The Edusemiotics of Images

Essays on the Art-Science of Tarot

Inna Semetsky

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Semetsky’s new book offers a bracing account of Tarot semiotics in view of its deep significance for educational experience. Analyzing the symbolic language of Tarot images that express the intimations of the unconscious, she invites readers to explore novel ways of learning about the nature of ourselves and the world we are situated in. Combining thorough research with an accessible style, this groundbreaking book is essential reading for present and future generations of practitioners, academics and students across disciplines.

Pia Brînzeu, Professor of English Literature and Vice-Rector of the University of Timișoara, Romania; author of Corridors of Mirrors.

A sequel to the author’s Re-Symbolization of the Self: Human Development and Tarot Hermeneutic and Semiotics Education Experience, Semetsky’s new book presents the Tarot sign-system as a school of ethical living. Bringing the philosophies of Peirce, Deleuze, Dewey, Whitehead and Gebser in a dialogue with the cutting-edge science of coordination dynamics, she grounds the art of Tarot in the logic of signs acting across nature, culture and human mind. Building on Noddings’ “maternal factor”, Semetsky demonstrates how the lessons embodied in Tarot symbolism recover the feminine value of relations and contribute to Self-Other integration. Such is the message of Tarot images. The Image is the Message.

Igor Klyukanov, Professor of Communication, Eastern Washington University, USA; editor, Russian Journal of Communication; author of A Communication Universe: Manifestations of Meaning, Stagings of Significance.

Semetsky’s amalgamation of the techniques of visual communication with the emerging field of edusemiotics is an absolute masterpiece in transdisciplinarity. By forging diverse strands of inquiry into an overall model of how images enhance learning, Semetsky’s new book provokes us to take a fresh look at iconic information and is a required reading for everyone who is engaged with the art and science of visual semiotics at the intersection of nature and culture.

Marcel Danesi, Professor of Anthropology, University of Toronto, Canada; editor-in-chief, Semiotica; author of The Quest for Meaning: A Guide to Semiotic Theory and Practice.

Finally. An in-depth look at Tarot from within the field of semiotics, a perspective that had been inexplicably overlooked until now. As a language of exile from language, Tarot cards are silent words that became images. Here is a book that turns our thirst for symbols into a learning tool. The sign sings in Inna Semetsky’s work.

THE EDUSEMIOTICS OF IMAGES: ESSAYS ON THE ART—SCIENCE OF TAROT
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The Edusemiotics of Images

Essays on the Art—Science of Tarot

By

Inna Semetsky

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In the beginning is the relation

Martin Buber, *I and Thou*

The spirit … moves between and among signs …

Robert S. Corrington, *Nature’s Self: Our Journey from Origin to Spirit*
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The word *edusemiotics* was coined by Marcel Danesi (2010) to indicate a new interdisciplinary field of inquiry that has emerged as a result of the last decade of my research in the intersection of educational philosophy and semiotics – or the science of signs. Edusemiotics transcends the long-standing disciplinary boundaries between humanities and sciences. According to the American pragmatic philosopher and founder of modern semiotics Charles Sanders Peirce, the whole universe is perfused with signs whose action in nature, culture and the human psyche constitutes the dynamical process of *semiosis*. Semiosis – from the Greek σημείωσις, *sēmeiōsis*, a derivation of the verb *sēmeiō* meaning “to mark” – is the name given by Peirce to the process of the evolution of signs.

Briefly, semiotics is the study of signs and their signification; as such, it is considered to be of eminent importance to interdisciplinary research. In ancient times semiotics was a specific branch of medicine, with signs describing symptoms. Later semiotics became a branch of philosophy, with signs, verbal or nonverbal, describing the nature of things. The Scholastic tradition, for example, posited a sign to be something that we can not only directly perceive but also connect with something else, its other, by virtue of our or somebody’s else experience. A sign not only represents but also causes other signs to come to mind as a consequence of itself: this relation is expressed in the medieval formula *aliquid stat pro aliyo*, which is translated as something standing for something else.

The word symbol is derived from Greek *symbolon*, that is, a token composed of two halves used to verify identity by matching one part to the other. Symbol is usually a concrete sign or image that stands for some other, more abstract, entity or idea by virtue of either convention, analogy, or metaphor. But signs can be polysemic, that is, they may connote more than one meaning. Therefore meanings may be characterized by their surplus. A symbolic connotation may demonstrate a deeper layer of meanings, sometimes with complex emotional associations, or having a cryptic character as pointing to something beyond itself.

Semiotics exceeds the science of linguistics, the latter limited to verbal signs of words and sentences, and encompasses both natural and invented signs, such as culturally specific artifacts. Human beings are sign-users, and semiotics can also serve as a meta-language, the function of which is to describe human action. Semiotics both constructs models, or sign-systems, and considers them to be its own object of research. Among semiotic systems there is such language substitute as Morse code. In contrast to the immediate sense data of the surrounding world, the human mind uses mediation and interpretation when, within experience, it crosses what philosopher Alfred North Whitehead called the semiotic threshold.
All thinking proceeds in signs, and the continuous process of semiosis is theoretically unending; thus human development is potentially unlimited.

Semiosis is a communicative, interactive, relational, and interpretive process. Communication, that is, the flow of information and the mutual transformation of signs that are being translated into other signs, is an important concept in semiotics. Semiotically, communication as information sharing is considered to be a natural organizing principle. However, signs are not only intentionally produced for the purpose of communication, as in semiology; the sign-function as the semiotics of signification, of meaning-making, is equally important, and the action of signs manifests also in symptoms, or in dreams, or in the unconscious in psychoanalysis.

Images belong to a category of signs, and from a semiotic point of view a mental image is an icon, or representation, of the real world. An internal or mental image serves as a semiotic tool, called the interpretant, so as to conceptualize, bring to knowledge, and create meaning for something that has been experientially perceived. An interpreter of signs connects the antecedent with its consequent by means of a specific inferential sign-relation. An interpretative act gives a sign its meaning: without a lived experience signs remain lifeless and mute. Signs perform an instrumental function: they can serve as tools of/for human knowledge, learning, and development. The semiotic dimension is therefore implicit in the philosophy of education.

The semiotic tropes, such as interpretation, development and evolution; dialogic structures and processes; metaphor and metonymy, have entered educational discourse, manifesting in educational research a move away from the prevailing model of social sciences. What first started as the doctrine of signs, elaborated by John Locke in his Essay Concerning Human Understanding, became over the centuries, in the words of the great contemporary semiotician John Deely, a new intellectual movement. A head start to what will have been later called edusemiotics was provided during my presentation at the 1999 Annual Meeting of the Semiotic Society of America (SSA) where, while still a post-graduate student, I read a paper titled The adventures of a postmodern Fool, or: the semiotics of learning and that, with its modified and updated content, forms a substantial part of the opening essay in the book you are about to read. At the next SSA meeting in 2000 this paper received the First Roberta Kevelson Memorial Award for its contribution to the research program promoted by the Semiotic Society of America.

