

Final Revision:

Title: Encoding/Decoding, the Transmission Model and a Court of Law

Keyan G. Tomaselli

Abstract:

Stuart Hall's encoding/decoding model is discussed in terms of CS Peirce's theory of the interpreter and interpretant. This historical semiotic window frames an example to which the Hall model was applied in South Africa to oppose a military dirty tricks campaign that involved a Supreme Court case brought against the Minister of Defence by the End Conscription Campaign (ECC) requiring him to cease his disinformation against the ECC. The Minister's own expert had proposed a transmission model of communication that was defeated by the Peirce-Hall combination. The author argues that the model can be massively strengthened when combined with Peircean semiotics.

Keywords: Stuart Hall, encoding/decoding, CS Peirce, Phaneroscopy, semiotics, reception

Media-society relations are best studied within the broader conceptual environment facilitated by the circuit of culture model (Du Gay et al., 1997) that mimics Karl Marx's circle of capitalist production, distribution and exchange. The model implicitly incorporated Stuart Hall's (1981) ground-breaking encoding-decoding relationship. My argument will be that Charles Sanders Peirce's (Hartshorne and Weiss, 1931-5) idea of the 'interpretant' – the idea to which the sign gives rise - was a crucial, if unspoken, progenitor of Hall's model. Working at the same time as Hall, Umberto Eco (1972) had proposed "aberrant decoding" on which Hall must have drawn, as his chapter refers to a semiological article on encoding. The early Stencilled Occasional Paper and Hutchinson book series' that mapped out the early Birmingham University Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) project under Stuart Hall's leadership identified the following semiological/semiotic sources also: Roland Barthes, Jonathan Culler and V.I. Volosinov, amongst others.

The interpretant, implied in Hall's model, is key to understanding how interpreters make sense of, and respond to, signs, in relation to the discursive contexts from which they are generated. Eco had connected the dots thus: "... a system of signs is not only a system of sign vehicles, but also a system of meanings" (1972:103). Despite the much earlier Peircean

semiotic, and the later reformulation by Eco, the explicit semiotic connections remain largely muted in cultural studies literatures. The model was a recurring point of reference at the CCCS50ⁱ conference held in Birmingham in June 2014. This event celebrated the establishment of the archive, an intervention that Richard Johnson described as a “re-occupation of Birmingham University” (that so precipitously closed the Centre in 2002 (see Webster, 2004).

Where Peirce emphasized the ways in which signs work, Hall and subsequent media reception scholars developed ways of understanding how communities of interpreters (what Peirce called ‘sign-communities’) make sense of media messages (e.g. Morley, 1992). Hall’s model actively animated what Peirce’s explicitly and in much more detail called the second trichotomy of signs in the act of reception/decoding, rather than focusing just on encoding on the one hand or decoding on the other.

Where the Hall model admits a variety of interpretants, 1950s mass society theories, conventional structural-functionalist sociology and communication science that held sway during the Cold War and apartheid era, could not account for interpretations that contested or negotiated the dominant ideology. The transmission understanding of ‘communication’ is widely criticized for its concentration on the level of message exchange to the exclusion of context or an understanding of the complex relationship between the encoding and decoding ends of the communication chain (Hall, 1980:57). Mechanistic stimulus-response applications of the Shannon and Weaver (1949) model, together with administrative research, formed the basis of South African communication science during the 1980s. Opposing sign-communities were considered aberrant, if not deviant, threatening, and the state feared their potential for political mobilization. For the purposes of this paper, the term Communication-Medium-Response (C-M-R) will be used instead of transmission as it more actively encodes the stimulus-response mechanism assumed by communication science, which itself largely drew on organizational psychology.

