Time and Translation

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

Rubber Pencil

About ten years ago, I was editing a volume of conference-proceedings with John, and I visited his office with the camera-ready manuscript I had typeset. John is meticulous about such things and while we were arguing about something on a page that he claimed wasn’t centred, I told him he was wrong. We went back to the page and I pointed to the right.

"Where did you get that from?" he demanded.

I walked over to his desk, picked up a pencil, and performed the “rubber-pencil” with it (i.e., holding a pencil in the middle between my thumb and index finger and moving it rhythmically up and down to create the appearance of flexibility).

"Do you know, like a rubber pencil?" he gave me a strange look of noncomprehension and asked what that was.

To better appreciate this anecdote, know that John was about 55 at the time, is well read and arguably smart, a world traveler, produces at least a book a year, is familiar with American culture, and so on. Accordingly, I didn’t think he could have been so oblivious, but when I ask him this, he had to admit it.

But he said he wasn’t.

"Did you put that on my desk?"

"I did put that on your desk."

"You know, like a rubber pencil!" he exclaimed.

Closing this account, I want to point to an important element that underlies the flow of differences in decoding – the ability, in other words, to "crack" the code of a given signifying entity.

But, nevertheless, decoding is surely nothing more than what Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe call a “literalization which fuses the differences of a relational system” (1985: 114). Or, perhaps one could modify this to read: this endeavor to fix...

An apt illustration of this is found in the common belief (Peirce, Eco, et al.) that “infinite semiosis” is not truly infinite, and that in the transcendental signified of some kind will be reached, even if, as Peirce has it, as soon as the end is found, semiotics immediately kicks into action again. Laclau and Mouffe observe that the transcendental signifier is carried along with “the possibility of fixing a meaning which underlies the flow of differences” (1985: 112). Signs, in effect, don’t refer only to other signs, this argument maintains; some sort of end – understanding or knowledge or even truth – will be the eventual, progressive outcome. For instance, Laclau and Mouffe maintain that a signifier ultimately refers to a transcendental signified, despite infinite semiosis. “The impossibility of an ultimate fixity of meaning implies that there have to be partial fixations – otherwise, the very flow of differences would be impossible. Even in order to differ, to subvert meaning, there has to be a meaning,” they suggest. “Every relation of representation is founded on a fiction: that of the presence at a certain level of something which, strictly speaking, is absent from it. But because it is at the same time a fiction and a principle organizing actual social relations, representation is in the terrain of a game whose result is not predetermined from the beginning” (119). This argument is not very compelling, however. (In fact, the same contention is also found in reader-response literary criticism that maintains that the reader can’t do just whatever she wants with a text; that the text, in effect, exerts some control of some kind just by virtue of being a text.) Yet this view of semiotic restriction provides an opening for further consideration of the concept of decoding.

A hypothetical example of this phenomenon can be reformulated as the ability to locate the monosemous “denotation” (yet another myth) of a word, look up its definition in a dictionary (Ruhl; Simpkins 2001). Then look up the definition of each word in that definition. Et cetera. Rather than leading to an absurdly pointless exercise, eventually some sort of “definition” of that first word will emerge – a sense of what that word means to someone, in effect, through a process of what Gilbert Ryle (1968) and Clifford Geertz (1973) discuss as “thick description.”

For semiotics, acceptance of the viability of “decoding” arguably serves as a rationale to justify itself. If semiotics can provide an outcome for decoding a sign vehicle, leading to the equivalent of a sum or remainder, then something it has an end purpose. But, as numerous examples can show, it appears that nothing of any certainty or finality can ultimately be “gained” from decoding texts without accepting that these results are manufactured (or to use Nietzsche’s term, “invented”) by the apparatus employed. Ultimately, then, any decoding would simply be a new encoding even further “away” from the truth of a signifying entity. And the process of semiotics carries on, endlessly.

Humans, Nietzsche maintains, have arranged an epistemological “peace treaty” which “brings in its wake something which appears to be the first step toward acquiring that puzzling truth drive; to wit, that which shall count as ‘truth’ from now on is established. That is to say, a uniformly valid and binding designation is invented for things, and this legislation of language establishes the first laws of truth” (1873: 889). This is how we “invented knowledge” – “Truth and falsehood are illusions” (881). Decoding, accordingly, could be viewed as a “pseudo of a metaphor” (892) or a “concealed crap game” or “only by forgetting [the] primitive world of metaphor,” Nietzsche concludes, “can one live with any repose, security, and consistency” (893). Given the unarguably human, improvisational, even fabricational component of what we call decoding, Nietzsche’s perspective actually holds positive consequences for semiotics. It acknowledges that decoders don’t just passively decode sign vehicles: they make them anew. Otherwise, if semioticians continue to pretend that decoding is a disinterested process with a “true” (also known as “invariant”) goal, then something similar to some components of the scientific method, they are not being honest or even accurate about what happens in the course of decoding.

This is understandable, after all, for as Stanley Fish notes, the illusion of materiality, or consensus, or reproducibility of results, is undeniably seductive. Fish emphasizes the immense seduction of the materiality of the page in this regard. While he averts that “the objectivity of the text is an illusion,” it nevertheless is a “dangerous illusion, because it is so physically compelling. The illusion is useful and incompleteness. A line of print or a page is so obviously there – it can be handled, photographed or put away – that it seems to be the sole repository of whatever value and meaning we associate with it” (1970: 82). The text, along these lines, then, is
essentially equivalent to the convincing sight of the rubber pencil. Such dishonesty or inaccuracy, however, is accompanied by certain contemporary technological wording, of course. No longer is decoding a fraudulent enterprise, a hatch trick, an act of legendary, a tremendous con job – a rubber pencil. Yet, a practice based on a lie remains a lie. A light is dimly held. The compromise that undoes whatever progress is seemingly accomplished.