Several special issues of edited journals that focused specifically on leading philosophical figures in the context of discourse in educational philosophy and semiotics followed over the period 2004-2007; such as Pierce and Education and Deleuze and Education (Educational Philosophy and Theory); as well as Semiotics and Education (Studies in Philosophy and Education). My book Deleuze, Education and Becoming (Semetsky, 2006a) positioned the philosophical thought of French poststructuralist philosopher Gilles Deleuze alongside the philosophies of Charles Sanders Peirce and John Dewey in the context of their analogous approach to logic and learning experience (cf. Semetsky, 2003a, 2003b, 2004a,
This common theoretical platform will support the arguments developed in the chapters of the present book.

A substantial development was a recent cooperative research project with international participants across the disciplinary fields of education, philosophy and semiotics in the form of the edited volume *Semiotics Education Experience* (Semetsky, 2010d), for which Marcel Danesi wrote a Foreword indeed subtitled *Edusemiotics*. The edited volume *Jung and Educational Theory* (Semetsky, 2012a) and a special issue of the journal *Educational Philosophy and Theory* devoted to Jungian currents in education (Semetsky, 2012b) partake of edusemiotics in terms of the significance of images and symbols for educational experience.

The present book further develops edusemiotics – and, specifically, the edusemiotics of images – by completing a trilogy comprising *Semiotics Education Experience* and the other important precursor: my latest monograph *Re-Symbolization of the Self: Human Development and Tarot Hermeneutic* (Semetsky, 2011a), which summarized both empirical and theoretical research that I have been conducting in the area of education, counseling and human development since 1992. It has laid down a necessary foundation so as to further detail the philosophical dimension to be specifically addressed in the present book in the context of education and the construction of novel theory-practice nexus centered on learning from signs comprising a semiotic system of Tarot images and symbols.

According to contemporary cognitive scientist Ray Jackendoff (2001), who holds an ecological perspective on mind, even verbal utterances should be understood semiotically rather than strictly linguistically, that is, in terms of their establishing a relation between a conscious mental representation (an expression) and an unconscious mental representation (a hidden message). Making the unconscious conscious is the prerogative of Tarot edusemiotics.

In brief, the Tarot sign-system consists of 78 images called Arcana, the 22 Major Arcana and the remaining 56 Minor. The meaning of the word Arcanum (singular) is this creative, but often missing or obscured, element in our experiences, which is necessary to know, to discover in practical life so as to become fruitful and creative in our approach to multiple life-tasks situated in the midst of experiential situations, events and our complex relationships with others when we face decisions and choices or encounter moral dilemmas.

Therefore by its very definition each Arcanum – each Tarot image – implies a moral dimension pertaining to what John Dewey (1922/1988) called human conduct. If and when discovered – that is, made available to consciousness – it becomes a powerful motivational force to facilitate a change for the better at our emotional, cognitive or behavioral levels and thus to accomplish an important ethical and educational objective. What is called a Tarot layout or spread is a particular pattern of pictures that are full of rich symbolism “embodying” intellectual, moral, and spiritual “lessons” derived from collective human experiences across times, places and cultures; yet the moral of these symbolic lessons – the very meanings of Tarot signs – may be “hiding” deep in the midst of the field conceived by psychologist Carl Gustav Jung as the collective unconscious. Since the images denote archetypes of the collective unconscious or
universal memory pool shared by humankind, their messages would have the same significance cross-culturally, at different times and in different places.

Learning from signs demands their reading and interpretation at the level of practical action in search for the deepest meanings of experience. This learning is “marked” by Tarot symbolism. *Such is the edusemiotics of Tarot images.* As pictorial artifacts, Tarot images represent meaningful patterns of thoughts, affects, emotions, feelings and behaviors, thus embodying the very values implicit in collective experiences that transcend times, places, language barriers, disparate beliefs and cultures. Learning occurs not only in formal settings such as a classroom; the concept of learning pertains to real-life human experiences and cultural events that can embody significant meanings. Cultural artifacts are capable of semiotic or communicative potential; different objects and events in our life carry cultural, psychological and social significance and represent symbolic “texts” to be read and interpreted.

Reading and interpreting diverse cultural “texts” embodied in Tarot images partakes of semanalysis – a term coined by French cultural theorist and semiotician Julia Kristeva (cf. Nöth, 1995). Semanalysis is a *portmanteau* word referring to both semiotics and psychoanalysis and emphasizing interpretation and becoming conscious of the unconscious. Kristeva’s concept “subject in process” would have challenged a self-conscious subject as the fixed product of the traditional educational system. Human subjectivity is continuously produced in experience: Tarot edusemiotics is equivalent to constructing and respectively learning “critical lessons” (Noddings, 2006) that, in their symbolic form, are embedded in the semiotic process of human experiential growth, both intellectual and ethical.

Nel Noddings, a renowned philosopher of education and founder of the relational ethics of care, addresses a maternal ability to “read” her children as the “capacity for ‘empathy’” (Noddings, 2010a, p. 6) and an instinct for survival in the course of human evolution pertaining specifically to the *maternal factor* (also, the title of her latest book). She refers to “the ‘reading’ process” (2010a, p. 53) in terms of cognitive apprehension motivated by love and accompanied by the attitude of care and “empathy [as] the constellation of processes” (p. 56) that connects Self and Other in a relation, which is as such necessarily “ontologically basic” (Noddings, 2010b, p. 390; also 1984/2003).

A relation, which is ontologically, epistemically and ethically fundamental, is a province of semiotics and semiosis. A sign, by definition, is essentially a relational entity that indicates something other than itself which is not immediately apparent. It needs mediation between itself and its own other in the interpretive process enabled by the inclusion of the third category of an interpretant, as Peirce called it, into formal logic. Applying this unorthodox logic to reading and interpreting Tarot signs permits us to empathically relate to something essentially other but nevertheless potentially understandable, knowable and, ultimately, known.

The relation thus established between the generic Self and Other in our real practical life is significant and has both epistemological and ontological implications. The dimension of foremost importance is however ethical, considering that we live in a time of globalization and uncertain multiculturalism.
with different values continuously competing, conflicting and clashing. In our current global climate permeated by diverse beliefs, disparate values, and cultural conflicts, understanding ourselves and others and learning to share each other’s values is as paramount for the survival of our species as is the maternal instinct for the survival of helpless babies.

We can awaken such a maternal caring attitude towards others at both individual and social levels via the medium of Tarot: as Marshall McLuhan famously made clear, the medium is the message. Rather than being “merely a passive conduit for the transmission of information, [a medium of communication is] an active force in creating new social patterns and new perceptual realities” (Logan, 1986, p. 24; italics mine). Such creative logic, foregrounding semiotics, is the paradoxical and at first sight self-contradictory logic of the included middle, the included third, in contrast to the propositional logic of analytic philosophy grounded in the principles of non-contradiction and the excluded middle. Therefore Tarot, despite being traditionally perceived as mystical and irrational, is still logical. Its logic is a semiotic logic of the included middle that, importantly, will be traced and elaborated in every essay comprising this book.

