对 现在时 was called loved thought leaned is call love reads hosts

情感：
喜悦 对 不悦 an affectionate street term coolly a child molestation sleepovers
second mother  the strange man

对立项的对比使文本的意义通过这种对比所产生的差异更加清晰地浮现出来，这样，不论是地点的转移还是时空的转换，不论是过去与现在的变换还是人物情感的变化，都通过这种差异的对比体现出来。

语法特征：

故事中主要使用过去时，只有在最后两段才用了现在时。我们注意到，过去时用来叙述整个故事的经过，而现在时用来描述故事的英雄人物莫妮卡·威廉姆斯的性格和生活。此外，故事中的对话均简明扼要，有的仅用一个单词。

陈述方式：

故事采用第三人称进行叙述。情感的同位索性复现体现了故事中主要人物形象的心理和性格特点，诸如“love”和“affectionate”等词用在切尔拉和威廉姆斯身上，突出表现她们的无辜与善良，诸如“lure”“trembling”“yelled”“exploded”“ordered”和“coolly”等词则用在陌生男子身上，表达他的贪婪与残酷的性格，而“beckons”“loved”“thinking”“ordered”和“speculates”等词的使用则是用来表达人物的个人观点、心理活动和意图。

2. 叙 事 层 面

在对语词层面进行一番细致分析之后，我们再来分析一下故事的叙事层面。这里，我们将故事分为两大部分。第一部分从第一段开始，到“Wasn’t she supposed to obey grownups? She climbed into the car.”结束。

A) 在这一部分中，我们先来看一下包括六种叙述功能项的比价表层框架。

主体：切尔拉

客体：切尔拉不知道陌生男子究竟有什么企图，但是遵循着妈妈的警告(警惕陌生人)，她的目标是想尽量摆脱掉那个缠着她的陌生男子。

对头：想诱使切尔拉上他轿车的那个陌生男子。另外，切尔拉只有十岁并且此时独自一人，这一事实本身便是不利因素。

发出者：切尔拉心中铭记的妈妈关于警惕陌生人的话，成为她想要摆脱陌生男子的最主要原因。

接收者：切尔拉

从故事的发展中我们可以知道，第一部分的主体(即小女孩)所追求的目标并没有实现(至少在第一部分是这样的)，也就是说她没能成功摆脱那个陌生男子，并且在第一部分的结尾，她钻进了那个男人的车里。与之相对的是，对头，也就是陌生男子至少在第一部分中实现了他的目标，他成功地让小女孩儿进了自己的轿车中。换句话说，在这
一部分中，对头的追求得以实现了。

B) 对故事第一部分的叙述功能进行考察以后，我们按照规范框架将这部分分成四个逻辑步骤：

**契约**
在小女孩的心中，存在着一个她与妈妈之间的契约关系。妈妈曾经提醒她要警惕陌生人，她也想听妈妈的话。为了坚守这一契约，小女孩儿努力想要摆脱陌生男子的纠缠。同时主体与反主体之间也有契约。

**能力测试**
为了具备完成追逐目标的能力(能够做)，小女孩儿不仅没有回答陌生男子的问题，而且男人主动提出要开车带她兜风时，她毅然拒绝了。并且一句话不说，加快了脚下的步伐。

**具有决定性意义的测试**
陌生男子的大喊大叫和小女孩儿内心的激烈斗争构成了具有决定性意义的测试。

**成败考验**
当小女孩钻进男子的车里时，她想要摆脱男子的愿望已经落空，也就是说，在对目标的追求中她失败了。与之相对的是，陌生男子成功地将女孩儿引诱进了自己的轿车中，即他作为反主体的追求实现了。虽然小女孩的心里有过斗争，但最终她还是向男子屈服了。事实上，此时坐在轿车里的小女孩儿已处于男子的掌控之中，只能听从命运的安排。很明显女孩需要别人的帮助来实现她的目标。

**第二部分的叙事层面分析：**
现在我们来分析第二部分的叙述层面，第二部分从“At just that moment, Monique Williams, 34, was driving down Salina on her way home”开始直到故事的结束。

**发出者**：威廉姆斯心中的正义感驱使着她的行动。这种正义感让她觉得警惕陌生人，保护弱者是她应该践行的公民道德准则。正如文中那位警察局长所言：“她不但觉察到了事情不对劲儿，而且没有因事不关己而高高挂起!”

**接收者**：莫尼克・威廉姆斯

**主体**：莫尼克・威廉姆斯

**客体**：威廉姆斯想要保护小女孩儿免受陌生男人伤害，以及她要将二人绳之以法的想法共同构成了主体追求的目标客体。

**助手**：特意停下来帮助的那位男士和塞拉克克市公园的职工杰西莱特，正是他开车从后面堵上来，挡住了陌生男子的逃路。在此过程中，警察也发挥了助手的功能。

**对头**：企图劫持小女孩儿的那个陌生男子。

下面是典范框架分析：

**契约**
在威廉姆斯心中，存在着拯救无助的小女孩儿及将陌生男子绳之以法的这样一个
契约。当小女孩回答自己并不认识那个男子时，这个契约已经生成。这样，威廉姆斯（主体）不仅同小女孩儿之间达成了契约，更重要的是，与她自己心中的正义感以及整个社会的良知达成了契约。

能力考验

威廉姆斯从小便在这几条街上来来往往，她本人也有过类似的经历。有陌生男子来到她身边企图引诱她上车。根据以往的经验，她琢磨着事情有点儿不对劲儿，因此特意停下车来确认一下。她问那个男子是否认识那个小女孩儿。在得到男子冷漠的回答以后，她又问小女孩儿。

具有决定性意义的考验

在确定了自己的感觉不差以后，威廉姆斯让小女孩儿立刻从车上下车。小女孩儿听了她的话，下了车。然后，她加大了油门，冲向前去挡住了道奇车前方的去路。威廉姆斯拦住陌生人并把他绳之以法的一系列行动构成了这一个部分中至关重要的内容。

成败考验

最后，在另外两位男士的帮助下，威廉姆斯把罪犯交给了警察，挽救了小女孩儿并将陌生男子绳之以法。所以，她作为第二部分中的主体实现了追逐的目标。

事实表明，在描述单一事件的叙述文本中，如果在第一部分里，主体的追逐目标即得以实现，那么具有完整价值体系的整个故事情节应该结束了。正是因为主体目标不能实现，接下来另一主体和助手的出现才成为可能。故事中各部分划分的依据之一，便是主体的转换，而主体转换的必要条件是前一主体无法实现或无法完全实现目标，他需要助手的帮助甚至完全要另一主体替他来完成。而各个部分中主体的确立又是根据主要人物的界定来实现的。如在本篇故事中，第一部分主要描写的人物是切尔拉·鲁弗斯，故事中的人物代词“她”均指切尔拉；而在第二部分中，主要描写的人物形象换成了莫尼克·威廉姆斯，文中的“她”也随之一变。在第二部分中常用“她”来指代的小女孩，在第二部分完全以“切尔拉”或“小女孩”的形式出现；这种变化绝不是无意识的或偶然的，而是作者经过精心设计的。这样一来，整篇故事中主体明确有了层次感，而主线始终贯穿如一。前后两部分的不同给人一种对比的美感。作者用词细心讲究，从我们能够看到作者对叙述结构的把握达到了很高的水平。文中对陌生男子的称谓指代一直没有改变，因此他可看作是整个语篇中的对手，只不过在第一部分中处于主动地位，而在第二部分中则完全处于被动地位。

小女孩切尔拉的追逐目标是保护自己，免受陌生男子的蹂躏，如猥亵甚至杀害等。但是她没有通过能力测验，从而没能实现目标。而威廉姆斯具有维护正义的品质并愿意帮助切尔拉，也就促使了主体的转换。综上所述，从整篇小说的角度来看，我们可以将威廉姆斯确定为整个语篇的主体。小女孩切尔拉的无助是正义的缺席，而主体的无助和正义的缺席又进一步预设了威廉姆斯的出现。如果我们将整个语篇看作是追逐正义的语篇，而威廉姆斯正是这一行动的主体。这样一来，我们可以说威廉姆斯和她那些正义而勇敢的行为构成了整个故事情节发展过程中的主体。主体最终实现了目标。
3. 深层次面

在分析了意义的表现结构和表层结构以后，我们接下来分析篇章的深层结构。语篇中存在着善与恶的转换：

- 善：（女孩被陌生男子救起）
- 非善：（女孩被陌生男子伤害）

与善恶矩阵并行的还有生与死的意义模式的转换：

- 生：（女孩被陌生男子救起）
- 死：（女孩被陌生男子伤害）

第三个符号学矩阵表达的是价值之间的转换：

- 价值的实现：（女孩被陌生男子救起）
- 对价值的威胁：（女孩被陌生男子伤害）

4. 语篇的社会语境

对于统领整篇语篇的价值体系进行了一番分析以后，接下来转向更为广泛的对语篇社会语境的分析。在这一部分中，下列问题值得注意的：除了深层结构中表现出来的价值体系以外，读者读完全文后，还会得出什么样的价值和意义的启示？本篇故事与我们的日常生活有什么样的联系？下面笔者就从社会语境的角度来对这篇故事进行一下简单的阐释。具体内容如下：

A）整篇故事可以被看作是一种社会对于女性的全新态度的体现。
许多人往往持这样一种观点：必须是强壮的男人，或者至少也要是男人才能做英雄
的事迹：而至于女人，她们生来便柔弱羞怯，人们从来不会想到她们会保护别人，更不用说阻止犯罪行为的发生了。持有上述观点的人，往往对女性持有传统的偏见甚至歧视。当然，社会上还有一些人会反驳说，女性的温柔性格与生俱来，所以她们根本不适合做这种英雄事迹。但无论如何，这些观点都不外乎只是人们想要或期待女性怎样表现，而绝非日常生活中的女性真实的一面。本篇故事无疑会使那些对女性存有偏见的人们改变他们看法，而且会帮助那些持有传统和僵化思想的人士改变他们的观点。

事实上，在本篇故事中，正是这位勇敢的女人——莫尼克·威廉姆斯——在保护小女孩儿不受坏人的侵害，并在将陌生男子绳之以法的过程中起到了至关重要的决定性作用。值得注意的是，故事中威廉姆斯的两个助手都是男性。在保护小女孩儿一系列行动中，威廉姆斯显然是一个领导者。根据自己以往的经验，她觉察出事情有点不对劲儿，于是停下车来仔细询问那个男子和小女孩儿，确认自己的猜测无误以后，她让小女孩马上从车上下来，并且用自己的车挡住了男子的车前方的去路。最后，是威廉姆斯用手机打 911 报了警，才促使陌生男子最后被绳之以法。

威廉姆斯不过五英尺高，她不会对任何人造成威胁。相反，那个陌生男子当然比她要强壮多了。男子企图把小女孩儿引诱进自己的车中，他的行为显然威胁着小女孩儿的生命安全，同时也威胁着善良、公正及社会道德良知等价值体系。在这千钧一发的危急时刻，威廉姆斯站了出来，保护了受害者，也维护了社会的价值体系。本篇故事旨在告诉我们，生活中有许多时候女人是重要任务中的主角，而男人们一样可以成为女人的得力助手。高大、强壮甚至会武术并不是成为英雄的必要条件。她可以是一位巾帼英雄，没有强壮的肌肉，但拥有一颗勇敢而正义的心。如此说来，每个人都有可能成为生活中的英雄。

在故事中，女人不再站在英雄背后只是男人的辅助力量，相反，她本身便是女强者，是巾帼英雄！因此，通篇故事所反映出来的对女性的崭新态度，打破了许人心目中占有统治地位的陈腐观点。

B) 整篇故事对读者产生的影响是积极的。

或许，在读过这则故事以后，许多读者会扪心自问：“如果在那个时刻，把威廉姆斯换成是我，我又会怎么做?”“我能保护那个小女孩吗?”“当罪行就在眼前，我是否有勇气阻止罪恶的发生?”但无论如何，我们都会承认威廉姆斯无疑是社会良知的代表。

现如今，社会上每时每刻都有许多罪行正在进行，这些行为严重威胁着受害者的人身或财产安全。但很多时候我们看到人们对耳闻目睹的罪行视而不见，而让受害者独自等待命运的安排。更有甚者，有些人看到这种行为时，还会特意停下来观看，以此取乐。原因很简单，因为正在发生的事情与他们不相干。但事情真是这样的吗？我们当中有谁能完全脱离其他人而存在？或者，有谁从来不需要别人帮助吗？如果真的存在这样的人，那么他要么是超人要么是白痴。因为普通人都不是完美的，他们总会有物质上或精神上想要而得不到的东西。社会是我们赖以生存的家园。在我们生活的社会里，有许多潜在的规则我们必须遵守，否则就要受到惩罚。那便是社会良知和道德规范，也就是说，我们不能互相友好，互相帮助和睦相处。只有这样才能保持我们生活的
家国安宁和谐。然而，现实中总有那么一些组织或个人，他们想要破坏这种规则，他们的各种行为危害他人尤其是弱者的人身或财产安全。在这一时刻，必须有人站出来维护社会道德规则。如果在事件发生时，这样的英雄没有出现，那么社会中将充斥着令人窒息的不公和受害者痛苦的哀嚎，毫无社会良知可言。相信没有人愿意在这样的社会中生活。然后在我们身边这样的一幕一幕却在真真切切地上演着。想象一下，如果在故事中没人察觉到事情的不妙，或者有人虽然感觉到了事情不对劲儿，却没把它当作一回事儿，那小姑娘的命运又会怎么样？后果是很显然的，正像那位警察局长所说的：“但她是小女孩儿肯定不会遭到猥亵。”可以说，要不是莫尼克·威廉姆斯及时搭救，那一天将很可能是小女孩儿悲惨生活的开始。

故事中的小女孩儿是幸运的，因为有一位勇敢的女士站出来保护了她，也维护了社会公德和良知。通过正义的举动，威廉姆斯给那些对此漠不关心的人们上了一课；她教育他们如何去做才能维护社会安定和平。其实道理很简单，在这个纷繁复杂的世界里，谁能够保证类似的事情就不会发生在你身上？因此，关心别人吧，你也会得到别人的关心。

5. 结语

综上所述，格雷马斯的符号学分析方法，从显现层面、叙事句法和深层语义的体系三个方面来分析语篇，具有很强的可操作性。这种分析方法不仅适用于叙事话语分析领域，还适用于叙事文学赏析、叙述文写作训练、法律叙事以及表演行为的行动研究等其它专业领域。另外，格雷马斯叙事符号学目前较少应用于汉语语境下的研究，其在中国的普及与推广势必会在我国的人文社会科学研究领域产生深远的影响。

参考文献
Get out of That Car

A girl carrying groceries. A stranger beckons her into his car. And then, two glances: a child’s fear, a man’s smirk. That was all Monique Williams saw. But that was plenty.

One morning last August, ten-year-old Chiara Rufus was walking down South Salina Street near her home in Syracuse, New York. An independent girl with a head full of tiny braids, Chiara loved buying groceries for her mother. Today, she was on her way to pick up milk and bread.

As Chiara paused in front of the store’s dairy case, a middle-aged man with short hair and a broad grin approached. He pointed to a red spot on her right leg, where she had burned herself. “What’d you do to yourself?” he asked.

Thinking little of the exchange, Chiara got items on her list and took them to the checkout. But when she went outside and saw the same man waiting in his car by the gas pumps, her stomach began to churn. What did he want? He leaned out the window of his red 1993 Dodge Spirit, “Want a ride?”

Chiara shook her head and walked faster. As she hurried along the sidewalk, the man followed. He pulled up beside her and opened the passenger door. Now his voice

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was loud and hard. “Get in!” he ordered.

Chiara’s thoughts blurred. Her mother had warned her about strangers. But this man was yelling. Her heart banged against her chest.

Wasn’t she supposed to obey grownups? She climbed into the car.

At just that moment, Monique Williams, 34, was driving down Salina on her way home. Up ahead, she saw the little girl get into the red Dodge. As Williams passed in her white van, the driver turned and met her gaze. He grinned.

Williams slammed on the brakes. Something’s not right, she thought. A mother of three young daughters, Williams had walked these streets as a girl. She had herself been approached by strange men who tried to lure her into cars.

Now she leaned toward her van’s passenger-side window and called to the man, “You know that girl?”

“Yeah,” he replied coolly. Williams eased forward so she could make eye contact with the little girl.

“Ma, you know him?” she asked, addressing the child with an affectionate street term.

“No,” said Chiara, trembling. Williams exploded, “You get out of the car! Get out now!”

Chiara jumped out, and Williams gunned her van, stopping in front of the car so it couldn’t move forward. Monique Williams, who stands just five feet tall, doesn’t look like a threat to anyone. But now she rushed to the man’s window and yelled in his face: “You’re wrong! You can’t take a little girl!” He stared back, expressionless. Behind them, motorists honked impatiently. Chiara, still holding two bags of groceries, started crying.

Williams called 911 on her cell phone. “What’s his license number?” she hollered to a man who had stopped to help. They both saw the stranger backing up, apparently planning to make his escape. But before he could turn around, the man, Syracuse parks employee Jerry Searight, pulled his truck in behind. The stranger was blocked in.

Police arrived moments later and arrested the man, James H. Gilkeson, 49, of Kirkwood, New York. Gilkeson had been reported twice in 2004 in connection with unsuccessful attempts to get kids into his car. When police seized his computer, they said they found pictures of children in sexually explicit situations. Gilkeson was charged with endangering the welfare of a child and possessing child pornography.

“Would that have been a homicide?” speculates Syracuse police chief Gary Miguel, “I don’t know.” But it could have been a child molestation, he said. Calling Williams “a very brave woman,” Miguel added, “she saw something wrong and
refused to look away. ”

Ever since her own childhood, Williams has made it her business to watch out for others. Sometimes, she hosts sleepovers for a dozen neighborhood girls, many of whom call her their “second mom.” One of her regular visitors these days is Chiara Rufus.

In her living room, Williams has two plaques. One, titled “Civilian Commendation,” is from the mayor and police chief of Syracuse. The second is even more special: “To my guardian angel Monique Williams,” it reads. “I love you. Chiara Rufus.”
叙述的频率与时间的三维

李卫华

摘 要 从作为人类体验的时间的三维——线性时间、循环时间、心理时间出发，不难发现，在这三维中，热奈特的叙述频率理论只涉及到（而且是无意识地涉及到）其中的两个维度——线性时间和心理时间，这使他的叙述频率理论呈现为一个“单一/反复”的二元对立结构。循环时间观的缺位，直接导致了热奈特叙述频率理论对“重复”的忽视和误解。以三维时间观为指导，则可建立单一(1R/1H)、重复(nR/nH)间的三足鼎立的叙述频率理论框架。

关键词 叙述频率、线性时间、循环时间、心理时间、重复

自从叙述学作为一门学科创立以来，“叙述频率”始终是研究的薄弱环节。在经典叙述学理论中，“叙述频率”作为一个术语出现较晚，“频率这一时间组成部分在热奈特之前的叙述学理论中没有得到考察”(里蒙-凯南，1989：102)，法国学者热拉尔·热奈特直到1972年才在其《辞格三集》的“叙事话语”这一部分中，将“叙述频率”作为一个术语正式提出，并将其定义为“叙事与故事间的频率关系（简言之重复关系）”。(热奈特，1990：73)热奈特之后的叙述学家基本上是在重复热奈特的说法，对这一理论没有进一步的发展；后经典叙述学则把研究的重点放在意识形态、政治、文化等问题上，对“叙述频率”缺乏足够的关注。究其原因，乃是因为多数学者只把叙述频率理论看成是对叙事技巧的研究，对于其背后隐藏的文化内涵，特别是其中蕴含的时间观念缺乏足够的认识。因此，本文试图从作为人类体验的时间的三维出发，探讨叙述频率理论进一

① 课题项目名称：国家社会科学基金项目《中西文学文本理论范畴比较研究》(项目批准号10CZWO02)，河北省社会科学基金项目《中西文学文本理论范畴比较研究》(项目批准号HB09BWX010)。

② 目前西方的 narratology 在国内有“叙述学”和“叙事学”两种译法，笔者参考赵敬文先生《“叙事”还是“叙述”？——一个不能再空下去的术语混乱》(《外国文学评论》2008年第2期)中的观点，采用“叙述学”的译法，其他术语亦均用“叙述”，如“叙述时间”“叙述频率”等，引文则尊重原作者或译者所用的术语。

③ 尽管对于叙述的研究自古有之，但“叙述学”作为一门学科的创立当以托多罗夫于1969年在《＜十日谈＞的语法》中提出“叙述学”这一术语为标志。

④ 《叙事话语》是《辞格三集》的主要组成部分，占其中四分之三的篇幅，热奈特将其称作“方法论”,
步深化和完善的可能性。

1. 时间的三维：作为人类体验的时间

“叙述频率”是热奈特的“叙述时间”理论的一个重要组成部分，热奈特曾明确指出，叙述频率是“叙述时间性的主要方面之一”（热奈特，1990：73）。因此，要对叙述频率理论进行反思和完善，必须从“时间”这个熟悉而又陌生的话题说起。

长期以来，我们从各种教科书上学到的“时间”定义大致如此：时间是运动着的物质的存在形式，是不依赖于人的意识而客观存在着的。时间的特性是一维性和不可逆性，这也是不依人的意志为转移的。（刘象愚，杨恒达，曾艳兵，2002：220页）然而，人类对时间的意识并不是从抽象的定义开始的，而是从最切身的体验开始的。这些体验被归纳、概括为定义，就已经沦为人类体验的知性残骸。定义是从活生生的人生体验中抽象出的干巴巴的骨架，已经丧失了其原始的生命和灵性。文学所关注的不是作为定义的时间，而是作为活生生的人类体验的时间。因为只有这样，才能复原世界的活生生的躯体，在人类面前重新展现有血有肉的世界之躯。

无论东方还是西方，人类对混沌迷茫状态的摆脱，都必然伴随着时间意识的觉醒。一方面，人们通过对晨昏、四季、兴衰、荣枯的观察，开始了对天地万象生生不息、循环往复的认识和把握；另一方面，又通过对人自身生死病死的生命过程的体验，产生了对生命的一维性和不可逆性的焦虑。前者催生了循环的时间观念，后者则引发了线性的时间观念。可以说，“时间意识一头连着宇宙意识，另一头连着生命意识。”（杨义，1997：120）个体生命是线性的、短暂的，宇宙则是循环的、永恒的。线性时间观与循环时间观的并置与交错，是东西方传统时间观的共同特点。只不过东方更重整体，因而倾向于将个体生命融入宇宙大化之中，线性的个体生命成了循环往复的宇宙大化的一部分，结果使得循环时间观占据了主导地位；西方更重个体，因而倾向于将线性的个体生命与循环的宇宙相对峙，以有限性、一维性和不可逆性确认个体生命的存在，结果使得线性时间观占据了主导地位。20世纪以来，随着学科发展，线性时间观也成为在中国占主导地位的时间观，并最终凝固为教科书上的时间定义。而且，这一定义被当作“马克思主义”时间观（孟宪鸿，1987：69；余源培，2009：18；章维生，2008：36-37），成了唯一科学、正确的时间观。

但是，这恰恰是对马克思主义时间观的误解。即使仅就经典马克思主义而言，其时间观也绝非是单纯的线性时间观，而是线性时间观和循环时间观的辩证统一。恩格斯在《自然辩证法》中曾明确指出：

1 热奈特《叙事话语》中的“叙述时间”理论包括三个部分：顺序，时距和频率，叙述频率占了三分之一。
这是物质赖以运动的一个永恒的循环①,这个循环完成其轨道所经历的时间用我们的地球年是无法度量的,在这个循环中,最高发展的时间,有机生命的时间,尤其是具有自我意识和自然界意识的人的生命的时间,如同生命和自我意识赖以发生作用的空间一样,是极为有限的;在这个循环中,物质的每一有限的存在方式,不论是太阳或星云,个别的动物或动植物,化学的化合或分解,都同样是暂时的,而且除了永恒变化着的、永恒运动着的物质及其运动和变化的规律以外,再没有什么永恒的东西了。(《马克思恩格斯选集》第四卷,1995:278-279)

显然,在恩格斯看来,与个体生命相连的、一维的、有限的、不可逆的线性时间,只不过是宇宙永恒的循环运动的一个短暂的瞬间。与这种永恒的循环运动相对应的循环时间是无限的,无法用线性时间加以度量。事实上,马克思主义的“物质不灭论”,已经内在地包含了循环时间观与线性时间观的辩证统一,因为永恒运动而不灭的物质世界,只能体现为“诸宇宙在无限时间内永恒重复的先后相继”(《马克思恩格斯选集》第四卷,1995:278)。相比之下,单纯的线性时间观恰恰背离了马克思主义的辩证法,落入了机械唯物论的窠臼。

进入20世纪以后,又一种时间观开始悄悄兴起,这就是以法国哲学家柏格森的“绵延”论为理论基础,并被存在主义者所接受和宣扬的“存在时间观”,或称为“心理时间观”。柏格森认为,传统的时间观念不过是用固定的空间概念(如“直线”)来说明时间,故而无论在科学中还是在日常生活中,我们都被时间视为另一种空间。这不是真实的时间,而是人类根据实用的需要,以空间为尺度对时间的度量。这种度量虽然有利于人们安排、记录时间,但却掩盖了时间的本质。真正的时间不是这种“空间时间”,而是“心理时间”。(伍端甫,1983:87-88)如果我们把时间看作是人类最切身的体验,那么就不难理解,时间必然首先存在于人的心理之中,因此,“心理时间”乃是比“线性时间”和“环形时间”(“线”与“环”都是空间概念,由此度量出的时间都是“空间时间”)更为原始的时间状态。“心理时间”的基本特点是“绵延”,即不可分割的持续流动状态。这种流动不同于线性时间观念中的时间之流,它不是一个时刻对上一个时刻的替换,也不是脱离人的意识的客观存在,而是只有在人的回忆(记忆)中才能呈现出来的,由感觉的偶合编织而成的一张巨网。线性时间和循环时间都只不过是从这个巨网中抽一部分加以理论化的结果,而这一巨网将在人的记忆中不断编织,永无终结。

这样,我们就得到了作为人类体验的三种时间。俄国宗教思想家、哲学家、基督教存在主义的主要代表人物尼古拉·亚历山大罗维奇·别尔嘉耶夫将其概括为宇宙的(循环的)、历史的(线性的)和存在的(心理的)。(谭君强,2008:116-117)

或许有人会说,这只是三种“时间观”,而不是三种“时间”,真正的“时间本身”只能有一个,对“时间本身”的科学认识也只能有四种。这恰恰是基于简单认识论的思维模式所造成的对时间的误解。这种思维模式的主要问题在于,它把人们赖以生存认识世界的“范式”与客观世界本身混淆了。“范式”是美国科学哲学史家托马斯·库恩提出的概念(库恩,2003:9),指的是人们对客观世界的总要从已有的知识中找出某种结构框架,作

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① 在1972年的版本中,这句话译为:“宇宙就是物质运动的一个永恒的循环”。

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为进一步认识事物的依托，这就是认知范式。但人们在认识事物时，对认知范式的运用不一定有自觉的意识，因而常常把发明了一定的范式而获得的对事物的认识，与事物本身等同起来，误以为这种认识就是事物本身。实际上，人所面对的客观世界，是既无秩序、又无始终的一片混沌，人唯有依靠某种认知范式，才能赋予这片混沌以某种结构；唯有人为地设定某种时间观，才能使其呈现出时间上的变化。库恩所谓的“范式”，法国哲学家利奥塔尔称之为“叙述”。利奥塔认为，“科学”是以“叙述”为前提对现象进行推理的结果，从这个意义上说，“科学”也只是一种可能的证伪的假设。人们通过一定的观察实验，如果发现科学命题被证伪了，这样的假设就可以放弃，如果没有被证伪，这一假设就暂时可以被接受。可以完全证实、无条件地接受的“科学”是不存在的。（利奥塔尔，1997：55）

就“时间”来说，按照简单认识论，应该是先有了“时间本身”这个客观事物，然后人们认识这一事物进行认识，才形成了种种不同的“时间观”；而且，只有一种与“时间本身”完全符合的“时间观”才是科学的、正确的。但实际上，时间并不是一个客观的实体，而是人们根据某种时间观对世界运动形式的描述。也就是说，脱离“时间观”的所谓“时间本身”并不存在。所谓“科学的时间观”，并不是对一个叫作“时间”的客观世界的合乎实际的认识，而是关于世界运动形式的一种或多种可能被接受、但将来可能被证伪的假说。恩格斯在《自然辩证法》的“辩证法作为科学”中，曾明确指出：“只要自然科学运用思维，它的发展形式就是假说”（《马克思恩格斯选集》第四卷，1995：336）而对同一个问题存在着多种假说时是完全正常的。以上的三种时间观，就是关于时间问题的三种可能被接受、但将来可能被证伪的假说。它们不但可以并存，而且可以互补，共同构成作为人类体验的时间的三维。相对于教科书中单一而枯燥的时间定义，这才是文学以及文学理论真正应当关注的时间。

2. “单一/反复”的二元对立

在作为人类体验的时间的三维中，热奈特的叙述频率理论只涉及到（而且是无意识地涉及到）其中的两个维度——线性时间和心理时间。这是由其二元对立的思维模式决定的。众所周知，叙述学脱胎于结构主义文学理论，而结构主义文学理论则受惠于索绪尔的结构主义语言学。“二元对立”是结构主义语言学最基本的思维模式。“语言/言语”“能指/所指”“横组合/纵聚合”“共时/历时”等一系列二元对立的范畴构成了索绪尔结构主义语言学的基石。这种思维模式也直接影响到热奈特的叙述频率理论，使其呈现为一个“单一/反复”的二元对立结构。①

① 在《叙事话语》的“频度”这一部分，热奈特写下的第一个标题就是“单一/反复”，并把这一“二元对立”的结构一直贯彻到这一部分的结束。
需要说明的是，热奈特所说的“单一”和“反复”，与我们对这两个词通常的理解有相当大的差异。要想弄清这两个术语的真实含义，必须从热奈特对叙述频率的划分说起。

在《叙事话语》的“频率”这一部分，热奈特首先划分了叙述频率的四种类型，并分别用数学公式进行了简明的表示。他认为，概略地说，无论何种叙事都可以讲述一次发生过一次的事（可简化为数学公式：IR/1H），n次发生过n次的事（nR/nH），n次发生过一次的事（nR/1H），一次发生过n次的事（1IR/nH）。不过，在热奈特看来，第二种类型（nR/nH）其实可以归入第一种（1IR/1H），或者反过来说，第二种类型可以包括第一种，当n=1的时候。作为一个专注于叙述话语的理论家，热奈特感兴趣的是叙述话语与所叙述故事之间的频率关系；无论是第一种还是第二种类型，其中叙述的次数与故事的次数都是相等的，所以热奈特认为二者实质上相同，都可以叫做“单一频率”。因为“单一性”的特征不是双方出现的次数，而是次数的相等”（热奈特，1990：74）。这样，叙述频率以上的四种类型就可以简化为三种，热奈特分别将其命名为单一（1IR/1H，nR/nH），重复（nR/1H），反复（1IR/nH）。

在热奈特命名的三种叙述频率中，如果说“单一”意味着故事中事件发生的次数与文本中叙述的次数完全相同，“重复”（nR/1H）和“反复”（1IR/nH）则都体现了故事叙述次数和叙述次数的差异；但这两个看上去十分相近的术语所描述的恰恰是两个相反的叙述频率；“重复”是叙述n次发生过一次的事，“反复”则是叙述一次发生过n次的事。前者比较容易理解，因为在日常生活中人们通常也把对于一件事的多次叙述称为“重复”；后者则显得有些别扭，因为多次发生的事件在文本中只有一次呈现，这种叙述方式人们通常习惯称之为“概括”而非“反复”①。而且，“反复”作为一个术语，也显得与“重复”类似而不易区别②。而热奈特之所以将“叙述一次发生过n次的事”这样一种叙述频率称为“反复”，是因为在文本中只呈现一次的叙述隐含了反复多次的事件，所以热奈特有时也称之为“反叙”。在热奈特看来，叙述事件不能对叙述手法视而不见，也不能满足于对叙述手法的罗列，而必须“揭露”“手法”背后所隐藏的东西。“反复”这一术语恰恰揭示了表面上的一次叙述背后所隐含的反复多次的事件，所以热奈特用它来为这种叙述频率命名。热奈特还特别指出，这里的“反复”与人们通常所说的“概括”不同。传统小说中的“概括”主要依靠“加速”，如“十年过去了”；而以普鲁斯特的《追忆似水年华》为代表的现代小说中的“反复”，则主要依靠“吸收和抽象综合”，即在单一事件或场景内部浓缩类似的反复性特征。（热奈特，1990：95）

在具体的理论分析中，热奈特对于“重复”（nR/1H）只作了片言只语的概括性论述，而把分析的重点放在“单一/反复”的二元对立结构上。这与热奈特对小说史的理解

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① 我国学者王平在翻译法国学者米克・巴尔的《叙事学：叙事理论导论》（第2版）时，就直接将“反复”（“iterative”）译为“概括”，见该书第132页，中国社会科学出版社2003年版。

② 国内不少学者因此将二者混淆，如林岗先生就曾将普鲁斯特的《追忆似水年华》作为“重复叙事”（数次讲述一次发生的事）的例证。见：林岗，明清之际小说批评学之研究[M].北京：北京大学出版社，1999：219。为与“重复”有所区分，我国学者赵毅衡先生曾将“iterative”译为“反复叙事”，既照顾了该词的本意，又传达了热奈特的理论主张，惜乎流传不广。见：赵毅衡，符号学文学论文集：附录[M].哈尔滨：哈尔滨工业大学出版社，2004。
有关。热奈特认为，传统的叙事性文学作品（如巴尔扎克的小说）以“单一”为基础的叙述频率，“反复”则作为插入其中的描写片段，对单一叙述进行补充。因此，“反复”是为“单一”服务的。与之相反，在以《追忆似水年华》为代表的现代小说中，“反复”则成为基本的叙述频率，“单一”为“反复”服务。（热奈特，1990:76）

“叙述频率”理论的提出，是热奈特对语言学的重要贡献。特别是他对其中的“反复”的分析，确实抓住了西方现代小说与传统小说的一个重要差别，对于研究和理解小说在现代的演变具有深刻的启示。热奈特把普鲁斯特看成是由传统小说向现代小说转变的代表人物，并把叙述频率由“单一”向“反复”转变看成现代小说与传统小说的根本区别。这样一来，热奈特的叙述频率理论实际上就是以“单一”为原点，论述普鲁斯特《追忆似水年华》中“反复”的运用如何突破了传统小说的界线，从而成为一种重要的而有独特价值的叙述频率的。这不但将大大有助于读者理解这部原本比较晦涩难懂的意识流经典作品，而且能够从特殊上升到一般，通过对这部作品的叙述机制的尽可能详尽精微的分析，对叙述学理论进行丰富和发展。


3. 循环时间观与叙述频率的重新划分

在热奈特的叙述频率理论中，循环时间观是完全缺席的。这种缺席直接导致了热奈特叙述频率理论最主要的缺陷：对“重复”的忽视和误解。

如前所述，热奈特命名了三种叙述频率：单一、重复和反复。但热奈特的叙述频率理论实
质上是“单一/反复”的二元对立结构。与对“反复”的详细论述不同，热奈特对“重复”只做了片言只语的介绍；更重要的是，在“单一”和“重复”的划分上，热奈特仅仅承认话语重复（nR/1H），而把事件重复，即“叙述 n 次发生过 n 次的事（nR/nH）”也称作“单一”，从而混淆了第一种（1R/1H）和第二种（nR/nH）叙述频率的界限。而且，在热奈特之后，西方其他叙述学家在这方面上也都比较忠实于继承乃至重复了热奈特的理论。以色列学学者里蒙-凯南的理论可以看作热奈特理论的补充。她干脆删掉了热奈特所忽视的第二种类型，将叙述频率划分为三种：单一的、重复的、概括的（即热奈特所谓“反复”）（里蒙-凯南，1989，102-104）。

荷兰学者米克-巴尔对叙述频率的论述则可看作热奈特理论的详细版，他详细地将叙述频率划分为五种：

1F/1S：单一的：一个事件，一次描述；
NF/NS：多种的：多个事件，多次描述；
NF/NSS：各种的：多个事件，多次描述，数量不等；
1F/NS：重复的：一个事件，多次描述；
NF/1S：概括的：多个事件，一次描述。 （其中 F 表示素材，S 表示故事）（米克・巴尔，2003，130-132）

需要指出的是，虽然巴尔区分了第一种（单一的，1F/1S）和第二种（多种的，NF/NS）叙述频率，但他也同样认为，第二种叙述频率其实是真正的“单一”陈述，因为“事件”和“描述”这两个层次是完全重复的。

显然，将“事件重复”等同于单一叙述，是西方叙述学界的普遍现象。其实，二者的审美效果是完全不同的。国内一些研究者已经注意到了这一点。例如，谭君强先生曾指出：“自然地叙述（指事件重复——引者注）与通常的单一叙述所起到的作用和所具有的意义是有所不同的。在不同的叙事中，它或具有主题的意味，或者造成某种特殊的氛围，或者起到类似于戏剧中‘幕’的构造作用，或造成某种节奏效果等。”（谭君强，2008，150）他还以鲁迅的《明天》《祝福》以及杜拉斯的《昂代斯玛先生的午后》等作品为例进行了说明。

西方叙述学界之所以将两种如此明显不同的叙述频率等同，根本原因在于其中循环时间观的缺位。如果说，与真正“单一”（1R/1H）的叙述频率相对应的是线性时间观；那么，与“事件重复”（nR/nH）相对应的就是循环时间观。如前所述，线性时间观与

①《堂吉诃德》中，桑丘讲过一个故事，说一位渔夫不得不用一条只能装下一只羊的小船把三百只羊运过河去。在桑丘叙述这个故事的时候，很明显他是打算将这件事讲三次，而渔夫渡河运羊的次数一致。结果堂吉诃德不耐烦地说道：“就当它们已经都运过去了吧……别这样没完没了地来来回回的，要不然你花一年时间也没法把它们都运过去。”
循环时间观的并置与交错，是东西方传统时间观的共同特点。早在古希腊时期，亚里士多德就在他的《物理学》中说：“凡是具有天然运动和生死的，都有一个循环。这是因为任何事物都是由时间辨别，都好像根据一个周期开始和结束，因此甚至时间本身也被认为是个循环。”（柯文尼·海菲尔德，2007: 4-5)时间的循环模式是古希腊各宇宙学派的一个共同点。而且一直到古罗马后期，这中循环时间观在人们的时间观念中都占据着支配地位。直到中世纪，犹太基督教传统才逐渐树立起线性时间观的权威，因为基督教相信，耶稣的生、死和他的上十字架受难，都是唯一的事件，都是不会重复的。特别是启蒙运动以来，随着“进步”的观念深入人心，以及19世纪以后作为自然科学假说的达尔文的进化论在人文社会科学领域的影响日渐扩大，线性时间观在西方终于完全压倒了循环时间观，被人们看作唯一正确的思想。然而，有趣的是，线性时间观的计数仍然要依靠循环性的物质运动：地球自转一周所带来的视觉上的太阳的东升西落，标志着一天；月球绕地球一周所带来的视觉上阴晴圆缺，标志着一个月；地球绕太阳一周所造成的春夏秋冬，标志着一年。因此，即使在循环时间观占主导地位的年代，循环时间观仍然隐隐地存在着。从最为根本的意义上说，人类之所以需要时间，是因为人类想要知道何时耕种，何时收割，何时洪水泛滥，何时迁移牧群；人类渴望掌握大自然运行的规律，从而使人类的活动能精确地与大自然相协调。而所谓“规律”，本身就意味着重复出现的事件，意味着循环。严格地说，在线性时间观的视野里，只有事件，没有规律。因此，无论人类是否意识到，循环时间观对于人类都是不可或缺的。

因此，与热奈特将“事件重复”归入“单一”不同，笔者主张将其归入“重复”，与“话语重复”并列成“重复”的三大类型。这样，我们就得到如下的叙述频率：

单一（1R/1H）。需要说明的是，这种叙述频率绝非是对现实的无技巧的重复，它是作者刻意选择的一种写作技巧，其审美效果在于最大限度地贴近生活。

重复（nR/nH，nR/1H）。包括事件重复和话语重复。其中事件重复（nR/nH）又可分为求同和求异两种。求同的审美效果在于强调，例如，海明威的《老人与海》就是典型的求同重复，通过老人桑地亚哥一次次捕鱼、一次次同鲨鱼搏斗，强调了老人顽强不屈的性格；求异的审美效果在于突出同一类型的事件各自不同的特性，例如《水浒传》中的“三打祝家庄”就意在求异，其审美效果在于突出“三打”与“一打”、“二打”不同的特性。与之相应，话语重复（nR/1H）也可分为求同和求异两种。鲁迅《祝福》中祥林嫂一次讲述阿毛被狼吃掉的故事，其重复显然在于求同，其审美效果在于强调这件事给祥林嫂留下的内心创伤；福克纳的《喧哗与骚动》中通过班吉、昆丁、杰生、迪尔西等人反复讲述康普生家庭的没落，所讲内容却各异其趣，其审美效果则在于突出不同的叙述视角（李华卫，2001: 107-110）。

集叙（1R/nH）。即热奈特所谓的“反复”。因“反复”易与“重复”相混，且如热奈特所说，此概念作为一种叙述频率又明显不同于作为时距概念的“概括”，故选择热奈特的另一个术语“集叙”为之名。对其审美效果热奈特已有比较充分的论述，在此不再赘述。
4. 余论：中西智慧的相互成全

如前所述，循环时间观的缺点，是西方叙述频率理论的主要缺陷。而正是在这一点上，中国传统文化可以补西方之不足。与西方线性时间观占主导相反，在线性时间观与循环时间观的并置中，循环时间观在中国传统文化中占据了主导地位。而且，在中国的传统时间观中，循环时间观与线性时间观并非截然对立，而是有机融合、互相补充的。从《庄子》中的“鼠肝虫臂”之词，“鼓盆而歌”之事①，到唐代张若虚的《春江花月夜》中“江畔何人初见月，江月何年初照人”等词句，再到南宗张批《三国演义》中的开场词“青山依旧在，几度夕阳红”，似乎都暗含着这样的二重时间观念：线性的个体生命只是循环往复的宇宙大化的一部分，因此，它最终必将融入循环往复的宇宙大化中；而且，只有将其融入宇宙大化中，才能真正彰显其意义。如果借鉴柏格森的理论则不难发现，将线性时间与循环时间二者融合在一起的正是心理时间，天道与生命正是通过人心融为一个整体。这心理也不局限于个体的心理，乃是民族文化心理的积淀。因此，在先哲智慧的指引下，将三种时间观相互补充，相互成全，不但能引领我们建构更为完善的叙述学理论，更能成全我们对文学的阅读和对人生的感悟。

参考文献


① 《庄子·大宗师》中说：“未我适化！又将奚以汝为，将奚以汝适？以汝为鼠乎？以汝为虫乎乎？”《庄子·知北》中记载了庄子在妻子死后鼓盆而歌的故事，庄子对自己的行为是这样解释的：“若其始死也，我独何能无慨然安之哉？奈何而有此邪！非独无此邪，而无此也，而无此形，非独无此形也，而无此气。故气变而有形，形变而有生，今又变而为死。是相与为春夏秋冬四时行也。人且偃然寝于壁，而我不觉者，是忘乎所以生死矣，故止也。”
难以叙述的叙述：《浮城异志》的图文符号互涉

摘 要 在图像、影视和电子媒介霸权的时代，文学艺术被视觉艺术挤压至边缘，甚至有终结之虞。香港作家西西却借视觉艺术之势，化用图像为文所用，并从图像叙事言说的技法中获得灵感，开创出新的图文互涉叙事创意。本文以西西的短篇小说《浮城异志》(1986)①为例，探究其如何受比利时画家雷奈·马格利特（Rene Magritte）的超现实主义绘画启发，在“图、形、文”即“言、意、象”三者之间，突破各自的局限，相得益彰地表达哲思意蕴。一是难以叙述的叙述：超现实图像与寓言体小说的“比、兴”。西西在超现实主义画作、拉美魔幻写实、中国古代志异体之间挖掘出共通点，采取超现实的“兴蒙太奇”，在相不相涉的事物之间顿悟，组合话题。《浮城异志》便置超现实主义绘画和魔幻文字，运用超现实理性的“兴”，运用电影蒙太奇技法，超现实地组接事物，有机结合，在抽象隐喻层面水乳交融，反叛传统的线性叙述，体现出非逻辑性、寓言性和神话性。二是时间零：小说空间感与绘画时间性的共时呈现。传统文化认为“绘画是空间艺术，小说是时间艺术”，但高明的画家能在绘画空间中展现出空间的“段”感，而高明的作家能在小说时间中展现出空间的“立体”感。单幅画作事接为整体的连环图，也使绘画艺术产生出时间性。小说整体则可以呈现为“时间零”结构，反叛传统线性叙述，体现出空间感。《浮城异志》借马格列特的画作，将“时间零”化为可感的形象，表达人类面临生死抉择而进退失据的两难境地。图文互生的深刻之处在于表达难以言说的观念，成为意义丛生的迷宫。三是符号与经验的断裂：象示明意与不说即说。《浮城异志》则是“不说就是说”的典范，运用“言外之意、弦外之音”的隐喻，促使读者无限接近事情的本相。《浮城异志》运用图文互涉叙事，实现了写实与写意的融合，理性与非理性的融合，可看与可说的融合，直觉与本质的融合。

关键词 超现实与比兴；时间零；不说即说

1. 难以叙述的叙述：超现实图像与寓言体小说的“比、兴”

图像如何表达难以图说的抽象思维？

马格列特开创了一种新的图像叙事，即将各种物件进行超现实组合，如“鱼头与燃烧的雪茄并接，羽毛撑起比萨斜塔，石头城浮在海上”，画作激发灵感，给人无限的想象空间。表达出“水与火，海洋与陆地，容纳与拒斥，内与外”等难以言说的哲学命题，甚至再现出人们难以言说的潜在意识心理，马格列特成为“用绘画表达自己思想的诗人”。

这些画作之所以能激发思想灵感，关键的图像叙事法是“比”。中国文学修辞擅长用“比”，如《诗经》中将黄鸟与父母互比。中国绘画中也出现过类似画作，如唐代王维《卧雪图》有“雪中芭蕉”，把两种“不可能事物”结成配偶。钱钟书认为，中国禅宗中也有类似“不可思议的话头”，如“鸟巢沧海底，鱼跃石山头”，这种格外谈就是西方古希腊哲学的“不可能事物喻”（addynta，impossibilia），其中蕴含的“禅理”暗示了稀有或不可思议。可惜，王维等人的雪里芭蕉画作只是特例，没有发展成为风气。而到了西方现代观念，超现实主义（surrealism）蔚然成风，成为流派，美术界除了马格列特之外，还有夏加尔、保罗・克利、米罗、达利等。超现实主义有其产生语境，在于西方现代文化流行反叛连续性，普遍规律，因果关系、现象的可预见性等传统观念。该流派的特色正如勃雷东（Andre Breton）在《超现实主义宣言》中指出的：‘它使自由艺术创作不受任何限制，传统限制包括推理要合乎逻辑，道德要符合标准，社会和艺术要合乎常规，受制于创作预期和意图。超现实主义者们的创作完全按照潜意识的暗示进行，利用梦境以及睡醒之间心灵状态以及自然或人为地引发种种幻觉。超现实主义的文学创作，有意冲破传统的艺术组织方式，尝试自由联想，非常规的句法，不顾逻辑，不管时间顺序，白日梦和梦魇似的罗列事件，以及将令人惊异的或者看似不相关的意象并置。’

西西在创作《浮城异志》前五年，写了七篇研究马格列特的随笔，于1981年4月2日至4月8日连载于《快报・快趣》，她因阅读达达主义的《显现的诗——雷奈・马格列特绘画中的隐喻和转喻》，一文有所感悟，而这种感悟就如马格列特的绘画创意实验因梦中的“鸟笼与蛋”忽生灵感，也像中国古代文学修辞的“兴”，两不相悖事物，意外地碰出新的灵感和想象。西西在研究马格列特的同时，还综合研究了古今中外的小说、绘画、童话和志怪作品的超现实性，并发表了一系列研究《诗经》的“起兴”论，若以中国的“比兴”理论阐释各媒介艺术的超现实性，不失为打通中西文化艺术的关节点。

如此说来，马格列特图像叙事的特色不仅在于类比推理，更在于“兴”，画作如句子与篇章的构成原则，也能运用“起兴”，并置不相干的事物，超现实地组接事物。他还尝试糅合电影、绘画和文学的叙事性和思想性，正如罗伯特・休斯所说：“马格列特从无声电影、舞剧以及博物馆蜡像中寻找创作源泉，组接并置日常事物意象，促使人从常中发现异，他是擅长以画言事的寓言家。”此后，斯科特・马特尔在摄影中也运用蒙太奇合
成技术，如照片《大桥下的图书馆》图1，图书馆开在立交桥下，图像拼接违反物理学原则，它既隐喻图书馆文化是文明的基石；也隐喻在急功近利的尘嚣都市，人难得沉潜，去感受深邃和怡然。

这些超理性照片和马格列特的画作一样，既运用电影的蒙太奇，也运用文学的比兴手法，进行超越常规的想象，给图像注入哲学意蕴，这种图像叙事法可以称之为“兴”蒙太奇。

那么，语言如何表达难以言说的哲思体验？

西西的《浮城异事》开创了一种叙事法，将马格列特的画作变为“起兴之物”，顷刻间“捏合或提取”，如普鲁斯特写作《追忆似水年华》，苦苦寻觅童年孔布莱德的回忆而不得，而一块玛德兰点心，意外地启动了记忆闸门。西西借用马格列特画作，以“浮城”作为联结点，串起本来互不关联的十三幅画作，镶嵌小说章节为“浮城、奇迹、骤雨、苹果、眼睛、课题、花神、间明、明镜、翅膀、鸟草、彗星、窗子”，共十三节，一节一图一事，进行超现实拼贴和抽象联想。

对《浮城异事》而言，难以言说的是什么？按写作语境，人们会轻易下断语，所指为“九七情结”，因1986年中英联合声明签订，港人陷入彷徨，进退失据，恐惧焦虑得无法言说。但是，如果故事寓意仅此一端，那么，一旦跨过了“九七”，小说势必失去意义。所以，有必要跳出一时一事的经验去阐释作品。其实，西西意在表达天道性命等具有神秘性的志异命题。近世以来，香港的华侨历史远胜于任何魔幻小说，它的存在是个谜，是异数，是例外。一个城市如何上升，是否下沉，这是个谜。大而化之，对于人类的存在而言，地球和生命如何起源，是否陨落覆灭，这也是个谜。万物存在之谜不可思议，难以言说，而西西偏要费尽心思地言说。十年前，她在《我城》中开始实验图文互涉文体，形成了散文体风格。至《浮城异事》，她要寻求更深层次的表达。龚鹏程认为“一般物事，寻常道理，言语足以尽意，不需要象示之法；凡立象以示意者，大抵是孔子所说的难以言传的天道性命之事”。②《易经·系辞上传》曰“圣人立象以尽意，设卦以尽意”，由此创生出立象尽意的中国文化体系。正因为言不尽意，西西要借用超现实主义画作，济

图1 画作《大桥下的图书馆》

言之不言。而因为马列列的画作同样求言说难以言说的存在之谜，因而，图文彼此能够水乳交融。

这种图文融合叙事法的关键，是超现实的“兴”至太奇。如小说第6节《课题》，“起兴”作为《黑格尔的假日》（Hegel's holiday），盛满水的玻璃杯被放置在雨伞下（图2）。西西研读画作，认为“两者联系的媒介是水，杯子容纳，雨伞拒斥”。1 由此画作抽象出“事物之二柄与多角度”：水既能饮用或洗涤，也可能泛滥成灾；同时也抽象出人类行为的荒谬性：“为把水倒进身体，发明了杯子；为排斥雨水，又发明了雨伞。”马列列执着于在物体之间寻找相似和相反、荒谬和逻辑性；而哲学家黑格尔也喜欢钻研物理间的微妙关系，如水杯和雨伞的关系大概是在假日同时想的问题。画作因此命名为“黑格尔的假日”。水，确实能让人浮想联翩：马列列的作曲家弟弟保罗说“如果发明胶水把雨点粘在一起，雨水就麻烦了”；西西也说“雨水可不可以撑了伞排斥人呢”？这些如“有胡子”还是“胡子有脸”西西式问题或庄重梦想式的问题，能激发出人的思考和想象。西西由雨伞与水杯的“兴”至太学投接，思考浮人对水的潜意识态度，在容纳与拒斥之间摇摆。再如，第9节《明镜》以画作《不再被复制、增殖》（Not to be reproduced）“起兴”（图3），画中镜子竟然不照正面而照出背面，有悖常理，正常经验不再被复制。小说叙述“雪白公主”的镜子正直忠诚，而浮城的镜子却只能反映事物的背面，所以，浮城女子不易为自己化妆。西西由镜思考真相与假相问题，隐喻浮人大多都迷失本我，追求表面的假相，难以得到真答案。而聪明人能知古鉴今，透过明镜照出事物背后的真相；人类虽能以史为鉴，无奈却难以预测未来。

马列列的画作富有思想冲击力，激发不

图2 画作《黑格尔的假日》

图3 画作《不再被复制、增殖》

1 西西《黑格尔的假日》[N]. 西西・西西, 1981-4-5.
少人进行图文互涉创作。如戈梅·科艾雅出版艾丽雅的新诗《至格里特》(1948)，配了13幅马格里特画作插图。如罗伯·格里耶认为，“马格列特时常呈现几个不同世界的矛盾重叠，从看似真实的世界发现了开口(opening)，通往另一个看似真实的世界。”①他给马格列特·罗伯·劳森伯格等画家画作搭配文字，生成《幽灵城市的拓扑学》(1976)和《金三角的回忆》(1978)，创造了片段“集合”小说(Collage Novel)。

但是，西西却在超现实主义画作、拉美魔幻写实、中国古代志异体之间挖掘出共通点，采取超现实的“兴蒙太奇”，在两不相涉的事物之间连结，组接话题。《浮城志异》并置超现实主义绘画和魔幻文字，运用超越理性的“兴”，运用电影蒙太奇技法，超现实地组接事物，联结语篇，在抽象隐喻层面水乳交融，反叛传统的线性叙述，体现出非逻辑性、寓言性和神话性。西西将“兴蒙太奇”手法运用于汉语写作，形成了自成一体的创作。

2. 时间零：小说空间感与绘画时间性的共时呈现

就单幅图画与单个小说章节而言，图文互为“比兴”，创造出图文互涉叙事创意，难以言传行言说。就整体而言，图文互涉又能产生哪些创意呢？

卡尔维诺创造过“时间零”小说叙事概念，即在猎人与狮子的格斗中，重要的不是狮子中箭而死或猎人被咬死的结局，而是狮子临空飞起，箭在空中的刹那，这个绝对时刻仿佛电影的“定格”。②而传统的线性叙述，多为“时间 N——时间零——时间 N”模式，强调铺垫“时间 N”的前因，也照顾读者急于知道结果的心理，突出“时间 N”的后果。故事情节的因果逻辑俨然。卡尔维诺通篇呈现“时间零”意念的小说有四篇，《时间零》《追逐》《夜行司机》及《基度山伯爵》。如《夜行司机》，叙述情人甲乙在电话口角，彼此声称分手。后来，甲反省，漏夜驾车从 A 城到 B 城找乙，以谋和解。小说着重呈现甲在半途中的思索和处境，他起初怕情敌丙同方向而行，后来又害怕乙会驾车迎面而来，彼此错过。于是，甲打电话给乙，无人接听，想乙一定驾车回来，于是想转头回家。再一想，乙也可以打电话给甲，甲不在家，乙掉头回家。因此，他发现，在旅途上个人与他人如何相遇和沟通，自己根本无能为力。如《追逐》叙述杀与追杀的处境，杀手被追杀者在大路上同时驾车，杀手是否可以杀死目的物，得看当时塞车的情况、交通灯的转变、别的车辆在横街上如何介入。西西将这类时间零小说称为处境小说，它们叙述特定时刻和环境中的事情，人物不重要，重要的是发生的问题——类似于飞矢不动或乌龟永远追不上兔子的哲思问题，时间零小说既没有曲折离奇故事，也没有全集的起承转合，但提供了新的阅读层面。

实际上，“时间零”具有深刻的变革意义，在于凸显出小说的空间感，截断故事时间

的进程，抛弃线性叙述，膨胀扩大绝对时刻，《浮城志异》叙事巧妙，在于整体结构设置呈现出“时间零”处境，非时间线意义而为矛盾张力之间的时间零，体现出抽象哲学理念，生成为空间小说。

小说前半部分，叙述人类的“浮城”大梦。第1节《浮城》借用画作《比利牛斯山脉的城堡》（The castle in the pyrenees）（图4），叙述浮人希冀浮城永存。即使卡尔维诺的《看不见的城市》写遍了各种想象的城市，也没有这种浮城。马氏画作也只有城堡空间，而西西却为之编出历史语境，将空间形象纳入时间叙事中，叙述出难以言传的梦想之城，图文互证，在抽象层面，浮城已然腾飞。第2节《奇迹》选配画作《头脑的凝视》（The mind’s gaze），房子都漂浮在空中，这是人凝视选择的结果，想象使这超现实符号显得合情合理。文字叙述浮城尽管无根，但若像卡尔维诺的不存在骑士那样“凭意志和信心而生存”，也能成为实存可能。第3节《骤雨》配《宝山》（Golconda）画作（图5），天上落下雨
点人，仿若四月的骤雨。①文字叙述浮人在每年风季都会梦见自己在空中，心理学家说这是“河之第三岸情意结”的集体意象。西西在分析过巴西作家卢沙（Rosa）的《河之第三岸》②，小说写老死巴交的父亲为了躲避发号施令的母亲，乘独木舟隐居。卢沙叙述能躲避权力和礼教的第三岸，卡尔维诺叙述能躲避俗世的树上生活，西西则在中西文化文本中融合贯通，叙述能躲避风雨的理想浮城，思索人类寻找理想栖居地的情意结。

小说后半部分，叙述浮人面对大限的心态。第 10 节《翅膀》叙述浮人希冀有翅膀可以飞行，最好有另一星球可供栖息。然而，大多数人都是画作《医治者》（The healer），自囚于鸟笼（图 6）。当然，若要医治心灵的焦灼，解铃当然只有系铃人。第 11 节《鸟鸣》叙述浮人既想飞翔又想扎根，对于这种矛盾心理状态，西西在画作《自然的神恩》（Natural graces）找到了“徒具鸟形的草”载体，可谓妙绝。第 12 节《彗星》叙述浮城的慧星迅速成长，母亲变得像婴孩般受照顾，如画作《精确的思维，几何学的精神》（The mathematical mind or the spirit of geometry）（图 7），一脸稚气的男子抱着一脸沧桑的母亲，传统权威被颠覆了，有人因此惶恐，有人则期盼慧星将困境迎刃而解。第 13 节《窗子》选配画作《葡萄收获之月》（The month of the grape harvest）（图 8），许多人透过窗子向内观望，而由观察者的脸，能探悉世态发展的过程，隐喻浮人不识庐山真面目，需要依靠旁观力量监察指引。作品由窗外观望的人群，思索本位与旁观问题。

![图 6 画作《医治者》](image1)

![图 7 画作《精确的思维，几何学的精神》](image2)

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而小说中的一段，叙述“大梦”与“大限”之间的“时间零”，正如灰姑娘在子夜12点面临变美的关键时刻，新人也亟待有白马王子在时间零等待，从此辉煌。第8节《时间》选用画作《凝固的时间》（Time transfixed）（图9）。

人们都说绘画是空间艺术，但这幅画却无一丝细节不传达出时间的意义：画面正中有一时钟暗示着时刻，有一列火车刚刚从镜子下的壁炉中露出头来，火车的烟刚刚被吹进了壁炉的烟囱。

好一个绝对时刻！这样转瞬即逝而又漫长无限的一段时间。马格列特的“凝固瞬间”、卡尔维诺的“时间零”与中国绘画“箭在弦上”理论，如出一辙。北宋画家李公麟描画李广张弓射箭“引而待发”。黄庭坚认为“未至弓上，旋即未定的帅士与急促的急促，都是深悟画格的高明者”。伍蠡甫则指出，“这意味著时间上由一点延伸为一段。庸手则画人仰马翻的结局，短段为一点，堵塞了观者的寻味和想象，无诗可言。”

西方学者莱辛也认为画家应当挑选全部动作中最耐寻味的“片刻”（Augenblick），避免描绘激情顶点，以免捆绑

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1. 薛西，时间凝固[N]，快报，快趣，1981，4-4。
2. 伍蠡甫，画中诗与艺术想象[A]，伍蠡甫艺术美学文集，上海：复旦大学出版社，1986，38-39。
了想象的翅膀。绘画艺术“富于包孕的片刻”原则，也见于文学艺术中。钱钟书认为这种手法“不是叙述动作的头尾原委，而是偏偏见首不见尾，就着点，就收场落幕，让读者得之言外。里特指导后辈习作长篇小说，干脆只有三句话，使他们笑，使他们哭，使他们等。莱辛称引的是弗朗契丝卡回忆她和保罗恋爱经过的末一句，她和他同读传奇，渐渐彼此有情，但丁在逼迫两情相悦的顶点时，把话头切断，那必然的结局含而不露”。

但是，《浮城志异》不一样，整体叙事结构在指向“时间零”，呈现出小说空间性。小说开端第 1 页就难以言明的浮城开创史，第 2 至 7 节讲述浮人对大梦的期盼，到第 8 节小说突然达到祸福交替的绝对时刻。第 9 至 12 节描述浮人面对大限来临的心态，恰如马格列特所画的困在高脚杯中的长颈鹿（《水晶的洗礼》，图 10），站得高却未必望得远，因四面都是墙，而墙又是脆弱的玻璃，真是无力锥之地，地位岌岌可危。浮人渴望飞翔，但也能化作鸟草，生来无法参破。小说整体结构的巧妙，还在于多层面组接叙述线索。一是虚幻层面，叙述浮城、骤雨浮人、鸟草、心笼等超现实意象；二是现实层面，叙述老师带领小孩参观马格里特的画展；三是旁观层面，反讽叙述者对画作和世界的理性思考。小说结尾描述工作人员把《蒙娜丽莎》画展的海报贴在预告板上，蒙娜丽莎像命运女神般神秘莫测，至此，现实与虚幻重合，图文相生，隐喻出所有人事不可预测的未来。

而且，《浮城志异》不仅在叙事结构上，在叙事内涵上也体现出“时间零”。“浮城”意象隐喻人类的乌托邦大梦，憧憬永不坠落的光辉梦境；而跟美梦如影随形的伴侣是大限来临的恐惧和忧心，如地震海啸，天灾人祸，极喜与极悲瞬间切换，随时破网飞出的危险威胁，这种恐惧焦虑成为人类的集体无意识。命悬一线，向前一步是大梦，向后一步是大限，人生的离合际遇往往取决于一念之差。祸福相依，这是人类无法摆脱的永恒两难。任由命运宰割，还是反抗命运宰割，这是人类世世代代思考的问题。西西像马格列特一样思考矛盾对立，相反相成的各种关系，思考大梦与大限、福与祸、乌托邦与反乌托邦等语言难以道尽的哲学命题。《浮城志异》借马格列特

图 10 作画《水晶的洗礼》

特的画作，将“时间零”化为可感的形象，表达人类面临生死抉择而进退失据的两难境地。图文互生的深刻之处在于表达难以言说的观念，成为意义丛生的迷宫。

传统文化认为“绘画是空间艺术，小说是时间艺术”，但图文互涉叙事却对这些观点提出了尖锐的挑战。高明的画家能在绘画中展现出时间的“段”感，而高明的作家能在小说中展现出空间的“立体”感。单幅画作串接为整体的连环图，也使绘画艺术产生出时间性。而小说整体则可以呈现为“时间零”结构，反叛传统线性叙述，体现出空间感。

3. 符号与经验的断裂：象示明意与不说即说

图文之所以要互生叙事，在于语言与图像各有局限。言不尽意，因此要立意尽意。而图像要被正确理解，也需要文字说明。但是，即便图文互涉，也会出现麻烦。因为无论是图像、文字或是任何符号，都会出现符号与对应物的断裂。词，图与世间万物一样，仅仅是物，它们既揭示又遮蔽它们所指代的事物。符号与认知存在误差，可见的和可述的难以一致。道可道，非常道。

绘画艺术反思符号与经验的关系，马格里特有幅经典的画作——《这不是一个苹果》（This is not an apple），画了个苹果，却在画上写句“这不是一个苹果”，让人费思量。确实，“这不是生活中的苹果，而只是一幅画，是物体的符号，却不是物体本身。”句子中的“这”指那幅画，而不是指生活实际中的苹果。这种“自己吞掉自己”的自指现象，在语言中也存在，如“本句子是假的”，它使人破坏以往的阅读习惯，而谈论句子本身，把符号自身当作叙述的对象。文西认为此画意在讨论“真与非真”。

图文不可能客观模仿再现世界，它们只是线条或文字，不能准确图像化现实。如画饼不能充饥。如禅宗偈语说：“你能以手指着月亮，但千万不要将手指误认作月亮”。后来，马格列特又画了一幅《这不是一个烟斗》，将苹果改为烟斗（图11）。1968年，福柯认为，该画的秘密在于设计图形文，然后又小心地将它解构了，解构了把图当作事实的错觉，反映出形象与文字内容之间的矛盾。图像文有长达千年的传统，它有三个作用，一是弥补文字的不足，二是不求助修辞学实现重复的表达，三是用双重写手法捕获物象。但图文的矛盾关系表现为

![图11 画作《这不是一个烟斗》](image)

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“语言表现”（由此排斥相似）和“造型表现”（由此导致相似）的关系。画家们谋求破除“词”与“图”的界限，质疑“事实上的相似”与“表达上的相似”的对等关系。保罗克利、康定斯基画面倾向于抽象，马格里特画面效果写实，思想抽象。马格列特的《梦境之匙》，画个钟，却标称为“风”；画匹马，却标称为“门”。暗示画作和语言不外是颜色和线条，都是假象。约翰·伯格在《看的方式》中指出，《梦境之匙》探讨“长存于语言与观看之间的鸿沟”。人观看事物的方式受知识与信仰的影响，注视是选择行为；而且人总在审视物我之间的关系，所有影像都是人为的创作，每一影像都体现出一种观看方法。刘纪蕙研究福柯的思考，指出“马格列特式符号与物体的突兀断裂，就是不断展开被切割与剥夺对象物的挫伤欲求，指出语言指涉功能的无效，误导思考，导致盲点。他利用既成物（ready-made object），思考符号与经验之间难以弥合的断裂。他意在表明语言有时在试图表达思想时会显得苍白无力。马格里特的理念在于，只有放弃辨认形象之相似，才有可能开始符号的诠释。”