Jonathan Culler argues that accepting certain strategic compromises (decoding, for example, or in his case, a decoded literary narrative) as necessary in order to establish a profession or discipline.

The claims of schools and universities to offer literary training are not easily dismissed,” he maintains. “To accomplish that compromise that undoes whatever progress is seemingly already in place in the analysis of this comic strip. In one analyst adds yet another layer to the reader strategies exercised by the decoder (in a manner similar to “close reading” in literary interpretation).

The incoherence underlying Edmund’s authoritative reading” in literary interpretation). Poe carefully chose each snatch of music he drew to illustrate, the music was a soundtrack to the strip, introducing the characters’ state of emotion, prompting for this. Conventionally trained readers would likely decode this strip successively decoded as the individual who refuses to be identified successfully over and over again in that “semblance” suggests both resemblance as well as a type of monosemous signifying possibilities of the minister’s appearance, a decoding framework which, while on the surface (as in Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s short story, “The Minister’s Black Veil”[1886]) provides a semiotic bombshell of sorts by relating, signification by way of wearing a black veil. Conventionally trained readers would likely decode this strip successfully as the individual who refuses to be identified successfully over and over again in that “semblance” suggests both resemblance as well as a type of monosemous signifying possibilities of the minister’s appearance, a decoding framework which, while on the surface (as in Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s short story, “The Minister’s Black Veil”[1886]) provides a semiotic bombshell of sorts by relating, signification by way of wearing a black veil. Conventionally trained readers would likely decode this strip successfully as the individual who refuses to be identified successfully over and over again in that “semblance” suggests both resemblance as well as a type of monosemous signifying possibilities of the minister’s appearance, a decoding framework which, while on the surface (as in Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s short story, “The Minister’s Black Veil”) provides a semiotic bombshell of sorts by relating, signification by way of wearing a black veil.
Hooper" (1836: 38). The "one thing remarkable in his appearance," the narrator adds, is "Swathed about his shoulders and head, a large black veil does over ever so gently to be shaken by his breath, Mr. Hooper had on a black veil."

As is found in film, the narrator appears capable of zooming in on the minister for "closer" inspection of the protagonist’s facial expression, a standpoint which, according to decoding possibility, all this does is increase the semiotic distortion of the sign vehicle, rather than clarifying it. Without detailing how this perspectival shift is accomplished, the narrator does that "on a nearer inspection," the veil "seemed to consist of two folds of crepe, which entirely concealed his features, except the mouth and chin, but, to no one, to no interpreter has further than to give a darkened aspect to all living and inanimate things." The emphasis on conjecture is clear here, as the narrator refers to these decodings as actions of "semiotic interpretation that argues that..."

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

In either case, though, the impression signified by Mr. Hooper is increasingly steered away from a positive, or even neutral, perspective. Although Mr. Hooper’s face was "veiled," so to those of his parishioners who still waited on the meeting-house steps, "so wonder-struck were they that his greeting hardly met with a return," we are told (1836: 38). Here, of course, the interpretive operation vacillates in the other direction, since "wonder-struck" is clearly not the same word as "veiled"; the face was behind that piece of crepe," one person cries. Indeed, like the decoding of unintelligible stimuli as "noise" (see the Barthes and Attali mention it in his benediction: "The people trembled, though they but darkly understood him when he prayed that they, and himself, and all of mortal race, might be ready, as the man of God had been, for the dreadful hour that should unmask the veil from their faces" (1836: 42). Of course, although he could be referring to the more common practice of face veiling, the crowd assumes that he is turning his literal veil into a metaphorical reference, one with semiotic implications insofar as it asserts that everyone is "a pale face" by facing the "peculiar" sign vehicle instead of a transparent (or even just translucent) signifier.

The subsequent supernatural associations of some citizens imagining that they see the minister "walking hand in hand with the other world" following this scene (something corroborated by interpreter observer agreement), along with a similar development pertaining to a young couple he marries, suggest that, indeed, the veil is imbuing Mr. Hooper with extraordinary signifying capabilities (1836: 43). After performing the ceremony, Mr. Hooper raised a glass of wine to his lips, wishing happiness upon the couple, and the crowd was elated. In a strain of mild pleasure that ought to have brightened the features of the guests, like a cheerful gleam from the hearth. At that instant, however, a gleam in the glass, the figure in the looking-glass, the black veil involved his own spirit in the horror with which it overwhelmed all others. His face shone like a pale moon, and, turning the veiled face with its golden wine upon the carpet, and rushed forth into the darkness. For the Earth, too, had on her Black Veil. (44)

In order for the townfolk to satisfactorily decode this resistant signifier, a group was changed with the task to "put the plain question to Mr. Hooper, wherefore he did this thing." This would imply a belief in the ability of the encoder to identify a privileged signified that is responsible for this particular sign function in the text. In turn, ironically, the impetus behind this mission was located in "a feeling of dread, neither plainly confessed nor carefully concealed," elicited by the veil. In other words, the veil apes the signified with, perhaps, a pathos almost clearly conveyed and/or significantly concealed. It neither shows nor hides.

