

CHAPTER II

Symbols in Charles Sander Peirce Perspective

A. Biography Peirce

Born in 1839 in Cambridge, Massachusetts, Charles Sander Peirce was the second and favorite son of Benjamin Peirce, who was a professor of mathematics and astronomy at Harvard University and was superintendent of the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey. Along with Abraham Lincoln in 1863, Benjamin Peirce founded the National Academy of Science¹.

Charles graduated with high honors in 1854 from Cambridge High School, where one of his favorite pastimes was the debating society, a source of his reputation as an engaging conversationalist and dynamic lecturer. He then graduated from Harvard with a B.A. in 1859 and an M.A. in 1862. In 1863, he graduated *summa cum laude* with a B.S. in chemistry from the Lawrence Scientific School at Harvard. He had an erratic and confrontational personality, largely preventing him from permanent employment in the academic world².

He was a part-time lecturer in logic at Johns Hopkins University from 1879 to 1884. Despite the persistent efforts of

¹ Encyclopedia of Communication and Information Edited by Jorge Reina Schement, vol.2 p. 706

² *Ibid*

William James, he never obtained a position at Harvard. His more periodic employment with the Coast Survey, and later with the U.S Assay Commission, fared no better. He suffered seven mental breakdowns between 1876 and 1911 due to condition now known as trigeminal neuralgia, associated with manic depression³.

With a small inheritance, he purchased a retirement home at Milford, Pennsylvania, and lived in extreme poverty. During the years between 1903 and 1908, he corresponded on logic and semiotics with Victoria Lady Welby in England. Peirce died of cancer on April 19, 1914⁴.

Peirce comes closest to being America's only systematic philosopher, writing widely and in detail. His principal philosophic system draws from medieval learning focused on the semiotic trivium of grammar, logic, and rhetoric- the building blocks of modern communication theory and mathematical (information) exchange theory. But, the behaviorist division of semiotics, proposed by Charles Morris, is better known. For Morris, grammar is syntactics, or the study of sign structures (codes), whether animal, machine, or human. Logic is semantics, or the study of choice in meaning that govern intention in

³ *Ibid*

⁴ *Ibid*

communication. Last, rhetoric is pragmatics, or the use of discourse to inform and convince. These three elements combine to create the world of human reference (named the “semiosphere” by Juri Lotman)⁵

B. Peirce’s Thought

Peirce’s concept of Semiotics as the “formal science of signs”, and the pragmatic notion of meaning as the ‘action of signs’ (semiosis), have had a deep impact in philosophy, psychology, theoretical biology, and cognitive sciences (see Jakobson 1960; Thom 1975; Prigogine, Stengers 1983; Freeman 1983; Fetzer 1988; 1997; Colapietro 1989; Tiercelin 1995; Hoffmeyer 1996; Houser et al. 1997; Brunning, Forster 1997; Deacon 1997; Freadman 2004; Hookway 2002; 2004; Misak 2004; Pietarinen 2005; Magnani 2007; Stjernfelt forthcoming). First and foremost, Peirce’s semiotics is grounded on a list of categories — Firstness, Secondness, Thirdness — which corresponds to an exhaustive system of hierarchically organized classes of relations (Houser et al. 1997). This system makes up

⁵ Encyclopedia of Communication and Information Edited by Jorge Reina Schement, vol.2 p. 706

the formal foundation of his philosophy (Parker 1998) and of his model of semiotic action (Murphey 1993: 303–306)⁶.

In brief, the categories can be defined as: (1) *Firstness*: what is such as it is, without reference to anything else; (2) *Secondness*: what is such as it is, in relation with something else, but without relation with any third entity; (3) *Thirdness*: what is such as it is, insofar as it is capable of bringing a second entity into relation with a first one in the same way that it brings itself into relation with the first and the second entities. Firstness is the category of vagueness, freedom, novelty and originality — ‘firstness is the mode of being which consists in its subject’s being positively such as it is regardless of anything else. That can only be a possibility’ (CP 1.25). Secondness is the category of reaction, opposition, differentiation, existence — ‘generally speaking genuine secondness consists in one thing acting upon another, — brute action’ [...] ‘I consider the idea of any dyadic relation not involving any third as an idea of secondness’ (CP 8.330). Thirdness is the category of mediation, habit, generality, growth, and conceptualization or cognition (CP 1.340)⁷.