写实语言也是如此，企图藉由写实贴近再现的事物，但是再精确写实的形象也只能指涉其他，而非此物体本身。西西对此有感悟，所以《浮城志异》是志异，寓言，而不写实。第 4 节《苹果》叙述浮城将举办马格里特的画展，宣传画是《这不是一个苹果》（This is not an apple）。正如画作中的苹果是假象，小说借用画作也不过是假象，画作的意被颠覆了，西西借此生发的意义才是本味。文字“浮城”永存，这个奇迹可以是假象，或神话，也可以是真相，这取决于人的观看方式。《浮城志异》因此丛生出相反相成的语义歧路。第 5 节《眼睛》选配画作《错误的镜子》（The false mirror），眼球中浮现出蓝天白云（图 12）。刘纪蕙指出该画表明，眼睛不忠实地反映世界的镜子，我们自认为看到的客观真实，可能是被涂抹遮蔽的，真实世界与观成经验之间存在认知与语言的误差。西西因此提出各种问题，“浮城是不是《灰姑娘》的童话？什么原因使浮城平稳悬崖，是海和天之间的引力，还

![图 12 画作《错误的镜子》](image)

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是命运之神操演？还是提线木偶剧？浮城的未来如何？”浮城的前途既取决于人的选择决断，也取决于命运的选择。眼睛的选择导致主观性错误，客观可能就是主观，语言未
能表达思想。

维特根斯坦指出，对于不可言说的东西，要保持沉默。① 叶秀山认为，他的意思是“秘密只能看得见而说不出”，② “书不尽言，言不尽意。”因此，中国绘画强调“以象明意”“象可以尽意”，暗示形象思维优于概念思维。中国禅宗要求“不落言筌”，强调神秘行为的顿悟，如当头棒喝、拈花微笑；还发展出答非所问的公案，如“佛是什么？是三磅麻”，问即是答，问在答里。①《浮城志异》第 7 节《花神》，选配画作《“花神”的创意》（The ready-made Bouquet）。花神从男性背影中走出，从男人的潜意识梦中冉冉升起。文字叙述文艺复兴时期波蒂采尼的《春天》和中国宋代李公麟的《维摩演教图》都表现文天散花，前者有大地春回的气息，后者表现文殊大弟子花满身，凡心太重。悟透后，可以参阅西西的散文《维摩说法》和《看画》，画意应和佛陀之教的大乘教义“结习未尽，花
著身耳”，这套法系在中国表现得最独特的是唐朝兴盛的禅那学说。西西参禅悟道，
运用“花沾满身”的意象，隐喻浮人病在于受物质诱惑，成为“累透透”民众。艾柯认
为，“禅的基本立场是反理智，接受直觉的生活，拒绝成科和成体系的秩序。西方人从东方禅
中体悟到，对于精神疲力竭的人，解决之道应该是淡定平和，摆脱偶像，放弃理性模
式，当头棒喝的公案，摆得像钻石角尖的智慧。”③ 贡布里希也认识到，语言是由空白
组成的，这就像禅宗的观念，空有是同一之物。中国水墨画讲究“留白”，比利时画家
马格列特的超现实画作也具有留白艺术的多样性。中国文论突破言说困境的手法之一是“不着一字，尽得风流”。中唐刘禹锡提
出了“境生于象外”，晚唐司空图提出来了“象外之象，景外之景”，认为意境的审美效果不仅有味内之味，还有味外之味，即是“韵外之致”和“味外之旨”。宋代严羽的《沧浪诗话》
认为，“诗之有神韵者，如水中之月，镜中之象，透澈玲珑，不可凑泊。不涉理路，不落言
诠者，上也。”如李清照的词句“非关病酒，不是悲秋”，富于言外之意。她从能说的事情
人手言说，对难以言说的夫妻相隔的离愁别绪与思念欲望，不直接说破。这不能说
的恰恰成为表达的重心所在，韵味所在。所以，从外部以“不”的句式说，“不说就是说”具
有“味外之旨”，它与“它偏说不是它”的“变异化和陌生化”都属于文学性的精髓。

西西的图文互涉小说《我城》是“是它偏说不是它”的典范，参见另文详述。

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① (奥)路德维希·维特根斯坦.逻辑哲学论[M]. 北京:商务印书馆, 1996.
《浮城志异》则是“不说就是说”的典范。小说运用“言外之意、弦外之音”的隐喻，激发想象，促使读者无限接近事情的本相。明说“浮城”，没有明言的是人类共同的理想彼岸梦想，因为机缘巧合的“命运”，浮城悬在空中不升不降，成为真空地带。明说“骤雨浮人”，言外之意是人类为躲避风雨，而寻找理想的生存状态。明说“时间零”，没有点破的是人类对大限来临的惊恐，对命运变迁、生死难料的绝对时刻的忧惧。明说“鸟”，言外之意是向往飞行而没有能力起飞的徒劳。有言中夹杂沉默，说出的话中有空白。童庆炳认为“文学经典本身的味道之临床外之致，那种丰富性和多重意义，独有的审美场域，依靠图像永远无法传达的。文学是用文字阅读唤起你在头脑中的想象，叫你自己建立那种审美形象，这比可视的，可听的形象更丰富。”

不少艺术家都意识到图文的无能为力，但又必须对不可言说进行言说。如卡尔维诺尝试“写作沉默”以及从沉默中可以诞生多少语言”，创作出晚期小说《帕洛马尔先生》。西西论述过此小说如何用描写法表达对语言困境的思考，如墨西哥印第安的神“羽蛇咬着头骨”、“它究竟是否意味着生与死的延续，结论只能是”阐释根本不可能；从实质图像到抽象文字，一切并非语言能轻易传达”。再如“我们人人都像猩猩一样，握着旧而空洞的轮胎，通过它希望触及最终的意义。那是文字无法抵达的领域”。再如“黑鸟的鸣叫，但可能鸣叫之间的沉默才是重要的思维”3。现实主义小说往往把什么告诉读者，喋喋不休，不厌其烦，不留空白；而浪漫主义小说则尽力调动读者的情绪，拼命煽情。现代主义小说更强调“弦外之音”。例如，海明威 1932 年在纪实性作品《午后之死》中，提出“冰山原则”——“冰山运动之雄伟壮观，是因为它只有六分之一在水面上”。因此，作者只应描写“冰山”露出水面的部分，水下的部分应该通过文本的提示让读者去联想补充。具体可见的文字和形态是“六分之一”，而情感和思想是“六分之七”，后者寓于前者之中。高明的电影也采取“画面外”技法，不拍即是拍，因为它激发了观众的想象。这画面空间，就是语言中的“不说就是说”。

社会迅猛发展，文艺却有所丧失。金心敏警告说，媒介拟像将导致文学所指涉的现实的丧失。电子媒介帝国化的后果是“距离距离、图像增殖、域化”，这改写了印刷媒介时代以距离、深度和地域性为生命内涵的现代性精神形式。而希利斯·米勒则说，“我更想强调的是，它将导致文学所指涉的天、道、神或其他任何神秘之物的丧失。”叶秀山则说，“海德格尔论过，科技方便于及时呈现事物的表象，但事物本质却被掩盖，所以，科技发展使我们离事物越来越远。”4他接着指出，文学艺术要靠诗人和哲人的“思”，揭示藏背后的事件自身。

图文互涉叙事的意义在于，力求挖掘图文表达的深层力量，摆脱表象，指涉“天、道、神”意蕴。西西的图文互涉叙事，既是为了寻求小说空间结构上的借鉴，如《我城》从中国古代绘画手卷吸取移动视点叙述的基础上，从现代电影中吸取时空互动法，图文互涉
与蒙太奇文体融为一体，图文功能融合，使读者获得时空互动的观感；也是为了突破语言表达的陈套，形成独特的童话体语言风格，达到“是它偏说不是它”语言效果。《浮城志异》主要运用隐喻转喻、“兴”蒙太奇、禅宗玄学、反言、隐言、曲言等各种办法，突破语言的局限性，达到“不说即是说”的效果。采取“兴”蒙太奇”超越理性的顿悟方式言说，对于语言不可言说之处，代之以象。借用马格里特的绘画，借助雨果的潜意识和无理性的艺术语言，使人顿悟，用“心眼”看到了自己忽视或朦胧察觉而不能表达的同一体，随之而来的欣慰和喜悦，那是仿佛生命没有虚度的充实感和宁静感，正如石涛说，思其一，得心有所着而快。魏朝的王弼的《周易略例·明象》指出，“得意忘象，得象忘意”，所以，最终必须抛除“言”“象”的粘滞与牵绊，随用随忘，随取随遗，常保持无用无累的心，才能达到“意”的领悟与把握。《浮城志异》具有“味外之旨”，主旨似是而非，需要读者去顿悟贯通，由此，读者享受阅读的游戏。这于卡尔维诺的《寒冬夜行人》在作者、故事主角与读者的关系之间穿梭游戏。《浮城志异》运用图文互涉文体，实现了写实与写意的融合，理性与非理性的融合，可看与可说的融合，直觉与本质的融合，其中的深意值得从多元角度一读再读。本文因此成为开放性的场域，可以幻生出迷宫一般的意义链。不管是陌生化、抽象主义，还是超现实、志异想象，现代性和后现代性文艺都体现出召唤全新意义阐释的迷狂。正因为文学尝试各种方法对不可言说进行言说，文学得以不死。

阐释之“度”与中国新诗的阅读困惑

乔 琦

摘要 1936年刘西渭和卞之琳的《鱼目集》中相关诗篇进行了多次交流,其中《圆宝盒》一诗争议最大。“圆宝盒”衍义过程最大的缺陷在于,卞之琳和刘西渭的阐释过程都隐去了从具象到抽象的路径,阐释成为封闭的自我行为;最具启示意义的则是刘西渭倡导的基本阐释立场———诗人挡不住读者。理论上,阐释之“度”可以被完全剔除,符号(文本)意义,开放且不确定;诗歌文本的反语法、反模仿、断裂、跳跃等“超规定性”特点,都决定着阐释难以得出确定的结论。无度之阐释的合理性论证起来困难重重,从卡勒对里法泰尔的批评,到卡勒与艾柯的辩论,再到刘西渭与卞之琳的讨论,共同呈现了符号衍义的开放性,也一并展示了设立界限的必要性。只要我们注意文本与读者的辩证关系,避免走向文本强迫读者的歧途;只要我们清楚,诗歌符号学的每一次阐释实践,获得的也只是部分文本意义,那么,里法泰尔提供的诗歌阐释理论,对于中国新诗阐释将大有裨益。

关键词 诗歌符号学;过度诠释;《圆宝盒》

1. 由“诗歌符号学”引起的批评

“阐释”,早已不是一个新鲜话题,但它在各种文学理论中占据显赫位置,符号学尤其如此。卡勒指出,“里法泰尔把意义的研究等同于阅读的研究,诗歌符号学实乃讲述读者处理或理解文本的方式。”①卡勒虽然对里法泰尔所作的诗歌符号学建构多有推崇,但认为他对读者的自由限制过多。卡勒批评里法泰尔的诗歌符号学偏重阐释,没能坚持对“文本和读者之辩证关系”的分析。写《诗歌符号学》的里法泰尔至少在两个问题上,令卡勒非常不满:

第一,里法泰尔受到阐释的诱惑,没能完成起初的诗学设想。

里法泰尔的《诗歌符号学》几乎是迄今为止唯一一本最具系统的诗歌符号学理论著

作，其基于主型、模式、核心语、不通、追述阅读法等关键概念基础上的论述，自成体系且别具一格。从结构主义阶段到解构主义阶段，卡勒对文学研究有相对一致的要求："作为一个学科的文学研究的目的正在于努力去理解文学的符号机制，去理解文学形式所包含的种种策略。”①在某种特定的理论形态之上，卡勒始终执着于大文学理论观，即坚持文学本体论方面的探索。因而，在肯定《诗歌符号学》成就的同时，卡勒无法容忍里法泰尔过分沉醉于具体文本的阐释。

第二，里法泰尔在文本与读者之间，较多地偏向于文本。
在意义的探寻过程中，文本与读者，恰似一场拉锯战的双方，难分上下。“新批评”、“结构主义”、“符号学”、“读者反应批评”、“解构主义”等诸多理论，在对文本或读者的偏重上，虽没有绝对清晰的变化轨迹，但 20 世纪以来的西方文论，大体经历了从偏重文本，到偏重读者，再到调和二者的过

斯坦利·费什的《罪的惊诧：〈乐园〉中的读者》、斯蒂芬·布思的《论莎士比亚的十四行诗》、伊瑟尔的《暗含的读者》、里法泰尔的《诗歌符号学》，以及卡勒的《福楼拜：不确定性的运用》等著作，”②“都描述了读者怎样试图依据认为是有关的代码和惯例来影响文本。以及文本对特定阐释模式的抗拒或服从。正是于读者活动的描述之中，作品的结构和意义显现出来了”。③卡勒发现诸多理论家对意义的论说，实乃在讲述一个阅读的故事，其中，里法泰尔讲述的故事更富戏剧性。

在对多种阅读理论进行考察之后，卡勒点出阅读的故事中有一个奇怪的特征："即文本与读者是多么容易交换位置：读者建构文本的故事，一转眼就成了文本激发读者某种反应，从而主动控制了读者的故事。”④《诗歌符号学》在文本与读者间滑动，总体上更偏向于文本对读者的激发，从解释学阅读到追述阅读，读者在文本的制约下被迫完成跨过藩篱的动作。

卡勒承认文本激发读者进行意义阐释的力量，也注意到，甚至一些专注读者的批评家，如费什，都无法确证读者的地位。⑤尽管如此，卡勒仍然坚持认为读者创造文本，肯定读者在阐释中享有独一无二的地位。

①（美）乔纳森·卡勒．为“过度诠释”辩护[A]//诠释与过度诠释，斯特凡·阿里尼，编，王汝根，译．北京：生活·读书·新知三联书店，2005:127．
②（美）乔纳森·卡勒．解构：结构主义之后的理论与批评[M]．陆扬，译．北京：社会科学出版社，1998:25．
③（美）乔纳森·卡勒．解构：结构主义之后的理论与批评[M]．陆扬，译．北京：社会科学出版社，1998:58．
④卡勒关于费什阅读理论中，读者被作者和文本俘虏的具体表述如下：“尽管费什的阅读故事一再申辩，读者还是成了个鬼魂般作家玄奥策略的牺牲品。事实上，读者越是积极参与，移情于作品，或富有创造性，便越是为句子或作者摆布操纵得苦。”见：乔纳森·卡勒．解构：结构主义之后的理论与批评[M]．陆扬，译．北京：社会科学出版社，1998:60．
2. “诠释与过度诠释”之辨

卡勒期望赋予读者更大的意义解读空间，“符号追寻”阶段的卡勒已经显示出对诠释的宽容态度。1990年，在与理查德·罗蒂、艾柯等围绕“诠释与过度诠释”展开的辩论中，卡勒更是义不容辞地选择了为“过度诠释”辩护的角色。

艾柯在考察皮尔斯关于符号“无限衍义”（unlimited semiosis）的观念之后，强调“从‘无限衍义’这一观念并不能得出诠释没有标准的结论。说诠释(‘衍义’的基本特征)潜在地是无限的并不意味着诠释没有一个客观的对象，并不意味着它可以像流水一样毫无约束地任意‘蔓延’。说一个文本潜在地没有结尾并不意味着每一个诠释行为都可能得到一个令人满意的结果。”①依据皮尔斯的“无限衍义”概念，符号表意过程永不结束，我们无法终止符号—意义—符号—意义—符号……的延展过程，但意义无法穷尽，并不意味着对意义的解释没有限定和标准。艾柯的提醒，把“无限衍义”从一种可能的误用中解救出来。艾柯多次强调，诠释文本一定有种必须遵循的标准，如华兹华斯的诗句：

A poet could not but be gay

依据华兹华斯所处时代的语言系统的基本情况，gay一词不具有“性”内涵，不能被理解为“同性恋”。艾柯进一步假设，如果华兹华斯的诗稿在一个神秘瓶中被发现，我们无法判断其时代背景，那么gay一词是否被理解为“同性恋”呢？这首先取决于文本其他部分是否允许，如果允许的话，可能继续推测，这个文本出自一位模仿浪漫主义作家的当代作家之手。艾柯进一步说：“我所揣测的只是‘文本的意图’，或者说，运用文本策略能够确认出来的那个‘标准作者’的意图。”②艾柯诠释理论的核心概念之一——“文本意图”，很难清楚地描述出来，它被放置在标准作者、标准读者与文本之间构成的动态关系中，文本意图不能直接从文本的表面看出来，而是由标准读者推测出来，并由此勾勒出一个标准作者，因此“文本就不仅是一个用以判断诠释合法性的工具，而是诠释在论证自己合法性的过程中逐渐建立起来的一个客体”。③


②（意）安贝托·艾柯. 在作者与文本之间[A]/(意)艾柯,(英).柯里尼. 诠释与过度诠释. 北京: 生活·读书·新知三联书店,2005:73. 艾柯认为“在‘作者意图’(非常难以发现,且常常与文本的诠释无关)与‘诠释者意图’——理性查德·罗蒂的话来说,诠释者的作用仅仅是‘将文本揉打成符合自己目的的形状’——之间,还存在着第三种可能性:‘文本的意图’。”

艾柯的“标准作者”类似于韦恩·布思的“隐含作者”，而“标准读者”则类似于斯坦利·费什的“阐释团体”。艾柯、布思和费什在各自不同的理论倾向下，共同的趋向是，在一定程度上，删除有血有肉的经验作者和经验读者对文本的专断统治。处于阐释循环中的文本意图，既是阐释活动的目标，又反过来制约着阐释活动的展开。

对于艾柯一再表明的阐释的自由是有一定限度的自由，卡勒予以强烈反驳：”阐释只有走向极端才有趣”，他借用切斯特尔顿的形象表述加深这一认识；”一种批评要么什么也别说，要么必须使作者暴跳如雷”。卡勒倒也不是一味对阐释求新求异，而是始终坚持阐释的诗学探索，“不应该将文学作品的诠释视为文学研究的最高目标，更不能视其为惟一的目的：如果批评家们执意如此，那也应该尽量多思考一些问题，应该将其思维的触角伸向尽可能远的地方。”①在诗学建构的宏观视野下，卡勒对里法泰尔、罗蒂、费什等学者的阅读理论均有不满。

正是在大文学理论的层面上，卡勒对过度诠释予以辩护：”大量被误以为是‘过度诠释’（或稍好一点，被误认为是过度理解）的东西，其目的正是力图将作品文本与叙事、修辞、意识形态等一般机制联系起来。”②所谓“过度诠释”，往往是对阐释边界拓的宽，我们一旦注意到阐释者努力，“过度”的说法也就自行消解。

具体说来，卡勒至少在以下两方面对艾柯做了回应。

首先，针对艾柯认为的“文本确实给予读者大量自由的阅读空间，但这种自由是有一定限度的”，卡勒以解构主义的意义观进行反驳：”解构主义虽然认为意义是在语境中一文本之中或文本之间的一种关系功能——生成的，但却认为语境本身是无限的；永远存在着引进新的语境的可能性，因此我们唯一不能做的事就是设立界限。”③解构主义理论家强调不能把语境生成意义的功能绝对化，语境不可穷尽，那么对文本意义的发掘亦无终点。符号运行机制、意义生成、文本构建等问题的复杂丰富，决定了阐释无需也无法设立界限。

其次，针对艾柯认为的“过度将偶然的东西视作至关重要的东西，是一种专业性的有意曲解，卡勒却认为这乃打开语言和文学迷宫的一把钥匙。散落文本间的碎片，或许暗藏玄机，甚至折射出一套不易被察觉的意义系统。”

围绕“诠释与过度诠释”展开的这场论辩中，卡勒不遗余力地为“过度诠释”鸣锣开道，准确地说，卡勒希冀祛除“过度诠释”这一概念，因为意义的开放性，阐释无关乎“度”。

通过仔细辨析艾柯和卡勒的观点，我们发现二人的观点并不完全矛盾。比如，卡勒主张意义不可穷尽，而艾柯对此并不否认。他在第一篇论文《诠释与历史》中，就借用皮尔斯的“无限衍义”表明衍义的潜在无限。不同的是，艾柯侧重可能意义与对可能意义进行阐释之间的关系，而卡勒在解构主义和大文学理论观的影响下，更看重文本意义的不确定性和无限可能性。

①②③ (美)乔纳森·卡勒.《“过度诠释”一辩》[A]// (意)艾柯, (英)柯里尼. 诠释与过度诠释. 北京: 生活·读书·新知三联书店,2005:119,125,130.
由文本而读者，由阐释而理论，卡勒为文本的阐释打开了一扇通向无限的大门。理论上，阐释之“度”可以被完全剔除，但无度之阐释的合理性论证起来困难重重。对于华兹华斯诗句中的 gay 一词，卡勒应该无法说服艾柯，将它解释为同性恋。我们暂且退后一步，只把卡勒的主张看作读者的自由而辩，而此辩护的合理性植根于皮尔斯的“无限衍义”理论。

3. “圆宝盒”的衍义：刘西渭与卞之琳的一段阐释公案

1936年4月至7月，《大公报·文艺》副刊第122期、142期、158期和182期上，分别刊登了刘西渭和卞之琳两份《圆宝盒》中有关诗篇的反复探讨。其中《圆宝盒》一诗争议最大，不同的解读构成符号释义活动中无限衍义的几个环节，即便作者本人也无法终止衍义过程，后来有更多的讨论加入。

下面以对《圆宝盒》的多种解读为中心，考察新诗史上的阐释问题。为方便分析，首先引出全诗：

我幻想在哪儿（天河里？）
捞到了一只圆宝盒，
装的是几颗珍珠；
一颗晶莹的水银
掩有全世界的色相，
一颗金黄的灯火
笼罩有一场华宴，
一颗新鲜的雨点
含有你昨夜的叹气……
别上什么钟表店
听你的青春被蚕食，
别上什么骨董铺
买你家祖父的旧摆设。
你看我的圆宝盒
跟了我的船顺流
而行了，虽然航里人
永远在蓝天的怀里，
虽然你的握
是桥——是桥！可是桥

二、文学符号学研究

1254
也搭在我的圆宝盒里；
而我的圆宝盒在你们
或他们也许也就是
好挂在耳边的一颗
珍珠——宝石？——星?

《圆宝盒》阐释引发的问题和思考如下：
第一，两种封闭式的寻找“圆宝盒”意旨的方式。

刘西渭从“别上什么钟表店”连续四行诗，推断“是否诗人想用圆宝盒象征现时？
这个猜测或者不见其全错。那‘桥’——不就隐隐指着结连过去与未来的现时吗？”但下面
的诗句“可是桥/也搭在我的圆宝盒里”，现时搭在现时里，似乎讲不通；刘西渭继续假
定，圆宝盒象征“生命，存在，或者我与现时的结合”，于是“我”的生命在生命之河中
流动，也碰到种种交流，而“我”那充满理想和追求的生命，在别人眼里，或许只是挂在耳
边的“珍珠”“宝石”或“星”。最后，刘西渭指出：“还有这比这更悲哀的，我们诗人对于人生的
解释都是装饰：‘明月装饰了你的窗子/你装饰了别人的梦’。”

圆宝盒究竟是什么？刘西渭并无意过多纠缠于这一问题，其解读的终点是对“装
饰”的理解和阐发。卞之琳对自己笔下的物件似乎更钟情一些，在回应文章中，明确指
出“圆宝盒象征现时”是全错。诗人认为更妥当的解释是“心得”“道”“知”“悟”“beauty of
intelligence”；至于“桥”，作者扭曲了刘西渭的纵向连贯，“明明是横跨的，我有意指感情
的结合”。卞之琳对圆宝盒的解释，使得具体符号的意旨更加抽象，倒也符合其知性诗
歌的特点。卞之琳对总体诗意的阐释，更看重“相对”的意味，而非“装饰”，“一沙一世界”，
圆宝盒可大可小。不过，在进行一番颠覆之后，卞之琳指出：“我写这些诗到底不过是
直觉地展出具体而流动的美感，不应解释得这样‘死’。我以为纯粹的诗只许‘意会’，
可以‘言传’则近于散文了。”

阐释诗歌，确实不应拘泥于一种所谓正确的观点，但若意义接收者止步“意会”，也无益于阐释的展开。

诗若可以“言传”则近于散文，实际上是说，散文具有相对清晰的言说对象——抽象
的观念或具体的存在。所谓“意会”，所谓“言传”，更多指涉的是对一首诗内容的领会和
转述，接收者的注意力集中于符号的对象，而诗歌恰恰是跳过对象直指解释项的符号。
因此，诗歌难以“言传”的是对象部分，而符号自身和解释项，应当被仔细观照。诚然，无
论用何种方式进行观照，诗歌阐释都不会得出唯一答案。《圆宝盒》意在“装饰”还是“相
对”？二者并无须对决，值得注意的是各自的衍义过程。

反推衍义过程可以见出，“装饰”说，从功用上分析圆宝盒，“相对”说，从大小上延展

① 卞之琳《圆宝盒》[A]//诗集.上海:文化生活出版社.1935:3-5.
② 刘西渭对《圆宝盒》的解读，见他为《诗集》写的书评，发表于《大公报·文艺》副刊，第122期(1936年4
月12日)。
③ 卞之琳对刘西渭评论的回复，见他写的《关于〈诗集〉》，载《大公报·文艺》副刊，第142期(1936年5月
10日)。
圆宝盒。这种从结论出发，还原分析过程的尝试，为两种解释的分歧提供了可能的依据，即对“圆宝盒”作分岔衍义似的解释。但无论刘西渭的印象式批评，还是卜之琳的通
信交流式批评，都极富跳跃性，他们几乎不约而同地将圆宝盒作高度抽象化；刘西渭——
圆宝盒 —— 现时、生命、存在、我与现时的结合；卜之琳 —— 圆宝盒 —— 心得、道、知、悟
等。从具象到抽象是没有问题的，问题在于阐释过程几乎完全隐去从具象到抽象的路径，
因而阐释就成为封闭的自我行为。

第二，诗人挡不住读者 —— 刘西渭的基本阐释立场。

面对卜之琳的纠错、指正，刘西渭的态度犹疑不决。刘西渭首先表达了读者的难处：
“一个读者，所有经验限于对象（一部书、一首诗）的提示，本身和作者已然不同，想
象能否帮他打进读书的经验，即使打进去，能否契合无间，正如一句伤心的俗话：‘天晓
得！’”①这句话辩白，隐含着读者对作者的追逐，读者想要领会作者全部的意思，何其
之难！

“一行美丽的诗，由它的灰尘，无限度地重生出来。”如同刘西渭借用瓦雷里的话所
表明的，诗歌文本蕴藏着无限丰富的含义。由此出发，对于《断章》一诗的不同解释，刘
西渭认为“我的解释并不妨害我首肯作者的白自。作者的白自也绝不妨害我的解释。
与其看作冲突，不如说看作有相成之美。”②此处，诗歌文本意义普遍繁复的特征，成为
读者的解释与作者的解释得以并存的基础。

在《圆宝盒》的阐释问题上，刘西渭忽对读者的依赖，但“圆宝盒”果真必须如卜
之琳所言解释为圆的宝盒吗？“你”必须解释为“情感”吗？由“挂在耳边”联想到“装饰”
就一定全错吗？这些问题都不会有也必不有整齐划一的答案。

刘西渭对作者的过分认同，或许和“态度谦虚”一类的批评外围的因素有关，虽
然对《圆宝盒》的阐释做了一番较为彻底的自我检点，他还是亮出了鲜明的立场，为
读者之自由呐喊：“如今诗人自白了，我也语完了，这首诗就没有什么‘小径通幽’
吗？我的解释如若不和诗人的解释吻合，我的经验就算白了吗？诗人的解释可以
撕掉我的或者任何其他的解释吗？不！一千个不！幸福的人是我，因为我有双重的
经验，而经验的交错，做成了我生活的深广。诗人挡不住读者。”③把读者从作者的
遮蔽中拉出来，还读者以自由，更是还阐释以自由。这才是新诗阐释的起点，一切
刚刚开始。

有意义的是，卜之琳晚年对五十年前与李健吾的争辩，颇感后悔。他放宽了对
文本意义的限制和读者阅读感受的自由，尽管依然认为《断章》意在表现“相对”
“我着意在这里形象表现相对相亲、相通相应的人际关系，本身已经可以独立，所以
未足成较长的一首诗，即取名《断章》。第一节两行，中轴（或称诗眼）是‘看风景’
第二节两行，诗眼是‘装饰’，两两对应，正合内涵。”但对于预料之外的解释，已不
觉困扰。作曲家冼星海为该诗谱曲，仍以《断章》为题，题下标注 Lente“徐缓”（带
伤感），卜之琳听不出“伤感”，但“见谱上明明注了‘带伤感’，我想人家这样‘接
第三，个体体验是读者（意义接受者）最后的法宝——阐释无“度”吗？

“当一切都不可靠的时候，自我总不至于滑出我观察的中心。”阅读中，常常要努力接近作者以及文本意欲传达的意义，但理想却往往只居于一个可近的似乎只有自我的体验和感知。西诗云，我们引申“个体体验”，其实还可以再扩大一点，概括为“个体的阐释活动”，包括阐释主体的感悟、思考、分析、推论等一系列思维活动。

在通向某一个最靠近文本意义的路，布满障碍和不确定性因素，阐释主体唯有依靠自身的思维活动。西诗一方面拨开作者和文本的制约，让阐释的自由落实到读者身上；另一方面又以某种确定的意义作为参照系，“我的用心，在怎样努力接近对方——一个陌生人——的灵魂和它的结晶，我也许误入歧途（好在现在），然而我避免隔靴搔痒。”

如果看似和卡勒一样，为过度阐释辩护，然而二者有着本质的区别。卡勒的出发点在于不存在所谓确定的意义和正确的意义，这一点从他对里法泰尔、费什等人的批评中都能看出，前文已多有论及。西诗则始终难以摆脱作者的羁绊，尽管他有过“作者挡不住读者”的宣告，但实际上还是常受制于作者和文本的约束，所以，他给出的不过是阐释无“度”的假象。

回到“诠释与过度诠释”之辩，卡勒以各种方式强调意义永远无法穷尽，艾柯则坚持阐释一定有度，二者看似针锋相对，实则互补为分。阐释是否有“度”？阐释之“度”如何界定？这些问题必须被提出来，却很难回答，此乃阐释面临的一大悖论。

从卡勒对里法泰尔的批评，到卡勒与艾柯的辩论，再到西诗与卡勒的讨论，共同呈现了符号衍义的开放性，也一并展示了设立界限的必要性。接踵而来的问题是，阐释何为？结合上面的引证和分析，笔者试图给出一种诗歌阐释的选择。

原则是，符号（文本）意义，开放且不确定；诗歌文本的反语法、反模仿、断裂、跳跃等“超规定性”特点，都决定着阐释难以得出确定的结论。唐湜在评论陈敬容的《交响集》时强调，“艺术的成熟的理想固然是雕琢似的凝定的意态，但那是为了比音乐的旋律有更无限的流荡，更大的震撼与更多的水流般的奔涌，凝固在定型的枯萎却是艺术生命的死亡”。当他读到陈敬容这样的诗句“我的歌呵，穿过万道回廊/掷出它最后的形体”时，他质疑“真正的艺术品果真有‘最后的形体’吗？”他的回答是否定的：“文学里面的好诗，潜伏在字里行间的流质永远不能被人吸干，好诗的理解与感受或二者的结晶永远不会完全，甚至连诗人自己也只能抓住物象的一环，结合着自己的生命力无意识地掷出他的意象，连他也只能朦胧或茫然地凝视，却不能轻易地说已经把握了永恒或全般“。

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① 卜之琳，冰心：“中国诗歌小史”载《卜之琳文集》中卷，合肥：安徽教育出版社，2002；209。
②③ 见西诗和卜之琳的通讯《关于你》，发表于《大公报·文艺》副刊，第182期（1936年7月19日）。
③ 唐湜，严峻的星辰们[译]》，新知文集，北京：生活·读书·新知三联书店，1990；182。
唐湜强调诗歌意义的无限，特别指出，诗人只是提供了最初的物象，而由物象到意象，再到更深层的意蕴，皆非可掌握之物。

彻底打开意义体系之后，我们再来面对具体的阐释活动，既然意义不确定，那么对诗歌的阐释，就有必要避开几种误区：寻找某种主题意义；过分依附某种现实对应；把意象从文本中割裂开来，紧抓作者的经验和文本产生的背景，肆意阐发等。

诗歌指向自身的本质特点，注定与形式论契合无间。里法泰尔的《诗歌符号学》虽不是尽善尽美，但其指出无疑的是，它改变了传统的诗歌阐释观念，从形式论入手思考诗歌，并留下大量精彩的阐释个案。“主型—模式—文本”是构成一首诗的基本框架，“核心语”是文本意义生成过程中的一个重要概念，“互文性”“不通”“超规定性”“追溯阅读法”等，也是重要的阐释理念和方法。只要有我们的背景与读者的背景关系，避免走向文本强迫读者的歧途，只要我们清楚，诗歌符号学的每一次阐释实践，获得的也只是部分文本意义，那么，里法泰尔提供的诗歌阐释理论，对于中国新诗阐释将大有裨益。

参考文献


文学符号之自我调节

苏 敏

摘 要 文学符号是存在于具体历史时空文学活动中的，由文学手法、文学风格两大基本结构层
级构成的复杂结构，其模式为：(ERC1)RC1)(ERC1)RC1)(ERC1)RC1)。其中，E 是符号能指，指自
然语言的声音；C 是符号所指，指自然语言的意义；R 表示两者的关系。ERC 即自然语言声音与意义相互
作用构成的自然语言符号。当 ERC 本身作为符号能指保持自己结构边界结构转换规律参与更高结
构层级建构时，RC1 指不可再分文学想象具象，两者相互作用构成最小文学手法 (ERC1)RC1，这是文学
符号—结构第一次结构转换过程与转换结果，体现了自然语言符号向文学表达符号的转换。当
(ERC1)RC1 本身作为符号能指，RC1 指单一文学想象具象，两者相互作用构成单一文学手法 (ERC1)
RC1，这是文学符号第二次结构转换过程与转换结果。当 (ERC1)RC1RC1 本身作为符号能指，RC1 指文
学想象空间，两者相互作用转换构成文本文学手法 (ERC1)RC1RC1RC1，这是文学符号第
三次结构转换过程与转换结果。当 (ERC1)RC1RC1RC1 本身作为符号能指，RC1 指文学想象具
象，两者相互作用构成文学符号 (ERC1)RC1RC1RC1RC1，这是文学符号第四次结构转
换过程与转换结果，是文学手法向文学风格的转换。当 (ERC1)RC1RC1RC1RC1RC1 本身作为符号
能指，RC1 指文学想象具象，两者相互作用转换构成文学符号 (ERC1)RC1RC1RC1RC1RC1，这是文学符号第
五次结构转换过程与转换结果，体现了文学风格由纯事物向意向客体的转换。

在文学符号诸结构构成因素中，ERC 与 RC1 分别是其结构连续构造活动的起点与终点，它们既属于文
学符号结构元素，同时，又属于非文学符号结构因素。文学符号通过这两个双栖于文学与非文学领域
的结构元素，与自然语言、精神文化发生关系，使文学符号在保持自己结构边界、结构转换规律，维系
文学自主、自足、自律运动时，维系与非文学的联系，成为自律与他律统一的开放式结构。

关键词 文学符号；结构层级；自我调整；文学手法；文学风格

在中西文学互照互识基础上，笔者提出，文学符号是以文本为独立单位的多层级结
构系统。文学符号的起点是最小文学手法，文学符号自主自足五个层级依次为：最小文
学手法，整一文学手法，文本文学手法，文本纯文学风格，文本文学审美风格。其中，前
三个结构层级属于文学表达方式，后两个结构层级属于作品文学风格。文学符号模
式为：
M·M·巴赫金提出，表述的文本作为文学想象活动中话语的文本，具有完成性、封闭性等特点。就文本的完成性、封闭性，巴赫金举例说：绘画中（包括肖像画）完成了的或“封闭的”人脸。这些面孔画出了一个完全的人，这人整个地就在眼前，不可能再成为他人。这些面孔已经说明了一切，它们已经死去或仿佛已经死去。艺术家把注意力集中在那些完成性的，决定性的，封闭性的特征上。……此人不能再重生、更新、变形——这是他的完成阶段（最后的和终结的阶段）。①

文学符号虽然由五个结构层级构成，但是，具体历史时空文学活动中存在的文学符号，是以巴赫金所说的这种完成性的、封闭性的文本为切分单位构成的结构个体。以文本为切分单位的文学符号，由三个结构层级构成：文本文学手法、文本纯文学风格、文本文学审美风格。小于文本单位构成的文学符号，比如最小文学手法、整体文学手法等，作为文学符号较低结构层级参与文本文学符号建构。

本文主要根据皮亚杰结构自我调节理论等讨论文学符号五个结构层级以及不同结构层级之间的关系。

1. 相关基本概念

在文学符号五个结构层级自我调节讨论中，笔者的主要理论资源是索绪尔、罗兰·巴特的符号学以及符号附加意义系统、皮亚杰的结构自我调节、贝塔兰菲的系统主导部分等研究。

1.1 符号及其附加意义系统

能指 signifiant、所指 signifié，是索绪尔语言符号学所提出的一对概念。在索绪尔看来，任何符号都包括能指（音响形象）和所指（概念），符号是能指和所指的结合。他说：“我们建议保留用符号这个词语表示整体，用所指和能指分别代替概念和音响形象。后两个术语的好处是既能表明它们彼此间的对立，又能表明它们和它们所从属的整体间的关系。”②

叶姆斯列夫将能指与所指关系用模式 ERC 表示，所有符号系统包括一个表达方面 E，和一个内容方面 C，而意义则相当于这两个方面之间的关系 R。在讨论语言与非语言时，叶姆斯列夫把自然语言称之为外延 denotative 意义系统，即任何平面都不是符号

①（俄国）M·M·巴赫金，《文本问题》[A]//文本对话和人文，白春仁、等，译，石家庄：河北教育出版社，1998：319。

②（瑞士）费尔迪南·德·索绪尔，《普通语言学教程》，高名凯，译，北京：商务印书馆，1980：102。
系统的符号系统，而把非语言的符号系统概括为内涵 connotative 意义系统。他说，内涵单位本身也提供一个对象，该对象由符号系统来处理。将内涵单位视为内容，将外延符号系统视为内容的表达，将这一内容与表达视为符号系统，即一个内涵的符号系统。叶姆斯列夫还提出了元语言或者元符号系统 metasemiotic，即内容平面本身是一个符号系统的符号系统，比如语言学。①

在叶姆斯列夫的基础上，罗兰·巴特提出相对于传统孤立符号系统而言的符号第二性系统，并根据第一性系统插入第二性系统不同方式，提出第二性系统两种不同情况：附加意义 connotative 与元语言 métalangage ②。在《符号学原理》第四章中，罗兰·巴特提出，附加意义系统(ERC)RC，即第二性系统表达层面 E，由第一性系统 ERC 构成的复合系统。罗兰·巴特指出，附加意义的能指，即附加意义载体，是由实指意义系统的符号(能指与所指的结合即 ERC)构成的。附加意义的所指，即意义的片段。附加意义即 ERC 与附加意义所指相互作用的结构过程。元语言 ER(ERC)情况与附加意义系统相反，其第二性系统所指由第一性系统符号构成。元语言是一种活动，附加意义系统是不活动的。整个符号学分析通常既调动了附加意义系统，也调动了元语言系统。③

从中西文学互照互识看，文学文本组合过程显示的内容混沌体由五个结构层级构成，换言之，文学符号附加意义复合系统不止于第二性系统。如果我们把多结构层级附加意义系统新的所指用 C°表示，那么，我们似乎可以推演出多结构层级符号附加意义复合系统模式：

(ERC)RC°

当我们以词作为文学符号第一性系统横组合关系的切分单位，以自然语言符号之音响形象作为文学符号第一性系统的能指 E，并把与音响形象相对应之观念作为文学符号第一性系统之所指 C，把文学符号第一性系统表述为自然语言话语横组合关系 ERC，那么，同样物理存在之 ERC，当其作为文学符号附加意义系统新的能指(ERC)，文学符号就可以被视为自然语言符号与文学符号附加意义系统第一个新的所指 C°相互作用。就这样，文学符号以(ERC)作为第一性系统，不断与更高结构层级附加意义系统新的所指 C°、C°、C°、C°相互作用，转换构成包括五个结构层级的附加意义复合系统，其模式为：

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1.2 结构及自身调节

索绪尔强调作为符号的语言对音响形象与观念这两者的作用，强调作为符号的语言是两者相互作用转换生成的第三者，是一个新的整体。皮亚杰肯定语言符号学提出的这种整体性。但是，在考察数学、物理学、心理学、语言学、人类学、经济学以及生物结构、社会结构等复杂结构基础上，皮亚杰补充了结构的其他两个重要特征：转换性、自身调节性。① 皮亚杰用结构的转换性、自我调节性阐释了更为复杂的非静止的结构整体性。

在《结构主义》中，皮亚杰明确提出结构是构造过程的断言。他说：不存在没有构造过程的结构。结构是有特定领域的相互作用或者说转换关系，是连续构造与再构造过程。②

皮亚杰认为结构转换性的特定领域是非静止的形式，并用双重构造作用解释结构的转换性，他说：结构就是要成为一个转换体系，而不是某个静止的形式。结构总是并且同时起构造作用与被构造作用，这种永恒的双重性，即结构转换规律赋予结构的整体性。一切已经知道的结构，从最初的数学的“群”结构，到规定亲属关系的结构，都是一些转换体系，都存在这种构造作用与被构造作用。

在结构转换或者说结构连续构造研究中，皮亚杰揭示了结构的封闭性、守恒性特点。结构转换构造的封闭性，即一个结构所固有的各种转换不会越出结构边界之外，只会产生于总是属于这个结构并保存该结构的成分中。在这个意义上，结构把自身封闭了起来。

结构封闭性，即新成分在无限地构成，而结构边界仍然具有稳定的性质。结构封闭性丝毫不意味着所研究的这个结构不能以子结构的名义加入到一个更广泛结构里去。只是这个结构总边界的变化，并未取消原有的边界，并没有归并现象，仅有联盟现象。子结构的规律并没有发生变化，而仍然保持着。所以，所发生的变化是一种丰富现象。

皮亚杰认为，斯特劳斯人类学在索绪尔语言学基础上对结构主义的贡献，是其提出了转换的“网”和“群”等结构。皮亚杰将斯特劳斯人类学转换“网”或者“群”，在数学初等数学与超穷算术、生物学等级关系等其他学科综合研究基础上进一步抽象演绎出结构连续构造理论，他说：“不存在只有形式自身的形式，也不存在只有内容自身的形式，每一个（从感知一运动性动作运算，或从运算到理论等的）成分都同时起到对于被它所统属的内容而言是形式，而对于比它高一级的形式而言又是内容的作用。”③

对于这种动态复杂结构高低层级之相对性，皮亚杰在《结构主义》结论中概括为：发

①②③（瑞士）让・皮亚杰，结构主义[M]，倪连生、王琳译，北京：商务印书馆，1987：11，101-103，23-25。
生过程与结构之间，有着必然的互相依存关系：发生过程从来就是从一个结构向另一个结构的形成过渡……构造过程本身是结构的产生者，它使种种结构处于不断的构造和再构造的过程之中。

结构的自身调节性在皮亚杰看来，是按照不同层级或过程才能实现的。因此，在结构的自我调节性讨论中，皮亚杰不仅提出了结构的守恒性、封闭性，还提出了结构复杂性逐渐增长的级次问题，即结构连续构造层级。皮亚杰认为，结构不同层级连续构造过程自我调节主要概括为两个方面：第一，调节结构内部平衡；第二，整合于新结构，即结构以子结构形式参与构造新的结构。

皮亚杰结构自身调节理论，与符号学附加意义复合系统相通，都意识到相对于自然语言符号而言更为复杂、开放、动态的符号——结构问题，不过皮亚杰结构自身调节理论以结构的封闭性、守恒性与结构层级等，揭示了符号学嵌套关系中第一性系统与附加意义系统之间的相互依存关系，为动态开放结构研究提供了理论资源。如果说语言符号学启发者提出文学符号五种附加意义系统之间的嵌套关系，那么，皮亚杰结构主义则帮助者将文学符号嵌套关系进一步阐释为保持结构自我调节作用的五个结构层级连续构造与被构造过程。

1.3 系统主导部分

如果说皮亚杰结构自身调节理论补充了符号嵌套关系不同层级之间开放动态关系研究，那么，皮亚杰的经济特征系数概念，则涉及到同一结构层级中不同元素之间关系问题。

在讨论结构与功能问题时，皮亚杰涉及到计量经济学“系数”概念。皮亚杰指出，在计量经济学中，这些特征用系数表示，而且这些系数的整体提供了双重信息：一方面，这个系数的整体提供了这个经济的蓝图；另一方面，它确定了对某些变化作出反应的途径。经济结构包含着一个功能作用，没有比这更好的说法了，因为经济结构是能够作出反应的，所以经济结构是与功能不能分开的。

皮亚杰所说的经济结构特征“系数”不仅涉及到结构“功能”，其实，还涉及到同一结构层级结构元素并非同质等价问题。只是对于同一结构层级不同结构元素之间关系问题，自觉意识并明确阐释的是现代生物学家贝塔兰菲。

与皮亚杰一样，在结构整体研究中，贝塔兰非亦反对只承认独立的、累加的元素之和，只承认等价元素的相互作用，把结构整体等同于部分之和的机械论主张。不过，贝塔兰非更明确指出同一结构层级组成成分的性质与功能并非同质等价，系数 P 在系统整体构成中起到确定整体某些性质发展方向的重要作用。

在生物逐渐个体化、集中化过程的研究中，贝塔兰非反对较老的遗传学那种把遗传物质看成确定各个特征或器官的微粒单位的总和的倾向，提出高分子的总和不能产生生物的有机组织的全体，强调一方面整个染色体组产生整个生物，另一方面，某些基因\(^{(1)}\)、\(^{(2)}\)、\(^{(3)}\)。
主要确定某些性质的发展方向，即作为“主导部分”起作用。在神经系统功能的研究中，
贝塔兰菲同样强调，尽管任何功能最终都是来自所有部分的相互作用，但中枢神经系统的
某些部分对它有决定性的影响，可以叫做功能的“中心”。在生物体；化与神经系统
功能研究基础上，贝塔兰菲提出，可以把元素 P 叫作主导部分，或者说系统以 P 为中心。
如果一些或一切方程的 P 的系数都较大，而 P 本身在方程中的系数都较小，则 P
的小变化即能导致整个系统相当大的变化，于是 P 可以称作触发器。P 的小变动会在
整个系统中“放大”。

在皮亚吉经济学特征“系数”与贝塔兰菲现代生物学系统“主导部分”的研究基础
上，笔者提出“结构要素”概念。但凡涉及结构的整体研究，大多使用结构要素概念，却
很少谈到明析界定。鉴于结构要素概念使用的广泛性，读者沿用该术语，但主要用贝塔
兰菲关于系统“主导部分”概念加以阐释。

结构要素，是相对于同一结构层级其他结构元素而言的概念。在同一结构层级自
我调节作用中，诸结构元素并非同质等价，其中某些结构元素之性质与功能不在于自
身，而要放大影响该结构层级其他结构元素。其他结构元素围绕该结构元素相互作用。
这种规定同一结构层级整体构造过程基本方向、基本性质与功能的结构元素，即结构
要素。

在文学符号五个结构层级中，能指与所指并非同质等价，其中，符号所指是其结构
要素，规定每个结构层级基本性质与功能。贝塔兰菲关于系统主导部分研究，帮助被
者将文学符号模式更精确表述为：

\[(\text{ERC})_R \in C\]

下划线所标出的结构元素，即结构要素。

### 2. 文学符号第一个结构层级

如前所述，(ERC)是文学符号附加意义系统之载体，文学符号是以自然语言 ERC
为第一系统的，包含五个结构层级的附加意义复合系统。最小文学手法(ERC)RC[1]，是
这个附加意义系统的第一个结构层级。在此，我们首先讨论(ERC)。

#### 2.1 文学载体(ERC)

ERC 是自然语言符号与文学符号都具有的结构转换。就自然语言符号而言，

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2. 叶姆斯列夫在讨论语言与非语言时，使用了语言学流行的观念——自然语言，指语言学理论研究的对象。见(丹麦)叶姆斯列夫. 叶姆斯列夫语符学文集. 217.
ERC 既具有索绪尔所说的语言符号的物理/心理性质，也具有皮尔斯所说的归约性 index 符号的约定俗成性质。

索绪尔在把所指称为概念时，明确指出所指的心理性质：所指不是“一个事物”，而是这个“事物”心理复现。如“牛”这个词的所指，不是一头牛，而是它的心理复现。

罗兰•巴特强调所指是符号的两个关系物之一，即非中介的关系物。在他看来，符号所指既不是意识行为层面的“心理复现”，也不是物质存在层面的“真实物”，而是“可言状的”，是在获得意义过程中使用某一符号的人所指的“某一事物”，它是符号的两个关系物之一，其与能指的唯一不同点在于能指是中介物。①

在所指的性质问题上，虽然索绪尔、罗兰•巴特似乎各自强调的侧重点不同，但是，下述判断似乎是两人共识：符号能指的实体永远是物质的，如声音、实物、图像等。符号所指是非物质的；或者是心理的，或者是获得意义过程中使用者的意义。

在符号分类研究中，皮尔斯将符号分为图像符号 icons、标志符号 indexes、象征符号 symbols 三类。② 其中，标志符号和象征符号属于规约性 index 符号，比如，语言符号、烽火台、信号灯等，而图像符号则属于造型性 icon 符号，比如照片、圣像、地图等。罗兰•巴特借用瓦龙的研究将符号类型概括为两组：符号与标志组、图像和象征组。前者属于没有心理复现的关系物，后者存在心理复现，能指与所指关系属于有理据的和固定的。③

索绪尔所说的语言符号能指与所指之间的任意性，或者罗兰•巴特符号学所说的理据限制的任意性①，以及皮尔斯、罗兰•巴特关于符号分类研究，结论是一致的。

ERC 与(ERC) 物理存在相同，但是，符号性质与功能不同。前者是单纯交际交流的自然语言符号，后者是文学的物质载体。在文学作品中，ERC 保持自己的结构边界及其物理/心理特性，归约性、理据限制之任意性，以子结构(ERC) 身份继续参与更高结构层级符号一结构建构。在此意义上笔者提出，在文学作品中的语言符号具有双核身份：作为 ERC，属于语言学领域，作为 (ERC)，属于文学领域。

在讨论建立演绎性结构理论体系时，让•皮亚杰特别强调研究结构连续构造的起点。皮亚杰明确提出：结构连续构造的起点是相对简单、稳定的结构。这种起点未必是


② 皮尔斯关于符号分类的文献比较杂多，作者所引用的关于皮尔斯造型性 icon 与规约性 index 符号的文献是：A sign is either an icon, an index, or a symbol. An icon is a sign which would possess the character which renders it significant, even though its object had no existence such a lead-pencil streak as representing a geometrical line. An index is a sign which would at once lose the character which makes it a sign if its object were removed, but would not lose the character if there were an interpretant. Such, for instance, is a piece of mould with a bullet-hole in it as a sign of a shot; for without the shot there would have been no hole, but there is a hole there, whether anybody has the sense to attribute it to a shot or not. Peirce, Charles Sanders. “Logic as Semiotic: The Theory of Signs.” Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce. Ed. Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1931;9-10.

最原始的材料，也不具备以后结构构造过程中抽象出来的东西，但它与结构理论体系中无法再上溯分析的开端，是最初的结构因素相互同化作用的过程。①

（ERC）是否是文学符号连续构造过程的起点呢？笔者以为，孤立静止自我封闭的ERC不是文学符号连续构造过程的起点，以ERC作为第一性系统的附加意义系统（ERC）RC1，才是文学符号结构研究中无法再上溯分析的开端。ERC只有在与文学符号新的所指C1相互作用成为（ERC）时才成为文学符号。与附加意义系统新的所指相互作用，或者说附加意义复合系统第一性系统身份，是自然语言符号转换构成文学符号的绝对前提。

2.2 最小文学手法（ERC）RC1

在文学符号第一个结构层级（ERC）RC1中，新的所指C1究竟是什么呢？为什么ERC与之相互作用就使归约性符号转换构成文学符号呢？文学符号第一个结构层级（ERC）RC1整体性质与功能又是什么呢？

在文学符号第二性附义系统中，新的所指C1是不可再分文学想象具象。要指出的是，不可再分文学想象具象不仅是（ERC）RC1的新所指，而且是其切分单位。②当我们将以不可再分文学想象具象为单位切分ERC横组合片段时，ERC本身作为符号第二性系统新的能指（ERC），与之相应新的所指C1即不可再分文学想象具象，两者相互作用是文学符号第一次结构转换过程与转换结果（ERC）RC1，我们称之为最小文学手法。从文学符号连续构造过程看，（ERC）RC1是ERC的更高结构层级，是文学符号一结构的起点，具有文学手法虚构一造型性质与功能。③

最小文学手法横组合构成揭示了自然语言符号与文学符号之间的关系；（ERC）是（ERC）RC1的构成元素之一，（ERC）RC1包含ERC，（ERC）保持自己的结构边界、结构转换规律参与更大单位、更高结构层级（ERC）RC1建构。

比如，唐朝诗人王维五绝《辛夷坞》中的诗句：

末末/芙蓉花，/C1-a
山中/发红萼。/C1-b

当我们以汉字为单位，上面话语连续体可以切分为十个汉字，我们用E-1表示。要指出的是，在此ERC的能指E-1，可以用十个英文单词置换，我们用E-2表示：

On the tips of trees /“lotus flowers” /C1-a

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①（瑞士）让·皮亚杰.结构主义[M].倪连生，王琳，译.北京：商务印书馆，1987:22-24,44.
③关于文学符号的第二次切分，自然语言符号与文学符号之间的关系，详见苏敏.符号一结构与文学性——从文学手法两大层级间阐释文学性[A]//文艺理论前沿：第8辑.北京：北京大学出版社，2011.
mountains /produce red calices /C^1-b

E-1, E-2 还可以以词组为单位再次切分为四个部分，并从 E-1 或者 E-2 与各自语系约定俗成之 C-1 或者 C-2 的相互作用中完成不同语系四个 ERC 建构。第一，地点状语，“木末”。第二，中心词，“芙蓉花”；“lotus flowers”；第三，地点状语，“山中”；“mountains”；第四，动宾词组；“发红萼”；“produce red calices”。

不得不指出的是，文学符号建构不止于这种自我封闭的 ERC。在《辛夷坞》中，E-1 或 E-2 保持 ERC 汉字或者英文单词的切分单位，以及两个语系各自物理—音响形象与心理—观念约定俗成之相互规约，还以不可分文学想象象象再次切分，扩展为更大范围之横组合片段，并与相应的两个不可分文学想象象象 C^1-a（关于开在树梢上的芙蓉花的文学想象象象）, C^1-b（关于在山中绽放红色花蕾的文学想象象象）相互作用转换构成两个新的意指作用——两个景物描写手法：第一个景物描写手法（ERC）RC^1-a 包容两个词组、五个汉字或者七个英文单词；第二个景物描写手法（ERC）RC^1-b 包容两个词组，以及五个汉字或者四个英文单词。就这样，十个汉字或者十一个英文单词作为 ERC 保持自己的切分单位、结构边界、结构转换规律参与景物描写手法（ERC）RC^1 建构，成为景物描写之物质载体（ERC）。

在《普通语言学教程》中，索绪尔在符号意指作用中剥离出“意义”和“价值”这一对概念。索绪尔指出，价值从概念方面看，是意义的一个要素。意义依存于价值，又跟它不同。意义只是听觉的对立面，一切都在听觉形象和概念之间，在词的界线内发生的。问题的奇特在于，一方面，概念在符号内似乎是听觉的对立面，另一方面，这符号本身，即它的两个要素间的关系，又是语言的其他符号的对立面。语言是一个系统，它的各项要素都有连续关系，其中每项要素的价值都只是因为有其他各项要素同时存在。这样规定的价值，怎么会跟意义，即听觉形象的对立面发生混同呢？拿剪开的纸张相比，A, B, C, D 等块间的关系怎么会跟同一块纸张的正面和反面的关系 A/A’, B/B’, C/C’……没有区别？

罗兰·巴特从符号横组合构成与综合聚合相邻关系概括符号的意义与价值：符号的意义，可以设想为一个言语过程，是联结能指和所指的行为，该行为的产物便是符号。符号的价值是从潜在的综合聚合方面、联想场方面考虑的。

最小文学手法综合聚合相邻关系之“价值”，主要包括（ERC）RC^1 三大类型相互对立关系赋予每一个类型的潜在相对内涵：第一，叙事；第二，描写；第三，抒情。

上述十个汉字或者十一个英文单词，如果有文学修养的读者，其接收过程就会唤起他关于叙事、描写、抒情的联想，并在叙事、描写、抒情综合聚合关系中确定描写手法的“价值”——非记叙，非抒情。同理，在景物描写、人物描写等不同描写手法综合聚合关系中确

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定景物描写的“价值”——非人物描写。

王维在写这两联诗句时是自由的，他根本不知道今天文艺学关于叙事、描写、抒情三大类型或者景物描写、人物描写不同类型划分，但是，王维的自由写作其实是在人类关于最小文学手法诸类型集体无意识中的自由选择。在中西文学中，无论作家、诗人曾经怎样自由创造，从最小手法角度看，其文学自由大都可看作在最小手法纵聚合系统三大基本类型以及子类型中的自由选择。不同语言之文学翻译，不仅在于不同语系语言符号所指层面存在相通，更在于最小文学手法存在人类共享集体记忆。

在最小文学手法自我调节作用中，并非所有结构元素都是同质等价的，不可再分文学想象具象 C^i 是其结构要素，其虚构—造型性不限于自身，而要放大影响整个文学符号附加意义系统，规定符号—结构发展的基本性质与方向。

十个汉字或十一个英文单词作为（ERC），与关于开在树梢上的芙蓉花在山中绽放红色花瓣的文学想象具象 C^i之间的构成关系，描写手法与叙述、描写、抒情三大类型以及描写手法诸类型之间的相邻关系，共同构成上述十个汉字或十一个英文单词作为景物描写手法之文学性。其中，关于开在树梢上的芙蓉花在山中绽放红色花瓣的文学想象具象，是景物描写手法之结构要素，规定以这十个汉字或十一个英文单词为载体的文学符号虚构—造型性与功能，以及景物描写的性质与功能，而每个汉字或英文单词，除了自己语系约定俗成之音响形象 E 之观念 C^i 之心理—物理性质以及约定俗成归约性之外，同时，还具有 C^i 赋予的虚构—造型性“意义”，以及景物描写的“价值”。

3. 文学手法：文学符号较低层级

在文学符号连续构造过程中，文学符号由三个结构层级构成，最小文学符号（ERC）保持自己的结构边界、结构转换规律，参与更大单位、更高结构层级的文学手法构建，即：整—文学手法（（ERC）R^c_1）R^c_2、本文文学手法（（ERC）R^c_1）R^c_2）R^c_1。

3.1 文学手法三大层级

整—文学手法（（ERC）R^c_1）R^c_2，是文学符号第二个结构层级或者说第三性附加意义系统，其能指是以更大单位——整—文学想象具象切分的（ERC）R^c_1 横组合集合，其新的所指 C^i 是整—文学想象具象，最小文学手法与整—文学想象具象相互作用转换构成整—文学手法。

限定语“整—”在这里有两个基本规定：第一，指这里的文学想象具象大于不可再分文学想象具象，它是不可再分文学想象具象横组合关系之集合。第二，指这里的文学想象具象小于本文文学想象具象，是非完成性、非封闭性文学想象具象。

“整—”话语借鉴了亚里士多德《诗学》讨论情节时提出的“单一而完整的行动”。在讨论古希腊悲剧时，亚里士多德指出：整一性的情节，是一个人的必然、可然联系的事件
系列，这种单一而完整的行为，其中事件结合的严密程度，以至若是绝对的删减其中的任何部分就会使整体松裂和脱节。

整一事件、整一意象，是一个文学手法聚合类型。“事件”亦出自亚里士多德《诗学》。从上面所引《诗学》可见，亚里士多德在讨论情节时提出事件构成情节。“意象”出自华兹华斯《抒情歌谣集》序。指抒情诗中诗人想象力虚构创造的表达情感、热情、思想、庄严意识等的典型符号，具体如人的动作、或者老人、石头、海兽、白云等。②中国古代诗学话语中“比兴”之物象③，不着一字尽得风流之象③，与华兹华斯所说的情象，基本内涵相通，不过有中国之别裁，别趣而已。

文本文学手法，(()ERC_)RC)RC)，是文学符号第三结构层级，或者说是第四性附加意义系统，其能指是以更大单位——文本文学想象情具象为切分单位的(()ERC_)RC)横组合集合，其新的所指C)是文本文学想象情象，整一文学手法与文本文学想象情象相互作用，以及文本情节、文本情象聚合两大类型，构成文本文学手法的意义与价值。

限定语“文本”规定了文本文学手法的封闭性、完成性，不仅使该结构层级成为文学表达方式的最高结构层级，同时，也规定了文学符号独立个体的结构边界。

文本文学手法，是文学手法较复杂的结构层级。在文本文学手法结构层级中，除了文本情象/文本情象两大聚合类型之外，还存在第二层级五大聚合类型，即题材、体裁、体裁体制、结构布局、形象塑造、语体风格。

在文学符号连续构造过程中，第二、第三结构层级附加意义系统新所指C)、C)，与第一结构层级附加意义系统新所指C)的性质与功能相似，不仅是所属结构层级的切分单位，而且也是所属结构层级的结构要素，其虚拟一造型基本性质与功能，以及组合类型特殊性质，都不限于C)、C)、C)，身而而要放大影响各自所属结构层级整体。文学手法三个结构层级的差异，主要是切分单位大小不同。也就是说，当文学手法第
—性系统(ERC)摆脱自我封闭状态与文学附加意义系统新的所指文学想象具象相互作用时,就出现具有虚构—造型基本性质与功能的大大小小文学手法构造或者再构造过程。

3.2 《三王墓》文学手法

中国魏晋志怪小说千宝的《神记・三王墓》ERC为543个汉字，当543个汉字与文学想象具象相互作用时，就出现不同结构层级文学手法：叙事、描绘等16个最小文学手法ERC, C, 四个整—文学手法([ERC] RC) RC。四个单一完整事件以时间先后以及因果关系构成《三王墓》文本情节：干将莫邪为楚王做成剑后被楚王杀死。其子长大后，按照父亲遗言取出雄剑，并为了替父复仇把自己的头颅献给山中客。山中客践行自己诺言杀死楚王并自刎。

在文本情节中，复仇题材：短篇小说体裁—一体制；莫邪之子手持剑与剑交与山中客，其头在锅中“喷吐大怒”，最后莫邪之子，楚王，山中客三个头在锅中混而不分等虚幻怪异事件；超越自然逻辑时空的结构布局；两个人物以虚幻故事刻画的超越生死之豪侠性格——莫邪之子舍生忘死为父复仇，山中客自持分弱出言必信，以及简洁质朴语言风格，是《三王墓》文本文学手法([ERC] RC) RC的“价值”。

《三王墓》四个单一完整事件依次为：

A. 干将莫邪为楚王做成雌雄剑后给儿子留下遗言及雄剑，献给楚王雌剑，并被楚王杀死(文本情节开端)。包括五个最小文学手法：1. 叙事(情节开端)；2. 语言描绘；3. 叙事；4. 语言描绘；5. 叙事(交代事件结局)。

B. 儿子长大后，母亲告诉儿子父亲遗言。儿子按照父亲遗言取出雄剑，日夜只想着为父复仇(文本情节发展)。包括三个最小文学手法：1. 对话描绘(事件开端)；2. 叙事；3. 叙事(交代事件结局)。

C. 楚王梦见莫邪儿子要复仇，出千金购买莫邪儿子人头。莫邪儿子听说楚王令之于大山悲歌。某山中客听见莫邪儿子悲歌，叫莫邪儿子把自己的头剑给开，他可以替莫邪儿子复仇。莫邪儿子自刎，将头与剑交给山中客，山中客答应代他复仇(文本情节进一步发展)。包括两个最小文学手法：1. 叙事；2. 对话描绘。

D. 山中客为着莫邪儿子的头见楚王，将楚王把莫邪儿子的头放在锅里煮。但头三天三夜煮不烂。山中客叫楚王自己亲自去锅边看，借机用剑砍下楚王头，并用剑也砍掉自己的头，两颗头均掉入锅里。三个头在锅里煮烂了，分不出彼此。人们只有分其汤肉葬之，并称之为“三王墓”(文本情节高潮以及结局)。包括六个最小文学手法：1. 叙事(事件开端)；2. 语言描绘；3. 叙事；4. 语言描绘；5. 动作描绘(情节高潮)；6. 叙事(交代情节结局)。

《神记・三王墓》

楚干将莫邪为楚王作剑，三年乃成。王怒，欲杀之。剑有雌雄。/1 其妻重身
當產，夫語妻曰：“吾為王作劍，三年乃成。王怒，往必殺我。汝若生子是男，大，告之曰：‘出戶望南山，松生石上，劍在其背。’”/2 於是即將是劍，往見楚王。/3 王大怒，使葙之曰，“劍有二，一以制獠，一以制柔不來’。/4 王怒，即殺之。/5

葉邪子名，亦後世，乃問其母曰：“吾父所在?’母曰：“汝父為楚王作劍，三年乃成。王怒，殺之。去時謂我：‘爾汝子我出戶望南山，松生石上，劍在其背。’”/1 於是子出戶南望，不見有山，但睹堂前松拄，石低之上，即以斧破其背，得劍。/2 日夜思欲報楚王。/3

王夢見一兒，眉間廣尺，言欲報楚。王即贈之千金。兒聞之，亡去。入山行歌。/1 客有逢者，謂：“子年少，何惡之甚惡耶?”曰：“吾年將莫邪子也，楚王殺吾父，吾欲報之。”客曰：“聞王贈子千金。將子與劍來，為子報之。”兒曰：“幸甚!”即时孤，兩手捧頭及劍奉之，立誓。客曰：“不負子也。”於是尾乃仆。/2 客持頭往見楚王，王大喜。/1 客曰：“此乃勇士也，當於湯鍊服之。”王如其言。/2 煮頭三日三夕，不沸。頭碎於湯中，著目大怒。/3 客曰：“此兒頭不熟，願王自往臨視之，是必熟也。”/4 王即臨之。客以劍擬王，王頭隨墜湯中，客亦自擬已頭，頭頭墜湯中。/5 三首俱熟，不可識別。乃分其湯肉葬之，故通名三王墓。今在汝南北宜春縣界。/6

### 4. 文学风格：文学符号最高层级

文学符号构建领域并非仅仅限于文学手法，当文学符号以文本文学手法 (((ERC) RC^n_1) RC^n_2) RC^n_3 本身作为第一性系统时，还在生成新的附加意义系统。在文学符号连续构造中，文学风格是文学手法的更高结构层级。

本文文学风格与文本文学手法切分单位相同，且是可以完成性、封闭性文本文学想象具象为单位切分的文学符号横组合集成，但文学风格与文学手法性质功能不同，文学风格是具有第二空间性质之文本想象空间，具有价值判断之意向客体。文学风格由两个结构层级构成：文本纯文学风格 (((ERC) RC^n_1) RC^n_2) RC^n_3) RC^n_i，文本文学审美风格 (((((ERC) RC^n_1) RC^n_2) RC^n_3) RC^n_i) RC^n。

#### 4.1 文学风格两大层级

文本纯文学风格 (((ERC) RC^n_1) RC^n_2) RC^n_3) RC^n_i，是文学符号第四个结构层级或者第五性附加意义系统，(((ERC) RC^n_1) RC^n_2) RC^n_3 作为文本纯文学风格第一性系统，在附加意义系统中成为新的能指，与此相应新的所指 C’是文本文学想象空间，文本文学手法与文本文学想象空间相互作用转换构造过程，文本想象空间经验/超验两大纵聚合类型，即文本纯文学风格的意义与价值。文本文学想象空间 C’是文本纯文学风格结构要
素，赋予文本纯文学风格第三空间基本性质与功能，将文学符号连续建构范围从文学表达方式领域扩展到文学想象空间。文本结构布局与形象塑造关系是文本文学想象空间结构要素，确定文本纯文学风格经验/经验两大类型。①

文本纯文学风格限定语“纯”，借用胡塞尔的概念“纯事物”。胡塞尔所说的“纯事物”，是相对于意向客体而言的一个术语，指不包含主体评价、价值判断的客体。②

在此的“第三空间”，借用索亚的概念，是相对于传统“第一空间”和“第二空间”而言的，是从整体角度对传统空间概念之综合。在索亚看来，传统的“第一空间”，其认识对象主要是感知的、物质的空间，可以采用观察、测量、实验等经验手段直接把握，侧重于空间的客观性与物质性，传统的“第二空间”，主要是概念化的空间、构想的空间，是精神对抗物质，主体对抗客体，是科学家、规划家、城市学家以及艺术家、各种专家在第一空间基础上产生的构想空间，包括一切书写和言说的空间。第三空间，是居住者和使用者的空间，用索亚的话说，“它源于对第一空间、第二空间二元论的肯定性解构和启发性重构，是我所说的他化——第三化的又一个例子”。索亚强调第三空间的开放姿态，强调在第三空间里一切都将在一起；主体性的与客体性的，抽象与具体的，真实与想象、可知与不可知、重复与差异、精神与肉体、意识与无意识、学科与跨学科……③

文本文学审美风格((((( ERC ) R C' ) R C ) R C' ) R C ) R C' 是文学符号第五个结构层级或者说是第六性附加意义系统，亦是文本文学符号个体连续构造成过程之最高结构层级，文本纯文学风格((( ERC ) R C' ) R C ) R C' 是其能指，与此相应新的所指 C' 是文本审美理想，文本纯文学风格与文本审美理想相互作用转换构造过程整体、文本主题与文本艺术意志两大结构聚合型，即文本文学审美风格之意义与价值。文本审美理想 C' 是文本文学审美风格结构要素，赋予文本文学审美风格意向客体之基本性质与功能。文本艺术意志是文本审美理想结构要素，使文本主题保持文学虚构—造型，以及文学想象空间性质与功能参与同一历史时空精神文化建构。

这里的“审美理想”，可借用康德的术语以及康德关于审美观念—审美理想的基本界定，某观念与表象的统一。在《判断力批判》中，康德提出“审美观念” — “审美理

① 关于文本纯文学风格结构要素，详见：苏敏。从欧洲文学谈文学风格结构[J]，西南民族学院学报，1994(2).

