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Semiotics of precision and imprecision

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Abstract: The fact of the multi-dimensionality of semiotics is an issue that offers more possibilities: either seen in the sense of their precise foreseeing, providing for, or discussing a scientific phenomenon, or otherwise, seen in the shape of its multiple formations, such as in the case of overcoming its rules. My aim in this paper is to make an attempt at proposing an hypothesis that may be overcoming another one, thus expressing ambiguity instead of precision, a metaphor instead a mono-semantic lexeme, or a complex instead of a simple phenomenon (thus, naming the different semiotic realities). This can be performed by representing at least some of the approaches to semiotics as a discipline: either seeing it as an expression of clearing redundancies through oppositions, through processes of representation, or through life processes. Starting from language-based semiotics, through scholars like Saussure and Jakobson, as well as through the Greimasian and Peircean schools of semiotics, I have tried to exemplify what I have called semiotics of precision, on one hand, and what I have called a semiotics of imprecision, on the other. In the frames of such an exemplifying of these two approaches, I have tried to focus on the dichotomy between seeming and reality.

Keywords: semiotics, precision, imprecision, signification, passions

1 Introduction: On the multiple possibilities of choice

One of the important components of the semiotic approach is the issue of its precision or, better, of its exposing of mathematically precise material, which should be subordinated to further procedures. No matter how a scholar approaches such an issue, or in what context (seen by whichever phenomenological status), we have to bear in mind that semiotics may treat it within more

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than one discipline. The methodology concerning the dichotomy of two mainly opposed phenomena seems to have been applied by the semiotics of the first half of the twentieth century. Such a scientific reality has shown to be a part of the structural and post-structural approach (either in terms of language study or other related social phenomena), which recently seemed to grow into other competencies that attempted to overcome the duality of analytical objects. My aim shall also represent an effort to overcome determined meta-theoretical aspects, through recent contributions in semiotics in general.

The fact of the multi-dimensionality of semiotics is an issue that offers more possibilities: either seen in the sense of their precise foreseeing, providing for, or discussing a scientific phenomenon, or otherwise, seen in the shape of its multiple formations, such as in the case of overcoming its rules. My aim in this paper is to concretize a theory that may be overcoming another one, thus expressing ambiguity instead of precision, a metaphor instead a mono-semantic lexeme or, after all, a complex instead of a simple phenomenon. This can be performed by representing at least some of the approaches to semiotics as a discipline: either seeing it as an expression of clearing redundancies through oppositions, through processes of representation, through a generative trajectory based on transformations for the sake of producing meaning, or through existential issues. Signs' growth in general does not stop in the frames of the mentioned approaches.

Providing examples of determined developmental tracks of one or more semiotic approaches shall give this study an empirical result, as one of semiotics' duties is to render problems complex to the extent that they might decompose, to the limit of their possibilities seen as micro-structures (Eco 1968).

Questions of the following kind, however, may arise: how do we treat them deductively or inductively? Semiotics may treat them in both ways, either in the shape of micro or macro-structures (Eco 1968). Taken from one point of view, one may need to treat a problem inductively that might become complex from a simple one. Such is the case (as for instance) within linguistic branches.¹ If diachronic study occurs one would think of a specialist in that field only. It is also true that semiotics finds a solution even to such a situation (Rauch 1999) by comparing variables to invariables, as well as by considering the historical growth of elements within various periods of time.

¹ Linguistics is only one of the branches to discuss in terms of its semiotic applicability. One must think of Saussure, when *linguistically-minded semiotics* is in question. The optionality of moving towards other branches within semiotics besides the linguistic study will also be an object of discussion in the following pages of this paper.

Moreover, especially by ways of comparison, one can open doors to semiotic study. Semiotics interferes in the sharing of the contents discussed, of the materials foreseen as linguistic and/or semantic entities. It can even create narrative units so as to develop them into structures. One of the structures, however, can be missing and/or there can occur an absence of meaning, but we can imagine it by way of representation (Eco 1968). This would mean rendering the meaning component complex. No doubt, code theory can witness such a phenomenon.