⁶ João Queiroz, Floyd Merrell, *Semiosis and pragmatism: Toward a dynamic concept of meaning*, Research Group on History, Philosophy, and Biology Teaching, Institute of Biology, Universidade Federal da Bahia (UFBA), Brazil pdf file.

⁷ *Ibid*

In another way of putting the categories: Firstness is possibility, what might become, Secondness is what is taken to be what is within some particular context, and Thirdness is what in all probability would be, given a certain set of conditions (for further on categories, see Hookway 1985; Murphey 1993; Potter 1997)⁸.

a) **The sign process**

As Savan (1986: 134) argues, an interpretant is both the third term of a given triadic relation and the first term (sign) of a subsequent triadic relation. This is the reason why semiosis cannot be defined as an isolated triad; it necessarily involves the continuous development of triads actualized from semiosis (see Merrell 1995). In Savan's (1987– 1988: 43) words, the terms interpretant, sign and object compose a triad whose definition can only be circular; each one of the three terms is defined by the other two. The only properties to be found in S, O and I are in the functional role; there is no distinct essential or substantive property, for at any given instant what was an S can become an O or an I, and the same can be said of O and I (Tienne 1992).

⁸ *Ibid*

Indeed, one of the most remarkable characteristics of Peirce's theory of signs is its dynamical nature⁹.

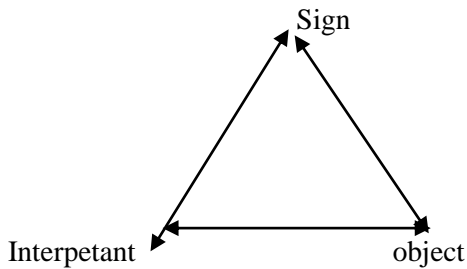
The complex (S–O–I) is the focalfactor of a dynamical process (Hausman 1993: 72). As a truly process thinker, it was quite natural that Peirce conceived semiosis as basically a process in which triads are systematically linked to one another so as to form a web. Sign processes are inter-relatedly extended within the spatiotemporal dimension, so that something physical has to instantiate or realize them. This means that signs cannot act unless they are spatiotemporally realized (see Emmeche 2003; Deacon 1999). If a sign is to have any active mode of being, it must be materially embodied¹⁰.

In generally the triangle meaning proses in Peirce's theory is:¹¹

⁹ João Queiroz, Floyd Merrell, *Semiosis and pragmatism: Toward a dynamic concept of meaning*, Research Group on History, Philosophy, and Biology Teaching, Institute of Biology, Universidade Federal da Bahia (UFBA), Brazil pdf file. p.5

¹⁰ *Ibid*

¹¹ Alex Sobur, *Analisis Teks Media*, Bandung, Remaja Rosdakarya, 2006, p.114-115



Picture 1. Triadic prose

Semiotic build from three main element, that called by Peirce triangle meaning (Fike, 1990& littlejonh, 1998).

a. Sign

A sign is anything rubbing physical objects that can be captured by the human senses and is something that refers to (present) case other than the sign itself. Reference marks are called object.

b. Object

Object is the social context of a reference of a sign or signs ascribed.

c. Interpretant is the concept of thinking of the people using signs and lower it into something of meaning in the mind of someone about objects in referred by a sign ¹².

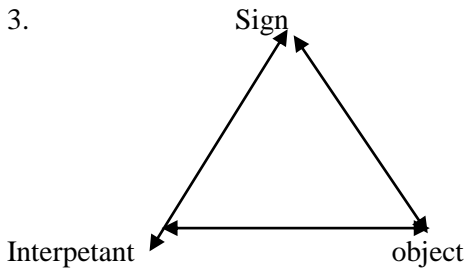
1. R

A “sign” or “representamen” (R) signifying only itself. We can only know the pure firstness of an isolated representament hypothetically, as a possibility, but not as an experience distilled from Secondness or Thirdness (Sheriff 199: 157)

2. R \longrightarrow O

A relationship between the representamen (R) and an object (O). This relationship, out of all possible relationships, is a significant one only if it is recognized as genuine, having a meaning effect (the interpretant, I) in the mind of an interpreter:

¹² Rahmat, Kriyanto, *Teknik Praktis Riset Komunikasi, Jakarta*, Prenada Media, 2006, h.265



But this is only the beginning of signification. The interpretant now has a relationship (it has Secondness) *with the relationship* between the first representamen and object. This in turn must be evaluated as genuine, creating a new interpretant:¹³