② 为了论证和在概念中把握世界现象的“意义”，胡塞尔提出“纯事物”以及“纯粹直观态度”概念，以区别于“意向客体”以及“自然”态度。在胡塞尔看来，意向客体，是与“纯事物”相对而言的概念，它仅像“纯事物”一样，具有纯物理的存在，有事物的表象，而且，还包含着主体对此表象此事物的评价、价值判断。[德]埃德蒙·胡塞尔，纯粹现象学通论，[C]，舒曼、编，李幼蒸、译，北京：商务印书馆，1995：227。

想”。从创作角度的审美观念Ideé，从欣赏角度康德称为审美理想Ideal。① 笔者所说的“审美理想”是不区分传播者编码与感受者释码的主体传播意愿，而且有特别规定：首先，文本限定之“审美理想”，是文学符号第五个结构层级之所指，不是外在于文本文学手法—文本文学想象具象—文本文学想象空间的审美理想。其次，文本限定之“审美理想”，其与表象统一之某种观念，不仅仅限于文化精神，还包括艺术意志，是文本主题—伦理价值判断与文本艺术意志—审美价值判断相互作用整体。最后，文本限定之“审美理想”存在于具体历史时空文本文学手法—文本文学想象具象—文本文学想象空间，以及诗学文献，它不是泛泛而论的概念，不是永恒不变之绝对存在，也不是人类共享之普遍存在。

这里的“主题”，借用了狄尔泰诗之主题②。文本主题，指封闭的、完成了的既包容于作品艺术图画中，又显现于人类多种生命体验中的主题。与康德想象力表象所包含的不确定的理性概念相近，是文本文体—文本文艺表现—文本文学想象空间所凝固的某种似乎不确定的文化精神。它是保持文学结构边缘、结构转换规律的人类文化精神，与同一具体历史时空文化精神同构。形而下生命体验与形而上生命体验，是其纵聚合类型。

笔者所说的“艺术意志”，借用了里格尔的概念。③ 文本艺术意志，指封闭的、完成了的某种推动和形成特定历史时空文本文学创作—接受的审美精神或冲力，它既是意志，也是传统的。特定历史时空文本文学文质中的文本文学意志，与特定历史时空文本文学风格经验/超验类型一致。

在文学风格两大结构层级中，附加意义系统新的所指，相对于文学手法三大层级而言，虽然它们不兼作文本文学符号横组合切分单位，但它们仍然是所属结构层级结构要素。正是因为有附加意义系统新的所指参与更高结构层级文本文学符号建构，文本文体才从文本文体方式扩展到文本文学想象空间—主体与客体、确定性与非确定性并存之第三空间领域，并从纯物质领域扩展到向意客体领域。

在文学风格三个结构层级中，文本文体的纵聚合类型联想空间属于人类共享集体记忆，而文本文体纵聚合关系联想空间却只属于各自所属文明、文化或者民族、地区的集体记忆。不同文明、文化、民族、地区，经验/超验文本文学想象空间的诗学话语不同，文本文学意志—审美价值判断不同。比如，中西诗学核心概念不同：“言志”与“模仿”。


③ （奥地利）阿洛瓦·里格尔.风格问题[M].刘增联，等，译.长沙：湖南科学技术出版社，2000.
国言志诗主要表达诗人内在心志瘾意；西方模仿文学主要模仿主人公的行动以及性格。①在中国，《尚书·钩览》第一次提出“诗言志”的命题。②秦汉之际《诗·大序》提到，“诗者、志之所之也，在心为志，发言为诗。情动于中而形于言，言之不足故嗟叹之，嗟叹之不足故永歌之，永歌之不足，不知手之舞之，足之蹈之也。”③清人王士祯指出：“诗以言志，言之者，莫不各具其人。”④在欧洲，赫拉克利特第一次提出了艺术模仿自然的观点。⑤雅典时期亚里士多德《诗学》系统地讨论了模仿理论，指出诗是对人的行动的模仿。⑥

中国言志诗与西方模仿文学四种文学风格类型，不仅有各自四种诗学话语，而且，有四种文本文学手法——文本文学想象具体——文本文学想象空间，以及相应之四种文本艺术意象——文本审美价值判断⑦，详见下表。

### 西方模仿文学审美风格四大类型

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>诗学话语</th>
<th>文本手法——文本图画——文本想象空间</th>
<th>文本艺术意象——文本审美价值判断</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>不自由仿写</td>
<td>挝仿或实或虚——有限人生艺术图画</td>
<td>追求单一情感体验的悲剧效果，喜剧效果</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>自由仿写</td>
<td>挝仿里尔克和复杂的人生艺术图画</td>
<td>追求悲剧和嬉柳情感体验的真实人生效果</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>具象表现</td>
<td>以完整客观具象表现内在的自然艺术图画</td>
<td>追求新奇效果</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>非具象表现</td>
<td>以非完整客观具象表现内在的自然艺术图画</td>
<td>追求不和谐效果</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 中国言志诗审美风格四大类型

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>诗学话语</th>
<th>文本手法——文本图画——文本想象空间</th>
<th>文本艺术意象——文本审美价值判断</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>雅丽</td>
<td>非理性服务的经验世界</td>
<td>情深辞巧</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>奇丽</td>
<td>充满奇之词、谲怪之谈的非经验世界</td>
<td>奇丽不减真柔；适于不事其人</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>比兴</td>
<td>心与物并置的艺术图画</td>
<td>托物言志</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>境象</td>
<td>心与物交融的艺术图画</td>
<td>言外之言，象外之象</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


②(清)孙星衍，尚书今古文注疏，上卷[M]，北京：中华书局，1986，69-70。孔安国，(汉)孔颖达疏《尚书正义》卷三，《十三经注疏》，北京：中华书局1980年影印世界书局阮元校刻本，上册，第131页。

③(汉)孔安国，尚书今古文注疏，上卷[M]，孔颖达疏《尚书正义》卷三，《十三经注疏》，北京：中华书局1980年影印世界书局阮元校刻本，上册，1980，261。

④(清)王士祯，酒尾文。《清》王士祯，带经堂诗话，卷三，草案[M]，张宗楠，纂集，夏阁，点校，北京：人民文学出版社，1963，74。

⑤(古希腊)罗马哲学[M]，北京：商务印书馆，1961，19。

⑥(古希腊)亚里士多德，《诗学[A]，罗念生，译//亚里士多德，译者：诗学·诗歌，北京：人民文学出版社，1962。

⑦关于中国言志诗与西方文学四种风格类型，详见：苏教，符号学与文学性：从文学风格两大类导释文学科学理性[M]//王宁，文艺理论前沿；第九辑，北京：北京出版社，2012。
4.2 《辛夷坞》文学风格

如前所述，最小文学手法是文学符号的起点。文学手法是文学风格的较低结构层级，因此，关于王维《辋川绝句·辛夷坞》文学风格体悟从文学手法考察开始。

**王维《辛夷坞》**

未开芙蓉花，
山中发红萼。/ A
涧户寂无人，
纷纷开且落。/ B

**Magnolia Bank**

By Wang Wei

On the tips of trees “lotus flowers”
mountains produce red calices. / A
The mouth of the valley is silent without men.
In all directions they open, then fall. / B
（Pauline Yu——余宝琳）

从文学手法看，五言绝句《辛夷坞》文学符号载体为二十个汉字，最小文学手法为四个景物描写手法，整—文学手法为两个整—文学意象 A、B。整—文学意象 A、B 各自包容两个景物描写手法，同时，它们又构成《辛夷坞》文本文学想象意象，即山涧貌似芙蓉花的辛夷花在枝头吐露红色花蕾，在没有任何人的关注下纷纷盛开又纷纷下落。

对于有文学素养的读者来说，《辛夷坞》会唤起他关于文本文学手法的潜在回忆，在文本情节/文本意象并合性关系中确定其文学手法相对“价值”——非文本情节，并在题材、体裁—体制、结构布局、形象塑造、语言风格等并合性关系中进一步确定其文学手法相对“价值”——山水花鸟题材；五言绝句；情景交融结构布局与不着一字尽得风流之境象；白描手法与颜色字构成的清丽语言风格等。

同样语浅情深之王维五绝《相思》毕竟还有“相思”双关语，《辛夷坞》四联二十个汉字没有一个字言说诗人内在心境，均是“语中无语”之“活句”①。更重要的是，《辛夷坞》文本意象中，诗人空无寂然之佛心与宇宙本体同—之无执、无挂碍悟境与辛夷花实相开

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① 王士祯《居易录》引《林间录》载湖山语云:“语中有语，名为绝句，语中无语，名为活句。”（清）王士祯. 带经堂诗话. 卷三文论七/（清）王士祯. 带经堂诗话. 张宗楠. 校. 夏衍. 点校. 北京：人民文学出版社. 1983：82.
开落论化境合一之仁兴①，真可谓“禅家以为悟境，诗家以为化境，禅诗一致，等无差别”。② 在此意义上，《圣济经》文本意象绝不仅仅是天生自然辛夷花物理形态之形尽相（比如“红豆生南国，春来发几枝”），也不是世俗生活喜怒哀乐情感之言说（比如“劝君多采撷，此物最相思”），而是诗人关于“色即是空，空即是色”“虚其心，实其形”③情景交融之妙造自然。唐人殷藻诗王维诗《出世调雅。意新理惬……一句一字，皆出常境”。④《圣济经》“出常境”之处，明人胡应麟体悟为“摩诘诗言绝，究幽极玄……俱所谓也。”胡应麟评《圣济经》“五言绝之标者”。“读之身世两忘，万念皆寂”。⑤ 清代王士祯评王维《辋川绝句》：“文字入禅……妙谛微言，与世尊拈花，迦叶微笑，等无差别”。⑥ 这种诗即是禅，禅即是诗之神韵，保持诗歌文本的结构边界；结构转换规律，参与中国佛道文化精神建构。

有唐诗的基本知识结构的接受者，可能联想到同样“优游不迫”之《春晓》。对比孟浩然“春眠不觉晓，处处闻啼鸟”整一意象以及“夜来风雨声，花落知多少”的情感情言，虽然两个花开花落文本意象都可以感受到盛唐诗人“透彻之悟”“羚羊挂角，无迹可求”“言有尽而意无穷”之别趣⑦，但是，《圣济经》内外寂然之禅境，还让人感受到诗人“自是君身有仙骨”之心性“别才”，一言契道之禅境“别趣”，其无功可言，无法可言，浑然天成，色相俱全之悟境化境。⑧诚如清人洪亮吉《北江诗话》所云“当于禅明中求之耳”。⑨ 难怪

① 仁兴，中国诗学语论，王士祯《渔洋诗话》特别推崇，比如，萧子显《南齐书》“有为斯立，每不能已，须其未自，不为力致”；王士常《白鹿诗话》等亦有同论。“每有制作仁兴而就”；王士祯：“生平服膺斯言，故故为山人倡言，亦不为力致而就”王士祯推推崇“古人诗言时兴会超妙，不似后人常言但作记里鼓”。“在《池北偶谈》中，王士祯还说：“世谓王右丞画雪中芭蕉，其诗亦然……大抵古人诗，凡取兴会神，若刻舟求剑，求之不得。’”

② 《圣济经》内外寂然之禅境，还让人感受到诗人“自是君身有仙骨”之心性“别才”，一言契道之禅境“别趣”，其无功可言，无法可言，浑然天成，色相俱全之悟境化境。⑧诚如清人洪亮吉《北江诗话》所云“当于禅明中求之耳”。⑨
明人胡应麟将李白与王维五绝均以“神化幽微”并提；“调古则韵高，情真则意远……若太白之逸，摩诘之玄，神化幽微，品格无上……”王士祯别名王维、孟浩然曰：“湍钝翁《魂》尝问予；‘王孟齐名，何以孟不及王？”予曰：“正以襄阳未能脱俗耳。”因此，在中国言志派风格雅丽—奇丽整合关系中，《辛夷坞》当与以屈原《离骚》为源头之“奇丽”风格文本想象空间更为相近——超验文学想象空间，而《红豆》《春晓》等则与《诗经》“雅丽”风格文本想象空间更为相通——经验文学想象空间。《辛夷坞》与《红豆》《春晓》之间的文本互涉规定了《辛夷坞》文本文学审美风格相对价值——非“雅丽”。

此外，《辛夷坞》还可能唤起读者关于《诗经·周南·桃夭》的记忆。同样花卉题材的言志诗，在中国言志派风格雅丽—奇丽整合关系中，《辛夷坞》这种不言一字尽得风流之境界，与《诗经》托物言志之《桃夭》之间的互涉关系，体现了中国言志派风格整合关系赋予《辛夷坞》文学文本审美风格另一相对价值——非“比兴”之象。

中国言志派风格系统雅丽—奇丽、比兴之象—境界整合关系赋予《辛夷坞》之相对价值，与《辛夷坞》文学手法—文学想象具象—文学想象空间以及相应文本艺术意志—审美价值判断等诸结构层级构成关系之意义，共同体现了《辛夷坞》的文学审美风格。

在《辛夷坞》的接受过程中，有欧洲文学基本知识结构的读者可能会唤起关于华兹华斯山水诗《水仙》的联想。英国浪漫主义诗人华兹华斯与中国唐朝诗人王维、人生独居的静逸态度，以及对大自然的感觉非常相似，诗歌文本题材、情感基调，以及语言风格也较为相似。此外，《水仙》也是通过花卉意象表达诗人感情的抒情诗。

《水仙》写诗人“我”在不眠之夜回忆起孤独的我在山丘谷底漫游看见连绵不绝水仙起舞，并与之幸福快乐共舞的事件与静态场面，抒写对大自然的热爱。《水仙》ERC由163个英文单词构成，文本意象由四个诗段—四个单一完整意象组成：

第一诗段：孤独的我在漫游中看见一群金色水仙翩翩起舞。从最小手法看，是叙事、景物描写。叙事交代了人物、事件、地点。从语言艺术手法看，使用了明喻、拟人修辞手法。

第二诗段，我看见一朵水仙像银河里闪闪发光的繁星连绵不断欢乐起舞。从最小手法，景物描写。从语言艺术手法看，使用了明喻，拟人修辞手法。

第三诗段，我凝望水仙与水仙，并以粼粼之水的快乐衬托水仙的欢欣。在此基础上，转入诗人“我”满心快乐的抒写。最小手法主要有两种：景物描写、直抒胸臆。语言艺术手法：明喻、衬托修辞手法。

第四诗段，我躺在床上不眠时，回忆起与水仙共舞而内心涨满幸福，抒写孤独中的福。最小手法有三种：叙事、直抒胸臆夹杂描写。叙事交代了时间地点（躺在床上不眠地孤独时）、人物事件（“我”回忆水仙起舞的画面）。第四诗段“孤独中的福”照应第一诗段“孤独地漫游”。

水仙起舞翩翩，银河繁星，粼粼之水，以及诗人与水仙共舞，皆《水仙》通过诗人想象
将水仙这一意象化为一个文学意象，以华兹华斯主张的以一化为众多之结构布局创造了《水仙》文本意象。由于英国民族文化集体记忆中流传着水仙自恋传说，《水仙》文本意象还可能隐喻了美丽与自然统一的思想。《水仙》保持文学符号的结构边界，结构转换规律参与了英国19世纪人道主义文化精神建构。

明喻、拟人等修辞手法、叙事（3个）、景物描写（3个）、直抒胸臆（2个）等最小文学手法，整体意象（4个）与直抒胸臆相结合的结构布局、题材角度意象的隐喻象征，以及抒写对大自然热爱之超越文本意象空间，与之相应的华兹华斯用想象力处理日常生活题材、处理意象以表达感情的艺术意志。19世纪初浪漫主义以想象力变现内心激情的审美价值判断①，是《水仙》文学符号附加意义复合系统，或者说五个结构层级的构成意义。在欧洲文学风格模仿/表现性组合关系中，与古希腊以来模仿文学的经验想象空间的互涉关系，规定了《水仙》文本文学审美风格相对“价值”——非模仿。

《辛夷坞》与《水仙》均以自然语言为载体通过创造意象抒写感情，而且，文本想象空间均是超越自然物理时空限制之超验类型，但是，文化传统不同、审美内涵不同、文学手法不同。从虚构—造型方式看，《辛夷坞》主要以白描为主，《水仙》使用多种修辞手法；《辛夷坞》只有景物描写之“活句”，而《水仙》却是叙事、描写、抒情三种方式并用；《辛夷坞》是不着一字尽得风流之境象，而《水仙》则是意象与直抒胸臆相结合之布局。从文本想象空间看，《辛夷坞》属于中国言志抒发诗散文中的奇丽—意境风格，这是相对于《诗经》雅丽—比兴风格而言；《水仙》属于欧洲模仿文学系统中的表现风格，这是相对于《伊利亚特》《俄狄浦斯王》模仿风格而言。

**结 论**

皮亚杰关于结构自身调节理论，为开放符号—结构研究提供了理论资源，不用消解结构，也可以阐释语言与文学、文学与文化之间的关系。

文学作品的虚构—造型表达手法，第三空间性质文本想象空间，以及不同民族文化诗学文献，是文学符号的特殊领域。其中，文学符号载体、第一结构层级能指（ERC）与第五结构层级所指文本审美理想C均具双栖身份，因此，文学领域与自然语言、精神文化领域相互关联。

文学符号附加意义复合系统构成元素不是同质等价的，附加意义复合系统新的所

① 据说，很久以前，一男子长得非常漂亮，有女人也这样说。自己却这样说，又一天，穿过一小湖。想喝点水解渴。到了湖边，看着自己的倒影，自己却发现自己是自己，觉得自己太美了，好入神地欣赏自己以至于一头扎进水里被淹死了。后来在入水的地方，长出了一种植物。人们为了纪念他而称之为水仙。

② [1]（美国）华兹华斯。抒情歌谣集·序[A]／胡经之，西方文艺理论名著选编·中册·北京：北京出版社，1986：61-65。[2]（美国）华兹华斯。抒情歌谣集·序[A]／胡经之，西方文艺理论名著选编·中册·北京：北京出版社，1986：61-65。[3]（美国）华兹华斯。抒情歌谣集·序[A]／胡经之，西方文艺理论名著选编·中册·北京：北京出版社，1986：61-65。
指C是结构要素，规定文学符号附加意义复合系统诸结构层级的基本性质与功能。

文学符号五个结构层级主要由性质与功能不同的文学手法与文学风格构成。

文学手法，是自然语言与文学现象具相相互作用的，以三个切分单位、三个结构层级构成之文学表达方式，具有虚构—造型基本性质与功能。它包容较低结构层级自然语言符号物理—心理性以及归约性。

文学风格，是以文本为切分单位的、文学手法与文学想象空间相互作用的、包括两个结构层级的，具有第三空间基本性质与功能文本意向客体。它包容较低结构层级文学手法诸性质与功能，并通过文本美学理想参与更高结构层级精神文化系统建构。

文学风格个体，犹如生命个体，是遗传库×文学风格个体×环境三者构成的复合体，各自民族文化文学风格纵聚合系统是其遗传库，各自精神文化系统是其环境。文化审美期待与文本审美理想同构形成文学风格个体与精神文化系统之间的反馈环路，文学风格保持自己的结构边界、结构转换规律，参与精神文化建构（关于文学风格与文化精神之间的关系笔著另文专论）。

2012年10月27日星期六，心远斋。

参考文献

附录：

一、孟浩然《春晓》

春眠不见晓，
处处闻啼鸟。
夜来风雨声，
花落知多少？

Spring Dawn
By Meng Hao-ran

Oversleeping in spring I missed the dawn;
Now everywhere the cries of birds are heard.
Tumult of wind and rain had filled the night —
How many blossoms fell during the storm?

二、《诗经·桃夭》

桃之夭夭，灼灼其华。之子于归，宜其室家。
桃之夭夭，有蕡其实。之子于归，宜其家室。
桃之夭夭，其叶蓁蓁。之子于归，宜其家人。

The Book of Songs

The peach tree is slender and sturdy
The peach tree is slender and sturdy,
Flaming red are its blossoms.
The girl is getting married.
Most suitable for the house.

The peach tree is slender and sturdy,
Luscious and abundant is its fruit.
The girl is getting married, 
Most suitable for the home.

The peach tree is slender and sturdy. 
Exuberant and green are its leaves. 
The girl is getting married. 
Most suitable for the family. 

（杨宪益译）

三、Daffodils

William Wordsworth

I wandered lonely as a cloud 
That floats on high o'er vales and hills. /1
When all at once I saw a crowd, 
A host, of golden daffodils; 
Beside the lake, beneath the trees, 
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze. /2A

Continuous as the stars that shine 
And twinkle on the milky way, 
They stretched in never-ending line 
Along the margin of a bay; 
Ten thousand saw I at a glance, 
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance. /1B

The waves beside them danced; but they 
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee; /1
A poet could not but be gay, 
In such a jocund company; 
I gazed-and gazed-but little thought 
What wealth the show to me had brought: 2C

For oft, when on my couch I lie 
In vacant or in pensive mood, 
They flash upon that inward eye 
Which is the bliss of solitude: /1
And then my heart with pleasure fills, 
And dances with the daffodils. /2D
《水仙》
华兹华斯

我孤独地漫游，像一朵云
在山丘和谷地上飘荡/1
忽然间我看见一群
金色的水仙花迎春开放
在树荫下，在湖水边，
迎着微风起舞翩翩。/2A

连绵不绝，如繁星灿烂，
在银河里闪闪发光，
它们沿着湖湾的边缘
延伸成无情无尽的一行；
我一眼看见了一万朵，
在欢舞之中起伏颠簸。/1B

粼粼波光也跳着舞，
水仙的欢欣却胜过水波;/1
与这样快活的伴侣为伍，
诗人怎能不满心快乐！
我久久凝望，却想象不到
这奇景赋予我多少财宝。/2C

每当我躺在床上不眠，
或心神空茫，或默默沉思，
它们常在心灵中闪现，
那是孤独之中的福;/1
于是我的心便涨满幸福，
和水仙一同翩翩起舞。/2D
巴赫金符号学理论下《红字》中的符号“A”

王 艳

摘要  在霍桑的《红字》中，女主人公因通奸罪被罚终生在胸前佩戴耻辱符号红字“A”，而到故事结尾，它却变成了一个表示赞赏的符号。根据俄国符号学家巴赫金的符号学理论，符号是意识形态的物质中介，任何一个符号中都交织着不同社会倾向的社会重音。由此而生出符号的折射。《红字》中的符号“A”的意义变化，是主人公与当时的清教社会的不断交流与对话，从而导致符号产生折射的结果。

关键词 符号；意识形态；话语；重音；折射

1. 引 言

在《红字》这部小说中，女主人公因通奸罪被罚终生在胸前佩戴耻辱符号红字“A”，它来源于英文单词“Adultery”的首字母。到故事结束它却变成一个表示赞赏的符号，清教徒把它解读为“Able”和“Angle”中的首字母“A”。同一个符号为什么却产生了如此巨大的变化呢？本文拟从巴赫金的符号学理论来解读红字“A”意义变化的可能性。

2. 意识形态符号“A”

《红字》这部小说中女主人公生活在 17 世纪美国早期殖民地波斯顿，因为家庭的原因，嫁给了年长自己很多的老学究丈夫。移民到波斯顿之前，他们住在荷兰。后来因为丈夫还有事务需要处理，他便只身来到当时清教徒在新大陆建立的殖民地波斯顿。之后很长的时间都没有丈夫的消息。后来海斯特爱上了年轻有学问的牧师丁梅斯尔德，
犯了通奸罪，并生养了他的孩子。按照当时清教徒的教规犯通奸罪是要处以死刑的。但是由于种种原因，当时的殖民统治者没有判处她死刑。取而代之，统治者要求海斯特在胸前佩戴红字“A”，即“adultery”（通奸）的首字母，并通过集会的形式知会全体殖民地居民。统治者妄图以此表示羞辱和警示，目的是要维护清教社会的良好秩序。米哈伊尔·巴赫金 M. M. Bakhtin (1895—1975) 是前苏联文学理论家、批评家，在他的著作《马克思主义与语言哲学》中具体阐述了他的符号学理论。巴赫金说，一切意识形态的东西都有意义：它代表，表现，替代着它在它之外存在着的某个东西，也就是说，它是一个符号。（巴赫金，1998：349）这里说的“意识形态的东西”就是指的意识形态符号。他认为一切符号都是意识形态符号。符号是意识形态的物质介位。从符号学的观点看，红字“A”是一个符号，反应了当时清教社会的意识形态。

3. 意识形态符号“A”是一个重音符号

关于符号的重音，巴赫金是这样说的。在社会发展的每一阶段，存在着能够引起社会关注和由此加以特别强调的客体的特殊的和有限的范围。只有客体的这一范围才具有符号形式，成为符号交际的客体。（巴赫金，1998：363）也就是说如果客体的特殊的和有限的范围没有引起社会的关注，就没有符号形式产生的可能。如何才可能引起社会团体的关注呢？首先它必须与该社会团体的现有的社会经济前提有关联，触碰该团体的物质存在基础。其次必须使它具有个体间的意义，因为符号存在于个体之间，在社会环境中被创造出来。只有这样，它才可能成为符号形式的客体，也才能进入意识形态世界，再其中定形和巩固，具有社会价值。这一成为符号形式的客体是用重音强调的，因为它引起社会关注，从而加以特别强调。所以重音符号的实现必须有三个条件，第一，它得到社会的关注和强调；第二，它触及社会物质存在基础；第三，它具有个体间的意义。巴赫金认为一切意识形态的重音符号都是社会的重音符号，因为他们都追求社会的承认，并且只为了这一承认，才外在地实现于意识形态的材料中。

红字“A”是一个社会重音符号，因为它满足了社会重音符号的三个条件，第一，它引起了清教社会的极大关注；第二，它触及了清教社会的物质基础，扰乱了正常的清教社会秩序；第三，统治者通过集会的形式使得红字“A”具有了个体间的意义，也就是社会意义。作为一个符号，红字“A”反映了清教社会的意识形态，同时也清晰地反映了统治者的政治意图——惩罚和警示。这是一个单一重音的符号，因为红字产生之初，它只象征着羞辱。统治者的意识形态就是大众的意识形态。

二、文学符号学研究
4. “话语”是研究意识形态符号“A”的最佳材料

意识形态现象是直接建立在经济基础之上的上层建筑。而上层建筑与经济基础的关系问题，是马克思主义的基本问题之一。巴赫金认为这个问题在很多方面紧密地与语言哲学问题联系在一起。他认为要研究经济基础是如何决定上层建筑，也就是基础到底是如何决定意识形态符号的，符号又是怎样反映和折射于形成中的存在的，那么话语是最合适的材料。因为，第一，话语是最纯粹最典型的符号。第二，话语具有意识形态的普遍适用性，任何专门化的领域，都可以用话语进行交流。第三，话语参与一切的社会生活交往活动。第四，话语是社会生活用的符号。即它可以像符号那样存在着，用不着在外部彻底表现出来。比如对新符号的理解依赖于内部熟悉符号的存在。第五，话语作为必不可少的成分，伴随和评论着任何一种意识形态行为。没有内部语言的参加，无论哪一种意识形态现象（绘画、音乐、意识、行为）的理解过程都不会实现。（巴赫金，1998: 354-357）所有这些特色使得话语成为意识形态科学的基本研究客体。巴赫金非常生动地把话语描述为一个环境。他说，“话语——是一个环境，在那里慢慢在数量上积累一些变化，这些变化还没有达到新的意识形态的本质，还没产生新的最终的意识形态的形式。话语能够记录下社会变化的一切转折的最微妙和短暂的阶段。”（巴赫金，1998: 360）

戴上红字“A”的海斯特是一种新的社会存在，她没有选择离开当时的清教社会，而是继续生活在清教徒之中，并且保持与清教社会的来往。她与清教社会的交往方式首先是一种生产关系的交往。她是清教社会的交往方式首先是生产关系的交往，她以出售针线活的形式为社会提供有偿服务，得以维持自己的生活。其次她把殖民地的居民看成自己的同属，凭自己微薄的力量，积极主动地帮助所有需要的人，自己却过着十分简朴的生活。

在海斯特与社会进行的交往的过程中，红字“A”不可避免地会成为人们话语交流的话题。海斯特所到之处必然引起人们对红字的各种形式的话语反应。有直接的侮辱性的言语攻击，有鄙视的窃窃私语。也有的人，比如未婚少女，当她们看到戴红字的海斯特时，只是生硬地把眼神移开。所有这些都是清教社会关于红字“A”话语的反应，尽管很多反应是无声的。因为前面提到过，话语可以是内部存在的符号。当人们理解了某种东西，并做出相应的某种反应时，那已经是话语的反应了。这种反应可能是言说的，也可能只是表情的或者动作的反应。比如，当少女看到红字时，只有当她读懂了红字，理解了它的全部意识形态的含义时，才会生硬地避开自己的眼睛。清教徒的关于红字的各种反应之所以能给海斯特带来巨大的痛苦，也正是因为她理解了人们的各种形式的话语。
5. 意识形态符号“A”意义的变化是符号产生“折射”的结果

巴赫金认为符号中反映的存在，不是简单的反映，而是折射。这种折射是由符号集中不同倾向的社会意见的争论所决定的。（巴赫金，1998：365）在每一种意识形态符号中都交织着不同倾向的重音符号。正如巴赫金所言，“任何一场真正的战争都可以成为被赞扬的，任何一个真正的真理对于许多其他方面却不可避免地会听起来是一个最伟大的谎言”。（巴赫金，1998：366）因为利益不同的社会团体，会利用符号去表达有利于他们的各自的声音。正因为这种交织符号才是活生生的、运动的，才能发展。

符号的折射可能是共时的，也可能是历时的。比如，在我国经济改革之初，“市场经济”这个重音符号曾经是不同社会倾向集团争论的焦点。保守派认为它是洪水猛兽，改革派却认为它是发展经济的良药。符号的这种共时的折射，尤其会出现在社会转型和变革时期。再比如，“红卫兵”这个符号发生在“文革”时期，当时人们认为它是社会中正面的、积极的“力量”；而如今人们再提它，更多的是负面的含义了。还有“右派”这个符号，在1957年反右时期它是一个负面的符号；而今它已经有许多正面的含义了，因为它指的是那个时代受到迫害的知识分子。这是一种历时的符号折射现象。

《红字》中的女主人公在被迫戴上红字“A”之后，尽管承受着来自清教社会的巨大的痛苦和压力，但是她从来没有停止过与清教社会的交流。她的精湛的针线手艺成为殖民地的时尚。殖民地经济在不断发展，清教徒对海斯特的针线活需求增多；海斯特一如既往地帮助所有有需要的人；自己却过着最简朴的生活；在瘟疫来临时她出现在最前方帮助她的同胞；她从来不要求社会哪怕是最小的回报；在社会给予的极大侮辱下她没有选择逃避，并始终拒绝说出孩子的父亲；她没再跟别的任何男人发生过关系，等等。这些都是有关她的社会物质存在。

清教徒关于红字“A”的各种话语从来没有停止。接受过或者没接受过海斯特帮助的，买过或没买过她的刺绣的，清教社会的统治者等，各种不同的社会关系，决定了关于红字他们会有不同的社会倾向。随着对海斯特认识的不断加深，清教徒渐渐对海斯特也有了各自不同的看法。在关于红字的话语中，慢慢地开始有了一些别的声音。红字“A”开始了它作为符号的运动、变化、发展的旅程。

后来越来越多的人开始对戴红字的海斯特有不同于统治者的看法。关于红字的不同的声音越来越多，各种声音围绕着红字，讨论着，思考着，争辩着。最后有一种声音慢慢变得越来越强，越来越大。这种声音认为海斯特是坚强的，仁爱的。于是另一个社会重音形成了。这种声音是如此之大，以至于清教徒们把统治者当初赋予红字“A”的象征意义完全颠覆，并赋予它新的含义。他们把红字“A”解释为表示称赞的able（能干）和angle（天使）的首字母，而不再是象征耻辱的Adultery（通奸）的首字母。这是符号产生的折射，正是后来的这个社会重音使红字“A”产生了折射。红字“A”成为对社会存在
折射的媒介物。清教徒利用统治者设计的符号“A”表达了与统治者原意不同的意识形态。同一个符号交织着两种完全不同的重音。前一个象征耻辱的重音被历史淡化。

6. 小 结

红字“A”从一个象征羞辱的符号变成一个象征赞赏的符号，这样的变化完全是海斯特与清教社会勇敢交流对话的结果。正是因为这种交流，使得红字“A”产生了符号的折射。如果没有这种交流，如果海斯特一开始就选择离开当时的清教社会，那么红字“A”这样的变化是根本不可能的。它作为符号的生命也就止于象征耻辱了。这正说明了社会存在决定社会意识，也就是存在决定符号。而符号可以反映和折射存在的。符号是运动、变化、发展的。

参 考 文 献
网络式交响叙事
——读马里奥·巴尔加斯·略莎的《酒吧长谈》

张慧敏

摘 要 本文以马里奥·巴尔加斯·略莎的《酒吧长谈》为分析蓝本，从“影像同化”“声音交响化”“情节节奏化”等三个方面讨论小说叙事的网络交响品格。深度阐释文本中浓缩时空的叙事技巧，解析叙事想象中的拼接填充同构交响之功。

关键词 影像;声音;情节;网状;交响;节奏;长谈

叙事学产生本身就意味着以科学的方式来分析写作的某种程序和规范，试图在漫无边际的虚构殿堂把握想象思维的某种功能状态。叙事的演变与科技手段分不开，不仅是对叙事的分析方法，比如普罗普所使用的归纳法，将自童话以来的叙事归纳出模式规律；故事开头有多少种模式类型；故事进程中有怎样的障碍设置；结尾又能获得几种可能性。而叙事操作本身，更是与材料工具的更新递进分不开。比如，中国曾经是竹简刻字，那在竹简上刻下的故事，穿插想象，只能在构思完成，否则刻下如刀记的秩序，除非遗失和残缺了某块竹简，现在多为 Processing 技术。纸张印刷术的发明，一定程度上使得后来将剪辑技术运用到叙事叙事成为了可能。也就是说，由于印刷品的电影制作手法，运用到叙事写作中时，已囊括了虚构想象及叠加剪辑组接之功。如今的写作，多为电脑操作，复制拼接的快易，前所未见，那么其对叙事的影响如何呢？

本文以马里奥·略莎的文本为范例，试图阐明网络技术对叙事的冲击。一个为文立志者，是可以很好地利用新科技，将写作叙事发掘光大的，而不是利用网络便利就胡来乱搞抑或抄袭泛滥平庸。一个好的叙事文本是丰富想象、超然天分之外借助技术更新，犹如蛟龙般潜入文字自身，精工细琢，方后有夺目绚烂。

马里奥·略莎将写作当成“宿命”，他崇拜福楼拜，不仅在于《包法利夫人》文本中不仅写了一个幻想女人的故事，还在于作者一次次剖析自己怎样写。对技艺的精益求精、打磨组接文字的功夫胜出写作天分，让马里奥折服。在《一个作家的证词》中，马里奥谈到：写小说非常花功夫，需要将生活中沉淀的影像不断加工、修改，使得也许并无光彩之
物，通过努力和坚持，直到造就一部天才之作，杰作为止。他的《酒吧长谈》号称费时 15
年，作者说若让他自己选择一部留世之作，那就是这部，因为写得最辛苦。① 要能真正
理解这份“辛苦”，必须深入文本中剖析其技艺。在进入其技艺之前，我要指出的是，读
马里奥・略莎的作品也不轻松，特别是当读者没能进入故事时，你会被一种混乱的叙
事喻意搞懵。作者说他最喜爱的不是在写作时，而是在一堆混乱文字影像中开始慢慢
修整梳理。这也同样要求于读者，通过离析纷乱的线索和交响的声音，最后你恍然大悟
在其中。如此文本，对读者的智力和思考，有着明确要求，即使是如《劳军女郎》这样的
刺激性故事，你的阅读也不能只是满足快感为止，而必须在辨析中跨越一道道艺术峰
巅，使得文学就是文学，不只是消遣。

1. 影像网状化

马里奥・略莎的出身属于中产阶级，但有军权思想，而且写作基本在谋生的业余中
完成。有说他的作品不带现实主义风采，他自己也强调文学应具有批判性②。那么本
文首先来探究，他在文本中是如何达到揭示和批判的。

《酒吧长谈》中主人翁圣地亚哥，《纪事》报的记者，写过狗食卡，当自己的狗也被
捕后，又去寻狗，接触了底下层黑人工作区域——狗场，肮脏、野蛮、工资低下。这些
揭露一般的末流作者也都能写，甚至于他们混混吃而放任玄虚的主要核心内容，但马里
奥・略莎出其不意之外却是让这哗众取宠的通俗情节只成了故事的一个铺垫序曲，力求
展示的是圣地亚哥一个少年与多年失去联络的打圈的黑佣人的相逢。这个与劳动
人民亲如兄弟的情同手足的细节并不新鲜，克服了小资的心理刻画，文学长廊里也多如牛
毛。马里奥・略莎叙事追求一定的精致，比如使用三个“犹豫”，因为黑人并没有认出少
爷，少爷完全可以避开麻烦，可是却伴随着重新获得自由的狗巴杜盖“冲着灰蒙蒙的天
空汪汪直叫”声，抑制不住喊出了黑人的名字。“犹豫”反衬出的是黑人朴实真诚的欢
喜。接下来是 4 个小时平民酒吧的叙旧，这是《酒吧长谈》的第二幕。叙旧的内容在这
第一章节，似雾里看山，略影略显。作者精心构置这故事纲领性一幕的网状效果，让感
念如游戏网关，峰峦迭起，挑逗、暗诱，使读者不知不觉如在琴弦于鱼饵的游鱼上了钩。
可见马里奥・略莎的潜心。

名为“长谈”，却很少对话，可以说对话钩织在叙述者少爷叙事视角的观察中，那是一
种身不由己的深入，却又时受人画外音心理干扰的摩擦。不是图像的单纯结构，而是
集影像、音响及气味交织的网状呈现。影像里有现实的破旧几乎千疮百孔、有透过闭塞
缝隙依旧流出的自然天空和石块、有炉火的劳作还有伴随饭菜热气的调戏，更有观察

① 参见《巴尔加斯略莎于 2011 年 6 月 14 日上午在上海外国语大学逸夫会堂所作的演讲》。
② 在《一个作家的证词》的演讲最后，马里奥・略莎谈到“文学并不是消遣，文学有一种批判的精神”
者隐秘的恐惧；相对这一切的是久别重逢喜悦中的黑人安布罗修的坦荡和浑然不知。在“油味、葱蒜味、屎味和垃圾味”、电唱音乐声、嗡嗡的人声、马达声和喇叭声混杂的背景下，意识突然进入无意识中，再森严的阶级界限在恍惚中也必然动摇。于是才有“安布罗修接过圣亚哥递过来的香烟了起，又把烟屁股拋到地上，用脚踩进地里。他啑啑作响地嚼着汤里的鱼，拿起鱼刺一直衭到发亮。他一面狼吞虎咽地把面包塞到嘴里，大口大口地咽着啤酒；并用手抹着脸上的汗水，一面听着圣亚哥讲话，不时地回答或问上几句。”（P14）这是一句阶级地位的俯视镜头，镜头里的底下层呼应着前面的味道及音响。作者的审视在叙事之中，而读者却已明白了评判。可这评判却是那样不具有稳定性，犹如网络看不见的传送波流，起伏不定：“岁月不知不觉地把人给毁了，少爷。”（P14）这是一句看似不经意，却实际是作者精心的穿插。而读者若不仔细专心阅读，几乎容易忽略掉这心语的对话。可是对这底下层黑人的交心之语，少爷的回应是什么呢？“圣亚哥思忖着：我怎么还不离开他呢？我该走了。”（P14）就好比根本用不着阐释的画面，以视角的高低足以将等级优劣、傲慢与卑微展露无遗。但是，叙述者却是那样冷静深邃，不动声色，叙述视角从少爷意识中金蝉脱壳般出来，成了纯粹客观的描述；“圣亚哥又吹了啤酒，斟满杯，抓起自己的酒杯。”这个状况性画面成为了一个回旋符，在接下里的篇章中反复插入叙述中。当以以等价身份的高傲傲出时，下意识地“圣亚哥又吹了啤酒”就会如此网络插件一般，中断你的思维。这要酒的非醉似醉的状态，揭示出来的却是一种堪称意义的东西，只是叙述者不动声色而已。仅仅只让叙述本身说话，由读者心领神会。叙述者视角下的图景：“他一面讲话，回忆，一面打瞌睡；想心事。他观察着啤酒上面的泡沫，每个泡沫犹如一个小小的火山口，静静地张开嘴喷出黄色的泡泡，然后又消失在被人手捂温了的黄色液体中。他眼也不闭地喝着酒，打着嗝，掏出香烟点上就吸了起来。他弯下身子去抚摸巴杜盖；妈的，事情算是过去了。他讲，安布罗修也讲。”（P14）在这一组交替叙事的画面中，读者难以区分谁是他是谁？如此叙事要产生的效果正是少爷与黑人已经难分你我，在这平视的客观里，等级化为了乌有。只是少爷是无意识的行为，叙述者用了第三人称“他”作为“讲”的主语，而黑人的“讲”却是由衷的，也是主体本身的，所以是“安布罗修也讲。”微妙到不露痕迹的区别处理，正是叙事视角暗渡陈仓之机，于是就又有了“安布罗修的眼泡发紫了，鼻翼像是长跑过后似的扇动起来。”（P14）不难明白，叙事视角已从客观叙事移向了少爷的俯视视角了，因此俯视中的“他”就都是被看的黑人了；“后来他每饮一口就吐一口唾沫，出神地凝视着苍蝇，在回忆往事，在倾听，一会儿悲一会儿喜，一会儿愁喜交加，他的眼光一会儿怒，一会儿惊，一会儿走了神；有时还呼上几声。他那头发已经发白。工装外面罩着一件上衣，大概原来是蓝色的，扣子都掉了。衬衣的高领子像根绳子缠绕在颈部。”（P14）这个俯视视角本来隐含了鄙夷，但好似叙述者也不能接受这样的跌宕，于是狐疑性地插入一注投注性目光，这目光正好与圣亚哥叠合，既成就了圣亚哥的主体性，又如镜面般隐含了一道反射光；“圣亚哥朝他那双大鞋看了一眼，鞋上满是泥泞，都走了样，穿的时间太久了。”（P14）这还是一道可以反射出同情、怜悯的光芒，但是，这个“故友”的少爷，却又有另一番不为读者知道的隐情，导致出他念：“他讲话的声音时断时
另一个阶段，可是马里奥·略莎在不知不觉中利用叙事的对比较量将其颠覆了，而且黑人安布罗修是那样礼貌、文明及尊严。可执迷于醉生的少爷却始终无法进入任何超越个人心胸的话题。在她的眼里，感受中，叙事者代替他道出：“两人交谈着，这中间圣地亚哥不时地听到安布罗修尊敬、胆怯而又放胆地说着：我得走了，少爷。”（P15）叙事者其实明白无比，且后来读着也清楚，是底下层雇用劳动力为生的安布罗修，4个小时的怠工，才有可能失去唯一的生活依持。但是相对安布罗修来说不无尊严处优的圣地亚哥是不拘的。叙事者在此处叠合入少爷感受，我会认为潜藏蔑视和唾弃，以为都不值得将其作为有意识之物对待了。所以从这样醉态虚幻之物的视角再看过去，就必然是虚妄：“隔着堆满酒瓶的长桌，安布罗修眼光流露出醉意和恐惧，在他眼里变成了个矮小而无害的人。”（P15）此句中的人称代词“他”，不是按照叙事习惯指代句子前的主语，而是转换了主格，以那自以为是的阶级视域作为主格，成就了其心理的自我安慰。如巴杜盖狗无目的的“汪”，还有禁不住的“不停地吠”。犹如主旋律的隐约荡漾，这场较量的起因，在胜负即将揭晓时，引魂的狗吠好比呜笛启示。“圣地亚哥感到内心掀起一阵旋风，一阵兴奋，他感到时间停滞了，只有臭气。”（P15）这时，臭气，已经从物质的转换成品格的了。在什么人会在臭气中玄幻疯狂？文本导出一句问：“我们还在交谈吗？”第一次使用合词主语“我们”，是在故友少爷与前仆人黑人情怀之间划上绝缘性停止符之后，作者使用了“我们”。这个复数词囊括了作者、叙事者、读者一起“还在交谈吗”？还有交谈的可能和必要吗？“浓浓的臭气仿佛是一条被分割成若干段的河流，有烟草味、酒味、人体味，还有剩菜味。各种气味在酒吧那热腾腾而沉重的空气中回旋缭绕。”一个阶级熏陶培养的后代，既是受惠又是受害者的双重人格，与其说臭气使人眩晕，不如说是明辨出了清醒。圣地亚哥年轻时选择入学圣马可，参与激进活动，且曾天真“以为生活富裕，做个阔少爷会毁了自己”，于是要追求“倒点霉就会锻炼成为一个坚强的人”（P147），他对“乔洛”（平民区）姑娘的态度，对女仆阿玛丽娅，先是小孩游戏性调戏后又满怀孩子的情同，且这同情的情绪真实到后来干脆娶了个乔洛女人安娜，对自己阶级身份的叛逆，一如现代社会无论是小说还是诗歌常常着重的拜伦式英雄。但是，略莎的新创意却使这个叛逆少了现代性的高尚，夹杂了无数后现代的反思和质疑。圣地亚哥与自己的家庭以及阶级财产决裂得非常彻底，即使在自己经济困顿的平民生活中，依然以对贪财的哥哥及他的阶层之蔑视，潇洒地放弃了万分疼爱他的父亲的死后遗嘱。圣地亚哥这个人物符号意义的复杂性就在于，现实平民区里，他具格一格地不屑于财，也不享受贫民的阶级身份，反而一生都纠结于“倒霉”。而客观不能否认的现实却是，失去家庭的经济资助，是一个人生涯的转折点，故事中圣地亚哥与奥卡约互为镜象，二者都在小时被父亲骄傲为天才，前者因了圣马可的激进政治影响，与始终慈爱他父亲的决离；后者却是因为自己怪异性取向和婚姻，被父亲驱逐。不同的却是，前者一生浸满了19世纪以来多余人的颓唐无奈，而后者却成为了奸商政客无耻加残暴。这组镜像关系的反射不是要揭示人物心理，而是作者隐而不显的对社会的批判。圣地亚哥，始终不乏对真实的执着，或许作者在这个人物符号中凝聚了其自身经历自身体会，就好像成长之后回眸自己的历史足迹，故此安排如小雀斑的青年智论：“"瘦
子想上圣马可大学，因为他不喜欢神父，而喜欢接近人民。”波伽耶说道。“话又说回来了，这个人就是别扭。要是他爸他妈让他上圣马可，他又该说，‘不，我要上天主教大学了。’”（P23）也就是说地中海人物的双重性，有着不少青春期叛逆的无目的性。这就使得这个人物之政治追求其实有许多引号和问号，乃至感叹号的碰撞掺杂，所以文本总在批判的犀利笔墨下给予另一个希望性转折，总是峰回路转。“突然，所有这些气味被一种高于一切，不可战胜的臭气吸收了；爸爸，你，我都错了。”这错到底是什么内？即使文本后面故事情节还很不显，但世事沧桑下的人生总是荆棘丛生、歧途绕绕，已昭然若揭出哲思的超然。而这认识又不是盖棺定论，只是一个巧遇间的偶然触及和中途认知，那么这“错”能接近哪个程度呢？一句“这是一种失败的味道。”（P15）既是_abort_当下所受，又是人生历练后的无奈和伤感，与前面“失败的声音”构成复沓，已然形成递进，这味道的失败定格在人生的普遍意义下，已经包含着地中海人的自我认识，是这醒悟导致了他的哭泣。泪水里有他与死亡了的父亲隐约萌回的惺惺相惜般的体味；还有自己固执对“真实”的执念。地中海亚哥想倾囊自己的薪水三千五百索尔，换取安布罗修道出“真相”，这“真实”是地中海与父亲的死结，也是他糊涂阶级意识立场的一锅汤不清理还乱的粥，他的生命在这酱缸的粥里荒废而断送，像溺水者似的，他渴望黑人安布罗修的拯救。他愿意帮助安布罗修，给他介绍报社看门的职务，到临时工处要做强百倍，这机会本身也是考验，安布罗修是否是逃犯，是否杀过人？是否这一切都是死去的父亲指使？“可是我现在不恨他了，他既然已经死了，我也不恨他了。”（P149）怨恨成了一个儿子对挚爱他父亲晚年全部，而这个父亲却是“他这一辈子最关心的就是搞清楚您为什么不爱他了，少爷。”（P92）什么是对的真实？什么又是恨的真实？谁能搞得清说得明呢？地中海亚哥认为爱自己的父亲“生前是个小人，但他本人并未察觉，他是无意的，再说，在我们这个国家里，小人多如牛毛，而且我相信他也为此付出了代价。安布罗修。”（P149）如此断语却让父亲的司机安布罗修近乎要捶胸顿足，“少爷啊，少爷，您怎么能这样说您爸爸呢，少爷？”（P149）在黑仆人眼里，地中海亚哥的父亲是一个“大好人”，“因为他爸爸是那么聪明，那么慷慨，少爷”，安布罗修说道，“反正一切好。”（P148）读者清楚这个“一切”是可以一忽儿在引号之内，一忽儿在引号之外的。作者总是在玩他叙事技巧的精湛，引号内与引号外的蹦蹦总透显出意义的灵动。一切的好，是不是与爱有关？一切的坏又不是因为了恨？能说出“一切”是不是必须有“了解”作为前提？“他为什么以为我不爱他了？”地中海亚哥说道，“我爸爸还跟你说了吗些什么？”“您爸爸不是跟我说的。”安布罗修说道，“是跟您妈妈、哥哥、妹妹和朋友说的。他们在汽车里谈，我开车时听到的。”作者读者都知道这组对话里暗藏杀机，是陷阱与狡猾对垒，但是作者让当事人符号呈现时，却故意营造好似天真无邪的懵懂不知。略莎的写作，似乎动机就在于研究，每个语词符号的组合，都呼唤你去深入剖析。这里，少爷的问，即使你还不清楚故事抖包之后的意思，读者至少会迷惑，父亲作为主人的上层阶级怎么就成为与司机可以无话不谈的知己呢？如果真是这样，激进思想的应该说是那父亲，而且父子就不可能有思想上的的矛盾。而安布罗修的回答，将一系列人称代词罗列一起，分明就在逃避掩盖什么。是当问回战术不管用，才来了直截了当；“你比我更了解我的爸爸。”地中海亚哥说。
道，“告诉我，他还说了我些什么？”“我怎么能比您更了解您的爸爸呢？”安布罗修说道，“瞧您想的，少爷。”(P92) 别谈虚无是躲避现实。说现实主义写作手法的命根，可是略莎却让“真实”犹如荆棘是刺手的玫瑰，他不是写侦探小说，却无意间有了侦探的无穷兴趣。于对案件来说，既可以把读者的欲求调动到极致，又可以将案犯隐藏和躲避的伎俩玩成杂耍般天马行空。(《酒吧长谈》正是一部非侦探的侦探小说，是因他，这侦探的“真实”其实比虚幻更无足轻重，故事要探究的是关于爱，关于书面上的儿子和书背后
的司机与故去父亲的纠结——那个死去了的人到底爱谁，是尊敬还是羞愧？是该赞扬还是该唾弃？或许就犹如生生死死，那只是一个平常的父亲，亦有着不一样的趣味，
生活就像政治或者经济，人逃不脱羁绊，却实在有着别样的里子。于是角度性回合交战，完全能超越了少年与司机的对话，而形成在作者与读者的思辨性追求中，自然就
有了关乎人性的天平衡量。因此，本文《酒吧长谈》序曲在点到为止的纲要中，不仅埋下
悬念纠缠，而且不乏伦理判别，以如此超乎现实价值的判断终止“长谈”。“我得走了，免
得您为自己说出的话而后悔。”安布罗修的声音嘶哑了，也充满了怜悯， “我不需要工作，
您要知道，我不接受您的恩惠，更不要您的钱。要您知道，您那位爸爸不配做爸爸。
您知道就行了。您也见鬼去吧，少爷！”(P17) 实际上，《酒吧长谈》是在逼近真实犹如追
逐月亮却被犬狗吃去了的寓言中结束的。虽说故事分为洋洋四部，却在第一部的第一节，就框架设定，结构整全，结尾敲定了。可以说无所谓真或者实，只有认识弥漫于叙事
间——“圣地亚哥思想：安布罗修用大棒杀狗，我却用社论杀狗，他比我强，我付出的代
价更大，倒霉也更大。他想道：可怜的爸爸啊。”(P18) 回肠荡气的内心呼唤，在引子似
的第一章节，狗是寻回了，人生却有许多难能追回……

2. 声音交响化

如果说影像网状化是将即使对话也以叙述的语式描述而成，那么声音的交响化，却
能很好地追踪马里奥·略莎操控对话的绝技。通过对话的交替变换，有人说起到了“浓缩
时空”的功效。在《劳军女郎》的前言中，孙家孟归纳了马里奥·略莎对话的几种技
法。比如通过视觉、听觉，营造的立体效果，将正面侧面，(我也会认为) 还有心理、意识无
意识统统展示在一个平面上，好似与读者玩一道猜谜游戏，在看似混乱的组合中，其实
有完整的形象丰富的意义。还有其他批评家分析的“话题衔接”“双线推进法”："即一
面以对话进行小说的主线，一面以行动过渡时间。”(1)

这里我举出《酒吧长谈》的一个实例：圣地亚哥家里的女仆少女阿玛莉娅被太太(圣
地亚哥的母亲) 辞退。少爷的圣地亚哥内疚，原因是他的欲望和恶作剧，让一个经
常受他哥哥妹妹少爷小姐欺负而坚韧地需要劳动挣得衣食的女孩遭殃了。圣地亚哥约

议院的儿子朋友小雀斑作陪送5镑钱。对话要将少爷的欲望、药品、对下层女孩的偏见、灰姑娘亘古性的激动，女佣被辞退，少爷施舍，参议院儿子（亦是上层普遍的世俗观念）可借金钱，以及失去工作的阿玛莉亚的情怀，众多“话题切割”在短短的场景中，而且要将到贫民窟“送钱”与在中产阶级“豪宅”跳舞，“双线推进”，将内疚性施舍对谈作为叙事主线，将回忆对话作为辅线阐明事发缘由，双线还外加小雀斑对圣地亚哥妹妹的迷恋，母亲迁怒于女仆，哥哥奇斯帕斯派女人的招数，圣地亚哥与新政治立场的对立，还插上短短几句团队安布罗修的处境与贫民窟经验等音波混杂，读者稍不留神，几乎难以明白故事来龙去脉。

马里奥・略莎喜欢用引号对对话组接进陈述对话中，前者是为了放慢叙事速度，提示话语及语词的表情作态，细节只能由读者在感受中把握。后者却是速度加快，迅速变换叙事视角，作者、叙事者、事件中人物，外加读者一起去尽量在瞬变中捕捉场景、感受、意识、无意识等律动。

“我就是不愿意去望弥撒，干嘛一定要向那个神父解释呢?”圣地亚哥说道。
“也就是说，你自认为是个无神论者了?”波佩耶说道。
“我不认为我是无神论者，”圣地亚哥说道，“我不喜欢那个神父并不等于不信上帝。”

“你不去望弥撒，你家人怎么说?” 波佩耶说道，“拿蒂蒂来说吧，她怎么看?”
“那乔洛女佣人的事使我很痛心，小雀斑，”圣地亚哥说道。
“忘掉算了，别犯傻。”波佩耶说道，“说起蒂蒂，她今天早晨怎么去海滩了?”
“她跟女朋友到赛艇俱乐部去了。”圣地亚哥说道，“我说你怎么还不接受教训?”
（P25）

以上这段对话中，除了意识交织，没有穿插。圣地亚哥想着女佣，小雀斑想着圣地亚哥的妹妹。

可接下来却插入安布罗修的问。似乎是提醒读者，指示灯转换航道，使用小一号字体：

“就是红脸膛，有雀斑的那位?”安布罗修说道，“参议员堂埃米略・阿雷瓦洛的儿子？我当然知道。蒂蒂小姐跟他结婚了?”（P25）

“我不喜欢有雀斑的，也不喜欢红头发的。”蒂蒂做了个怪相，“而他二者兼备。呜呜，真叫人恶心。”（P25）

这两句对话，不是发生在圣地亚哥求救小雀斑去女佣家里送钱的路上，而且不是发生在同一叙事时间，前者属“长谈”，后者属意识旋律画外插入。但说的是一个事件，只是话语的接受者漂浮不定，从而扩张了指示意义。作为序曲故事的承接，以及后来故事的伏笔，小字号安布罗修的话，有惊讶、忧伤，却是对一个传递消息者的回答和对事件本身痛苦的叩问。而蒂蒂决绝与厌恶的话与安布罗修的“结婚”之间对称，在故事包裹未拆开之前，读者很难理解其中玄机。最多理解为娇小姐对哥哥们或者朋友们的调侃，而安布罗修也只是犯人的关心而已。但是这组话语却充满了能指力量，使得接受作为游动所指，使故事及人物心理无论在场还是不在场，皆扩大了话语意义空间。因为，
上层阶级使相貌生理有极大反差。也终究会成就了夫妻。这是历史上反复演化的政治与婚姻的同构。而将生与政治进行交响叙事，正是籍著的情有独钟。在故事的成长里，读者会知道小雀斑很入世；且后来从政如鱼得水，一如征服蒂；而下层的安布罗修与阿玛丽亚，却是彼此挚爱然而自始自终充满恐惧、压抑、贫困，最后生死分离。如此叙事设计不只暗含对爱情意义的叩问，更是通过对话组接交出时间转换，以此来承接场景，使叙事回归主线。

“我最感痛心的却是由于我的过错她被辞退了。”圣地亚哥说道。（P25）

“其实是奇斯帕斯的过错。”波佩耶安慰他说，“你本来也并不知道‘育亨宾’是干什么用的。”接下来是一段介绍圣地亚哥的哥哥奇斯帕斯的陈述。然后是：

“我知道是干什么用的，只是从来没有见过。”圣地亚哥说道，“你认为这药会真会使女人动情吗？”

“是奇斯帕斯胡说，”波佩耶低声说道，“他真的跟你说话能使女人动情？”

“是的，但是用过量就要死人了，奇斯帕斯少爷，”安布罗修说道，“您可别给我惹祸，小心，要是给您爸爸捉住，我就完蛋了。”（P25）这句话以小一号字再度跳到安布罗修世上。在这里，读者开始有点明白为什么前文提到的，成年后的圣地亚哥对安布罗修有恐惧记忆。少年圣地亚哥对社会及性陌生而好奇，安布罗修是其中之一介绍给他“‘大教堂’是个酒吧、饭店，还兼幽会旅馆，少爷，厨房后面有一间小屋子，租金每小时两索尔。”这些对话不呈现具体话语场景，只是意念插入法。但对话体式紧凑分明，连年轻的圣地亚哥之问，也用的是小一号字：“你怎么知道那的女子是妓女？”（P28）

但是，少年圣地亚哥与安布罗修的对话，之所以插入或女仆家苏尔基约区的路上，并且因为主主叙事，正在这个贫民窟街区进行中。虽然视觉影像中亦有林荫、公园，还有婴儿车的一派和平，但幼小的少爷心情中已被灌输进许多关于这区域的贬损话语，营造者既有上层阶级的习惯偏见，也有像安布罗修这样也许是从这区域走出进入中产阶级家庭为仆的真实经验。就是在今天的西推、富人区与穷人区、白人与黑人区，也不乏如此露骨隔绝。这些地域人情的隔绝，其根深蒂固性，远远超过种族，身份可以想象的范围。甚至贫民窟在马里奥的文字中丝毫不见，如气味般旋绕，本文只是使其昭然若显而已。

“他跟你说过，只要用一小匙，任何女人就会和你睡觉，是吗？”波佩耶低声说道，“我看这都是他胡编的，瘦子。”

“需要试验试验，”圣地亚哥说，“哪怕光是为了证实一下呢，小雀斑。”（P25）这两句对话是承接回忆欲望、迷魂药而来。由此还构设了一组圣地亚哥从哥哥处得到“育亨宾”的对话过程。从陈述对话开始，由圣地亚哥与小雀斑对女人既朦胧又对刺激充满向往的兴奋；有圣地亚哥对哥哥的否决评判；还有回忆少年欲望被挑起的多重倒叙。叙述对话与引号直接对话交互衔接；奇斯帕斯赛马赢了钱，兴奋地到圣地亚哥房间，“劝圣地亚哥说：到岁数了，你也该活动活动了，这么大的人还是个男童，你不害臊吗？说着递给他圣地亚哥一支香烟。奇斯帕斯又说道：别扭扭捏捏的，有女人了没有？圣地亚哥骗他说
有了。奇斯帕斯关心地说：是时候了，说真的，你应该破":"地亚哥说道。
“你不是一直求你带我逛妓院去吗?”圣地亚哥说道。
“你要是得了脑病，老子非要你命不可。”奇斯帕斯说道。再:**说，男子汉搞女人要**
自己想法，花钱买不算本事，你不是以为什么都行吗？可你在女人问题上还懵懵懂懂的**
呢，超级学者。”
“我从来没认为自己什么都行，”圣地亚哥说道，“人犯我，我才犯人。好了，奇斯帕**
斯，带我去逛妓院吧。”接下来还有一组关于圣地亚哥与父亲与哥哥持不同的政治立场
对话，之所以插入，是奇斯帕斯认为连女人都不懂的乳臭未干毛小子，还总是义正言辞
地批评，可连弄个女人也得低三下四的。
“咱们是人各有志，”圣地亚哥说道，“好了，带我去妓院吧。’(P26)
“去妓院？没门儿。”奇斯帕斯说道，“不过，我教你一个办法能搞上女人。”为什么这
里要使用直接引语对话？放慢行文速度，意在让读者反思什么呢？每个对话里都有两
个醒目大字“妓院”，这个词语如此慢镜头要玩味出何种内涵？绝对不是一个男童破贞
那么简单。我会认为，更大的主题隐在后方，金钱与女人，甚至是富家子的金钱与下层
女人的纠缠。下文就更加清晰了。对话从再倒叙返回倒叙：
“‘育亨宾’在药店能买到吗?”波佩耶说道。
“是私下买到的，”圣地亚哥说道，“这是违禁品。”
“放一点点在可口可乐或是热狗里，”奇斯帕斯说道，“你就等着吧，慢慢就会起作用。
等她动情了，一切就看你的了。”
“比如说吧，”奇斯帕斯，“圣地亚哥说道，“这种药能用在多少女人身上?”
“你不至于笨得给十岁小女孩用这种药吧。”奇斯帕斯笑了，“对十四岁的女孩子就
可以用，但只要一点点。虽说十四岁的女孩不容易得手，但用了这药你就可以为所欲
为，”(P27)这里有一个对比性组接，前两句倒叙中清楚这春药属于”违禁品“，也就是
说，他们靠近罪犯和危险。后三句的再倒叙，却突出的“为所欲为”。这是富家子或者
说钞票的特权，在世界的任何角落，无何何时何代。问题是，好比猎人手中的猎枪已不
弹满膛，猎物呢？谁？哪一个女人该命中圣地亚哥的药枪?
接下的叙事是关于世间有许许多多女人，街头处处皆是，小雀斑把爱情留给蒂蒂小姐，
可以为她死，但是街上任何女人都可以混混。“圣地亚哥说，是由于我的过错她才被辞
退的，送点钱给她有什么不好？我看你别人爱上那个乔洛姑娘了，五块钱可是个不小的
数目，我们还不如请那两个孪生姐妹去看电影呢。这时两个姑娘已经乘上了一辆绿色
的莫斯科牌汽车。波佩耶：唉，晚了，兄弟，这时圣地亚哥已经点上了一支烟。’(P28)
这段陈述对话叙事，镜头已经回归叙事主线，叙事时空早已翻山越岭跌宕起伏好几回
了。连圣地亚哥也成长了，虽然没有文字表露他是否破贞，由男童转为了男子汉，但从
“点上了一支烟”足以表明其成长的形象了。
“我想奇斯帕斯肯定不会给自己的未婚妻用‘育亨宾’，这都是他胡编的。好叫你出
丑。”波佩耶说道，“你难道会给一个正派的姑娘用这种药粉吗？”如果说连小雀斑都有如
此界限，即正派和不正派女人的判别，那么她该是猎物，什么理据可以证明她是“不正
派”的呢？
“对未婚妻当然不能用，”圣地亚哥说道，“但对风骚的娘们儿为什么不可以用呢，你说是不是？”（P28）
“那你怎么办？”波佩耶说道，“是用掉它，还是丢掉它？”这几句直接对话里，有多少世间不公的潮涌澎湃。在世界文学的长廊里，多少个玛斯洛娃样的少女，本来纯洁美丽且勤劳，却被富家子弟作为了猎物，发泄完欲，塞几个钱，就大事告捷。即使如苔丝，有着祖先真实的贵族身份，却无法逃脱家里的贫穷，而这贫穷就是一个被富家子侮辱的合法理由，最后只能从一个美丽少女走向囚犯、杀人犯。马里奥书信如此，我想也许作者真的受福楼拜饮砒霜的动情，叙事者停住了，将直接对话改为了叙述，“我本来想丢掉它，小雀斑。圣地亚哥脸红了，放低了声音，嘿嘿嘿地说，后来我想了很久，想出了个主意，但仅仅是为了看看这药的效力到底如何，你看怎么样？”（P28）这本来没有引号的陈述，是心愿？理亏？少爷心里已经有了猎物目标，但首先得要说服自己的是“她”定是不正派的，是风骚的。

