

Semiotic Sequences and Cultural Appropriation

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international / philosophy / opinion/analysis

I have recently discovered that donning a cleaner's garb or waiter's apron is a passport to a wealth of knowledge. A very rich harvest of information is available to every non-descript person in a service industry. A typical but dated example (I do not wish to compromise my current activities) would be an overheard conversation between two bankers regarding the then new strategy of reducing (their) costs while simultaneously narrowing the options/freedoms of the population. The banks and other large financial institutions decided that it would be far more expedient and profitable to run their businesses utilising a strategy of perpetual debt rather than temporary debt. 'Joe and Josephine' citizen were about to become perpetual debtors or economic slaves.

Large financial institutions and corporations flocked to the new strategy/model; numerous service fees were created and an abundance of accessible new loans and credit options became available. An historical shift occurred in banking; the banks were once required to compete against each other, however, it became apparent that it would be to the advantage of banking institutions to co-operate and rely on predictable incomes extracted from the public – who are now forced to obtain loans to cover nearly every aspect of modern life. [The social strategy employed to increase borrowing was simple, increase costs while decreasing real income.]

The above formula was designed for the masses not the elites whose real incomes have skyrocketed to obscene levels. Thirty to fifty million-dollar salaries with various additional bonuses and termination payments (regardless of performance) are not uncommon today.

Numerous major corporate failures clearly indicate that huge disparities in individual incomes do not reflect levels of competence or skill. The prevailing system favours cliques and nepotism; the 'best person' does not usually obtain the position in which they would excel. The downward pressure of exploitation on the people suffocates the upward mobility of highly suitable and talented people to fill positions most suitable for their particular talents. Corporate elites reserve the best positions for their business colleagues or family members regardless of their suitability for the position.

Regardless of the contempt the common people now have for the banks, few western nations have not succumbed to the new economic social slavery methods of the twenty-first century. Today the proof is in the proverbial pudding. How does it feel? Increased debt equals decreased quality of life, mobility and the social disintegration that results from the destruction of the family unit. Most families today exist in name only as there is little time available for the children or spouse. Available time is spent working in order to meet all the financial obligations required for the basic necessities and other costs related to maintaining a family.

The disintegration of the nuclear family unit was not anticipated as a product of economic social control but is consequential to financial hardship/pressures. The desired increase in social manageability resulting from perpetual debt comes at the cost of the basic social unit of society, the family. Financial institutions are now fully aware of the social cost of their debt strategy, however, profit is the prime consideration of all financial institutions, negative social consequences are now conveniently ignored or left to welfare organizations.

If our governments and the richest (top 100) are taken as role models then honesty is no longer the preferable or desired option – criminal tactics are the ‘order of the day’! I refer to another overheard conversation between two smartly dressed males who were quietly bragging of the successes of their latest recruits in operations designed to deceive. A third male who had the demeanour and appearance of a history teacher joined the pair for lunch. I would not have given this person a second glance in any social situation. ‘Ordinary’ seemed invented to describe this person, except for the deplorable content of his conversation he could have easily passed for a pastor or bureaucrat.

I have recently utilized modern technology to extend the range of human hearing. The information ‘incidentally’ and ‘accidentally’ obtained falls into numerous categories; a distinct small percentage is clearly a marketable commodity. I had no idea that meaningless information to most people could command such staggering amounts; it seems there is always someone who requires certain information.

Information brokers have become a fact of life in today’s world; the vast majority have no allegiances preferring instead to offer a service to the highest bidder. Allegiances are a liability in the trade. Partiality or partisanship is for the masses not for the merchants of ‘reality’.

It soon became apparent that there is no such thing as useless information. A skilled ‘comber’ is able to recognise a myriad of semiotic gems that would be ignored by the average person. High quality information is rarely obtained instantly. Patience is a virtue in the comber’s profession. Incomplete sequences usually form complete pictures in time; the source/s must be given ‘space’ but visited frequently. Frequent appearances create familiarity and the visual habit of congruity. But it is a mistake to become close or too familiar, even if invited. Maintain ‘furniture’ familiarity status rather than friend or companion, most people are fools but it only takes one alert individual and you’ve lost your meal ticket and opulent lifestyle!