Contrary to narrow instrumental rationality, Tarot helps us achieve an expanded and intensified scope of awareness that encompasses the level of meanings and values. However Tarot is not altogether foreign to scientific reason: its very logic can be defined as “a science of the necessary laws of thought, or, better still (thought always taking place by means of signs), it is a general semiotics, treating not merely of truth, but also of the general conditions of signs being signs” (Peirce, CP 1.444). Such science, underwriting semiotics, will be explored in this book in terms of the cutting-edge science of coordination dynamics based on the “reconciliation of complementary pairs” (Kelso & Engstrøm, 2006, p. 63) in a relation expressed as the squiggle “~” (used in the title of this book) versus the habitual binary opposition between self and other, mind and world, subject and object.

Indeed, John Deely (2001) acknowledges what he calls Peirce’s grand vision that has the advantage of being rooted in science rather than in mysticism: our deep thinking – so deep that we may remain non-conscious of the inferential processes at this subtle level – proceeds in signs, in images, and not solely in the language of propositions employed by the conscious mind reduced to the Cartesian Cogito! As embedded in the process of semiosis, Tarot readings work in practice; suffice it to say how popular this phenomenon is at various levels of subculture worldwide. The nuances pertaining to the quality of readings and the many subtle and not so subtle “situational variables” associated with it (including the personality of a reader and their level of consciousness) have been addressed in detail in my preceding book (Semetsky, 2011a). Still, “it must be admitted … that no-one has ever been able to explain how it works” (Gettings, 1973, p. 9; italics in original). How does Tarot work?

By positioning Tarot in the framework of semiotics, this book will help us arrive at an understanding of both Tarot structure and its functioning as the action of signs that comprise signosphere (Deely, 2001) – or, as it is alternatively called,
semiosphere (Lotman, 1990; Hoffmeyer, 1993) – and which represents a symbolic analogy to the biosphere of organic life. As a science of signs, semiotics differs from linguistics which reduces signs to their solely verbal equivalents, words. Semiotics generalizes signs as embedded in any medium or sensory modality, hence not only broadening the range of sign systems and sign relations but simultaneously extending the very definition of language to include its analogical or metaphorical sense. I have indeed been addressing Tarot in terms of a specific, pictorial, language of signs, symbols, and images in a number of earlier publications (e.g., Semetsky, 2006b, 2010b, 2010c).

The language of Tarot images speaks “in a different voice” that brings forth the subtleties of Carol Gilligan’s (1982/1993) pioneering work, which challenged habitual assumptions about human moral development; as well as bringing to the fore “women’s ways of knowing” (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986) that, in addition to purely cognitive understanding, would have included insight, imagination and intuition (Semetsky, 2004b, 2011a; Noddings & Shore, 1984; Greene, 2000). Non-incidentally, Michael Peters and John Freeman-Moir dedicate their recent volume, *Edutopias: New utopian thinking in education* (2006), to future generation of educators capable of understanding that, with imagination, education can transform individuals, raise collective consciousness, and contribute to the development of global civic society.

Learning from signs is equivalent to pursuing education in the three Is as the aforementioned insight, imagination and intuition; contrary to the long-standing tradition of three Rs of formal education. As noted by Irish abbot and philosopher Mark Patrick Hederman in his remarkable book *Tarot: Talisman or Taboo? Reading the World as Symbol*, it is Tarot that provides us with the system to fill the gaps produced by the area “where education and trained sensibility are in short supply” (Hederman, 2003, p. 86). I share his conviction that each of us should be given at least the rudiments of one of the most elusive and important symbolic systems if we are even to begin to understand human relationships. This would require tapping into a wavelength and a communication system other than the cerebral, reaching what has been called the “sympathetic system” as opposed to the cerebro-spinal one which covers the three Rs of traditional education. (Hederman, 2003, p. 87)

Such an emotional, sympathetic system does not simply relate to empathic understanding as one of the prerogatives of Carl Rogers’ humanistic theory in psychology. Significantly, educating for the three Is by utilizing the pictorial language of Tarot images would involve sympathy as an ability of “feeling with” (Noddings, 2010a, p. 73). Jim Garrison, a philosopher of education, refers to sympathetic data as describing intuitions and perceptions that would make possible our understanding of others; he is aware nonetheless that “our culture has not evolved highly refined methods of collecting [those] data … researchers do not perform careful interpersonal experiments, [and] the theories of human thought, feeling, and action remain … remarkably underdeveloped” (Garrison, 1997, p. 35). Yet, it is precisely sympathetic, inter-subjective, data that are maximally “relevant
to the topic of teaching” (Garrison, 1997, p. 36) and learning, to pedagogy as a whole.
Sympathy thereby is directly connected to the developed feminine capacity of “learning to read the other” (Noddings, 2010a, p. 73) as a natural caring and also as a prerequisite for practicing the Tarot hermeneutic method described in minute details in my earlier book (Semetsky, 2011a) as reading and interpreting the images together with a self-reflective and critical “re-evaluation of what is read” (Noddings, 2010a, p. 73).

Analyzing the historically evident conflict between word and image, Leonard Shlain (1998) notices “the plunge in women’s status” (p. viii) as contingent on literacy taking over nonverbal means of expression, such as image. Even if the development of literacy has been habitually equated with progress, “one pernicious effect of literacy has gone largely unnoticed: writing subliminally fosters a patriarchal outlook. Writing…especially its alphabetic form, diminishes feminine values and with them, women’s power in the culture” (Shlain, 1998, p. 1). Shlain reminds us of anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss challenging the supremacy of literacy and insisting that the establishment of hierarchical societies was linked to the appearance of writing: “misogyny and patriarchy rise and fall with the fortunes of the alphabetic written word” (Shlain, 1998, p. 3).

Noddings, describing the two paths to morality (Noddings, 2010a), expresses a hope for the convergence between traditional and feminine ethics, the latter naturally grounded in caring relations. She points to the maternal, feminine, capacity for “reading the emotional state, needs, and intentions of others” (Noddings, 2010a, p. 170) and notices that with appropriate guidance such capacity can be brought to a high level. It is the Tarot sign-system that can indeed provide the required guidance when a reading assumes the function of an educational “aid” or a counseling “tool” that can contribute to human development (Semetsky, 2011a); but also by virtue of its potential ability to bring back the becoming-woman (using Gilles Deleuze’s poignant expression) as symbolic of the revitalization of society that has long been subscribing to a solely masculine worldview embedded in “linear, sequential, reductionist, and abstract thinking” (Shlain, 1998, p. 1; italics in original).

This book will demonstrate the possibility of yet another, complementary, perceptual mode in terms of “holistic, simultaneous, synthetic, and concrete” (Shlain, 1998, p. 1; italics in original) qualities that appear to have been lost in the course of modernity during which the verbal word became the major medium of communication. Learning to read the pictorial language of Tarot signs equips us with the ability to understand the deepest meanings of individual and collective life-experiences expressed in the multiplicity of images. The implications for human evolution and the expansion of consciousness – what John Dewey defined as growth – are profound. Dewey pointed out that

What [a person] gets and gives as a human being, a being with desires, emotions and ideas, is … a widening and deepening of conscious life – a more intense, disciplined, and expanding realization of meanings. ... And
education is not a mere means to such a life. Education is such a life.  

As a philosopher of education, I share Dewey’s sentiment. But not only. I am especially sensitive to the present urgency of creating such a meaningful life – a mode of education – whenever pessimism, superstitions, and inert (as Alfred North Whitehead would call it) useless knowledge disengaged from important life experiences still lurk as they did at the time of Dewey’s almost century-old creed.