Peirce’s second trichotomy fractured the co-terminous dyadic de Saussurian structuralist semiology by deliberately locating the viewer/spectator/interpreter/decoder as the meaning-making organism, in a triadic rather than a dyadic (structuralist, semiological) relationship. That is to say, semiotics as triadic includes an active *interpreter* with in the sign-signifier relationship. If Cultural Studies examines: i) culture as structure; and b) culture as a response to structureⁱⁱ, then the encoding/decoding model was a natural early development addressing these interlinked relationships. A mixture of semiotics and semiology, first popularised by John Fiske and John Hartley (1978), opened the door to the study of text-context-interpreter

relations. Peirce's overarching frame or supersign of the phaneron (in contrast to Kant's more restricted notion of the phenomenon) offers a sophisticated framework via which to approach both how meaning is made and also interpreted, and moreover, how to explain stark differences in the ways in which different sign communities (interpreters) make different sense of the same messages. The phaneron encodes all and anything that is present to the mind in the act of interpretation, including fictions, the imaginary and the supernatural "regardless of whether it corresponds to any real thing or not" (Hartshorne and Weiss, 1931-1935, 1.284). The Phaneroscopic table overleaf schematises a tabulation of sign relations:

THE PHANEROSCOPIC TABLE

Orders of Signification	Peirce's Order of Philosophy	Phaneroscopy (Peirce's Categories)	The 3 Triads of Signs & their Relations ⁱⁱⁱ	Nature of Semiotic Interaction	Order of Discourse	Phenomenology
1	<p>Aesthetics</p> <p>Description of Quality or feeling: the emotional interpretant</p>	<p>Firstness:</p> <p>Central Idea Quality (1868)</p> <p>Immediate interpretant (a feeling)</p>	<p>Functional:</p> <p>Icon (motivated sign)</p> <p>Sign proper: Qualisign</p> <p>Operation: Rheme</p>	<p>Encounter</p> <p>Signifying organism's initial face-to-face reception of significant potentiality.</p>	<p>Polemical</p> <p>The evoking of emotional signs: racism, nationalism, infatuation, etc.</p>	<p>Being-there</p> <p>Strangeness at facing the new: the basic incarnate condition.</p>
2	<p>Ethics</p> <p>Analysis of norms in doing: the energetic interpretant</p>	<p>Secondness:</p> <p>Identity in the face of the Other</p> <p>Dynamical interpretant</p> <p>Reaction (1868)</p>	<p>Functional:</p> <p>Index</p> <p>Denotation</p> <p>Connotations</p> <p>Myth – which bleeds into the 3rd order below</p>	<p>Experience</p> <p>Recognition or re-sponse to significance: knowing how to conduct oneself in a situation.</p>	<p>Rhetorical</p> <p>Aimed at conduct or behaviour: persuading to act <i>this</i> way instead of <i>that</i> way.</p>	<p>Activity/Doing</p> <p>Work directed at making the world: producing familiar material goods.</p>
3	<p>Science/Logic</p> <p>Activity of elaborating relations: the final or logical interpretant.</p>	<p>Thirdness:</p> <p>Codes/syntagma</p> <p>Mode of relations</p> <p>Logical interpretant</p> <p>Mediation (1868)</p>	<p>Functional:</p> <p>Symbol</p> <p>Sign Proper: Legisign</p> <p>Operation: Argument</p>	<p>Intelligibility</p> <p>Making sense in regular ways: transmitting knowledge about relationships between encounter and experience.</p>	<p>Reflexive</p> <p>Elaborating thought on relations between emotional and active discourse: producing new responses or conduct.</p>	<p>Public Signs</p> <p>Producing the new as part of the world: changing the world with new ways of doing (habits, conduct).</p>

Table 1. The Peircean Trichotomy, relating signs to discourse, philosophy, and the phenomenology of the human condition. The Table is to be read in terms of the multiple dimensions of significance and sensibility in the ways it is possible to experience the presentation and re-presentation of the world (as defined through Hannah Arendt (1958). (Derived from Tomaselli and Shepperson, 2001: 93).