However theoretical such a study or such vision might seem, science initially cares about stating objects, or better, its object. Besides, like all other branches said to have a well-determined status within their development, semiotics as well should try to unify procedures of execution, as for instance can be exemplified within the mentioned linguistic field, the textual and other fields, under analysis. Each tiny element then grows into a generalization, as a process of complementing elements.² How precise are we within such procedures is a matter of various semiotic schools (or seen otherwise as methodologies), which sometimes seem opposed to each other, contradictory, and claiming facts of different kinds. Why should a binary opposition be a starting point? How do we put it into a certain point of hesitation, in order to determine its precision of results? Can such an opposition be overcome, and how? How does the psychological status of a certain analyzed problem differ from a certain other logical status of such an analyzed problem? These are only some of the questions that semiotics can answer from the methodological point of view. It is also true, however, that the approaches in general have been providing considerable results in terms of the signs' growth process in general, as well as in terms of the appropriate approaches to them, specifically.³ Not only can they be processed, and motivated, but they also can be coded. They can further have their metaphoric status, which allows them to escape from general precision in idealistic terms, so as to be rushing towards an illusory, or a brand new reality. How many realities does semiotics have after all?

2 The aforementioned processes have already established and are still establishing semiotics as a separate discipline within inter-human overall informational exchange, as one of its levels. Other issues that are also a part of the semiotic process shall be discussed in their due place in this contribution.

3 One should consider the founders of general signs' theories, such as Peirce, Guiraud, Morris, and Eco. Each of them has treated the semiotics in general, as well as semiosis specifically, out of different points of view.

Such questions have well been treated within the field of semiotics – say the branch, or the semiotic method. One can treat the process of narration (Eco 1994) not only as an artistic entity, but as well as a pragmatic choice of an inter-human communication. One aspect may be treated (for instance) and the other not. Can semiotics combine both, or is one subject to the communicational processes only?

There is no question in the fact that items should be treated separately. This would otherwise construct the other hypothesis here: such chosen elements should render themselves complex, gradually, by way of procedures. If the linguistic approach is in question, then its constituent parts should be elaborated, within their precision, in the shape of such tiny elements, such as one may find in the linguistics of science. A semiotician, however, should interfere at a comparing point, at a representational issue, advancing questions of the following kind: why should a certain phenomenon correspond to another in terms of languages? Are the mentioned phenomena culturally or only linguistically dependent?

First, semiotics creates a twofold dimension, in the mentioned contexts: one ready to be compared and /or decomposed, and the other ready to represent something else. It can thus create relations of axes, out of which one is paradigmatic and the next syntagmatic.⁴ If such elements can gradually, due to the social nature of languages, create narrative structures as a result (Greimas 1973), then why in terms of linguistic study can a sentence be segmented according to a tree theory, thus, generating itself into a grammatically correct one (Chomsky 1984)? How do the different scientific fields correlate? If they correlate in turn, another question follows: can semiotics create other dimensions? Such other dimensions, as a part of the general semiotic process, shall be a part of a further elaboration in this contribution.

Providing an answer to these questions doubtlessly shall open doors to other fields that may be semiotically covered, with the general aim of complementing their initial constituting elements to their resulting into a process of signification.

⁴ Chomsky (1984) has used the aforementioned terms in developing his syntactic structures. Semioticians however, have rightfully used them, not only in the denotative sense of the word, but in the connotative one as well, so as to be aware of the fact that linguistically introduced binary oppositions can be overcome. Such a situation is shown by Greimas (1973), within his practical application of the actants and actantial relations. Besides, the narrative structures, seen in the semiotic square, can further be decomposable, owing to concepts like aspectualization, visualization, and manifestation. Their deducting of a specific taxonomy relating to passions, definitely, as shall be further explained, overcomes such mentioned oppositions (Greimas and Fontanille 1993).

Second, if one treats its social dimension, it may create a relation of more than one source and more than one destination, such as in the case of mass communication (Eco 1995), which has a goal of a social interaction. This in turn shall depend on the contextual circumstances, thus making it a part of cultural studies as well.

