

## Editorial Issue 15

By Geoffrey Sykes

It is a pleasure to introduce Issue 15 of the journal. Contributions include two developed and well argued pieces by two long standing supporters of the journal - Susan Petrilli and Nicoleta Popa Blanariu. It is good to have papers reflecting professional commitments, in education by Haroula Hatzimihail and Ioannis Pantelidis, in cognitive science by Marcus Oliveira and Rosana Pinto, and in visual design by Jacqueline Hill. Oliveira and Pinto, along with Adewale Adelakun and Olusegun Oladosu, and Amalia Nurma Dewi, help fulfil a geographic spread (Brazil, Nigeria and Indonesia respectively) in line with original goals of the publication. A number of papers from African authors have been gladly included in recent issues. Finally, but by no means least, Bent Sørensen and Torkild Thellefsen demonstrate excellence coming from independent scholarship, a practice that cannot be underestimated in semiotic studies that are far from established in mainstream tertiary institutions.

The title of the first paper by Jacqueline Hill, “The Metaphysical Quality that gives a Visual Identity Mark its Sway” invites a thematic trope that can provide a distinct perspective of this Issue as a whole. Hill argues persuasively that signs, including those of corporate advertising, continue a mediated encounter of humans with nature. The author puts paid to some common varieties of postmodernism, in attesting to enduring links between modern and early human cultures. Contemporary advertisers and artists do not merely appropriate icons from the past - they are inevitably influenced by cultural forms that are immersed in ritual and memory to deep knowledge and feelings for nature. Modern play of signs remains continues to provide a window, albeit indirect, to a real world or what Hill terms, “a metaphysical quality.”

Semiotics can be well if not best understood as a theory of metaphysics. Metaphysics, as the study of nature and origins of reality and in particular the natural world, has many traditions

and competing theories. Peirce consciously broke ranks with major traditions of British empiricism and European idealism, in particular the Platonism that informed his father's mathematics.

Metaphysics can be often identified with "meta" physical or transcendental approaches, often spiritual, studying dimensions beyond the observable or real world, yet potentially influencing experiences in the everyday world. Platonism was metaphysical in this sense. It was not the case that Peirce disavowed reality beyond immediate or everyday perception. It was just that in the light of advances on physics and sciences at his time, he sought an epistemology about phenomena that were imperceptible but real, and potentially visible. Such phenomena, in cosmology and astronomy, chemistry, climate studies, medicine, geography and surveying, were known indirectly, through their effects.

Peirce's pragmatism was not only logical; this logic was grounded in discovery of knowledge about the world. Natural phenomenon were known indirectly, by their effects on other bodies. Peirce's immersion in experimental empirical science was triggered from his early assignment to the Harvard University. His intrigue in the complexity of cosmology - of a universe that outstripped so many prior presumptions of stable and finite design - predated the century and a half of inquiry with advanced optical and radio telescopes, and mathematical calculation, that was to followed. Peirce was intrigued with the example of a moon of a distant planet that could not be seen directly but detected by indirect effects on other rotating moons. The moon (in its phases) itself is an index of the earth's globe, which cannot be seen as a whole or generally by everyday observation. By way of simple example, the wind might not be seen but made visible through effects on other objects or a wind vane. Weather can be "forecast" while unseen, using a suite of instruments. Socially, an unseen guest is detected by means of a door knock. In all example the object is absent to immediate perception, but detected through effect on another object, which became what Peirce terms an index of the primary object. He termed his own approach to metaphysical reality as 'pragmatic', and identified the effects of unseen or absent subjects as indexes or signs of the reality they indicated or pointed to, or were caused by. That which was previously unseen and secret was now potentially seen, and what was clear was not less obvious. One can call Peirce's approach to traditional metaphysics a "new metaphysics".

Peirce's semiotic or pragmatic metaphysics was affiliated and a form of the philosophy of perception and lived experience, phenomenology, or what he terms phaneroscopy. However the world, as demonstrated in science, was known as a paradox of presence and absence, of perception and imperceptibility. The empirical traditions was 'radicalised' and made complex: the idealist tradition was made real and material.

The distinction between science and culture was blurred in indigenous or early human culture. What was a graphic tool or painting for travel or governance was also a sacred and aesthetic object. In perceptual terms the indexical function was anything but simple or merely functional. It was, as Jacqueline Hill well points out in her paper, a response to what was "semi tangible" about reality. Hill stresses the numinous nature of reality, according to the work of Rudolf Otto, in the face of which the graphic indexical sign becomes a means to know what cannot be known directly or tangibly. It is inevitable and necessary for finite humans, faced with vastness of landscapes, or the sun and moon, even the apparent and actual infinity of the cosmos and earth, to identify and represent through "graphic symbols". Such graphic images are grounded in individual perception, but soon become collective in use. So long as they are grounded as responses to natural phenomena, they are 'element and natural' in their nature. Images can be rapidly divorced from elementary nature, and formalised to enable power and commerce, to become what the author calls VIM or cultural symbol.