The example through which a phaneroscopic framing of the encoding/decoding model will be illustrated involves a Supreme Court case brought against the Minister of Defence by the End Conscription Campaign (ECC) in 1989 requiring him to cease a disinformation campaign being conducted against it by the South African Defence Force (SADF). The Minister's expert witness had proposed a stimulus-response argument that anyone reading an ECC poster would be **automatically** persuaded to adopt a revolutionary posture. Encoding/decoding was not part of communication science's conceptual repertoire. The Court, however, did understand that encoding and decoding codes sometimes collide.

Encoding/Decoding

Three different ways in which readers respond to texts were proposed by Hall, which appear to have been triggered by Eco's (1972) intervention:

The first (and the only position of which communication science is aware) is one of transparent decoding where the reader interprets the message in terms of the reference code in which it was encoded (i.e. the intentions of the writer) (Hall, 1981:136).

The second position, characterized by Hall (1981: 137) as 'negotiated', occurs when readers acknowledge the legitimacy of the reference code in which the message has been encoded, but reserve the right to negotiate their own ideological positions. Eco talks of "aberrant decoding" as "the unexpected exception, if not the rule" (1972:105). The message maker is not always aware of such aberrant possibilities.

The third is when the reader understands both the literal and connotative inflection given by a discourse but decodes the message in a globally different way (Hall, 1981: 137). This is no longer aberrant but oppositional decoding.

Within the three positions outlined by Hall reside interpretants where discursive struggle occurs, elaborated in the next section.

Outline and Division of Interpretants: 'The cultural connection'

Every sign is an interpretant. Every interpretant is related to its object through the sign it interprets or decodes. The three kinds of interpretants are: i) the immediate, ii) the dynamical and iii) the final. The immediate interpretant resides in a sign's own "peculiar interpretability" before it gets to any Interpreter (Lieb 1953, Peirce, Letters, 36). The immediate is the logical potential or possibility of a sign to be interpreted. It is a feeling, an undigested central idea that exists in and of itself, located in firstness.

The dynamical interpretant is "the direct effect actually produced by a sign upon an interpreter of it" (4.536)^{iv}. This interpretant is divided according to the different kinds of responses within the interpreter/decoder or reader of which Peirce identifies three: i) the emotional, ii) the energetic, and iii) the logical. The emotional is the feeling in the interpreter invoked by the sign. It may be one of recognition or it might be elevated to a higher level which is itself "the only proper significant effect that the sign produces" (5.475). The energetic interpretant is that which involves an effort - either physical or mental; this sign resides in secondness. The logical interpretant resides in the category of thirdness/ideology. The ultimate logical interpretant is necessary to break the cycle of interpretants producing signs. Unlimited semiosis - encoding/decoding/new coding - occurs until this point. The logical interpretant is divisible into the non-ultimate and the ultimate. The latter will act as an explanation which must be in terms of something other than what is to be explained. The only instance of ultimate logical interpretants, which would need to have a general application, is that of a habit-change - meaning a modification of a person's tendencies toward action, resulting from previous experiences or from previous exertions of his will or acts, or from a complexus of both kinds of causes (5.476).

Since only intellectual concepts have logical interpretants, the future tense of the interpretant is in the conditional 'would-be' category (5.482). The ultimate logical interpretant is similar to Hall's notion of 'ideological closure', where messages are designed to limit interpretant production. This implies action (political or otherwise). The natural termination of a sign (semiotic closure) occurs when it serves a particular purpose or a vested interest. Peirce's 'habit' is similar to Antonio Gramsci's (1971) "common sense", the taken-for-granted way of doing things which involve no change of social practice (in Althusser's 1971 sense) or perception of alternatives. Habit (or common sense) can be identified with the ultimate logical interpretant. Some signs capable of producing an ultimate logical interpretant do not do so because the interpreter resists carrying the semiotic process sufficiently far to establish or change a habit.