This extra-signifying capacity is arguably what impels the community members to bring it into the marketplace of signification, one way or another. "There was the black veil swathed round Mr. Hooper’s forehead, and concealing every feature above his placid mouth, on which, at times, they could perceive the gleaming of a melancholy smile," we are told. "But that piece of crepe, to their imagination, seemed to hang down before his heart, the symbol of a fearful secret between him and their fate." Here the veil and its presence aside, they might speak freely of it, but not till then"
it was only a double fold of crepe, hanging down from more accurate decoding, “she fixed her eyes steadfastly to the veil’s (thus-encoded) signification. Despite the assumption that the minister possesses the semiotic key issue of decoder “privilege” arises with the attendant to know what the black veil concealed.” Again, this based “community of interpreters” (Fish 1980) that the (1836: 45). Given the assumptions of a hierarchy­veil had impressed all beside herself” – his spouse was the village, unappalled by the awe with which the black blockage, moreover, is dramatized by the failure of the already existing layers of resistance to meaning. Yet it, too, stands as an inscrutably (1836: 45). As a paratextual supplement, Mr. Hooper’s re­configures the connotative frame for his smile; my lips!” – is detached from the speaking subject: “There is an hour to come,” said he, ‘when all of us one­more, associated with an important facet of meaning. Yet this common­(e.g., an infant learning to smile back at its mother is a seemingly “primitive” form of expressive mimicry (if this is even possible, contra Nietzsche) by declaring oneself instead of a relational sum: “‘No’, said she aloud, ‘I don’t remember.’ But I think I can (including the presumed class of signs deemed transparently “iconic”). Mr. Hooper nevertheless endorses to engage in this very procedure, but the impact of infinite semiosis cannot have any true “degree of null signification” (as was seen in Poe and will be received that note has begun to experience what gave plausibility to the whispers, that in turn leads even him to begin to believe in the possibility of decoder semiotic competence (the starts to align himself with the community of interpreters, i.e., “the multitude” – who believe the veil signified his dreadful secret”). Their instinctive dread caused him to feel, more strongly than ought else, that a preventive and to drink at a still fountain, lest, in its peaceful bloom, he should be affrighted by himself. This was what gave the minister’s conscience torturing him for some great crime, too horrible to be entirely concealed, or otherwise than so obscuredly insinuated. In response to this, “There is a new veil, rolled a cloud into the sunshine, an ambiguity of sin or sorrow, which enveloped the poor minister, so that love or what if the world will not believe that it is the type of other mortals, have sorrows dark enough to be typified is fundament­ally conjectural, or perhaps suggesting that the encoder has no special privilege in terms of speaking an essential mirroring. “It is a sign of mourning,” replied Mr. Hooper, “I, perhaps, like most others, have sorrows dark enough to be typified by a black veil” (1836: 46). His wife, however, observes that it is this very polyvalence condition which can lead to stigmatizing interpretations by others. But what if the world will not believe that it is the type of an innocent sorrow” urged Elizabeth. “Beloved and respected as you are, there may be whispers that you hide your face under the consciousness of secret sin. For the sake of your holy office, do away this scandal! In response to this, “There is a new veil – again – that same sad smile, which always appeared like a faint glimmering of light, proceeding from the obscurity beneath the veil.” This suggests that he has acquired the common semiotic technique, that the encoder truly intends to ‘‘aeonically’’ make Saussure identified in his Course when he noted that even an artifically constructed language cannot be controlled by the non­linguist signifier of the veil: “Mr. Hooper’s smile seemed to have the one desirable effect, of making its wearer a...

By Anna Cabak Rédei

In the majestic book Signifying and Understanding: Reading the Works of Victoria Welby and the Signific Movement, Anna Cabak Rédei returns to the topic, first addressed in her Significa et semiorum historia (1984), of semiotic history and Victoria Welby's importance for contemporary semiotics. The book consists of a selection of Victoria Lady Welby's (1837–1912) published and unpublished writings (including her correspondence with important scholars of her time as well as her scientific writings), contributing to modern semiotics on a general level (and in the correspondence with Charles Sanders Peirce in more specific ways). But more importantly perhaps, the selection of writings illustrates Lady Welby's contribution to the Signific Movement in the 1890s, which eventually flourished in the Netherlands within the Dutch Significs Group.

Petrelli's ambition with this book is to communicate the theoretic bedrocks of significa and its evolution with a special focus on issues connected to the problem of "signs, meaning and understanding," i.e., with "language and communication" (iv).

The organization of the volume is chronological. The reader is carefully led through Victoria Welby's own writings as they develop, and their linkage to contemporary intellectual and scientific streams of thought, by Petrelli's sensitive "ear". There is also a rich selection from the archives of Victoria Welby's correspondence and papers, as well as reviews of those, in the closing chapters of the book, which ends with appendices and bibliographies of great value for anyone interested in further studies of Lady Welby and the Signific Movement. The integrated archival material, such as hitherto unpublished letters and/or illustrative documents, illustrates the scientific and intellectual development of Welby.

Who was Lady Welby? Lady Welby was born as Lady Victoria Alexandrina Maria Louisa Stuart-Wortley into the highest circles of the English nobility. She was named
Welby defined in comprehensive terms significance for conveying meaning to any word (or in broader sense, any sign), at stake throughout these writings. As Pettit (2014) writes:

> “Significs” evokes the verb “to signify” which is the expression of the dual semantic valency of the concept of meaning, linguistic and valuative; and different forms of the verb “to signify” or “semantics”, it was completely free from technical associations.

**Welby underlines the need to cultivate language, to be able to choose the right words, and to better define their meanings in light of the context of discourse which they somehow concern.**

The term “person”, “self”, “religion” are signalled as examples. Reference to the latter is later in the essay in the course of conceptualization, for the purpose of minimizing the negative effects of misunderstanding and improving the work of conceptualization.

In connection with Welby’s semiotic approach she wanted, on the one hand, to criticize what she thought was the restricted side of the term “common sense” (“simple” meaning), and on the other, as something a priori to language. Pettit theorized the latter (already present in Liddes and Clast from 1881) Welby within the frame of her conception “mother-sense”, or “primal sense” (142).

Another substantial contribution to the field was the “Welby Prize” for her book Signs and Language: The Articulate Form of Our Explanatory and Interpretative Resources. Many of Welby’s essays are published conference papers. Although she was not connected to any academic institution, she was a member of distinguished academic bodies like the Aristotelian Society, Anthropological Institute, and the Sociological Society. Pettit has meritoriously included some of Welby’s unprinted lectures, whichdeal with issues relating to mental evolution and cognition, and are thus important for the history of modern semiotics, as well as her essay “An Apparent Paradox in Mental Evolution?” (Sept. 1890) and “An Apparent Paradox in Mental Evolution” (Dec. 1890). Welby also anticipated a specific field of modern semiotics, namely biosemiotics, or “global semiotics” (the latter paper contains references to Darwin, among others), with “her studies on the relation between signs and life, signs and evolution” (129), and she anticipated the branch of ‘semiotiques’ of the Bari school, introduced by Pettit and Augusto Pontico.