Third, the correlation among elements procedurally considered in this context however is also semiotically treated, such as in the case of reducing redundancies, either seen as phenomena contradicting each other, or complementing each other. If contradiction as a relation is one of the scientific phenomena, then again semiotics can find the answer: such as in the Greimasian sense, for instance, within his actantial relations. The aforementioned relations, in turn, may cover human aesthetic expression, which is a competent for providing us with a brand new formal reality, in the shape that artistic expressions can create. Semiotics can even find an answer to the aforementioned contradictions in terms of their inter-relational processes, which may be doubled, continuous or interpretable to the extent that they should produce a decent semantic universe within their manifestation status in the semio-narrative level. If all aforementioned issues are taken into consideration (taking into account all applicable semiotic theories, in the sense of their signifying results), one may conclude that the known statement of *an unlimited process of semiosis* (see Eco 1962; CP 2.303), brings us to scientific truth.

If one bases oneself upon that conclusion that drives us back to its origin (or better, to one of its originating tracks – and there are, as I may be encouraged to say, more than one), then one finds himself/ herself in the field of philosophy, or more precisely logics of science (CP). If such a statement is true, then why should philosophy and its relative branches be left aside? Recent approaches to semiotics however, prove the contrary to be true. Exemplifying such theories, as for instance the interaction of subject, active subject, and anti-subject, so that one could finally deduce a passion taxonomy (Greimas and Fontanille 1993), is a proof of an epistemological level of semiotic discourse. Differing from *classical semiotics*, however, semiotics can also create a new communicational scheme based primarily on the human existence value (but not only) named existential semiotics (Tarasti 2000). No doubt, semiotics provides the possibility of choice. The multiplicity of the choice as a term itself can lead us either to the precision or, otherwise, to the imprecision of its elements, that would finally represent an empirical result. In conclusion, my aim here is to state, as much as possible, what some of the options can be, how different they are, or better, whether, and to what extent, their mutual inclusiveness or exclusiveness can contribute to the final signification process as a result.

2 On the main streams of semiotics

2.1 The precision/imprecision of the linguistic approach to semiotics

The linguistic approach, or its choice to treat the structures as opposed to one another, has long ago pushed scholars dedicated to semiotics to give their contribution to its development. The phenomenon of structuralism and functionalism in linguistics itself has established a semiotic system that even today is highly applicable. This in turn has not remained only a theoretical paradigm, but has as well shown a path to a new practical applicability of the semiotic discipline as such.

First, Saussure's (1959) contribution has not only represented a huge step in the frames of modern linguistics, but has introduced semiotics into it, and even "embedded" the semiotic approach into it. Is it however linguistics or semiotics? Are both terms mutually exclusive or inclusive? As far as this kind of juxtaposing between the two is concerned, here is Rauch's opening statement to such a phenomenon: "The intimacy of the relationship between semiotics and linguistics is accountable on the one hand to the role assigned to language within semiotics, and on the other hand to the role assigned to linguistics within language" (Rauch 1999: 49).

As can be seen, there is a "relationship" (Rauch 1999: 49), and such a relationship is of a semiotic nature. To what extent is one discipline, as I have claimed, embedded in the other (or otherwise inclusive, or exclusive), is well explained in Saussure and his semiotic discourse. One could think for instance of the dichotomy presented: the signifier and the signified. Such distinctions have been a characteristic of the period, nevertheless, it has to be stated that Saussure's contribution has been dedicated to signs' scientific definition(s). In the frames of his definition, Saussure tried to give a precise definition of semiotics as a discipline, as a science of signs, thus further claiming it to be a part of the social as well as general psychology (Saussure 1959). According to him, therefore, signs would also mean language, as language is only one of such semiotic systems (Saussure 1959). Everything else that could be excluded from linguistics seems to belong to the field of psychology, as well as to other socially-related disciplines. We shall therefore name a result of precision in semiotics and/or of the semiotics of precision the part of "his linguistics," which treats the aforementioned issues.