Habits are general and thirds, social practices -- they incline individuals to act or react in prescribed ways under certain conditions. While Peirce conducted his discussion of logical interpretants in the context of 'scientific inquiry', my argument is that Peirce's theory of interpretants can be extended to apply to everyday practices where individuals are arguing, thinking, reacting and acting. Habits, being thirds, are the normative rules within which individuals, groups, classes and class fractions behave, think and to which they respond. Practices are reacted to in terms of something other than "what is to be explained" (Fitzgerald, 1966: 153); that is, the C-M-R framework obscures understanding of particular concepts and forecloses unlimited semiosis to within the limits set by the mode of relations -- ideology -- that is the habit. Habits are not signs because the effect produced by the habit is an action, though it may be triadically produced. Signs make connection with the material world at the level of thirdness. In other words, reality itself is a set of relations where everything has a semiotic value.

The final interpretant is "that which would finally be decided to be the true interpretant if consideration of the matter were carried so far that an ultimate opinion were reached" (8.184). This involves the interpretation of the sign that would be negotiated by the community of scientists if they understood completely the laws that regulate the effects of the sign.

The immediate interpretant is the concept of the sign itself and so is an analogue of firstness where the possibilities of interpretation are still open. The central idea has yet to take on specificity, identity in the face of the other. The dynamical interpretant is the effect produced on the interpreter. It is the triadic nature of the dynamical interpretant that allows Peirce to equate it with the sign itself. This makes the dynamical interpretant an analogue of secondness. The final interpretant is that which "would be" if one understands the laws of connection which structure the posited phaneron or sign.

Of the three interpretants, the immediate, the dynamical and the final, only the dynamical is an interpretant in the narrow sense, since Peirce defines the interpretant as the effect that the sign on the interpreter, and it is only the dynamical that completes this triadic process. The immediate interpretant is not an interpretant in the narrow sense, since it only establishes the interpretability of a sign. The final interpretant is also only a quasi-interpretant since it is an ideal.

The Model Tested: Communication or Propaganda

Few conventional studies of communication admit that lies and lying, double-talk, deception, psychological warfare and the struggle for signs and meaning are part of communication

practices (see Eco, 1985). The concept conventionally assumes a benevolent sharing of information. Benevolence is very rarely the case, however, as interpersonal, inter-class and inter-cultural power relations always circumscribe the nature of the interaction.

The trajectory of cultural studies that emerged in South Africa during the early 1980s preceded awareness of the earlier Birmingham approaches. This trajectory largely arose out a Peircean semiotic that linked resistance with worker theatre, performance studies and an explicit anti-apartheid media practice. A second trajectory, not at issue here, was an EP Thompson culturalism that dominated worker history, labour sociology and worker theatre (see Tomaselli and Shepperson, 2001).

Generated by schools of journalism, media studies and performance, cultural studies deriving from elements of the four liberal English-language universities found itself in conflict with the implacably positivist, largely apartheid-supporting dominant communication science paradigm that held sway at the majority of Afrikaans-language universities. Where the former scholars directly took on the ruling hegemony the latter 'neutrally' located themselves within the administrative research paradigm, and directly consulted for the state, the military and other ideological and repressive state apparatuses (Tomaselli and Louw, 1993).

It was not surprising, then, in the encoding/decoding example below, that the adversaries in the court case reflected the broader communication science vs. media studies conflict. Each paradigm was linked to different interpretive communities representative of where they stood politically. The explicit use of the model as read via Peirce occurred in a number of instances, of which the illustration below is but one.

Militarization of the Sign

Militarization was central to the apartheid state's 'total strategy' / WHAM (Win Hearts and Minds) theory following the June 1976 Soweto uprising. The dove-like WHAM shifted to the hawkish COIN-OPS (Counter Insurgency Operations) under successive states of emergency following 1986, which necessitated greater military intervention as a mechanism of rule. As the example below attests, however, SADF leverage did not totally encompass the judiciary.