5 镑钱的价值很大，大到小雀斑不停地絮叨。5 镑钱的价值也真大，大到也许毁去一个少女的一生！这样的世间逻辑，让叙事者离弃，都不会脱去本意，施舍的 5 镑，与前面的妓院交相辉映。正是这扭曲的逻辑让理亏者恐怖，所以，在文本叙事中，将圣地亚哥的恐惧处理得恰到好处。马里奥喜好使用双关语：
“就怕阿玛莉娅一发火把我赶出来，”圣地亚哥说道。（这恐惧既有初入贫民窟的紧张、安布罗修经验的担忧，更是理亏、负疚的害怕）
“五镑钱也是一笔可观的数目了，”波佩耶说道，“得保她像接待国王一样接待你。”（P28）他们是否去道歉？施舍？还是去妓院？对于以金钱论人的价值之扭曲逻辑，也许没有分别。文本从这里开始，声音的交响化就越来越明显，一个语句涵盖了双重意境乃至话语场。好像你开了两个视频，同时播放不同时空的声音，却在同步中。

“我有点紧张，”圣地亚哥说道，“昨天我失眠了一整夜，大概就是为了这事。”（P28）为何事难入眠？为送钱？还是为下药？读者不能分辨，而文本也就自然过渡到下药的倒叙中。两个少男，读圣地亚哥父母外出，使女仆睡下，也得叫醒她来作为猎物成就少爷的心事。这里，使用的是叙述话语：“她这就来，小雀斑。圣地亚哥看到她没睡，给我们送点口可乐上来。两人笑了，嘘，她来了。是她吗？是她。”（P30）快速转换，恶作剧开始，“嘘”却一语双关。似乎作者也在故意给读者设迷魂，仓促一读“她来了”，真以为是女佣送了口可乐来了。只有潜心去比较叙事细节，诸如“她走到了门口，用惊奇、疑惑的眼光打量着他俩，她一言不发，后退一步倚在门框上。”若没有下文辅助，阅读可能只会迷惑，一个被要求送上口可乐的女仆服务，怎么可能这样的形态？一不会惊奇、疑惑，二不可能“一言不发”地傲慢。还有“她身穿一件粉红色毛衣，里面衬衫的扣子未扣上。”这几乎是诱惑读者去纠缠有关“正派”的问题。“她是阿玛莉娅，可又不是，波佩耶想道，因为她以前一直是扎着围裙在瘦子家中忙来忙去，手里不是端着托盘，就是拿着掸子。这时她披头散发地站在那，您好，少爷。”（P30）难道真是瞌睡碰上了枕头，这猎物也蠢蠢欲动，要往枪杆上撞？女仆也趁主人太太不在家，打算放纵一回？
其实，全都是作者给读者暗设的圈套。她在自己贫贱的家里，无需修边幅。突然的
冒闯者，犹如窥视了隐私。“我妈妈告诉我，说你离开我们家了，”圣地亚哥说道，“你走
了，我很难过。”两段对话只有圣地亚哥的话语是直接引号注出，而阿玛莉娅的回
答，只在陈述中。“不是我自己想离开的，是索伊拉太太把我辞退的，为什么要辞退我，太
太？索伊拉太太，这是我的事，你现在就去收拾东西。阿玛莉娅说着用手压平头发，整
好衬衫。”(P30) 也许这辞退风波背后还另有蹊跷，在圣地亚哥，母亲的“事”是为了惩罚
下药的晚上，而索伊拉自己的事，很有可能别有他意。而阿玛莉娅整作衣衫已承传接了
“收拾东西”，还双关出在母亲自己的事中，有“不正派”的危险，而这描述，实际面对的是
送钱来的圣地亚哥和小雀斑，那么始终是“正派”的。在接下来的陈述中，女孩告诉圣地
亚哥求了太太好久，但是没有用。更说明本来“正派”的少女，也许就因了那被放药的晚
上，而遭到了不只失去工作的危险，还有更大的大灰狼在暗中瞄上了猎物。正派与不
正派其实相隔咫尺，多少如芳汀似的女劳工，就因为被迫丧失了工作的权利，而被不
正派的男人和社会吞噬。这是为什么刚阿让有终身的愧疚，可悲惨的世界里也没有
因为雨果的塑造而更加美好。

“把盘子放在茶几上吧，”圣地亚哥说道，“等等，我们在听音乐。”叙事镜头在此倒
叙，陷阱之初，少女茫然不知；“阿玛莉娅把盛着可口可乐杯子的漆盘放在奇斯帕斯照片
的前面，带着满面好奇的神色在斗橱前站住了。她穿着白色的制服和与制服配套的平
跟鞋，但没戴围裙和头巾。”这才是女仆的形象，而且整得严谨。只不过对另一个世
界，她每日辛劳服务的上层，有某种好奇罢了。“干吗在那儿站着？来，坐下，还有地方。
阿玛莉娅轻轻地笑了；我怎么能坐呢？索伊尔太太是不喜欢我走进少爷们的房间的，您
难道不知道？傻瓜，我妈今天不在。”(P30)

也许自古以来，上层世界的一个作弄一个玩笑，下层世界中的可怜人们，就只能以
赤诚甚至感恩来接受，结果，有希腊神话中伊娥的故事，一份少女或者是向往，或者只是
被遭遇，却落得丧失人形生不如死。阿玛莉娅一点也不知危险藏在这看似友好的邀
请中，好似上层世界平等到了下层，自己也可以尝一口少爷小姐们喝的可口可乐，听一
曲美妙的歌。甚至把少爷的“紧张”都当成了真诚，却惘然不知他紧张的是若你拒绝，回
到自己仆人的房间，药就无法进入你的身体，就无法达到他们的目的。可是，姑娘，你只
有坚守自己的卑微，唯一的安全！

阿玛莉娅不是一个“装模作样”的人，靠劳动为生的人，即使想装模作样也难。在圣
地亚哥的盛情和小雀斑以“装模作样”这样的话语刺激下，“阿玛莉娅看看圣地亚哥，又
看看波佩耶，在床的一角坐了下来，脸色很严肃。”叙事者也许都动了恻隐，要帮你证明
“正派”，而不正派的正是他们。“圣地亚哥站起来向漆盘走去。他可别大意，可别放多
了，波佩耶思量着又看了阿玛莉娅一眼，”而且，为了掩护，分散你的注意力，“指了指收
音机。你喜欢这些人唱的吗？唱得真棒，对吗？我喜欢，唱得太好了。”叙事者在这叙述
对话中，尽可能地冷却自己的感情，却掩饰不住悲伤。多么简单的对话，看不见地雷埋
伏，更无死伤，是一个音乐的共鸣。这是真的吗？“阿玛莉娅双手放在膝上，笔挺地坐
着，半闭着眼睛仿佛要更好地欣赏；这是北方歌手唱的。”高明的作者，有许多隐语在这
冒似冷静却动情难遮的叙述。如果你出生在另一个世界另一个阶段，另一处地方另一番情境，你会是谁？女仆的阿玛莉娅懂得欣赏，懂得这是“北方歌手唱的”。而拥有音乐并把音乐作为诱饵者，在干什么呢？“圣地亚哥继续倒着口可乐。波佩耶不安地偷偷看着她。”马里奥用如此善恶交响叠加出精妙的叙述对话。如音乐演奏，此时，都不能再使用弓弦，必须用手指弹拨，以叩问：“阿玛莉娅，你会跳舞吗？”（P30）为什么要主语复指？为什么要将阿玛莉娅和“你”中再插进问号？“跳圆舞曲，波莱罗，还是华尔兹？”阿玛莉娅微微一笑道，严肃起来，接着她微微一笑：不，我不会。她向床沿上滑了滑，又起又起，这动作很不自然，好像身上的衣服太窄小了似的，又好像背上有刺，可是她那映在镜木头板上的影子并未移动。（P31）铁板钉钉如出身份，阿玛莉娅可以选择吗？但致命的还是某种禁不住的诱惑，尽管窘迫不自然，却挪不开步，难以自拔。

可是，马里奥用笔通过交响的叙事，像仙女助了灰姑娘水晶鞋般，帮卑微的阿玛莉娅浮起屹立：“我给你点钱买，用这钱买点什么吧。”圣地亚哥说道。“我？”阿玛莉娅看了钞票一眼，但没去拿，“索伊拉丁付了我全月的工资，少爷。”（P31）场景交替，在自己贫穷的屋里，阿玛莉娅是自己，尊严自然。即使是那让小雀斑喷嚏好好巨款的5镑，也没有构成直接诱惑。似乎证明，其实钱，不是姑娘堕落的原因。

但叙事镜头及时转换，跳跃沉浮，且精确无比，圣地亚哥举杯一饮而尽。……我喝，少爷，祝您健康！阿玛莉娅喝了一大口，喘了口气。把杯子从嘴边拿下，还剩半杯，真好喝，凉丝丝的。波佩耶走着边。（P31）马里奥•略莎的话语组接，叙事推移，真好比精雕细琢的木工，每个榫头都镶嵌得恰如其分。下药成功，接下来就是为所欲为了。

“你要是愿意，我们来教你跳舞。”圣地亚哥说道。“这样，等你有了未婚夫，就可以跟他去参加舞会，而不至于干等着别人跳舞了。”

“没准儿人家早就有未婚夫了。”波佩耶说道。“阿玛莉娅，你看明白了没有？”

“小雀斑，你瞧她笑的那样子。”圣地亚哥抓起她的一只胳膊，“你肯定看了，你的秘密我们早就发现了，阿玛莉娅。”这里又双关或者是隐蔽，发现的秘密不是“未婚夫”，而事药效，圣地亚哥的试验，通过阿玛莉娅的笑，似乎证明了功效。

“你有了，你有了，”波佩耶一屁股在她身旁坐了下来，抓住她的另一只胳膊，“瞧你笑的，坏妞儿。”作者在这里特意使用了直接对话，好让细节慢慢展露无遗。好比药效慢慢发挥作用，潜入为所欲为的前提——“坏妞儿”。（P31）

只有少什们，而且是下药者，方知这姑娘的“笑”是坏。阿玛莉娅自己是不知道的。也许她真的开心了一回，好似天堂的门竟然如此敞开，让她飞舞，灰姑娘也仙女了一回。马里奥•略莎是清醒的，清醒到必须分辨真伪。因此接上来一段叙述对话：“阿玛莉娅笑弯了腰，她摆动着双臂，但是圣地亚哥和波佩耶仍然抓住不放。有什么呀，少爷，我没有未婚夫。阿玛莉娅一边说，一边用肘推搡着，想把二人推开。圣地亚哥抱住她的这一点，波佩耶把手指到了她的眉腰。阿玛莉娅使劲用手推开，这可不行，少爷，别碰我。波佩耶又扑了过来，坏妞儿，没准儿你会跳舞，你骗我们说不会，你坦白。好吧，少爷，我收下了。为了表示不是装腔作势，她拿起了钞票，用手卷了起来，放进了毛衣的口袋；我
要您的钱，心里真是过意不去，您现在星期天看电影的钱都没有了。”（P32）两个场景被
作者嫁接得天衣无缝，而且遥遥呼应那个刺激性的语言“装腔作势”。这是一份愧疚补
偿的钱，而阿玛莉娅理解却是“朋友”的好意，故此，叙事者接下来，就在“朋友”词汇上大
下功夫，如文学长廊中不乏的描写：贫穷的家庭突然接待了贵客，虔诚的主人，用自己的
“裙子擦了擦房间当中的桌子；就坐一会儿。她眼睛里闪现了一丝狡黠的光芒：你们先
谈着，我去买点东西，一会儿就回来。”（P32）作者在抵挡少爷下药的预谋中并没有使用
“狡黠”，却给了阿玛莉娅，并与“光芒”相接。可见“狡黠”的作者意于聪慧。阿玛莉娅
真的是去买可口可乐了，而且还不忘记少爷们喜好用“麦秆喝”。相对这纯真，作者镶嵌
进那天晚上，少爷们意淫中的种种侮辱性恶行，而姑娘却如清风般，好似初萌了爱情。
“你干嘛要麻烦。”圣亚哥亚说道，“我们早想走了。”
阿玛莉娅递上可口可乐和麦秆，拖过一把椅子，在他们对面坐了下来。她这时已经
梳好了头发，系了腰带，扣好了衬衣和毛衣上的扣子。她看着两人喝，而她自己却不喝。
“傻瓜，你不该这么破费。”波佩耶说道。
“我花的不是自己的钱，是圣亚哥少爷送给我的钱。”阿玛莉娅笑了，“略微招待
一下而已。”（P33）我会认为，阿玛莉娅教会了少爷该如何花钱，钱可以是个什么东西。
正是作者交响出的和声，人人，本可以如此和平。

3. 情节、节奏化

马里奥·略莎制作的故事，喜欢用填充式来完善情节。在《酒吧长谈》中，直叙“酒
吧”场景时，上文已经分析，以网状的组接、旁观插叙和审视，造就了“长谈”的间接性。
以至于在貌似“长谈”的“酒吧”场景中，却无关畅言对话沟通。但是，之所以命名为
“长谈”，是这一行为依然真实发生了。只是作者使用了别具一格的结构，以先描轮
廓，后填充色彩的方式，好似中国的工笔绘画，有的几乎就像手板画，或许把描出的架
构先烧一遍底色，然后不混淆地层层加彩。

总在谈到后面的章节，方恍然大悟，原来“长谈”内容丰富。情节构成中，似乎马里
奥有意破坏有始有终如“滴答”的叙事时间进程，而欲追寻某种意象性时间，也可以称
其为“情节时间”，是指这一时间锻造的情节，更趋近心理而非叙事的物质外在表现。既
然是心理意象的时间回溯，情节在“长谈”中的时间流淌，就必然隐含了某种伦理性蓄
意，也就是小说中反复敲击的鼓点“什么时候倒霉的”。

音乐中，鼓点的作用在于敲击出节奏，不只是煽动起情绪，它还使得情节叙事具有
某种连贯和深入的可能，逼迫你省思。故事回忆一段青春豪情，革命加爱情。圣亚哥
亚考进了一所政治倾向非常强烈的学校圣马可，还与一男一女构成追慕共产地下组织的
三角关系。此情节跨文本很多，其中不无穿插其他故事，但由鼓点“何时倒霉”，始终牵
系。这是主人生初恋，是从这个女孩身上，“圣亚哥亚回想道：我发现了女人，她可
以干更多事，不光是为了跟人睡觉，不光是为人想念，让人追逐，是的，她可以干更多的事……”(P60)激发有作为的情绪，如蒸汽翻滚，但叙述者冷静诙谐。鼓点“何时倒霉”敲在“革命”地下组织的伴奏中，很容易暗示读者某种政治兴奋。可叙述者却挥舞性地在读者刚刚想极端思想严肃以待时，却插入像是黑人问语，不用小字号，显明此问属意念，是“长谈”正文的联想。“小莎，是不是由于在上一年级的时候看到圣马可是个大妓院，而不是像你所想的那样的天堂，你就倒霉了?” (P85)“大妓院”此处是比喻说法，意在讨论圣地亚哥对自己选择且奋力考取的大学之评价。不学无术，既无书本知识，政治亦感冷漠，唯一值得记忆的，就是阿伊达这个女性了。于是获取美人心成为主人翁意识不愿意承认，但为潜在意识的主核，亦是复调旋律之一。好似旋律的核心乃爱，其中另一道是圣地亚哥与父亲的关系;“您爸爸说，是圣马可害了您。”安布罗修说道，“他说您不爱他了，这要怪圣马可。”(P91)当小字号延展“长谈”，中间夹杂的同步发生的意念由正常字号道出，学校革命组织的人事关系叙述，这既是对父子反目的阐释，因为一个追求革命者对资产阶级父亲当有的界限，又是解构陈旧一问一答一事一追究的方式，犹如节奏的间隙起伏。而且也说明，人由思维到言谈的行为，不可能是单线平的，任何谈活都只是思维活动的一条线索，同时同步还有没有“谈”出的心里独白或者画外音。从此，故亲父子关系的走向，通过仆人安布罗修的插话导出，与学校革命团体有关“华盛顿”这个人物的组织建设相辉映：

“我爸爸跟你说我不爱他了?”圣地亚哥说道。
“你以为华盛顿走掉是由于这个?”阿伊达说道。
“他这一辈子最关心的就是搞清楚您为什么不爱他了，少爷。”安布罗修说道。
他没有说三年级学生……华盛顿……圣地亚哥回想着，他第一个成为熟人，成为朋友的人。
“他为什么以为我不爱他了?”圣地亚哥说道，“我爸爸还跟你说我爱他干什么?”
“我们为什么不组织个学习小组呢?”华盛顿心不在焉地说道。
……
“学习小组?”阿伊达一字一字地说道，“学习什么呢?”
“您爸爸不是跟我说的，”安布罗修说道，“是跟您妈妈，哥哥，妹妹和朋友说的。他们在汽车里谈，我开车时听到的。”
“学习马克思主义，”华盛顿很自然地说道，……
“你比我更了解我的爸爸。”圣地亚哥说道，“告诉我，他还说了我些什么?”
“这一定很有意思，”哈柯沃说道，“咱们组织个小组吧。”
“我怎么能比您更了解您的爸爸呢?”安布罗修说道，“瞧您说的，少爷。”(P92)

犹如小提琴与钢琴协奏曲，小字与常字，父子与革命组织间的人人关系，在内核心要素是“爱”“了解”，还有后有可能的如“阴谋”般的计划。关于爱与了解，本文已在第一部分分析，这里着重的是性与政治的和声共鸣，突出的不是圣地亚哥的父子关系，而是圣马可大学的爱情与政治纠葛下的三角关系。之所以父子关系会作为背景音乐，恰是因为父子不和被认为是这所大学之错。其实“错”得扑朔迷离还在于爱的本质，人在
成长过程中由亲情之爱过度到性别之爱的必然，政治只是个由头，暗下伏笔。而“倒霉”作为关键词，关联上了两组不同的爱恨情仇。是因为分组了，圣地亚哥才在爱情上败给了哈柯沃。三人在本同，分组导致圣地亚哥独自一组，三角关系的一对男女刚好成就了爱情。似乎鼓点“何时倒霉”有了结论性意义。但是，旋律未尽，鼓点难止，而且必须踩出样样的花点。

小莎，是不是因为升，2年级的时候由于开始觉得马克思主义光学习不够，还必须有信仰，你就倒霉了？你倒霉是不是由于缺乏信仰，小莎？你对上帝缺乏信仰，少爷？我对任何事物都缺乏信仰，安布罗修。（P95）从这里开始，大大一整段对话没有引号，依旧是小号与常规协作，不过节奏急促，交杂多声部，辨析出敌我是非朋友。是因为圣地亚哥对信仰的怀疑，才导致了三角关系的天平失衡，被孤立。尽管叙事中有一种心灵意识的画外音：小莎。最好当时能够把眼一闭；马克思主义是以科学为依据的……把脚一跺：上帝并不存在。把牙咬得咯咯响；阶级斗争是历史的动力；咬紧牙关，深吸一口气；无产阶级摆脱了资产阶级的剥削，也就解放了全人类；冲啊，也就建立一个没有阶级的世界。本文不无遗憾地感受到，这个画外音始终不能完全决定心灵的真实，于是圣地亚哥杂揉情绪下“回想”：小莎，可结果你没能够这样做，你过去是，现在是，将来是，到死你也是小资产阶级。（P98）

这个判决对于一个追寻政治理想的小年轻来说打击沉重，他反思自己无论是家庭还是学校，他都在“装假”，是这样的痛苦回想，才使得酒吧场景中圣地亚哥喝醉了。在这叙事中偶然插入一句：“您最好别再喝了，少爷。”安布罗修说道。佐证了叙事始终是“长谈”的一部分，一块作色板块而已。就在板块色彩高潮迭起时，鼓点重锤：“小莎，你是由于缺乏信仰才倒霉的吗？会不会是由于你太胆怯了？”圣地亚哥自责：“一个既胆怯又无信仰的人就像同时患了梅毒和麻风一样。”（P98）永恒总在现实中破碎，只剩“臆造，夸张，说谎”的“永不结束”的“独白”，是这让你圣地亚哥痛苦万分。鼓点敲击，追究其切音，在“倒霉”以锤定音之下，到底何时呢？“小莎，是不是在第二学年最后几个星期、期末考试之前，无事可做的日子里倒的霉？”他曾经拼命以阅读马克思来抗争，以去姑娘阿伊达家时，黄昏将步入黑夜之时，欲望的蠕虫还“越长越大”，“湿漉漉”“粘糊糊”，几乎“越来越有希望”，却在抵达后，方知转换为了“尖刀”，将“心灵”破碎如“面包屑”了。那是阿伊达告诉他，哈柯沃向她表白爱之时，也是圣地亚哥再度认清自己“怯弱”之刻——“十月的一天晚上，七点，在阿列基帕路的第四街区上。”圣地亚哥说道，“我明白了，安布罗修，我就是在此时此地倒霉的。”（P101）

鼓锤定音，却余音未了。人该如何表达，声音之中的声音，该如何辨别和区分，情节在这样的节奏跌宕中韵味无穷。说马里奥·略莎的叙事具有网络交响品格，正正在于无论是如绘画的填充还是协奏的和鸣，其关联方式一如网络标签关键词，只要输入标签关键词，所有情感色块就统统关联人视频网块，比如上文所引的关于何时“倒霉”的辨析，性，政治，爱情，革命，还有金子关系，父亲与黑司机的瓜葛，甚至与凶杀，统统可以由关键词“早晨”，索引了出来。但是，这个“早晨”又不是固定的，却始终在游动变幻，一如各色块的相互交错，是日转星辰，昼夜交替。
无论是爱情还是仕途，人生就是这样荡着秋千，翻着筋斗，上下折腾，跌宕起伏。只有世事人生的无常像生死，不分等级肤色贵贱，平等与每个人。这似乎是马里奥•略莎塑造故事的意旨。所以故事不在乎章回，不在乎开始，也不在乎怎样结束。只要把每个人生的色块填满，充满了偶然性，似乎作者呕心沥血就在于营造一个随意，随意到读者稍微分心，就必然在纷乱的线索中迷路。马里奥自己在1989年《谎言中的真实》文中认为：“实际生活的流动的，不会停止，也无法度量，是一种混乱状态；每个历史事件在混乱中与全部的历史事件混合在一起，由此，每段历史既无开头也永远没有结尾。”①他的填色方式，基本跟随如此对生活的认识，所以才会有交错对话穿插历史横断面的写法。无论是奥德里亚政变与执政，还是圣马可学潮和聚会，甚至每个个人的历史，都是通过某种共时且不无纷乱中呈现出来，从而填满故事的色彩。但是，略莎又非常强调，“小说是写出来的，不是靠生活生出来的”（同上）也就是说小说写作在模仿现实生活时，必有匠心。在纷乱的色彩骨子里，定有一个意旨一个核心，一条枢纽密布的线索。只是这个开头和结尾的故事时间，与现实时间有着“深渊相隔”（同上）。就像《酒吧长谈》似乎作者在努力共同展示现实与虚构的双重时间，若把“长谈”的四个小时模拟为现实时间，那么每个读者都会清楚，其实故事里的时间跨过时代和个人的半生乃至一生的历史。这些历史内容皆以色块的形式，或者叠屏或者链接的方式共存于读者空间。只是这个叠屏和链接的速度，不是由网管说了算，而是如略莎：“一部小说的主权不仅是写小说的语言产生的：也是由它的时间体系，由存在流动于小说中方式产生的；存在何时停，何时加快速度，叙述者为描写那编造的时间采取什么时间角度。……小说中时间的间隔是为了获取某种心理效果而制造的装置。在这个装置里，过去可以放在现时的后面（结果在原因前面）。”（同上）因此，就不难理解《酒吧长谈》中，故事叙述之初，常常会有突如其来的时间，其节奏犹如空穴来风之感，比如圣地亚哥在酒吧突然向安布罗修追问：“你别装疯卖傻”，圣地亚哥闭上眼，吸了一口气，“我们坦率地谈谈吧，穆斯是怎么回事？我爸爸是怎么回事？是不是他命令你干的。”（P17）这其实暗含了整个故事的结果，是因为安布罗修杀害了一个叫穆斯的女人，从而离开了圣地亚哥家，到处流浪。“长谈”纠结的全部就在于安布罗修与圣地亚哥父亲的关系，他们与这穆斯的恩怨，可是操弄符号的作者，绝对不会直截了当给你结果，而是营造了一个现实与虚构同构的迷宫。在这迷宫里，读者只能听凭突兀的鼓点，来跟踪节奏线脉。

在安布罗修说说自己太太阿玛莉娅的死，以及自己的女儿时，语言上空会骤然一声鼓点或者说啰音“铛”地一下，“堂费尔民说道，你干了这种事，就必须离开这里，无赖！”前文已论述非“长谈”之外的联想语言都是用常态字，所以圣地亚哥父亲堂费尔民突然出现在了思念文字里。在知道结果之后的读者会一头雾水不知此鼓点来自何方。而这意念文字叙述的故事却是阿玛莉娅，处女失身与安布罗修之后，遭到安布罗修无礼的羞辱性拒斥，且遭到圣地亚哥母亲的辞退，而堂费尔民却介绍她去了药房，对爱情失望的女孩与药房另一位工人特里尼达恋爱结婚的故事。这可以说是一个关于爱情的伤痛，

之所以安布罗修在谈到死去的妻子时，会联想或者说链接到这个故事，且链接上堂费尔
民，都因了锥心之痛。安布罗修当初是因为恐惧而不敢公开与阿玛莉娅的恋情。那么
他恐惧什么呢？与堂费尔民有什么关系呢？回答这个问题，作者将叙事速度几乎放到了
空山回音中，袅袅难缉。只见在圣地亚哥他的圣马可大学的政治以及意念链接到关
于“性弱”与爱情时，空中又响起一声鼓点：“那当然，”堂费尔民说道，“你必须离开我
家，离开利马，销声匿迹。这不是为我自己考虑，无赖，我是为你着想。”(P101)的确，是
安布罗修自己杀害了缪斯，不是堂费尔民指使。但是安布罗修是因为缪斯敲诈堂费尔
民才干的。可以说堂费尔民在某种程度上的确如安布罗修认为的“一切都会”，他给了
安布罗修两万索尔，让他逃离，自己去创业安家。而叙事者却只让堂费尔民的这一声鼓点
敲了一下，表明线索仍在潜动而已，且之所以这鼓点的发声，更在于语言环境的营造，那
是圣地亚哥意念里的纠结：爱情与革命，谁该看得更重呢？圣地亚哥在“长谈”中告诉安
布罗修，他那时什么都懂，什么都不想，只有出走，逃避，销声匿迹。是“销声匿迹”这个
关联词，是爱情与革命的矛盾氛围，将安布罗修与堂费尔民的意念对话插入了故事中。
“您叫我到哪儿去呀，老爷？”安布罗修说道，“您不信任我了，您是在赶我走，老爷。”
(P102)在圣地亚哥回想青年时的热血，革命，甚至跃跃欲试要加入共产党的激情，以及
与阿伊达、哈柯沃的三角恋情挣扎中，关于“信任”这样的标签，才链接了安布罗修回应
堂费尔民的鼓点声。

如星星般稀疏的鼓点、袅袅余音，正是马里奥为小说把握的节奏。原来堂费尔民，
圣地亚哥的父亲与安布罗修是不为世俗所接纳的同性恋。安布罗修是被动的，但也有无
限的依赖和留恋。不喜欢政治却要利用政治做生意的堂费尔民，同性恋的生活恰是他
在各方压力运作中回归本我的一个放松保护的装置，一如小说中他的另一别墅之地“安
贡”。他占有了黑人司机安布罗修，当有他别样对情感纯粹的要求。“我知道你当时为
什么要那么干了，无赖。”堂费尔民说道，“不是由于她总找我钱，不是由于她总讹诈
我。”(P155)此鼓点是在选举政治的色彩背景下敲出的，这里的关键词是阴谋、讹诈，还
有玩着像玩选票、像演女人一样的游戏。奥卡约是投机生意和政治的行家，虽然中学没
有毕业，却是个天才的投机冷血者。堂费尔民做生意般介绍缪斯做了奥卡约的情妇，而
阿玛莉娅与安布罗修旧情复燃，并做了缪斯的女仆，于是缪斯抓住了堂费尔民的隐私，在
得知阿玛莉娅为安布罗修怀了孕后，在奥卡约被政客玩弄逃亡离开秘鲁之后，开始敲
诈堂费尔民的钱。略莎出色的叙事技巧就在于可以让无论多么轰轰烈烈的历史都成为
背景，就像油画的底色，虽然语言很多，却只是做了底子，而真正的语义却是几个零星的
鼓点，好似画面上的蜻蜓点水，提了一点亮色艳色而已。堂费尔民的情感起伏跌宕，就
在这样的隐约中，一如他对圣地亚哥的父子情感，总是背影般鞠躬尽瘁地让人感动。而
对安布罗修，作者有意如此安排对话穿插。

“你当时认为我会因为得知你有女人而把你辞退，”堂费尔民说道，“而且你也以为
干了那件事就等于卡住了我的脖子，其实你也是想讹诈我，无赖。”

“先生，他们说选举里有鬼。”一个警卫说道。

……
“我曾经问他什么时候把老婆从钦拉接来，”埃斯皮纳说道，“他说永远不会接来，就让她留在钦拉。您瞧，卡约乡巴佬变得多坏，堂费尔民。”

......

“够了，别哭了，”堂费尔民说道，“难道不是这样吗？难道你不是这样想的吗？难道你不是因此才那样干的吗？”

......

“不过我想将军不会认为这是坏事，凡是卡约干的，他都认为是好事。”埃斯皮纳上校说道，“将军说他对国家最大的贡献就是把卡约挖掘了出来，把他从内地带出来同我一道工作。卡约简直把将军装在口袋里了，堂费尔民。”

“好了，对，对，”堂费尔民说道，“别哭了，无赖。”

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“好了，你并不想讹诈我，而是想帮我的忙。”堂费尔民说道，“不过，你还是按我说的去做吧。好了，听话，够了，别哭了。”

“我们等了那么久，原来就是为了抢票箱这点小事。”......

“我没看不起你，也不恨你，”堂费尔民说道，“很好，你尊敬我，你是为我好，为了不让我受罪，好了，好，你不是无赖。”

“门迪萨瓦尔以为自己很有把握，”乌朗多说道，“他以为这是他的地盘就能获得多数票，结果是鸡飞蛋打。”

“对，很好！”堂费尔民说了又说。（P157）

这组对话穿插，即使加进“鸡飞蛋打”的标签，也一定可以索引到页面。但是作者绝对不只满足叙述清楚了一个事件的来龙去脉，更大的兴趣却是在扩张人的心理时空。为此，叙事者不惜将时间错乱性并置。政治选举是在奥卡约刚入仕途得意之时，而堂费尔民与安布罗修的对话，却发生在奥卡约的政治生命结束之后。之所以组合在一起，且鼓点频频，节奏舒缓，目的就在于揭示堂费尔臣这个人物。前文已有儿子圣地亚哥与安布罗修的争执，这个父亲，到底是小人还是好人？略莎并不喜好判断，他的人物构设基本全权通过叙事策略，通过选择符号的组接来尽量拓展这个人物性格的立体多面。尽管网页上可能只是平面的单人接电话的形式，所有安布罗修的神态语言都通过堂费尔民的接听中转述而出，但读者完全可以按照意念上链接到其他阐释画面，而得出自己对这些人物的感受。

结  语

当论及略莎立体画象人物时，有不少评论多继承性地指出人物的多重身份。比如慈爱的父亲，暗地的同性恋，称客交易者等，笔者却认为，身份的复杂在一定程度上可以多面揭示人物的性格有可能多异，但这不是绝对的。一个大众化平扁人物也可以有多
重身份，既做好父亲的角色又做好奸诈商人的角色，或者做好残忍政客角色；而一个立体多面且具独特性格之人，也可以就在一重身份或者一种心情下，纷彩多变。马里奥叙事的出色就在于刻画人物着重的是性格，性格的别具一格，方显出立体多面色彩纵横。

外在的身份如相貌，在整容术遍布大街小巷电线杆的今天，外貌的美和丑，与职位身份的高与下，都具有了大众化的可塑性。但人物构造的叙事魅力就在于创造独特性。堂费尔民的独特，并不在于他是个同性恋者或者商人，而在于他自己没成为另一个好父亲的无能为力，且其地位和经济与他对圣地亚哥的情感爱莫能助。所以，外在，如圣地亚哥的心语；“他使出浑身解数奋斗着，为了不被人吃掉，他就得吃人；他到底是个受害者还是个害人者?”(P339)这问表明了堂费尔民人物既典型又普遍的意义，“受害”与“害人”本来不该成为一个同构性问题，但恰似畸形的使然。机械型的社会是无可谈羞耻与否的，而人不一样，堂费尔民的内里还有一份外人不知的“羞愧”感。

因此，马里奥·巴尔加斯·略莎最具魅力且费尽心机设的叙事，就在于写人。影像是网状化，声音交响化，及叙事时间的把握，鼓点快慢的节奏，都在力求将人的心理时空延宕回旋。对军事寡头奥德利亚的独裁统治的否决，也在于这个官僚体制将“人像蚂蚁一样被组织起来，一个无所不能的压缩机粉碎了人们的一切个性。”(P3)人无法逃离生存的时代环境，如作者慨叹的，他与他的同龄秘鲁人；“是在温柔的暴力或是粗暴的柔情中成长的”(P5)，小说就为了揭示这病态现象。不是人自己愿意“倒霉”，而是在整个国家都“倒霉”的时刻，人无处可逃，圣地亚哥对安布罗修说：“反正我们这个国家里，一个人自己不倒霉，也要让自己倒霉。我并不后悔，安布罗修。”(P156)关键是，后悔对人生不发生任何意义。人生多有惋惜，就像堂费尔民对自己的爱儿语重心长：“我一直搞不懂，瘦儿子，”小莎，他低着头看你，仿佛是在对潮湿的土地或是长满青苔的岩石讲话，“你离家出走，我起初以为是由于你有自己的想法，你是共产党，愿意像穷人那样生活，想为穷人斗争。可是，你真的是这样吗，瘦儿子？你甘愿在这种平庸的位置上干下去？为了一个无所作为的前途?”(P337)叙事者中间的插语，极尽了事世人生的苍凉。

其实，每个人的选择和行事，初衷一定不会是碌碌无为。在弱肉强食的社会，人有着匆匆的苦衷。就像书中第一部第7章，在政治阴谋角逐叙述中的空镜头，那“一片生长着鬣蜥”“一个劲地往上飞”的兀鹰，到最后也只能“小心翼翼地伸出它那灰色的钩爪。它是想试探锐利的承受力，温度，还是想试试锐利皮不存在不存在呢？它收拢双翅，在锐皮棚顶上停了下来，警惕地东瞅西望。但是为时已晚，石块雨点般砸进了它的羽毛，打断了它的骨头，折弯了它的尖啄……”(P105)兀鹰的象征，谁也难逃宿命。第二部第9章的奥卡约败北，感受的就是“一个幻影突然变成了现实，跳在他的背上，把他压倒了。”(P294)只是倒下的唏嘘声各异，奥卡约可以“像坟墓一样一声不吭。”(P502)因为他掠夺投机成性，是恐惧给予的。

在略莎的笔下，情欲也如相貌或者官职权力一样，过眼烟云。能将身躯倒下的唏嘘转换为后世的语言意思，终究需要情怀。安布罗修对堂费尔民的缅怀，就因了“他坐在那里，让我喝酒，平等待我。”(P501)不管是什么肤色，底层对上层的向往，如兀鹰的向上飞翔，渴望平等。阿玛莉娅对缪斯的感恩也如此理。作者非常机巧地不是借用深
知内情且与缪斯有同性床头之好的妓女凯妲来叙述被谋杀的缪斯人生，而是借女佣阿玛莉姬之口，塑造出一个特立独行、为情魂断之女色。缪斯与凯妲曾作为奥卡约性怪癖的情欲挑逗者，与政治双簧缠绵，却只有阿玛莉姬刻骨铭心地思念，甚至将自己女儿的名字都用了缪斯奥登希娅之名。阿玛莉姬坚信她友是不同他人的好，推究其根源，却是缪斯“平等”待她，像前文论述的初尝“可口可乐”一样，阿玛莉姬感恩使缪斯让她学会了洗澡用肥皂。向上飞舞，缪斯对于阿玛莉姬，就是一个追求的目标和向往，就是在这样一份追求的偶尔满足中，留下了根深不灭的思念情怀。

没有人会同意圣迪亚哥的哥哥斯培拉的问题：“你这辈子到底想干什么？为什么总是想方设法使自己倒霉？”（P540）而圣迪亚哥恰恰是在追求中“倒霉”的，只是他想追求特立独行，“因为多亏我考上了圣马可，我才有成为一个模范学生，模范儿子，也没成为一个模范律师，安布罗修。”（P135）模范，正是机器型熄灭个性的结果。“倒霉不一定有倒霉相”，（P37）但倒霉却宿命地与个性追求悖逆。对自己没有期待的算不是人？

“您问我这辈子希望成为什么样的人，老爷？”安布罗修说道，“这还用说，我想成为富翁。”

……

“您希望成为幸福的人，是吗，老爷？”安布罗修说道，“我当然也希望幸福，可是，有钱和幸福是一回事呀。”（P119）这是穷人的普遍心声，但事实上，有了钱的人像堂费尔民、奥卡约有钱并不等于幸福，倒是圣迪亚哥对自己的婚姻表示了满意：“我对自己的婚事很满意”，圣迪亚哥说道，“问题是这实际上不是我自己决定的，是命运强加给我的，同我的工作一样，同我身上发生的一切事一样。说来不是我做事，而是事做我。”（P445）

《酒吧长谈》①阐述的，依旧是现代意义上的人在终极意义上是被动可怜的动物。仅有的幸福只不过如安娜失而复得小狗巴盖盖而已（P20）。更多的却是如阿玛莉娅、安布罗修期望的阶级超越，最后都只是比原点更沮丧。前者最后到死更适应于村妇的生活；后者逃亡穷困潦倒。本可以2年后回利马时再求助堂费尔民，但终究因为一份情怀还有自尊，没有回到利马。但是自尊又能坚守什么呢？最后靠着一个“无所求”的黑人相助，谋得了临时性的捕狗工职业。

《酒吧长谈》①的结尾，驻笔在安布罗修对自己回家乡钦特的叙述中。[20] 让扑朔迷离的故事，悠悠地滑出了一个绵绵无绝期的叹息。物是人非，却只有落后依旧，贫穷固然。而追求游走之人，难似候鸟过江东，与豪情壮志根本无关。“我今天晚上就回到了利马，发誓再也不去了。我在利马到了霉，可在钦特，除了感到倒霉，我还感到自己衰老了，少爷。”（P548）这最后的结尾也有评论者注意到作者使用了叙事者、人物第一人

称，第三人称的转换。本文认为如此叙事变换，正是将各阶层尽管差异纷争，但最终在人生的意义上，归为了圆舞曲的哀鸣。这才是虚构之真！真的是磨难，真的是叩问！

马里奥·巴尔加斯·略萨起笔《酒吧长谈》是在1969年，这也是网络刚刚起步之时，笔者会认为，此文本的可贵，恰在于写作技艺与工具的崭新默契和探索。

2012-8-1 完稿于景德镇高专陋室

① 梁丽英.浅析《酒吧长谈》中的对话艺术[J].苏州科技大学学报，2004(11).
三、
文化符号学研究
仁学的符号学诠释

季宏

摘 要 从符号学的角度诠释仁学的本质，是儒学现代化的迫切要求。胡塞尔的现象学悬置是一件非常好的工具，可以帮助我们对儒学进行彻底的反思，以揭示仁学的核心存在。重新悬置两千年的儒学，即使孔子的亲传弟子的思想我们也要悬置，让晦暗不明、意义不定的仁的面目重放光明，达到一目了然、形象直观的境地。

关键词 仁、儒学、符号学、儒学

1. 引 言

儒学是指孔子及其弟子以及再传弟子所组成的学问，前后持续两千多年，到现在还在延续。而仁学仅指孔子在《论语》中所传达的学问，它是《易经》的人文学的符号呈现，是人文知识诞生的平台。仁学并不把自然科学和人文科学等知识作为自己的研究对象，而是追问这些知识何以能够产生、何以能够发展。从符号学的语境讲，仁学的“所指”指的是宇宙和人类社会的根本规律；而针对“所指”的“能指”，却有不同的方式。《易经》用“太极”呈现，老子用“道”呈现，孔子用“仁”呈现，胡塞尔用“主体间”呈现，海德格尔用“此在”呈现。虽然“能指”的方式和路径不同，但是都追求一个共同的目标——揭示人类和宇宙的最根本的规律。仁学的研究方法很简单，儒、释、道互参，东西方文明互证。

2. 仁在《论语》中所呈现的符号意义

在《论语》中，孔子对“仁”的表述有两个影响广泛的观点。“仁者爱人”和“克己复礼
为仁”。孔子针对不同的提问人，所作的回答是不同的。对于张谈“信”；对于言谈“义”；对于狂谈“礼”；对于夫子谈“仁”。对鲁哀公问“古之仁”的，孔子回答“克己复礼”。孔子总结孔子关于“仁”的谈话，都有一个共同点，即从不同的方面谈到“仁”。“仁”是什么？首先，不能用“爱他”解释“仁”。爱他，是一向另一方表达心意。But this 心意是单向性的，大多时间是武断和自作多情的。子路说“爱人者，必反其仁”（《论语·卫灵公》）。这句话解构了传统上把仁解释为“爱他”的言说系统。因为仁的范畴要比爱的范畴大。爱人的心理趋向是单向性的。例如，如果甲对乙示爱，而乙不回应，这就叫“不敬”，不领情。遇到这种情况，甲就要反思在示爱的时候，有些地方做得不好。比如可能是尊重不够，有施舍怜悯之嫌，也可能是诚意不够，有敷衍之嫌；或者是有意无常，有行骗设陷之嫌；所以，如果你的示爱没有得到相关方的回应，就叫“不敬”。孔子的“克己复礼”，就是要让你反过来反思你的爱，用意纯不纯，用心诚不诚，方式巧不巧，态度真不真，是否对相关方造成伤害等。如果通过了仁的审查，就能获得相关方的爱护。如果不能通过仁的审查，这个爱只能算单方面的行为，是虚情的。从爱到礼，再到由礼到爱的过程，本身就是婚姻的形成过程，当然也是“仁”的形成过程。仁所具有的状态不是一朝一夕形成的，而是经过长期的、反复的沟通和交流，需要动用智慧、诚心、信心和耐心构建起来的。

颜回问仁，孔子回答道，“克己复礼为仁。一日克己复礼，天下归仁焉。为仁由己，而由人乎哉？”（《论语·里仁》）这里的“克”，《说文解字》写道，“克，肩也”。段玉裁注解“肩，肩也。人部曰：肩，肩也。毛谓二字皆训克也。肩谓任，任事以为肩。故任之肩。也谓之克。”总结许慎和段玉裁的解释，“克己”就是“肩例自己”。在“肩例自己”包含两层意思，一是“肩例自己”，二是修养自己。正如管子讲“肩例实则知礼节，衣食足则知荣辱”（《老子·管子》）。所以，修养自己是第一位，修养自己才是第二位。过去把“克已”解释为克制自己，从修养的目标来看是正确的，但是，从仁的起点来看，却是有问题的。克制自己需要有一个前提，即存在的前提。如果没有生存权和话语权等宪法赋予的权力，拿什么来克制自己。把“克”解释为“肩”，我们就站在了孔子的高度认识仁。仁从结构上看，分为两个有机的结合体，即：主体与主体间。主体的生存、发展和壮大，这是“肩己”；而主体间要求沟通和交往，既交往就要讲究规矩和法律，这是“复礼”。事实上，“克己复礼”就是“肩己复礼”。举例说明，中国现在讲“和平崛起”。“崛起”是“肩己”的工作，“和平”是“复礼”的要求；人们抱怨“为富不仁”、“先富起来”是“肩己”的工作做得好，但过上好日子以后，更要“复礼”，更要加强慈善和环保工作。再比如“果仁”的仁，它是植物生长的起点。内部补充着生长的动力，这是“肩己”的本能。但是，作物的生根发芽却需要水、温度、阳光等外界因素，这是“复礼”的过程。只有遵循和适应外界环境，一颗“果仁”才能成为大树。仁等人文概念的精细化研究，需要借助符号学、现象学等西方现代人文哲学和最新科学成果来进行解释和梳理。
仁与义、礼、智、信的范畴比较

（1）“仁”，《说文》：“亲也。从人二。段玉裁集中了郑玄、何晏、孔颖达的相关注解。《中庸》曰“仁者人也”注：“人也读如相人偶之人。以人意相存问之言。”《大射仪》“遣以耦”注：“言以者，耦之事。次此言相人偶也。”《聘礼》“每曲耦”注：“以相人耦为敬也。”《公食大夫礼》“宾人三耦”注：“相人耦。”《诗》，《匪风》笺云“人偶能含鱼者，人偶能辅周道治民者。”《正义》：“人偶者，谓以人偶尊偶之也。”《论语》注：“人偶同位人偶之辞。”《礼》注云：“人偶相与为礼义皆同也。”按人用其言而我亲密之词。独则无耦，耦则相亲。故其字从人二。这段注释中有几个关键词：一个是郑玄注“相人偶”，一个是段玉裁注“独则无耦，耦则相亲。”“相人偶”的解释见刘文英的研究，是一种古老的礼仪：“两个人见面，首先互为对称，然后互相作揖，表示敬意和问候”（刘文英，1990）；而“耦”是两个人在一起耕地。物理学有“耦合”的概念，指两个或两个以上的体系或两种运动形式之间通过各种相互作用而彼此影响，以至联合起来的现象。可见，从汉代的郑玄到清代的段玉裁都准确地揭示了“仁”的本质含义，即仁是两个人的主体间关系。孟子说：“夫仁，天之尊爵，人之安宅。”（《孟子·书·仁》）这是对仁的形象描述（白先勇，2003）。

（2）“义”，《说文》：“义之则也，从我、羊。”段玉裁注解到：义之本训，礼容各得其所宜，礼容得宜则善矣。在解释“我”的时候，又借用董仲舒的观点，“仁者人也，义者我也，谓仁必及人，义必由中制也”。分析段玉裁和董仲舒的观点，可以看出这样的结论：在仁的框架下，主体间的关系——我，做出恰如其分的言行就是“义”。比如义的主体字是“義”，是屠宰牛羊以祭祀的会意。杀牲祭祀，是古代不可废弃的大事，作为“我”最适宜的言行是“威仪也”。所以，“义”强调当事人“我”，要根据具体情况作出最适宜的选择。可见，仁的范畴比义大，仁为义提供交流的时间和空间。义在仁所搭建的平台上，可以作出多种选择，而其中最时宜的那个选择就是义。

（3）“礼”，《说文》：“礼，履也。所以事神致福也。”段玉裁注解到，礼有五经，莫重于祭，故礼字从示，示者行礼之器。礼的特性是践行，在各种礼仪的演示中，关键是要表达崇敬之情、尊敬之意。比较仁、义和礼可知，仁是主体间的存在，义是主体间交往的具体实践，而为仁和义的存在提供融洽的环境。所以，仁的范畴比礼大，仁的存在是礼的存在依据。没有仁，礼的存在就没有意义。

（4）“智”，《说文》：“识也”；“知”《说文》：“词也，从口从矢”。知和智在古文中可以通用，但这里却要详细区分它们。在仁的框架下，词是主体间交往的主要内容，但这些内容能否成为科学知识，还必须经由实践来检验，只有经过检验的知识才能成为科学知识，否则就是伪知识。当然这个过程需要“智”来把关。智用心倾听“知”的言说，判断其真伪，观察其言行，权衡其利弊，最后形成综合判断，交由“义”来执行。

（5）“信”，《说文》：“信也。从人从言。会意”。“信”和“信”字面意义很明确。人说出的话，就是承诺。而要实现承诺，就必须讲诚信。在仁的框架下，一个事件到“信”这里就已经结束了。人文世界的基本过程包括“仁、义、礼、智、信”五个阶段。

分析比较“仁、义、礼、智、信”，仁的范畴最大，其次才是义、礼、智、信。它们的价值
和意义全部建立在仁的基础之上。

3. 仁与“言说太极”

3.1 阴阳太极

仁作为一个汉字符号所呈现的意义和太极八卦呈现的意义是相同的。仁是主体间交往的状态，太极是阴阳互动的状态。

道家内丹学派把宇宙乾坤看成炼丹的炉鼎，把日月看成炼金丹的药物，把八卦看成炼丹的火候，把人类看成炼制的金丹。张紫阳的《悟真篇》写道：“先把乾坤为鼎器，次将乌兔药来烹”（《悟真篇·卷中之一》），其中，乌兔是太阳和月亮的别名。依照“言不尽意”和“得意忘言”的原则来阅读内丹学派的文章。可知，内丹义理实际上是通过炼丹成仙的实践过程，把人类和自然世界的规律揭示出来，使人在修炼的过程中，体悟人类和宇宙的道理。

在宇宙演化史中，太阳已经有50亿年，地球也有46亿年。地球上的生命已经存在30亿年，人类的历史至少也有200万年。内丹义理把太阳系的这段历史称为烹炼人类这枚金丹的时间火候。人类的生存是在昼夜和四季中度过的，内丹的火候也是以一天和一年为一个周期。一天分为十二个时辰，从子时到午时为进阳火，从午时到子时为退阴符。纵观一个昼夜的气温和太阳高度的变化，进阳火和退阴符的过程与地面获得太阳光热的多少是一致的。日出以后，近地面气温随着太阳高度角的上升而升高，热量收入大于支出，出现盈余。午后，随着太阳高度的降低，热量收入小于支出，出现亏损，气温下降。同样的道理，一年四季地球上的热量变化也符合这个规律，以中纬度地带最为典型。一年分为二十四节气，其中，冬至至北半球北回归线以北地区太阳最低的时刻，此时昼最长夜最短，地面获得太阳光热最少。夏至刚好相反，春秋分日昼夜平分。从热量收支状况看，北半球的夏半年收入大于支出，冬半年则相反。总体来看，一个周期（一年或一天）的热量盈亏可分为五个阶段：收入大于支出，支出最大，收支最大，收支平衡。如果把收入称为阳，支出称为阴，则上述阶段可以转述为：阳长阴消、阳极、阳消阴长，阴极、阴阳平衡等。利用金木水火土五行还可以表述为：阳长阴消象征万物生长，称为“木”；阳极象征熊熊烈火称为“火”；阴阳消长象征物质凝固，称为“金”；阳极象征水往低处流，称为“水”；阴阳平衡象征木火金水都归于土，称为“土”。这样一个周期的热量盈亏又可以表述为：木生火、金生水，木火金水生土又归于土。即阴阳消长最终归于阴阳平衡。《易经》的八卦是东方文明对阴阳变化研究的最高状态：八卦即震、离、兑、乾、巽、坎、艮、坤。从震卦到兑卦为阳长阴消，乾为阳极，从兑卦到艮卦为阳消阴长，坤为阴极。八卦相互搭配构成六十四卦，详细揭示人类世界的阴阳消长变化的过程。回顾地球的46亿年的历史，无非就是上演着年复一年、日复一日的阴
阳消长，热量盈亏的变化过程。人类就是在这样的宇宙环境下孕育而成的。从单细胞到多细胞，从无脊椎到有脊椎，从卵生到胎生，最终进化为人类。内丹义理的高明之处就是用最简单的方式，高度概括了地球漫长的46亿年演化史：乾坤为丹炉，太极八卦为火候，人类是金丹。“故以乾坤为鼎器，坎离为药物，其余六十卦为火候”（《周易·系辞上》）。“故冬至后，阳生于地，地抽于阴，以太阴抽为胎阴，少阳添为阳明；厥阴抽为少阴，阳明添为太阳。夏至后，阴降于天，天抽其阳，以太阳抽为阳明，少阴添为厥阴；阳明抽为少阳，厥阴添为太阴”（《吕洞宾第231页》。据录张伯端和吕洞宾的文字以作证前面用现代科学研究成果所叙述的内容。

人类在地球上至少生存了二百万年，每一天都在阴阳太极的热量盈亏中度过。内丹把这种普遍的、平凡的日常生活，积极地描述为“炼丹”或“修炼”。在炼丹中，人类获得了自然的所有核心特征。例如，生老病死、呼吸、恒温和两性结合等无不暗合着太极阴阳的基本规律。就是交流中的言说与倾听，也体现着太极的阴阳变化。

3.2 “言说太极”

言者，直接也。说者，悦也（说文解字）。直言以后，主体所表现出来的愉悦。从仁学的角度看，言说呈现三层含义：一是主体发言后，心情愉快。二是言说能够加深理解。直言，往往是一种立体的传情达意方式：它调动声音、语调、表情、肢体等多重要素立体地呈现，使人更容易理解说话者的思想感情。如果产生误会，也能够在言说中释前嫌，重新赢得信任和好感。第三，双方的直言互动，将使感情进一步升华，理解进一步深入，合作进一步密切。

仁的言说用太极描绘，称之为“言说太极”。言说从基本结构上看，包括两部分：说话者和倾听者。说话者为主动表达思想的一方，类似于太极中的阳；而倾听者的一方，是沉静地理解着言说者意思，类似于太极中的阴。言说经历着：开始说，说话高潮和说话结束三个阶段，相当于太极的少阳、阳明和老阳；倾听者的理解也经历着：不理解、理解中和完全理解三个阶段，相当于太极的阴、厥阴和少阴。言说和倾听的角色互换相当于太极的阴阳互动、阴阳生化，阴阳生阳，阴阳平衡。

伽达默尔在解释学中提出了“游戏（伽达默尔，2004）”的概念，认为游戏活动的真正主体就是游戏本身。这个概念可以从另外的角度解释“仁”的含义。言说就是语言的游戏。游戏的主体是言说者和倾听者，游戏的玩具是声音语调和肢体表情。贯串游戏的主线是意义的交流。其中包含两个境界：言不尽意和得意忘言。我们都有同感，经常遇到表达不清的困境。如果只有一个回合的交流，很容易造成误解。为了表达清楚，言能及意，需要经过反复多次的交谈，才能准确完整地表达意思。可见，要想言能及意，非要拿出玩游戏的精神不可，你来我往，循环往复。而“得意忘言”则是纯粹的理解。所谓纯粹理解就是领会其精神实质，但不拘泥于原始的表面文字。“言不尽意”来自《周易·系辞》。“子曰：书不尽言，言不尽意，然则圣人之意，其不可见乎？”“书”，书面表达。文字虽然能记录说话内容，但记录不了语气神态、肢体语言。而“意”者，乃言说者的所思所想。“意”需要用恰当的口头语言表达出来，包括用词恰当、逻辑条理、判断得当、推
4. 仁学的时空

### 4.1 仁学的时间

#### 4.1.1 我的时间

当时间和我联系在一起时，时间就是我的时间，我生活在我的时间当中。我的过去是我现在的“待存”，我的未来是我现在的“预存”（胡塞尔，1992，第574页）。这里的“待存”原则上与客观时间没有多少关系，只与我的父母的“一次做爱有完全的关系。这次做爱开启了我作为我的时间段。在我的时间段内，父母为我的成长和教育“操心”（海德格尔，2006：209）。成年后，我不仅操着我的现在，还操着我的未来，同时为子女的现在和未来操心。操心成了我一生的主旨。在操心中，现在变成了过去，未来变成了现在。

我的操心是从被给予我的每一个事件开始的。既操心事件的开始，又操心事件的结束。经过一个循环的循环，我能够反思并评价我在这个时间段的价值和意义。如果作出了肯定的判断将继续在原有的基础上开启更高层次的时间段，使我所参与的事件进一步发展。但是，如果估计是消极的，我能表达出结束原有时间段的愿望，或者调整事件的要素关系，继续在新的平台开启新的事件运行。
我不太关心客观时间的运行。因为不管愿意不愿意，它都在我的身边流淌，‘子在川上曰，逝者如斯夫’（毛泽东）。而我的主观时间却与我的性情密切相关。丈夫或妻子的时间段开始于结婚，结束于离婚或一方死亡；儿子的时间段开始于出生，结束于最后的父母死亡；合作事业的时间段开始于合作，结束于合作关系的破裂。可以说，我有多少称谓就有多少时间段，当然就要分出相应的意思去‘操心’每个时间段。“一心一意”和“三心二意”取得的结果是截然不同的。为了寻找纯粹的自我，需要对自己的所有时间段进行反思，检讨一下哪些是必须开启的，哪些是不必开启的。当我能简化到不能再减少为止，最后只剩下两个时间段是必须开启的。一个是生死时间段，一个是作为儿女的时间段。这两个时间段是自我本体当下的立身之本。那么，从大道至简的角度看，我的一生只要操心做好两件事就可以了：一是养活自己，一是孝敬父母。

在我的所有时间段中，从生死到死是最长的时间段。海德格尔把我的‘此在’称为‘向死存在’（海德格尔，2006：271）。我一出生就走在通向死亡的道路上。死亡是我的最终归宿。死亡是老天爷为包括人类在内的所有生物制定的使命。不管贫富贵贱，男女老少，胎生卵生的，在死亡面前人人平等。自然用死亡掌握人类和众生。道家为了超脱自然的死亡法则，主张通过修炼成仙，从精神上超越死亡对人类的束缚。内丹用三句话十二个字总结成仙的过程，即‘炼精化炁、炼炁化神、炼神化虚’。父母的精子和卵子结合为精，胎儿发育所用之气为先天之炁。所谓‘炼精化炁’就是描述从受精卵到胚胎的发育过程，相对于胎儿出生后所自由采食的食物和呼吸的氧气，母体提供的营养和氧气为先天之物。相同地，‘炼炁化神’描述的是从胚胎到胎儿再到婴儿的过程。这个阶段是胎儿大脑发育的关键时期，一方面神经元迅速生长，一方面神经元的突触连接广泛形成。到出生时，婴儿已经完成了对新环境的适应的神经系统。这个神经系统使人类进行思考和学习语言成为可能。神者，申也。连通天地的闪电是也。语言文字具有上天入地，贯通古今的本事。所谓炼神的过程就是学习的过程，包括学习语言、学习科学文化知识和学习道德等。通过看书学习，我的思想认识水平得到提高，眼界开阔，尤其是知道了事件发生的来龙去脉。“物有本末，事有终始，知所先后则近道矣”（大学）。

学习语言文字有两个境界：一是言不尽意；二是得意忘言。学习语言文字的目的是为了表达思想感情，但往往说出来的话和写出来的东西，不能完全地表达自己的所思所想，有些东西在肚子里就说不出来，或者说不完整，即言不尽意。要达到言能尽意，就需要反复地交流，从不同的侧面阐述自己的观点和看法；所谓得意忘言，就是学习语言达到一定阶段的境界，深刻领会精神实质，进入神乎其神的地步，即入圣，入神，入仙和入佛的境界。这是人一生修炼的最高境界，在精神上彻底超脱了生死。道家内丹义理是积极的人生哲学，把‘向死存在’的每一天，每一刻都转变成自我修炼。日常生活中的一件事，包括柴米油盐、扫洗对等细微的行为都变成修炼，把走向死亡的道路转变成修仙成佛的道路。人生从此就有了无穷的价值和意义，人类也就从精神上超脱了生死，真正成为自己的主人。

4.1.2 乾卦的时间

对乾的时间研究，最透彻的要数《易经》。从乾卦到六十四卦都是在讲时间和空间
的变化规律。为了加强理解，我们把霍金的《时间简史》时间光锥、胡塞尔的内时间现象学的时间结构和乾卦的时代时间流程进行互参，以取得他们理解时间的本质。霍金认为，对于一个事件（现在）都有未来光锥和过去光锥（霍金, 2007; 26）。相同地，胡塞尔把现在、过去和未来也建立了内时间意识的时间结构，称为诸时间相位。他认为，现在既是过去的“持存”，又是未来的“预存”。“诸时相可在同一时刻呈现于我们的意识中，已逝去的现在在某一现在时刻取代时并未消失，而是被保留在‘持存’位置中，因而仍然呈现于意识中。”（胡塞尔, 1992; 575）霍金从所有角度都处于光锥的角度说明，现在的事件是过去相关事件的结束，又是未来相关事件的开始。而胡塞尔从现象学的角度说明，现在的意识既包括过去的持存，又包括未来的预存。他们的观点都意味着爱因斯坦广义相对论的时空论的正确性：宇宙必须有一个开端，并且可能有一个终结（霍金，2007）。

过去已经过去，未来还未到来，请珍惜现在，经常有人这样告诉我们。为了实实在在珍惜现在，就必须反思过去，总结经验，展望未来。与总结经验相比较，对未来的预测显得更重要。《易经》在时间预测上，取得了非常高的学术成就。乾卦从宏观上预测，六十四卦从微观上预测。乾卦的六爻完全地展现出一个事件的时间变化，尤其是人文事件的时间变化。从“初九”到“上九”分六个阶段。第一阶段事件刚刚开始，用“潜龙”告诫人们，要不断地学习，养精蓄锐，韬光养晦；第二阶段崭露头角，“见龙在田”。应该多交往“大人”，即那些道德、才智及声望俱佳的人。继续学习，加强历练，诚信待人，低调做人。第三阶段担当领导。告诫人们对自己的事业要“终日乾乾、夕惕若”，即终日自强不息，甚至到了晚上也不要放松自己，戒惧谨慎。加强“居位”“进德”等方面的修养，更要忠孝诚信。同时，还要善于发现人才，培养干部。以上三卦属于内卦，几乎适用于所有人。九四，到了内卦转成外卦阶段，预示将要发生变革。因为这时的事业顺风顺水，但是伴随而来的妒忌中伤、自满骄傲，或者内部管理的放松等问题，事业走到了十字路口。乾卦的外卦的第一卦“九四”或跃在渊，无咎，描述此时的情景，或者改革现状上一个新台阶，或者退出起点重新创业，都是“无咎”的。孔子建议“上下无常，非为邪也。进退无恒，非离群也。君子进德修业，欲及时也，故无咎”（《易经·乾卦文言》）。此时上下进退都没有关系，但必须及时地“进德修业”，反思得失，总结经验，加强学习，提高水平。九四阶段正是一个人由青年走向中年，由青涩走向成熟的时代。勇于改革，提升学习是此时最应该做的事情。经过九四阶段的改革调整和坚持，事业向新的高度阔步前进，进入到九五的“飞龙在天”的人生顶峰。此时“同声相应，同气相求；水流湿，火就燥；云从龙，风从虎。圣人作，而万物睹。本乎天者亲上，本乎地者亲下，则各从其类也”（乾卦·文言）。声望和影响达到人生的最高点。东方文明把皇帝称为“九五之尊”就是这个道理。乾卦的第六段“亢龙有悔”，就是做到了太上皇的阶段，孔子评价道“贵而无位，高而无民，贤人在下而无辅，是以动而有悔也”（乾卦·文言）。“亢龙”已经到了事业和生命的最后阶段，动辄有悔。以上六个阶段各有特点，孔子针对各阶段的不同特点提出了中肯的建议。如果按照建议行事将达到“元、亨、利、贞”理想境界。

乾卦和坤卦比其他六十二卦多了“用九”和“用六”。乾卦有“用九，群龙无首，吉”。“
说明时间的最高境界是无时间。这里的时间为主观时间。道家所倡导“无为”就是不要随便开启时间段。与“无为”相对的是“有为”。所谓“有为”是必须开启时间段的。任何“有为”都要操心用力，但人的时间是有限的，而“无为”却是无限的。以有限的时间去应付无限的时间段，在理论上和实践上都是不可能的。所表现的现状是透支身体、药物维护，最终过劳而死。所以，对于精力有限、生命有限的人来说，开启的时间段越少，精力就越充沛，身体越健康，生命越长寿。在《论语》中，孔子从本我的角度把干卦解释为“吾十有五而志于学，三十而立，四十而不惑，五十而知天命，六十而耳顺，七十而从心所欲，不逾矩”（论语2.4）。孟子评价孔子为“圣之时者也”（孟子·万章下），是说孔子对时间的理解和把握，已经达到出神入化的地步。

### 4.2 仁学的空间

#### 4.2.1 亚里士多德的空间与仁学的空间

亚里士多德认为，要研究空间，首先应从空间自身的知识开始。其中包括如下方面：
1. 空间有长宽高三维。
2. 点和点的空间是不能区别的。
3. 每一生长事物的空间必须和它所一起长大，每一事物的空间不小于也不大于每一事物。（亚里士多德，1982：94-95）从亚氏关于空间的观点可以阐述这样几层意思。在主体坐标中，长宽高是无限的向量。空间在宏观上是无限的。在微观上，点的空间也是无限小的。虽然点与点的空间不能区划，点却能标称其位置和处所，同时也能成为其他处所的参照物。以上观点已经得到物理学的证实，并成为常识。这里最要阐释的是“每一生长事物的空间必须和它们一起成长”。人类属于生长的事物，他的身体空间不仅随着他的成长而扩大，而且通过语言文字符号营造的空间能够超越其自身的生理和物理空间，这些空间包括有精神空间、情感空间、旅游空间、政治空间、宗教空间、虚拟空间，等等。同时，人类还可以通过学习、交流、约结等形成更大的空间。学习是扩大精神空间最好形式。历史人物的精神一般被语言文字符号所记录，通过阅读式的交谈，被当下读者所领会，作者和读者之间构成了一个视域融合的空间。这个空间将随着读者的阅读和实践的增加而不断扩大。相同地，人类文明就是通过这种方式，使精神的空间远远地超越物质的重重束缚，而获得绝对的精神自由。庄子的《逍遥游》可以作为这个境界的代表。精神的空间通过阅读思考而获得，但现实的空间扩大却需要通过订约和结盟而达成。每个人、每个集团和每个国家的生存空间是有限的，受长宽高三维的限制，但是这种三维的限制却可以通过订约而扩大。仁的空间应该是通过订约而建立起来的，并使空间处在不断成长的状态。诸如人伦空间、集团空间、国家空间和宗教文化空间都是这样建立起来的。