The well known first conceptualisation of Peirce's triadic categories can mislead in its simplicity, when the potential of the index, both for scientific and non scientific inquiry, is explored. The index does a lot more than direct attention or indicate features of a distant, individual object. Throughout his life Peirce was concerned with any nominalist direction in his thought. Increasingly the object of indexical reference was regarded as complex in its own right: by his second formulation of semiotic categories the object/index relationship was fully understand in terms of a sophisticated transformed notion of the icon. The object was no longer a disparate, separate thing but a complex pattern of relations in its own right, whose knowing by an interpretant human subject required advanced graphic and language tools. Peirce revolutionised notions of graphic communication, taking interest in the copy, resemblance, abstraction and the imaginary. The logic of reasoning was facilitated by

graphic tools, to include abduction, hypothesising, imagining and, in verbal and non verbal expression, metaphors.

Bent Sørensen, Torkild Thellefsen, and Amalia Nurma Dewi, contribute an accomplished and impressive study of metaphors by Peirce, in “Revisiting the Theory-Constitutive Metaphor”. They also address the blurring of scientific and non scientific fields that occurs in his interdisciplinary auto-didacticism. In particular, they specifically address the role of metaphors in scientific inquiry.

Following on from the work of Richard Boyd, and what he termed the Theory Constitutive Metaphor (TCM), the authors identify and elaborate diverse functions of metaphoric expression explaining ‘significant features of the world’ as well as ‘development and articulation of theories’ as part of research and education. That is, metaphors become a ‘garment’ of complex reality - in phenomenological terms (which the authors do not pursue), they “bracket” aspects or parts of manifold reality. The indexical function depicts and points to a dynamic, relational non literal, external reality. The study of signs is part of revised ontology - it is not merely a question of how scientific reasoning occurs, but of truth and knowledge.

Further, the authors explain, as a main part of their argument, there are many functions metaphors can play in facilitating what Peirce saw in a third category, as scientific community based inquiry. The possible limitation of metaphors, in terms of catachrestic vagueness, in depicting reality, can provide open endedness which becomes an asset in communication and theorisation in further inquiry. Metaphors play a role in Peirce’s revision of traditional logic - they are well explained as part of hypothesis building or abduction.

We can add that Peirce apparently coined the term abduction, as part of the decades long stood of the logic of science. “[A]bduction is the process of forming explanatory hypotheses. It is the only logical operation which introduces any new idea” (CP 5.172); it encompasses “all the operations by which theories and conceptions are engendered”, and was part

of discovery or beginning of inquiry; it generates theory, and is different to induction and deduction which are used to assess theories. The authors amply explain how metaphors function as part of abduction, while all the time referencing an observable or potentially observable state in the world.

This paper can be seen to reference Peirce's idea of a scientific community of inquiry - metaphors facilitate assessment of theory and role making through the values, contributions and transparency of interlocutory discourse. Generally speaking, there is no doubt that Peirce's references, in thirdness, to a community of inquiry, gleans values of liberal, educated New England society at the time, and provide an important hint and link to a theory of society in addition to Peirce's science theory. Peirce was by no means a social thinker, and there remain difficulties, often underestimated, in coopting his concepts in a generalised social semiotics. However, at some key times, his presumed social values become evident. From 1867, in the (pertinently named) Metaphysical Club, he opposed a sense of burgeoning nationalism in America after the civil war. The Club was ironically called Metaphysical because of a desire for more analytic answers to traditional philosophical approaches. For that reason Darwin became flavour of the month for the group. Despite his intrigue with biological Darwinism, Peirce vigorously opposed utilitarian validation of social progress and improvement which social Darwinism, had been commenced by club members including Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. Chauncey Wright, Nicholas St. John Green, and William James, in addition to Peirce. He equally opposed adaptation of his own coined term, 'pragmatism', into a social philosophy by James, and renamed his key term to awkward pragmaticism so that would not be easily coopted

Ironically, Peirce would have been comfortable in the milieu of the club and small meeting, of like minded individuals, assembled in a domestic residence in back streets away from Harvard campus. New knowledge, such as sociology, psychology, Darwinism, or scientific topics, were often articulated in private forums years before their organisation on campuses on a faculty basis. Peirce's work had a lot in common with Habermas' liberal sense of civil society. In terms of the heritage of the New England middle class, Peirce was a conservative. Those values has justified and endured through the slavery and civil war - he saw no need to reformat social ideology as a result of the war.