A 'war-psychosis' amongst whites was generated by the state's propaganda agencies, whilst trying to pacify blacks (Seegers, 1988; Evans, 1983). Following the State of Emergency inaugurated in 1986, the media were directly manipulated by the Bureau of Information (Tomaselli and Tomaselli 1986), and all verbal, pictorial and written criticism of state action on containing the continuing 'unrest' was declared 'subversive' (*Government Gazette*, No 101,

1986). Definitions of 'subversive' fluctuated as unions and media institutions challenged, sometimes successfully, the regulations through the courts. The state's response was to redraft the regulations. Increasingly under attack both internally and externally, the ruling alliance amplified pressure on the anti-apartheid press and any organisation using media to oppose the war being fought on South Africa's borders against the allies of the banned and exiled African National and Pan-African Congresses respective military arms.

The discourse of 'total war' – one that is economic, financial, political, psychological, scientific in addition to being a war of armed forces - eliminates the distinction between civilian and military categories. As Armand Mattelart (1979:406) states: "All of society has become a battlefield and every individual is in the camp of the combatants, either for or against. It is a total war because the battlefields and the arms used pertain to all levels of individual and community life, and because this war does not allow the very slightest space to escape from the gravitational pull of the conflict".

The ECC was seen to a key player in anti-war internal resistance. Many thousands of young white men had fled South Africa to escape conscription. The few conscientious objectors who remained in the country were getting sustained and often positive media coverage in the liberal press, while many who did serve were conscripted against their wills. The ECC was very active on university campuses and it had the backing of lawyers, social justice and religious organisations, and ran an extensive and systematic alternative media campaign.

During the last decade of apartheid the SADF and pro-apartheid media imaged the ECC as enemy, linked to Moscow. Counter-measures against the Campaign by the SADF Communication Ops Division between 1986-7 involved both violence and propaganda tactics such as circulating: i) false documentation containing illegal content sourced to ECC; while ii) rumours were spread by *agent provocateurs* both inside and outside anti-apartheid organisations, aimed at creating moral panics and tarring ECC members as folk devils; iii) the use of demonic imagery, especially against internationally known activists like Archbishop Desmond Tutu; and iv) 'expert' academic witnesses were called on by courts of law to prove that the ECC was part of the 'total onslaught' being waged against the 'free world' by communism.

The ECC had previously taken the Minister of Defence to court in late 1987 where he was instructed to cease the anti-ECC dirty tricks. When the Minister failed to comply the ECC obtained a second injunction against him in August 1988. It is the latter case that is of interest here as the question of representation and reception is the issue here.

The Court Decides: Defeating the Transmission Model

The SADF relied in part on an MA thesis written by a student at Rand Afrikaans University for its defence. Content from this thesis had appeared in right wing magazines, and the SADF had obtained from her a summary of the thesis in affidavit form (Pepler, n.d.). The ECC's lawyers had contacted me as they had no answer to the Minister's witness whose testimony was that anti-conscription posters *a priori* encouraged revolution on the part of readers. That is to say, the hegemony of the C-M-R model of communication was so pervasive that even the ECC legal team had no counter-argument – initially.

Our team (that included graduate students at the Centre for Communication, Media and Society, University of Natal) responded to the Supreme Court affidavit by applying the encoding/decoding model to this legal setting. An analysis of militarization, hegemony, and the social construction of the enemy underpinned a semiotic analysis of anti- and pro-war publications (Graaf, 1988). This study provided the backdrop to a dramatic court victory by ECC. We counter-argued that the state witness's MA thesis had interwoven fiction and non-fiction, and that it had legitimised the resulting propaganda via an impression of scientific method, and through its reliance on the discredited C-M-R model. The Minister's argument was that anyone reading an ECC poster would be *automatically* predisposed to engage in insurrection. By critically interrogating the thesis and method we generated from it a theory of disinformation that was used by the ECC legal team against the Minister (see Louw and Tomaselli, 1991). An application of Peircean semiotics as animated by Hall's (1980) model demonstrated that it was the thesis and not agit-prop posters that were at fault; that is, that the witness's final interpretant had been reached via the impression of a scientific practice conducted in terms of something other than "what is to be explained" (Fitzgerald, 1966: 153). The result was the SADF's cessation of the dirty tricks, simultaneously followed by the expected banning of the campaign. Our semiotic analysis, in fact, revealed that many ECC posters were actually so confused as to be meaningless. Hall's model needs to include this fourth category.