The UNESCO report (Fauré et al., 1972) identified a gap between education and life as a dehumanizing disease that should be overcome. Still, the educational system today as a whole rarely addresses the questions of meanings and values, focusing instead on the accumulation of factual, yet often meaningless, information and preparing students for “adult life” in terms of, for example, such abstract ends as dubious economic success or “access to college” (Noddings, 1993b, p. 9) in lieu of meaningful, educative, lived experience. Tarot images, as symbolic representations of humankind’s typical experiences, comprise what I call a metaphorical informal school of life (Semetsky, 2011b).

The current times of economic downturn demand the revaluation of values. A new, spiritual, dimension of experience can be discovered in practical life. Presenting feminist spirituality as an alternative to traditional patriarchal religion, Noddings (1993a) acknowledges that women have long suffered inferiority under the prevailing theological and philosophical theories. The different, feminine, language of Tarot images not only “voices out” new, spiritual, values that can be re-created and absorbed into culture, but also puts these values into practice so as to help those in need.

As Noddings (2010a) emphasizes, the ethics of care derives not from human rights but from human needs. Still, educational theorists and policy makers working with the concept of needs often remain uncertain of how to identify and interpret needs. In the framework of the ethics of care, inseparable, in the context of this book, from Tarot edusemiotics, a basic need foregrounding the practice of Tarot readings is

the need to be heard, [to be] recognized. In the condition of natural caring, each human being is comfortably aware that if a need arises, someone in the circle of care will respond … A particular need may or may not be met, but it will receive a sympathetic hearing. (Noddings, 2010a, p. 181)

The circle of caring is enabled by the process of semiosis, by the action of signs as basic relations that, by virtue of the triadic logic, establish a semiotic bridge connecting Self and Other. So it is the natural dynamics of sign-process together with the “conditions of natural caring [that] establish the best climate for the identification of needs” (Noddings, 2010a, p. 181). In this sense, Noddings’ ethical theory in education becomes necessarily complemented by epistemic and ontological platforms in terms of semiotics, the science of signs; and specifically the edusemiotics of Tarot images as the following essays in this book will demonstrate.
EDUCATING FOR THREE IS

REFERENCES


PROLOGUE

CHAPTER 1

AT THE EDGE OF CHAOS

The very first picture in the sequence of the Major Arcana of the Tarot deck, called The Fool, depicts a youth who projects the image of wide-eyed innocence, curiosity, and a trusting heart (Figure 1.1):

Figure 1.1. The image of The Fool.¹

The Fool is standing at the edge of the cliff, but with his head high in the clouds the Fool doesn’t seem to notice an uneven road or the possibility of falling down. The image portrays the symbolic child within many of us, the archetypal *puer aeternus*, symbolizing new beginnings, the potentiality of life, novelty itself. The Fool’s childlike topological perception of the world, in accordance with Piaget’s developmental theory (cf. Merrell, 1997, pp. 335-336), is not restricted by conventional Euclidean geometry; conversely, his world is not conceptualized merely in terms of rigid axioms of propositional logic.

The chaotic world symbolized by the abyss just a step away is full of encounters and experiences, of which the Fool has no knowledge yet. Still, independently of that, the phenomenal world is here, and has always already been here even before the youth approached the edge. The Fool’s youthfulness, bordering on infantile

¹ Note: All illustrations in this book, unless indicated otherwise, are from the Rider-Waite Tarot Deck, known also as the Rider Tarot and the Waite Tarot. Reproduced by permission of US Games Systems Inc., Stamford, CT 06902, USA. © 1971 by US Games Systems, Inc. Further reproduction prohibited.
carelessness, expresses a sense of connection that is present in a small child’s
goal of individuation is the achievement of a “greater personality” (Jung,
world as undifferentiated totality, where inner and outer realities
are movable and transient. Only venturing into unknown territory might bring a
relative order into chaotic flux of childish perceptions. And the free choice – while
not a strictly rational choice because formal logic is as yet beyond a symbolic
child’s grasp – of coming to a decision to make a step ahead so as to separate
himself from the unstable present and leap forward into the future in search of
authentic experiences in the process of what Carl Gustav Jung called individuation,
is transmitted by this image.

The search for wholeness is an experiential process that, in the framework of Jung’s depth or
analytical psychology, means becoming conscious of many unconscious factors in
the psyche. Wholeness as the integration of the unconscious into consciousness is
marked by a change of attitude when the center of the personality shifts its position
from the Ego to the Self. Individuation as at once a developmental and learning
process was defined by Jung in terms of self-education during which both
unconscious and conscious aspects of life-experiences become integrated.

Jung was explicit that education should not be confined to schools, nor should it
stop when a child grows up. Presenting his depth psychology as a method of/for
self-education, Jung (1954) emphasized self-knowledge that can be achieved by
means of its symbolic mediation via images in the analytic process:

There are … many extremely psychic processes which are unconscious, or
only indirectly conscious … there is … something as impersonal as a product
of nature that enables us to know the truth about ourselves …. Of the
unconscious we can learn nothing directly, but indirectly we can perceive the
effects that come into consciousness. (Jung, 1954, p. 49)

Such an indirect mediated criterion for knowledge borders on the pragmatic maxim
postulated by Charles Sanders Peirce as his theory of meaning aiming to attain

Nel Noddings (1993, p. 105) points out that, as producing observable effects,
Jungian analytical psychology may be considered a pragmatic method. And so, in
his experiential journey in search of the authentic Self, the Fool will step – as if by
chance – on the road of self-discovery and will begin apprehending the multiplicity
of experiences. The Fool’s first step is motivated by curiosity or what John Dewey
called interest, which represents a connection in the sense of an engagement of the
self as subject with the world of objects. To be of interest is equivalent to being
“between’ the agent and his end” (Dewey, 1916/1924, pp. 149-150), and one way
of arousing interest is by bringing about a sense of connection; as a result
What [a person] gets and gives as a human being, a being with desires, emotions and ideas, is not external possessions, but a widening and deepening of conscious life – a more intense, disciplined, and expanding realization of meanings. … And education is not a mere means to such a life. Education is such a life. (Dewey, 1916/1924, p. 417)

The Fool thus begins his experiential, albeit symbolic, school. In this “school of life” he will be learning from a series of encounters and events, each symbolized by all subsequent Arcana in a Tarot deck. His “eagerness for experience” (Dewey, 1991a, p. 30) that lies ahead, in the abyss, contains “the germ of intellectual curiosity” (1991a, p. 32) because “to the open mind, nature and social experiences are full of varied and subtle challenges to look further” (1991a, p. 33).

The in-between, *intermezzo*, quality of interest is equivalent to what Gilles Deleuze called the radical conjunction *and* that serves as an unorthodox basis, the included middle, for his a-signifying semiotics that defines an alternative logic. The Fool’s lived experience is “fundamentally linked to a logic – a logic of multiplicities” (Deleuze & Parnet, 1987, p. viii) as relational entities or signs in contrast to the propositional, signifying logic grounded in the logical copula “is” and directly establishing identity due to the excluded middle.