Thus I becomes a representamen (R1) relating to R-0 as its object (O1), and I1 like wise relates to the initial triad as R2-O2, creating I2. Each element in the original triad thus eventually has qualities of each mode: Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness. Each plays different roles in a series of nesting signs-in Peirce's words, "and so on, endlessly" (CP 2.274; see Sheriff 1989:59-61)¹⁴

¹³ Ben Chappell, *Folklore Semiotic: Charles Peirce and the Experience of Signs*, PDF file p. 5

¹⁴*Ibid*

Depend on the interpretant, signs differed by Peirce are Rheme, Disen sign and Argument.

- a. Rheme: is some sign qualitative probably, that is without anything that not true and independen namely rheme. Almost all of singular word and all of word class anything, maybe adjective or verb. Accept sign not truth and wrong.
- b. Disen Sign or Dicsign: is actual existence, some sign usually as some proposition. As proposition, disen is inforative sign. But, different with rheme disen is true or false, but not directly give some reason.
- c. Argument is sign “law” or principle, some logic sign that conscious by leading principle that declare from change premises to the conclusion are inclined true.¹⁵

If the sign is associated with the ground, Peirce divides signs into three parts.

- a. Qualisign: is a quality that is on the sign, such harsh words, hard, weak, tunable.
- b. Sinsign : is the actual existence of objects or events that exist on the sign; example words blurred or cloudy that exist in the word order turbid river water, indicating that there is rain in the headwaters.

¹⁵ Alex Sobur, *Semiotika Komunikasi*, Bandung, Remaja Rosdakarya, 2006, h.42

c. Legissign adalah norms contained by sign, for example traffic signs indicating the things that may or may not doing by human.¹⁶

b) Meaning and semiosis

Peirce defined meaning as the consequence of triadic inter-relations of S–O–I as a whole (EP 2:429), as well through differential correlates among the sign, the object (MS 11, EP 2:274), and the interpretant (EP 2:496, EP 2:499; CP 4:536) (see Fitzgerald 1966: 84; Bergman 2000). This notion of meaning is derived from his definition of the sign as a medium for the communication of a form or a habit embodied in the object to the interpretant, so as to determine the interpreter’s behavior through inter-related inter-action with the sign (see Tienne 2003; Hulswitt 2001; Bergman 2000). Peirce spoke of the sign as a ‘conveyer’, as a ‘medium’ (MS 793), as ‘embodying meaning’¹⁷.

A Sign may be defined as a Medium for the communication of a Form. As a medium, the Sign is essentially in a triadic relation, to its Object which determines it, and to its

¹⁶ Alex Sobur, *Semiotika Komunikasi*, PT. Remaja Rosdakarya. 2006 cet. 3 p. 41

¹⁷ João Queiroz, Floyd Merrell, *Semiosis and pragmatism: Toward a dynamic concept of meaning*, Research Group on History, Philosophy, and Biology Teaching, Institute of Biology, Universidade Federal da Bahia (UFBA), Brazil pdf file. p.6

Interpretant which it determines. That which is communicated from the Object through the Sign to the Interpretant is a Form; that is to say, it is nothing like an existent, but is a power, is the fact that something would happen under certain conditions. (MS 793: 1–3; EP2, p. 544, n. 22)¹⁸

In short, for Peirce a sign is both ‘a Medium for the communication of a Form’ and ‘a triadic relation, to its Object which determines it, and to its Interpretant which it determines’. If we consider both definitions of a sign, we can say that semiosis is a triadic process of communication of a form from the object to the interpretant by the sign mediation¹⁹.

Form is defined as having the ‘being of predicate’ and it is also pragmatically formulated as a ‘conditional proposition’ stating that certain things would happen under specific circumstances. But for Peirce, form is nothing like a ‘thing’ (Tienne 2003), but something that is embodied in the object as a habit, a ‘rule of action’, a ‘disposition’ a ‘real potential’ (EP 2.388) or, simply, a ‘permanence of some relation’. Form can also be defined as potentiality . If we consider this definition, we will also come to the conclusion that form can show the nature of both firstness and thirdness. Consider that potentiality is not the same

¹⁸ *Ibid*

¹⁹ *Ibid*

as mere possibility. For the sake of our argument, consider Peirce's treatment of Quality as a 'mere abstract potentiality'. It is abstraction not in the sense of a reduction of complexity to formal simplicity, but in the sense that the quality in question has been 'abstracted' ('cut') from the continuum of possibilities²⁰.