Another genre important for Welby’s mode of expression was the essay, which she preferred to publish in Pettit’s volume. They were short and privately printed. Apart from the major monographs mentioned earlier, Welby wrote two books on reflection (excerpts published in her childhood diary published in 1852. But the main part of her writings are still unsung. The name of Sene marks a different phase of Welby’s work, and moves away from the religious sphere to problems of scientific matter, such as anthropology, philosophy, pedagogy and linguistics in the light of significs. The importance of the notion ‘sense’ is given a more significant and elaborate role in what is meaning (1903), as it is used to adequately define the value of ‘experience’. The highest value of sense experience is identified in ‘significance’, that is, in sense that emerges in the relation between signs and values, augmented in the ongoing discourse from one sign and sign system to another” (20-21).

In 1896 in the essay "Sense, Meaning and Interpretation," Welby introduced the term ‘Significs’, alongside "Semantics" referring to "Significs" as a possible alternative. Pettit (2014) writes:

> “Significs rubs the verb ‘to signify’ which is the expression of the dual semantic valency of the concept of meaning, linguistic and valuative; and different forms of the verb ‘to signify’ or ‘semantics’, it was completely free from technical associations.

However, as we have seen, Peirce viewed Welby’s triad as part of logic but Welby insisted (in a letter to Peirce on the 18th Nov. 1903) that “Significs”, as a philosophy
of ‘significance’ (the third level of her meaning) was to be regarded as a ‘practical extension’ of the structural and constitutive interconnection between the pragmatic-operational and evaluative-value dimension of sign activity in human signifying processes” (272).

Another letter to Peirce dated 19 Jan. 1909, she set side by side the terms ‘significa’ and ‘semiotic’ (as used by Peirce) in order to underline her own focus on the ethical, aesthetic and what today is identified as the ideological dimension of human sign activity in contrast to what she thought to be “a purely descriptive approach to studies on language, knowledge and expression” in further discussions in her monograph Signific and Significus (1913), where the connection of terms to values is stressed as the “ultimate aim of signific” (281). An important topic to Welby was her correspondence with Peirce in their exchange of letters (notably between 1903 and 1905), initiated by the latter’s review of What is Meaning?, the issue of time in their exchange of letters (notably between 1904 and 1905), and in connection with his thought regarding his triad of categories (as part of his polyphonic model). Welby’s ideas, namely, with the order of connecting terms to values, language did not manifest the dependent nature of time on space “except in the matter of expression in speech” (i.e. in a conventional way, language being such a terminological term).

What, then, does Peirce suggest? Further along in the letter to Welby, Peirce writes:

There is one of the main branches of geometry, Topics, which alone occupies itself with properties of Space itself, namely, with the order of connecting parts. This has been little studied, and no regular method for treating it is obtainable. In any case the order of connecting parts in those circumstances to prove any dependence of Time on Space except in the matter of expression in speech. [...] I therefore assume that the method took rise between two persons who met and endeavoured to communicate partly by words and partly by signs. Those persons would be together with a common spatial environment, which was visible, and in which all actions would be performed and put out by. It would therefore be particularly easy to form a termology for spatial relations. [...] Hence, if you do not assume a dependence of Time on Space to be otherwise independently proved, it appears to me that circumstances would nevertheless infallibly drive those two persons to the expression of temporal relations through their analogy with spatial relations. [...] (in Petrelli, 397)

Welby included the idea of “mother-sense” in her conception of time, expressed as follows in a letter to Peirce (20 Nov. 1904): “To the race-relish there and is can be no difference in existential reality between the past and the future any more than between a mile just left behind and a mile just entered upon” (in Petrelli, 399). These lines suffice to illustrate the divergent views on time of Welby and Peirce. However, Welby was not alone in viewing time as being dependent on space. The French contemporary philosopher Henri Bergson, for instance, held a similar view, a view that is related to Welby’s thoughts on expression and was expressed in a letter to G. F. Stout (1903–1905). Now, the issue of time was dealt with before her essay of 1907 in her correspondence, and appended excerpts from it may give some idea of how she turned the discussion. For note here are comments on Welby’s papers by W.R. Sorley (also from 1903–1905) which touch upon themes mixed by the two authors, but the problem of the connection between language, mind and the state of things in the world. Sorley asks:

What is the ground of this assertion that time is a derivative from space? Am I right in saying that the only argument is the philological that time-conception is always expressed in language by spatial metaphors? I have not elsewhere seen so complete a working out of the relation. But the question remains: does the fact that the time-concept is expressed in language in terms of space prove that the thing we call time is prior in experience? May not the spatial expression be due simply to the greater permanence or fixity of space, not to a prior experience in time? (in Petrelli, 404)

Welby, in a letter to Sorley (from 1903–1905), continues by saying “that it change and not time which life space is primordial” (406). And further on: “Again, Prof. [Adams] evidently leans definitively towards my own conclusion that space and time ought never to be coupled as they are, since it seems that space is dependent upon life space but not conversely” (406).

The discussion on time, which is here accounted for, to some extent at least, illustrates Pettenk’s polyphonic to what extent the polyphonic model of Welby’s ideas, namely, by showing (in the form of excerpts and appendices) the context in which they emerged.