#### 4.2.2 海德格尔的“此在”与仁的空间

海德格尔的“此在”论，即一脉相承又极大地超越了西方的空学空间概念。此在，是一个物理上的位置和处所，更是一个生存论和存在论的处所。在夫妇伦中确定其为夫或为妻的处所；在父子兄弟姊妹伦中确定其在家庭中的处所；在同事和朋友伦中确定其在社会上的处所。这个处所可以凝聚为一点，小而无内；也可以扩展为巨大的空间，大
而无外。小而无内说明这个点的空间是不能界划的。如果能界划，这个处所也就消失了。大而无外说明此在是能够用语言文字符号交流的。人类由于拥有语言文字符号，在时间和空间上得到了前所未有的扩展。人类的语言文字超越了实体的历史和范围的界限，通过阅读和学习，历史的空间在此显现，此在也超越处所的限制，而可以思接千古，域接八荒。庄子的水击三千里，抟扶摇而上者九万里的逍遥游境界，就是人类拥有语言文字符号后超越界限，这个空间如此之大，穷尽思想都不能达其极，所以“大而无外”。此在不仅超越思想的虚拟的空间，而且通过交流并订约而扩大了实在的空间。

海德格尔对黑格尔的评价：“黑格尔的命题则系：空间‘是’时间。”“精神与时间都具有否定之否定的形式结构，黑格尔借回溯到这种形式结构的自肯性来显示精神‘在时间中’的历史实现的可能性。”(海德格尔，2006:491)黑格尔关于时间和精神是否定之否定的形式结构体现了西方典型时间观和核心意义。说明时间的否定之否定是现在对过去的否定之否定和未来对现在的否定之否定。时间上的过去，已经过去就不会回头，但精神的过去还会回来的。此在的精神是对过去精神的否定之否定，无非是否定已经过去的东西，吸收未过时且有用的东西。精神的否定之否定在实践中，容易简单地演变为对精神拥有者之粗暴否定。如处理不当，就可能演变成人身攻击和阶级斗争。由于主体存在被过度否定，当生命消逝一去不复返时，再扬弃其精神，所遭受的损失是无法弥补的。况且精神的否定之否定是不能由自我本体独立完成的。任何精神的否定之否定都是在批评交流和互动中诞生的。“壮士断腕”是不得已的以“舍卒保车”的方式换来主体自我的生存论和存在论的完整。黑格尔把精神和时间看成否定之否定的形式结构，使精神的进步等同于时间的变化。逻辑地推出，现在的精神一定优于过去的精神，未来的精神一定优于现在的精神。当然，也逻辑地推出历史或事物的演化是从简单到复杂、从原始落后到现代先进的推论。事实上，精神进步的前提是对主体间的主体的尊重和肯定。在此基础上，进行视域融合，达成共识，形成精神的进步。

海德格尔在时间性中对主体的存在予以肯定，关注此在存在的真实体验，比如操心、沉沦和向死存在等。海德格尔给操心和此在同等的地位。“因为在世上本质上就是操心，操心于上手事物的存在可以把握为操劳，而与他人的在世内显出的共同此在共在可以被把握为操持。寓于‘此’的存在是操劳，因为这种存在作为‘在之中’的方式是由它的基本结构即操心规定的。”(海德格尔，2006:223)。如果用仁分析操心大概有三层含义。一是主体间的操心。操心是站在理解的角度，对操心的人和事的贴心揣摩，体会操心人的心里体验和事件的发展过程及其趋势，从而做出适当的行为。二是主体间的自我操心。自我所具有的生存论和存在论的尊严，需要自我本体的全力操心。三是操心与诚信的“诚”处在于不同的意义范畴之中。操心与诚都来自内心世界中最诚实、最真实的部分，既从客观上统筹整个事件的发展过程，又从主观上着眼于每个精神的细节。全力以赴、全心全意地保证整个事件圆满完成，修成正果。仔细比较孔子的“仁”的概念和海德格尔的“此在操心”的概念，发现他们都在同一个方向奋斗，即为了个人的幸福和人类的和平而努力，进入到人类最真实、最普遍的存在中去。在这个问题上，东方文明已经非常发达，走得更远。孔子及其弟子和其后的传人已经建立了以“仁”
为核心的完整的“操心”体系。把“仁义礼智信”看作“操心”人文世界的“五常”。也就是，以“诚”为精神内核，构筑起东方儒家文明的理论的、时空的构架。“仁”是主体间存在的时间基点和时间起点；“义”是主体间的共识及其执行；“礼”是主体间的礼仪状态；“智”是主体间的言说；“信”是主体间的裁判。东方文明就是在仁义礼智信的循环往复中持续的，只要人类存在，她将永远存在。

5. 仁的符号学公式

操心人文世界的任何事件的运行状态，一般都经历着从开始到结束的时间流程。而诚信往往既是事件的起点，又是事件的终点。如果信守承诺，事件将继续运行；如果任何一方背信弃义，事件可能就有到此为止。

5.1 仁的公式

\[ T = SC (T; Time \text{ 时间} \quad S; Space \text{ 空间} \quad C; Cheng \text{ 诚}) \]

T（时间），事件从开始到结束的时间向度。

S（空间），事件双方的主体间存在。可以具体到两个人、两个组织、两个集团、两个国家、两大宗教之间的存在。既包括主体的空间存在，也包括主体间的空间存在，这里主要讨论主体间的空间存在。

C（诚），“诚者，自成也”（中庸）。植物的生长有发芽、开花、结果、衰亡的过程；人类也有婴幼年、青年、成年、中年、壮年、老年到死亡的过程。诚就是对整个过程的全程把握，即顺应事件的发展规律，用心做好每个环节，以取得最佳的效果。具体来说，诚关注“仁”“义”“礼”“智”“信”五个环节。在“仁”的环节上，强调主体间交往的平等性；在“义”的环节上，强调适宜的行为；在“礼”的环节上，强调尊重；在“智”的环节上，强调智慧；在“信”环节上，强调监督。虽然诚在不同环节上所关注的侧重点不同，但是“诚”始终记住《中庸·第二十章》的一句话：“诚者，天之道也。诚之者，人之道也。诚者，不勉而中，不思而得，从容中道。”

5.2 讨论

S 的取值范围：
当 S > 0 时，主体间存在。
当 S ≤ 0 时，主体间不存在。假如存在，只可能存在于精神世界的人鬼交流、人神交流、鬼鬼交流、神神交流和鬼神交流中。
当 S = 0 时，主体间不存在。所以 S 的取值只能处于 S > 0 的范围内。

T 的取值范围：
当 T > 0 时，仁、义、礼、智、信存在，诚也存在。
当 \( T<0 \) 时，宇宙消失。
当 \( T=0 \) 是，宇宙是奇点。所以，C 的取值范围为 \( C>0 \)

6. 结论：仁的起点是父子伦还是夫妻伦

“仁”，是会意兼形声字，甲骨文和篆文皆从人，从二。仁虽然是一个普通的汉字，但是在《论语》中却赋予了其丰富的内涵，成为儒家的核心概念。那么，我们要追问：仁的起点是父子伦还是夫妻伦。

如果把夫妻做爱看成一个事件的话，那么，男子提供代表自己全部生命信息的精子和女子提供代表全部生命信息的卵子，结合形成了一枚受精卵，开启了生命世界最伟大的一次事件。这个事件蕴含着一个先天性的结构：阴阳结构。《易经》讲“天地乾坤，万物化育，男女构精，万物化生”。受精卵孕育成胎儿，发育成婴儿，从而开启了新生儿生病的一生。从孩子出生，就相继建立起父子、爷爷、兄弟姐妹、亲朋好友和同事等一系列人伦关系。我们的问题是所有这些人伦关系的起点是从产道开始，还是从受精卵开始？现代科学表明，生命从受精卵开始。所以，正确的人伦关系的起点应该是夫妇，而非父子。夫妻关系应该是平等的、自由表达的关系。《易经》对这种关系作了深刻的表述：“一阴一阳之谓道”，认为阴阳结合是天下最根本的规律。但是，自秦汉以来，董仲舒将父子伦定为人伦之起点，到汉末的《白虎通》时，又把君臣伦定为人伦之首，提出了三纲“君为臣纲，父为子纲，夫为妻纲”，正式把平等的夫妻关系，定为不平等的服从关系，并降格到君臣、父子人伦之后，为中国两千年以“忠孝”为思想内核的意识形态定下规矩。这种偏离仁的本质的思想运行体，直到清王朝倒台，才正式结束。虽然形式瓦解了，但是千年以来形成的思想体系还具有强大的惯性，一直到现在，还在我们生活的若干方面发挥作用。所以，为了重新确立仁的尊严和巨大的价值，只有把人伦的起点从父子伦恢复到夫妻伦上，才能真正地回到孔子仁的本质含义上来。

参考文献

四大国有商业银行行徽趋同现象的符号学分析

刘宇红

摘要 四大国有商业银行的行徽都由多个符素或亚符号按一定的结构次序组合而成，它们在行徽内部体现为组合关系，并在行徽之间体现为聚合关系。行徽的趋同化特征源于三个因素：一、古钱亚符号的重复使用并且构图面积偏大；二、聚合关系中的符素或亚符号在结构上被扭曲，缩小了这些符素或亚符号的区分度；三、人类的感知策略或认知惰性忽略了某些能指相同但所指不同的符素或亚符号。从意指过程来看，古钱亚符号与银行服务之间的第一意指关系被一再借用，由此形成第二甚至第三意指关系。如果充分考虑不同意指系统的结构内嵌关系，那么行徽之间的雷同现象可以最大限度地被消解。

关键词 银行；行徽；符号学；亚符号；符素；组合关系；聚合关系

1. 序 论

国有商业银行是国有独资银行，全部资本由国家投入，是国有金融企业。四大国有商业银行分别是中国银行、中国工商银行、中国建设银行、中国农业银行，它们的行徽如图1所示。

图1 四大商业银行的行徽

检索学术期刊网(CNKI)，发现对国有商业银行行徽的研究有多篇文章，但无一例外都是对四个行徽构图结构的简单评述。比如：

* 本文系“江苏高校优势学科建设工程资助项目”(优势学科代码 20110101)的科研成果。
吴杰指出上述四个图标在设计上有“趋同化特征”[1]，即它们都以古钱为原型进行设计，如图 2 所示。每一徽标都体现了“天圆地方”的人文理念，所以在结构上大同小异。

图 2 四个图标结构雷同

乔京禄在批评上述图标的设计时，指出它们基于“惯性的设计构思”“固化的设计理念”和“少个性化的设计样式”[2]

岳俊杰在总结上述图标大同小异的基础上，分析了上述四个行徽趋同的历史渊源和心理因素，即对“天圆地方”观念的推崇和模仿[3]。

上述学者的研究都是有价值的，可惜的是，没有一个文献从符号学视角对行徽进行分析。在本文中，我们将运用符号学的研究方法，对上述图标“趋同化特征”进行符号学分析。理由很简单，银行的行徽都是符号，理所当然应该成为符号学的关注目标。另一方面，从上世纪初符号学问世至今，符号学理论得到了长足的发展，一个充分发展的学科不应该忽略如此备受关注的符号实体。

2. 四个行徽的结构：符素、亚符号与符号

要分析四个行徽的“趋同化特征”，必须对它们的构图结构进行基于符号学理论的分析，即使用符号学的同行可以接受的术语。运用符号学的同行愿意认同的分析方法，而不是基于视觉直观的笼统分析。

语言学的形态学（linguistic morphology）认为，语素（morpheme）是最小的有意义的单位，语素组合成为词。为了分析四个行徽的结构，我们决定构建一个新术语“符素”，即最小的有意义的符号单位，英文名字暂定为 semioteme。希望能被同行接受并认可。所谓“有意义”，是指每一个符素都是能指与所指的匹配，所指是能指的意义。符素组合成为亚符号（sub-sign）或符号（sign）。

所谓“亚符号”，是在能指的复杂程度上介于符素与符号之间的符号学单位。“亚符号”本身包含能指和所指，能独立存在，但当它成为符号的构成部分时，我们称之为亚符号。比如，古钱是可以独立存在的符号单位，但在四个行徽中，它是行徽的一部分，我们称之为亚符号。

中国银行是我国金融机构中率先使用行徽的银行，行徽由香港著名商标设计家靳埭强先生设计。1981 年，这个标志获得了美国传艺艺术（CA）年鉴设计奖，1987 年 1 月 1 日行徽正式被启用。根据靳埭强先生的设计思路，行徽“以中字和古钱形相互结合而
构成，中字代表中国资本的联营集团；古钱象征银行服务；圆角的方孔是现代化电脑的联想，上下连串的直线则象征联营服务。[3]

如上所述，古钱是徽中圆的亚符号，它包括两个符素，即“圆”与“方”，分别代表“天”和“地”；方孔的四个外角都是圆的，这不是古钱的方孔必须具备的特征，我们称之为非区别性特征（non-distinctive feature）。如果借用语言学的术语，它是符素的自由变体（free variant），因为不管方孔的外角是不是圆的，都是可以接受的合格的方孔。但是，象征“现代化电脑”的“圆角的方孔”是另一个独立的符素，所以“圆角”是区别性特征（distinctive feature），如果没有圆角，该符素与“现代化电脑”之间的相似关系会受影响。

古钱的方孔和象征“现代化电脑”的“圆角的方孔”，视觉形象（即能指）相同，但它们不是同一符素的多义现象（ploysemy），因为两者之间没有直接的语义关联，而是能指相同，所指不同的两个符素。如果借用语言学的“同形异义字”（homonym）的概念，我们不妨把它们认定为“能指相同所指不同的符素”，英文不妨定为 homonified。

另一个亚符号单位是汉字“中”，其中的笔划“|”在正中断裂，但是不妨碍被认读为“中”，所以仍可以看作汉字“中”的自由变体，而不是另一个不同的汉字。另外，设计者认为“直线象征联营服务”，所以“|”也是独立的符素。

汉字符号是有内部结构的，在徽中具有亚符号的地位，比如“中”，从造字原理来看，它是指事符号，即六书中的“指事字”，其中的方框（即“口”字）是任意区域或方位的象征符号，“|”是标明位置的符素，即“正中”的位置。但是汉字“中”是整体被借用到徽中，所以我们不对它作进一步的结构分析。

靳埭强认为徽“以中字和古钱形相互结合而构成”，这是直观的视觉效果，如果从能指与所指的关系来看，徽是由四个成份构成的，即古钱、圆角的方孔、“中”“|”等。如果借用结构语言学的分析方法，徽由四个“直接成分”（immediate constituent）构成，其中古钱包括自己的下级符素。如图 3 所示。

![图 3 中国银行行徽的结构要素与结构层次](image)

另外三个徽也包含古钱这一亚符号，除此之外还包括其他的符素和亚符号，比如工商银行的徽还有一个汉字亚符号“工”。《说文》释“工”：“工，巧饰也，象人有规矩也，与巫同意。”《说文》的释义是最原始的符号意义，在当前徽中“工”指代“工商”。建设银行徽的外部是两个重叠的字母 C，分别代表 China 和 construction，两个 C 均是
符素，由它们重叠而成的结构是构成行徽的亚符号。农业银行的行徽内部是一条麦穗，
麦穗是符素，指代农业。四粒麦子呈正方形排列，构成汉字亚符号“田”，“田”象征农业，
也是亚符号。对“田”来说，方正的形状是区别性特征，对麦穗来说，麦粒的多少和排列
形状不是区别性特征。所以，由麦粒构成的“田”字是三个符素（亚符号）组成的“同形异
义”现象：首先，它是古钱的方孔符素；其次，它是汉字亚符号“田”；第三，它又是麦穗的
主体，与麦芒共同构成麦穗符素。至于麦粒与麦芒的关系，我们认为两者是不必细分的
完整符素，而且麦粒按一定的位置排列足以指向所指对象麦穗，此时麦芒可以看作能指
消余（redundancy）。

3. 行徽的同与异：组合关系与聚合关系的视角

在分析了四个行徽的内部结构之后，下面我们将分析它们的“趋同化特征”。
以中国银行的行徽为例，古钱、圆角的方孔、“中”“|”这四个成分是构成行徽的要
素。索绪尔认为，它们之间的关系是组合关系（syntagmatic relation）[1]，其他行徽中的
亚符号“工”、麦穗（田）、重叠的C与中国银行中的圆角的方孔、“中”“|”是聚合关系
(paradigmatic relation)[1]，即可替换的关系，如图4所示。在视觉效果上，聚合关系中
的多个成分是一个整体，所以图4可以简化为图5。

![图4 实际的组合关系与聚合关系](image1)
![图5 视觉上的组合关系与聚合关系](image2)

首先，古钱是每一个行徽中组合关系的一部分，所占面积较大，在视觉感知上较突显。
符号中的部分符素或亚符号为什么更突显，不属于符号学的解释范围，只能从构图美学加
以解释，即为了使行徽在整体的视觉效果上更符合某种约定俗成的审美习惯。相同部分
（即古钱这一亚符号）突显了，相异之处（即可替换的成分）相对不突显了，所以让众多的研
究者认为四个行徽具有“趋同化特征”，其实相同之处只是多个符素或亚符号中的一个。

其次，古钱之外的符素和亚符号，都被较大幅度地扭曲了，比如中国银行行徽中的
“|”没有上下贯通；工商银行行徽中的“工”是空心，而且中间断裂；农业银行行徽中麦穗
的麦子只有四粒，而且呈正方形排列；建设银行行徽中重叠的 C 的内侧被扭曲成为方形，而不是圆润的弧线形状。扭曲的结果是降低了它们的视觉突显程度，导致它们之间的区分度被缩小了，这也是造成四个行徽具有“趋同化特征”的另一原因。

再者，对于“能指相同，所指不同的符号”来说，人的感知过程受格式塔认知策略的干预，往往只关注其中较突显的符号（或亚符号），而忽略其他较不突显的符号（或亚符号），比如看到古钱的方孔时，我们往往忽略圆形方孔与电脑之间的相似关系。看到四粒麦子时，不一定还会关注四粒麦子构成了汉字“田”。这是人类的认知策略，也是一种认知惰性。这样的认知策略或认知惰性，足以缩小四个行徽之间区分度。

4. 行徽趋同的结构原理：从第一意指系统到第二意指系统

罗兰·巴尔特认为，所有的意指（signification）系统都包括一个表达层面（plan d’expression，缩写为 E）和一个内容层面（plan de contenu，缩写为 C），意指过程是两个层面之间的关系 R。所以，意指系统可以表达为 ERC，称为第一意指系统。在此基础上，巴尔特假定，从第一意指系统可以延伸出第二意指系统，两者既相互包含又相互分离。被包含者为第一系统，包含者为第二系统，如图 6 所示。

以古钱—亚符号为例，它代表银行服务是第一意指系统 ERC，其中古钱是 E，银行服务是 C，把两者联系起来的是 R。

中国银行之后的第二家银行在设计行徽时，靳埭强先生的设计作品成为可供参考的设计方案。此时，成为表达层面的不再是古钱本身，而是古钱与银行服务之间的符号关系，即第一意指系统整体被借用，即 E=ERC。我们假设，如果第三家银行在设计行徽时，不知道靳埭强先生的设计作品，而只知道第二家银行的设计方案，并加以模仿，那么，第三家银行的设计思路就涉及了第二意指系统，如图 7 所示。

由于第二意指系统（甚至第三意指系统）的存在，我们认为，图 4 和图 5 所示的聚合关系是过于简化的结构模式，因为它们没有体现图 6 或图 7 中不同意指层次之间的内嵌关系。以图 5 为基础，我们假定四个行徽之间依次被模仿，并且下一位模仿者不知道模仿对象本身是模仿的产物。那么，组合关系和聚合关系可以表示为图 8。
在图8中，古钱这一亚符号单位不再是被简单重复的组合单位，相反，彼此内嵌的意指关系构成聚合关系（请对比图5和图8）。如果这种新的聚合关系进入到认知者的显意识中，那么，四个行微的雷同之处将完全消解，因为古钱的每一次重复都代表更深一层的意指关系内嵌。

5. 结 语

四大国有商业银行行徽的趋同性特征是从事标志设计的学者们关注较多的话题。可惜的是这一特征甚至银行行徽这一符号现象丝毫没有受到符号学界的关注，本文从符号学视角来分析行徽之间的趋同化特征是一个新的尝试：一方面，对银行行徽来说是对其分析角度和研究方法的创新，另一方面，就符号学来说是研究领域的拓宽。

比较四个行徽的同与异，首先必须对它们的内部结构进行分析，而不是基于视觉直观的表象判断。我们认为，行徽是一个符号，它由多个符素和亚符号按一定的结构次序组合而成。在分析了结构要素和结构次序之后，我们分析了四个行微构件之间的组合关系和聚合关系，行微的雷同之处体现在古钱亚符号被重复使用，不同之处体现为聚合关系中可替换的符素或亚符号成分各不相同。

在行微设计时，首先，出于美学考虑，部分符素和亚符号在构图比例上偏大，这是造成行微图案在视觉上雷同的重要因素；其次，聚合关系中可替换成分被扭曲，以致缩小了行微之间的区分度，也是抹煞差异的重要原因；再者，人类的感知策略或认知惰性往往忽略某些能指相同、所指不同的符号要素，也是造成行微雷同的认知原因。从意指系统的内嵌关系来看，古钱亚符号与银行服务之间的第一意指关系被再借用，由此形成第二甚至第三意指系统，如果充分考虑不同意指系统内部结构的差异性，即内嵌关系的递归性特征，那么行微之间的雷同现象可以最大限度地被消解。

当然，意指系统的内嵌关系只是心理操作的产物，在通常情况下，视觉直观的相似性是不会屈服于心理操作过程的。况且，即使承认不同意指系统的结构差异性，人类认知的过程可以是转喻（metonymy）性质的，即在E被分析为ERC的同时，E也可以转喻性地借代ERC。当后者以递归的方式进行时，第二意指系统甚至第三意指系统都会还原成为表达层面E。

参考文献


论中国民间美术字的符号意蕴

——基于皮尔斯象似符理论

彭凌玲

摘 要 本文以美国实用主义哲学家皮尔斯提出的“象似符”理论为论证根基,从符号与所指对象之性质的某种相似性着手,于“图像符”“图表符”“隐喻符”三个线索;从“民间美术字象似符解析”“民间美术字的原补时空观”“隐喻性认知与表达”三个层次,逐一探讨民间美术字象似符号的诗性结构和文化意蕴,帮助我们对民间美术字寄哲变通的内在旨趣、进化之途所包含的新文化因子,以及所流露出的民族心理和心灵世界作出深入解读。

关键词 中国民间美术字; 象似符; 象征义

古人云,“科斗鸟篆, 类物象形”②,以“类物象形”的方式装饰美化文字, 即为对美术字概念的最早规定。与日常应用文字及书法艺术不同, 它被视之为第三种文字范畴。徐锴在《说文系传》中这样表述:“鸟书、虫字、刻符, 及书之类, 随事立制, 同于图画, 非文字之常也。”③非文字之常的美术字发迹于新石器时代陶器刻画符号的朦胧装饰, 延续至商及周初青铜器铭文中的图形文字, 以至后来春秋战国时期的鸟虫书金文美术字, 秦汉篆书美术字, 宋元明清时的宋体美术字等诸多阶段, 迄今有至少五、六千年历史。伴随着社会结构和意识观念的变迁, 美术字与民间生活紧密相连, 广见于铜器、印章、幡信、砖文、瓦当、镜铭、铭旌、剪纸、刺绣、版画、及历代碑刻、墓志、题署、题壁等之中。其中, 一些民间艺人又将美术字提炼成一种创意性的设计形式, 形成典型的带有绘画倾向的装饰字体设计。如此, 民间美术字成为一种生动而广泛的艺术符号集束体。

作为中国文化的独特产物, 民间美术字与书法艺术一样具有双重符号的特征。首先它是表象符号, 是一种巧哉形象、点景赋彩的艺术表现形式。同时, 它又能完成语言

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2 李学通, 《文心雕龙》(A)///历代书法论文选, 上海: 上海书画出版社, 2006: 20。
3 见徐锴, 《说文系传》, 疑义篇。
符号的书写、语素及词素完备并具有概念规定性。换言之，如果说语言和艺术是人类所有活动的不同中心，那么民间美术字应该处于这两个中心的交集地带，两者的长期共生，使它的传播和深化具有可靠的依凭。

在此，民间美术字作为汉字符号系统的一个分支，依旧是以“象”这一灵魂贯穿始终，从而构筑出创意盎然的图文世界。我们知道，汉字的“六书”原理中，“象形”是造字的原始基本方式。所谓“象形者，画成其物，随体仿真”（许慎《说文解字·叙》），其中“象”的基本意便是“摹拟”，也就是对存在之物抄袭化和对基本形态的抽象概括。如古人所云“随类象形”“因势象形”“赫然可象”等，皆有此意。“象”的这一摹拟性质暗示出它与所摹之物之间具有整体的同一性，从符号意义而言，这对应了美国哲学家帕斯对“象似符”的解释：“与所指在某种方式上相似于它某种形式的符号。”也就是说，象似符的“能指”与“所指”之间具有自然性的联系，对于这联系的正确解读，美国实用主义哲学家皮尔斯提出了新颖的“象似符”理论。他认为象似符由图像符（Image）、图表符（Diagram）、隐喻符（Metaphor）三个部分组成，图像符和表征对象的关系比较简单，相似性位于属性；图表符是通过一个事物的各个部分进行类比，相似性位于结构或关系；隐喻符描写一事物跟其他事物的平行关系，相似性位于关联①。本文即依据皮尔斯符号学中的象似理论，从符号与所指对象之性质的某种相似性来揭示象似符号发生机制，从而深化对民间美术字之内在秩序的认知。

1. 民间美术字象似符解析

在象似符号的几种分类中，图像符所代表的图像象似是指能指与所指之间存在直接的模仿，两者之间共有某些简单属性，表现为外部形体、状态、颜色、姿态等属性的雷同。②民间美术字图像化的基本特征来看，图像象似是其首要的特点，这表现在：一方面，创造者对自然界及超自然界中诸相诸如，斟酌去取，表现形象；另一方面，又以添加、嵌入、重复、变形等方法，与汉字字象交互融合，相得益彰，共同趋于民间美术字浩瀚绵延的图像景观。如果说字象是汉字思维的起点和基石，那么它也是民间美术字创造的核心。汉字创造源于自然万象，美术字以此为根据，结合汉字笔画之间图案化的穿插、构建等诸多因素，重新赋予抽象文字以生命感。且不谈龙书、藻书之冰壶天工，螺蚌文之匠心独运，道教符篆之神形有营，单是蔡邕过鹤都门观圣人壁书龙禽白书，王羲之善写龙车字，南朝庚元威《论书》所记宗炳造化堂应图这些史实来看，足见笔画之中所表露


出的“象”的意态真妍。正如画家兼诗人石虎所说，“汉字有道，以道生象，象生音义，象
象并置，万物蕴于其间”①。

那么，对于民间美术字来说，其所象似的事物又合成什么景象呢？表面上来看，是
传说、神话、故事、节日、时俗等文化活动构成了新的表现素材和主题。深一步讲，也是
创造者的表象思维勾起形成沉淀的戏剧、文化、艺术品中的无数感触和印象。在绵连不绝的
时间之链中，创造的生机透过个体和种族的绵延，给民间美术字赋予了活的形式。于
是，我们可以看到瓦当字中的日月星辰；图文砖中的车马形纹；钱币字中的灵龟仙鹤；
嘉庆瓷器中的松枝松子；剪纸祥语中的生肖图饰；以及花卉果木、云水楼台、仙禽神兽、
百鸟朝圣、北斗魁星、西王母、南极星辉、群仙祝寿、三星合聚、八仙过海、二圣和合、蓬
莱仙子、文财神、玉女金童、包公断案、唐僧西游、三国演义、水浒列传、贺生贵子、祝贺
新婚、连中三元、五谷丰登、黄金万两、福寿双全……凡此种种，尽是兼容并举，陶铭万
象，趣味横生。这些自然的万有，以及超自然的万有，在民间美术字的表意形态中都被
具体地描绘出来，并有一种普遍流行的盎然生意贯穿于描摹景象的全境。这诸多形式，
反映在民间美术字的造型世界，却是以世俗界与神奇界相聚集的图象出现，这即不同于
西方观念自然理性与神奇理性的界限，也不同于原始神话思维中神奇与世俗两界的
决然分化，而是神奇落实于世俗，世俗透射出神奇，两者互相符应，体合无违。在这里，
所谓对神奇的向往和世俗的排斥的描绘都是不可分割的，也不存在逻辑与心理上的界限。
神奇与世俗的交融互涵，正体现出一种可被离析的二元文化结构，即生——死，
鬼——神，天——人，阴——阳等两个世界的相对互存与通达，在这二元结构中，被强
调的并不是两者的对立与分隔，而是两者的相通互易。这正是中国传统哲学最深刻也
最普遍的太极图示，在中国人“中和”信念的体用之下，神奇的信仰与世俗的现实一起构
成了民间美术字的日常题材。民间美术字因而呈现出完整的互文本性，从其无垠的，具
体的，深人的图像表述中，我们所获得的主观反应也相应地得到适配和调节，进而归于
一种有融无隔，亲和自抑、求安求平的姿态中去。

2. 民间美术字中的原朴时空观

民间美术字所描述的外界事物在人们大脑中唤起的心理效应，总是和人的感官及
思维相关。而为了促进达成对观念上的理解，就需要使用另一类能为视觉表现提供潜
力的符号。就是皮尔斯所说的图表符。与象似性最强的图象符号相比，图表符号紧随
其后，像似性依旧取决于它的指涉对象。而且，图表符号的能指与所指中两个相关元素
间的关系，必须以类似的二价关系来重现，如时间象似、位置象似、数量象似、对称象似、

①石虎.《论字思维》//谢冕.《字思维与中国现代诗学》.天津:天津社会科学出版社,2002:3.
非对称象似、最适象似、关系象似等①。

从这些二价关系可以联系到民间艺术创作的原发性思维，这种思维方式被列维-斯特劳斯描述为，它紧跟着“感性直观”“大致对应着知觉和想象的平面”“按照事物和行为呈现在眼睛和耳朵里的那种形式来表现关于它们的观念。”②由此，我们就不能不提到中国人原朴性的时空观，因为“使经验直观成为可能的正是时间与空间”，正如卡西尔专门提到的那样，“在中国人的思想中，所有质的差别和对立都具有某种空间的‘对应物’，形式不同却演化为极为精妙和准确。……一切事物在空间中的某处都有它们的‘家’”③。基于他们极富启发性的论述，让我们浅析一下中国原朴时空观对民间美术字图表符号的作用和影响。

中国原朴时空观有三个特点：一、知觉体验性，即是说原朴人对方位或时间观念的理解，都与其生活环境和具体事务相联属。在他看来，连续性的时间和发散性的时间皆是以生活场所扩展开来，因而便生成以他视线为中心的空间感，和以他的行为方式及生活节奏为中心的计算时间的方法。因此我们说，民间美术字图表符号内在关系的认定总是与时空经验现象连在一起，并浑然不可分。如陕西西安独创字“BiangBiang 面”（图 1），这是一个典型的图表符号，对于这个字的描述有诗歌一首，“一点撩上天，黄河两道湾，八字大张口，言字往里走，你一扭，我一扭；你一长，我一长；当央夹个马大王，心字底月字旁，留个勾搭挂麻糖，推个车车逛咸阳。”从中可见，其位置象似、范畴象似、数量象似等多层二价关系都统系在原朴的空间认识中，周遭天地、山川地理、世态炎凉都为之化入了雄浑的空间格局，令人有身临其间目不暇接之感。又如，民间《九九消寒图》（图 2），包括“春前腊梅风送香盈室”九字，每个字由九个画组成，每笔均代表一日，记录八十日天气，这其中蕴含了丰富的自然情景和生活形势，显然又是以描述性的线性次序与标度性的时间经验相对应的知觉体验。

图1 陕西西安独创字“BiangBiang 面”  图2 民间《九九消寒图》

② 列维-斯特劳斯，野性的思维[M]，李幼蒸，译。北京：商务印书馆，1987：20-21。
③ 恩斯特·卡西尔，神话思维[M]，黄龙保，周振，译。北京：中国社会科学出版社，1992：99。
3. 心理体验性

尽管人有身体和生命场所的局限，但他同样能以本性觉察到时间和空间的不可穷尽性。庄子就曾把世界比喻为“天台”，即一个不停旋转的大圆盘。《系词传》中也说，“一阴一阳之谓道”“一阖一辟之变”。天为初，地为化育。天地交感，盈虚消息。“恒”与“变”在开显与闭隐的时空历程中，造成了万物春生秋收冬藏，人生老病死循环不息。——这是原朴时空观中包含的对永恒流转之物的赞叹和梦想，正是这样一种意味甜蜜、令人陶醉兴奋的心理体验，造成民间美术字图表符之空虚意思的流露。此时，请转过头来再看一种民间美术字——遐文（见图3）。在这一图中，我们可从任何一字读起：“可以清心”“以清心可”“清心可以”“心可以清”；“月是故乡明”“是故乡明月”“故乡明月是”“乡明月是故”“明月是故乡”。字与字间无始无终，有无互促；一个个意境后相续，生化无已；“前者未始终，后者已资始”，这不正是富有循环特征的原朴时空观的体现吗？其中不正蕴蓄着广漠时空相一致的神圣内美和精神灵光吗？

综合上述两点，原朴的时空设置充当着民间美术字图表符的核心样式，能指与所指中相关元素的二价关系都在此基础上获得保障，从而使民间美术字的图表符呈现出简化的自由的双重特点——简化而不同于概念化的图示，自由而又兼综理性的旁通，最为以“隐喻符”一起，类象出生香活密的大千世界。  

图3 遐文——可以清心，月是故乡明

4. 隐喻性认知与表达

皮尔斯将象似性视为本身包含隐喻的一种现象。实际上，我们可以理解为隐喻是体现象征性的手段之一，它与其对象之间，本体和喻体之间在结构上存在对应关系。隐喻往往涉及到从一个认知场域投射到另一个之中，从这一角度上，皮尔斯认为隐喻与“意象”的概念相同。维科在著作《新科学》中，又将隐喻思维称为“诗性思维”②，诗性思维

作为原始人类各民族共同的思维方式，其特征大体表现为三个方面：一是诗性隐喻的以己度物；二是诗性逻辑的想象类概念；三是诗性文字的以象见义、象形会意。民间美术字体现了诗性思维的这三个特征。对应学术的论述，我们可以将诗性思维的发生过程理解为，当指涉对象进入民间美术字的符号表意系统后，便会产生一个表意空间，这空间结构类似于诗歌中的虚境，解释者在解读时会依据自身的感受来，思维和经验进行反向的多元象征补充，以达到意义的完整表述。总之，中国民间美术字的隐喻符号并非体现静态僵化的“实”的表象，而是依解释者“虚”的想象背景而建立。表述者可大刀阔斧、粗犷拙饰；可以细腻致雅、精微细致，却都是以某种出场姿态与观者“无言相对最销魂”，此时无声胜有声。

比如，通往泰山的路侧有两个很古怪的字，其中一个甚至无法读出字音，但凡看到这两个字的游人无不好奇地停驻脚步，加以品味揣摩（图 4）。这一字是“虫”字多一撇，另一字就是“二”，将这两个字各加半个外边界就形成了繁体汉字“风”和“月”。四个字的奇妙关系不言而喻——正是“风月无边”。无独有偶，旁边还有一石碑，解为“有限年华”（图 4）。在这里，独立存在的汉字单元被解构了，笔画的增减造就了文字原本语义的增殖，文字链看似被消散得无影无踪，却又不期然地在开放、多元、非连续性的想象空间里相遇了得意丘壑、养真葆华的诗情画意。这说明，解释者从此中获得的所感空间并非等值，而是富有极大的弹性，能够允许解读时信息的丢失或超值。关键之处在于，具有相似性内涵的隐喻的导入，促进了对视觉符号与想象对象之间的关联度的理解。而凭借意象及其隐喻的暗示功能，民间美术字的隐喻符便在人们的头脑中激起新意、奇思和求知的震动波，这波荡如果能通过了本体和喻体（媒介物与指涉对象）之间的曲折路径，便可实现符号范畴上的跨越而获得新的理解空间，如此便可以“使玩之者无穷，味之者不厌”。

5. 结论

从上述逐一分析中可知，民间美术字象似符号所包含的图像符、图表符和隐喻符三者集合成不同层次的同质空间。各种异质要素都可凭借某种相似性而从属于此。同时，

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也鼓励我们去建构相关要素、范畴或概念之间的联系。然而，一旦其解码形式被约定俗成，就会成为一种新的转义，因而符号特性得以上升为皮尔斯所说的“象征符号”①。反之这个过程也说明，象征的超越性意义不仅仅被动静止地存在于象似符这个基础层面中，更是主体人的对它的主动、历史地建立。或者说，民间美术字象似符号的基础意义与超越其上的象征意义共同组成了一个整体。通过第一层面的意义，我们领略了超越其上的深义，在领略象似符号的基础上，我们同化于象征物中。

总而言之，民间美术字的每一个象似符号就是一个图式，一个有意义的形式，它所露出的生机趣意，乃是对生活气象、自然气象的一种描绘。这种描绘是通过寻求与对象间的相似性来表征再现的，而“相似”是存在于能指与所指中的双向对称，它超越了模仿中能指与所指的单向决定关系，不仅象似出现实的既定序列，也表达出多重意义的复杂整体。正如卡西尔所强调的那样，“人类精神的每一种真正功能都与‘认知’一样地具有这一决定性特征，它不单纯地摹写，而是体现出一种本源性的、赋予形式的力量。它不是被动地表达出某种事物在场这一单纯事实，而是包含了一种独立的精神力量，通过这种力量，现象的单纯在场获得了一种确定的‘意义’，获得了特殊的、观念化的内容。”②如此，我们也可以看出，民间美术字中的象似符号并不是对一个现成的即实在的单纯复写，它是向对事物和人类生活得出客观见解的途径之一，它不是对实在的模仿，而是对实在的发现。因而，民间美术字的象似符也可以成为艺术符号认识论中的一个问题，帮助我们对民间美术字文化变迁的内在旨趣、进化之途所包含的新文化因子，以及所流露出的民族心理和心世界作出深入解读。

① 美国实用主义哲学的开拓者皮尔斯根据符号与对象的关系，把符号分为：象似符号（Icon）、索引记号（Index）、象征符号（Symbol）三种，其中后两者的某种意义上包含了象似符号，三者是逐级逼近关系。参见：赵毅衡，符饰与传媒[M]，成都：四川美术出版社，2010.47。

罗兰·巴特的文学符号学及其对东方文化的解读

文 玲

摘 要 东方文化在罗兰·巴特构想文学符号学的过程中扮演了核心角色，但东方文化在巴特眼中只是一个参照性的乌托邦。巴特希望通过对同时期美国存在主义话语、称“文”必须偏离意义，句子具有不完整性。然而，巴特选择“文”的途径——中性，仍具有关于意义的哲学。巴特将“装饰”的语言移植到日本俳句及茶道语言中，从而误解了东方文化。中国道家语言观可以提供积极借鉴意义。巴特的语言悖论是因为东方文化是“空”的视角。

罗兰·巴特思想经历由前期权师运作的语言结构转向去权势化的文本过程。1957—1967 年十年间，巴特关注符号学的科学性、整体性。析第一在《普通语言学教程》中以字数为前提的符号学，发展为一种真正社会的符号学。1968 年以后，巴特认为这种符号学必须进行修正：一、巴特不再相信符号学的科学性，科学必须认定自己仅仅是一种写作。二，巴特认为符号学必须攻击西方整个文明的象征系统和语言学系统，必须把西方封闭区，设法挣脱意义系统本身。巴特由系统科学阶段进入文本阶段，1968—1980 年这段时期的符号学与文学相结合，称文学符号学。巴特通过借鉴日本俳句、中国禅宗及老庄思想对西方文明进行了反思。然而，东方文化在巴特眼中只是一个参照性的乌托邦，巴特是站在西方的视角认识东方。将东方文化视为西方文化的对立面。东方文化在巴特构想文学符号学的过程中扮演了核心角色，却建立在对东方文化误读的基础上。

1. 罗兰·巴特的文本写作与日本俳句

巴特认为西方传统人文科学均是智力运作的结果，用语句化的概念、常用论点、固定说法建立意义体系，这一意义体系为确保其真理性和不理性，成为久不衰、无限延续的权力话语，毫无顾忌地强迫别人接受。这类话语是严厉无情的可怕独裁者，享受君临一切的独白乐趣。人们近乎麻痹地重复着这种语言，人的自我感受力被扼杀。因而，他希望通过文本写作裂解意义。为了裂解意义，巴特将日本文化视作西方文化的对立面。他说：

符号之所以空洞是因为日本是一个没有西方意义上的宗教、即一神教的国度。置身这样一个国度会很深刻地感受到那种符号观及其实践。在那里关于上帝的符号是空

三、文化符号学研究
洞的,就是说没有所指。那里的符号没有作为上帝的那个终极所指。我们西方的符号是与一神教文明相联系的,在符号后面我们放置了一个所指。我们整个的符号体系用一种超验性、饱满性、中心、意义,一级一级地填充着最后一个所指。而日本的独特性就在于:那是一个无拘无束的系统,强有力而又很精妙,既很发达又很清晰,但其中的符号最后又都是空洞的。那是能指的世界。[2]

巴特认为西方的符号无不染着意义,符号最后指向一个终极所指,使用语言只是为了获得“客观性”“科学性”真理,人的个体性,差异性被抹杀,人的感情无处安置。而日本的符号只关注形式,不关注意义,取缔了本质、理性、宗教的权威性,真正实现了人的自由。他羡慕日本俳句,因为对他来说,“一首成功的俳句最直接的标准为:它不具有关于意义和象征的任何推论;它不‘捕捉’(形而上学的或者‘信念’、良知的)体系。”[3]我们来看一个俳句的例子:

古池塘

跃进一只青蛙

呵!溅水的声音(松尾芭蕉)[3]

从这个例子,我们发现俳句是一些名字的排列,词与词之间没有严密的逻辑联系,这些名词的简单组合构成了一幅生活场景。俳句不君临一切的强势话语,我们陶醉在青蛙溅起的水声当中,忘却了俗世纷争、功名利禄。巴特认为俳句是文的集中体现,是与意识形态话语相对峙的语言。意识形态话语以真理之名形成垄断性的统一话语,权力运作的话语不断操纵人们重复着这一话语,真理只是陈词滥调的谎言。在《阅读的快乐》中,巴特说:

“我们均被语言活动的真实所控制,也就是说,被控制在他们的地区性中,被拖带到调整其相邻关系的可怕竞争中。因为,每一种语言(即每种虚构故事)都为霸权而奋斗;一旦有了权力,它便扩散到社会生活的潮流和日常生活之中,它就变成了多格扎(doxa),即自然本性,这便是政治家、国家工作人员的所谓非政治语言,这便是报纸的语言、电台和电视的言语,这便是会话的言语;”[4]

意识形态话语因为重复使用被塑造成“自然本性”,文要以反常性、以求新、求异打破这一自然本性的俗套用语。因为一切语言一旦重复就变成旧的语言,旧语言意味着固化的所指,一经权力运作进而变成真理。因而,文是语言的极端不稳定状态,他勾勒出文的几大特征:

（1）意义处于漂游状态。在巴特看来,固定意义、真理、理性是同一体,文必须偏离这一同一体,如果没有这种偏离运动,文仍是关于意义的哲学。

（2）句子具有不完整性。一个完整的句子将词语固定放在主语、谓语的位置,以一种逻辑的严整性确保意义的稳定性,从而成为一个规则,强迫人们按照这一规则说话。在此,巴特将克里斯特娃“任何意识形态都表现为在构成上是完善的语句形式”,反过来
说成“任何完善的语句都冒着带有意识形态的风险”。

（3）文摆脱了命名。如“马克思主义”“资本主义”“唯物主义”，在提及名称的时候，意识形态便强行注入，人们被迫按照词的固定意义理解并使用该词。因而巴物说“根据语言活动的一种不与科学相混的方法论，文本在近于说的极限时，也在破坏命名，而且正是这种破坏使文本接近于享乐”。

巴物将自己心仪的文的特征套用到俳句，认为俳句偏离意义、摆脱命名、打乱句子稳定性。他说俳句是“一张缀满珠宝的网，其中每一颗珠宝都反射着所有其他的珠宝，如此以至无限，并不存在一个可以抓得住的中心，一个辐射之源。”在巴物看来，俳句不是语句的完整形式，是一种非理性的语言，是瞬间的绝对写作，“是这个”“是这样的！”“是悟的时刻，向语言虚空过渡之时。巴物提到禅宗的三个阶段：看山是山，看水是水；山不是山，水不是水，看山是山，看水是水。巴物称第一阶段是无的阶段，第二阶段是反意阶段，第三阶段是自然状态的阶段，处于无的、俳句的阶段。在某种意义上，是对文字的回归。[3]巴物认为俳句是瓦解意义教条主义的指示语，是对自然状态的沉默展示。禅宗语并非无事事事，非照相机式地如实所是。禅宗第一个阶段，是看山只是山，看水只是水，是通过意义去认识世界。第二个阶段，产生了庄周梦蝶，蝶梦庄周的疑惑，开始怀疑世界的真实性，这只是名相世界，如《金刚经》中称“诸微尘如来说非微尘。是名微尘。如来说世界非世界。是名世界”。因而“不应住色生心。不应住色香住触法生心。应生无所住心”。如此，便进入第三个阶段，不执著于名相，透过名相悟空。因而，禅宗并非排除意义，只是不执著于意义。此时，山则不是山，水则不是水，而达乎于无者乐山，智者乐水”“澄怀观道”之境。因而，禅宗的“空无”并不是“没有”，而只是意味着宇宙的万事万物共有之本性是“空”，不能把“空”万事万物执着为实有。巴物一厢情愿地希望通过俳句式写作裂解意义，因为他取道于东方文化超越西方意义的封闭圈。

2. 罗兰・巴物中性观与禅宗语言

巴物认为中性是实现俳句式文本写作的途径，他称“我把中性定义为破除聚合关系(paradigme)之物，或者说，我把凡是破除聚合关系的东西都叫做中性”。[3]什么是聚合关系？聚合关系是指两个潜在的项次之间的对立。如在汉语中L和N产生了聚合关系，因为L和N意义不同。因而凡有意义的地方，就有聚合关系；凡有聚合关系的地方，就有意义。在巴物看来，聚合关系扼杀了差异性原则，符号在主动/被动，灵/肉，高/低等聚合体中确立等级、划分同类，使一切纳入喜欢不喜欢的聚合链，使作品具有强烈的善恶二元论外表，世界呈现超强意指的假自然。聚合关系是世界的简化原则，世界变得清晰而单调，消解了人类活动的复杂性。因而，要破除意义，即要破除聚合关系，中性即破除意义的途径。
巴特以禅宗语论诬中性，围绕“回答”讲授了一堂课。他称任何发问都意味着某种权势，预定别人接受提问的方式，在深地强迫别人围绕自己感兴趣的问题展开对话。因而，回答者无论做出什么，都像一只被套牢的老鼠。为对抗言语权势而采取答非所问的态度是中性的表现，答非所问的具体形式有如下几种。

答非所问

1. 出行、逃避、沉默、遗忘
   (1) 沉默，无答复。用沉默或等于沉默的装聋，消极应对“前言”，以没听见作收。
   (2) 忘记了什么，忘记已经说过，不以为怪，仿佛每次都把一个话题从头说起，很累人。
   (3) 出行。“我什么也不说，随它去吧，我旅行去了。”

2. 偏离
   (1) 迫使人明确回答。一种真正的中性，打破是与否的中性，然而并不抽身引退。
   (2) [乌尔特]一种常见的、轻飘飘的、散碎的，超然于任何文化能力的偏离→乌尔特(1977年夏)：杂货铺的年轻女掌柜：“昨天天气很好”→我们可以期待是/否的回答（“是”的可能性大，因为诗人并不喜欢争论），女掌柜却回答说：“天气很热”。既没有肯定，也没有否定好天气，而是把这种聚合关系移入了另一种聚合关系，实用另一种价值取向。因为她认为好天气是天气热的同义语。此地人们不喜欢热，热天气：赣涵贬义。

3. 失礼
   (师徒关系)
   高峰和他的年事已高的师傅。
   “师傅，是谁穿着你这身皮夹克？”
   高峰朝他“嘿！”，地喊了一声，师傅拿起棍子要打他。
   徒弟让他住手，说道：“今日您不可打我。”
   “——缘何道理？”
   高峰没有回答，却突然走出门去。次日，师傅说：“万物归一，一归何处？”
   “——狗舔锅里的沸水。”
   “——你从何处学来此等蠢话？”
   “——您何不问问自己。”
   师傅于是感到十分满意。

“答非所问”是对发问者强势话语的有效回避，防止陷入任下断言的圈套。“答非所问”包括了沉默/出行/偏离/失礼四个中性项，打破了非是即否的聚合体。“乌尔特”是一种常见的、轻飘飘的、散碎的，超然于任何文化能力的偏离，“乌尔特”打破了好/坏的聚合体，以天气热回避了文化的价值体系。在禅宗一课中，师傅问高峰：“是谁穿着你这身皮夹克？”高峰没有回答是自己或是他人，而是“嘿”了声。师傅拿起棍子要打他，高峰说：“今日您不可打我。”师傅问，“缘何道理？”高峰没有回答，而是选择离开。第二天，师
傅说：“万物归一，一归何处？”回答这个问题需要长篇论述。然而，高峰回答“狗舔锅里的沸水”。巴特认为在高峰与师傅的对话中“展现了非所问的所有类型；沉默，出行，偏离，其中最严重的失礼反而使师傅最终感到满意；活像马科斯四兄弟”。所以他认为禅宗语言才是真正符合“答非所问”的中性语言。禅宗语言并非中性语言，其中存在一个认识的误区。

巴特称中性是对差别的激情，他进一步解释中性“这个中性依然是冲突性，对于相互抵悟的力量的争斗仍然十分敏感；取消冲突不是通过中止、放弃或打破聚合体，而是通过创立一个第三项；复杂项，不是零度项，中性”。傅立叶的系统学即一种扩展的聚合体，系统就是实现的、组合化的聚合体。在《萨德·傅立 叶·罗狄拉——书中，巴特认为傅立叶的系统学体现了中性。傅立叶在聚合体的两项对立中按照联想律插入了许多转化项。如丈夫在文明期的婚姻中幸福吗？对此提出8种理由：不幸的风 险，费用、警惕、单调、不育、隔阂、亲、戴绿帽。财产呢？不仅有穷人、富人，还有紧张度日者、勉强度日者、宽裕者。在傅立叶看来，幸福/不幸，穷人/富人这种聚合关系，是文明阶级的谎言和装腔作势，这种简单主义的统一式是对欲望的审查，将无法纳入聚合体的趣味统统加以排除，并确立尊卑、优劣、善恶关系。傅立叶则划分了更多的类别，缓和聚合关系两个间的对立。这些过渡项、转换项即中性类，它连接了不同的领域，趣味、性格，使各项处处于和谐期。[7]巴特认为中性是一种欲望，一种暴力，中性打破了聚合关系划分的等级秩序，不打算矫正、改革、取消一种趣味，不论它多么奇怪，而是对一切趣味加以肯定、强调、认可、合法化。

巴特的中性观是因差别的尊重，但禅宗语言是取消差异性，强调一切合一。禅宗以“无生”为本体，认为这个“无生”是一切创造可能性之源，在无生之域众生平等，日常生活中即体现了“道”。禅宗公案表明一个人不是为概念或定义而活，而是为生活本身。有一次，一个僧人问赵州禅师：“我的自我是什么？”赵州说：“你吃了早粥没有？”“我吃过了。”于是赵州对他说：“那么，洗钵盂去。”另一个僧人问赵州同一个问题，赵州说：“你见到庭前的柏树了吗？”[8]禅宗语言强调的是本体的空无；禅宗语言不是通过语言去开拓现实，语言是被轻视的对象，由于语言的介入，使得“无生”进入“有生”，形成主客二分。禅宗语言通过打破语言的逻辑规则忘掉自我，达到无意识，摆脱相对认识，与见者合一，达到“无生”的最高境界。禅宗语言有很多矛盾的说法，如“骑在毛驴上行走”、“弹无弦之琴”，甚至用粗暴的行动，如棒喝。更著名的名字是—和尚问禅师：“如何理解祖师西来意？”这相当于问：“佛法的根本意义是什么？”被禅师当胸一脚踢倒，当他从震惊中恢复过来，却爬起身，拍手呵呵说：“真是奇怪！一切三味无量妙义竟然都在一根毛发尖上，而我已经识得了它最本源的含义！”[9]那么，可以说禅宗语言完全放弃了聚合体，禅宗世界是一个“一”的世界，不是通过语言去建构世界的多元性。

巴特的中性语言观强调的是语言，将一切形而上学拉回到语言，语言之外不存在任何立足点。中性只是破除聚合链建构的等级秩序，还原世界的多样性存在。禅宗语言强调本体“空无”，语言成为被否定的对象。巴特之所以认为禅宗语言是真正符合“答非所问”的中性语言，是因为巴特认为聚合关系是西方文明实施欲望审查制度的手段。
取道禅宗语言破除聚合链,禅宗语言扰乱语言的逻辑秩序,实现了巴特以中性语言偏离文化的梦想,但他没有看到这种偏离是一种弃,是“离于世”的冷漠与退让。

3. 罗兰·巴特的语言悖论与老庄“道通为一”的思想

巴特希望以俳句式的文本写作对抗意识形态话语,裂解意义,因而他误认为俳句不关注意义。巴特的理想是以排除意义的文本写作破除聚合关系,但实现的途径为中性,中性不是破除聚合关系,而是以浸透着意识形态的语义扩增聚合关系。以扩展聚合体的方式实现非聚合体的文本写作,产生了巴特的语言悖论。巴特一言既出,便遭遇语言权势,陷入语言的苦役而不能自拔。他称“我毕生都在经历这种循环往复:身陷语言的高扬(享受冲动)（因为，我的社会存在相关，我写作、说话因为我发表和教书）和欲望之间，亟欲暂歇，中止和豁免言语行为。”[5]在文中:“天地与我并生,而万物与我为一。既已为一矣,且得有言乎？既已为一矣,且得有言乎？一与一为二,二与二为三。自此以往,巧历不能得,而况其几乎!”这段话时,巴特称这话打从心里感到千真万确;有一种对于语言行为的疲惫感,而且像一切疲惫感那样没有尽头;言语行为如同一场苦役。[5]


“物无非彼,物无非是。自彼则不一,自知则知之。故曰:彼出于是,是亦因彼。彼是,方生之说也。虽然,方生方死,方死方生;方可方不可,方不可方可;因是因非,因非因是。是以圣人不由而照之于天,亦因是也。是亦彼也,彼亦是也。彼亦一是非,此亦一是非。果且有彼是乎哉?果且无彼是乎哉?彼是莫得其偶,谓之道枢。枢始得其环中,以应无穷。是亦一无穷,非亦一无穷也。故曰莫若以明。”[10]

世界上的事物没有不是彼的,没有不是此的,彼和此相对而生。任何事物随起就随灭,随灭就随起;刚说可就转向不可,刚说不可就转向可了,有因而认为是的就有因而认为非,有因而认为非的就有因而认为是。是与非只是语言设定的,因为语言是道断,在肯定一面时必然否定另一面,如果顺从语言以肯定的一面与否定的一面进行争辩,只会落得以己之矛攻己之盾的下场。所以圣人不走这条路子,而观照于事物的本然,这也是因任自然的道理。此也就是彼,彼也就是此,彼有它的是非,此也有它的是非,彼此不相对待,就是道的枢纽。合于道枢才能得入环的中心,以顺应无穷的流变。
然而，小言执着于是非之辩，以其片面性隐匿了道。小言者自认为掌握了真理标准，唇枪舌战，互相攻击，落入语言的圈套却全然不知。文中称“夫随成心而师之，谁独且无师乎？他必先代而心自取者有之；愚者与有焉。”故有儒墨之是非，以是其所非而非其所是。如先见自己的成见作为判断标准，那么连愚人都有一个标准，人们却以这些标准作为讨伐征伐的武器，所以有儒家和墨家的争论。文中形容了当时的生存境界；

“大言炎炎，小言詹詹。其弊也神交，其弊也形开，与接为构，日以心斗。”

小言者论辩不休。他们睡觉的时候精神交错，醒来的时候形体不宁，和外界接触纠缠不清，整天勾心斗角。大言则调和一切是非，摒弃一切等差尊卑，寄寓于无穷的境界，即道的轮回。

“化身之相待。若其不相待，和以天倪，因以曼衍，所以穷年也。何谓和之以天倪？曰：不是然；然不然。是若果是也，则是之异乎不是也；亦无然；然若果然也，则然之异乎不然也亦无然。忘年忘义，振于无极，故寓诸无极。”

大言合于自然的分际，散漫流衍，悠游终生。什么叫合于自然的分际？任何东西有是便有不是，有然便有不然。是果真是是，就和不是有区别，这样就不须辩论；然果然是然，就和不然有区别，这样也就不须辩论。忘掉生死年岁忘掉是非仁义，遨游于无穷的境界，这样也就能寄寓于无穷的境界。巴特无法理解大言说“道通为一”的真谛，只能打心底赞同道家思想，而无法做到像道家那样“游刃有余”，失陷于小言的纷争而不能自拔。

4. 结 论

巴特的语言悖论是因为他固执于小言的纷争，缺乏“道通为一”的视角。巴特后期采取片断式的文本写作，挑战具有超象意识形态功能的传统写作方式。传统写作采用“一通到底”的写作方式，统一的结构、完整的情节、连贯的叙事，读者只需要紧跟作者的思路，发现作者安放在作品中的意义。而片断式写作没有固定的读法，也没有稳定的意义，邀请读者进行再创造。巴特称；“片断有一种理想；一种并非思想、并非智慧、并非真理（例如在箴言中）的高度浓缩，而且是一种音乐性的高度浓缩：与‘展开’相对立的，是某种分节的、被歌唱的东西，即一种朗诵：在这里充满了色彩。’片断式写作不是为了传达某种思想、观念，而只是传达自身。巴特以命名为的方式定义“文”，他选取了 plaisir（快乐）/ jouissance（享乐）区分文的两种类型。快乐是属于文化可以自由进入的满意、满足、舒适感、享受是与文化相分裂所带来的震动、震撼感。快乐/享乐是被重复使用具有确定意义的词语，是浸染着意识形态的符号，巴特却希望以浸染着意识形态的词语呈现非意识形态的文本写作。这是巴特思想矛盾的根源所在，庄子语言能为化解这一矛盾提供借鉴意义。

庄子不是选取原来的词语语言道，而是通过重新组合能指，赋予新词新的含义。如“卮言”、“卮”是古代盛酒的器皿，空则仰，满则倾，在倾之间不断往复，永不停止，以
“卮”也言正是《庄子》语言不守常规的形态体现。天籁一词同出一辙，《齐物论》中，子綦对子游说：“女闻天籁而未闻地籁，女闻地籁而未闻天籁乎！”籁是古代的一种箫，籁是指人吹竹管发出的声音，子綦将籁与地、天合起来组成地籁、天籁两个新词，并赋予新的意义。地籁，是风吹洞穴发出的声音，而天籁则借子綦之口说：“吹万不同，而使其自已也，咸其自取故也，其谁邪！”籁、地籁、天籁象征了人生的三个境界，层层递进，达到无待的自由境界。《庄子》是能指游戏的高手，不只是重新组合能指创造新词，而且通过改变能指的次序，揭示人在语言中的生存困境。如寓言《朝三暮四》：“狙公赋芧曰：朝三而暮四。众狙皆怒。曰：然则朝四而暮三。众狙皆悦。名实未亏而喜怒为用，亦因是也。是以圣人不以是非而废乎天钧，是之谓两行。”

这个寓言巧妙地颠倒词序，词序改变而所指并未改变，狙公却因语言使用的不同而喜怒不同。朝四暮三，让猴子认为得到更多的栗子，因而欣喜。这岂不是人类自身处境的写照，我们何尝不是因为语言弄得心力交瘁，被一场语言的游戏所愚弄，还要沾沾自喜，自鸣得意？“卮言”反对稳定、唯一的标准，并不是肆意违背语言结构，而是创造性地利用汉语的特性，实现“道”的永恒复归。如在《庄周梦蝶》这个寓言中《庄子》利用汉语的原生态性改变词序，解决了物我两化的哲学命题。

“昔者庄周梦为蝴蝶，栩栩然蝴蝶也，自喻适志与！不知周也。俄然觉，则蘧蘧然周也。不知周之梦为蝴蝶与？蝴蝶之梦为周与？”周与蝴蝶，则必有分矣。此之谓物化。”

在“周之梦为蝴蝶”这句话中，语言逻辑将人放在主语位置，庄子反对稳定的标准，将蝴蝶放在主语位置。因为周与蝴蝶没有语法变化，可以在主语、宾语的位置相互置换，却不会改变汉语结构。通过这一置换，蝴蝶之梦为周顺理成章，蝴蝶遨游各处悠游自在，根本不知道自己原来是庄周，庄周与蝴蝶原为一体，实现了道通为一。

庄子意识到成心之言即巴特所说的意识形态用语导致人的生存困境，庄子采取“卮言”论道，巴特提倡“文”。“卮言”与“文”的共性都是一种求新求异的语言，是对俗套用语的悖反。但“文”是以否定的方式切近与文化的一切关联，打破一切陈规，巴特认为“文”必须偏离意义，句子具有不完整性。然而，巴特以命名的方式定义“文”仍是关于意义的哲学，巴特的语言悖论使得“文”成为空想之物。庄子可借鉴之处在于，庄子不以下定义的方式论道，也不否定句子的完整性，而是采取创造新词，改变词序的方式。庄子经常使用的句式是“其名为吊诡”“此之谓天衍”“此之谓葆光”。如：

“故知止其所不知，至矣。孰知不言之辩，不道之道？若有能知，此之谓天衍。注焉而不满，酌焉而不竭，而不知其所由来，此之谓葆光。”

大言合乎道的轮回，道没有边界，那么大言也不能是恒常不变的语言，唯有创新语言才能言道。“府”通“腑”，“人府”相对的“天府”正是“大言者”的心境。这种心境注焉而不满，酌焉而不竭，永远保持分明，不会被一隅之见所蒙蔽，因而称为葆光。小言者无法领悟“天府”“葆光”之心境，唯有将其纳入道的轮回中才能明白其意义。庄子并没有否定意义，也没有固守常规，而是不断创新意义。“卮言”既关注意义，又不执著于意义，既遵循语言结构，又创造性地运用汉语非原生态性特征，以肯定语言的方式实现了“文”
的构想。对于庄子来说，所谓的是非只是一组概念游戏，最终要达到的是一。庄子认为所谓的生与死，是与非等区分对立来源于语言的遮蔽性，语言必然有所断定，在肯定一面时必然否定另一面，如果顺从语言以肯定的一面与否定的一面进行争辩，只会落得以己之矛攻己之盾的下场。将矛与盾两词合用正体现了中国人的智慧，实际上矛与盾皆备于我，为何要使两者互相残杀，矛盾合用同中求异，异中求同。在道枢中，真正实现了道、言、人的合一。这正是巴特的乌托邦之梦。巴特之所以陷入语言的苦役不能自拔，是因为他只看到分没有看到合，他希望裂解意义，却又无法走出意义的泥潭。如在《S/Z》中，S/Z是一个聚合体。S和Z分别是巴尔扎克的小说《萨拉辛》中两位主要人物萨拉辛(Sarrasine)和赞比内拉(Zambinella)的首写字母。萨拉辛的艺术生命来自S与Z的对立，一旦发现Z非男非女，破坏了分类的基础，使得意义无法生成，也使得寻求中心意义的S失去了生存的凭证，让萨拉辛自觉艺术与生命的终结。但从庄子语言角度出发，Z难道不是反写的S吗？巴特固执于S与Z的对立，认为一旦取消对立，便散失意义、艺术、生命之源，而庄子告诉我们S与Z的统一才是真正的艺术之门。

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西周器物的“符号化”及其意识形态转换

徐东树

摘要 周代器物摆脱了商代器物自然语言式的符号指代方式，进入了一种制度化的符号象征体系阶段。在周代礼制观念下，西周器物的铭文、器物组合、纹饰、功能与意义内涵形成了具有新的价值观念内涵（“德治”）的结构与系统，器物的生产与形式从此打上深刻的意识形态内涵，参与了制度演化的进程，成为深刻的制度之“物”。

关键词 西周器物；符号化；二度规范体系；制度；意识形态

1. 商周器物的价值转变：从形式风格到德治“符号”

黑格尔意义上的时代精神不断受到后来思想家的批判，在艺术史界以贡布里希最为著名。可是，如果不是在一种先验的意义上使用这个说法，而是以历史回溯的方式去观察，我们倒是可以看出，每个不同的历史时期都有一个相对主流、显在的文化风格，可以让我们大体辨认。李学勤论东周艺术时说：“无论是建筑遗址，还是墓葬发现的各种器物，都寄托着古人的思想和观念。东周到秦代各种工艺的变化，其实都在不同程度上反映了时代的变迁。从夏商到西周盛行的艺术传统，崇尚重庄严瑞，这和那时尊祖敬神的思想是一致的。到春秋中期以后，表现在青铜器、玉器，漆器等各方面的艺术上的根本变化，新的秀雅清新的风格，则与新兴的思想观念相调谐，或者不如说是同一潮流的体现。”“纹饰肯定有其内容。笔者不赞成把商和西周的纹饰归结为狰狞可怖，因为这些器物大多是祭祀的礼器，花纹不能起恫吓的效用。”这样的描述大体类似于沃尔夫林式的、潘诺夫斯基所深化的艺术“风格”问题。艺术史可以通过风格变化来分期，每种

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③ 李学勤，东周与秦代文明[M]，上海：上海人民出版社，2007：291。
风格背后都凝结了特定的文化思想与内容。李泽厚则更简洁清晰地把周代后期的艺术风格发展趋向概括为“理性化、世间化”①。这二者所言皆有所据。

但是，我们还是可以进一步深究，这种理性化、世间化的风格是如何形成的？文化思想与艺术“风格”之间的结合与转化的机制具体是如何实现的呢？某种主导观念与某种物化的形式之间一定存在必然联系吗？这样的追问则是从风格学的形式分析进入到符号学的阐释。风格分析只是简单地在某种物化形式与一个特定观念之间建立历史性的联系，用的是归纳的方法。符号分析则是寻找某种形式之所以阐述某种观念的意义生产“机制”，即理解并解释形式与意义之间的关系确立的，而不仅仅把它当作一个事实的存在。物质形式与意义之间关系的建立有赖一种特定的组织规则，这个关于物的特定组织规则又得依赖于一个更大的意识形态体系建构，才能实现意义与物质形式的有效联系。