In terms of the encoding/decoding model:

The first interpretant position occurs when viewers interpret the encoder's intentions without being made aware that the message is a construct created within the codes and rules of meaning structuring. At work in the ECC example were three totally different receptions assumed by the Minister and his expert witness:

First was the fiction (myth, secondness) that had no correspondence whatsoever to empirical evidence or how readers of posters interpret them. The state's witness transparently assumed that her interpretation would be everybody's interpretation, but that the energetic interpretants of those mechanistically persuaded by the poster to engage in revolt would, ironically, not include her own response. This non-reflexive interpretant made sense in terms of the dominant ruling classes (thirdness). Even exposure – encounters with ECC documents and personnel - failed to enable a change in habit.

Second, the legal firm was totally flummoxed as it too initially assumed the C-M-R model, while third, the CCMS expert witnesses immediately saw the contradictions in the thesis and witness statement when read through both Peircean semiotics and the encoding/decoding model. The witness, her supervisor and examiners had endorsed her fictional explanation (other than what was to be explained) of the ECC's supposed organisational chart and the presumed link to Moscow. The presumed Moscow link was the hidden transcript that was assumed in the thesis to be nevertheless present, if interpreted as a wilful structured absence (myth, ideology, intelligibility). Experience (knowing how to conduct oneself, secondness), resulted in the witness insisting that what was absent from the evidence was in fact was present in the way that ECC actually operated. The ECC organogram similarly assumed by the witness presumed a hierarchical organisation that did not exist because her transmission model insisted on it. The ECC rank and file were expected by the state's witness by means of stimulus-response to respond actively to 'instructions' from the fictional hierarchy which itself was acting on behalf of the Soviet Union. Despite access to ECC personnel and documents, habit-change on the part of the witness did not occur and the prevailing hegemonic common sense did not need factual verification as the link was already 'known' (myth, predisposition to preferred conduct) by the state and possibly her supervisor who in that year took up a position with the SADF.

The second position is through negotiating the code. Once the ECC's legal firm had been informed of negotiated and rejected decodings, it was able to develop a strategy to defeat the Minister's C-M-R argument. The expert witness's method and transmission assumptions had excluded the need to conduct semiotic or reception analysis of the ECC posters which might have identified incoherent signification, let alone aberrant readings. What was already 'known' by the witness and the Minister took on the force of discursive law (final interpretant, argument, no habit change), as disinformation repeats assertions until they become self-evident truths (myth, secondness). Thus, in this discourse, as articulated in the pro-apartheid public sphere, boo words predominate and ECC members were demonised as homosexuals, commies, and cowards. The ECC legal team had to navigate these common sense truths or myths. Habit-

change occurred as far as the ECC legal team was concerned and a new final interpretant was negotiated, centered on reception analysis and the encoding/decoding model.

The third response is when the interpreter understands both the literal and connotative inflections given a message but decodes it in a totally different way. This was our position as we studied both the MA thesis and expert affidavit derived from it. The right wing media legitimised its anti-ECC allegations by citing the ‘experts’ (whose word, by definition, is uncontested) quoted by Minister’s witness. Yet our team concluded in every instance that these sources (ranging from Marshall McLuhan to Mau Tse Tung had been misinterpreted (i.e. decoded in totally different ways). This reading was thus neutralized by involving me (acting on behalf of my team) as a ‘counter-expert’. Since we were able to trace sources from Lenin to *The Bible* we could show in many cases that they had been quoted out of context.

A fourth category, not mentioned by Hall, is that of confusion, not to be confused with aberrant decoding. One of our arguments was that some ECC posters were semiotically incomprehensible, no matter the ideological position of the reader. The judge agreed, especially when the SADF’s council himself was unable to interpret one particular poster.