In What is Meaning? Welby also introduced the term “translation” by underlining its broad scope; much in line with Roman Jakobson’s (1896–1982) notions of intralingual, interlingual and intersemiotic translations from the essay “On the Transfer of Translations” (1959) which have been further developed by Petrelli elsewhere. In order to elucidate her ideas on translation and analogy, Welby presented an idea of translating a translation of Dr. Hughlings Jackson’s “The Lecture on the Nervous System” (1884) in which physiology is turned into religious language use. She also made an important observation on the transposing religious language into a physiological one. These experiments fit well with Welby’s general idea of translation as an intellectual process. As Petrelli puts it: “Translative thinking may be regarded as a third and semiotic processes at large, in which something stands for something else, which is generated in fact through the translation of signs into other signs, into different types of signs and different sign systems” (528). The latter indicates what Welby coined the “homological method” (along with the ‘analogical methods’), which are those in which the relation between two signs, according to him, is by translation in a broad sense, things that might seem very distant from each other. Welby borrowed the term from the biological sciences. Petrelli again: “Beyond surface resemblance and associations, these homological method searches for profound general, structural, functional and dynamical relationships among the terms of reference in question [...] or how Welby warned against the error of exchanging analogy or surface similarity with homology or genetical-structural similarity” (532).

Welby’s model reminds us of Peirce’s interpretive-cognitive model, containing the idea that the meaning of a sign is further developed by another sign (its interpretant), in a continuous, never ending chain of signs, such that the signs themselves are transformed. Often enough this process implies a multiplying of signs, for instance, the number of words increases along the way. For instance, Peirce’s ideas would be “parallel in growth in significance,” and involves the accumulation of knowledge not only in quantitative terms but also in qualitative and ethical terms. The qualitative aspects in Welby seem to match Peirce’s conception of the final interpretant (something to strive for). Translation is a topic central to other philosophers of language such as Bakhtin and Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889–1951) and Petrelli shows how Welby’s thoughts may be linked to ideas present in these scholars’ work. When it comes to Wittgenstein it is also an issue of relating in things the forward relation between Wittgenstein’s notion of “proposition” and Welby’s “pictorial symbol” and “representative action,” all being “signifying units” (541). Petrelli reads Welby’s theory of translation in the light also of Ferruccio Rossi-Landi’s (1921–1985) work. Notably, the connection between Welby’s concept of “common language” (from What is Meaning?), also expressed in terms of “common sense” or “common meaning” and Rossi-Landi’s concept of “common speech” developed later in the term “social reproduction” (542–3). Petrelli relates “common language” to the notion of “semiotic material” to underdefine the idea that different languages are part of and form a “single human language,” as well as the different historical-natural languages, cultures and signs systems (544–5). “Common meaning” implies a replication of referring to some sense universal, “as a priori community” generating differences and variations through expression.

It seems to me that the “common meaning” used by Welby might be connected to another fundamental term in her work, namely, “mother-sense” or “primarsense”, as her publishers preferred. And it is via Peirce that we may not only explain Welby’s term mother-sense, as a term “bound up” to the term to Pettenk’s notion of “primarsense” (572), but also the connection of the former to “common meaning.” Petrelli produces another question that might be further explored in the light of Peirce’s three categories (discussed above), and thereby in connection with his notions qualisign, sinsign and legisign or the triad of qualisense, molition, and habit.

Welby writes in a paper entitled “Primal Sense and Significus,” dated 15 April 1907.
The connection between Mother-sense and Semiotics may be put like this: Primal Sense is what takes up and supplies to us the material of immediate awareness, conscious and interpretative. It is thus at once primordial and universal, at all stages of human development. [...]. (in Petrilli, 574)

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

Feeling is the momentarily present contents of consciousness taken in its pristine simplicity, and might be called primisense. Altersense is the consciousness of a directly present other second, withstanding us. Malisense is the consciousness of a thirdness, or medium between primisense and altersense, leading from the former to the latter. It is the consciousness of a process of bringing to mind. [...] Altersense has two modes, Sensation and Will. Malisense has three modes, Abstraction, Suggestion, Association. (C.P 2:55 in Petrilli, 577)

One is tempted to connect Welby’s notions of mother-sense and common meaning through Peirce’s definition of altersense, and in doing so, establish a link (at least in some respects) between the former term, in its turn, to this triad of Peirce (as mother-sense gives rise to the “rationalizing Intellect,” also called “father reason,” with which it is in a dialectical relation). Petrilli, on the basis of the correspondence between Welby and Peirce, extends these connections, when writing: “Opening the ethical sphere before and beyond the strictly cognitive, with Peirce scientific rigour in reasoning is connected to ‘motherwit’ and to agapastic logical procedure, with which it is in a dialectical relation). Petrilli, on the basis of her selected writings. At the same time, Signifying and Understanding will greatly assist and inspire those who would like to extend this line of inquiry. Petrilli’s work in the archives is priceless for the research field, not only concerning Signics, but also of semiotics and semantics. However, Petrilli’s outlining of Welby’s “thought system” might have gained from a more rigorous editing, as the reader is from time to time interrupted by the many appended texts within Petrilli’s compelling discussions. These appendices might have been assembled at the end of the chapters, or perhaps at the end of the book.

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References


2010 McLAREN-LAMBERT AWARD


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

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

The McLaren-Lambart Award is an annual honour bestowed by the Society for Animation Studies (S.A.S.) on one of its members, recognizing an outstanding contribution made to animation studies in the previous 2 years. Tracing the origins of this prize to a collaborative award with Canada’s National Film Board, it is named for NFB animators Norman McLaren and Evelyn Lambart.
This review essay is a series of musings inspired by Joel Brier’s latest book, Information Enough: The Cybersemiotic Crisis of Modern Science. This book is an attempt to bridge the gap between traditional cybernetics and semiotics, and it proposes a new paradigm for understanding the nature of information and knowledge. Brier’s approach is based on the idea that information is not just a simple data structure, but rather a complex, multi-layered system that is deeply connected to the physical and biological world.