Another of Saussure's distinctions is by all means of a semiotic nature: the dichotomy between *language* and *speech*. Although such a paradigm may also

be derived from other linguists, such as Sapir (or even other scholars which may and may not belong to the same linguistic evolutionary period), the dichotomy in question explains what one means, for instance, by a double articulation, as explained by Martinet. If language is abstract, speech is a concrete phenomenon. The aforementioned dichotomy can be explained in the following way: some psychological processes have to occur prior to our speech: or better, first we think and then speak. The closeness between linguistics and psychology here, especially its cognitive part, is more than evident. The ongoing processes within our brain are the following: cognition about reality, the perception of objects, their categorization, and finally their naming. Pronunciation, though, belonging to the speech element, is a physical act of our speech organs. This kind of analysis can be applied in terms of not only linguistic phenomena (as we have previously stated contradicting each other), but also other life phenomena, being thus a result of empirical contributions to scientific research in other spheres, as for instance, the social one.

Second, the Russian Formalists' (Baker 1986) choice has also been a firm ground for a research in the field of semiotics. The methodology, as I would dare say, not only made semiotically inclusive determined distinctive features in the field of language study, but has also made artistic expression become an inclusive part as an object of the semiotic method in general.⁵ Thus, for instance, the distinction between two elements (mostly opposed to each other), as in the clear-cut division in form and content (Chatman 1978), made analysts, literary critics, philosophers, mostly cope with a work of art, which could be signified, in the shape of adding meaning to a given form. In contrast to pure linguistics, where precision is and can be deduced as a result of determined processes, through the Russian Formalists the new entities of analysis could also cover the narrative structures (which later, through other scholars have been applied in the field of arts among other related disciplines). The use of that methodology has shown that imprecision in procedures and/or results can belong to a semiotic analysis. By the term *imprecision*, I intend the disproportionality of elements on both sides of the communicational channel, as well as the unequivocal elements (see Eco 1979), which, as a result (if one takes initially the communicative level as an instance), emanate the aesthetic message, such as, in the following instance: how much time do we need to understand an author's message? Do we get what the author wished to say or not? Although it is true

⁵ This is the reason why some determined elements that are treatable within the linguistic field, can obtain a narrative status. Scholarly approaches have also analyzed such important and complex issues, such as literary and/or artistic status analysis based upon semiotic processes.

that the final semantic choice belongs to us (in this case to the destination of the transmitted message), another question might be a part of imprecision, as for instance: how many characters does Hamlet represent? Or: how many parts does he play (even if we imagined him in the play, concretely)? And finally, as a consequence, how do we treat such a situation semiotically? This shall not depend on our final semantic choice as a result only (due to determined semiotic processes), but on the author's intentions as well.

It is also true that it is linguistics that has also contributed to the wider applicability of either semiotic or communicational processes. One has to think of Jakobson's contribution, for instance. His communicational model (see other schemes of the communication process: Shannon and Weaver 1949; Eco 1968) has represented a step forward in terms of either precision within the semiotic approach, or in terms of expanding its competencies (aimed at a multifold signification process). Jakobson's addition of three new elements in the communicational model, as well as his poetic functions of language (Innis 1985) have made linguistically-minded semioticians think of the extra-linguistic entities as objects of semiotic studies.

Jakobson's contribution to the science of signs shall belong to the precision of his procedures and/or to the semiotics of precision (because of the supposed exact amount of transmitted information through the communication channel), whereas the establishment of the poetic functions shall belong to the imprecision of such procedures (and/or to the semiotics of imprecision). The reasons for this conclusion drive us back to the communicational processes that consider the exact proportion of transmission of the processing material. Eco's (1979) explanation of codes' theory in such respect, gives a clear-cut picture of the code's shapes, the signal's transmission, and their final form and content when reaching the destination. Based upon Jakobson's poetic functions however, Eco makes another distinction within the frames of the last codes' function (Eco 1975), which speaks of metaphoric language usage itself. This would as well argue for Jakobson's emotive function (Innis 1985), as well as his further explication on the message's meaning. If one treats the results of Jakobson's analysis, it is to conclude that the final meaning choice is ours.

One can choose in conclusion which option to use. If, on one hand, it occurs that precision is in question (as, for instance, many linguists have demonstrated, in terms of the semiotically interpretable units), then the manifestation results, in terms of final semantic units, shall generate such a situation. If, on the other hand, it occurs that imprecision is our choice, then the manifesting of narrative structures as a result (Greimas 1973) shall consider the multiplicity of our choice.