Thus metaphors operate in object/index, first/seconds relations, but also set up discourse for thirdness in which new rules of phenomena are explored. The community of inquiry so preferred by Peirce seems to embody New England liberal social mores, and a picture of collaborative civil society, in which small group discourse, individual manners and inquiry maintained harmony and prosperity. This was the social theory that Peirce assumed, and if reflected in his scientific and semiotic thinking. His phenomenological metaphysics is not a complete account: truth or ontology is mediated non-subjectively through a sociality of shared collaboration.

“Semiotic and Rhetorical Patterns in Dance and Gestural Languages” by Nicoleta Popa Blanaria, can be seen in terms of Peirce’s epistemology. It involves an inquiry about perception and how knowledge is reality is obtained, and transfers well into artistic and cultural domains. The collaborative and ensemble nature of dance is stressed by the author. Dance is a distinct social practice, that for the author is well approached and understood through a semiotic gaze.

For some years Blanariu has specialised in dance as a semiotic domain, where the moving body has meaning potential and is more than an abstract shape. Influenced by Greimas, she locates structural features in classical dance, without assuming an equivalence of how non-verbal and verbal forms are received. The non-verbal, embodied phenomena of dance is oblique and indirect compared forms of perception and analysis available to written texts. It is a “disarticulation” of written texts, in part because the body is “at the crossroads” between biology and culture. There are physical dimensions to dance (labor, energy, contact) that are phatic and outside a language parameter; dance is also moved, the moment or individual pose constantly being displaced by the next. Blanaria acknowledges this complexity, while also elegantly depicting the occurrences of structures. She uses dance to embody structuralist method, and displace it from the mentalist paradigm with which it is commonly associated.

To talk about Susan Petrilli’s paper, “Identity Today and the Critical Task of Semioethics”, in a social metaphysic (and ethic) might seem to be metaphoric application of philosophy

and science, and it is true Peirce did not elaborate on the full sociological implication of his nascent concepts. Gilles Deleuze, with his rhizome contemplations, takes up the comparison, that social structures can be similar to the complex imperceptible forms of nature. Petrilli is intent on extending interpersonal and communication patterns to a global scale.

Her paper is grand in content and planning, and replete with core semiotic concepts and authors, through which she presents a formidable argument for a social reality that resembles Peirce's approach to metaphysics. Petrilli's vision is of micro sociology generalised as a macro norm. For one thing, individuals, freed from constraints of tribal, national and territorial boundaries, have unlimited opportunity to transform their identity in broad demography that, being unlimited in geography, is named as global. Petrilli's use of the term global should not be confused with its corporate or colonial sense - it is used indeed to subvert or subvert those more conventional uses.

The paper is theoretical and lacks many case studies, however its ideas fit well in a world of mass travel, back packing, digital telecommunication and migration (she has indeed published well on the latter subject). Interpersonal values, anchored in part in the author's studies of the correspondence of Webby and Peirce, are injected into the world at large, offering a basis for ethics applied beyond a stable, more limited view of the self. Petrilli has a vision of a transformed, communicative world that is bold enough to embrace political economy. There is an opportunity for the author to merge her semiotic approach with the network theory of an author like Everett Rogers. The individual is not fully real or simply seen to direct perception. An individual belongs with associations, contexts, groups and friendships that shape or change identity depending on circumstances. These associations are largely imperceptible at any one event or meeting, and further research, perception and time are required to more fully know the identity of another person. These associations (six degrees of separation) can extend indirectly person to person and in this way, become potentially global. International contacts have become so common in the contemporary age, and are further expanded when friend-of-friend-of-friends (who-knows-who) are factored in.

After finishing Petrilli's tome, one can retain questions whether the author has moved on from territorialisation too quickly, and does the "globe" need a vision of re-territorialised

geo politics that provides governance, equity and justice better suits to the current times? From its first epoch humanity has always divided and marked out territories, and not necessarily competitive and long before colonial expansion and conquest.

Notes about Peirce's social thinking can provide a nice segue into another paper in this issue, and that is 'Jules Verne 'Around the World in 80 Days': Multilingualism, Multiculturalism and Symbols' by Haroula Hatzimihail and Ioannis Pantelidis. The paper is an admirable account of an exhaustive research program, undertaken over eight months to a year 8 Junior High School class. The program has the aim of exploring forms of multi cultural and multi linguistic learning facilitated by study of a modern classic literary work. The book is pioneering as the kind of travelogue commentary, often first person and fictional, which has proliferated in the contemporary age of international cruises, organised tours, blog, travel journalism and video documentaries. The modern traveller can well identify with the foregrounding of the traveller/narrator, and their organisation and time management, exemplified in Phileas Fogg and his male attendant Jean Passepartout.