Brier’s book is divided into twelve chapters, each of which explores a different aspect of the cybersemiotic crisis. The chapters range from the history of cybernetics and semiotics to contemporary developments in information science, and from the philosophical implications of these developments to practical applications in fields such as artificial intelligence and natural language processing.

Brier’s central theme is the idea that information is not just a passive data structure, but rather a dynamic, interactive system that is constantly evolving and adapting. He argues that traditional views of information as a simple, static entity are inadequate, and that a more nuanced understanding of information is necessary in order to make sense of the complex, interconnected systems that we live in.

Brier’s book is a powerful argument for the need to re-conceptualize information, and it is a must-read for anyone interested in the philosophy of information, the history of science, or the future of technology.

...
human experience per se, would be "located" precisely at this included middle-in-between what appears to us as two disparate Cartesian substances of body and mind.

As Deely puts it, "at the heart of semiotics is the realization that the whole of human experience is located at the point of interaction of matter, structure mediated and sustained by signs" (Deely 1990: 5). The levels in the complex semiotic system are not immediately interconnected with each other but mediated by the interpretant of the third category: the great 'interpretant', either human or non-human; and, it is the very mediation or interpretation that enables the emergence of the meaning of information for the interpretor in the form of meaning. As Peirce said, signs are in fact signs only when interpreted. Still, the information is always already here, embedded in its semiosis or its implicit, potential, virtual form. Meaning is "altogether virtual... it is contained in no thing at all, but it is realized in the act of meaning" (ibid., 2010). A thrown-insign is not a thrown-in-thing, only reducible to what in physics would be called particles. They are moments in the flow represented at large by analog (and not solely digitally) and this is the "unfolding" of Peirce's process of signification and defined as discrete "bits" within a certain context only, that is, always holistic as parts of the greatwhole (cf. Rockwell 2007: 123).

Sure enough, we can hardly grasp this deep notion about how we stay in the language of propositions that subcribes to the logic of the excluded middle, to yes or no, or true or false. Etc. A novel language of expression pertaining to, then, a no yet virtual, nuanced model that is "not enough" and with which he engages in shadow-boxing. It is the included third of the interpretation (in any guise) that, by creating a self-referential feedback, expands the boundaries of matter, "filling" it with information that as such acquires meaning.

Signs are the patterns of coordinated, interpretive activity comprising "embodied cognition" (Kelko and Engstrom 2006: 89) analogous to that invoked by Peirce (referring to Lakoff and Johnson). However, in the Peircean (coordinating) signs, dynamics is the interaction (the included third, the interpretant in the Peircean triad) is a priori informational and the dynamical (or sign) systems are "informationally based" (Kelko and Engstrom 2006: 9). Information is what establishes psychophysical unity thereby confirming what Peirce was saying more than a century ago: "The old dualistic notion of mind and matter, so prominent in Cartesianism, as two radically different kinds of substance, will hardly find defenders today" (Peirce CP 6:24, quoted in Brier, 2003).

However, and again in agreement with Peirce, old habits of thought die hard. In the language of the science of coordination dynamics, a genuine Peircean sign is conditioned by a complementary interpretant sign-pair to, in which an interpretant is designated by a symbol of reconciliation, "~", and which serves as a fundamental boundary condition, as a couple of "intersign sign". Coordination dynamics as such offers a "ubiquitous science of life" (Kelko and Engstrom 2006: 76) permeated with "functional information" (ibid., 88). Reconstructing metaphor as functional makes the notion that "information is not enough" misleading.

What is surely not enough is our perception of information as solely quantifiable or measurable. It is meaningful in a pragmatic, Peircean sense as productive of observable effects. Hence, according to Peirce’s pragmatic maxim, whatever is real, true, objective, and a precaution for communication. Language is a functional information: it can change the coordination patterns. Functional information is, in short, the very interaction arising by a "virtue" of the sign "I" (Kelko and Engstrom 2006: 101), to self-organize. A sign is not a sign unless it is interpreted; but so is the fundamental stuff in the universe: human beings living the actually observable, Secondness: universe - "a photon is not a photon unless it is measured [and] counts information" (Ibid., 101; italics in original).

Applying this bit "pair intended" of information in our practical life at the level of action - by using it - makes this information meaningful. But the field of potential meanings was always already implicated at the different level of order, which is virtual in implication. In this sense, it is not that "information is not enough", rather, it is more than enough. The semiotic codicility (cf. Hoffmeier and Enenche 1990) seems to be better explained on, "if the fifth element is a dance of particles folding back on themselves" (Deely 1995: 157): analog (virtual) - digital (measured) - and analog again at the level of human actions (actual).

The reference to Leibniz brings to mind yet another of Brier’s targets: algorithmic cognitive science as a project begun by Leibniz and today continued, with much needed renewal in the Artificial Intelligence (AI). And here lies, I feel, the fundamental yet currently misconception. Leibniz did not present his algorithmic cognitive science as a "bit of information from which emerges all that we can perceive by our senses, at the level of Peircean Secondness. It is a semantic field. As Merrell points out, semiotics artifacts a traditional theory of meaning as "about meaning engendered when signs are in their act of becoming signs, a becoming that includes sign interpreters as participating agents in the very semiotic process of becoming" (Merrell 1995: xii).

As Landau comments, this invaluable field named "Embodied Cognition" (EC) or virtual particles – a zero-point field also called the quantum vacuum - is everywhere while the observable visible world just floats on its surface. Violence or nothingness does not make the difference. According to Merrell (1995), the three Peircean onto/ontological categories of Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness, require the existence of a universe that is non-ecological, holding them together, the as yet undifferentiated "field within which semiosis plays out its drama" (Merrell 1995: 217), acknowledged by Peirce as pre-Finiteness or nothingness. Still, it is this apparent nothingness as a virtual potential informational "field [that] produces effects, and these can be perceived" (Landau, 2004/2007: 17), "fits" into Peirce's pragmatic sense as a part of the observable, sensible, world in which we live.