Within the linguistic approach to semiotics as well, both precision and imprecision are applicable to the extent that one chooses them to deduce

messages that can be either mono- or poly-semantic. The two items in question create a double semiotic discourse that must be in a permanent correlation. Such a correlation shall belong to the unlimited semiosis processes, at least in the frames of what can be semiotically interpretable.

2.2 On the overcoming of oppositions: Greimas's elementary semantic unit

The oppositions themselves, as I have claimed, were a characteristic of the structuralism period, which, at many instances, showed grounds for a semiotic, formal analysis of contents and/or texts. The question however that I have raised is: how can oppositions be overcome, so that the semiotic object becomes analyzed otherwise? One such choice or options to treat a semiotic phenomenon is to overcome such procedures. In order to explain such a situation, one needs to assemble some more scientific data.

Besides the structuralists' description of given phenomena, which may and may not contain oppositions (thus being ready to be semiotically treated), late structuralism (and/or post-structuralism) as represented by Greimas (1973), has to my view an important element: the manifestation after the formalization, and finally the semantic micro-universe of its units. This is due to the action element, which, among other related social contexts, could emanate meaning to such complexities as artistic expressions.⁶ This is a result that is to be established after the gradual and procedural achieving of the narrative structures, as one of the important Greimasian elements.

A. J. Greimas is the last of the great thinkers and theoreticians of French structuralism and post structuralism to be translated into English and presented to the American public, and perhaps in many ways the most difficult and forbidding – bristling with scientificity, as these texts are, and breaking out at all points into graphics of formalization (equations, schemata, nonverbal symbols of variables and invariables) that always seems to the “humanist” to draw a boundary across which one looks with frustration at the forbidden promised lands of mathematics or symbolic logic, or of musical theory. (Jameson 1987: vii)

As can be seen from Jameson's Foreword, one of Greimas's “innovations” in this respect is the use of extra-linguistic tools to describe semiotic

⁶ Naturally, the artistic field which theoretically contains an aesthetic status and/or element at least, is not the only treatable phenomenon according to Greimas's theory. Semiotics is able to treat social phenomena: therefore its domain is widely extended in the frames of the decent choice of the object analyzable by such methods.

phenomena. It thus proves Greimas's hypothesis of treating social phenomena using semiotic methods.

One can also notice the usage of "nonverbal symbols of variables and invariables" (Jameson 1987: vii), as a proof for the semiotics coverage in this respect. Greimas's contribution here, among other related issues, is a derivation of meaning as a result. It is worth noting that besides the Saussurian definition of semiotics (as a science of signs),⁷ there is another definition of it which says that the result of each semiotics (or its definition in general) should belong to the semantic field (and/or to the process of signification): in terms of the science which generates meaning.

The production of meaning is meaningful only if it is the transformation of the meaning already given; the production of meaning is consequently a signifying endowment with form (*Mise en forme*), indifferent to whatever content it may be called on to transform. Meaning, in the sense of forming the meaning, can thus be defined as the possibility of the transformation of meaning. (Greimas 1973: x)

Defining meaning, as can be seen, proves the semantic results in semiotics. The word "transformation" however reminds us of Chomsky's grammar, which is also built upon determined procedures that contribute to processes of grammaticalization and lexicalization, in terms of generating meaningful sentences. If Greimas has contributed to the overcoming of the phenomenon of binary opposition, Chomsky has contributed to the universal acquiring of languages. The inclusiveness between the two in this respect is providing for results through transformational procedures.⁸

Here is how Greimas introduces his trajectory of procedures, which shall later lead towards a process of signification:

- (1) Deep structures define the fundamental mode of existence of an individual or a society, and subsequently the conditions of existence of semiotic objects. As far as we know, the elementary constituents of deep structures have a definable logical status.
 - (2) Surface structures constitute a semiotic grammar system that arranges the grammar contents susceptible of manifestation into discursive forms. The end products of this system are independent of the expression that manifests them, insofar as they can theoretically appear in any substance and, in the case of linguistic objects, in any language.
 - (3) The structures of manifestation produce and organize the signifiers.
- (Greimas 1973: 48)

⁷ A definition that naturally belongs to other scholars as well, such as Eco (1975), for instance.