Quality, then, has the nature of Firstness, being essentially indeterminate and vague. But we can also talk about a generality of Quality. In this case, we are beyond the domain of pure Firstness, since generality refers to some law-like tendency. Peirce works in this case with a merging of Firstness and Thirdness. As an abstract potentiality, Quality is closer to a blend of Firstness and Thirdness, than to pure Firstness. Such a treatment seems to be compatible with Peirce's categorical scheme, since, as Potter (1997: 94) stresses, the categorical structure which Peirce uses is 'highly subtle and complex, admitting of various combinations'. For Murphey, there is a transition from the notion of meaning as a qualitative conception carried by a sign to a relational notion according to which the meaning of a concept consists in a 'law relating operations performed upon the object or conditions of perceptions to perceived effects' (Flower, Murphey 1977: 589). The qualitative

²⁰ Charles Sanders Peirce, *The Collected Papers of Charles Sander Peirce*. Electronic edition reproducing vols. 1–6 [Hartshorne, C.; Weiss, P. (eds.), Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1931–1935]; vols. 7–8 [Burks, A. W. (ed.), Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958]

conception involves reference to the sign's ground, while the 'law' or necessary conditions of perception are relational rather than qualitative — 'If the meaning of a concept of an object is to consist in the conditionals relating operations on the object to perceived effects, these conditionals will in fact be habits' (Flower, Murphey 1977: 590).²¹

This brings about a constrained set of effects of the Object on the interpreter through the mediation of the Sign. In short, Peirce defines a Sign both as 'a Medium for the communication of a Form' and as 'a triadic relation, to its Object which determines it, and to its Interpretant which it determines'. If we consider both definitions of a Sign, we can say that semiosis is a triadic process of communication of a form from the Object to the Interpretant by the Sign mediation²².

C. Semiotic and Culture

In etymologically the word "semiotics" itself comes from the Greek, semeion which means "sign" or seme, which means that the interpretation²³ "sign". And in terminology

²¹ João Queiroz, Floyd Merrell, *Semiosis and pragmatism: Toward a dynamic concept of meaning*, Research Group on History, Philosophy, and Biology Teaching, Institute of Biology, Universidade Federal da Bahia (UFBA), Brazil pdf file. p. 7

²² *Ibid*

²³ Moh Natsir, *Fidhud Dakwah* (Jakarta :Dewan Dakwh Islamiyah Indonesia , 1993), p. 4

semiotic can be defined as the study of the vast array of objects, events, across cultures as a sign.

Semiotic analysis is a science or an analytical method to assess the sign. The signs are the devices that we use in an attempt to fight their way in this world, in the midst of human beings and human beings together. Semiotic, or in terms of Barthes, semiology basically want to learn how *humanity* to make sense of *things*. Interpret in this case can not be confused with communicating. Interpret means that objects not only carry information, in which the objects were about to communicate, but also constitute a structured system of signs.

Lechte defines semiotics is a theory of signs and semiotic markers further details is a discipline that investigates all forms of communication that occurs by means of signs 'signs' and based on the sign system (*code*) sign system. Meanwhile, according to Charles Sander Peirce semiotic is a relationship between sign, object, and meaning.

What we need to underline the various definitions of the above is that the experts see it as a semiosis or semiotics is science the process associated with the sign²⁴.

²⁴ Alex Sobur, *Semiotika Komunikasi*, Bandung, Remaja Rosdakarya, Bandung, 2006, cet.3 p.15-17

At least there are nine kinds of semiotic that we know today are:

1. Semiotic analitic, semiotic system that analyzes the mark. Peirce states semiotic has object sign and analyze into ideas, objects, and meanings. The idea can be said as a symbol, while the burden of meaning is contained in the symbol that refers to a specific object.

2. Semiotic descriptive, is a semiotic sign system that can pay attention we are experiencing now, although there are signs that since ancient remains as witnessed today. for example the sky overcast with rain indicates that it is no longer going down.

3. Semiotic faunal (zoosematic), is special semiotic that give attention to the sign system that produced by animal.

4. Semiotic cultural, is the specific semiotic that examines sign system the prevailing in certain societies. it is known that the community as social beings have a certain culture that has been passed down through generations in the preserve and respected. The culture that exists in the society which is also a system that, using certain signs that differentiate with other communities.