Brier asserts that "...information... becomes the organizational aspect of nature" (2004), but notes that with regard to information "a fullledged metaphysics" is undeveloped. Landau (2004/2007) refers to the expression "nothing" which "is a subtle connection between the two different locations in space and events in different points in time. Such connections are... 'nonlocal' in the natural science and 'transpersonal' in consciousness research" (Ibid., 60).

Physicist David Bohm emphasized that in holonotion there is no direct causal connection except for the relation being interwoven into a whole by means of the interacting network of which. Semiosis as such is this interconnected nature between that the Peircean sign full of implicit information that continuously change their mode of expression in fluctuating between polar opposites. Thereby, among bipolar complementary pairs there should also be a relation described as novelty confirmation. The structural coupling of 'matter-energy describing the physical world is necessarily grounded in the logic of the included middle representation and in the concepts of potential realty as the computation proceeds.

In the universe per se with signs it information and computation are everywhere: it is all there in The information is potentially active everywhere, yet "it is actually active, only where and when it can form to the..." (Bohm and Hiley 1993: 36). The complex semiotic universe must express itself in a dual mode of matter and energy. Løbø points out that "most information is infinite in its potential, and it takes a finite amount of information (to compactify it, in a way, that is, to make it relatively visible at the level of physical observable world. The basic material elements such as "Earth, air, fire, and water," which are the four so-called different forms they are taken are determined by information. To do anything requires energy. To specify what is done requires information. Energy and information are by nature different that information in the form of potential, keeping in mind that the flow of semiosis is unlimited with the Peircean triadic sign, Nofs. (1995/90) presents a synopsis of a triadic sign tracing in definitions and disparate terminology from Plato, to Storge, to Ficte, to Peirce, to Ogden and Richards and notices that in order to construct a semiotic triangle connecting, in the
generic terms, signifier, sense, and referent, the path of mediation, represented by a dotted line between a signifier and a referent, must be present. The coordinating relation (akin to the dotted line) is ubiquitous. Kelso and Engstrom, however, point to another kind of coordination, like physical laws in general, are matter-independent, they are function- and context-dependent; they govern (hence make relatively predictable) the "flow of functional information" within a system (in its original. It is the coordination that produces meaning (or "sense" in North’s triad). This means that, Neo-Platonic, ‘equation’ of any system does not lie itself relatively to the framework of science of coordination dynamics; it is expressed in the form of another complementary pair, unity-diversity. Kauffman (2010) gives an example that unites one of the complementary pairs, which appears to be a paradoxological structure if not for understanding that it is the perspective of an observer and context that produce a paradox.

This also means that our very sentence is an emergent property and not rule-based, that is, it cannot be founded on merely propositional thought and logocentrism. Perhaps this is what Brier is getting at when he argues against algorithmic computation. The attention to different regimes of signs becomes imperative and Leibniz’s unfinished project must be completed. Kelso and Engstrom indicate the noetic-organic origins of intentional action. The project begun by Leibniz reflects the interaction of knowledge representation. In analytic philosophy the representational system presupposes a class of things represented which are not representations themselves, hence ‘outside’ language and consciousness to any degree. On account of this, poetic or personal, metaphorical language, which “represents” symbolically or indirectly via mediation, cannot be ‘objective’ in describing reality. But the reality is habitually taken as the empirically observable physical reality reduced as such to empirical observable physical reality reduced as such to empirical observable physical reality reduced as such to the level of Peircean Secondness ignoring the fact that: the Universe as an argument is necessarily a great work of art, a great poet - for every fine argument is a poem and symphony - just as every true poem is a sound argument. But let us compare it rather with a painting - with an impressionistic seashore piece - then such quality is a quality in a Premiss or one of the elementary coloured particles of the Painting...The total effect is beyond our ken: but we can appreciate in some measure the resultant Quality of parts of the whole (Peirce, CP 5. 119 quoted in Brier, 384).

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

To conclude, I would like to refer to the project of transdisciplinarity addresses by Basarab whose book Manifesto of Transdisciplinarity was published in 2006. The project of Nicoscu’s Center for Transdisciplinary Research should become a valuable complement to any research project in semiotics. Nicoscu advocates overcoming the split between sciences and humanities and contends that the term ‘transdisciplinarity’ was initially coined by Jean Piaget in 1970 to indicate something across and between the disciplinary divides. Transdisciplinary knowledge belongs to what Nicoscu specifies as in vivo knowledge that exceeds scientific knowledge of the external world as independent from the subject. Bound to the internal world of human subjectivity, it necessarily includes a system of values and meanings excluding objective facts alone. Yet, transdisciplinary knowledge does not reject science; what it rejects is scientism. Below is a Table 1 addressing disciplinary and transdisciplinary in vivo knowledge:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KNOWLEDGE (Disciplinary)</th>
<th>KNOWLEDGE (Transdisciplinary)</th>
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<tr>
<td>IN VIVO</td>
<td>IN VIVO</td>
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<tr>
<td>Limited to the objective knowledge of external world (cf. spectator theory of knowledge)</td>
<td>Correspondence, analogy, conversation, sympathy as a relation between the external world of objects and the internal world of subjects</td>
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<tr>
<td>Static knowledge of facts</td>
<td>Dynamic understanding of meanings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Analytic conceptual thought - separation between mind and body, mind observing the world, disembodied cognition.</td>
<td>Synthetic holistic intelligence – harmony or correspondence between mind and body, mind participating in the world; embodied cognition.</td>
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<tr>
<td>oriented towards power, possession and separation from, and control over the 'other'</td>
<td>oriented towards sharing, cooperating with, and integrating the 'other'</td>
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<td>logic of the excluded middle /dualistic philosophy</td>
<td>logic of the included middle /non-dualistic philosophy as SEMIOTICS</td>
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<td>exclusion of values</td>
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Table 1. Disciplinary and transdisciplinary knowledge. Adapted and considerably developed in this context from this paper from Nicoscu at https://www.metanexus.net/conference2005/pdf/nicoscu.pdf (accessed 15 November, 2010).