The Fool’s individuation begins when he connects with the world of objects in accord with “a theory and practice of relations, of the AND” (Deleuze & Parnet, 1987, p. 15) functioning on the basis of the logic of the *included* middle. By jumping into the abyss the Fool will have engaged with the phenomenal world, thus defying the dualistic *either-or* split between thought and experience, the sensible and the intelligible, between ideas and sensations. His practical logic embedded in life, in experience, is not “subordinate to the verb to be. … Substitute the AND for IS. A and B. The AND is … the path of all relations, which makes relations shoot outside their terms” (Deleuze & Parnet, 1987, p. 57) and form multiple interconnections in a network constituting a rhizomatic structure.

Rhizome is a biological metaphor for unlimited growth through multiple transformations, which are characterized by “new connections, new pathways, new synapses” (Deleuze, 1995, p. 149) as a result of experimental and experiential learning embodied in the new image of thought versus the dogmatic Cartesian image. The rhizome, as a complex network of relations, describes an open system of interactions; there isn’t a single crossing point but rather a multiplicity of “transversal communications between different lines” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 11). Such conceptualization permits a shift of focus from the static body of factual knowledge to the dynamic process of experimental knowing, of *becoming*, thereby having far-reaching implications for education as a developing and generative practice.

The Fool, rather than being “doomed to act along lines predetermined to regularity” (Dewey, 1922/1988, p. 208) is an experimenter because contrary to arborescent regularity, the rhizome must contain an a-signifying rupture to allow for the conjunction *and* to intervene as the included third so as to initiate the Fool’s “veritable becoming” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 10). The new relations
generated via rhizomatic connections are not copies but artistic creations: never reproduction of the same, but repetition of the different. Relations are prior to their terms; they are, as Noddings says, ontologically basic. The relations are described by machinic becomings and not classical mechanical laws: they are uncertain, “probabilistic, semialeatory, quantum” (Deleuze, 1995, p. 149) and often initiated by chance encounters; such presence of the chance symbolized by the image of the Fool. Sure enough, Charles Sanders Peirce proposed his thesis of tychism (from the Greek word for chance, τύχη) as the presence of spontaneity, of chance, in nature itself.

The Fool, then, at the ontological level of interpretation, is a symbol for the first principle of Peirce’s evolutionary cosmology and the origin of the universe per se under yet another regulative principle of continuity or synecchism. John Dewey, who was Peirce’s student, described continuity as the “interdependence of all organic structures and processes with one another” (Dewey, 1925/1958, p. 295); in other words, their relational nature. Peirce’s philosophy of objective idealism (not unlike Jung’s objective psyche) considers matter to be just a special, partially deadened, mind, thus overcoming the mind-body dualism that has haunted us since the time of Descartes and still represents an unfortunate model for educational research.

The rhizomatic structure that originates with The Fool Arcanum becomes a model of “singular processes of learning” (Deleuze, 1994, p. 25) rather than falling back “as upon a stereotype, upon some previously formed scheme” (Dewey, 1934/1980, p. 52) prevalent in the dogmatic, Cartesian, model of thought. The Fool indeed could not have formed any such scheme prior to having started his practical journey as a first explorer, an inquirer! The conjunction and is a principal characteristic of the logic of signs, or semiotics, making it operational in the sense of “being-multiple” (Deleuze & Parnet, 1987, p. viii). Such logic remains however “underground or marginal in relation to the great classifications” (Deleuze & Parnet, 1987, p. 15) represented by the reductive empiricism or rationalism alike.

First, “the surprising fact … is observed” (Peirce, CP 5.185), and the Fool’s inquiring mind begins apprehending experience by means of the peculiar Peircian logic of discovery or the rule of abduction, a sort of as yet uneducated (if education is taken formally) guess. Abduction belongs to those “operations of the mind which are logically analogous to inference excepting only that they are unconscious and therefore uncontrollable and therefore not subject to logical criticism” (Peirce, CP 5.108); still abduction exceeds direct Cartesian intuition understood as a merely dyadic relation between the knowing mind and the known object that delivers the self-evident truths. Peirce denounced “the Cartesian maxim” (CP 5.265): immediate intuitions are to be replaced with a community conducting a semiotic inquiry, an inquiry in signs and of signs that stand in the relation of intelligibility to other signs.

Despite being initially unconscious and necessarily vague, the abductive inference is part of logic as semiotics understood as the “laws of thought … thought always taking place by means of signs” (Peirce, CP 1.144). In semiotic terms, the Fool is a sign of the self at the very beginning of identity formation, and
vice versa the self itself is just a sign in the semiotic process of evolution, learning
and growth. Peirce regarded all the regularities in nature and mind alike as
products of growth (cf. Peirce, CP 5.313). The relevance of Peirce’s semiotics to
the problematic of human subjectivity manifests through the life lessons embodied
in Tarot images.

The Fool’s symbolic journey is embedded in the continuity of a developmental
and learning process. And this objective process as semiosis – or the action of signs
to be addressed in detail in the next chapter – exists independently of whether “a
general idea, living and conscious now…is already determinative of acts in the
future to an extent to which it is not now conscious” (Peirce, CP 6.156; Colapietro,
1989, p. 76).

The triadic nature of relations between signs led to Peirce’s classifying signs in
terms of basic categories of Firstness, Secondness and Thirdness: “First is the
conception of being or existing independent of anything else. Second is the
conception of being relative to, the conception of reaction with, something else.
Third is the conception of mediation, whereby first and second are brought into
relation” (Peirce, CP 6.7). Mediation ensures the included middle that constitutes a
relation between what otherwise would have remained two disconnected opposites
as “conflicting, or competing aspects – contraries” (Kelso & Engstrom, 2006, p.
186). It is by virtue of relations that “all thinking is dialogic in form” (Peirce, CP
6.338).

Contemporary semiotician Floyd Merrell (1995) asserts that in order for there to
be three Peircean onto/logical categories of Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness,
there must exist some extra principle holding them together, some undifferentiated
“field within which semiosis plays out its drama” (Merrell, 1995, p. 217) acknowledged yet by Peirce as pre-Firstness or nothingness. The nothingness (no-
thing-ness) is expressed by numeral Zero, an ambiguous symbol of ultimate
wisdom or total folly, a number that historically, and perhaps not totally arbitrary,
has been assigned to The Fool Arcanum in the majority of Tarot decks.

In a series of translations into other “more fully developed” (Peirce, CP 5.594)
signs, signified by the rest of the Arcana, the naive Fool will learn and grow, will
become something other and something more than he was when he just began his
experiential school of life. Zero can then be described as “the germinal nothing …
boundless possibility [and] boundless freedom” (Peirce, CP 6.217); this sense of
freedom and infinite potential (Peat, 1997) available for the Fool in his non-
Euclidean non-metric world of topological space, in which void coincides with
plenitude – they “seem to be inextricably connected to each other” (Kelso &

In such an ambivalent and “radically conjunctive” (Merrell, 1997, p. 63) world
the classical principle of the excluded middle is by definition invalid (cf. Rotman,
1993). Pre-Firstness thus becomes a symbol of a preconscious and tacit knowledge,
which would be a contradiction in terms within the boundaries of formal
rationalization. This tacit knowledge must exist in order to bring the Firstness of
abduction into being, to initiate the process of that which might be, and confirmed
by thisness as Secondness of the Peircean “brute facts” that the Fool will have
encountered while in the experiential abyss, ultimately finding an indirect or mediated conclusion in that which would be as Thirdness, provided of course that certain circumstances will have been met.