5. Semiotic narrative, is a semiotic that examines sign system in the narrative entitled myths and oral stories (folklore). It is known that oral stories and myths, there are cultural values which have high.

6. Semiotic natural, is semiotic that examines sign system in the special produced by nature. The murky river water marks on the upper reaches of the River have been cloudy

7. Semiotic normative, is a semiotic sign system which examines made by form human norms. As traffic signs..

8. Semiotic sosial, is semiotic examines sign system that produced by human as a symbol, although symbol word or symbol as word in unity that called by sentence.

9. Semiotic Structural, is semiotic examines the sign system manifested through the structure of the language.

Semiotic is a science that examines the signs in people's lives. That is, all those present in our lives is seen as a sign, that is something that we have to give it meaning. Until here we probably all agree. However, when we have to answer what is a sign, started problem. The struktualis, referring to Ferdinand de Saussure (1916), saw the sign as a meeting between the forms

(created in one's cognition) and meaning (or the contents, which are understood by humans as a sign).²⁵

De Saussure uses the term *signifiant* (signifier) for in terms of the form of a sign, and *signifié* (signified) in terms of its meaning. Thus, de saussure and his followers (Barthes, among others) view the sign as something that be structure (the process of definition of the link between signifier and signified) and structured (the results of the process) in human cognition.²⁶

In the theory of de Saussure, *signifiant* is not a language (image acoustique). Thus, what is in our lives is seen as a "form" that had " meaning " certain. Still in the sense of de Saussure, the relationship between form and meaning not be personal, but social, which is based on "the deal" (convention) social.²⁷

Despite this de Saussure in his lectures at the University of Geneva emphasizes descriptions of "Science" which examines language independently, which he called "linguistique", he suggested that language is a system of signs. In addition, he suggests that it is possible the existence of the science that made

²⁵ Benny H. Hoed, *Semiotik dan Dinamika Sosial Budaya*, Komunitas Bambu, Depok, Cet. 1 p. 3

²⁶ *Ibid*

²⁷ *Ibid*

possible the existence of a science that examines the life of signs in the community²⁸.

That sort of science, that is part of social psychology, will be named "Semiology" which will show what form the signs and rules of what is happening to him²⁹. Because of its ties to two terms, and alert markers, sign de Saussure's theory also is dikotomis and structural.³⁰

D. Spirits In Al- Qur'an

See the phenomenon that exists in the community about the offerings of ritual or form to resist the dangers are very closely related to spirits or more commonly referred to as jin. Haunted places like the great tree, and cemetery of the river often sacred as a place of spirits. More specifically in this research. Ritual disposal of the chicken is associated with giving offerings to jin..

²⁸ *Ibid* p.4

²⁹ Ferdinand de Saussure was a citizen of Switzerland, Professor of Linguistics at the University of Sorbonne, France (1881-1891) and the University of Geneva, Switzerland (1891-1912), who for the first time gave the runway on linguistics as a science of the self. He also mentioned the necessity there is the study of "life signs" that he called "semiologi". His famous book entitled *Cours de linguistique générale* (1915), published by Payot, Paris Publisher (1916). This work comes from his lectures were published by two former mahasiwanya, namely Charles Bally and Robert Schechaye (both professors at the University of Sorbonne, Paris) for a more complete description of Ferdinand de Saussure, see Kridalaksana (2005)

³⁰ *Opcit*

They believe if they (the Jinn) coexist with society but different in nature. In surat Al-baqarah verse 3:

الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنفِقُونَ (۳)

In this paragraph said that the properties of the pious to those who believe in the unseen, which is faithful to God Almighty, as well as carrying out continuous and perfect Al-salaah, i.e. According to the pillars and the requirement. There is no denying that a lot of things that are invisible to humans, as well as a variety of levels are also. There is an absolute invisibility, which cannot be revealed at all because God knew it, and there is also a relative invisibility. Something that is not known to anyone but known by others, he is a relative invisibility.³¹

The above verse clearly mention if there is something can not see by eyes. Or often referred to as spirits or jinn. Such confidence is still very strong and growing in society in general.

³¹ M. Quraish Shihab, *Jin, Iblis, Setan dan Malaikat Yang Terrsembunyi*, Lentera Hati, Jakarta, 2002 cet 1 p.25