Disciplinary and transdisciplinary knowledge stay in a complementary relation to each other. Disciplinary, in vivo, knowledge is based on the classical logic of the excluded middle that induces a separation between subject and object and reduces the meaning of knowledge to knowing merely the facts of the external world. The new transdisciplinary or in vivo knowledge is founded on the logic of the included middle so that subject and object correspond to each other. They are in a triadic contra dualistic relation; they are in correspondence (Nico Varela designated such a correspondence as a correspondence between a complex, autopoietic, that is, self-referential, system structured, sure enough, as a network of signs; Brier indeed acknowledges the importance of Varela’s contribution to his cybersemiotics; see Index on p. 476). Transdisciplinary knowledge is based on the logic where terms form a bipolar many-to-many pair versus being binary opposites. In vivo knowledge is not a static knowledge of the facts per se but a dynamic understanding of meanings that by necessity brings in the dimension of values which is traditionally (in vivo) considered ‘subjective’, that is, located outside ‘normal’ science. Epistemology and ethics alike transcend the confines of an individual ego or Cartesian Cogito and cannot be separated from the collective, social, domain: the individual society, too, is a complementary pair in which the terms of the triadic relation sustain each other by the reconciling symbol “,” in the literal issue of the journal Transdisciplinarity in Science and Religion, Nicoscu (2009: 2497) points out that “a new system of values can appear orally through the dialogue between different domains of knowledge, between different cultures and different religious systems. This system does not yet exist”.

I think that this ethical dimension should now become the core of semiotic research so in establishing what North has recently called ‘intercultural competence’ (2010: 99) and which is an urgent matter in our present content that does display diverse “signs of the times” (Semenyka 2010b) amidst cultural conflicts and the clash of values at the global level. The language of signs that can ‘speak’ in characters denoting meanings and values – shared meanings and values - needs to be understood.

Inna Semenyka is a researcher in education and the arts at the University of Newcastle, Australia. Her Web site <http://www.innasaemoney.org> contains a wealth of material about her recent activities.

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— (2010b) “Interpreting the signs of the times beyond Jürgen,” Social Semiotics 20 issue 2, pp. 103-120.


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

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

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

The fact that WikiLeaks is so readily reducible to the figure of non-editor-in-chief Julian Assange is one of the reasons why as an organization it is vulnerable. Certainly, Assange has made some deals with blue chip mainstream news corporations and has a group of hackers - Anonymous - to defend his interests and countersignature (via what they call a LOIC - Low Orbit Ion Cannon type of DDoS attack under the rubric of ‘Operation Payback’) against the financial sector service players like MasterCard, VISA, and PayPal that have closed its accounts (and the blocking of the site for Library of Congress staff). WikiLeaks’s countersassay that credit card companies like more stable revenue streams from porn and gambling is acute. Still, this is not sabotage, and an understandable response because use of the LOIC is traceable and, as has been recently shown, not ‘anonymous’ for hacktivists at all (Peau et al. 2010). Either this is a bad mistake and everybody downloading LOIC should have been warned or WikiLeaks really believes in transparency at any cost.

Where Assange is personally threatened, his only recourse is to up the ante by more and more spectacular disclosures. His behaviour becomes less complex and more fragmented. He doesn’t deepen our understanding of what he is doing and why. Rather, he plunges everyone into a politics in which he becomes a case, legally, and psychopolitically, and this is what comes to dominate and drive the story, while the material awaits constructive narratives and actionability.

On the other side of the menu, there are the state agencies which lament their loss of control over secure information, and their right to privatize it, feeding the growing creature of the security industry. Then the security intellectuals enter the fray. Some, like University of Calgary’s Tom Flanagan (Wilton, Suzanne (2010) “Prof may face charge for assassination/3938210/story.html (December 7).

The future of WikiLeaks is not revealed in the content; we know that diplomats are paid to lie and that the military get paid for shooting civilians. But in the activation of solidarity, complexity and collaboration between independent part-timers, between cognitive workers of various kinds: hardware technicians, programmers, journalists who work together and share the same goal of destabilising totalitarian power. From this lesson, the rebels find their way to self-organization of the general intellect.

Recourse to a revised Marxist concept of “general intellect” underlines how general human semiosis is mobilized by a self-organizing cognitariat, otherwise exploited within the extensive electronic networks of post-Fordist production, in defence of WikiLeaks. The traits of these semiotic modalities are heterogeneous and scattered across the cybersphere, yet seem to lack a corporeal body. The offline bodies of the hackers working further the WikiLeaks adventure have not yet appeared in this drama. For Bifo, diverse elements of the cognitariat are self-organizing and assembling a general intellect that doesn’t require, at least in its preliminary phases, an identifiable body, but rather coalesces semiotically around a common political project against state secrecy and for the catch and release of hitherto sensed knowledge. Against security - that is the timely call to the cognitariat to destabilize the master narrative of our time (Neoclesiu 2008), the critique of which exposes the kinds of subjectivities it produces and the violence it exercises.

The Future of Wikileaks
By Gary Genosko

Wardending Deep Packet Inspection tools sanctioned under US Cybersecurity Act of 2009, see Project Censored 2010) to get in on the game to which they have been summoned as newly minted entrepreneurs. Academics, too, can play at and with secrecy, despite the openness of the profession and protocols around the presentation of research results. These, too, are changing.


The lesson of WikiLeaks is not revealed in the content; we know that diplomats are paid to lie and that the military get paid for shooting civilians. But in the activation of solidarity, complexity and collaboration between independent part-timers, between cognitive workers of various kinds: hardware technicians, programmers, journalists who work together and share the same goal of destabilising totalitarian power. From this lesson, the rebels find their way to self-organization of the general intellect.

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