The preconscious state of mind, connoted by The Fool imagery and manifested in “the fascination of children with … Winnie the Pooh, and … Alice’s adventures − also a favorite pastime of logicians, mathematicians, and physicists − attests to their import of ‘primitive’ perceptual and conceptual modes, keenly picked up by philosopher Gilles Deleuze” (Merrell, 1996, p. 141). The Fool’s conscious decision-making is deferred for a moment. Dewey (1991a), addressing the problem of “how we think,” said that “we de-fer conclusion in order to in-fer more thoroughly” (p. 108) at a later stage. The Fool’s stopover at the edge of the cliff takes place at a level below awareness and hence is barely perceptible.

The Fool is subsisting behind a looking glass in a transient and shifting state of “pure reserve” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 156) as a virtual event situated “at the surface of things” (Deleuze, 1990, p. 19) in its actual embodiment in the material, pictorial, form. The incorporeality of pure events, according to Deleuze, finds its expression in language; but the notion of language per se is re-conceptualized. Rather than being reduced to strictly verbal propositions of the conscious mind, it becomes “the marriage of language and the unconscious” (Deleuze, 1990, p. xiii); indeed, the expressive means of Tarot edusemiotics.

Such is the Fool’s predicament in the play of semiosis, the image per se expressing an instinctual and “quasi-immediate…though…not purely accidental or aleatory” (Merrell, 1995, p. 204) sense of spontaneous decision-making and taking chances in the over-determined world of pure potentialities that constitutes Deleuze’s virtual reality. The world of choices comes about as if by chance, seemingly from nothingness, out of Zero; our Fool was wandering without any specific purpose or destination − he wouldn’t be the Fool otherwise − yet his abductive leap represents a selective, even if bordering on unconscious, choice, a subliminal decision-making; that is, an interference of as yet imperceptible difference that would have made a difference in practice.

The domain of nothingness always already contains the seeds of all future possibilities; in fact they are here, in the picture, subsisting in a void, or metaphorical abyss of freedom, behind the cliff; so in some sense experiential reality does exist for the Fool in its future perfect tense of future anterior and “everything culminates in a ‘has been’” (Deleuze, 1990, p. 159). The Fool acquires information about the world by means of experiencing this world first-hand, that is, participating in it and letting go “of the constraints of habitual responses [when performing] a saltus step off the edge” (Kevelson, 1999, p. 15; brackets mine).

The Fool’s saltus is a transaction, which is embedded “in the organization of space and time prefigured in every course of a developing life-experience” (Dewey, 1934/1980, p. 24) and extends beyond the spatio-temporal boundaries of the sole organism to the whole of an environment. The meaningful reorganization of experience involves both organism and its environment. Significantly, in such a “continuum … there is no attempt to tell exactly where one begins and the other ends” (Dewey, 1934/1980, p. 227): the transaction is what constitutes “the
Transaction ensures the operational closure of the system open at large, making
each end-in-view a temporary means for a new end, thereby correcting and
ordering the course of events.
This is the Fool’s prerogative in the play of semiosis: to establish an initial
transaction. His action precedes any conscious choice, however. He does not know
the range of experiences that will have been encountered in his journey even if
what enters the mind as information always depends on a selection, [but] this
selection is mostly unconscious. In this sense one should not speak about
“getting” information, rather information is something we “create.”
(Hoffmeyer & Emmeche, 1991, p. 122)
While the continuity thesis “means that rational operations grow out of organic
activities, without being identical with that from which they emerge” (Dewey,
1938/1998, p. 166) – the symbol for such an organic activity being the Fool’s
seemingly non-rational jump into the abyss – this very jump presents itself as the
imperceptible discontinuity within a “zone of indetermination, of indiscernibility”
(Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 173) between the Fool and the abyss of experiences.
It is this discontinuity that entails the creativity inherent in the Fool’s experiential
learning process. Holder (1995), addressing the conception of creativity in the
context of Dewey’s logic as a theory of inquiry, presents a powerful example of
such an element of discontinuity in “the instance of a great work of art – for
example, the thinking that coordinates the emergence of Michelangelo’s David
from a hunk of marble – [this is] a degree of discontinuity that epitomizes the kind
of thinking that is called creative” (Holder, 1995, p. 186).
The key word for interpreting the meaning of this Major Arcanum in the process
of the Fool’s semiotic voyage is the concept of creative becoming. The Fool’s
unavoidable jump into the abyss proceeds along a paradoxical “line of becoming
[that] is not defined by points that it connects, or by points that compose it; on
the contrary, it passes between points, it comes up through the middle” (Deleuze &
Guattari, 1987, p. 293). Deleuze addresses paradoxes of logic in his book The
Logic of Sense (1990). The French word Sens means at once sense (or meaning)
and direction, therefore having both epistemological and ethical connotations.
The logic of sense, as Deleuze scholar James Williams points out, is not “the
logic of a language. It is a description of the [semiotic] structures that appear when
being is understood as the encounter of events and series” (Williams, 2008, p. 23;
brackets mine). This is logic pertaining to diverse regimes of signs irreducible to
verbal propositions but encompassing also the pictorial nonverbal language of
Tarot edusemiotics based on the interpretation of images – their reading – and
functioning on the basis of the included middle that defies the classical principle of
non-contradiction. Williams notices that the key cases in Deleuze’s book relate to
contradictions and paradoxes, and Deleuze demonstrates how these indeed “make
sense” despite their apparent “logical invalidity” (Williams, 2008, p. 24) within the
framework of the classical logic of the excluded middle. Indeed, the line of
becoming passes through the middle.
Narrating the pictures brings to the surface the structural homology in the relations between the image and the Sens of the concept. This surface is both metaphorical and literal, as Tarot pictures, or sign-events, are sure enough laid-out or spread on the flat surface in a particular layout during Tarot readings. The complex and forever incorporeal concept, or pure event, is capable of being expressed in a pictorial, that is corporeal, language and thus of acquiring meaning via its very embodiment. It is surface that serves as “the locus of sense, signs remain deprived of sense as long as they do not enter into the surface organization which assures the resonance of two series” (Deleuze, 1990, p. 104): incorporeal mind and corporeal matter.

The wandering Fool, who is always on the road, always embedded in the process of becoming, who carries his sack on a stick as the universal symbol of vagabonds and minstrels, is pictured as if subsisting in a fleeting moment of having stopped at a pivotal point on the edge. He “is barely in touch with any facet or fashion of Firstness; hence … remains vague in the extreme” (Merrell, 1996, p. 141). The dynamics of becoming is characterized by the process in which every sign, or what Deleuze, following Henry Bergson, dubbed qualitative multiplicity, is described by “changes in nature as it expands its connections” (Deleuze & Parnet, 1987, p. 8): the Fool, in his open-ended reciprocal interaction with the environment, is continuously transformed into other signs, thereby becoming-other.