⁸ We emphasize this term, as it shall be necessary for our next distinctions on the Greimasian models. See Greimas and Fontanille 1993.

Greimas here creates a double discourse at the beginning of his division into deep and surface structures. The existence of semiotic objects is conditioned as he says by the existence of individuals and societies. Such a statement implies that the basic notions and concepts of a semiotic treatment are taken from the external reality. The conceptualizing and/or naming of the aforementioned notions in terms of a linguistic expression, as well as the process of lexemes' creation, belong to the normative part of linguistics. The regulations and/or rules of applied language, as it can be inferred from Saussure's theory, make the language phenomenon and language usage a social phenomenon. Consequently, the structures (which in the Greimasian sense are not only a result of a linguistic procedure) can thus be manifested. Such a situation proves their practical application. In the given circumstances as described, Greimas creates his elementary structure of signification, in the following way:

If the signification S (the universe of a signifying whole or any semiotic system) appears, at the level of its initial apprehension, as a semantic axis, it is opposed to S^- , taken as an absolute absence of meaning, and contradictory to the term S . If we accept that the semantic axis S (substance of content) is articulated, at the level of the form and content, in two contradictory semes: $S1 <> S2$, these two semes, taken separately, point to the existence of their contradictory terms: $-S1 <> -S2$. (Greimas 1973: 49)

As can be seen, a double relation is thus created, expressing disjunction and conjunction (1973: 49), which in turn represents meaning at the level of manifestation.

Greimasian double relation, as can be noted in the two separate instances (named the elementary structure of meaning), can thus overcome the previously established structuralist dichotomy, through the semiotic square. As we can conclude, Greimas has precise transformational procedures in the frames of creating such a structure: therefore such an approach should belong to the semiotics of precision.

Besides the structures' existence (named narrative in determined Greimasian procedures), created through a process of transformation the constituent elements of the semiotic process can further be developed towards a semiotics of action, thus providing the movability of states from one to another (see Greimas and Fontanille 1993). The semiotic process though, besides the aforementioned precision in its procedures towards manifestation (i. e., the deduction of meaning and its semantic units), can result in the imprecision of a process, or better expressed: in a deduction of a spectrum of semantic units. The conceptualization of different states of phenomena and/or beings as moveable within the mentioned theoretical approach lies on epistemological grounds. As it is rightfully observed:

It is therefore not surprising that the best-explored, and perhaps the most efficient, level of the generative trajectory is, in fact, situated in that middle area between the discursive and epistemological components. We are referring above all to the modeling of narrativity and to its actantial organization. The concept of an actant, freed from its psychological frame and defined only by its doing, is the *sine qua non* condition for developing a semiotics of action. (Greimas and Fontanille 1993: xvi–xvii)

Owing to the fact that the previously mentioned basic model (and there are more if one intends their application aimed at the stage of tinniest semantic units) regards the signification process primarily, we shall give an example here. The relation between Romeo and Juliet in Shakespeare represents a relation of conjunction because of their love, on one hand, whereas on the other, the relation between their parents respectively represents a relation of contradictoriness. Love (between Romeo and Juliet) and hatred (among their parents respectively), creates the emotional status of the play as well as of its characters. This is the reason for the tragic events in the plot of the play.

Is there any reason for a determined event to occur in the plot of a given work of art that a protagonist (and/or a viewer and/or a reader) might have wished that it should have happened otherwise? Can a semiotician perceive other sorts of events occurring so that he or she might rely on hypothetical situations that might finally build narrative structures ready for a semiotic context? Regarding such a prospective, Greimas and Fontanille (1993) have provided for an epistemological level, which establishes the semiotic preconditions, in a way that previously established topoi and/or focal points become transformable into a new state of existence. This is possible in the frames of a performative expression, such as, for instance, in a Shakespearean tragedy.

The aim of the Greimasian model was not as simple as one could conclude at first sight: such semiotic squares have to develop their manifestation trajectories, so as to reach meaning as a result. In relation to the example, questions like the following could be advanced: when have love and hatred reached their culmination and why? What kind of relation do the characters have within the development of the story? How much more time is needed so that the mentioned semiotic topoi reach the level of a comparison among each other so that a determined relationship may be established? Reaching a level that can clearly show the relationships and/or phenomena becoming passionate in an applicative and a manifestation stage at the surface structure (named a semio-narrative level), due to deductive procedures in terms of a generative trajectory, is a proof of a multifold semantic specter.