周物对于商物的“改造”是通过“礼制”的改造，把物充分系统化，使物的铭文、组合关系、装饰、内涵、功能（以下将对此展开论述）共同构成一个不同于前代的、有着内在深层意义结构的“符号系统”。虽然对殷代多有承续，但周代造物的“文化性格”是对商物整体性的改造，而不是简单物质形式的变迁。用一个符号学的术语来描述，即确立了比较完善的物质形式背后超越自然语言符号的“二度规范系统”。“自然语言是最主要的初始符号系统，在自然语言基础上加上补充性超结构，使之与社会文化的知识体系、观念与道德准则等有固定同型性，就成为二度规范体系。二度规范体系的特征是判断性的，在游戏中有正确与失败；在法律中有合法与违法；在宗教中有尊崇与异端。”②通俗地说，虽然延续使用了前代许多的“词汇”，但使用的“语法”规则却是新建的。

周代造物享有的合法观念已经是“天子”“德治”的等级化秩序，通过不断申诉殷商“败德”周人尚德，而不再凡事借助“上帝”神的意旨来实现社会统治的合法性。③器物的功能与目的更加直接面对现世的秩序安排，物直接参与了等级的区分，其世俗化、等级化、符号化趋势已经确立，并为后世的造物奠定了基础性的方向。物本身的珍贵已经不是最重要的，其象征的意义已经超越了物本身的意义。《礼记·礼器》中不厌其烦地申诉，不同场合中使用器物的贵贱标准并不确定，或以大贵，或以小贵，或以多贵，或以少贵，或以高贵，或以次贵，或以文贵，或以素贵，都要依据具体情境来判断。从中可见物的符号化象征功能的发达程度，依从“德”的合法性，“尊贵”原则已经内化为物的基本性格，即器物首先表现为其文化价值象征的功能。这种“德治规范体系”对于器物的态度与改造带有根本性意义。物已经纳入一个深层的文化结构的演化进程中，体现出一个价值意义明确、稳定的物化秩序，物已经深刻地参与到一个更大制度的演化中，与人的活动建立了更加深层的规则及意义联系方式。经过了“德治”的改造，类似的物已不再是旧物，而是文化、观念、制度的直接载体了。

③ 参见作者论文：周公制礼与中国造物制度的思想基础[J]. 美术与设计, 2009(3)。
相对而言，商代贵族对于物的占有方式显得较简单，虽然殷商青铜酒器已经具有一定的符号功能，但出土来看，它们对于器物的占有方式仍是常常显示为对于其形式的直接占有，而不是物的符号象征意义的占有。保存比较完好的商代妇好墓中（器物大小接近中型规模），我们可以说它一点他们对于物的态度。比如，仅只骨笄一种，就有四百九九件。其中椭圆管形头（即图式）体则弯曲在“木框”之於，与玉盘、石豆等在一起外，其余都装在一个木框内。根据这批骨笄笄头的不同形式，可分七式。其中以 II 式管形头比例最大，有三百三十四件；其次为 IV 式方牌形头，计七十四件。再次为 III 式和 I 式，其中的变形头 I 式也有三十五件；而 V、VI、Ⅶ式为数极少。(1)（见图 1，2，3）如此大量重复的器物恐怕不会是妇好生前的日常用物，或仅仅为了作成为葬品而专门放置的。它极可能是财产保存的一种方式。商代的货币还不不是很发达，其交换的方式还主要是以物易物的方式。而商代与各国的交往，主要是货物的礼尚往来。

周与商相之间，发生的是内在文化价值核心的根本性变化。商代器物表现出来的器物形式更多停留于物的“自然语言”的层面，主要通过其体态、数量与华贵的程度使器物形式与观念直接对应。周代器物则是经过一定意识形态改造的秩序井然的符号化系统，充分表达了周代混融性体系化的礼制内涵。它体现的是一种比较成熟的国家权力集中体制下更为有效的文化与意识形态的统治方式，是一种人间的政治秩序安排(2)。

![图 1 I 式骨笄拓片](image)

1. (175) 2. (174) 3. (172) 4. (173) 5. (180) 6. (104) 7. (179) 8. (102)

(1) 中国社会科学院考古研究所．殷墟妇好墓[M]．北京：文物出版社，1980：208-212。
(2) 关于西周政体，有学者概括为“权力代理的分封制国家”，周王拥有不可分割的权威王权。参见李建的《西周的政体——中国早期的官僚制度和国家》第七章第三节，吴敏娜，周晓军，译景瑞，侯呈文译，北京：三联书店 2010。有关西周政体争议还可参看张广志《西周史与西周文明》(上海科技文献 2007)9 章“西周政体之争”的相关论述。
图2 Ⅱ式骨化拓片【1—7】Ⅱ B式
(111, 146, 139, 140, 145, 141, 186) 8—14 Ⅱ A式(150, 109, 110, 112, 153, 235, 108)

图3 Ⅳ式骨化拓片【1. (114) 2. (192) 3. (116) 4. (113) 5. (193) 6. (196) 7. (117)】

而不是以“至神上帝的迷信和崇拜以统制天下”。殷人先祖死后则为侍上帝左右的“王
帝”，凡事皆卜问“帝”而决。《礼记·表礼》谓“殷人尊神，率民以事神”，“周人尊礼尚
施，事鬼敬神而远之。”周代的器物开始具有远为鲜明的“事人”的文化意涵。

布迪厄说，国家的垄断常常“首先逐渐垄断有形暴力，然后慢慢垄断符号暴力。”②
中国周代国家统治形态与商代的差异，很大程度上就体现在符号垄断上的完善与加强。
周代礼制符号的制度规范带有鲜明的强制色彩，周代礼制系统的诸多层次也是依赖于
系统化、物化形式才可能充分明确地呈现其制度的规则与功能。在一个核心价值明确
的制度体系中，造物制度显然属于一个外层结构，但它又会“内在”地嵌于制度体系之
中。制度体系的复杂性就在于，从道德共识、制度理念、政治制度、经济制度，到具体微
观制度的安排是一个相互关联的复杂系统。③不同层次之间并不是洋葱式的包裹，不是

① 黃荫第：95516.
② [法]皮埃尔·布迪厄，[美]华康德。实践与反思：反思社会学导引[M]，李猛，李康，译，北京：中央编译
出版社，2004：129.
③ 近些年致力于制度理论研究的汪丁丁对制度系统按核心到边缘的次序大体划分出五个层次，最核心一层
是制度的“核心价值”，即道德共识及规范；其次则是在外引申出来的一系列制度理念，如程序“正义”规则；第三个
层次是政治制度系统。第四个层次才是经济制度系统。第五个层次则是更近一步细化的各种具体制度安排，与个体
行为相关。他深刻指出，不同情况的制度变迁是由内部变迁的层面有所不同。汪丁丁。制度分析基础[M]，上
海：上海人民出版社，2005：224.
独立为片单向递进，而是复杂互动的。制度变迁可能是最核心的道德价值转换，也可能是制度理念的修正，还可能从最外在的物的形式开始渐次演化，各个层次之间既不完全同步，又不乏内在的呼应。

西周封建礼制这样深刻的制度变迁，反映到造物行为上，我们在器物表层上看到了一种不太同步的关系。造物虽相对有所滞后，但正是其缓慢而有清晰方向的变化，可以更深刻地看清核心价值观念的转变，由人对社会变迁方向的牵引。

20 世纪丰富的考古成果让我们充分看到，周初器物的形式和装饰与商末是相承延续的，仅从物质形式的表层看，商周之际的变动并不明显。然而，其不变的，缓慢渐进的影响却十分深刻。对于造物变迁的考察，我们可以看到，制度的价值理念核心所起的作用并不是简单表现为一时一地的表面变化，其根本的力量表现为一种历史演化的方向的内在推动，是物的符号体系结构的根本性塑造。

符号学研究与分析的对象，即符号体系的意义形成机制，其基本原理经过了几个阶段的发展才逐渐完善。它很大程度上受到不断发展与突破的结构主义思潮的影响。符号学分析认为，任何意义符号都是结构化和体系化的，具有明确的规则，这个规则背后还有更大规则，即元规则，也就是前面讨论的“二度规范体系”。它依赖于一定的意识形态，而这个意识形态也是一个意义结构，决定这个意识形态的还有更为深层的意义核心价值。这个意识形态，也是制度理论中的“共有理念”，与道德核心价值。这样才构成一个深层意义结构模式，才是成熟的“符号”体系，而不是“自然语言”式的、符号与意义对应清晰明了的“记号”。借用赵瑞银用过的简单的一个比方。如“红灯停，绿灯行”这一制度规则能够表现出明确的意义，是因为二者是对立区别的，但是“红灯”和“绿灯”的意思、以及其规则来自于西方文化，它可能是不确定的、偶然的；假如意思反过来红灯为“行”，其结构与功能并不会改变。更深层次的问题则在于，这个规则确定之后就具有强制性，并且在这个规则之上还有一个更小的制度规则，有一个超越它的规则，比如，它就包含了某种关于优先权利的行为规则制制。这也体现了特定的意识形态与价值核心，它是西方现代社会的制制，有人人平等的意思。而在一个君主专制制度下就不可能存在这样的交通规则，皇帝出行，一切都得给他让道，其他人员则按等级高下决定通行的优先次序。

当然，关于红灯为停，这种符号与意义之间最早联系的建立，则一般来源于某种更
为内在的、久远的文化传统观念或者道德核心价值。在西方文化中，红色常常用来表示禁忌的颜色，同时还有红色为最强波长的可见光的近代物理学解释。如果是非西方文化，如中国，红色反而具有喜庆、华贵等意思，不一定会被挑选为“禁止”的意思。在此一个简单的符号结构基础上，结构可能复杂化、细分化，如出现左转红灯、右转红灯。这样就又另有一个同级的结构关系出现，组织起更复杂意义的表达与区分。“左转红灯，右转红灯”在一个系统内的组分关系中，由于是同类物，为相似关系，在符号学中称为“选择关系”或“组合”，可以互相替换，表示可区分内涵的组分。而“绿灯与红灯”则表现为相异不同类的组合关系，为临近关系，称“组合关系”或“横组合”。这两种不同的组合关系，结构了两类事物，一类同类，一类异类，并在同类之间产生了彼此差异区别的二元对立，由此构成一个可以产生表达比较完整意群的结构。

而周代的器物在礼制系统中，开始形成了系列化层级化的各种层次的纵横组合结构，在这个结构体系之上，具有明确的“二度规范”，有一个强制的意识形态加诸于物本身。我们可以看到器物的铭文（由于“铭文”在周器意义内涵中所具的重要性在此不归人“装饰”、组合、装饰、内涵与功能共同构成一个互相内在联系的整体结构，器物通过铭文、组合、装饰形成了一系列新的物的结构系统，呈现了新的制度功能与意识形态内涵。周代器物的形式变迁由此表现出了特定的意涵指向。其变迁的趋势绝不是随机偶然的，而是有内在规定性的、沿著相当确定的方向发展。“理性化、生活化”之下，是一种新的社会秩序安排、新的器物占有方式，其背后隐含着新的价值观念与生活态度。

2. 铭文的内涵与制度功能：改事不改器

周人克商之前尚没有大规模的青铜工业，克商之后全面接受了商人的铸造工艺与工艺奴隶，很自然地，“西周早期几乎没有新出的器型”①。但是器物形式的延续只是表面的。周代统治者并非被动地接受商代的工艺遗产，其首先采用的手段是直接加以意识形态改造。周器对于商器第一个重大改造就是在器物上铭刻了大量周代德治所特有的意识形态内容的文字。这是简单、直接又有效的“改制不改器”。

商代中期，特别是盘庚迁殷以后，铸铭铜器才有所增多，但每器所著字数仍不多，一般只有一两字，多者四五字，“到殷代末年

图 4 铜史墙盘(西周中期)

始有较长铭文，最多三四十字，内容大抵是受赏赐而为父辈作器。”①商代铜器铭文的内容也较简单，一般不含重要意义，数十字的铭文也仅有几例。铸铭的目的在于标记器主的族氏或者识别用途。如“戈”“天”“子”盖是标记铸器的族氏或铸器人；“父乙”“母丙”是表明器为祭祀父乙或母丙而作；“宾小室孟”则是表示存放地点和使用场所。铭文一般多铸在器物的不显著部位。西周早期，铸铭之器骤然增多，长篇巨制，屡见不鲜。②并且西周早期铭文一个重要的功能就是建立其“政治理论”，说明“国家的根本正统性是由上天特别授权文王作为它的接受者。”“此后，文王和武王接受天命的说法在西周青铜铭文中已成定式。”而至 2002 年，已发表的商周时代铭文共 13371 篇，其中大部分为西周铭文。③

某种意义上，铭文的刻写是商器与周器最根本的差异，以铭文的方式强迫器物说话，其基本功能在于表达一个明确的意思。

铭文常常不断宣示着周“德”的盛大与光辉，参与了大量社会规则及行为的规范化，其明确的功利目的不言而喻，《礼记·仪》说得非常明白：“铭者，论字其先祖之有德善，功烈，勋劳，庆赏，声名，列于天下，而为之祭祀，自成其名焉，以祀其先祖也。显扬先祖所以崇孝，身比也，顺也。明示后世，教也。”铭文常常就是为了隐恶扬善，既体现了子孙孝顺之心，又是为了不断给人作为教育的榜样。仅仅通过文字的直接烙印，器物的内涵与功能直接发生了变化，周初商代工匠生产的器物形式由此变成了周代统治者宣扬德治的直接工具。大量铭文的出现使器物直接有效地参与了周代国家道德意识形态的建设。

如 1976 年出土于抚风庄白家微氏家族青铜窖藏的史墙盘铭（如图 4），铸于恭王时期，有铭文 284 字，正是为了颂扬先祖功烈的典型作品。前半部分追述文、武、成、康、昭、穆六世周王的功业，后半部分历数微氏家族五代辅佐王室的事迹。其目的全在于现世秩序的合法性说明。

当然，周代的铭文的形式内容并非单一不变，马承源曾概括出十二种类型：

1. 篆记。作用是为标识器主。
2. 纪辞。明确具体的祭祀用途。
3. 册命。册命制度创立于西周初期，穆王以后更为习见，逐渐形成了一套固定的典礼仪式，在青铜器铭文中更清晰地将这套仪式成为一种仪式。册命铭文的格式主要包括时间、地点、受册命者、册命辞、称扬辞、作器、祝辞及等内容。
4. 训诰。训诰是西周铜器铭文中常见的格式之一。
5. 记事。记事类铭文盛行于西周，数量最多，题材丰富，格式也较随便，有纪功、获赏、从征、出使等。

① 《殷商史》，587。
② 《殷商史》，343-350。
③ 李峰. 《西周的政体——中国早期的官僚制度和国家[M]》，吴敏卿，胡晓军，许景昭，等译. 北京：三联书店 2010：297，2。
6. 追孝。商周时期奴隶主贵族都非常重视祭祀祖先，周人更多地在青铜器上表现了祭祀祖先的热情。他们通过铜器铭文夸耀自己祖先的业绩，吹嘘自己祖先的美德，以此来行孝道。

7. 约剂。《周礼·秋官·司约》：“凡大约剂书于宗彝，小约剂书于丹图。”于是有所谓“治民之约”和“治地之约”。

8. 律令。也属于约剂之一种，它不是个人之间的，而是政府的法律条令。

9. 符、节、诏令。属于非彝器的铸铭有兵符、节传、诏版等。

10. 乐律。西周时期的钟上的铭文有的记载乐律名称。

12. 物勒工名。“物勒工名，以考其诚”，这是战国秦汉时期青铜器铭文的特点。

铭文形式虽然在长期的演变中出现了多样化的形式，但我们从中可以看到周代之后常见的铭文多不是体现为对上帝的祭祀，而更多与礼制化的一些政治活动相关。其中，最有特色、最多见的内容表现为了“颂扬”。有学者曾专门对周代器物中“颂铭”作过整理研究。在其研究中，揭示了颂扬铭文的内容及其细微变化与现实的政治秩序的变迁颇可相互参证。

颂扬铭文按照颂扬者与被颂扬者的上下关系，将各种颂扬情况可以分成下级对上级的颂扬、上级对下级的颂扬、自颂的三种形式。

从数量来讲，下级对上级的颂扬占大多数，有后孙对祖先的颂扬，臣下对君主的颂扬、属下对上司的颂扬、贵族对周先王的颂扬、子女对母亲的颂扬等六种情况。其中，因为追禄铭文为颂扬铭文的重要成分，后孙对祖先的颂扬最为常见，按身份再可分贵族后孙对祖先的颂扬、时王对先王的颂扬、东周时候诸侯对祖先的颂扬。臣下对君主的颂扬与属下对上司的颂扬，多见于册命赏赐铭文，西周中期以后大量出现。册命、赏赐完毕后，一般以“对扬王休”来赞美周王的恩德。

而进入东周时代，随着王权的衰落，阶级矛盾与社会危机显露出来，册命、赏赐制度都深深地动摇了，因此，这种因册命赏赐所发生的颂扬也逐渐消失。贵族对周先王的颂扬相对来说也少见了，东周贵族已经不太需要仰仗于周天子来维持家族的政治地位，这可能会变成对先王颂扬的减少。

从颂扬的本质上看，上级对下级的颂扬只能是少数。这类颂扬可分王对臣下的颂扬、王对贵族祖先的颂扬、父亲对儿子的颂扬。西周晚期之后，多见王对建武功的臣下的颂扬，大约与周室衰微反过来需要仰仗于诸侯的支持有关。王对贵族祖先的颂扬一般都出现于训诰形式的铭文里，“王若曰”这一类字眼都表示颂扬受着者祖先的功绩。这类颂扬有特殊目的，即周天子让贵族子孙以替周邦建立功勋的祖先为典范，励精求治，使诸侯顺服来归，通过册命赏赐，勉励受着者率其家族，部属捍卫王身，敬事周室。

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铭文中隐含着的是丰富的政治信息，政治的变化可以从中清晰地折射出来。西周晚期之后，除了周天子在贵族的颂铭增加了之外，另一个有意思的变化是“自颂铭文”的形式开始出现。这种现象反映当时宣扬自己业绩的愿望强烈起来。‘颂扬’本来是反映出了一个子或先明贤德，在东周之后的对抗与战争中，强大起来的诸侯与贵族迫切需要确认与加强自己统治的能力，从而使诸侯国的贵族通过自颂的方式炫耀自己的政绩，以巩固其政治地位。而其颂扬的中心内容，也有所转移。西周时期多封‘圣哲’，以此为天子或后先所要具备的品德。进入春秋时期演变为自己炫耀的内容，战国时期首次出现“智”的概念。

仅仅从颂扬铭文变化的过程，隐约显示其背后的政治理性的变化过程。从周天子以德配天，意以庇护与统治天下；到春秋时期诸侯自颂德行，意以加强自身巩固政治地位；再到七雄混战对于谋划竞争的强调。我们看到了政治理性的程度一步步在演化。

周公制礼显示出对于上帝依赖的削弱，人的力量在逐渐被强调，其趋势从对于先祖德能的依赖与强调，到对于自身德能的强调，一方面实现了现实激烈的竞争需要，另一方面也是周礼对于“上帝”“礼制”之后政治体制发展的内在逻辑。我们是不是可以这样论断：东周制度理念发生的变化趋势，并没有离开人为“德治”的核心价值所划定的方向。

3. 器物组合的结构与功能：商周器物象征的转换

就器物结构化组合关系而言，在周代重器——青铜礼器上也有非常明确的 categorie。早期吸收殷代工艺制造体系，具体器物的形制与工艺虽多延续前代，但是进入中期穆王以后，虽然是新旧交杂时期，但开始有了急遽的变化。客观上，这并不是一蹴而就的，而是经过消化吸收之后，周人的文化性格才逐渐在器物外在形式上强烈地显露出来。核心的礼器组合中，酒器衰落，觚、斝、觥等器基本不见，殷商常见的爵、觚、Insn组合已经被列鼎、编钟所取代；器物组合的中心已经被食器为中点所替代。早在周初，《尚书·酒诰》中周公即言宜，毁败于逆酒相关，指出戒酒不仅是文王的教导，还是上帝的旨意。祭祀用酒，但人不能“荒度于酒”，要严厉宣称有人“出酒”，要拘捕处死。严厉的敬酒显然蕴含着鲜明的政治意图，被赋予相当深厚的道德含义。这种器物重心的转移由此已经远远超过了简单的形式变迁与更替，而具有深刻的制度意义，彰显了悦神威敬人德的文化内涵的转换。商代铭文充斥着以“天干”为标志的祖先名称。而周代中期之后铭文多有“子子孙孙永保用”，奉献对象逐渐从祖先转向了子孙后代。这种转向的深刻性

也是政治核心目标转移的重要表征。从“敬神”到“德治”，到“尊贤、亲亲、贤贤”的重大转向。

中期以后慢慢形成的、有鲜明等级区隔的“九鼎”制度，①则更是器物使用上的一个重要创制。从九鼎八簋依次递减这样的组合已经成为一种象征“符会”，它的意义已经超出器物的占有本身，而是一种等级占有的象征。九、八之数的象征才是最重要的区别。商代的贵族的等级差异还主要依赖于工艺器物的休量、数量与质量。符号的特性就在于以严格对应的象征意义替换物本身的价值，这是周与商的转折。比如，楚庄王试图称霸“问鼎中原”的时候，得到的周大夫王孙满的回答很明确说“在德不在鼎”。②在理论上，“鼎”自身的重要性显然已经退让给符号的意义了。

鼎和簋开始结构于清晰齐整的结构系统之中。鼎和簋组合，九、七、五鼎的等级差和八、六、四簋的等级差构成了组合；而九鼎八簋、七鼎六簋等构成了横组合。其中的鼎制具体组合可参见表1（据《周礼》内容制成）。

<table>
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<th>升簋</th>
<th>鼎数</th>
<th>鼎实</th>
<th>簋数</th>
<th>簋实</th>
<th>周王室</th>
<th>诸侯国</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>九鼎</td>
<td>三簋</td>
<td>大牢</td>
<td>六鼎</td>
<td>牛、羊、豕、鱼、腊、肠胃、肤、鲜鱼、鲜腊</td>
<td>八簋</td>
<td>天子</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>五鼎</td>
<td>三簋</td>
<td>大牢</td>
<td>六簋</td>
<td>牛、羊、豕、鱼、腊、肠胃、肤</td>
<td>六簋</td>
<td>卿</td>
<td>诸侯、公、侯</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>四鼎</td>
<td>二簋</td>
<td>少牢</td>
<td>五簋</td>
<td>羊、豕、鱼、腊</td>
<td>四簋</td>
<td>夫人</td>
<td>卿</td>
<td>诸侯、伯</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>三鼎</td>
<td>一簋</td>
<td>牺</td>
<td>三簋</td>
<td>豚、鱼、腊</td>
<td>二簋</td>
<td>元士</td>
<td>夫人</td>
<td>诸侯、子、男</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>一簋</td>
<td>牲</td>
<td>一簋</td>
<td>豚</td>
<td>无簋</td>
<td>士</td>
<td>士</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

以上器物的结构组合并不是任意的，而是有着明确的符号象征内涵与礼节意义。九为最大数，天子专享，以下贵族依级递减。奇偶的搭配，也是特定观念的产物。《礼·郊特性》言“鼎俎之间而鸾豆偶，阴阳之义也”。商代墓葬出土的成套礼器还往往是在鼎簋偶数相配，而周人礼器却总是奇偶相配。九鼎配八簋，其奇偶并不是偶然，或者只是习俗相沿，而是人为的、观念的设计，鼎实为六牲，是天产，自然为奇；簋实为六谷，是地产，自然为偶。天尊地卑观念在周代才明确确立，是为了建立一套礼制化的等级制度服务的。

周代另一个礼乐制度的重要代表——编钟乐悬制度，也是以鲜明的等级制分为发展方向的。周代的改造已经不是“礼之末节”的调整，其钟磐乐悬作为宫廷重器，不是简单的演奏乐器，还承载着深刻的政治内涵。从音乐考古发现来看，西周编钟乐悬的摆列制度与文献记载大致相合。《周礼》不载高于六卿的公一级，所以在等级对位时略有出入，据出土器物调整后，可大致按等级排出以下序列等差：王宫悬，三公轩悬，诸侯、卿、大夫

① 由于目前尚未有西周王墓发现，“九鼎”之制尚有争议，有学者以为天子九鼎可能配三簋，为十二鼎，而三公一级即可享有九鼎。参见：王清雷、西周乐悬制度的音乐考古学研究。北京：文物出版社，2007：109。

② 《左传》宣公三年。
判悬、士特悬。①并且，这个制度是在周初刻意新创的情形下不断完善起来的。编钟制度可以在相当程度上看出周礼对于前代损益的苦心。殷礼乐制的标志性器物是编钟，至成王之后的康、昭时期，已彻底为殷人没有使用过的编钟所代替，其他几种如簠簋、编磬、特磬也不见于西周墓葬。西周中期以后，以源远流长、为殷礼所无的“钟”替代了殷的重器盛器，成为上卿以上高官贵享专享礼器。至西周晚期，乐悬制度已经定组织，等级分明，层次清楚。②

周人克商，比较彻底改变了乐制，一个重要变化时周人禁用“商”音，仅用“宫角徵羽”形成音列。形式本身的改变并不是关键，重要的是音乐被加强了一种好善恶的恶巧，具备了道德与文化上的区分功能，“商音”成了朽败堕落的象征。这个禁绝曾经是如此彻底，以至“在西周达数百年的时间里，在中国广袤的土地上，出土众多的编钟音列绝大多数没有商音，只有在西周强大的王权下才能做到”③。乐制的正声与淫声的区分体现了一种意识形态的划分。西周礼中，音乐是一个体察人心与协调社会秩序的重要手段，被作为一个承载着深厚道德内涵的礼制行为加以规范化地提倡。音乐在西周中已经成为社会秩序的表现形式。在《礼记·乐记》中，不断地阐述音乐与人心、政声的直接联系，甚至宫商之音，还有君臣之分：

“乐者，音之所由生也；其本在人心之感于物也。是故其哀感于心，其声噍以杀。其乐感于心，其声噍以缓。其喜感于心，其声噍以散。其怒感于心，其声噍以厉。其敬感于心，其声噍以廉。其爱心感于心，其声噍以柔。六者，非性也，感于物而动。是故先王慎所以感之者。故礼以道其志，乐以和其声，政以一其行，刑以防其奸。乐刑政，其极一也；所以同民心而出治道也。”

“凡音者，生人心者也。情动于中，故形于声。声成文，谓之音。是故治世之音安以乐，其政和。乱世之音怨以怒，其政乖。亡国之音哀以思，其民困。声音之道，与政通矣。宫为君，商为臣，角为民，徵为事，羽为物。无准则，无度则凶。宫乱则荒，其君骄。商乱则陂，其官坏。角乱则辱，其民怨。徵乱则哀，其事勤。羽乱则危，其财匮。”

“凡音者，生人心者也。乐者，通伦理者也。故知音而不知音者，禽兽是也。知音而不知乐者，众庶是也。唯君子为能知乐。是故审音以知音，审声以知乐，审乐以知

① 参见：王清雷.《周礼乐制的音乐学研究》[M].北京：文物出版社，2007:170. 从音乐考占发现看来，西周乐悬的摆列制度与《周礼》记载有其相合之处。如所谓“轩悬”“判悬”“特悬”等乐悬之制在西周时期确已存在，姜、大夫、士的乐悬之制也与《周礼》相著。但也有例外，即不能完全对位。如卿、大夫有诸侯同为“判悬”，三公应为“轩悬”，周公高于六卿的公一级，当然就不会有关于三公一级乐悬制度的记载。三公应为“轩悬”之制，弥补了先秦文献有关乐悬制度的缺载。西周时期的乐悬，卿、大夫应属同一级别。西周诸侯虽然有“判悬”之制，但与《周礼》记载“卿、大夫判悬”是相符的，所以，西周的乐悬摆列制度应为：王令悬，三公轩悬，诸侯、卿、大夫判悬，士特悬。至西诸侯判悬之制应是春秋时期的事情了。但这与《周礼》记载也不矛盾，因为西周时期的诸侯为卿，用“判悬”之制；到了春秋时期，诸侯都升级为公，所以其乐悬制度也应该由“判悬”升为“轩悬”，这与《周礼》所载的乐悬制度仍然相符。

② 同①，第155-156页。

政，而治道备矣。是故不知声者不可与言音，不知音者不可与言乐。知乐则几于礼矣。礼乐皆得，谓之有德。德者得也。是故乐之隆，非极音也。食飨之礼，非至味也。清庙之瑟，朱弦而疏越，壹倡而三叹，有遗音者矣。大飨之礼，尚玄酒而俎腥鱼，大羹不和，有遗味者矣。是故先王之制礼乐也，非以极口腹耳目之欲也，将以教民平好恶而反人道之正也。①

音乐，外可以调和社会的伦理秩序，内可以调和个体的精神状态。音乐能够发挥这么巨大的制度功能，我们也许就能够理解，为什么最复杂的青铜分铸技术会出现于夏代身上了。②即使后来已经有了更为便捷的失蜡法，而依然不厌其繁。

还有如玉器的使用上，其功能与结构同为有序井然，玉器的分门别类已经是高度结构化、符号化了。以下两表关于玉器中功能形式区分之细致繁复已远过商代甚多。

### 表 2 玉器的种类、命名及功用

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>修饰</th>
<th>功用及位置</th>
<th>葬器</th>
<th>六器</th>
<th>谐礼器</th>
<th>功用</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>打眼</td>
<td>敛尸，备食（天）</td>
<td>琮壁</td>
<td>壁</td>
<td>苍壁</td>
<td>礼天</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>有隆起的修饰</td>
<td>敛尸，备食（地）</td>
<td>琮琮</td>
<td>琮</td>
<td>黄琮</td>
<td>礼地</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>高出</td>
<td>敛尸，备食（地）</td>
<td>琮圭</td>
<td>圭</td>
<td>青圭</td>
<td>礼东方</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>丝带穿过其间</td>
<td>敛尸，备食（地）</td>
<td>琮璋</td>
<td>瑁</td>
<td>赤璋</td>
<td>礼南方</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>敛尸，备食（地）</td>
<td>琮瓮</td>
<td>瓣</td>
<td>白瓣</td>
<td>礼西方</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>敛尸，备食（地）</td>
<td>琮璜</td>
<td>瑭</td>
<td>玄璜</td>
<td>礼北方</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 二、文化符号学研究

① 一件甬钟的铸造，以中层第三组第一钟为例，便需用范，范共一百二十六块组成。参见：中国社会科学院考古研究所,《商彝乙簋[M]》,北京：文物出版社，1989:107,622。问题在于，这个时期已经有了更为简易便捷的失蜡法，但仍然使用这么麻烦分铸法。在考古学家深入研究与复原商彝乙簋过程时，他们才改变了最初是用失蜡法铸造的判断。

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### 表3 六器为核心的“玉器”种类、名称及功用

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>玉器种类</th>
<th>功能</th>
<th>形状尺寸</th>
<th>装饰</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>大圭</td>
<td>天子守之，或用于朝日</td>
<td>长三尺，宽三寸，榫上终勒首</td>
<td>琠五采五就，中</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>镇圭</td>
<td>用于朝会会同诸侯侯国</td>
<td>长二尺，宽三寸，厚一寸，项齐于削成钝角</td>
<td>琠五采五就，中</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>桓圭</td>
<td>今用作于朝会会同诸侯侯国</td>
<td>长九寸</td>
<td>琠三采三就</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>信圭</td>
<td>今用作于朝会会同诸侯侯国</td>
<td>长七寸</td>
<td>同上</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>射圭</td>
<td>今用作于朝会会同诸侯侯国</td>
<td>长七寸</td>
<td>同上</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>珍圭</td>
<td>今用作于朝会会同诸侯侯国</td>
<td>不详</td>
<td>不详</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>谷圭</td>
<td>今用作于朝会会同诸侯侯国</td>
<td>长七寸</td>
<td>剌有五谷图纹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>麦圭</td>
<td>今用作于朝会会同诸侯侯国</td>
<td>长九寸，上端半圆</td>
<td>有璜</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>琅圭</td>
<td>今用作于朝会会同诸侯侯国</td>
<td>长九寸，上端尖锐</td>
<td>有璜</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>瑁圭</td>
<td>今用作于朝会会同诸侯侯国</td>
<td>长八寸，六寸，四寸通减</td>
<td>琠二采一就</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>牙璋</td>
<td>今用作于朝会会同诸侯侯国</td>
<td>七寸长，射二寸，厚寸</td>
<td>锐出边缘呈锯齿</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>中璋</td>
<td>今用作于朝会会同诸侯侯国</td>
<td>同上</td>
<td>同上</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>大璋</td>
<td>今用作于朝会会同诸侯侯国</td>
<td>长七寸</td>
<td>同上</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>瑮璋</td>
<td>今用作于朝会会同诸侯侯国</td>
<td>八寸，六寸，四寸通减</td>
<td>琠二采一就</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>壁</td>
<td>今用作于朝会会同诸侯侯国</td>
<td>直径五寸</td>
<td>同上，刻谷纹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>浦壁</td>
<td>今用作于朝会会同诸侯侯国</td>
<td>直径五寸</td>
<td>同上，刻谷纹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>瑁壁</td>
<td>今用作于朝会会同诸侯侯国</td>
<td>八寸，六寸，四寸通减</td>
<td>琠二采一就</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>珠</td>
<td>今用作于朝会会同诸侯侯国</td>
<td>贞多，射四寸，厚寸</td>
<td>琠二采一就</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>瑁</td>
<td>今用作于朝会会同诸侯侯国</td>
<td>贞多，射四寸，厚寸</td>
<td>琠二采一就</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>瑾</td>
<td>今用作于朝会会同诸侯侯国</td>
<td>四寸自方，下部一寸半削成钝角</td>
<td>琠二采一就</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

表3参照《周礼》所载玉瑞的种类、功能、形状尺寸及装饰。玉器的种类、功用、享用级别，其特有的“形”和“数”，不同的装饰手段，有时皆为了迎合礼制的需要，通过结构化实现了明确的特指性，使某一具体的形式与某一特定的意指固定下来，从而为各种不同层次的政治活动与日常生活提供身份、地位与实际用途的结构化系统化识别需要。

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1. 此尺寸为估计的周代尺寸。我国古代的尺是以足为长度单位，现在的市尺约为 0.333 35 米；商代的尺，约合今尺 0.189 5 米（根据南京博物院所藏商代骨尺）；周代的尺没有实物保存下来，但战国时的尺，约合今尺 0.230 米左右，周代的尺不会超过这个长度。

2. 两表内容主要基于《周礼·春官·宗伯第三》“典瑞”部分的记载制成。采自未过白《中国玉文化传统研究》D, 博士论文, 清华大学, 2008：图2.19、2.20。
4. 纹饰的结构与功能

在器物的纹饰上，西周也逐渐显示出不同于商的文化性格，其“理性化”的性格其实可以表现为似乎相反的两个方面，一个是抽象化符号象征，一个是现实写实的发展。

如服饰纹饰，最重要的纹样为天子衷服上的十二纹章（见图 5 和图 6）。其实，在中国原始彩陶文化中，日纹、星纹、日月山组合纹、火纹、粮食纹、鸟纹、蟠龙纹、弓形纹、斧纹、水藻纹等早已出现。“十二章”中除宗祖在夏代以前尚未出现，可以存疑，其他纹样早已分见于各地彩陶纹样中，至于衣服上的龙纹和黻纹，在商代玉、石、青铜器物主人物造像衣纹装饰中已存在。但是成为一个结构化的定制，有纵横结构化组合，有特定的象征意义，却可以大体说是周代的制制。“十二章”最早的文献记载见于《尚书・益稷》：“帝曰：予欲观古人之象，日月星辰山龙华虫作会宗彝藻火粉米黼黻絺绣，以五采彰施于五色作服汝明。”对此语句不同，就有不同的解析，主要争议在于如何断成十二纹章。最后是后汉郑玄把《尚书》十二章与《周宫》五冕内容相结合，其调和式的解释被广泛接受，虽有人批评其牵强，但自隋之后成为定制。

图 5 明《三才图会》所绘的十二章纹样
《隋书·礼仪志》皇帝“衣则日、月、星辰、山、龙、华虫、火、宗彝，画以为绘。裳则藻、粉米、黼、黻以为绣，凡十二章”①。各诸侯国争在于细节上的出入，如果不从制度的意义上，则论争者之间不仅没有不同，反而目的不同，即追求准确的十二之数及其象征意义。

当然，纹饰的结构还要与服饰组合的结构互相构成一个更大的结构体系。在服饰组合中，衣、裳、履之间构成一个层次的横组合；而不同的冠，如冕冠、玄冠等则构成一个纵组合。这个结构之上，吉服与丧服又构成一个横组合，其中的丧服又以亲至疏分为斩衰、齐衰、大功、小功、缌麻五个等级构成纵组合，各个等级皆有相应的装饰要求。

至此，系统的结构化区分已经至为繁细，各类器物通过如此层层结构而构成整个器物的制度体系。

在器物的动物纹饰上，商代最重要的其中有“图腾”神兽兽面纹（即宋以来约定俗成但并不确切的“饕餮纹”），虽然已经带有综合性公式化倾向，但通过其形象的变化，仍然可以清晰区别出多种多样不同形制的兽面纹（见图7和图9），如牛角形、羊角形、龙角形、长颈鹿角形、虎头形、熊头形、龙蛇集群形，还有环柱角形、外卷角形、内卷角形、折角形，等等。到了唐代，青铜器上兽面纹则已基本不辨角形，也难有明确兽体，许多装饰都是一些无意义的对称弧

① 前汉孔安国以为：日、月、星辰，为三章：与山，为龙，为华虫，为虫。其章亦以五彩采于衣服之族称，藻，水草有文者，火为火，粉为粉，其日，为日。其中，为日，为火，为水，为木，为金，为土。此章，为日、月、星辰，为三章：与山，为龙，为华虫，为虫。其章亦以五彩采于衣服之族称，藻，水草有文者，火为火，粉为粉，其日，为日。其中，为日，为火，为水，为木，为金，为土。
线，常常是模糊的、只能依稀的兽面纹。商代大一些的兽面纹两侧一般有各类鸟、龙纹配置，此时也大大减少了。(1) 商代多姿多彩的鸟纹饰也有相近的命运。(见图 8) 类型繁多的鸟纹于西周中后期逐渐减少，明显特征日益模糊，渐趋抽象化（如图 9 所示）。与这个简化过程相适应的，还有一个鲜明的以商文化为代表的东方短尾鸟形态渐次衰微，而以周文化为代表的西方长尾鸟形态却开始占据了主流的过程。(2)

图 8 佩带、镶嵌玉饰
[左，怪鸟(403) 鬃(379) 首(461) 燕(380) 鸟(381) 蝌蚪(382) 鸟(350)
 鹤(507) 猪(508) 右，玉鹤(507)]

学者们现在大体能够根据大量出土器物确定商代的器物及装饰具有一种多部族文化融合。学者杨晓能在质疑郭沫若“族徽”的说法时，细致分析了商代青铜器上图像铭文与图形文字为当时各地所共同享有。因为东至山东的长青、济南、东南到安徽的含山、嘉山、北至辽宁西部与内蒙古、西至陕西的岐山、城固、西南至四川广汉，都有常见的共同的图像文字，近似的器形与纹饰。他推测图像铭文所代表的意思应该与某种具体的祭祀仪式相关。在分析中，他比较充分地说明了商代器物的装饰纹样已经是一种适应多民族统一统治的抽象整合体，尤其是最核心的兽面纹是汇合各部族的图腾而整合起来的神灵崇拜的共同象征，并已经为中原各部族所共享与认同，成为商族建立统治的一个有效控制方式。这在商代早期就已形成了。“商式青铜礼器及纹饰传播

(1) 马承源，中国青铜器[M]，上海：上海古籍出版社，2003：320。
(2) 陈公柔，张长寿，殷周青铜器上鸟纹的断代研究[J]，考古学报，1984(3)：中国的东部多短尾鸟，而西部多长尾鸟，故早期鸟图腾还有明显的地区差异。
之广和被接受程度之深，乃至发现于不同地点的商代早期青铜器在造型与风格上是如此相似，如果没有确凿记录，即专家也难以辨识其具体出土地点。”这些文字与标识是当时各部族“松懈的共同体”共同利益、权利与义务的象征。① 杨晓能虽没有进一步深入研究，然而，根据商代对外是“诸侯”共主、对内则王族轮政的政治特点，不妨可以推断，至迟在商代，华夏的文化与政治认同已经形成。只是在器物应用功能上，商代重器贵物的直接占有本身就是权势的直接代表。但是，以物化的形式建立象征的“符号”体系无处不在地贯穿于日常的行为实践中，以表达一种贵贱尊卑等差的政治含义，则是商

代人还没有实现的。

在动物纹饰上，一个可称典型的“符号”转换则是周代抑制“玄鸟”（鸱鸮）①，提倡凤鸟。长尾鸟的兴盛与短尾鸟的衰落，背后还包含着意识形态的更替。商代的各类鸟作为灵兽图腾未有善恶之别，周代则以褒贬来强化其内涵的差异，“平等”的鸟开始出现了等级差异，成为意识形态运作工具。周代的“德治”对鸟形态的选择起了关键的作用。商代作为图腾的玄鸟（鸱鸮），到了周代成为恶鸟，如在《诗经·豳风·鸱鸮》中“鸱鸮鸱鸮，无毁我室，无毁我室，无毁我室”这样的负面形象，与商代奉鸱鸮为神鸟有了天壤之别。后世注家，都以鸱鸮为“贪鸟”“恶鸟”“不祥之鸟”。② 其衰落的趋势则是必然的了。在我们的文化中，鸱鸮类的猫头鹰到现代依然不是正面的形象。而在商代，鸮形器物或者以鸮形为纹饰是很常见的。如石器中就有不少这类器物。周代以后，装饰的长尾凤鸟形象则逐渐定型为吉祥之鸟，其基本的文化性格已不再改变。周之后，风格与形式的变化背后存在着的关于鸟的认知及价值判断的转化，是意识形态运作的结果。

① 鸱鸮，鸟类的一种，头大，嘴短而弯曲，吃鼠、兔、昆虫等小动物。对农作有益。鸱鸮等属鸱鸮科，也作鸱枭。

当我们在器物纹饰上看到“周人的动物崇拜远远比不上商人”时，不妨可以这样说：这与器物的“政治化”品格相关。当器物不再作为通神娱神之器后，功能的变化自然带来形式的变化。诸多动物都逐渐抽象化为一种政治等级“符号”，通过一种差异化的“德”的强调，物的改变趋势就由于成为政治价值观念的载体而被不断改造。凤、龙这样的重要纹饰不断抽象化，象征化，符号化为一个必然的趋势，被嵌进了仪式化的等级象征系统。至后世，以龙代表天子，以凤代表帝后，其主从之别与符号对应显然不是历史偶然的选择，而是人为的制度安排在器物上显示的结果。

5. 符号象征的制度意义

可以这样说，商周器物组合及纹饰的变化只是一个可以看得见的物化形式，内在远为深刻的变化则是器物符号结构所表达内涵及相对应文化功能的不同。与周礼的政治任务相适应的是，“物”逐渐抽象成一种文化符号，它不仅仅限于文化认同，而且开始直接包含了善恶贵贱的意义，参与了礼制意识形态的构建。器物功能上的这种变化所隐含的制度变迁意义是潜在的。许多论者能够敏锐地察觉到器物功能的变化，却往往并未注意其深刻性，未注意其功能深层结构的价值核心与意识形态内涵。从器物形式深入到其背后的文化内涵与制度功能，我们可以更清晰地看到殷周制度本质上差异，其根本的改变不仅仅可以从事思想观念史上考察，还可以从物的深层次内涵与功能中得到揭示。

《诗经·小雅·四月》云：“溥天之下，莫非王土；率土之滨，莫非王臣。”诗中虽有质问的意思，但却是后世历史变迁不断加强的方向。西周王制从“王”到“天子”的转变所确立的君王政治专制，其制度的合法性有赖于“德治”为核心，依从“以德配天”的基本思想，建立了与“尊尊、亲亲、贤贤”的统治原则相应的一系列礼乐制度的安排。借助器物的形式与功能来有效地贯彻制度安排所试图传达的观念内涵，可以这样说，相对“静止”沉默的文化器物并非封闭自在进行发展的独立形式，它与社会的意识形态与制度变迁紧密呼应，其背后同样包含着历史的冲突与紧张。社会人的组织及其活动就是在物与观念之间得以展开与调节的，会留下可见的痕迹。往往是某种特定的观念塑造了某一特定的物的“性格”。

② 如学者杨晓能就不太关注形式功能背后的制度内涵，因此无法解释周之后鸟的图式的变化。见《另一种古史》第581页。
“想而不得”：西班牙“媚仿”现象的文化符号研究

许 彤

摘 要 西班牙哲学家 José Ortega y Gasset 认为每个民族的语言中都存在着一些在其他语言中无法找到对等概念的表达法，而且这些“无法翻译”的词语往往能够在隐喻层面准确描述该民族的文化特质。“cursi”（本文译为“媚仿”）就是具有此类特征的一个西班牙语词汇。媚仿概括了 19 世纪下半叶西班牙新兴资产阶级的行为模式和趣味取向，传递和暴露了他们“想而不得”的文化困境与意识形态。本文通过分析“cursi”词源内部，利用 Jean Baudrillard 的仿真与拟真理论（simulacres et simulation），分析西班牙媚仿现象的相对性、拟真性、无限性和自足性特质，探讨这一文化现象潜藏的现代性属性。

关键词 媚仿; 仿真; 拟真; 现代性

“姑娘的老爹当过少尉，
先前曾打过摩尔人
可下巴颊儿中了弹
再不能张口把话言。

姑娘租住亭子间
房租每月两杜罗
会弹钢琴也能洗洗涮涮，
洗洗涮涮当然很呕人。

姑娘散步手套戴，
披风毛茸茸身上裹，
脚上鞋子曾在
旧货市场经风雨。

（……）
但你们看
姑娘镜前立，任
心中幻影自欺欺人
她喊到：‘我的身价高

克里奥拉站
光光的太过时，
卡特琳娜是笨瓜，
蓬巴杜真俗气。

我乃堂堂一闺秀，
惟有时尚挂心头，
寻找中意单身汉，
最好不过是鳏夫。’

上文节选自讽刺诗《造作姑娘》（La cursi）（Preugent，1872，256—258），全诗收录在1872年出版的《西班牙众生相》（Los españoles de ojño，1872）之中。主人公是一位年轻的西班牙女孩，出身平平，教育程度不高，因父亲伤残而家境艰难，窘迫之处溢于言表。虽然生活捉襟见肘，却始终瑕瑜不辩，借高雅，沉迷在不切实际的玫瑰色幻想中，沦为诗人笔下愚蠢的“造作姑娘”——19世纪后半叶西班牙城市小资产阶级的一种典型形象。

尽管《西班牙众生相》的编者宣称“以令人赞叹的精神和准确，描绘西班牙近三十年间涌现的大量典型人物”（Valero，1872），但与彼时不少风俗主义作品一样，个别章节外，所谓“西班牙众生相”不过是浓缩版的“马德里众生相”（Ayala Aracil，1984，67）。马德里市民阶层——或者更直白地讲，现代化进程中的城市小资产阶级——牢牢占据了《西班牙众生相》的舞台中心。编者精心选择了大量剪影式人物小传和微型风俗故事，以略带夸张的春秋笔法，铺以嬉笑怒骂的幽默笔触，描绘了19世纪50至70年代中下层市民的言行举止、所欲所念，尤其是那些终日忙于谋生的“小家碧玉”，或者囊中羞涩却要扯虎皮拉大旗的伪君子。他们行事做派看似荒腔走板，笨拙愚蠢，实则徘徊在“想而不得”的窘迫中不得解脱，个中甘苦，一言难尽。

在这一社会文化背景下，大约在19世纪30—40年代，西班牙语中出现了一个词源不详、构词怪异、意义宽泛、难以翻译的名词“cursi”（本文翻译为媚仿）。它准确概括了城市小资产阶级的行为模式和趣味取向，生动描绘了他们“想而不得”（Pérez Galdós，1885，187）的尴尬与纠结，构成了一种扭曲的资产阶级意识形态表达。亦如西班牙哲学家José Ortega y Gasset所言，媚仿从隐喻层面描绘了19世纪后半叶西班牙文化的特质——“媚仿的所指汇集了西班牙1850至1900年间的全部历史”（Ortega y Gasset，1993，661）。本文试图由梳理“cursi”的词源入手，在词义辨析的基础上，利用Jean Baudrillard的仿真与拟真理论（simulacres et simulation）分析西班牙媚仿现象的相对
媚仿的起源


目前西班牙学界对于“cursi”一词的准确起源尚存争议，比较常见的观点有:


2. 加的斯说(版本二)。1899年12月1日马德里《环球》(Alrededor del Mundo)杂志发表了署名为S. Ch的读者来信探讨“cursi”一词的来源。据作者介绍，Adolfo de Castro曾于1885年撰文说明《加迪斯方言词典》编撰的若干问题，并在文中明确指出

3. 字体说。西班牙社会学家Enrique Tierno Galván（Tierno Calván, 1961; 82-85）认为“cursi”源于“cursivo”（意思是斜体字、草体字，也可以作为名词和形容词）。1800—1830年间，英国商人常用的手写斜体字伴随贸易往来传入西班牙。英式斜体字书写便捷，辨识容易，但适界日渐风行，甚至出现了替代西班牙传统圆形笔花字的趋势。但这种变化在保守势力掌权时被废弃，近代以后，字体更替意义匪浅，它不仅代表了基于实用价值的趣味选择，更在某种程度上象征了新兴资产阶级的一种文化自觉。西班牙19世纪工业化和现代化进程造就了一批工商业新贵和新兴小资产阶级。前者虽然经济实力不俗，但颇具社会影响力，但主体性模糊、执着于跻身西班牙传统上流社会——大贵族和大官僚阶层。小资产阶级——Enrique Tierno Galván，即所谓“真正意义上的资产阶级”（Tierno Calván, 1961; 87）——多集中在大城市，以低级公务员、专业人士、小业主为主，人数有限，整体实力弱，经济地位不稳定，政治话语权缺失，意识形态建构脆弱。他们欣喜其所有，自感其所得，不忧其所得，忧其所得，倾尽心力“模仿上等阶层（宫权和贵族）的生活方式，力求将自己同平民区隔开来”（Tierno Calván, 1961: 87），却只落得了个“天呀！您可真没品呀！”（Silvela, 1866; 9）的下场。新兴资产阶级的自主文化选择与趣味自然更使他们逃脱不了受嘲讽、被苛责的命运。在这一背景下，“概念与词汇同时产生了”（Tierno Calván, 1961: 85），“cursivo”丢掉词尾变身“cursi”，由“斜体字”派生出“媚仿”——描绘新兴资产阶级行为模式与趣味的新词。

无论在“cursi”起源上存在何种分歧，上述三种观点均不否认媚仿是主体主动进行的自主模仿行为，并或多或少地认同“媚仿的热情不是基于提升地位和攫取权势的先天冲动，而是内在社会弱势的证据”（Tierno Calván, 1961; 87）。换言之，媚仿的内在动因是对自身的不满和对臆想形象的无限追求，而在“cursi”一词产生的特定历史时期，具有这一特征的正是上文Enrique Tierno Galván所谓的西班牙“真正意义上的资产阶级”。因此媚仿从一开始就是“一种资产阶级行为模式”（Tierno Calván, 1961; 87）并且带有强烈的价值评判色彩。

媚仿的词义辨析

自被辞书收录以来，“cursi”的词性基本保持稳定，一直可以作为名词和形容词使用。
用，词义也没有发生过什么重大变化。主要示例如下：

《加迪斯方言辞典》（Diccionario de voces gaditanas，1857）：“媚仿①[名] 想高雅却由于财力不足或趣味庸俗而无条件做到的人。②[形] 趣味低下但想表现出高雅。（CURSI. 1. s. m. y f. Persona que quiere ser elegante sin tener las condiciones necesarias para ello, bien por faltarle medios pecuniarios, bien por carácter de gusto, 2. adj. Se aplica a lo que carece de gusto y se quiere presentar como elegante.）”（de Castro，1857；VIII）

《卡斯蒂利亚语成语习语辑录》（Florilegio o Ramillete alfabetico de refranes y modismos comparativos y ponderativos de la lengua castellana，1873）认为媚仿的典型表现是模仿名媛的穿着举止，并意强调模仿者虽然表面上富丽堂皇，甚至可能不乏穿金戴银之举，但实则硬充高雅，俗不可耐。（Sbarbi y Osuna，1873）

DRAE（1869 年版第 233 阻第 3 段）：“媚仿 ①[名] 人自以为文雅高贵而实不是。②[形] 外表或文雅或高贵的人，事、物却实则矫揉造作，趣味低下。（CURSI. m. y f. fam. La persona que presume de fina y elegante sin serlo. | | adj. Todo aquello que con apariencia de elegancia o riqueza, es ridiculo y de mal gusto.）”（Real Academia Española，NTLLE）

DRAE（1970 年版第 400 阻第 2 段）增加了“cursi”的第 3 项释义：“媚仿③[形] 艺术家或作家试图却无法做到精美高雅或表现崇高情感，也可以用于形容艺术或文学作品。（CURSI. adj. fam. 3. Dicese de los artistas y escritores, o de sus obras, cuando en vano pretenden mostrar refinamiento expresivo o sentimientos elevados,）”（Real Academia Española，NTLLE）

DRAE（2001 年第 22 版）：“媚仿①[形] 艺术家或作家试图却无法做到精美高雅或表现崇高情感，也可以用于形容艺术或文学作品。②[形] 自以为文雅高贵而实不是的人，也可以作为名词使用。③[形] 外表或文雅或高贵的人、事、物却实则矫揉造作，趣味低下。（CURSI. 1. adj. Se dice de un artista o de un escritor, o de sus obras, cuando en vano pretenden mostrar refinamiento expresivo o sentimientos elevados. 2. adj. coloq. Dicho de una persona; Que pretende ser elegante y refinada sin conseguirlo. U. t. c. s. 3. adj. Dicho de una cosa; Que, con apariencia de elegancia o riqueza, es pretenciosa y de mal gusto.）”（Real Academia Española，DRAE）此外，即将发行的第 23 版 DRAE 计划去除第 22 版第 1 条释义，保留第 2、3 条。

综上所述，对于“cursi”的释义往往描述了媚仿的特性（如，表里不一、鄙陋浅薄、俗不可耐等），但它们很少触及媚仿的实质，也没有清晰勾勒出媚仿现象的边际，或者明示避免堕入媚仿陷阱的方法，因此“这不是对媚仿的释义也不是字典的定义职责”
（Baselga Ramírez，2004；80）。媚仿的释义似乎回避了定义媚仿：

“媚仿是什么？哪里才是强大帝国边界的尽头？侵略一旦强似一天，一波强于一波，乃至今天我们也可以对帝国衰落时期罗马人说‘只有蛮族才是罗马公民吗？’邪恶是从哪里来的？它是如何传播和扩散的？采取什么措施才能制止它？”（Silvela，1868；8）

媚仿的吊诡之处就在于词义的不可言说或言之无义。人人都把媚仿一词挂在嘴边，恣意给某人、某事、某物贴上媚仿的标签——“媚仿是我的同谋”（Benavente，1904；99），仿佛它“笼罩无际，在社会生活中无所不在”（Baselga Ramírez，2004；79），但又似乎没有谁能够真正弄清楚到底什么才是媚仿，很多时候只要笼统界定为“一切要么媚仿要么与众不同”（Benavente，1904；100）。三幕喜剧《媚仿》（Lo cursí；1901）对此提出了尖锐批评：

“创造‘媚仿’这个词让生活麻烦得令人发指。以前有好的、有坏的、有逗乐的、有无聊的，我们按照这些标准规范我们的行为。现在有了媚仿，它既不是好的，也不是坏的；既不是逗乐的，也不是无聊的。媚仿是一种否定；它是与众不同的反义，而与众不同就是绝对不能流俗。因为当有六个人想或者做同样事情时，为了高人一等就必须想或者做其他事情了。人们为了远离媚仿而无所不用其极，发疯、搞怪、干蠢事，甚至不惜作恶。”（Benavente，1904；81）

由此可见，媚仿的所指往往是相对的、变动的、含混的、模糊的，更多建立在一系列同样含混模糊甚至自相矛盾的否定之上。这不仅没有阐明媚仿是什么，反而由于过于密集的否定而令人焦躁不安和无所适从——“现在我已知道了不能像弗洛拉妈妈那样矫揉造作。但你要告诉我你想让我的样子？”（Benavente，1904；66），只能陷入“想而不得”的窘迫。这也是定义媚仿面临的主要困境之一。

**媚仿的定义**


由此可见，媚仿是“坏趣味的欺骗与自我欺骗”（卡林内斯库，2002: 251）的矛盾统一体，它始于模仿却不止于机械模仿，尝试创造意义却沦为表象重构。首先，媚仿是野心勃勃的，“不可避免地令人相信媚仿不仅具有阶级属性（例如，上层阶级/下层阶级），也是一种文化标志，它在公共与私人、内在与外在、显现与隐藏、自我和他者、自我和世界之间不断变动。”（Valis, 2002: 87）


再次，媚仿是相对的，这是媚仿的外化特征。媚仿的冲动源于比较，源于主体对自身的不满——或者更准确地说，对自我在外部世界投射的不满。正如前文所述，José Ortega y Gasset, Enrique Tierno Gaván, Noël Valis 等学者都认为由于西班牙资产阶级的软弱性和不足性，媚仿实施者/主体自居于下位，按照自己对于表象符号的解读建立参照系，因此媚仿代表们一种相对价值评估体系而非独立价值观，并且一旦进入媚仿框架，参照与被参照的关系将无限作用下去，即所谓“风骚女可能变贞妇，丑女没准儿成美人儿，但矫揉造作的姑奶奶一辈子改不了腔调。”（Robert, 1871: 84）

义，媚仿实施者/主体与媚仿对象/客体之间的区别立即大白天下。媚仿的产物否定了媚仿的全部努力，媚仿实施者/主体的自足也就坍塌了。媚仿实施者最害怕的是被贴上媚仿的标签——“这儿都是穷人，这里没有真正的上流社会，大部分……都是些装腔作势、附庸风雅的家伙”（Pérez Galdós，1884：302），并为了逃避这种而不所不为——“许多时候为了不被人说是矫揉造作我们掩饰自己的情感还强迫别人掩饰情感”（Benavente，1904：81-82）。因为归根到底在城市管理阶级的秘密法典中媚仿即贫
穷（Benavente，1904：236，244）。这是媚仿实施者/主体真正的梦境，它如丛林猛兽般
伺机而动，张开血盆大口吞噬中产阶级着力营造的玫瑰色幻想。

媚仿的基本属性——拟真性

Jean Baudrillard 指出“拟真（simulation）试图获得自己没有的东西，是假装拥有自
己没有的东西”（Baudrillard，1994：3），因此“拟真者试图使现实，所有现实与其拟真
模式相吻合”（Baudrillard，1994：2）。媚仿不是单纯的模仿或再现，由于媚仿者没有
充足或适当物质材料（金钱），媚仿无法遵循“符号与现实对等原则”（Baudrillard，
1994：6），只能是以假造真或以假乱真，并由此产生所谓超现实快感。仿像与拟真
(simulacres et simulation) 可以被视为媚仿的基本属性。

Jean Baudrillard 认为仿像分为三个等级：

——仿造是在文艺复兴时期逐渐兴起
——生产时期工业时代的典型模式
——仿造是目前这个受代码支配的阶段的主要模式。

第一级仿像依赖的是自然规律，第二级仿像依赖的是价值的商品规律，第三级仿像
依赖的是价值的结构规律。”（波德里亚，2009：61）

尽管“媚仿依然与手工而非机械制品相联系”（Valis，2002：17），媚仿关注的不是
物质层面的复制而是符号意义的置换。因此媚仿具备第二级仿像的基本特征，是所谓
“具有现代意义”的拟真行为。事实上，媚仿无力消除现实差异，但能够“通过吸收表象
或消除真实（怎么说都行），简化了这个问题——总之，它建立了一种没有形象、没有回
声、没有镜像、没有表象的现实”（波德里亚，2009：67）。媚仿实施者/主体首先将媚仿
对象/客体的本质消解为表象符号意义，并以此为模板，借助事无巨细的外在复制试图
在内层面实现对于媚仿对象/客体的复制或再现，形成基于且限于媚仿者主观认同的
表象对等关系，然后“参照交换法则”（波德里亚，2009：63）将这种虚拟的表象对等关
系解读为本质等价关系。亦如 José Ortega y Gasset 笔下的阿甘顿人（Ortega y
Gasset，1993：658-659）。19 世纪后半叶的西班牙城市小资产阶级厌恶自身“想而不得”
的生存现实，自觉或不自觉地选择造梦自我安慰，这也成为滋养媚仿现象产生的社
会环境。出于对现实的逃避，媚仿者转而将注意力放在关注自我形象上。如果这个形
象——自我在外部世界的显影消失——他们也无法生存下去。然而想象中的自我面
目模糊，媚仿者又无力清晰诠释，只能借用媚仿的相对价值体系创造区隔符号，制造“与
众不同，卓尔不群”的幻觉——“归根到底，重要的不是系列复制性，而是调制；不
是数量等价关系，而是区分性对立；不再是等值法则，而是各项的替换——不再是价值的商
品规则，而是价值的结构规律。”（波德里亚，2009：71）

结 论

贝尔指出 19 世纪中叶至 20 世纪中叶西方审美意向发生过一次重大转向——“现
代主义就是摹仿的互解。它否认既定的外部现实是第一位的。它所寻求的要么重新安
排现实，要么退隐到自我的内心世界，退隐到隐秘的经验中，把这些作为它关心和审美
专注的源泉”（贝尔，1989：169）。作为这一历史时期的典型文化，西班牙媚仿现象代
表了表象与实质的分离，外在和内在的断裂，充分体现了现代性的特征与悖论。事实
上，媚仿代表了 19 世纪西班牙城市小资产阶级“想而不得”的日常困境，并且正如
Mariano Baselga 所言“在追求风流蕴藉和趣味高雅之外媚仿更渴望金钱”（Baselga
Ramírez，2004：83），所谓“想而不得”的根源并非趣味高低而基于资本差异，而媚仿也
因书写城市小资产阶级“想而不得”的经验而逐渐发展成为他们标志性的文化符号。

参考文献

2013-01-30.