The symbolic jump into the abyss symbolizes, in a way, the death of the subject in its current state, which, however, is not to be mourned but is to be considered as a condition of possibility, or “the body’s potential” (Massumi, 1992, p. 70) of becoming-other in the process of creative individuation. Respectively, each sign, each Tarot image, indicates “an event rather than an essence” (Deleuze, 1995, p. 25) and is to be understood as a rhizomatic network of relations produced by the wandering Fool. Subjectivity becomes constructed in a multileveled field, and the individuated Self is a priori collective and plural; as a sign or relational entity, it is a multiplicity expressed via the distribution of pictures in a particular Tarot layout or spread.

Deleuze said that it is “events [that] make language possible” (1990, p. 1). This assertion seems but incomplete; it is language – to be precise, expressive language as a regime of signs – that makes events actual. The latter statement accords with the capacity of incorporeal events to be expressed in the corporeality of Tarot pictures, each image embodying a sign-event. Perhaps that’s why the ancient Stoics had only a single word lekta for describing the incorporeal surface of events and meanings as well as physical appearances and expressibles, or concepts capable of expression.

Each of a series of events unfolding in the course of the Fool’s archetypal journey “contests both model and copy at once” (Deleuze, 1990, p. 2); not only because of the doubling of directions, that is, always becoming-other at the same time as becoming-self, but also because of the reversal of cause and effect or effect collapsing into the cause. Indeed in the Fool’s atemporal and tenseless topological world, where everything is folded or stretched, premises coincide with conclusions, effects may precede causes, and Jungian archetypes – symbols of the depth of the
psyche – present themselves as pure events distributed on a flat surface in the guise of Tarot pictures.

Each image embraces its own original and as such carries on, albeit in a silent voice, the Peircean paradoxical self-referential refrain “I says to myself, says I” (Merrell, 1992, p. 185) thus engaging with its own “other” in the powerful, never mind preconscious, dialogue, irreducible to verbal propositional thinking. Subjectivity has a dialogic form because “[o]ne’s thoughts are what he is ‘saying to himself,’ that is, saying to that other self that is just coming to life in the flow of time” (Peirce, CP 5.421). It is via Tarot images that we can become conscious of the yet unconscious subtle dialogue with our “selves-becoming-other” in the flow of semiosis.

The dynamics of semiosis is ensured by the triadic structure of signs that are continuously being translated into other signs; still, the first step (as initiated by the Fool) is to form a hypothesis by a simple “conjecture. These ideas [guesses] are the first logical interpretants of the phenomena that suggest them, and which, as suggesting them, are [themselves] signs” (Peirce, CP 5.480; Colapietro, 2000, p. 143).

Deleuze, talking about “double causality” (1990, p. 94), maintained that the physics of surfaces demand that events have both causes and quasi-causes, that is, some other event “intervening as nonsense or as an aleatory point, and appearing as quasi-cause assuring the full autonomy of the effect” (p. 95) in its relation to this secondary cause. The Fool in his paradoxical pre-Firstness seems to signify nothing (Rotman, 1987) and is an aleatory point; but – not quite so! Although barely touching upon the abductive inference present in Firstness, the Fool definitely remains not purely accidental or aleatory. Indeed,

as soon as sense is grasped, in its relation to the quasi-cause which produces and distributes it at the surface, it inherits, participates in, and even envelopes and possesses the force of this ideational cause … This cause is nothing outside of its effect … it maintains with the effect an immanent relation which turns the product, the moment that it is produced, into something productive… Sense is essentially produced. It is never originary but is always caused and derived. (Deleuze, 1990, p. 95)

The symbolic stopovers in the Fool’s experiential sense-producing journey are represented by the 22 archetypal lessons. The word Arcana derives from the Latin arca as a chest; arcere as a verb means to shut or to close; symbolically, Arcanum (singular) is a tightly shut treasure chest holding a secret: its implicit meaning. In reference to Greek etymology, Arcana relate to arce which means origin or inception. The 22 images of the Major Arcana are shown in Figure 1.2.
The Fool is present in all subsequent Arcana (one plus zero is still one; two plus zero is still two) and represents nothingness or nonsense (non-sense) in the guise of
a “floating signifier” (Williams, 2008, p. 72) that donates meaning to the series of events. It is nonsense that functions as “a ‘donation of sense’ … it generates a paradox” (Williams, 2008, p. 72) simultaneously defying the uniformity of meanings: sense is created anew. The meaning of each sign – each Arcanum – is derived in the edusemiotic process irreducible to the transmission of facts but devoted to the production of meanings and values for experiences. It is at once associative and inferential, thereby inconsistent with “the operation of the principle of non-contradiction as a response to paradoxes” (Williams, 2008, p. 71; italics in original).

The resolution of paradoxes depends on two modes, thought and unthought; one with “conscious cogitation and [one] with the unconscious” (Williams, 2008, p. 73). Importantly, the unconscious or the “unthought [mode is] not external to thought” (Deleuze, 1988a, p. 97) but is being folded into “its very heart” (Ibid.). The concept of fold points to the relational, enfolding and unfolding, dynamics of the semiotic process. In the fold the boundaries between the habitual dualistic opposites, such as subject and object, inside and outside, etc. are blurred because of the symbolic conjunction and that mediates between them.

The presence of the medium is a must; as we said in the Prologue, the medium itself is a message. The medium of Tarot images is the expression of subjectivity that learns from experience by means of passing through the Arcana, each representing a lesson to be learned. Importantly, the transaction ensures modifications at both sides, subjective and objective alike. As Dewey pointed out,

Everything depends upon the way in which material is used when it operates as a medium … It takes environing and resisting objects as well as internal emotion and impulsion to constitute an expression. … [T]he expression of the self in and through the medium … is … a prolonged interaction of something issuing from the self with objective conditions, a process in which both … acquire a form and order they did not at first possess. … Only by progressive organization of “inner” and “outer” material in organic connection with each other can anything be produced that is not a learned document or an illustration of something familiar. (Dewey, 1934/1980, pp. 63-65, 75)

The series of Tarot pictures are Peircean icons that, in a mode analogous to the existential graphs posited by Peirce, render “literally visible before one’s very eyes the operation of thinking in actu” (Peirce, CP 4.6). The pragmatic world of action comprises the Fool’s experiential school of life because the Fool is learning by means of going through many life lessons embedded in the archetypal images and symbols. As Deleuze says,

A flat image or, conversely, the depth of field, always has to be created and re-created – signs … always imply a signature. … All images combine the same … signs, differently. But not any combination’s possible at just any moment: a particular element can only be developed given certain conditions. … So there are different levels of development, each of them perfectly coherent. (Deleuze, 1995, p. 49)
These different levels of development are represented by Tarot Arcana. Human subjectivity grows and develops, indeed. Still, how can the immaterial, non-substantial, un-extended and timeless psyche have reference to an extended and spatio-temporal material world? It is because of the logic of the included middle that Cartesian mind-body dualism is rendered invalid!