In the aforementioned context for instance, one would advance the following question: was it something that Hamlet or any other protagonist of the play wanted to do, or anything else that could not have been done so as to reach the

mentioned culmination point (and/or the tensitivity component in the Greimasian sense of the word) of the tragedy? Greimasian theory provides us with instances of modality in action, which prove the imprecision of elements exposed in his semantic models.

We should note also that Greimas himself offers a semiotician more than one option: for instance, besides the elementary semantic structure, the mentioned relations later develop into actantial relations which, besides the manifesting status of various analyzed phenomena, can show their actions. The actions in turn are being performed by subjects, seen as semiotic systems, which may contain semes, transformable into passions as taxonomies, in their final manifestation results like: emotionality, sadness, happiness, death, hatred, etc.

2.3 On the logical option of semiotics: Peirce

Besides the structurally-minded semiotics and Greimas (which I consider to be different from previous structuralists' mainstream), Peirce brought to general semiotics another approach. An inclusive element however of all theoreticians we have mentioned until now, is doubtlessly the process of signification.

If the aforementioned process, in the frames of the linguistically minded semiotics, is claimed to be derived or deduced by a psychologically originated paradigm (Saussure 1959), in Peirce's terms semiotics is deduced by a philosophically originated paradigm, which makes the two points of view different in the frames of their methodological approach. Differing from Saussure, Peirce "... derives semiotics from logic, a normative science branching from philosophy" (Rauch 1999: 49).

The mutually exclusive factor between the two approaches is semiotics' definition on the one hand, and on the other, the mutually inclusive factor between them: the process of signification. Here is how Peirce defines semiotics: "logic, in its general sense, is, as I believe I have shown only another name for semiotic, the quasi-necessary, or formal, doctrine of signs" (CP 2.227). It can be noticed from this statement that he treats semiotics as a science of representation. If psychologically-minded semiotics on one hand treats it as an ongoing process, like dichotomies (as we have seen) out of which one is abstract (as determined processes must take place), and the next is concrete (as such process has to be performed), on the other, then, logically-minded semiotics treats it as a deduction, out of which a signification must result. The obvious difference in terms of both approaches, as can be noticed, lies within methodology.

To prove such representational importance in this respect we shall quote some of his basic definitions in terms of the semiotic elements:

A sign, or representamen, is something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity. It addresses somebody, that is, creates in the mind of that person an equivalent sign, or perhaps a more developed sign. That sign which it creates I call the interpretant of the first sign. The sign stands for something, its object. It stands for that object, not in all respects, but in reference to a sort of idea, which I have sometimes called the ground of the representamen. (CP 2.228)

If a sign stands to represent something else, it means that such an entity would not perform any processes in advance (in case one compares it with any other issue or, if one stated that it is an entity, a smaller unit, which has to be processed). On the contrary, such a sign in Peirce's terms would refer to a signification. Peirce, out of such a model, infers meaning in his representing three things or issues. Therefore the sign, or representamen, is his First or Firstness, "which stands in a genuine triadic relation to a Second, called its Object [or Secondness], as to be capable of determining a Third [or Thirdness], called its Interpretant" (CP 2.274). Thus, for instance, in Shakespeare's *Othello*, Firstness is his being a successful worrier (which can be concluded from his behavior, clothing in the scene, etc.), Secondness is his being a Moor, whereas a Thirdness is his naiveté, which is a cause of the tragedies happening in the play.

One should bear in mind that this is not the only triadic relation expressed by Peirce. One could even analyze the symbolic element as a consequence of a procedural deduction, which in turn brings about distinctive features as a result.

We may thus place Peirce's Firstness and Secondness within precision in semiotics, as they represent a Subject-Object-like representation, or a first level of signification. The Thirdness, which is the Interpretant itself, shall belong to its imprecision, because of the possible symbolic reference in it.