If the author inquired whether the book could be a stimulus for teenage learning they certainly had an affirmative answer - arguably too much so. Any attempt to probe different cultures in depth in the 80 day global voyage is subtended to a serial through line of random encounters and brief glimpses of location and locals. As a result Hatzimihail and Pantelidis produce less organised cultural analysis than a catalogue of disparate elements and places that reads like an erudite tour destination guide in a cruise brochure. This is of course not a bad thing, and quite in the spirit of Verne's book when the main coherence is the sensibility of its main character, and his diverse communicative exchanges with Jean and innumerable passerby's. Rather than the grandeur of foreign places, there is the nomadic/sporadic sense of individuals coexisting and communicative in small intimate events with goodwill and humor. The globe as a whole is condensed to the experiences of a few peripatetic and not so peripatetic individuals. Culture might provide habitualised identifiers of locality, but the main dialogue is between individuals of goodwill, wherever they are, that transcends culture.



The book becomes a digest from which modern students can select and make their own encounter. Metonymic random insignia, occurrences and persons that point to the manifold complexity of the worlds' peoples and cultures. Figuratively, it could be possible to argue for a "social metaphysic" at play - that the stuff of social world can only be studied and understood in selected, indexical aspects of the whole. The whole is best understood in radiating distributive networks, of localised groupings. The macro social world, and its grand culture and nations, exist in a kind of vague unknown. Society is absent, known only in sporadic occurrences of transitory individuals.

Peirce's contemporary approach to science, and the semiotic theory that followed, was invested with notion of uncertainty, chance, imperceptibility and interpretation. Philosophically both departed from understanding of observed reality in terms of conformity to universal often god given rules. In terms of its social implications, and its realist nature, Peirce's semiotics can be substantially distinguished from European structuralist and semiological theories that soon followed his from the early twentieth century, theories that seemed to follow on from traditions of philosophical idealism. Signs structures and patterns would embody the meta significance previously attribute the generalised knowledge. General rules of society could be studied (in the form of sign structures), in much the same way that universal rules determined actual occurrences in the natural world.

"On the Relation between Memory and Language from a Cultural-historical Perspective in Neurolinguistics" by Marcus Vinicius Borges Oliveira and Rosana do Carmo Novaes Pinto, is an intriguing argument about the relationship of neurology and semiotics. First, the authors conceive of semiotic patterns as distributed networked associations, where meaning and structure are situated at a higher level on essentially complex relationships. Meaning and memory is not found in one part but in relationships, both in the brain and in semiotic concepts. Thus the brain functions can be conceived akin to a semiotic reality, where meaning is always indirect and oblique.

Oliveira and Pinto further argue that this similarity provides a useful conceptual framework to discuss a more perplexed subjects of brain-mind, mind-body, mind-experience relationships. Semiotics is a bridging or interdisciplinary tool for discourse and inquiry into - it

does not necessarily explain phenomena but can go some way to providing insights into interactions even origins of mind/brain/perception/experience - in that perception of external natural form can stimulate neurological development, and social association and habit can also correspond to features in the brain. The brain also offers a platform to understand the nature of networking that is at the heart of semiotics generally.

The notion of a 'new metaphysic' can thus be extended a full gamut, from natural to social to neurological phenomena. In all spheres reality is displaced and imperceptible from immediate perception, and discovered in wider association and relationships.

'The National Anthem as a Symbol of Religiosity in Nigeria' by Adele Adelokun and Olusegun Oladosu, is a sound and authentic account on African religion and public life, in particular in the nation state of Nigeria. It comes from a perspective quite different than the Peircean infused analysis of previous three papers. Adelokun and Oladosu are unapologetic and forthright in their argument that uses semiological premises, about the collective determining function of social symbols, evidences verbally in the words of the national anthem, but also u the flag, insignia, monuments, emblems and public events. The integration of religion and public/political life in post-Independence Nigeria are evidence in a plethora of constructed meanings, such there seems no need to do ethnography with demonstrate the same points. The crucial public role of religion is central for the authors, and certainly this is evidenced even if more explanation of the actual operations and localised beliefs could further assist. The main example of actual occurrences - prayer meetings held across social contexts, including the military, begins to flesh out or ground argument that is conceived in generalised terms. The authors conclude with the example of how, forms of Pentecostal religion are uniting the integration of public religion, and leading the social fragmentation, consumerism and individualism. The gradual change to the status quo reminds them how specially constructed the traditional function of religion in society has been.

Papers in this issue can held demonstrate crucial differences between Peircean and non Peircean semiotic traditions. The latter seem to lack metaphysical features that seem crucial features in Peirce. Peirce does offer enough explanation of the interplay of collective sym-

bols, society, power and cultural hegemony. It could be possible to seek a composite or expanded theory that include the best features of both traditions. This could involve study of a society or world well or wholly grounded or indexed on “natural” or elemental representation (to use terms of Jacqueline Hill) of the wider material world, as well as one with the interpersonal breath and complexity that authors like Petrilli, and Hatzimihail and Pantelidis, seek, along with geo-political structural features (alluded to by Adelakun and Oladosu). This may, or may not be, something of a challenge.