The Final Interpretant: Conclusion

Peirce developed his semiotic to address the scientific ‘that which would be’ – the final interpretant when consensus is reached – the kinds of interpretations that arise from research practice. Where the first case brought against the Minister in 1987 focused on the illegality of the dirty tricks campaign, the second was an argument over representation and its significatory effects.

Phaneroscopy anchors Peirce’s ensuing analysis of "indirect knowledge" of reality, that is, encounters within which people make sense of their worlds. Encounters entail several possible experiences between an interpreter and an event or situation. The state’s witness had one particular intelligibility shaped by her own class and racial determinations. Our multi-racial anti-apartheid activist team at CCMS had a different interaction with regard to encounter, experience and intelligibility. If the phaneron pre-exists the sign, signs, then, are the vehicles through which experience becomes intelligible. The kind of intelligibility that results will differ between ideological positions as was experienced by the court.

The phaneron involves the interpretations of both *producers* (conceived texts, encoding) and *viewers* (perceived texts, interpretants) into a total framework of meaning (social and public

texts [apartheid, anti-apartheid]) which may have little to do with the ‘reality’ that the Minister’s expert witness encountered, experienced or was responding to.

Our drawing of a link between the Hall model and Peirce’s semiotic was a tactical one. Apart from the fact that we were simultaneously drawing on both phenomenological Peircean semiotics and materialist cultural studies as analytical frameworks, we were also engaged in active resistance. The state’s intellectual apparatuses themselves had dismissed Marxism as an affirmative theory, and thus dismissed cultural studies also, though it remained wary of both, especially Lenin and Gramsci whose work was seen to be of strategic organisational significance (unlike Marx’s work), and therefore an affirmative threat to the prevailing political economic order (Tomaselli, 2000). What Peirce, a non-Marxist, brought to the table was clear method, one recognised by the court and our academic ideological opponents, and a set semiotic techniques that trumped the Minister’s own council.

The crucial impact of the model in the way in which we applied it to anti-apartheid activity in South Africa as described in the above example has been significant. To this extent, Hall’s work in general underpinned much of our theory and practice during the late apartheid years and was crucial in helping us to develop resistance strategy and actual applications. Explicitly developing interrelated theories of militarization of the media to a theory of disinformation by linking Hall’s model to Peircean semiotics afforded the ECC legal team a scientifically legitimate conceptual framework through which to argue its case.

With regard to the source of the model, it is clear that in the heady days when CCCS was attempting to chart its own path that many of its staff and students in surfing the wider literature had appropriated what worked for them in their quest to constitute themselves as organic intellectuals in addressing the rise of Thatcherism. Eco, Volosinov and other semiotic and socio-linguistic scholars influenced the Centre’s debates, directly and indirectly. The achievement of the Centre was as much due to the way that it organised itself and its critical pedagogy as it was due to the intensive discussions through which ideas were developed, circulated, appropriated, merged and applied, involving what CS Peirce would identify as a community of scholars working on a common project. In its travels, cultural studies has become the over-arching enchanting idea (a phaneron of sorts) in its near universalism within sections of the Humanities.

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ⁱ CCCS stands for the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies established in 1964.

ⁱⁱ Thanks to Paul Wallace, a postgraduate student supervised by Hall during 1975-6, for this specific formulation. My thanks to Wallace for his extensive engagement of a previous draft of this paper.

ⁱⁱⁱ The Nature of Peirce's sign relation requires that any sign can only be real (that is, have a bearing on conduct) in relation *to* an Object *for* an Interpretant. But to relate *to* is, in Peirce's diagrammatic mathematical sense, to *map onto* in the sense of a function. Hence, the Icon-Index-Symbol triad refers to the ways signs proper *map onto* their Objects.

^{iv} Peirce's *Collected Papers* were published in eight volumes between 1936 and 1958. The convention cites by volume number, followed by paragraph number. A reference to Peirce, *CP* 7.138, therefore, indicates the source of our citation or material at Paragraph 138 of Volume 7 of the *Collected Papers*.