

Editorial Issue 14

The papers in this issue can be conveniently regarded as exemplifying the three categories of Peirce's mature semiotics, and ordered accordingly. The first two papers, "Lermontov's the Dream, Chekhov's Dreams: at the Brink of Life and Death" by Fatima Festic, and "Literary Genre: 'Diary of anorexia' in aspects of art semiotics and practic thanatology" by Elena A. Semenova, can be seen to share themes of dreams, fantasy, transference and imagination, all typifying Peirce's development of iconicity with the category of Firsts., and more broadly the field of phenomenology or Phaneroscopy as he termed it.

"Operation Fortitude: Signs of the Greatest Deception" by Paul Ryder explores a field of indexicality (Peirce's Seconds) operating in the theatre of war at most intense scale, where social and scientific interpretation coincide with epic historical consequences. The paper explores semiosis that occurs very close to the signifying object, at a level where interpretation is not customarily sought. The notion of literal perception is confounded by virtual or estranged signifiers deployed by the Allies at the time of the Battle of Normandy, in order to mislead planning by the Germans to counter the impending invasions of Europe from Britain. Direct (indexical, Seconds) observation, the first stage of complex organisational planning (Thirds) is confounded by false leads, messages and ground armies.

The paper explores a fusion of engineering, weather, geography, logic and and social organisation - all subjects that would interest Peirce. In particular he worked for years in the US Coastal and Geodetic Survey. We are reminded that Peirce's semiotic began as a commentary on physical sciences and mathematics, and the transfer of key concept to social examples was often analogical and secondary. This paper is concerned, like Peirce generally, with various form of reasoning - formal, hypothetical and pragmatic. Any scientist knows the pitfalls of hasty or simplified use of observation and data. All hypotheses about explanation of data occurring in a "community of inquiry" must seek out alternative explanations of information and observation. It is not so much that nature intentionally tricks or misleads (as the British did in the invasion), but that we the receivers like the Germans in Operation Fortitude can readily underestimate the capacity for direct perception to confound our initial or habitual understanding.

“Yorùbá Linguistic Identity of Jénífà in Fúnkẹ Akíndélé’s Jénífà’s Diary,” by Tèmitópẹ Olúmúyìwá, Aládésanmí Ọmọbọlá Agnes and Olórò Táyé Ọláńrewájú is a nuanced, informed and researched inquiry to the linguistic determination social identity, and can be seem to parallel Peirce’s understanding of dialogic signs in Thirds. Likewise “A Socio-semiotic Analysis of qat Culture in Yemen” by Nabil Mohammed Nasser Salem, shows how simple chewing material can act as a social signifier and become imbued with layers of individual and group meanings, and act as flexible marker in cultural events. Both papers demonstrate an argument for semi-linguistic determination in the essential shaping social identity. The role of verbal and non verbal signs in constructing dynamic social identity, along the lines of Peirce’s interests in the role of Thirds in social inquiry, is clearly demonstrated.

The search for synchrony of life and language in “Mourning the Bards: Interrogating the Contemporaneity of John Milton’s Lycidas and Pius Adebola Adesanmi”, by Clement Olujide Ajidahun is involves methods not fully addressed by Peirce and more in line with semiological focus on patterns or connotation. It is intriguing to see this possible approach as a supplementary of fourth category to Peircean orthodoxy.

On the other hand, Peirce maintained an extra-curricular interest in visual and performing arts (there were frequent play readings and informal performances hosted by Charles and his French wife Juliette at Arisbe. There are examples from the arts in his writings, although generally they did not impinge on the scientific nature of his main professional pursuit.

It is possible then to see in two fields of semiotic or logic study, present in implicit and explicit ways, in Peirce, illustrated in papers in this issue. These are the scientific/mathematical and the literary/artistic. The scientific is tangentially represented, in Ryder’s paper, in a small window or glimpse to a very substantial and contemporary inquiry into natural and physical sciences, and more analytic approach to social sciences. It is good to keep semiotics open to non social fields, as Peirce certainly did. This is not to say semiotics can compete with hard edged scientific inquiry - however it can provide concepts and frames to approach questions of epistemology across scientific disciplines, and contribute fo public and educational discourse. .

As well as the codes of science, humans respond to reality through the patterns or codes of narration. Papers by Festic and Semenova show the imaginary narratives formed by a polysemic pattern of signifying elements, in which quotidian perception is disrupted. Perception of the body is

filtered through lens of a a powerful social and personal narrative. Memory and hopes are amplified and distilled through dreams and fantasy.

Clement Olujide Ajidahun exemplifies a long tradition of semiotic, and in particularly semiological/ structural, approaches to literature, while Nabil Mohammed Nasser Salem demonstrates how simple objects assume the imaginary status of cultural signifiers, offering a gamut of signification and social functions, and hence facilitate and participate in host of social narratives.

This issue is not at all specialised in its focus on Peirce, and the papers individually and collectively make little direct reference to that source. Nevertheless, it remains an intriguing exercise, by way of editorial introduction, to seek a coherence through the categories and beyond. The papers themselves are developed and distinct in their respective subjects and methods, and typically and often with strong research and writing attributes.