从庄子的语言观透视其存在性自由的思想主旨
——从“一与言为二”到“诗意语言”

张 静

摘 要  人是感性的现实存在，更是具备运用抽象符号能力来表达和构建理想世界的存在。庄子意识到了作为人的无存在的这个先验基础。庄子解构了两种语言形式：以概念的形式为代表的指称语言，表达欲望、情感和政治意图的规范语言。“一与言为二”揭示出语言的本性就是逻辑中的“排中律”，这个最大的“类的类”即二元的分类，决定了人在思考问题时不由自主地会陷入到“非此即彼”的独断中。庄子承认在人的世界中到处存在着不合逻辑的“非此亦彼”或“非非亦非”的事情，人的言谈在存在的层面和世界同一，这一言说的自由不是现代意义上的言论自由，不是一时一地彼此是人的坚持和判定，而是人的存在的根本性。诗言与存在同一，最大程度地表达了存在性自由。庄子诗言的意象性可从汉语言的文本位得到进一步的说明，与西方言的言本位不同，诗言的意象性意味着符号与对象之间存在着错综复杂的“言言意意”的转关、多义甚至歧义联系。庄子对诗言的阐释意味着人与人、人与万物、人与自身的全面和解途径。自由不再是一个终极的目标，而是我们存在的过程和游戏规则的自我更新和确立。

关键词 “一与言为二”；指称语言；规范语言；诗意语言；存在性自由

1. 人会说话：心止于符的自由性

庄子说“耳止于听，心止于符”，人是感性的现实存在，更是具备运用抽象符号能力来表达和构建理想世界的存在。语言是人的根本性存在方式，也就是说，人所为人为，就在于他会说话和写字，在语言的活动方式中获得真正的“自由”。庄子意识到了作为人的存在的这个先验基础。进一步说，庄子认为语言不仅仅是工具，人是一个言说者，并由语言所规定。国内文化语言学的倡导者申小龙先生曾多次撰文批判工具作为语言的本性的偏颇，认为语言本身是人看待世界的一种高级的精神生产方式。海德格尔认为“语言在言说”①，认为语言不仅是人为了交流而使用的一种工具，否定了语言只能在

① 海德格尔.在通向语言的途中[M].孙周兴.译.北京：商务印书馆.2010:190.海德格尔在《语言》一文中，通过分析特拉克的《夜歌》一诗，表达了他对诗歌语言的见解。他明确地表明“语言是存在的家”的著名观点。
具体的人类交谈中实现。伽达默尔认为“没有语言性之外的‘自在世界’”，“能被理解的存在就是语言”①。

运用符号是人类最重要的能力。恩斯特·卡西尔认为“人是符号动物”，而语言是人类最基本、最完整的符号形式之一。② 古希腊文中的logos这个词本身兼有“理性”和“言语”两重含义。西方近代很多哲学家都以此来强调逻辑与语言的关系，如海德格尔在《存在与时间》中认为与其说“人是理性的动物”，不如说“人是会言语的动物”。无独有偶，中国的道也有言说的意思。卡尔·波普尔大量论证了客观世界1、主观世界2和符号世界3③，索绪尔在《普通语言学教程》一书中，均认为在人运用符号的自由性，符号一旦“约定俗成”，生活在这一文化系统中的人不亦深入地分析研究，便不能“任性”地随意“创造”。

语言是人的根本性的存在方式，也是人不同于动物的特征。④ 无论是言语还是语言，都与人类早期的经验密切相关。人类用来表达自身经验的声音似乎很难与动物的叫喊区分开，动物由“意欲”通过叫喊或手势也在其内部的初级的社会组织中实现自己的目的。我们可以猜测动物甚至植物的“意图”或其表达的欲望和情感，然而人发出的声音终于在程度上更有意识，更为自觉。庄子在《齐物论》中指出“夫言非吹也”，人类的语言活动是一种有别于“使其自己”“就其自取”的“天籁”之自然现象的社会现象和文化现象，语言是纯粹人为自觉地制造出来的符号系统，是人认识客观世界并表达自我观念、情绪和欲望的方法。语言是人的声音，这个声音分于植物、矿物的自然界的“无声”，也区别于动物的叫声，因为后者只是物理和生理的声音本身，没有意义。因此，语言不仅仅是人的自然本性，更是在历史性的意义累积的过程中生成的，语言赋予人类一个居住和生存并且脱离了自然界蛮荒沉默的温馨自在的家园。

庄子说“言者无权”，这里的言是人的言语行为。这个行为就如同自然界的风吹过水面荡起的涟漪，复又归于平静了无痕迹，因此言语的风波性，仅其性不能显现人真正的自我和存在，言语的行为只是无赖的闹乱，是无意义的。庄子的批判指出了语言的本性不是它的声音，而是人的符号构造能力，所谓“耳止于听，心止于符”。耳听是外在的，心符则是内在的。也就是说，人由于扩大、深入地借助了“言语”这一实现意欲或表达动机的工具，人从动物直接的、有限的本能活动中挣脱出来，得以构建属于自己的世界。人的自然这个看似矛盾的语词实际上暗示了人除了生活在物理的自然、生物的自然之中，还生活在一个由语言所构建、所赋形的第三世界中。人文自然（刘义敏语）的真实含义在于其人类学意义上对人的界定，人会言语，会用语言构建文化形态作为精神家园，这种能力或存在的方式就是人的本性。

① 伽达默尔：《哲学解释学》[M]，上海：上海译文出版社，1994：32。
② 卡西尔：《人论[M]》，甘阳，译，北京：商务出版社，2003：153。
③ 参见《科学发现的逻辑思维与反证：客观知识》等，《历史决定论的贫困》和《开放社会及其敌人》已为社会科学界所熟知。
④ “除了在一切动物首先中都可看到的感受器系统和效应器系统以外，在人那里还可以发现可称为符号系统的第三环节。”见：卡西尔：《人论[M]》，甘阳，译，北京：商务出版社，2003：43。
2. “说不可说”即“不得不说”的语言悖论

“道”不可说，那就不说，用沉默的方式体道；既然思想的任务是“说”，那就说可说的。说与不说，可说与不可说是什么样的关系呢？熊伟的一段话很精辟：“‘可说’固须有‘说’而始‘可’；‘不可说’亦须有‘说’而始‘不可’。宇宙永远是在‘说’者。”①这也就是庄子所说的“言无言”，虽言而不悖于无言；“终身言，未尝(不)言”，无言亦不妨于有言；“终身不言，未尝不言”。(《寓言》)②

思想对存在的反映是一个缓慢而复杂的过程。语言作为思想的凝结需要更为漫长和复杂的历史经验的累积。人不仅用语言组织现有的世界，还用语言的方式面对历史经验以及构建一个未来的理想的世界。庄子对语言的反对恰恰在于他看到人如何利用语言这种工具从根本上脱离了有机生命的自然世界，然而悖论在于他所坚持的“道”和“自然性”，以及他抨击文明异化都是用语言来表达的。

对于无法言说的道必须以“名”的形式进行说明，是“不得已”。因为道自身是无限的、不可分解的一。人的经验不可穷尽，作为传递经验的语言对之进行描述必然产生偏颇。然而人作为语言的生存“不得不说”，因为即使是“物化”的“沉默”悟道，也是人的独特的、极端的一种表达方式。庄子并非一般地取消语言，而是指出一般语言的偏蔽如何阻隔了人与道的沟通。所谓“不可与庄语”并非表达了自视甚高的学派的优越感，而是反对以名称为代工具性、历史性语言对道的遮蔽和偏离。

庄子的否定其实正是人从自然脱胎而出无家可归的经验的表达，然而，庄子“返家”的路径恰恰是对家的重建。这个家园已经不是原始的自然，而是他用“诗言”构建的新的未来的家园，即刘献其先生所言的“人文自然”。庄子用一个更高类型的语言方式印证了人的存在，人不仅不可能再次陷入永恒的沉默当中，而且也必须反抗语言的工具性和历史性对人的自由存在的褫夺。庄子的说二道只是表面现象，尽管语言如此波诡云谲，事件如此波澜壮阔，想象如此离奇夸张，但一个系统性的东西横亘其中是毫无疑问的，所谓“万变不离其宗”。面对不可逆转的文明进程，庄子解构了两种语言形式；以概念的形式为代的指称语言，表达欲望、情感和政治意图的规范语言。从“道言”那无言的陈述，到庄子的“诗言”事实上是伟大的思想家庄子的理想的构建，我们获得了超越于伦理规范的自由道德，获得了超越于理性认知的自由的审美直观。

不是存在决定语言，而是语言决定存在。哲学上所谓语言学转向的最重要的任务

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① 熊伟，说，可说，不可说，不说[1]，国立中央大学文史哲季刊，(1)；73。
② 庄子关于“说不可说”即“不得不说”的文本材料如下：“天地与我并生，而万物与我为一。既已一矣，且得有言乎？既已谓之矣，且得无言乎？一与言为二，二与一为三。”(《齐物论》)“言者谁之有也”“无言足以尽道之妙，而不言者无以明”“言而足，策则言而尽道”(《则阳》)。

三、文化符号学研究

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3. 从“一与言为二”开始

人会说话这一单纯的事实对我们而言是不够的，需要更进一步指出的是人类语言的一般结构。对“拟声说”“情感说”等对语言的“无穷后退的”自然主义式的起源的解释必须做一个断然中止；人的语言从一种抛弃了纯粹主观生物性本能的对象化的二元命题开始。“一与言为二”是对语言的结构/功能的精辟的逻辑分析，庄子认识到这个普遍的语言秩序。卡西尔说“分类是人类语言的基本特性之一”①，这个最大的类就是“二”的偶值关系。《齐物论》中“吾丧我”就是人与自身的偶值关系的反思，人不得不借助于“吾”“我”这样有异的语词表达对自我的意识。易学中的阴阳宇宙关系也是这个偶值关系的体现。西方到了近代形容主体客体二元区分的认识论和主体性哲学是这种原初的偶值结构关系的成熟或高级形态。

从人类文化的一般事实来看，人特有的“意欲”实现的手段在符号化的语言文字中演变为一个目的论的结构。这个结构是对人的“意欲”存在方式的客观化和存在方式，人的“意欲”获得了一种新的方式。语言的目的论偶值结构映射着人的意欲和满足这一动机的对象化的物的基本偶值关系。这一偶值的结构关系就是人的特殊的存在方式，也是人类思想的结构。语言符号进一步固定了这种偶值关系，那么语言和思想、存在的关系到底是什么呢？

“一与言为二”可以作为理解庄子思想的最重要的切入点。语言的内部结构“二”所呈现的偶值关系恰恰显现了人的思想和存在的悖谬，或者说决定了这种悖谬。庄子在指出的名言的偏执，即言说和不动道着“是非”的检阅；庄子在《逍遥游》中说“小知”不及“大知”；《齐物论》中果说“小大齐一”，这不也是一个无法解开的悖谬吗？庄子主张“无是无非”，那么你这句话是对还是错呢？这不由让人想起罗素悖论。“可说”的相对于“不可说”的纯全性而言，就类似于阿克琉斯的脚跟。庄子思想自足甚至成为一个“空项”，不可知的怀疑的相对主义自足也是不可言说不可思议的。庄子“非毁名实而益其论”，所谓“一与言为二”揭示出语言的本性就是逻辑中的“排中律”，任何人包括庄子都无法摆脱这个思维的基本型构。佛教大乘派“离有无二边”的中道思想以及“离四句”中“非有非无”和“亦有亦无”的表述和庄子是非两行而不遗的超逻辑体证方法

① 卡西尔，人论[M]，三阳.译，北京：商务出版社，2003：167.
可谓一脉相承。这个最大的“类的类”即二元的分类决定了人在思考问题时不由自主地 会陷入到“非此即彼”的独断中，结果生活自身的丰富性、多样性反过来否定了人制定的这一根本性“悖谬”的规则，嘲弄了这一“理所当然”对人的桎梏。从人类学哲学看来，逻辑“普适之用”未若儒家讲的“实际效用”，凡有人处必定有境遇，时空、情势的具体的问题要解决，也未若庄子讲的“道枢”，如能得其环中以应无穷，言语之悖的问题继而科学之真问题可排除在外根本不予考虑。从中国文化的本性考虑，“李约瑟难题”可解。那个理发师不是逻辑学家，所以他还是会给自己理发；庄子也一样，虽然他说了“道不可说”，但还是“不得不说”地写了三卷本的煌煌巨著。

庄子并非否定名家的言说方式，而是指出其不足：面对生活和人性，逻辑的“名实”关系只是非常狭隘的一个领域，恐怕生活根本不是什么“东西”，而是一种创造性的生成。不仅“一与言为二”而且“二与一为三”，即老子所说“道生一，一生二，二生三，三生万物”。庄子的伟大就在于为人自身受制于理性法则的尴尬开出了另一条路线，为“生命不可承受之轻”的“沉重肉身”的欲望求解脱。对于人的价值和存在真相而言，不可能以科学所追求的物理之真来衡量，只能用这种来自一重化生活世界的启悟的“超逻辑”的智慧，这一智慧的来源依旧“不可说”也“不必说”。

庄子对人类的理智生活和道德生活持怀疑态度，并用这一态度作为批判的武器。如果说这怀疑还不究竟底的话，即在于庄子并未像自然天籁那样陷入永恒的沉默，而是用一种隐喻、象征的语言重新构造了我们对生活的理解；承认人的世界中到处存在不合逻辑的“亦此亦彼”或“非此非彼”的事情，而人的言语在存在的层面和世界同一，这就是言说的自由。这一言说的自由不是现代意义上的言论自由，不是一时一地彼此是的争执和判定，而是人的存在的根本性、“人生而自由”。如卡西尔所说：人不可能过着他的生活而不表述他的生活。诗言与存在同一，最大程度地表达了存在性自由。至于现实中的自由作为一种价值，作为一种世俗功业与庄子的诗言已无关联。自由所以和人类文明中貌似一种价值，不过是因为人用各种方式将自由的整合性存在分解开来，使之异化或遮蔽了它而已。自由的实现不过意味着，人将价值分类，争辩价值的排序，为某一个阶层或群体论证某一价值的有效性。这些波普氏、马克思主义的“言者”如果没有“诗言”的重新审视和批判，没有“以道观之”的再符号化，恐怕很容易形成“一言堂”或“众说纷纭”而归于虚无。言说因此不是对价值的重构，而是创造新的价值和意义，它对“一”保持沉默，用“二”进行理性的思辨和言说，用“三”的多元化构造方式返回到“万物为一”的所来之处，在万物与整一之间自由往返。

4. “说什么”与“如何说”的问题

“一与言为二”的偶值关系在东西方文化发展中有着同根殊途的命运，最能说明这种差异的是语言自身在偶值关系中呈现的差异。也就是说，我们的问题不是一个发生
学的、历史学的问题，不是一个将人与动物相区分的问题。“人是会说话的动物”就是我们的起点，没有必要再去追问人是如何“学会”说话的。当然，我们并不反对生物学家、人种学家、语言学家或者神学家对这个问题的追本溯源似的研究。我们的问题在于语言的结构与功能：人说了什么？人如何说？“说什么”与“如何说”密切相关，可比拟思想中主题和方法的关系。内容决定形式并且两者不可分离。正是对这个问题的探究将我们对人的研究从“人是什么”的形而上层面带入到“人如何存在”的智慧层面。我们有必要根据人所说的与人的语言方式将语言划分为三种类型：指称语言、规范语言、诗意语言。

### 4.1 指称语言

#### 4.1.1 墨家“名学”批判——唯名论

我们通过庄子对“名家”的批判进入到对指称语言的一般描述中。伍佰非先生说庄子“非毁名家而益其论”，意思是至少在逻辑上庄子论证了语言中包含的基本的偶值结构，这个二元结构是逻辑文化的前提。这个二元结构使得语言脱离了词句一体的巫术功能的阶段，使人获得了逻辑思辩的有力工具。前秦所谓百家争鸣事实上就是围绕“名”展开的一场大辩论。说文解字对“名”的解释：“名，自命也。从口，夕者冥也，冥不相见，故以口自命。”“名”一开始就是关于不可知的外部事物的“自命”，所谓“自命”提出人对他所的一种干涉、操作，有一定的限制的意味，并导致了一种人与物的必然联系关系的断裂，或形成一个封闭的畛域，这是人要运用“名”作为沟通工具所必须付出的代价。所以庄子说，“夫道未始有封，言未始有常，为是而有畛也。”《齐物论》语言表示肯定与否定（是与非），表示每个个人从他自己特殊的有限的出发点（彼与此）所形成的意见。“言者有言”，但却“其所言者特未定也”“言未始有常”。

在名家看来，名与实（词与物）的逻辑状态是——对应的符合性，所谓名实①，但并非所有的实都有与之相适应的名②。荀子能将指与所指不对应的情况分为三种：用名以乱名，用实以乱名者，用名以乱实。《正名》管子认为形名相交的关键在于因形而定名，根据事物的感知属性来确定事物的名称。③墨子也有同样的观点。④《荀子・正名》曰：“然则何缘而以同异？曰：缘天官。”墨子的“名”“言”与荀子的“缘天官”都要求命名要紧密结合对象的物理属性和感知属性，这样才可以让名与形相映射，既可以由形定

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① 《尹文子》：“名者，名形者也；形者，应名者也。”“名也者，正形者也，形正由名，别名不可取。”“故名有形以检形，形以定名，名以定事，事以检名，察其所以然，别形名与之事物，无所隐形理矣。”“有名，故名之正形。今万物其存，不以名正之则乱；万名具列，不以形应之则害。故形名者不可不正也。”《邓析子・转辞》：“循名贵实，实之极也；按实定名，名之极也。”“名不可外去”《吕氏春秋・审应》：“以其名，为之名。取其实以责其名，则说者不敢妄言。”

② 《尹文子》：“有名者必有名，有名者未必有名。形而不名，未必失其黑白方圆之实。”

③ 《管子・白心》：“以其形，因为之名；因名之为也。名者，圣人所以纪物也。”“物固有形，形固有名，此名名不得过实，实不得延名。形以形，形以名，昭名正名，故自圣人。”

④ “言，言也。”“言，言也。”“告之以名者彼实也。”（《墨子・经上》31 条）“故言也者，告之以名，名者也。名若即彼言也，谓言即名致也。”（《墨子・经上》32 条）
名，也可以由名正形。

公孙龙子“白马非马”①说坚持把符号看作与生物生理感知相对应的信号。从逻辑上看，马是一个种概念，白马是一个属概念，二者不能混同。白马成了一个无法应用于对象的符号。“离坚白”②严格将视觉与触觉反应区分开来，这样“白”与“坚”只是单纯的操作者而非指示者。这都是由符号脱离人类的感知实践造成的。公孙龙子的观点揭露了语言符号在整合感受时所表现出来的局限。

索绪尔在指出语言的约定性的任意原则时指出，符号的指涉功能主要由符号之间的系统分配关系决定，而不来自于符号对象的具体特征，更为重要的是符号与其对象能指与所指之间尽量保持一一对应的关系，以保证符号的区别性。由名家对“符合”的坚持可以看出语言的“约定性”；语言必须是言语双方的某种约定，否则彼此无法理解，语言则不能发挥作用。约定越广泛，语言的传达功能就越强。荀子说：“名无固定，约定俗从谓之宜，异于约谓之不宜。名无固定，约之以命实，约定俗从谓之名实。名有固定，依易而不从，谓之善名。”（《荀子·正名》）这些都强调了语言的工具性。

4.1.2 一般指称语言的特征与偏弊——唯工具性

P·利科尔说：科学语言是“一种用尺寸和数目来说话的语言，一种精确的、一致的和可证实的语言”③。指称对象明确，一般用来指称物，称为“物言”。它的突出形态是概念，在一定的场景中，例如科学的实验条件下，描述一个物为之下定义。概念试图表达类的普遍经验，追求能指与所指一一对应，其意义明白清晰并可检验与证实。

指称语言类似一个摹本符号，所指是一个单子式的外在实体，能指往往是一种抽象或假象。指称语言在命题的形式中，所指的出场就替代、遮蔽了能指，作为符号的所指又成了下一等级符号的能指。在海德格尔看来这直接导致了存在者对存在的遮蔽。所指和能指呈现线性的交替和无穷后退，所指在能指的运转中无限迟延”（德里达语）。这种被与此消长的语言事实上意味着孤立静止片面的形上学思想方式。“科学意味着抽象，而抽象总是使实在变得贫困。”④形式逻辑的“好处是可以为知识寻找到具有确定性的可靠基础，坏处是容易把生活世界的丰富多样性约化为僵硬的理想模式”⑤。对事物具体的、特殊的方面的隔离才能有效地呈现所指，此为一个无穷倒退的过程，以致不得不靠预设断然终止。名实关系即物我关系，中西方对物我关系的看法不同，一种把物当作一个自在的他者，一种就是以庄子为代表的物我齐一的观点。从前者看来，物自体的属性不随时间、地点、认知者而改变，认知结果得以记载和流传，符号有不可或缺的作用。而庄周梦蝶的梦境表明了人与物同一的过程和形式，最终物与我形成有差异的同一。物与我不再是认识过程中对立的双方，它们之间存在一种微妙的互动的关系。西

①“马者，所以命形也；白者，所以命色也。命色者非命形也。故曰：白马非马。”（《公孙龙子·白马论》）
②“离不得其所坚而得其所白者，无坚也。离不得其所白而得其所坚，得其坚也，无白也。”（《公孙龙子·坚白论》）
③P·利科尔，言语的力量：科学与诗歌[M]，朱国均译，哲学译丛，1986(6):39。
④卡西尔，人论[M]，甘阳译，北京：商务出版社，2003：177。
⑤安德斯，（《道家经》自由观念的形而上学导言）未刊稿。
方的认识论困境其实就是语言不能表达终极的物自体的问题。对象从根本上是一“不可言说者”，庄子则直接取消了对这个问题的执着。

“文士不可语于道者，束教教也”，庄子批判了类似断言式命令的认知方式，因为绝对化的概念限制了人的创造性，也阻隔了对更高层次的真理的追求。藉由与东郭子的对话①，《庄子》反讽了世人的“固执其质”。西方科学的昌明进步，技术发展所带来的便利与高效都在印证理性的全面胜利。然而，在这一胜利的凯歌奏响之前，在人类历史的开端处就有庄子冷峻而深刻的批判。庄子是在什么层面反对主体性掌控的知识活动以及与之密切关联的指称语言呢？人一说话就是在区分、在进行分类的活动了，体现为对对象“贴标签”的命名行为。庄子意识到“名”并非“实”，何况还有那么多名“不符实”的情况。知识的活动表现出根深蒂固的执著和狂妄，把命名的创造和权力膨胀为外部世界全部的掌控和剥夺。命名本身不致成为过错，但理性专门化的趋向会认为名和实是——对应的，那么事物之间微妙、新奇而富于变化的一面，物与人的情感性的富有生机的联系最终将被忽略、遗忘、遮蔽。那种纯粹的逻辑分析在人的问题面前终将会束手无策。亚里斯多德说知识即美德，事实上知识只是知识，人自身没有必然的关联。所谓理性的人，无非是利用摹本式的语言来认识，组构进而利用外部世界的人。个人有差异的偏好、趣味以及动机决定的价值选择在对象性的指称语言那里是缺席的，或者说被遮蔽的。

4.2 规范语言

4.2.1 儒家“名”学始末——历史学思维方式

如果说儒家名学强调的是名与实（词与物）的一一对应，认为语言的核心功能在于对名称的标定，那么儒家名学的根本特征在于名与事的关联。对于儒家而言，最基本的其实是“人是子”这一亲子间共生共在的文化结构。孔子最早提出“正名”②的思想，以达到自己所追求的“正政”。儒家名学批评名家仅仅滞留于名词与实物的对应符合关系中，而将语言的工具性扩展至为明确具体的社会政治实践服务的要求上③，所谓“名号之由人事起”（董仲舒《春秋薄露·天道施》）。儒家名学实为礼学④，孔子、荀子

① 东郭子问于庄子曰：“所谓道，恶乎在？”庄子曰：“无所不在。”东郭子曰：“期而后可。”庄子曰：“在蝼蚁。”曰：“何其下邪？”曰：“在蝼蚁。”曰：“何其下邪？”曰：“在瓦砾。”曰：“何其下邪？”曰：“在屎溺。”东郭子不应。庄子曰：“夫子之问也，固不及质。正获之问必于监门履襆也，每下愈况。汝唯无乃，无乎远福。至道若是，大言亦然。周道三者，四名同实，其一也。”(《庄子·外物》)

② “名不正则言不顺，言不顺则事不成。”(《论语·子路》)

③ 魏子《孝辨注》：“名者，所以别同异，明是非，正号之门，造化之准绳也。”(《子思·正名辨胜》)②

④ 《论语·子路》中名学批评名家的材料如下：《荀子·非二十子》“不法先王，不是礼义，好治怪说，玩辞辩，甚察而不欲，辩而无用，多事而寡功。不以为治纲纪。然而其持之有故，言之成理，足以欺惑愚众。是惠施、邓析也，司马谈《论六家要旨》：‘名家贵察缴，不与争其事，专决于名而弃人情，故曰“得人情者，权轻”者。’《汉书·艺文志》：‘名家者流，盖出于天官。古者名位不同，而任异其事。’”
的正名论都由此立论。魏晋时期，王弼将名实之辨深入到名称之辨①，名称演化为空名位。“正名”背后潜藏着一种权力关系的描述，即规训权力（福柯）。儒家名学与语言意识形态，一种约定俗成的社会语言进而被规范化，系统化。结构化，对人的言说、思想和行为，都是一种规范和约束，历史在孔子那里成为一个经由文字经典层累叠加重新阐释的符号化的特定时代。在这个意义上，杰姆逊才宣称“是语言说来，而不是我说语言。”

我们可用索绪尔的摹状词理论②进一步说明规范语言。摹仿一种状态的词和一般指称物的名称不同，它们没有一个实体化的对应物，它们不能表达客观对象的属性（包括物自体），而是传递抽象的道德观念或思想。即使对同一个作为对象的人或物，摹状词和专名也有很大的差别，他们不能互换，在实体不存在的情况下，摹状词永存，专名只存在任意约定的命名，而摹状词则浸润着人的具体的意识和意愿。摹状词相对专名可谓复数本体，具有一种间接指称的不完全对应。既等于又不等于，似与不似在摹状词的情况下既非同语反复又非假命题。虽然不能如专名词那样完全充分地指称对象的全部含义，但却指出了最重要最核心的意义。

与其说语言指称，独立的单一实体，不如说语言是被人的兴趣和目的所决定的，语言的本质是摹状词而非专名，进而是命题而非命名。这样语言就从一个较狭窄的范围中挣脱出来而具有了更广泛的功能——价值判定的功能。我们仅仅分析一下在语言中存在最广泛的现象也能得出同样的结论，这些日常语言无一能达到科学概念所要求的同一性符合的标准，然而这并不妨碍它的表情达意。这一点在晚年维特根斯坦于《哲学研究》提出的“语用”逻辑中可以得到更充分的说明。维特根斯坦的一段话里很能说明他从早期的图象论转向晚期的游戏说。“命题是实在的图像。图象的两个含义——(1)一幅肖像：它像、类似，相等于使其成为肖像的那个东西。(2)有意向使某个东西成为另一东西的图画，然而这个东西不在(1)的意义上与那另一个东西相似。它之成为一幅图画就在于那个意向。”③对一个抽象观念的赋义需要通过具体的此时此地的情境、境遇来解释。对于维特根斯坦而言，名称代表了对象，命题代表了事态，基本命题则代表了基本可能的事态。语义逻辑转向语用逻辑并非是对前者的否定，而是指出语言除了逻辑的，抽象观念的语义功能外，还有更重要的语用功能。语用是先在的、决定性的并使语义逻辑可能的基础，也就是说词与物之间首先是一种自然的联系，然后才能是一种约定的联系。这里的自然指人的生活存在情境。弗洛伊德在其《精神分析导论》中说过，“语词一开始是充满魔力的，直到今天，语词仍然保留着他们许多古老的力量”④。

① “名者，定彼也者也。称者，从谓者也。名生乎彼，称生乎此。”“名必有所分，称必有所求，有分则有不兼，有具则有不尽。”(《老子格致》)
③ 维特根斯坦，维特根斯坦剑桥演讲[英]周晓亮；江怡；译，杭州：浙江大学出版社，2010; 15。
弗洛伊德首先说明了语言掌握者言说者，其次现代世界的祛魅化（韦伯语）意味着对语言人格化如上帝的话语、实体化如巫术的消解，不过理性对语言未免矫枉过正。科学和逻辑终未获全胜，时至今日，语词仍然保留着许多“魔力”。无论语言的任意约定达到如何登峰造极的程度，如何成为人类理性的骄傲的冠冕，也不能改变这样的先后顺序。如果说在科学的领域后者独领风骚，那么在人类整全的生活图景和文化价值的序列中，语言的自然性即语用层面永远居于核心的地位。所谓“语用”，它们的目的不是为了描述一个什么东西，而是有一个新的目标，即激发人类的情感，使人行动。更为重要的是，语言的功能不仅体现在对物本体的指称上，还体现在对价值的标定和选择上，而这一选择和标定不是绝对、普遍和永恒的，而是因时因地“与时俱进”的。

4.2.2 规范语言的特征与偏弊——意识形态的嬗变

庄子将儒家的话语方式批评为“俗言”。世俗和人的私我欲望相关。欲望的表达式是“我要……”，欲望恰恰说明了所欲之物的匮乏。规范为了矫治欲望，演变为这样的表达式“应该……”，其应用范围为社会，其指称为人际关系。个人的欲望和社会的规范有冲突和矛盾，在思想中就体现为普适性的礼的标识的规范内化为个人道德诉求时出现的逻辑悖谬。孔子“随心所欲不逾矩”的自由的确圣人的修为——他律和自律的完美统一。

规范语言是一种不完全指称。规范是某人（或全体）定的，它却要求“所有人”。可惜生活场景中只有具体的“每个人”（包括个体人自身的抽象概念），人与人之间有差异（“性相近，习相远”），人与自身也有矛盾（“我是谁”）。人群为了实际利益打起来或者个人的言行不是大普遍的事实，所以规范语言极容易流为“唱高调”，有时调子过高让人不耐听，称之为“假大空”。西方基督教的教义与康德的绝对律令固然是对人的道德性最纯粹的要求，然而无论何时何地的普遍性的规范在人与神之间、人与律令之间划定了不可逾越的鸿沟，“罪人”真正“生命不可承受之重”。孟子的义利之辨实际上是将道德理想从云端拉入了现实的社会政治生活中，以“公利”之义反对“私利”，义作为一种具体生活情态的经验性的权衡优先于“经”。这是儒家自然性的体现，即使强调道德理想的至上性，但从不脱离当下的身体性的面对面的交往过程。道德理想圣而不可知，但伦理规范却是可知、可感、可操作、可遵循的。所谓“不完全指称”意味着规范的相对普遍和适用。孔子从个体人出发的内在的“仁”的道德理想嬗变为孟子从关系人出发的外在的一系列强调人与人关系的身体性行为准则的“礼”和“法”，规范语言作为一种知识精英的官方意识形态一开始就已经产生了决定性的作用。

庄子对儒家名学的批评事实上是解构儒家意识形态化的诗学解读方式。孔子面对“莫春者，春服既成；冠者五六人，童子六七人，浴乎沂，风乎舞雩，咏而归”的境界，发出了“吾与点”的喟叹，孟子的“众乐乐”是以独乐乐为身心基础和逻辑前提的，这表达了儒家并不否定存在着名教之外的“乐地”即精神上的诗意的自由。但后世儒家话语权力的取得与儒生的切实政治利益密切相关。他们在解释传授儒学经典时多自觉维护其地位甚至是特权，某种程度上交出了自由思想的权利，思想和文化自身更新的内部力量消解于世俗功利的考量。解经遵循的不再是普遍性的“真诚”原则，“权”也蜕变为了迎合统治
阶级一方的利益需求的功利考虑。庄子在这个层面上的否定事实上是对儒家道德教化和礼俗规范的“规训权力”的质疑，是多元价值对一元价值独断的解构。多元价值间的整合、协调首先要反对二元分离的非此即彼的逻辑判断，将价值判断和信仰留给个人自己，遵循或此或彼的“既……又……”“不仅……而且……”的系统逻辑（“无可无不可”的正面涵义），这一点使得许多现代思想家将庄子引为知音。由于主张价值多元，庄子的思想在中国历史中成为消解既定秩序的一股暗流，成为思想自由的活的动力。

4.3 诗意语言：即言即道

4.3.1 寓言、重言、卮言

庄子三言以寓言之广，重言之真，卮言之曼衍的言说方式蕴含了非一般逻辑的思维形式。用“吊诡”（老子：正言若反）来表达真理。庄子的寓言有两个基本的含义：(1)言其意彼。“籍外论之”就是“道”“寓诸言”就是一种隐喻式表达。(2)“以寓言为广”《天下》：寓言材料广泛符合道无所不在的特性。体道在这里获得一种符号化的形式，通过寻找被语言寓寄的多重化“意义”要经历曲折幽深的过程，是一种“深味”式的体验和领会。《庄子》的寓言从《应帝王》中的混沌开始，体现出一种泛神论色彩的神话思维，将形象思维与抽象思维的结合。在混沌中人、物、灵万有合一。庄子描述了人类文明生活是一种不可逃避的不可逆开展过程。《庄子》并非试图阻碍这样的开展，而是讲如何在开展中同时维系人与自然的和谐——“混沌的死”说明了整全的毁坏与对立的开始，这样一来才有“归根复命”的必要。庄子的所有寓言几乎可以说就是围绕着如何复原整全与解消对立而言说。

“重言十七，所以已言也。”第一种理解即庄重之言，亦即《庄子》中直接论述作者的基本观点的话，在庄子看来，只有合“道”之言才能达到止息聚讼之目的。这种解释不如重(chong)言更深广。重言就是层层堆理，讲究气势，既正说又反着说，时而正说时而反说。

《寓言》篇中提到“危言日出，和以天倪，因以曼衍，所以穷年。”危言在历代注疏中“有以下基本理解：危言就是脱离了个人观点的言论。近人张载用“危险”的话形容危言比较贴切。《庄子》的书中说明任何一种带有特定主体性与逻辑结构的语言，都不是可以贴近真实的理论语言。危言以曼衍的言说形式，进行一般语言与论说的支离，成就一种浑圆之说，以此直证大道，因此，“危言”可以视为“道”的语言化而不
仅仅是描述道的工具而已。

4.3.2 即言即道的诗意语言

“道”是一个无形的存在，具有超越时空局限的特性，所以“道”就不是为人的感官所感知和理智所认识，而是具有超越理性思维的性质而只能被直接体悟。“道”本身其实是一种“言”，道的自本自根性提示或启发了诗意语言的直观体悟。庄子的诗意语言作为隐喻表达了语言抵达自由的可能性——“即言即道”。从上述庄子三言可以看出，人与自然现象的广泛类比与隐喻关系，不仅是一种修辞方法，而成为一种“结构”性的思维模式。这一思维模式从基本的偶值关系开始，扩展、发展为一种非线性的辐射式的多元结构，诗意语言表明了人与物之间有差异的同一关系。

海德格尔在《走向语言的途中》一书中指出，通向语言的道路是要让人经验语言自身，而不是把语言解释为这个或那个东西。作为语言的言就是道说，语言不是一个静寂而待分析的概念，而是能够表达其自身的动态生成过程，语言不应该是作为指示或表达意义的工具，语言有着更深层的存在意义。《庄子》关于语言的看法显然与此有所会通。庄子的诗意言是“自然之言”，根本上是体证和直观的。

指称语言和规范语言的共同特征就是对象化、对物、关系的对象化指认导致了偶值的分裂。主体和客体分裂为二，人在因果性链条中“往而复返”，起因被目的遮蔽，彼岸成为此岸的桎梏。只要将语言仅仅理解为工具，只要语言仅仅是理性逻辑和情感欲望的表达，“说什么”都同样最终被人的存在构成限制，人在这样的语言方式中是不自由的，就好像在监狱中。那么人有没有可能“诗意居住”并找到存在的家呢？庄子用诗意语言为我们显现了这一终极性的可能。道不过是包涵了无穷之人的终极性意义，言可以将有限之人的意与无限之道这些背后的东西显现出来。“诗言”是对道和知识形上学透过书写形式的一种反动，而“诗”与“思”又是一致的①。诗性的比喻、虚构、想象、荒诞、虚妄等超现实的东西更具有真实性或更接近真实性。亚里斯多德的著名论断“诗比历史更真实”，指出在符合“可然律”和“必然律”的意义上，艺术表现了更高的真实性。但可然律和必然律依然是理性范畴内的普遍性的概念和典型，德里达更进一步指出，“理应如此”不过是真理的创造本性的一部分而已，那些不符合逻辑的、“诗”的“语言”可能更真实。庄子的真实不仅包含了如亚氏主张的理性认知获得的洞见，还包含对具体物象的显现，对生活世界意义的创造和生成。直觉体悟的言策略（修辞）由庄子升华到人的存在本身的显现方式。

诗意语言的特征是意象，即对象与非对象之间（“似与不似之间”）。在庄子的思想中当然存在着诸如人与物、自我与他者、知与行、情与理、身与心以至理想与现实，天与人、自然与人文等一切的偶值关系，但由于非对象的诗意语言方式使得这些偶值是“合一”的，是“往而复返”“未往已返”或“既往且返”在偶值之间徘徊寻觅的诗意之旅。这种天人合一的存在方式是中国哲学表述的最高价值和最终目的。

诗意语言对指称语言和规范语言的否定和超越，实际上涉及到价值排序的问题，不是认定某一价值，而是在价值的生成中认可多元价值这一最高的价值。其揭示的唯一真理即通过不间断的返实现相对融通和生成变易的价值观，多元价值就是可能性，就是人的存在性自由。庄子的诗言是中华民族根深性的智慧，它超越儒墨之是非，在语言范围内就是对理性名制的颠覆，就是对工具语言和欲望语言所带来的虚无主义的反动。人和绝对自由本体的连接不是通过认识论的方法，而是以诗意语言这样的超知识、超逻辑思维的直观方式体验到本体性的自然之道。在诗言中，物我两忘的迷惘状态成为与道为一的形象表达。庄子的哲学因而也是美学。

5. 诗意语言的意象性

5.1 言不尽意的困境及解决——言、象、意

若要说明庄子诗言，必须从他的言意之辨的论述作为人手。道不可说，那么意可说吗？可将人意理解为道的逻辑沉降，“意之所随”即“道”。所谓“只恨语言浅，不如人意深”不是说人意不可说，人意毕竟可说，“言者所以在意”(《外物》)，语言具有基本的表意功能，但人意难说，有言不尽意的困境，庄子是怎么解决这个难题的？答案就是“意象”。

没有了指称语言的中介，那“意”该如何得到呢？“吾安得夫忘言之人，而与之言哉？”(《外物》)。庄子的“言意之辨”事实上意味着一种怀疑；指称语言能否对外部世界进行整全性表述，庄子否定作为工具的指称语言的描述功能，即将人与外部世界的表层联系斩断，使得人自身进入与外部世界更深层次的自然性的联系中去。

意象首先表达了一种类比的逻辑关系，所谓“借外论之”，但又不止如此。中国古代的符号系统由以下三个方面：言（名、符）作为能指符号，象（形、情、式）作为对象客体，意（心、情、志）作为解释者主体。言、意、象三者的关系，不仅关涉到传达的问题，还是一个根本性的哲学问题。事实上，在汉语言系统中意象是一个概念，能分开。意象甚至可与胡塞尔现象学的“意向”联系起来理解，象在意向中，客体的象通过人的主观意识才能够显现出来，显现就是主体和客体的融合，意象就是按照人的主观动机、直觉、经验、感受所呈现的事物的形象。意是情感的表现，在偏离自然的层面“不似”，象是对客观世界
的摹写和再现，是“似”，具象和本体①、似与不似之间庄子采取了“往返式”的不即不离的态度，具象和本体之间就是“意象”。德里达认为“语言可称为在场与不在场这个游戏的中项”③。

诗言立于“道枢”“环中”，往返于“意”和“象”、“情”与“景”、“我”与“物”之间，“以应无穷”就是一个能指符号有许多所指意义，事实上就是主客体交融的万物一体的聚合。德里达将西方语言视为在场的形而上学，原因就在于符号与对象之间有一种“零度追求”的直接、单一和同构性的联系，所指出场能指隐去。而庄子提示给我们的诗言的意象性则意味着，符号与对象之间存在着错综复杂的“言此意彼”的转义、多义甚至歧义联系，或者是文字的意象不断移植所指所指，或者是能指所指在同一空间中往复呈现。利科的一个说法很能佐证诗言的意指方式，“语言的神奇性正在于，语言是利用对象的特性玩弄着‘指明—隐藏’的双重方向的运动的魔术——语言在指明时就包含了一种新的隐藏，而在隐藏时又包含了再次指明的可能性。”③

诗言因为“意象”性成为道显现的方式，成为人的存在性自由的表达，而不是单纯的工具。如德里达指出，语言(文字)符号是一种建构意义的生产模式。从根本上说，意象性的诗言如同指称语言和规范语言一样，也是一种“建构”，不过不是剥离式的外部建构，而是一种内在性和物性合一的生成式的建构。诗言语言的“功用”在于显现，就是“文”，如同庄子答东郭子，道无形地显现在每一个事物身上，这就是一种“语言”。诗言没有规则（“无法而法”），不遵循固定逻辑，没有一对一的能指与所指的对应局限。诗言是一种自陈述，某种意义上就是道本身。体道的“无言”方式与颠覆式的讲述即存在诸多可能的寓言、重言、厄言的语言游戏并行而不同。体式的“诗言”本身就是对道的显现和开敞，更是对丰富意象的直接表达。“真意”无尽语言的描述和滞留，这点在魏晋的王弼那里得到很好的发挥⑤。

庄子“言不尽意”中的个体化差异与德里达所述说的“语言即游戏”的意义相近。维特根斯坦补充了早期的诗言图像论，指出语言语言只是语言的一种。存在也不仅仅指外部的物理世界的“实在”，而是人类生活动态的不断生成的全幅的景观。命题语言作为思想的工具的有限功能说明了必须对知识论及理性进行反思。语言还可以是人自身存在的表达和显现，它和游戏相似。“一个命题应当与它所表达的事实有同样的多样性；它应当有同样的自由度。我们应当和事实中所能发生变化同样地处理语言。语法允许我们对语言有所为有所不为；它确定了自由度。”⑤唯有从语用的角度，即将人们说话时具体的的环境、行为和情感考虑在内，才能明白语言及使用语言的途径。此

① 卜宗三先生认为西方形而上学是抽象中的具体形而中的，西方与中国不同的是非对象化的境界形态，包含着主客体两个方面。参见：卜宗三，中国哲学十九讲[M]，上海古籍出版社，2005，第七讲：作用的表象。
② 德里达，声音与现象[M]，北京：商务印书馆，2010:10。
③ 转引：高宣扬，李克尔的解释学[M]，台北：远流出版社，1989:158。
④ 王弼：言生物象，故可言象以观言，象生名。故可言象以观言，意以象，故言者所以明象，得象而忘言，象者所以存言，得意而忘言。《易例略·明象章》
⑤ 维特根斯坦剑桥讲演录[C]，周晓亮，江怡，译，杭州：浙江大学出版社，2010:18。
时，语言映射的不再是实在或单一的意义，而可以是具有偶然性的社会及人的存在多种可能性，以及更为抽象的社会历史结构与游戏规则。

5.2 诗意语言的书写性与声音性

5.2.1 诗言的文本位特质

“得意忘言”，忘掉的是称名的言说以及对符合性真实的追求。忘在语言的范围中就是意义自身的往复性。往返性与胡塞尔的“悬搁”“返回”，海德格尔的“去蔽”有一定的差异，和德里达的“延异”的说法相近。德里达认为西方语言的本质是无形象的声音逻各斯，而书写痕迹则意味着延异，即是对系统化、同一化的形而上学的一种省思。文字的差异企图瓦解结构，这与庄子的“无用之用”相近。差异是一种权力关系的反省，它要求尊重个异性，反对权威性的统一论述。和理性的言位论辩不同，对书写的强调意味着以不确定性及其虚空的特性来开展无限性，而表现的形式则是诗、隐喻、寓言或者是更多的联想与交叉指涉，目的在于颠覆原有的——对应的指涉，表现出一种去中心化与去宰制的活动。

诗言的意象性可从汉语言的文本位得到进一步的说明。“书写”是语言的重要本性。在汉语中体现尤为突出，以致有学者将之总结为“文本位”，与西方语言的言位形成为重要差异。①从汉字的特质可以略知汉文化的基本条件和建构力量。“道”虽然也有“说”的意思，但首先是一个形象的显现，所谓“目击而道存”。汉语言文本位倾向的关键之处在于对视觉的强调。②道显现为自然之“象”，言义语尤其是汉字的主要构形原则是象形，言义之文就是道的显现的过程。但汉字的象已经升华为掺入了人主观意图的“意象”“象”和个体的感性经验以及作为族群的具体历史经验都不能割离开来。

汉语言的“意象”性甚至渗透到了中国文化的最小单位——汉字。象形是汉字的主要造字原则，初文就是对自然物象的描摹和再现，这是一种一般的看法。如果能深入地了解汉字的话，我们会发现这种“象”是经历了一定的抽象过程的相似而已，绝非纯粹的、直接的、线性对应的完全写实，也就是说汉字不是被动、暗淡、模糊的“印象”，而是一种积极的创造，即层层叠加的再符号化的过程。汉字从象形出发越来越趋向抽象和写意（会意）。③言义语借助文字的本性，越过了对客观物体的精确再现，对物质属性的逻辑表达，而进入到对意味即情感价值的求索，如中国的书法、绘画强调神似胜过形似。绝对的符合印证是不可能的，但这却是西方科学、艺术追求的终极目标。在中国文化中，这是一个在孕育期即被抛弃的胚芽。意象是具象和抽象的中间位置。道家诗学如庄子表述

① 关于文本位和语音位的差异见：孟华，汉语和华夏文明的内在形式[M]，北京：中国社会科学出版社，2004年，15-17。

② 形象字是鞋子的会意字，一般言义理论都承认的事实，说明在汉语言系统中，文字的形成和意义具有优先性。《老子》曰：“道与万物，观乎其物；德与万物，观乎其物。德与万物，其中有物。”《老子》第二十一章：“道之为物，惟恍惚，惚兮恍兮，其中有象，恍兮惚兮，其中有物。”《周易外传·系辞下传第三章》

③ 参见：孟华，汉语和华夏文明的内在形式[M]，北京：中国社会科学出版社，2004年，90。将汉语的初文和埃及象形文字进行比较得出的结论。
思想的方法就是从“形象”出发的隐喻、象征和暗示，所谓“言在此而意在彼”，汉字中和具体的感性经验连接在一起的形象层面愈益充分和深入。这也不难理解，我们的“文学”会发展的原因，因为文学艺术的媒介就是文字，对文字本身的玩味和游戏成为汉文的显著特征。

在描述一个事物时，汉语常常采用“a 如 b”的表达方式，所指与能指是相互多重指涉的关系，即往返性。我们的象形文字用的也是“形似”的造字法，如“初文”，把 a 和 b 关联起来的是两者的形象的相似性。两者的相似是任意的、相对的，是迂回的。就象形字本身看，它并非一种忠实的记录的图画，而是掺入了人主观的因素，考虑到具体情境的抽象的具象，可谓“似与不似之间”。西方后现代思想家德里达在名著《论文字学》中认为，“书写的痕迹”作为固态的形式，并非表面呈现出的那样是语言的工具，而是显现出从意义和结构的自然语言到属人的语言及其功能形成的过程。借助汉字的视觉形象，使得记忆中的在场延缓出场，“延缓”的叠加层形成了儒家特有的历史性思维方式。庄子的诗学使得文字的“延缓”具有更多的可能性，能指与所指之间往返性的多重指涉扩大了语言的表现能力。“如同”其实就是对中心的偏离、偏离的程度保持恰当和比例就是汉字语言的修辞理性，就是韵文。所以不说美文，因为韵不仅是指形象的历历在目，而且是情感的跌宕起伏，是涵蓄了美的更高的境界。客观世界的再现（象、似）、主观情感的表现（意、不似）构成了意象的诗学。中国传统“咬文嚼字”的诗学一方面注重汉字形象的美感，如推敲的典故，同时注重汉字连缀在韵律上形成的韵律感，从而表达含蓄的情感，这和古希腊“唇枪舌战”的论辩修辞学大异其趣。庄子辩无胜的观点，可与“文本间性”的说法比较。是非两行而不偏，盖无存在绝对之是与绝对之非，辩无胜的真义就在于此。意义及与之相关的是非价值判断并不是在语言和字和之间，而是在文字中，即上下文的交互中才能显现出来，从而对之作出解释。因为语言的本性一开始就注定是相对实在或终极性真理的偏离。

在西方语境中，太初有言即上帝“说”。上帝为万物“命名”，万物所以存在。这一命名即是事实，此外不再有别的原因，上帝就是语言和存在自身。宗教中的上帝后来成为哲学中的理性、logos。在西方形而上学的中，无论是柏拉图排斥感性经验的理式还是亚里斯多德将感性认识和理性认识理解为一个连续上升的过程，西方的思想呈现处这样一种持之以恒的努力，证明逻辑形式对质料内容的先在性以及构造的模式，语言是现实的印证的工具。西方语言的音本位也是一种普遍的文化现象。于连在《迁回与进入》中指出，古希腊文化是一种根深蒂固的话语说的文化。卡西尔在《人论》中也指出西方哲学的主题和方法源于苏格拉底所开创的对话式的思辨活动。这种对话不是表面上呈现出的所谓的“理论的游戏”，而成为一个真实的理智工具——根据对话时人物所站立的位置而与此要求作出是与非、存在与非存在、真实与虚妄、善与恶的判断。庄子说“辩无胜”就是否定了决断是的辩论活动，因为道的无言之言提示至人和真人要用涤除玄览的方式、沉思默想的方式体会大道，这是心灵的独白。

西方语言音本位倾向意味着强调说说者在场的位置即彼此的区分和界定，西方的文字起初作为“记言”具有强烈的“约定”性，这一约定随着现实的变化和说说者的不同
境况而变化，单个的字母或一串字符都不具有独立的意义，只有在“指涉”的命题中才能获得意义，西方语言具有一种“指称性”。音位学的西方语言发展至最完备的逻辑语言，科学在逻辑力量的推动下趋至完备，终于无人可及。

西方人描述一个事物时采用的“a 是 b”的表达式，是显现了两者内在本质同一的“类同”关系。指称语言的前提是将表层的现象的差异忽略不计，以期求得所指与能指的绝对的理据式的——对应。语言呈现出索引和媒介的工具性的特性，其本身在能指召唤所指物的过程中不断地消耗和消失。“对意义的追求是无穷的倒退，我们永远无法提到最终的所指。”与指称语言的线性特质对应的是德里达所谓的 logos 中心主义，形而上学悬设了终极本体如物自体、如上帝，但图像式的逻辑语言只能指出这种悬设的“无意义”。“是”标示了能指与所指、自身与他者的同一关系，它们之间的距离若为 0，同一关系成立，除了数和形式逻辑的符号符号，日常语言甚至哲学语言都是充满了悖论或谬误的，或者说永无抵达终极本体的可能。维特根斯坦在《逻辑哲学论》中提出了著名的图像理论，对形而上学源于语言的误用进行了深刻的说明。哲学的首要问题就是指出命题语言表层现象的界限，即有些东西（传统哲学探讨的终极性）只能显现出来，语言无力表述。那么语言、思想、存在的关系是什么呢？他认为，命题语言本身只是客观世界的反映，类似于图像呈现。在命题和世界之间存在着对应的关系，由名词组合的句子与名词后句的对象构成的世界同一则是真命题，矛盾则是假命题。如果出现找不到对应物的情况，则此命题无意义。这种对应的逻辑关系即逻辑形式不是实在的对象，但它本身却是自明的，是命题语言自身无法描述也无须证明的。维特根斯坦晚期在《哲学研究》中提出的语言游戏说，从反面说明了指称语言的局限和弊病，此处不赘。

西方的拼音语言发展出索引式的，以归纳法、演绎法为核心的语义逻辑；中国的象形语言则发展出象征式的，以阴阳五行、天人合一为核心的语用逻辑。庄子用象征与整体的方法来表达对象，力图在符号（言）、解释者（意）、对象（象）之间找到一个交点，来将单一的对象与对象所蕴含的普遍性与超时性全部表达出来。至此，语言进入一个诗性表达的境界。文本位和音本位是相对的区分，“意象”和“指称”的标定仅有在区分中西文化的基本条件和构建方式这一问题中才有意义的。从语言的形象和声音这两个层面剖析中西文化存在的前提和依据，是近代哲学语言学转向给我们的重要方法论启示。

5.2.2 诗言的生成性时间向度

“言文二元结构模式，既是系统外部的区别性特征，又是系统内部不停地自我重建的两种互动力量。”①上文论述了中西语言的文本位和音本位的差异，然而在中国思想内部，道家和儒家也存在着声音和文字的区分，这一区分可作为解释自由与秩序的新视角。庄子赞赏的劳力是熟悉掌握工具的生手技艺者，他们没有经过正统教育的底层，其生存状态是游荡在乡村和民间，只会“假语村言”“偶语连篇”的“庄语”，这和孟子的劳者形成鲜明对比。后者是活动于城市和庙堂之上，掌握了特殊的纸笔工具的知

识精英，他们利用文字和典籍规训人的心灵和行为。儒家将文字稳固的优长替换为伦理规范和政治法则，成为一种重要的建构力量。在中国的文化境遇中，庄子的“胡说”呈现为对语言“文化化”的儒家正统庙堂的意识形态的消解和补充，是一种气态的来自乡村民间的言说。正如林语堂在《吾国吾民》中讲到的，儒家是中国人的工作态度或都市哲学，道家是中国人的游戏态度或乡村哲学。前者表达了秩序，后者表达了自由。

从语言和言语区分的角度，需要指出的是，语言尤其是文字体现的是一个静态的结构，静态意味着时间的停顿或时间的一个截面，而结构更意味着空间对时间的替代。然而这一静态的结构并不排斥语言所体现出的动态生成的原理。动态表明了对时间性的坚持，而生成则意味着时间的未来的向度。庄子虽然否定了“言者”日常闲聊的琐碎暧昧，也否定了空洞、抽象和诡辩的概念，但他恰恰代表了来自民间和底层的无用的、漂浮的胡言乱语的“言说者”，以反对理性名制对语言的僵化，回复语言的活力和对存在性自由的终极表达。由于中国语言根本性的“文本位特质”，儒家对历史文本的叠加阐释虽然有稳固的优长，但也有僵化的可能。庄子的“孔子”也是从强调语言的“气态”入手，但又不同于西方“音本位”的“彼此相对”“非此即彼”的形而上学（德里达强调文字，却是翻转了的二元论），而是以诗言（意象）往返于在场与不在场之间，让包蕴“彼此”至万物的“道”显现出来。意象某种程度上挣脱了“象”的单一性的理据和符合特性，进入到语言者存在样态的“意”的相对的情境约定（不同于西方拼音文字的任意约定，因为任意约定恰恰意味着不可更改的唯一性）中，这一约定是多向的动态更迭的。

“一与言为二、二与一为三”可从语言的层面作出如下解释：语言一般具有“言此意彼”的意指性，汉语言尤其重意，文字显示了人意与物象的二元偶值关系，这是“一与言为二”。虽然承认语言文字的优先的建构力量，但必须也承认言语的存在价值和意义。言语（口语）呈现出线性的时间之流的不间断和连续性，它是作为物理世界存在性的统一的表征，即“一”。一旦进入道为世界，人作为符号的动物，用固化的语言（文字）形式试图保存或重构、重建自身存在的经验，这个混沌的“一”就从根本上被切分为空间结构性的偶值关系。偶值是文化构建的基本形态，“三”作为差异和替补使得僵化的“二”返回到“一”，从而生成多元的有着丰富形态的时间性的延展之流，所谓“言有尽而意无穷”。“二”是语言文字保守的建构秩序的力量，“三”是言语自由的创生和突破力量，两者构成互补。言语作为动态的消解力量再次强调了生活世界的一重化和时间性，因此是更高器的建构。由一到二是切分，二到三是取消历史性时间的往昔专断，恢复生活意义时间的未来可能向度。三意味着人的时间性存在自由。

6. 诗意语言——无底棋盘的游戏

庄子的诗言从根本上以道为根据，是道的显现，在它和道的关系中恰恰说明了它的
非工具性和非历史性。诗言即道，即本体，诗言的显现与道的创生力量是一回事。诗言首先显现了存在的多种可能性，天地自然万物的自性无处不在，个体人的原则就是自我保存，这是一种超越了善恶道德诉求和人际伦理规范的自由存在。儒家的道德理想成为一个相对黯淡的符号。庄子则以诗意的言说彰显出最大的应该：无限可能的生存方式的选择，这与西方后现代的精神相通。最低限度的个体的自我保存到最高级的艺术化生存是生命一体化（道）的不同表征。在庄子那里，艺术化生存不仅是手工业者“技进乎道”身体游刃有余的自由，也是每一个人都具备的语言能力。诗言是语言的游戏。与游戏相关的“胡说八道”看上去似乎是一个否定，其实也是一个最高的褒奖。当然，我们必须首先将“蓝黑色的或者是”之类的胡说排除在外（维特根斯坦），其余的则是神话这一“初级胡说”以及宗教这一“高级胡说”。以科技为代表的工具理性在与神话和宗教争夺地盘的斗争中获全胜，然而后者在形而上学的追问中死而复生。“胡说八道”并非日常生活中的一种用法，如诽谤污蔑的人身攻击，如逻辑精神失常的胡言乱语，而是需要哲学的思想方法层面的一些诠释。首先，我们承认每个人及其差异，胡思乱想是人的存在方式，谁也管不住也不应该管；与胡思乱想的事实相对应的是绝对禁止胡作非为，否则人类作为一个整体根本无法存续，这个法律和制度必须要管。其次，在这两个事实的面前，我们还应承认和允许各种“胡说”，每一种胡说都代表着一定的立场、利益、态度，都具有合理性，这种允许事实上就是反对思想的独断，反对传统哲学或伦理学对最大“普适”价值的“一”的僭越。再者，我们所说的“限制”一方面是指对已经达成的共识的尊重和遵守，另一方面是指对特时空中的“共识”一定会被替代和更新，限制的目的是为了达成新的共识，这是一种游戏规则。思想因此不是漫无边际也不是仅限于在人的存在事实中不断生成的自由的游戏，自身建立根据。

由上面的论述，我们可以肯定：语言是有规律的思想，语言赋予了人自由的存在的最深刻的内涵。如同维特根斯坦的区分，行为的事实属于“how”，而语言和思想属于“what”，后者是一种更高级的存在，但必须在前者那种存在的事实“余地里”，这个余地就是自由的边缘或限制，它非但不是存在的桎梏，不是绝对的普适的“一”，反而是存在不断生成和创造，是对存在意义的赋予，是相对的变动不居的“多”。庄子的学说体现为伦理学和美学的同一。庄子论述的伦理问题事实上是一个最高的生活意义和价值的问题，即美的问题，多元并生和共存的游戏规则的不断生成就是存在的最终依据。如果说道德形而上学是人与人之间最终达到和解的途径的话，那么庄子的美学伦理学对存在的关注则意味着人与人、人与万物、人与自身的全面的和解，自由不再是一个终极的目标，而是我们的存在过程和游戏规则的自我更新和确立。

① 卡西尔说“我们所有的人都模糊而朦胧地感到生活具有的无限的潜在的可能，它们默默地等待着被从潜在状态中唤醒而进入意识的明亮而强烈的光照之中”。在卡西尔看来，意识就是语言。参见：卡西尔著译《人论[M]》，甘阳，译，北京：商务印书馆，2003：179。
参考文献

永远的洞穴：论俗套

郑孝演

摘要 俗套就是保持中项，以不偏倚为准则，“非此即彼—亦此亦彼”，拒绝标出。俗套的运行机制是，启动一套社会文化机制，从而俗套化；俗套化是文化的自然状态。本文主要以俗套的文化形
态及其生成机制为据，描述俗套化现象，探讨其深层次的认知结构与文化机制，并结合中国文化的俗
套化结构进行阐述。主要运用现代符号学中解析文化的标出性理论，对俗套进行重新阐释与研究。

关键词 俗套，标出性，符号学，俗套化，文化机制

在柏拉图看来，人的一辈子都带着锁链居住在黑暗的洞穴中；海德格尔同样认为，人需要破除俗
世迷雾，才能达致澄明之境，以及诗意的栖居。我们可以说，这些锁链，俗世迷雾就是俗套，洞穴就是俗套化
的文化。然而，人是文化符号的人，文化又免不了要俗套化，符号化。俗套是文化的自然形态，文化自然得俗套化，并通过俗套化的力量来形成社会效
应；这是文化俗套化的运行机制和内在动能，也是社会结构的自然状态。那
么，人类无法不俗套？！

让我们先来提起一个比喻和一个笑话：(1) 第一个把女人比作花的人是天才,第二个把女人比作花的人是蠢才。(2) 有关德国人的一个笑话：世界上篇幅最短的书是什么书？四千年的德国幽默书。这两种说法，意思简单明白，人们一看就懂，其中也包含着
人类观念形态、文化形态的深层次结构。把女人比作花，人人都可以做，可是凭什么第
一个人就被认作天才，第二个人就被看作蠢才了？德国人的幽默书太短，拿不出来；也
就是说，德国人家过于老实，一板一眼的，不擅长讲笑话，不懂得幽默。但是，此类认
识到底反应了怎样的认知模式与文化形态，它离事实又有多远？恐怕我们还无法简单
地去理解它的层次结构，这并非故弄玄虚故作高深，这实则就是关于俗套的问题。卖个
关子，我们把悬疑暂时搁置一下，先来讨论俗套的一系列问题。

1. 俗套概念的由来

俗套是一个普遍的文化概念，涉及到语言修辞、心理认知、社会交往、意识形态、政
治体制、文化机制、种族、宗教，等等。俗套概念本身是一种动态机制，无法去准确定义、
描述它，更难以归类，但它又无处不在。俗套既是一种心理认知，又是一种文化形态。
俗套过程是启动一套社会文化机制，形成一种文化常态。

汉语词典这样注释俗套：1. 世俗的习惯和礼节；2. 陈旧的格调、程式。如此，俗套是一
个中性词，偏向贬义。在西方，俗套一词从最初的印刷术语，到 19 世纪初指一种凸面
模版，后于 20 世纪移用到社会学和心理学领域，指不假思索接受的重复观念。它具有两
个特征：缺乏新颖性和被广泛接受。

俗套概念的梳理。法国研究俗套的文化学者吕特·阿莫西①在《俗套与套语》
（Stéréotype et cliché）一书中详细梳理了俗套概念。

（1）俗套（cliché）：首先是指印刷业的模版。在法语中也称为“印版”（cliché）。在 19
世纪初，指用固定模版来进行大量复制的新方法；通过印版和铅版铸印。19 世纪中期，
印版在摄影界指可以用来冲洗无数张相片的底片。印版一词接着又被人们用来形容一种
现成的句子。在整个 19 世纪，人们——特别是作家们对词语的陈旧和老套一直深有
体会，福楼拜在 1850 年还编写了《习见词典》，以总结分析成为套路的用语和书写形式。
法国著名的社会学家和犯罪学家塔尔德写出《模仿规律》，专门对俗套行为进行研究。
他指出，俗套在社会凝聚力的形成中起着积极的作用，并提及俗套对于社会潮流和社会
风气的形成过程有重要作用。

（2）窠臼（poncif）：借喻自刺孔印花（poncif），是一种书画印章艺术的词汇。在 18
世纪，指一种纸张，上面刻有或者刺有图案，人们通过把它放在麻布或者另外一张纸上，
并在上面撒上印花粉，从而进行印制。在 19 世纪，指的是一种根据常规模式和方法制作
的图案。

（3）大众话题（lieux communs）：也称共同话题、公共性话题、方法论来来源之类。共
同话题从一开始就被人们设想为具有思维的普遍形式，具有广泛的意义。它首先来自
古希腊时代的雄辩术和修辞术。在中世纪，论题固定成为了典型，以及各类典型的源
泉，并最终固定下来，成为俗套。18 世纪，对大众话题的负面批判开始出现。19 世纪，
大众话题的词义开始扩大，但也多是以贬义出现，具有重复、老套、刻板、过于普遍等含
义。它们形成一个有待展开的论题，一种老套的阐述方式，一种极端平庸的念头或者句子，
一个格言，甚至一个惯用语。

当然，我们看到，20 世纪初期，大众话题的意义与传统、真理和舆论的关系发生了
转变，也不再是思维的共同源泉，而是一些极其普遍的观点。而在 20 世纪后期，随着媒
介的发展，对大众话题的看法又起变化，对大众舆论的关注又加深了对俗套的认识。

（4）习见（idée recue）：《俗套与套语》一书指出，习见这种表达法是现代才出现的，
其意义倾向于贬义。从最开始的“约定俗成”和“广泛接受的观点”，到宗教意义的摇摆，
它成为标志化个人对社会形式主义和共识的反抗。习见包括判断、信仰、言行方式，具
体表现为一种证明或者一种明确的结论。它们构成了一个社会的基础，在这个社会里，

① 吕特·阿莫西对俗套研究的成果突出，著有《俗套之话语》(1982)、《习见，俗套符号学》(1991) 等。
行动和思想规范被描述为一种普遍存在的事实。
(5) 客套(stéréotype); 客套和套语一样都来自于排版业。拉鲁斯词典(1875)是这样定义客印作品(ouverage stéréotype); 用字符固定的模板印刷的作品,模板可以保留下来方便新的印刷。20世纪初,客套开始成为社会科学感兴趣的话题。

吕特·阿莫西总结到,客套是刻板固定的,这与人们公认的大多数概念和信仰表现出的固定性一样,也是不能自由改变的; 客套过程是程式化和归类性质的,但是这些过程对认知的形成是必不可少的,即使它们会造成对现实的简化,而且有时候是一种极端的简化;为了能够认识世界,作出预见,安排我们的行动,我们需要把我们所看到的事物归入一些研究预先存在的模式里。据此,阿莫西把客套理解为: “是关于某个群体人格特征的整体信仰; 关于某一个人类群体特征的公认信仰, 一般来说都是关于性格特征的,但通常也是关于行为特征的。”

社会科学中的客套, 指代的是一种固定的集体意象。李普曼在对舆论研究中, 把客套(成见) 看作是一种社会文化的自然机制, 也是与人们的认识和社会活动联系在一起的; 它是一种预先存在于人的认识中的意象。套客在身份建构,社会互动行为中起着重要作用, 这也是一种社会科学研究重点所在。

2. 客套与客套化

“客套” 首先是一种概念, 不带褒贬和道德情感意义, 只是在使用中客套化了之后, 才被赋予了诸多情感色彩和社会意义。客套最初是一个中性概念, 被社会化了后,似乎更趋向于贬义。这是人们在对它的认知过程中, 启动了社会道德情感机制, 也就是客套化机制。我们对客套的解析过程, 也要区别对待: 有时候, 它是不带褒贬的中性词, 有时候它是倾向于贬义的意义形态。客套本身具有双重性。

1922 年, 美国传媒学者李普曼写出《公众舆论》(Opinion publique), 对客套(中文译者把“stereotypes” 译为“成见”, 实则与客套同义) 展开了详细论述。他用这个从口语中借来的词语形容我们头脑中的一些意象, 这些意象是我们和现实关系的中介。它们包括一些现成的表现形式, 预先存在的文化模式, 人们借助于它们来对周围现实进行过滤。他从人的基本认知模式谈起, 论述到人类文化中预先存在的意象, 从而提出: 人类生活在一个虚拟环境中, 这种想象就预先构成了人的文化场景, 即为人们预存了对世界的意象。

李普曼的拟态环境与柏拉图的洞穴是一回事。柏拉图认为, 人的一辈子都带着锁链居住在黑暗的洞穴中, 这些洞穴的居住者看不到耀眼的光照的洞穴外的真实生

① (法)吕特·阿莫西、安娜·埃尔舍博格·皮埃尔, 《客套与套语[M]}, 丁小会, 译。天津: 天津人民出版社。2003: 30。
活，他们只能注视到洞穴的墙壁上颤动的现实的影子；事实上，就他们而言，这些影子就是现实。只有少数人设法挣脱锁链从洞穴中逃脱出来；他们在洞穴外发现了放射着本质之光的现实，他们认识到了墙壁上的影子不是真实的，只是现实表象灰暗的轮廓。在媒介信息时代，在消费文明社会，这样的洞穴是无限自由敞开的：宽广、魅惑、享乐。柏拉图所描述的生活图景，其实质就是俗套化的世界，这点上他看到了俗套的弊端与对世界的遮蔽。但是，人类就一定得走出洞穴，生活在“放射着本质之光的现实”中吗？这样的“现实”又是怎样的现实？李普曼在指出文化“成见库”——即俗套系统——导人的认知模式化之后，也说，使规则足够准确以及节省精力的需求是不可避免的；而为了某种彻底单纯的生活方法而抛弃一切俗套，可能导致人类生活索然无味。

当然，俗套未必一定就不好，不可取。俗套在广告、销售等具体行业中的作用可谓立竿见影。俗套使得人们快速找到一种方向和认同感，也是娱乐文化的惯用伎俩。虽然落入俗套，却是一种节省成本的方式——不至于因失误而输得很惨。社会文化及体制规范都很不愿意去冒险，这导致一种稳扎稳打的策略，走中庸路线，以不标新为完全域；至少是处在安全域，不至于出现大的失误。所以，我们才得有机会看到电视娱乐节目及广告的恶性竞争。这是功利性俗套的基本内涵（基本需要）和表现形式。当然，在保证基本安全的需要之下，又总会有一部分更善于剑走偏锋，挂靠（依附）、打擦边球的俗套。

李普曼认为，一个人对于并未亲身经历的事件所能产生的唯一情感，就是被他内心的那个事件的想象所激发起来的情感。这就是我们所说的俗套化：人对社会的认知，就是带着先验经验、文化模式及情感状态来言发生的。所以，当社会现实契合了内在的元语言情感，就会激发出强烈共鸣。人对“那个事件”的经历，本身就预存了对“这个事件”的想象——俗套意象。人在社会生活中对环境的调适是通过“虚拟”这一媒介进行的；俗套预存了一种意象，再通过启动俗套文化机制，人就在与世界的对话中对世界进行构建。

人对契合自身情感与需求的俗套更有好感。在与世界接触时，我们一眼就能认出早已为我们定好的自己的文化，而我们也倾向于按照我们的文化来诠释的，我们所熟悉的方式去理解世界。李普曼认为，问题出在俗套的性质和我们运用俗套时的那种轻信，而这些东西最终取决于构成我们生活哲学的各种标准。“除非我们一致同意把本能的禀赋与那些成见、样板和程式——它们在构筑迎合了自然天性并得到它回应的精神世界时发挥着决定性作用——分离开来。人们之所以漫无边际地谈论什么“集体思考”“民族灵魂”“种族心理”，就是因为不能作出这种区分。”

俗套给人带来便利的同时，也成为一种屏蔽。俗套系统是我们的文化系统，是存在于斯的洞穴。

社会心理学研究喜欢用的两个经典案例：

（1）同样一张很有特点的照片，人物是一位眼窝深陷、额头凸出的中年男子。一组人看到了照片人物深邃的目光隐藏阴险，凸出的额头显示了死不悔改的决心。这一组

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①②③ 《(美)沃尔特·李普曼, 公众舆论[M]。同克文, 江红, 译。上海: 上海人民出版社, 2006: 67, 10, 69。
人得到的先前信息是说照片人物是一个屡教不改的惯犯。另一组人看到了照片人物深邃的目光折射出人物的思想深刻，凸出的额头显示出科学家的智慧和不懈探索的意志。这一组人得到的先前信息是说照片人物是著名科学家。这类“先前信息”就是俗套，就是李普曼所谓预存于拟态环境中的意象，也就是俗套文化元言语。

（2）马路上有个人站在窗前对面大厦的一个窗户观测，行色匆匆的路人也有不同的时间向大厦的窗户眺望。当有两个人一起向对面大厦眺望时，行人不仅会同样关注他们在看什么，而且有人开始停步观望。当伫立眺望马路对面大厦的某一窗户的人数增加到五人时，停留下来的人会越来越多，没有停步的人也会匆匆向马路对面观看到底发生了什么。