For the activist/subversive every situation presents an opportunity, never dismiss anything; become a collector and in time you too could affect an outcome. [It is always the small that overcomes the large!] The best plan can be decimated by a skerrick of information. Trust no one who makes approaches to you, remain alert and vigilant at all times.

Coherent patterns are irresistible to the human mind; organizations are particularly susceptible to coherence and ‘symmetrical’ patterns, especially those that deal in information. Life is full of ironies.

The formation of meaningful patterns is an art without rules; the maintenance of plausibility and familiarity are the only requirements. If a particularly stubborn chain of information is incomplete it is advisable to juxtapose material from other sources, for example; I recently attended a talk on the polarising forces in the religions of Islam and Christianity. During the course of the talk it became evident that the essential core of both religions is identical, the authority of the text is at the heart of both belief systems.

Islam is a lingua-centric religious doctrine, implying that God is Arabic or has adopted the Arabic cultural tradition; whereas in Christianity it is the message contained in the text that dominates. However, both adhere irrationally and fanatically to the authority of the text. The irrational view that texts (written language) are a favoured form of Divine expression borders on pathological unreason as it is obvious that texts are the productions of human culture.

The text is the principal mode of expression of large civilizations. Writing was developed of necessity; large organised societies required records, record keepers and scribes for a multitude of reasons. Writing is both a product and medium of culture and as it is language, text is the perfect

vehicle for those who wish to engage and frolic in a particular cultural consciousness.

The act of reading is a dynamic that unconsciously invites the inscriber into the deepest recesses of the readers mind; the text is a powerful art form that may contain various subliminal codes specifically designed to harness the most emotionally responsive triggers in a particular culture. The reader easily adopts the passive attitude regardless of a 'negative' re-action to a text. The inanimate text requires decoding and that process requires an animate mind; please note that 'animated' engagement is an involuntary response, in order to decode a text the reader must necessarily open the door to his/her entire living being/consciousness - it is the mind that contains all the cultural cues and information required to decode/understand the text.

Engaging the mind at the very level of personal identity and values etc, is an extremely privileged position for the inscriber and possibly a hazardous position for the reader.

The mind does not exist outside of (or removed from) its content. The mind is culture, or the constant stream of cultural images/text/signs/symbols called thought! It is both a repository and medium of culture. A well-crafted text is not only able to engage the mind it has the ability to alter it! Everything you are today has been learnt; the mind is already trained as a passive recipient of data - you have just been violated and inoculated against future fabrications (9/11 etc). Religious polarisations of light-dark, night-day, good-evil, love-hate, life-death etc, fall into the category of binary oppositions, that is, qualities that are mutually inter-dependent and cannot exist outside an oppositional relationship. The following quote written 600 BC highlights the point:

"If not for the notion of beauty there would be no ugliness.
If not for the notion of good there would be no evil.

Polarities alternate one with the other and are mutually bound in opposition."

Truth exists only in contrast and is therefore dependent on 'Lie' for its existence. In Milton's "Paradise Lost", it is Satan who has the dominant role in a relational interplay with God -- for very good reason! Truth is qualified and brought into existence by its opposite -- it is therefore clear that the 'Lie' is the determining (dominant?) factor!

The next paper in the series will cover 'Assembly and Presentation'.

[Create your own 9/11 and manipulate the masses with bogus information - become a merchant of 'reality'; dreams that you live by and nightmares that others die for! Or if that doesn't appeal create your own world religion - that formula is simplicity itself!]

Legalese:

The above content is purely for entertainment purposes, the tradition of the social novelists notwithstanding. Truth can never be found on a page but an abundance of useful information is always available. The Art is knowing the difference.

Cleaves Alternative News. <http://cleaves.lingama.net/news/story-258.html>