3 Conclusion: The processes of signification

As we have stated earlier, the process of signification is what makes all such theories inclusive in their approach and/or methodology. I intend by such a process to derive or deduce meaning(s) from the entities under semiotic analysis, or differently expressed: to apply a process of semiosis. Seen from the practical and pragmatic point of view, one may ask: what it is that is decent or eligible for a semiotic analysis? How do we make such an object be comparable, representational or communicable? The aforementioned question in turn shall have to find its answer within our choice of analytical method to approach various objects of research.

The instance of *Hamlet* should be seen as an interaction within human relationships. The results of conjunction and disjunction, as shown in Greimasian

models, bring about psychological results based upon a logical procedural deduction analysis. Hamlet's relation with Ophelia is a relation of a conjunction. However, such a relation between two lovers is conditioned by other circumstances, among which is the incest problem in "Hamlet" (see Shakespeare 2002).

A relation of contradiction, on the other hand, can be firmly concluded between Hamlet and his father. The reason is obvious. One must state, however, that Hamlet's doubts and hesitations, which reach their peak in Hamlet's famous monologue, start much earlier – even after Shakespeare's exposition phase in his tragedy. In conclusion, even such contradictoriness is conditioned by Hamlet's wanting to do, or taking actions about which he is not certain. We can face the notion of tensitivity in the frames of Hamlet's hesitations, which later resolves itself tragically as a consequence of content's aspects of the play.

The relation with his mother as well, is of an extreme importance. He seemingly thinks it should represent a conjunction, nevertheless in reality, it is disjunction. If such relations are established in the shape of a syntagmatic and paradigmatic axis, we come to Greimasian semiotic square and his actantial models, which foresee comparison, replacement, and substitution of the taxonomy (through a way of transformation), aimed at semantic units.

Our examples of treating a Shakespearean work semiotically here have been considered only as a proof to the fact that such works of art can be an object of analysis. Procedurally speaking, not only that basic semantic notions can be deduced, but as well such tiny elements, initially were named "semes" by Greimas (1973). It naturally entails and foresees the whole of the aforementioned theory applied as created by Greimas and Fontanille (1993). My aim is to prove theoretically the fact that social contexts of various kinds are definitely semiotically treatable and interpretable.

In conclusion, I call a *semiotics of precision* each process that, while undergoing transformation, can show and transmit an exact amount of the information process, as it is otherwise foreseen by semiotics' theoretical paradigms. Such processes (due to the communicational processes performed in general) can be seen in linguistic or language-based semiotics (including, for instance, Saussure's semiotics). In addition, as we have claimed, Greimasian trajectories of deriving semantic units also belong to such a methodology.

I call a *semiotics of imprecision* everything that escapes the exactness of procedures as foreseen in applied semiotics, and that is applicable, for instance, in the field of artistic expressions. The unequivocal messages it can create drive us to multiple semantic fields. Greimasian modalities or modal expressions seen as a result of determined structures shall belong to the semiotics of imprecision. Actions expose the subject as a performer (in relation to the object), and are a subject-matter to an interpretation process. In frames of this last process, as it

should be understandable, a semiotician interprets to the extent it is semiotically possible. Thirdness in Peirce also represents imprecision, because it interprets the First (or Firstness) so as to find a logical or an inferred semantic choice. The micro-units however that emerge from a signification process contain different semantic nominations. It proves, in conclusion, the poly-semantic nature of its results.

The signs' growth in general, at least regarding "classical semiotics" (Tarasti 2000), has shown to have proved its signification results in terms of its represented relationships of its objects (be they dichotomies, abstractions that have turned into concreteness, etc.) In addition, other semiotic theories, especially grounded on the cognitive comprehension of the signification process itself, are purposely not taken into account in this study, which basically focused on a possible methodological nomination of some chosen semiotic methods that I have considered and that can illustrate such a methodological "intervention," as examples. Tarasti's existential semiotics (2000) for instance, is one of such theoretical approaches that has given a primacy to the subject study (understandably, owing to the fact it is based upon existential philosophy and the *transcendence* notion), thus, among other related disciplines, making an artistic expression and aesthetic value not only semiotically treatable and valuable, but even scientifically applicable and a part of a general human existence.

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