这不仅仅是行为艺术或者社会学实验案例，而且是我们的心理认知和文化模式；从众心理，社群关系、个人行为的失控、盲从、群体、集体失语、替代选择、舆论等，是文化政策、政治形态，也是新闻媒体、娱乐文化、社交礼仪、日常规范、家庭关系、言语方式，等等，是人身体的延伸。

此外，巴尔特对现代神话的研究，对权力语言（即意识形态）的批判，他所谓的“多格扎”（doxa），就是俗套的结合，即俗套文化。巴尔特的符号学思想源于其对符号语言的权力结构的揭露，这贯穿于他的整个写作实验与研究。福柯同样对俗套化权力体系极为敏感，故讨论词与物的关系、权力体系、性别形态等；德里达突破结构主义转向后结构主义，对话语结构的解析，对文本衍义的解析；昆德拉的“媚俗”，艺术学中的“Kitsch”概念，萨特存在主义说的“坏选择”，等等。

### 3. 俗套的符号学研究

俗套的概念从最初的词语、话语的言语范畴，引申到社会交际、规约、心理认知、意识形态等社会文化范畴，再到抽象的理论形态。通过上述分析，我们知道，俗套作为一个明确的概念，并引起人们重视，最先是源于“复制”。

从技术开始革新的那一天起，复制（俗套化）一直是社会变革的运行方式及力量。模仿借鉴、仿造仿制、山寨盗版、冒牌货、机械复制，真正的创造只是极少数，而更多是靠复制。要形成社会共识，形成趋势，更须得依靠复制力量，要符号化——俗套化。所以，俗套本就是一个中性概念，只不过，文化道德对它有歧视——贬义化倾向，这是吊诡之事：人们处在俗套状态中而并不能满意，所以拿“俗套”出气，以表达对自己现状的不满，而正是这种不满成为文化发展的动能。所以，我们可以说，俗套性质的双重性，使得自身具备了张力机制，形成自动更新的动能。俗套既使得社会趋同，维持稳定；又保持张力，推陈出新，充满活力。故现代性、消费社会形态、或许本身就存在着一种“复制技术”的变革动能。

当然，我们从广义的符号理论来看，任何意义机制都是动态过程，而俗套与标出性
天然的对立，自然就为创新提供了一种可能。俗套与创新机制本来就天然存在一种博弈关系。

倘若一定得给俗套下一个确定的概念，从符号学角度切入，或许可以给出一个简洁明了的理解：俗套就是保持中项，拒绝标出；俗套的运行机制是启动一套社会文化机制；俗套的表征多样，不存在统一体，俗套总体倾向于稳定结构，易于固定，随着不同媒介呈现不同的变换周期。从符号表义来看，俗套有三个阶段：符号概念（意义意义）—保守中项（文本意义），驱动社会文化机制，使其正常化、符号化，俗套化—符号标出（制动机能、标出，成为异项，进一步概念化、符号化、正常化）。三者是联动的，社会文化机制起着决定作用。从生成机制看，俗套有三个层面：词语概念层面—话语交际层面—抽象属性层面。

俗套是一个包含着中性与贬义双重词性的文化概念。俗套化过程也就是文化的动态发展过程，启动一套社会文化机制，在接受者符号衍义的文化立场中，表现出明显差异。俗套=保守中项，艺术、先锋=标出性。所以，艺术天然反拨俗套，艺术在创造一类新的俗套。这样，我们就可以回答关于天才的悖论，假使没有人们的运用，没有社会文化机制的反复作用，恐怕把女人比作花的人就成不了天才，只能沦落为庸才。

俗套机制，就是要保守中项，不偏倚、大众化，具有普遍性；不以标出性为目标，要跳出俗套就得承受标新立异带来的风险。当中项开始偏向标出项，也就开始了初步俗套，更进一步就完全俗套，就等着另一新的异项来打破这种平衡，这平衡是动态的。在不同的场域，俗套的表现形式不同，其作用机制也有巨大差异。有的必然要固守俗套，有的天然是反拨俗套。这体现于政治的稳定性与艺术的创新性尤为突出。政治必然是要以稳定为主导，改革也是在体制俗套的基础上，这很难脱离俗套；艺术天然是以标出为“灵魂”；出奇制胜，甚至极端、出格为标准。

“中项的最大特点是不取位，不归类。从消极上说，这是随大潮，不持主见；从积极上说，尤其是从文化符号学的潜力上说，中项的立场不僵硬，绝对拒绝原教旨立场。”①并且，赵毅衡例举“善与恶”“贫与富”两个常见例子来加以分析中项的作用。最后指出，中项倾向的善与恶，不是伦理道德问题，而是取决于文化符号的意义解释；关键不在于一个人做了什么行为，而在于文化如何去理解并命名这个行为，从而使得中项恶其名而避之。②

“文化的解释”即是俗套化过程，俗套就是启动文化机制来使其俗套化，获得中项地位。所以，我们可以说，正项与异项对中项所形成的动力机制，正是俗套的自身动能结构。所以，用俗套化来解释“标出性的历史性翻转”是最准确的。赵毅衡在对文化的“标出性”问题进行深入讨论之后，认为在现代文化中，标出性本身具有诱惑力，的确是当代文化宽容度增大后的一个特别现象。③

社会对标出现象的宽容度增大，即减少了对俗套的限定，同时也增大了俗套多样的可能。我们据此进一步推论：当代文化及社会宽容度越来越大，并且在传媒力量增强的时代，俗套的形成和更新速度也在加快；也就是说，更易于俗套化。当然，这使得社会不再单一俗套化，而趋向多样化，社会更包容，文化更丰富。

中性是不偏边的，但是正项会协同中项以排出异项，故而异项得以标出，从而成为先锋，成为艺术。在这里，正项也得俗套化，因为正项要对中项施加压力并获得中项认同，故而也是俗套化的其中一环，三项的动力机制即是文化永不会停息的动能。可以说，正是俗套自身具有的双重性使其有了自我突破的可能。异项也会俗套化，异项的势力达到一定程度，就会获得中项的认可，直到逐渐成为中项，从而结束其标出性地位。

俗套结构本身并非是固定的，俗套变动不居，自身带有着不断更新的动态势能。俗套的变动势能更多源于媒介的变化——传媒力量。不同媒介的时代，俗套化过程与方式不同，传媒提供了技术支持，如印刷术、报刊、电影、广播、电视、互联网，传媒的目的和宗旨是新闻、娱乐、传播、教育，传媒改变着世界形势（“地球村”）、政治形态（“第四权力”）、经济形态（传媒经济、符号消费）、文化形态（文化“买卖化”；工业化、商业化）。

随着不同媒介的发展，影响着俗套的进程、方式及结构。俗套意义的不同，在于符号表意的衍义不同，启动的文化机制不同。

俗套是一种社会规约，一种符号表意的规约体制，是启动社会文化机制，启动解释项的衍义系统，并形成新的机制。

艺术泛化，进入俗套的日常生活空间后，艺术的创新与标出性就得到自然体现，就会受到俗套化挑战，大众日常生活艺术化，艺术如何保持其标出地位呢？艺术如何在俗套化力量中保持创新呢？艺术的俗套，这是个问题。

4. 中国文化的俗套化结构

普遍认为，中国文化具备一种超稳定性结构。这里的超稳定性结构，就是俗套化结构。

在中国文化传统中，精髓部分很大程度上源自谋略，至少是谋略部分的传统被视为主流并被传承得最为明显。谋略文化，如在《三十六计》《孙子兵法》《六韬三略》等华夏经典中，谋略被视为智慧，被作为中国文化符号，被作为骄傲。在这种文化传统中，是讲要怎么聪明，是讲要怎样懂事，有谋略；是讲要含蓄，韬光养晦；是讲别让人摸透你。智慧，聪明，重在谋略，策略，技巧，把智慧作为一种方法与手段，终极目的是去谋取利益。导致笑脸之下内心骂娘的人格分裂，价值观分裂，无有固定的价值标准，导致伪善、伪敬、伪笑，就更难说言行合一。所以有；斗智甚于斗勇，不作匹夫之勇，不做莽夫，不做出乎意料的事情。于是，中国俗套结构，中国俗套文化，中国俗套化，就是这样的一个过程。

三、文化符号学研究

① (法) 费朗西斯·巴勒。传媒[M]，张迎秋，译。北京：中国传媒大学出版社，2007。
头鸟；做事不争先，为人不出头。所以有文韬，韬光养晦；有笑里藏刀，攻心为上；有官场哲学、官学；有交际技巧，交际术。所以这个文化传统更擅长于勾心斗角，内斗；更喜欢拐弯抹角，做表面工作，爱面子。此类表相，实则是文化俗套化之极端变相。

存在主义者认为，一个人只有从所有的社会角色中退出，以“自我”作为根本，对这些外在的身份进行内省审视时，他的“存在”才开始显现。然而，从符号学的意义产生过程来看，人使用符号进行意义表达，必须在无限衍义的接受—解释过程中，才能确立对自我的概念和体认。也就是说，人对自我的概念，是在各类社会身份的结合中得以确立。

孙隆基认为，中国文化对人的概念，只有在社会关系中才能体现——他是所有社会角色的总和，如果将这些社会关系都抽空了，“人”就被蒸发掉了。因此，中国人不倾向于认为在一些具体的人际关系背后，还有一个抽象的“人格”。①虽然这未必能确切说明中国文化是否存在主体的缺失；但是，中国文化中确实存在一种俗套化倾向。

中国人因为缺失抽象的“自我”概念，所以就抓住“他我”不放；以他者来进行自我认知。所以，能否合群、能否团结人，并被大家接受，变成了自我认知的标准；而这种需要进行俗套化，也只有在俗套化中才能成为可能。

中国人不喜欢过分执著抽象的原理，中国文化也缺乏严密的逻辑推理，这恐怕与中国的文化谋略化相关。中国文化注重谋略，更多需要以现实为最根本参照，所以凡事得从“实际”效用出发，这本身没错，但是却在现实中走向俗套化的计谋关系。中国文化的“和合文化”，反映在对宗教的态度上更为明显：中国思想常常提倡儒道佛“三教合一”，并且在实际中也并存了。

孙隆基认为，中国人是世界上最现实的民族，因为世界上任何文化都有一些超越于人世间之上的符号的（神性），而中国人唯一能超越没有精神性的“身体化”存在的，却只是“心”的诸般作用；在西方人的“良知系统”中，连心也是被归入肉体领域的，但是中国人则将它当作精神性的唯一源泉，由此可以看出整个中国文化形而下的现实倾向。②在此，我们不去讨论西方的“神性”与中国的“心性”伦理传统孰优孰劣，只是不同的文化认知而已，也即是不同的俗套化过程。但是我们可以据此看出，中国文化的“实际化”倾向，无疑是更易于俗套化。正是存在这样的文化机制，也才使得中国社会结构趋向于超稳定性，因为在俗套化结构中具备了一种弹性机制——俗套自身的动能机制。

对俗套化的合理利用，不仅能够形成良性的认知模式，也能作为解决社会问题的良方。美国的黑人运动，自上而下、自下而上进行的民族运动，自是一种有组织有规模的政治运动，又是一种声势浩大的文化运动。结果却是很成功的，有效地消除了种族歧视。黑人登上历史舞台。这种俗套的创建，也是对另一种俗套的消解，本是双向的。这场俗套化运动，启动的恐怕不只是一套系统，而是多套系统的联动作用，并且是历史性的。俗套化对民族问题、历史问题的解决，确实可以是作为一种不错的方法。当然，由于存在着政治差异、意识形态差异或者所谓的历史遗留问题，寄望俗套保持良性互

动恐怕是很难的；更由于俗套本质上具有顽固的一面，这尤使需要警觉。

无疑，懂得认清和破除无处不在的俗套，才能脱出苦海，洞明人世。

最后，本文形成一个奇怪的结论：天才之所以是天才，在于人们运用了天才把女人比作花的比喻，并且使之俗套化；一旦人们停止使用这俗套，天才就不再为天才。而德国人的幽默感过于短小，拿不出来彰显门面；这并非是德国人缺乏幽默感，更非德国文化的问题，而是人们的俗套化理解的问题。符号表意及俗套文化复杂之如斯。我们明白文化的俗套化机制，这结论就不再吊诡了！让我们来喊出一句：让这个世界多出一些创造俗套的天才吧，人们需要它。

参考文献

四、
电影符号学及其他研究
重适电影研究话语下的电影符号学

齐隆平

摘 要 20 世纪 90 年代电影理论的衰退，如同我们所经历和见证的情况一样，普遍出现在学术研究、出版等语境。对电影理论衰退或消亡的讨论，有许多不同看法，而其中最激烈者莫过于 1996 年戴维·鲍德伟尔（David Bordwell）和诺埃尔·卡罗尔（Noel Carroll）主编出版的《后理论：重建电影研究》（Post-Thory: Reconstructing Film Studies）一书。鲍德伟尔提出“中阶研究”（middle-level research），卡罗尔提出“零碎理论”（piecemeal theory），来对抗“宏大理论”（Grand Theory），更加速了电影理论社群的对立和争议。

本论文主要讨论《后理论》所引发的电影现象，并对鲍德伟尔和卡罗尔的电影观念提出讨论，即电影理论的衰退的原因是因为上述“宏大理论”关系，而让电影理论失去适切位置，以至衰退或消亡？或是应该改弦易柱，运用“零碎理论”化方式，以小范围局部研究来替代“宏大理论”？而电影符号学作为“宏大理论”的一主脉络，又该如何面向和回应上述问题？此外，自 1964 年麦茨（Christian Metz）建立电影符号学以来至今已近五十年，面对电影理论衰退之际及其他严峻批评挑战，是否然然出局？或是有足够新的动能和研究传统能令其自身转化？甚至还能再开新局？本论文的目的在于探究和尝试回答上述问题，并针对电影理论衰退现象提出一些解释和响应，并通过近年其他相关电影复数理论研究讨论，进而希望指出现今电影符号学的研究趋向和其价值。

关键词 后理论；电影符号学；中阶研究；零碎理论；电影复数理论

1. 前 言

20 世纪 90 年代电影理论的衰退，如同我们这一代人所经历和见证的情况一样，普遍出现在我们学术研究、课堂、出版等语境。是不争事实，不容我们忽略或回避。对电影理论衰退或消亡的讨论，亦有许多不同看法，而其中最激烈者莫过于 1996 年戴维·鲍德伟尔（David Bordwell）和诺埃尔·卡罗尔（Noel Carroll）主编出版的《后理论：重建电影研究》（Post-Thory: Reconstructing Film Studies），简称《后理论》一书，该书中文译本于 2000 年出版。书中鲍德伟尔提出“中阶研究”（middle-level research）（4-52），卡
罗尔提出“零碎理论”(piecemeal theory)(53-97)，来对抗“宏理论”(Grand Theory)；
此一理论提出，更加速了电影理论社群的对立和争议。他们两人所称的“宏理论”是指
20世纪70年代以来主导电影理论达20年之久的结构主义—符号学、精神分析、文本
分析、女性主义、后结构主义、后现代主义、男/女同性恋论述和文化研究等面向。
20世纪90年代电影理论衰退的原因是否因为上述“宏理论”关系所致，让电影理论研究
失去适切方位，以至走向衰退和消亡？或是应该改弦易辙、调整部术，运用零碎理论化
方式，以小范围的局部研究来替代“宏理论”？而电影符号学作为“宏理论”的一起
始主脉，又该如何面对和响应上述问题？此外，自1964年麦茨(Christian Metz)建立电
影符号学以来至今已近五十年，面对电影理论的衰退及其他方面的批评挑战，是否已然
淡出或出局？或是亦有足够新的动能和研究论题能令其自身转化？以致还能再开新
局？因而，本文主要目的在于探究和尝试回答上述问题，并针对电影理论衰退现象提出
一些解释和响应，进而也希望论证电影符号学的一直存在而非消失或消亡，只是成为众
多电影理论的一支脉络，并同时指出现今电影符号学的研究趋向和其价值。

2. 后理论：中阶研究、零碎理论及其争论

针对鲍德伟尔和卡罗尔在《后理论》一书中提出的论点，斯洛文尼亚思想家斯拉沃
热·齐泽克(Slavoj Žižek)于2001年出版的《真实眼泪的惊惧：克里斯托夫·奇士劳斯
基在理论与后理论之间》(The Fright of Real Tears; Krzysztof Kieślowski: Between
Theory and Post-Theory)著作作出回应。这本著作是由受英国著名学者柯林·麦凯波
(Colin MacBabe)邀访的一系列讲座组成的，麦凯波并为此书作序，而讲座其中一个主要
目的即在讨论近年电影理论弱化和窄化的现象，目标不言而喻指向《后理论》一书出版
后引发的争议。齐泽克以一贯激进的马克思主义、拉康精神分析者立场,批评此书是一
种解构主义者后现代意识形态的呈现,对他而言，鲍德伟尔和卡罗尔两人《后理论》一
书，被视为认知论者和历史主义者对电影理论的反动。齐泽克认为在他们面前似乎不
存在有马克思、佛洛伊德和意识形态符号学,他们两人把那些差异性甚大的众多理论视
同一个统一体“宏理论”来看待。齐泽克因其激进立场对《后理论》有不少批评,这
是可以理解的,但我以为齐泽克提出有两点值得我们讨论，一是此书是一种后结构(解构)
主义与后现代主义的混合体；二是此书把20世纪70年代中以来20年的各种理论，
如：符号学、精神分析、女性主义和文化研究等，都归为一个统一体“宏理论”之名下，
对众多理论的复杂现象多少有简单化之嫌。这两个意见一并会在下文中讨论。

鲍德伟尔把“宏理论”归为“主体一位置”理论和文化主义两大面向，并认为它们
是偏狭的、权威式的,由上而下的抽象学说，鲍德伟尔所提“中阶研究”一者在于祛除“宏
大理论”的拘圉，二者在于避免受“宏大理论”的主导支配，并另行开发“中阶研究”的问
题化论题和方式。例如某些对电影史的新探讨和电影文体风格研究之例证，内再融汇
以实证主义和经验主义方法，可以建立电影研究的第三条大道：“中阶研究”。鲍德伟
尔的“中阶研究”显著建立在研究的问题上，而研究问题可以是电影美学、历史、风格、叙
述、机构、观众反应等领域，他（2000:41）主张：

具体而言，中间层面研究的程式已经表明，论辩既可以具有概念的力量，又可以
基于与理论的拼凑或概念的联系无关的论据。而且，这些程式也揭示了，除了对
电影加以阐释以外，你还可以做很多有关电影的工作。特别是我们无须通过被这
种或那种理论的“特权的”（privileged）语义学领域的拘囿去理解一部电影。最重
要的是，中间层面研究的程式说明了你不必在某一个研究领域里运用一种包罗万
象的宏大理论去指导工作。

至于鲍德伟尔的“宏大理论”并非新事物，最早出现于1989年他所写《电影的历史
诗学》（Historical Poetics of Cinema）一文中，并且与“SLAB理论”相关。重要的是在他
这篇论文里，他与妻子克里斯汀・汤普森（Kristin Thompson）同属为“新形式主义”
（neoformalism）。“新形式主义”如他所言，源头来自俄国形式主义和捷克结构主义。
“新形式主义”对他并非是电影理论，而是一种对所有电影现象的基本性质和功能
的阐明，而以此来和“宏大理论”区隔，概因“宏大理论”的电影研究已成为意识形态、性
差异或主体的一部分，而“新形式主义”的研究则是一种提出问题的方式，它是实证的，
并且把重点放在发现影片的事实中，因而他主张“新形式主义”是诗学的。鲍德伟尔
甚至认为“新形式主义”如“与宏大理论相较，它的门径和精神接近于某些科学的实践。”
（1989;381）另外与“宏大理论”一起提出的是“SLAB理论”，“SLAB”是由索绪尔
（Saussure）、拉康（Lacan）、阿伦索（Althusser）、巴特（Barthes）等四人首字母连结而
成的一新创复合词。这个复合词是由鲍德伟尔发明的。“SLAB理论”指的是运用索绪
尔的结构语言学、拉康精神分析、阿伦索马克思主义和巴特的符号学文本理论作为研
究立论基础。他认为这种混合学术于1970年初的法国《电影手册》（Cahiers du
Cinéma），再经由英国《银幕》（Screen）散播，已成为当代电影研究主流。在这里“宏大理
论”和“SLAB理论”有同义关系。鲍德伟尔将那些运用“SLAB理论”的人为SLAB
理论者，他批评SLAB理论者只会用空洞的概念行文，呈现千篇一律的机械化格式，对
阐明和理解电影无任何帮助。或许他自认为“SLAB”的用词不雅，随后以“宏大理论”
取而代之。

而卡罗尔的“零碎理论”，我认为因涉及理论重构和解析，相较之下比鲍德伟尔的
“中阶研究”不论在概念或陈述上，皆要来得更直接和明确。因此接下来将以他为主要讨
论对象，进而由此阐释本文所关切的相关论题。卡罗尔同样认为“宏大理论”不仅阻碍
电影“理论化”的开展，更限制我们研究的想象力，而电影理论化对他而言是科技整合
的，因此他提出一个更简略但更有效的框架，而它所涉及的即是一种小范围理论，也就
是其所称的“零碎理论”。目的主要在通过小范围、多样化运作以获知更多东西。鲍德伟
尔称“零碎理论”为：“不是去从主体性、意识形态或总体文化的意义上建立理论，而是根
据特定现象建构理论”（2000: 41）。又因为此种理论不在建立一种统一的理论，所以其方法论也是多元面向的。可参照卡罗尔的主张（2000: 55）：

这后一种观念要求人们从复数的电影理论的角度，而不是从单数的电影理论的角度来思考问题。即也就是说，不要借助一套限定性的理论构想去把电影风格上的所有因素加以理论化——例如，用现实主义或意识形态性去将电影的美学加以规定，而是要推进局部理论的建构——例如，对电影悬念，电影隐喻，摄影机动静描写等理论加以建构，而无需期望这些小范围的理论能否在某种关于电影本质或功用的一大套设想之下聚合和统一起来。

由于“宏大理论”被表现为一种统一或总体性的系统，因此两人批评运用此一种理论的人，把电影现象和问题都归于这一宏大理论的法则和类型中讨论，并依靠惯用法则或程序产生出一些相似的研究提案，而这种结果必然导致现在理论所面对的贫困。所以卡罗尔提议人们运用复数的电影理论，而不是单数的电影理论来思考问题，我认为这确实是一个很好的提议，而此观念在近代最早的提出可追溯到1973 年安德鲁·杜多尔（Andrew Tudor）的《影片复数理论》《Theories of Film》一书，和1976 年美国电影理论家道利·安德鲁（Dudley Andrew）的《主要电影理论》《The Major Film Theories》专著，以及1977 年法国多米尼克·诺盖兹（Domique Noguez）发表的“(复数)电影(复数)理论?”[Théorie(s) du(ou des) cinéma(s)?]论文（并于1981 年出版），以及近年极力提倡电影复数理论的意大利电影符号学和电影理论家卡塞蒂（Francesco Casetti，1999，2007），此部分内容下文再论。

在卡罗尔这里，复数电影理论显示为“零碎理论”，而单数电影理论为“宏大理论”，并以“零碎理论”来对抗“宏大理论”的总体性，而零碎理论化的研究包含了对电影领域内的分隔及任何电影机械、载具、模式、规则等研讨，其立场（哲学）是从观众对电影认知和感知过程进行讨论，而不是以精神分析式的征候来进行讨论，于是卡罗尔把自己（和鲍德伟尔）称为认知论者，并对外界常批评他们为形式主义者来加以反驳，但依我看效果不大，原因是他们主张在电影认知或叙述理论中政治或意识形态是可以中性的显现。卡罗尔说，“在认知论（按，认知论）的建构上有一个理论研究的层面，在把意识形态问题用括号悬挂起来之时，这个层面的研究是可以继续展开的。”（2000: 72）

认知论者认为可以在电影接受问题上进行无涉于政治或意识形态的独立研究，可把意识形态问题用括号悬挂起来不予理会，这的确与20 世纪70 年代中期以来电影理论的发展，如精神分析、女性主义、后现代主义和文化研究等，有极大差异，而且是立场相对且不相应。被齐泽克在前文称为认知论者和历史主义者的反动，指的即是此一无涉于政治或意识形态的立场。关于此点，我们可能不能忽略此一论原生地美国近代电影理论的历史发展进程和演变。

麦茨创立的电影符号学在20 世纪60 年代中后期在法国、意大利已成为风潮，20 世纪70 年代开始通过英国《银幕》杂志大力向英语系国家推介，而这一时期美国并非全
然热烈欢迎此一电影新学说。概因美国电影理论与批评仍处于巴赞写实美学与爱森斯坦蒙太奇理论的语境中，这一时期反对电影符号学最激烈者莫过于《电影季刊》(Film Quarterly)的布莱恩·汉得森(Brain Henderson)，其写作时期横跨1970至1977年，他的主要反对论点是，他认为电影符号学是不适当的，且不能应用于电影批评。期间在该刊持续发表者为比尔·尼柯斯(Bill Nichols)、尼克·布朗(Nick Browne)和詹姆士(Fredric Jameson)等人。在这种情况下，美国把麦茨电影符号学以大发展统称为“当代电影理论”，看来不是没有其背景原因。美国电影学界和批评界对电影符号学的普遍看法是认为它不够具体化和过于细琐，并以抽象概念替代实际的影片分析工作，为一学院派和科学化产物，因而无大使用价值(Sam Rohdie，1975)。

研究背景与取向的不同，导致理论看法的不同，这是普通见的事。麦茨以结构语言学为基架的第一符号学，在美国受到如上所述的待遇，而以精神分析为基架的第二符号学，伴随着马克思主义、女性主义、后受到不同程度的再加工风起潮涌的后结构、后现代，后殖民、后女同志、文化理论等思潮流派，构成了《后理论》所述1975-1995年“宏大理论”现象。宏大理论主导和支配了整个西方人文科学领域，此种背景促使《后理论》的产生。如后现代在前面所说处于后结构(解构)和后现代历史语境下的话语，而我以为鲍德里和卡罗尔两人首先透过代换作用把宏大理论视为电影理论的单一和唯一主体，然后则以解构和去中心的方式消解其重要性，并且又承继后现代宏大叙事瓦解的设计蓝图，把局部、小范围、零碎化和中阶研究推上前台，此一行动与思维脉络能否为电影理论带来一些成果？答案相信是肯定的，任何对电影理论的探究不论方法为何，相信都是有益的。

罗德维克(D. N Rodowick)在2007年的《对理论的一个礼赞》(An Elegy for Theory)一文中，针对鲍德里和卡罗尔的《后理论》提出另一套看法，认为后理论建立在一个认知科学和历史科学之上，并依据自然科学认识论的推论来框架理论。鲍德里所提倡的认知主义和中阶研究模型，主要把意识形态和文化研究，向向拉回到探讨影片的本质结构和功能，而对影片理解则建立在经验主义，并着重历史和语境研究。中阶研究又反对把研究对象作过度和抽象化的表述，因为宏大理论中影片对象的研究常沦为一种概念的示范，不仅不生产新知识，且只重复生产同一概念。罗德维克认为，在鲍德里和卡罗尔两人观点中，政治和意识形态是不存在的，而认识论是处于中性价值。《后理论》要表达的是所谓科学化的研究，如一社群研究者以共同的认识论标准联合一块，努力为一个普遍性和真实性的图竞奋斗(2000:96)。电影美学研究甚少援引科学模式，以致卡罗尔主张电影理论在很大的程度上，尚未存在，且有可能在未来出现。我认为罗德维克的主要想法在把哲学、科学和理论作一区分，并把电影视为一文化活动，很明显地不同意电影理论的中性看法，而《后理论》所提出的中阶研究方法，可能落入另一标准化和窄化的研究模式。我同意罗德维克对研究方法标准化的隐忧和批评，可让我们在更大的面相思考理论研究方法和去向。理论研究我以为应该具有更大的包容力和穿透力，任何一界的探究、尝试，皆是人类知识的表现，在此基础上我们才有进步的可能。
3. 后理论：人文科学和自然科学争论

另外在卡罗尔论述观点里，比较特别的是他自认为所提的电影理论与后实证主义的科学哲学是一致的。卡罗尔批评当代学界的人文学者、电影学者都对科学表示怀疑和反对，原因是他们对科学存有偏见，并视科学为霸道。卡罗尔(2000; 84)主张:

我认为，凡是能对科学提出的要求实际上同样也适用于电影理论……更确切地说，我挑起关于科学方法论的讨论，以期在电影理论的辨正概念问题上实现观念的转变，并不是因为我认为电影理论是一门自然学科，而仅仅是因为科学的哲学给我们提供了某种最佳的模式以理解理论上的探索。

毫无疑问，有人会否定我的观点，理由是我把电影理论与自然科学混为一谈。这纯属误解。我所说的意思是：为了弄清我们自己的实践的结构是怎么回事，我们要利用科学之光的烛照。

对卡罗尔而言，科学之光的烛照就是通过科学理论的“可错论”(falliblism)来进行的，“这种主张可以提供一种更好的框架，比声称一贯正确论(infallibility)更符合实际，”(2000; 85)概念理论与方法都是变动不居的，是可以修改的。我认为卡罗尔所提的“可错论”是有道理的，对所有理论工作者或探究者都适用。从他文中所提“可错论”的来源并不清楚，但“可错论”的提法一般又常与美国现代符号学创建者科学哲学家和哲学家皮尔斯(Charles Sanders Peirce)有关。对皮尔斯而言，“可错论”是探究理论的重要部分，因为皮尔斯主张人总是在信念上建立新事物，也意识到自己的意见有错误的可能性，包括：理论、感知甚至数学等，而当我们有真正的理由怀疑信念时，探究工作始得进行。皮尔斯说道：

没有任何东西比无错误更完全地和科学生活的结果——哲学——相反的了，无论它是穿着旧的教会的服饰还是披着最近的‘科学的’外衣。

(柯尼利斯•瓦尔, 2003; 56)

皮尔斯“可错论”的提出主要是反对笛卡尔(Descartes)的怀疑论。因为笛卡尔一开始即把所有信念皆置于怀疑之前思考。皮尔斯者则以积极态度面对问题，通过有效探究，并经过够长时间，我们人类终可达到真理。(柯尼利斯•瓦尔, 2003, Christopher Hookway, 1992[1985])

站在符号学的观点来看，人文与自然科学一向是相融且合的，并不像卡罗尔所描述的那样。研究皮尔斯的大家费希(Max H. Fish)提供了个壮观并最常被引用的
论点：

到目前为止，美国思想界所产生的最具原创力且多才的学者是谁？其答案毫无疑问是“查尔斯·S. 皮尔斯”，因为任何位居其后第二位者都将被他远远甩开而不值一提。他是数学家、天文学家、化学家、大地测量家、解剖学、制图师、计量学家、光谱学家、工程师、发明家、心理学家、语言学家、辞典编撰者、科学史家、数理经济学家、终身的医学学习者，书评家、剧作家、演员、短篇小说作家、现象学家、指号学家，逻辑学家，修养学家和形而上学家。这里列出几个例子，他是美国第一位现代实验心理学家，是第一位把光波长应用为一个测量单位的计量学家，是球面五点梅花形投影的发现者，是第一位电子开关电路计算器设计和理论的著名构想者，是“研究经济”的创始人。他是美国唯一的一个系统—建构哲学家，在数学、语言以及其他科学的领域，他同时显示出实力和成果。在整个哲学史上，若他在这些方面尚有与之匹敌者，则他们不会超过两个。（约瑟夫·布伦特，2008；《导言》，3）

由此我们可以看出皮尔斯的伟大贡献及其跨科际性，远远超出一般人想象。在美国，皮尔斯符号学由莫里斯（Charles Morris）、雅柯布松（Roman Jakobson）到西比奥克（Thomas A. Sebeok）及迪利（John Deely）的推展，符号学早已成为人文与自然科学的交会领域。而与皮尔斯同一时期在英美大学任教的是物理和化学本科，一年后才转到莱比锡大学语言学，而这点常常被人忽视。如果考察他的《普通语言学教程》（Cours de linguistique générale, 2003[1980]），其中有许多重要符号学和语言学概念的描述，皆以自然科学为喻。譬如在谈到语言的历时与共时，所指与能指、“思想—声音”、语言单位、语言传播波浪理论、代数等概念时，索绪尔主张:

- 系统从来不是直接改变的，它本身不变，改变的只是某些要素，……情况有点像绕太阳运行的行星改变了体积和重量，这一孤立的事实将会引起普遍的后果，而且会改变整个太阳系的平衡。（2003:124）
- 为了表明语言和历时态的独立性及其相互依存关系，我们可以把前者比之于物体在平面上的投影。事实上，任何投影都直接依存于被投影的物体，……没有这一点，就不会有整个的投影学，只考虑物体本身就够了。（2003:127）
- 比较正确的是把它比作化学中的化合物，例如水。水是氢和氧的结合，分开来考虑，每个要素都没有任何水的特性。（2003:147）
- 在大多数作为科学研究对象的领域里，单位的问题甚至并没有提出：它们一开始就是给定了的。例如动物学的单位就是动物。天文学研究的也是在空间已经分开的单位，即天体。在化学里，我们可以研究重盐酸钾的性质和组成，从不怀疑那是不是一个十分确定的对象。（2003:151）
• 我们试设想空气和水面发生接触；如果大气的压力发生变化，水的表面就会分解成一系列的小区域，即波浪；这些波浪起伏将会使人想起思想和声音物质的结合，或者也可说交流。(2003:158)

• 语言可以说是一种只有复杂项的代数。(2003:169)

以上列举这么多例子，只在论证现代符号学不管是美国皮尔斯或欧陆索绪尔传统，皆与自然科学紧密关联。

在电影研究领域，一直到二次大战后的法国“电影学”(Filmologie)研究，虽然主要与实验心理学相关，但仍与自然科学多少有些许关联，如1947年《国际电影学期刊》(Revue Internationale de Filmologie)第一期第耶·安西欧(Didier Anzieu)的《电影学与生物学》(Filmologie et Biologie)和尚·达尔撒斯医生(Jean Dalsace)的《电影、生物学和医学》(Cinéma, Biologie et Médecine)。而此种与自然科学关联的情况将愈发少见，我的见解是受到高等教育分门别类的趋势所致，大学系所组织愈分愈细，并以专业为导向，于是人文、传播学科与自身远离外，更与自然科学愈分愈远，因此必然产生整个知识断裂的问题，而今天只能靠跨领域或跨学科方式补救。但是从历史发展角度来看，我们仍要强调的是，人文与自然科学一直是紧密相连的，在符号学发展里，李幼蒸认为：“尽管自然科学和社会人文科学之间有着根本区别，知识理论的统一性和理论明确性却是任何科学均须遵守的基本的逻辑要求。”(2007:103)因而电影与科学的理论研究仍如科拉尔所言，仍待我们深入探究和开发。

4. 后理论：电影的复数理论

20世纪90年代电影理论的衰退，当然不是由于“宏大理论”的提出所致，按照意大利电影符号学家、理论家卡塞提的说法：“理论的消逝也许显示，首先是电影的消失。没有理论是因为没有了电影。”(2007:35)他认为1995年以后，电影进入一种深层的转移，此种激烈的改变超过电影的任何时期，而这种转变倒不如说，是电影的消失，部分因数字革命和媒体汇流所致，电影已不再拥有自己的版图。他认为现在电影面对的是进入复数性状况，电影具有众多的“格式”(formats)，如DVD、电视节目、计算机等。

此外，卡塞提我借着对电影身份的讨论隐含了另一个问题，即数字时代下电影摄影影像本体论(巴赞式的)问题，而我认为要讨论电影身份在数字时代下的复数性问题之际，亦要对电影影像的本体论问题提出讨论。方能建构一个由下而上的新时代电影理论模式，或许卡塞提的焦点不在此，如同本文一样，但是仍要提出电影社群共同努力作进一步讨论。

而最早在数字时代提出电影身份危机的是来自美国的列夫·玛诺维奇(Lev Manovich)，在1996年《数字电影是什么？》(What is Digital Cinema?)的网络论文里，他
主张电影进入数字时代，数字技术成了电影摄制的基础，使用计算机3D动画软件和绘图程序，不只可以改变原先摄制镜头所没有的画面，更可以虚拟整个场景，数字电影和传统电影已有绝然的区别。传统电影中由镜头构成的元素及其实现，不但面临了破坏、瓦解危机，更涉及电影本体及身份危机。我本人（2004）则随着玛诺维契论脉络，略简地提出我们进入的数字电影美学孕育期，为一种融合计算机科技与美学的再现形式，并以法国哲学家德勒兹（Gilles Deleuze）的本体论讨论有关虚拟/实际（virtual/actuel）部分，即（1968：269）

虚拟（virtuel）不应与真实（réel）相对立，而仅与实际（l’actuel）相对立。虚拟拥有一整个现实（réalité），此一现实同虚拟般。...虚拟必须被定义为真实对象的一个精确部分，如同该对象有一部分在虚拟中，以及在客观面向中展现。

所谓的虚拟具有真实化的方向，虚拟和现实一样为存有的一种力量。换句话说，虚拟是绝对的真实，虚拟是现实化的过程本身。电影本体论是否可以涵盖或延续在数字时代中加以讨论？这是上面原有的想法，只是此一问题目前尚未有更深入和圆满的答案。

在数字时代下，电影对卡塞提而言如同：“一个复数和传布的实体，不受限于一个单一实体。”(2007：37) 卡塞提强调了电影的复数性状况, 显露其特别和有意义的见解, 这亦是他先前电影复数理论的延伸（1999），而我认为现今电影此种的应用复数性、多面传布性和通道接触的多元性；已超越索绪尔的“言语回路”模式和雅柯布逊的“沟通模式”，而进入另一个更复杂、更立体化的模式，而此模式的建立亦成为另一新课题，尚待进一步探究。我为此一课题首要面对的即是电影复数理论问题。安德鲁・杜多尔（1973）以“影片复数理论”来描述电影理论发展状况，在他的概念里，关于模型（models）和美学（aesthetics）两者。前者主要关注科学的理解，后者主要评量判断，且两者都不是提供一个普遍的标准（15）。杜多尔从艾森斯坦开始，到巴赞、克拉考尔的实与美学，旁及作者和类型。道利・安德鲁的理论认为“影片众理论”（Film Theories，或译“影片复数理论”），表现在电影理论历史发展脉络下，从心理学传统、现实主义到当代法国电影理论之论述。至于多米尼克・诺盖兹（1981）追随罗兰・巴特的文本理论, 认为电影理论不仅必须是复数的，而且电影本身亦是复数的，电影至少有两种样式：一种为叙述性的电影，一种为非叙述性的或实验性的电影。他借用实验科学家克劳德・贝纳（Claude Bernard）的意见，认为众理论是相对的真理，众理论只是假说，必须经过事实检验，而理论并不是被决定的，亦不是一种绝对的方法（1981：54）。因而随着后结构主义脉络，诺盖兹提出众电影的众理论设问，对一众理论的探讨提出反思，此一观念在日后逐渐被电影理论社群所接受。

卡塞提除了延伸电影复数理论的概念外，还对电影的身份问题提出质疑，他认为这同样也表现在电影历史研究时，如此一时期新史学的研究; 查尔斯・穆瑟（Charles
5. 结 论

20 世纪 90 年代电影理论虽然给人衰退和消亡印象，但如果仔细考察此一领域，仍不时有好的理论著述出现。如果单举电影符号学领域，有华伦·巴克蓝（Warren Buckland）的《电影认知符号学》（The Cognitive Semiotics of Film, 2000），陈述欧洲认知电影符号学和北美认知电影理论之不同；约翰纳斯·埃贺拉（Johannes Ehrat）的《电影与符号学：皮尔斯和电影美学、叙事与再现》（Cinema and Semiotics, Peirce and film Aesthetics, Narration, and Representation, 2005），此大部头的专著以美国符号学之父皮尔斯符号学为引用纲要，讨论电影美学、叙事等问题，可算是近年以皮尔斯符号学讨论电影的第一本著作。此外，还有戴维·罗德维克的《影片的虚拟生命》（The Virtual Life of Film, 2007），他运用电影第一符号学和第二符号学的概念，如“电影/影片”“想象的能指”来讨论数字电影。电影符号学由于数字电影的兴起，反而获得概念的转换契机，并没有因数字时代的来临而消失。由此可论证电影符号学理论并没有衰退或消亡，电影符号学作为电影复数理论下的一个支脉，仍展现了具有开发和研究议题的能力与活力，如同其他摆在我们面前众多的电影理论课题一样，仍待我们电影理论社群的持续努力和探究。
参考文献


阐释与批判：德勒兹的电影符号观

孙 澄

摘 要 吉尔·德勒兹在《电影 1: 运动—影像》《电影 2: 时间—影像》中批判了结构主义的电影符号学，论述并建构了自己的具有“后现代”色彩的电影符号理论。德勒兹的电影理论和符号理论具有很大的原创性、极端的复杂性、突出的敞开性。本文聚焦于德勒兹论述中的几个紧密相关的基础性概念：“质料”“调频”“整体—客体”，对其论证逻辑进行梳理，结合结构语义学对德勒兹的论述予以批判性的阐释。文章的主要成果是：一、论证了德勒兹以质料概念作为其逻辑起点，进而区分语言符号与影像符号；二、认为德勒兹的调频概念消解了电影符号的分节问题；三、能指—所指连接转换为整体—客体循环是德勒兹对电影符号表义问题的建构和阐释。文章着重论述在德勒兹的理论构建中，结构语义学的能指—所指连接必然发生变型或断裂，于是，德勒兹在符号学 semiotics 之外，深刻阐述了另一种关于电影影像的纯符号学 semiotics。

关键词 德勒兹；质料；调频；所指；客体

1. 从克里斯丁·麦茨的电影符号学谈起

我们关于德勒兹电影符号观念的批判性阐释将从克里斯丁·麦茨的理论切入。前者在系列著作中阐释了他（有时与加塔里一起）与众不同的符号学，而在《电影 2: 时间—影像》的第二章第一节中系统批判了后者的电影符号学。在后续的章节中德勒兹将自己的思考放在皮尔斯理论的框架中，并将皮尔斯的符号三分法与叶尔姆斯列夫的内容面/表达面的二分法相联结，在电影理论领域实践了自己在《千高原》中关于思维的 n—1 次幂的哲学宣示。

众所周知，麦茨的著述在电影理论发展史上具有转捩性的作用。他鲜明地提出“人们怎样理解电影”的问题，其最著名的成果是关于电影语法的八大“组合段”（the large syntagmatic category）的理论。那么，麦茨系统性地，同时又是有选择性地将语言/言
语，能看出所指，内涵与外延，组合与聚合等结构语义学的概念框架移用到作为视听媒介的电影的分析上，是否具有足够的合法性？

这个问题无论是在德勒兹提出系统批判的 20 世纪 80 年代之初，还是在当下，在电影理论还是符号学说，都具有重要的认识价值。德勒兹对于麦茨的批评是釜底抽薪似的，他认为麦茨在最需要严格论证的地方以含糊的方式保持了沉默，麦茨的电影符号学“既没有符号，也没有电影”。所谓最需要严格论证的地方就是关于电影符号的分节问题和能指/所指问题，后一个问题即电影作为“语言”的“语义”问题，而前一个问题则后一个问题的基础。这两个问题是电影“语言”作为结构主义语言学意义上的“语言”的基础，是麦茨关于“电影作为陈述（utterance）”的前提。

在直面电影的时候，麦茨冷静地意识到电影通过“一连串的现实世界”而进行，这“一连串的现实世界”在叙述中以具备整体意义的姿态不断呈现，“一连串的现实世界”指的就是镜头。但当他在面对符号问题时，却落入轻率。

2. 体貌特征质料

我们知道，能指/所指和表达面/内容面的区分位于结构主义语言学中语义学的层面。然而，承担“语义”的材料仍需奠基在一些物质性基础之上。与麦茨跳过“语义”分析直奔“陈述”分析不同，德勒兹不但要对“语义”层进行分析，对语义的物质层也进行了区分与命名。尽管在《电影 1》和《电影 2》中，这个分析点到为止并未完全展开，却不妨碍我们在德勒兹的文本的基础上进一步探讨和演绎。本文认为，德勒兹关于电影作为非语言符号论说的逻辑过程就是遵循“质料—调频—运动—影像—时间—影像”这样一个思路。首先，德勒兹在本体论/存在论的层面提出问题，而影像理解为体貌特征质料。

德勒兹认为电影影像与语言不同，从“现象与事实”来说，影像则是体貌特征质料，语言是非体貌特征质料。语言的声音也具物理属性，也是质料，但此质料非彼质料。为了抓住电影的媒介属性，换句话说，为了抓住电影媒介的材料属性，德勒兹关于“体貌特征”（signaeletic）概念的提出十分重要。汉语的“树”和英语的“tree”体貌不同，但在各自的语言体系中都表示一种木本植物的含义。一个女声说“shu”比一个男声说“shu”音高（音域）要高，但在语义学的层面上不值成区分作用（differentiation）和规定作用（specification）。而电影影像作为质料是具有区分与规定作用的。每一个影像都与别

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① 麦茨于 20 世纪 70 年代关于电影分节问题的相关论述见于他的几篇著名论文《电影：语言还是语言？》、《电影符号学的一些问题》，而特别参见《剧情片中的指示意义问题》。麦茨先生在面对“陈述”问题时似有余味，而面对分节问题时多少有些捉襟见肘。他最后说：“结论是，镜头更像陈述，而不像字，但镜头绝非必然跟陈述一样。”

② 麦茨，剧情片中的指示意义问题[A]//麦茨，电影的意义[M]. 刘森克，译. 南京：江苏教育出版社. 2005；101. 此外，若麦茨将“一连串的现实世界”等同于镜头，这仍然是错误的。相关分析参见下文关于 X 项的分析，以及德勒兹关于整体——客体关系的分析。
的影像不同，每一影像的任一细节都不可替换。在现象学层面，这种不同于自然语言的质料构成电影影像的物质基础。依据《电影 2：时间—影像》，体貌特征质料（signaletic material）不是词，也不是语言行为。它是可塑物质（plastic mass），这种质料是无意义、无句法的。它不是陈述（utterance），而是可陈述物（utterable）。在此基础上，德勒兹将影像定义为——前语言影像和前意义符号。认为影像前于语言，影像符号前于意义符号。它是它所支配的东西的前件。影像具有意义表达功能，影像可以行使语言功能，这些功能正是作为质料的影像“所支配的东西”，而并非影像本身。从构词法上来看，很显然，德勒兹为影像的非语言中心的符号分析也预留了出路。①

体貌特征质料与非体貌特征质料的区别就是电影影像与自然语言的区别。作为体貌特征质料的电影影像，包含着具有体貌特征的调频属性，即视觉的、听觉的、触觉的、运动觉的、加强语义的、情感的、韵律的、调性的，甚至口语与书面语的……

3. 调频概念的奠基性

自然语言的基础在于语音/语义的双重分节；电影影像的基础是影像的调频性。正如上文所述，体貌特征质料的概念奠定了影像符号的非语言符号学的基础。我们为何还要在符号学的维度来探讨影像问题呢，就是说，德勒兹将怎样继续在符号学的维度来探讨这个问题。我们认为，电影影像作为符号需要解决三个基本问题：一是符号的自然性基础问题；二是符号分节问题；三是符号表义问题。关于第一个问题，德勒兹给出的解答是体貌特征质料。体貌特征质料概念作为分水岭，使得电影影像符号的分节问题也具有了新的面向。

众所周知，关于电影符号的分节问题在德勒兹之前有三种主要的观点。他们分别是：依麦尔、帕索里尼、艾柯提出的。麦尔回避了分节问题的探讨，仅述说这个环节而之，提出组合理论。对他来说，影像无分节。帕索里尼（Pier Paolo Pasolini）希望电影是类似语言的系统，提出双重分节：即电影素（cinemes，相当于音素 phonemes）和镜头素（shot，相当于词素 moneme）；艾柯（Umberto Eco）吸收了皮尔斯的符号学，提出电影影像的肖似符号、指示符号、象征符号。他同时提出了电影语言三层分节理论：影像构成符号层，影像符号层和运动符号层，以及“十大代码理论”。②

德勒兹对以上三人关于影像符号分节问题的观点进行了分析和批判，提出了自己的看法。在他看来，电影分节问题是伪问题，因为电影不是自然语言，体貌特征质料

① 德勒兹的有关论述参见：吉尔·德勒兹. 电影 2：时间—影像[M]. 谢强，等，译. 长沙：湖南美术出版社，2004，第二章。

② 艾柯的观点发表在 1967年，1968年，特别是 1967 年的著作《视觉沟通之符号学笔记》（Appunti per una semiosiologia delle comunicazioni visive，Università di Firenze，Bompiani Editore，pp. 139-152。）详述了他的三重分节设想。帕索里尼的论述见于《进化中的书写语言》（La lingua scritta dell’aziore）。此外，帕索里尼与艾柯的思想均可在列维—斯特劳斯处找到源头，后者在其名著《生与食》（Le cre et le cuit）中对绘画做了类似的“分节”分析。
料赋予影象以调频的特征。调频是一个无线电方面的术语，德勒兹欲籍此揭示影像——质料的变动不居和生成性的运动属性。调频的概念可以涵盖从镜头框取、镜头、到长镜头的各层次影像符号之表达面和内容面。这实际上取消了电影影像分节问题。调频作为影像构成带来的结果是随处可分、随处不可分。于是分节问题不再适用于影像符号。我们认为这种看法是符合实际的。比如，仅仅就场面调度问题而言，就涵盖景，服装、化妆、道具、灯光、演员的运动等，双重或多重分节理论也根本无法应用于电影影像这样的全息性和运动性图景。而调频的概念则肯定并维护了视听觉的全息特点。

我们进而言之，语言/言语是颗粒状的，这正是分节的基础；影像是波状的，是颗粒状的波，波状的颗粒，是每秒 24 格胶片的运动。即使在一格静止的胶片之内分节也无法进行，遑论运动——影像。因此，以颗粒状的语言符号的“节”来分析或衡量波状的影像的“流”，完全不具有适切性。这一特性是被许多研究者直观感性地认识到的，而德勒兹则是在哲学上加以确切论证。

可否将分节与调频两者的特性予以直观化呢？形象地来看，调频是线状的，分节是点状的。① 可以用实线和虚线来区别。如图 1 所示：

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>分节</th>
<th>------------------------------</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>调频</td>
<td>------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

图 1 分节与调频

详细论述调频的特性以及调频概念的重要性还需专门著文，此处不赘述。

4. 所指的“零度”

从德勒兹复杂暧昧的论述中，我们抽绎出质料——调频的概念，分别回答了我们在前文提出的三个重要问题中的前两个，同时也为第三个问题即符号表义问题的推理创造了条件。从质料——调频思路出发来考察影像表义问题，我们发现能指/所指连接发生变形，同时“语义三角型”模型也不再适用。我们把这一现象称为所指的“零度”。

4.1 所指的消失

索绪尔认为“符号是表达另一事物的某一事物”。在电影影像的表义过程中，某一事物的影像直接出现（在场），不需要另一事物的中介了。也就是说，作为体貌特征质料存在的影像——符号，符号所指（能指所表达的概念）在功能上不复存在。我把所指消失这一现象称为所指的“零度”。对于影像—符号的考察我们依然立足于能指—所指—客体这一关系中，我们认为所指的“零度”并未否定符号关系的存在。因为索绪尔关于“某

① 索绪尔在《普通语言学教程》中谈到了语言具有“线性”的特征。如果是在不精确的意义上，口语和书面语可以看作是一条线，但却是虚线。
一事物”与“另一事物”的“替代性”的符号定义具有巨大的客观的包容度。因为另一事物（客体）并没有直接现身在场的是“另一事物”的影像。（即使在3D技术中，银幕为观众所得到的也不过是“另一事物”的三维影像而已。）符号学依然需要，但是这里需要的是包涵第二项（即“客体”项）的符号学。皮尔斯的理论部分地满足了这个要求。

所指的消失意义何在？正如德勒兹在《电影1：运动—影像》中所正确指出的，电影既属于表演法系列，又属于移转方式系列，是这两个系列之间的交易者。

就表演法而言，它与绘画、摄影等有关；就移转方式而言，它与皮影这种古老的光影移转有关。但若将皮影作为电影的前导，其谬误将不亚于将电影比做绘画和摄影。电影的符号属性及其内在层次简单而实际上极其复杂。就电影一符号的“自然”属性我们简要分析如下：设客体事物为$O$，设胶片为$F$，那么可得胶片上的客体事物的影像为$O'$，印有客体事物影像的胶片为$F'。O'$与$F'$是互为依附性的同时性的存在。它们相联系就是我们得到的一枚曝光后的静止影像的感光胶片$OF'。OF'$与$OF$的关系是曝光这一物理过程，使得事物的影像（image）产生于胶片之上，$OF$与影像的联合关系构成了$OF'。因而$OF' = \Delta OF$，我们用$\Delta$在这里表示影像这个变量。而这个影像还仅仅是一枚产生于胶片上的静止影像。经过分析不难看出，“影像”（image）这个元素或存在物，是电影现象与电影事实的基础，同时也是电影符号分析的关键所在。所幸的是德勒兹深刻地把握到了这一点。在德勒兹的思想和我们的阐释中，客体项是一直出场并且十分重要角色的。换句话说，德勒兹要考察的是客体、影像、大脑三者之间的关系，而不是影像、大脑两者间关系。因而德勒兹将皮尔斯引人到关于符号的分析中来。

返回到我们关于影像符号的分析中。在语义三角形模型中“概念所指”项$C$是三角形关系的核心元素。符号能指$S$与客体$O$的联结依靠概念所指来完成。但是在影像符号中，符号能指与客体之间不需要概念所指来建立（人为）联系；两者之间是自然联系的。但我们同样认识到，此两者之间并不相等，两者永远是不能合二为一的。也就是说电影影像与客体事物之间仍然有一个中介物$x$项。正是因 mindful 辨识出了$x$，并从建立起了关于$x$项的文化心理认知，影像与客体之间的关联性才得以建立。一些关于电影初次放映的新闻性文字记录中告诉我们，观众们大惊失色正是因为他们还没有认出$x$的存在。而一旦观众建立关于$x$项的“常规”，影像与客体的关系就自然而然地建立了。很显然，人类及其个体关于$x$的认知心理的建立是一次性的、整体性的、继承性的和人类性的，这与概念所指项的属性完全不同。$x \neq C$。

基于我们的分析，在影像一符号中，在概念的意义上，所指是不存在的；换句话说，在索绪尔主义的意义上，概念所指是不存在的。此即“所指的零度”。如图2和图3所示：图2是语义三角形的语义关系，图3是影像一符号关系。$S$表示符号能指项，$C$表示概念所指项，$O$表示客体项，$Sf$表示影像一符号关系的能指项，$x$表示影像一符号关系的所指项。图1的关键在于$S-C$的联结关系，这一关系是约定性的；图2的关键在于$Sf-O$的联结，这一关系是生成性的。

① Gilles Deleuze, 电影1：运动—影像[M]，黄建宏，译。台北：远流出版公司，2003：30。
4.2 从连接到循环

所指之值成为“零度”，并不意味着影像—符号的表义功能丧失了。能指/所指关系被转换为影像—客体关系。前者在索绪尔那里是约定性的连接：后者在德勒兹那里是生成性的循环。

由于所指 C(变为图 2 中的 x) 消失, 三项式减为两项, 即 S — O(实际是 S/ O)。于是, 德勒兹主义的影像符号学需要着重新回答此二者之间的关系, 影像作为符号其运作功能是怎样的? 无疑, 德勒兹《运动—影像》整本著作都可以理解为对这个问题的回答。简要言之，德勒兹将余留的两项还原为两种循环关系, 他称为整体—客体循环。“运动—影像(镜头)有两面, 一是它表现的整体, 一是它贯穿的客体”。① 这样又 又保留下来两个问题：一是图 2 中的 x 项还未得到很好的阐释；二是，德勒兹进一步将整体—客体循环推进到客体—整体—整体的序列中，（这组关系主要在《时间—影像》中得到演绎）并把“整体”予以神秘化，走向某种先验性。他在《运动—影像》第一章中的表述将这种唯心色彩表露无遗：“全体会自行创造，就如同将某质性状态的整体集合连结到另一整体集合者，或说如同通过这些状态完成的无休止纯粹流变，就是在这样的意义上，我们可以将精神或心理的。”

客体就是世界; 整体就是镜头—剪辑。至此，德勒兹将能指—所指这对概念转换为整体—客体关系。这一转换具有两个意义：一是连接变为循环。在语言符号关系中，能指—所指连接是能指指向所指，能指占有优势；而影像则“表现一个变化的整体，并形成于各客体之间”。整体与客体都不具有优势性，是一种循环关系。二是符号的约定性关系变为一种整体—客体间的生成性关系。这由叶尔姆斯列夫的桥梁，德勒兹的影像符号学游弋、追溯于索绪尔和皮尔斯之间。

帕索里尼在《诗的电影》中关于电影语言关系的一段话，可以看作他本人作为实践者的理论家的经验之谈：“当电影导演和他的人物融为一体, 并通过他的人物来叙述剧情或表现世界时，他不能求助于出色的当然也是千差万别的语言工具，他只能以风格而不是用语言来进行创作。”②

① 吉尔・德勒兹, 电影 2; 时间—影像[M], 谢强等, 译, 长沙: 湖南美术出版社, 2004: 44-47.
② 帕索里尼, 诗的电影, 电影理论文选[C], 北京: 中国电影出版社, 1990: 225, 着重符替换为黑体，为作者本来所加。
中国大学符号学教学之我见

李玉平

摘要 虽然目前中国大陆高校内容涉及符号或符号学的课程众多，但是实质性的符号学课程并不多，中国的符号学教学尚在起步阶段。符号学课程不能仅仅在教学内容上涉及符号、符号学，而必须具备自觉的符号学意识。符号学课程重在培养学生的符号学素养，而符号学素养是现代人应有的科学、文化素养之重要组成部分。符号学课程对教师提出了很高的要求，开放的教育态度、内在的使命感、强烈的教学化、跨学科的组织能力、等等。本文以“文学符号学”为例，阐述了本科教育在全校通识课、专业选修课等层次对开设符号学课程的必要性和可行性。符号学的跨学科性质使其在当前很难进入正式的学科建制，这固然给符号学教学带来诸多不便，但我们的同时更应看到符号学这一现实处境为其在教育思想、教学模式与课程建设等方面的改革和创新提供了便利的条件和自由的空间。

关键词 符号学教学, 符号学意识, 符号学素养, 中文系教学

1. 引言

2012年伦敦夏季奥运会的口号为“激励一代人”(inspire a generation)，全世界的观众共同见证了本届奥运会对年轻一代的激励和鼓舞，使奥林匹克精神在一代人中间生根发芽，开花结果。

我认为，以“激励一代人”这个口号来描述同一年举办的第11届世界符号学大会暨首届中国符号学论坛也同样适用。大会和论坛也讨论研究生开放注册，会场内外到处洋溢着青春的活力，一张张年轻的面孔使我们看到了中国符号学的未来与希望。

毋庸置疑，符号学教学是中国符号学“激励一代人”，使符号学事业在中国发扬光大最主要的途径，大学课堂是符号学传承、发展的最重要的阵地。笔者野人献芹，不揣鄙

* 本文系2013年度国家社科基金青年项目“文学符号学基本问题研究”（13CZW014）阶段性成果。
2. 一个基本判断

首先，我们必须对中国符号学教学的现状有一个准确的基本判断。2011年，网上发布了一个对全国已开设符号学课程的院校及主讲人的梳理。发布者对中国大学开设符号学课程的情况进行调查和梳理，列出了中国大学（不包括港澳台）开设的符号学课程达95门之多，其首创之功和参考价值不容抹杀。该梳理是对中国历年开设符号学课程的汇总和梳理，而据我所知，其中某大学1990年开设的“符号学”课程，后由于任课教师调离等原因，于上世纪就已停开。该调查值得商榷的另一问题是把一些本不属于符号学的课程也列入其中。譬如，某大学的“语言学概论”赫然在列，其原因是该课程有一个单元为“语言是自然形成的符号系统”。我与该课程的主讲人熟悉，该课程涉及“语言是自然形成的符号系统”不假，但这位主讲教师对符号学研究从根本上是持否定态度的。这样的课程，即便通体在讲语言符号，也决不能列为符号学课程。

基于以上分析，对中国符号学教学现状的判断并不乐观。即使如网上的梳理所言，目前中国大陆大学开设符号学课程95门，这个数字对拥有2000多所大学的中国来说也少得可怜，更何况95门课程中还有停开、误列等情况。

我的基本判断是：虽然目前中国大陆高校涉及符号和符号学内容的课程为数不少，但是实质性的符号学课程并不多。中国大学的符号学教学尚在起步阶段。

3. 符号学课程：自觉的符号学意识

符号学课程不能仅仅在教学内容上涉及符号、符号学，教师必须具备自觉的符号学意识。在这一点上，符号学教学与符号学研究有着明显的区别。Daniel Chandler（2007：227-234）在《符号学基础》(Semiotics; The Basics)的附录中专门对符号学的重要人物和学派逐一列出词条，给予解释。其中在Gregory Bateson、Kenneth Burke、Ernst Gombrich等10人姓名前加注星号，意在表明这些学者通常不被视为符号学家。加星号的学者都是各自学科的翘楚，尽管他们并未形成自觉的符号学意识，更从不自诩为符号学家，但他们在修辞学、人类学、视觉艺术等学科的成就推进了符号学相关问题的研究，被选为符号学研究重要学者，他们当之无愧。

如果一门课程的教师缺乏自觉的符号学意识，仅仅因为其授课内容涉及符号或符号学，我们能否将这门课程认定为符号学课程呢？答案显然是否定的。文学、艺术、人类学、社会学、心理学等具体学科的研究者缺乏自觉的符号学意识，丝毫不会影响符号
学研究者从他们的研究中受到启发，从而推进符号学相关问题的研究。但是，如果任课教师都未从符号学开讲，缺乏自觉的符号学意识，我们怎么能够希冀他的学生“越俎代庖”地从他讲授的内容中获得符号学的助益呢？难道以己昏昏，还能使人昭昭？

教师有自觉的符号学意识是符号学课程之必备条件。只有具备了自觉的符号学意识，教师才能自如地运用符号学的概念、方法、理论框架分析、讲解林林总总的符号现象和符号学问题，使学生得到切实的符号学训练。符号学课程的内容可以因具体的学科而有所不同，无论是文学、语言，还是社会、历史，只要教师具备自觉的符号学意识，用符号学框架分析问题、解决问题，其课程仍不失为符号学课程。

教师首先具备了自觉的符号学意识，学生才能在其课程的学习中培养起基本的符号学素养。符号学的创始人之一 Peirce(1934；488)认为：“如果我们不能说宇宙完全是由符号所构成的，我们至少可以说宇宙是渗透在符号里的。”我们生存于宇宙中的每一个人都应该对无远弗届的符号现象和原理具备起码的理解和认知。基本的符号学素养更是现代人应有的科学、文化素养之重要组成部分。符号学作为一门科目，大学里的符号学课程，项目固然是其重心，符号学家 Nóth(1995；223)甚至认为符号学教育要素甚至应该引进到中学阶段的教学中。

4. 符号学教师的素养

如前所述，符号学课程首先要求教师具备自觉的符号学意识。教师有了自觉的符号学意识还不足以讲好一门符号学课程。符号学课程的教学对教师提出了很高的要求：开放的教育心态、强烈的人文关怀、跨学科的组织能力等都是一位合格符号学教师的必备素养。

四川大学赵毅衡教授的符号学课程彰显出一位优秀符号学教师的良好素养。赵毅衡教授深厚的符号学和中西文化素养自不待言，令人钦佩的是其开放的教育心态。该课程现场讲授时就吸引了大批的青年学子，更为难能可贵的是课后将全部课件和讲课录像放到网上，供不能亲临现场的广大符号学爱好者免费共享。相形之下，许多拿着国家大把经费的精品课程却只是象征性地开放少得可怜的课程资源。赵毅衡教授还将符号学课堂延伸到网上，在“符号学论坛”解答网友提出的各种符号学问题，与符号学学子疑义相析，论辩交锋。

5. 中文系的符号学教学：一个案例

如今，中国大学还没有专门的符号学系。因此，国内的符号学研究和教学人员除了符号学之外，都有各自的学科专业。现阶段，中国大学的符号学教学还需依托具体的学
科专业进行，符号学课程分布在语言、文学、哲学、社会学、传播学等系科。

在国内的符号学教学中，外语系开展较早，中文系尚处于起步阶段。以笔者所在的南开大学文学院为例，本院设置的学科专业涉及文学、语言、艺术、传播等门类，尽管人类最重要的几种符号系统全都囊括其中，但令人遗憾的是截至目前我仅开设一门符号学课程——“文学符号学”。

笔者于 2012—2013 学年开始，在南开大学文学院为中文系的本科生开设了“文学符号学”选修课。该课程在自觉的符号学意识指引下，从符号学的视角出发，为学生系统讲授和剖析文学这一人类重要的符号系统。课程的内容主要包括三部分：首先，结合索绪尔、皮尔斯、雅各布森、洛特曼、巴赫金、巴尔特、克里斯蒂娃、艾柯、里夫·台尔等符号学家的思想，系统讲授西方符号学的重要理论；其次，在此基础上，讲授和讨论符号学视域中的文学话题、文学的指涉性、文类符号学、多模态符号学视域中的新媒介文学等文学符号学的重要问题。最后，结合中文系的专业特色，凸显课程的本土视角，讲授和讨论中国古代的符号学思想、诗词曲赋的符号学分析、《文心雕龙》等中国文学特有的符号学内容。

在“文学符号学”的教学中，我尝试着将单一的教师讲授模式转变为以课堂讲授为主，辅以课堂辩论、课后练习、原著研读、案例分析等师生互动的多元教学模式。“文学符号学”理论性强，重视逻辑推演，环环相扣。由于学生欠缺符号学基础知识，更没有系统读过符号学的基本文献，因此在“文学符号学”的教学中，我带领学生系统、深入研读符号学的基本原典，认真体会符号学提出的具体语境、符号学家独特的推理过程，进一步培养学生符号学思维，提高学生发现问题、解决问题的能力。

实际上，符号学教学在中文系大有可为，拥有广阔的发展空间。单就本科教育而言，中文系的教师似可在全校通识课、专业选修课、高级研讨课三个层次全面开设符号学课程。中文系的研究生教育亦可设置文学符号学、语言符号学、中国文学符号学等专业方向，培养符号学硕士、博士研究生。

6. 符号学教学的展望：挑战与机遇

符号学的跨学科性质使其在当前很难进入正式的学科建制，这固然给符号学教学带来诸多不便，但我们同时更应看到符号学的这一现实处境为其在教育思想、教学模式与课程建设等方面的改革和创新提供了便利的条件和自由的空间。

在目前的中国高等教育界，符号学教学还属新鲜事物，机遇与挑战并存。社会发展和学术进步需要大量的符号学人才，中国大学承担着培养符号学人才的历史重任。可以预见，随着第 11 届世界符号学大会暨首届中国符号学论坛的成功召开，中国的符号学教学必将迎来一个高潮，更多的大学、科系竞相开设符号学课程，符号学教学的水平和质量也将达到新的高度。
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