As early as 1908, Dewey, asking whether reality possesses practical character, acknowledged the existence of “a peculiar condition of differential – or additive – change” (Dewey, 1908/1998, p. 131), the peculiarity appearing because of the present condition having both emerged from the prior state and related to the consequent, yet absent, state of affairs as its own constituent part, a condition of possibility. Stressing the difference between the pragmatic logic of inquiry and traditional epistemology, the former focusing on “the relation to one another of different successive states of things” (1908/1998, p. 132, Dewey’s italics), Dewey considered this relation to be a powerful substitute for the eternal question of “how one sort of existence, purely mental … immaterial … can get beyond itself and have valid reference to a totally different kind of existence – spatial and extended” (p. 132).

It is because of the conjunction and as a feature of the logic of the included middle that “the physical universe ceases to be merely physical [but] becomes caught up in the semiotic web, and the universe becomes perfused with signs” (Deely, 2001, p. 621), which are always subject to evolution, growth, and becoming-other in the process of learning from experiences. Similar to the loss of her name “throughout all Alice’s adventures” (Deleuze, 1990, p. 3), the Fool’s identity will be contested and will reappear under the guise of other Major Arcana in the Tarot deck. The Fool becomes a nomad, never disappearing, always one of the “haecceities” (Deleuze, 1995, p. 141) comprising the regime of signs. Nomads are intrinsically “becoming … they transmute and reappear in the lines of flights of some social field” (Deleuze, 1995, p. 153) as well as of psychological field because of “the interrelation and interpenetration of the social and psychological spheres of experience” (Bogue, 1989, p. 4) in the radically conjunctive, semiotic world.

This psycho-social field partakes of the field of the collective unconscious posited by Jung as “populated” by archetypal patterns. A self-conscious Cogito is “replaced by processes of individuation” (Williams, 2008, p. 135) through the experiential becoming-other qua signs as archetypal patterns within the “substratum in the depth of the subconscousness, the basic pattern of the relations of the live creature to his environment” (Dewey, 1934/1980, p. 150). The depth of the psyche is capable of making sense only when it, “having been spread out became width. The becoming unlimited is maintained entirely within this inverted width” (Deleuze, 1990, p. 9), the meaning of a pure event “all the more profound since [it] occurs at the surface” (p. 10) in its projection as a nomadic distribution.

In fact, without an event being a nomadic distribution, that is, “already past and yet in the future … always the day before and the day after” (Deleuze, 1990, p. 77), the convergence of the series of past and future singularities into the present would not happen; yet past-present-future coexist in a Tarot layout, which is a paradoxical element par excellence in accord with Deleuze’s definition. As grounded in the
logic of the included middle, “the life of nomad is the intermezzo” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 380), always in-between. Those are indeed genuine nomads that can “act on the basis of the absent and the future. … [For them] nature speaks a language which may be interpreted. To a being who thinks, things are records of their past, as fossils tell of the prior history of the earth, and are prophetic of their future” (Dewey, 1991a, pp. 14-15).

The logic of the included middle, the affective logic of nomads’ lived experience precludes the nomadic ideas from meeting “the visual condition of being observable from a point in space external to them” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 371); in accord with Dewey rejecting the spectator theory of knowledge in favor of the logic of inquiry situated in experience, in life. The Fool’s apparent undecidability reminds us of Alice’s persistent question, “Which way, which way?” The limit case of vagueness would be “this mad element which subsists and occurs on the other side of the order that Ideas impose and things receive” (Deleuze, 1990, p. 2), and there is but a fine line separating the dynamics of pure becoming, the unlimited, from the retarded state of a static order, the boundary condition of being a fool in a literal sense. Still, a seemingly illogical choice made by the Fool belongs to the “immensely more intimate and fundamental part of ourselves than are…conscious choices” (Dewey, 1922/1988, p. 21).

What Dewey, in his analysis of thinking, described as a pre-reflective state of mind, is a necessary condition arising from “the disturbed and perplexed situation” (Dewey, 1933/1998, p. 139) that calls for the momentous state of suspense, which is reflected in the imagery of the Fool portrayed as standing at an uncertain pivotal point at the edge of the cliff. The Fool’s self-reflective consciousness has not yet been developed; the unconscious has not been integrated; the Fool is standing on shaky ground … Still, how “can one … attain wisdom without foolishness?” (Jung, CW 11, 953). It is the Fool’s natural, even if not yet realized, “eagerness for experience” (Dewey, 1991a, p. 30) to be gained in the school of life symbolized by all subsequent Arcana.

The Fool’s mode of functioning in the world as an element of creativity and novelty is able to present “life as a work of art” (Deleuze, 1995, p. 94), always being capable of inventing new possibilities of life. The world is folded and as such we can endure it, so that everything doesn’t confront us at once. … “Children are born with twenty-two folds. These have to be unfolded. Then a man’s life is complete”2 … There is no subject, but a production of subjectivity: subjectivity has to be produced when its time arrives … The time comes once we’ve worked through knowledge and power; it’s this work that forces us to

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frame a new question, it couldn’t have been framed before. (Deleuze, 1995, pp. 112-114)

We are born with 22 folds; there are the 22 Major Arcana that have to be unfolded; we have to re-create ourselves anew in the school of life. The Fool will begin to consciously learn from experience when in his journey he will have encountered The Hermit, Arcanum number IX, as the embodiment of the Jungian archetype of the Old Wise Man; hence becoming-wise while becoming-other. Despite his incapacity for totally rational decision-making, the Fool is nevertheless inclined to make the right choice; as a matter of fact he is not at all haunted by Alice’s question. His apparently irrational jump seems to confirm the Peircean insight that an “abductive leap comes by way of a fundamental human instinctive potential for generally being more right than wrong in the face of an indefinite number of possibilities for erring” (Merrell, 1992, p. 14) if and when the Fool would have chosen some other rhizomatic line available in the abyss of freedom.

When the Fool spontaneously “decides” to jump into the abyss, he is bound to create novelty and become-other by virtue of embodied experiences. For Dewey, novelty may be created precisely at such a critical point where the human mind “comes in contact with the world … When the new is created, the far and strange become the most natural inevitable things in the world” (Dewey, 1934/1980, p. 267).

The production of subjectivity initiated by the Fool’s jump depends on the capacity “to affect and be affected” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. xvi). His experience is permeated with an affective, pre-cognitive, dimension. The intensity of the encounter with an affect in the world of possibilities marks the passage between the Fool’s experiential states and, accordingly, almost in a physical sense affects his capacity for action as the power to multiply and intensify connections. Experience is a milieu full of affective qualities. It cannot be otherwise in the world of semiotic reality where experience is not shut off from nature but defies the dualistic split, because it “is of as well as in nature” (Dewey, 1925/1958, p. 4). It is the totality of experience that emits signs that exceed any pre-given system of significations.

Perplexing situations abound in the abyss, and are characterized by what Deleuze dubbed difference; learning from experience, then, can be conceptualized as the empirical mapping of such a difference, which continuously becomes repeated in a process, thus contributing to multiple “becomings [that] spill over whoever lives through them (thereby becoming someone else)” (Deleuze, 1995, p. 137). This does not mean that the subject becomes a “fixed self, but the present self in its dialogic projection toward that self of becoming which is as yet absent but which will have been present, given the appropriate set of conditions” (Merrell, 1992, p. 201). Here we arrive at an important concept for interpreting the meaning of The Fool Arcanum, potentiality, which is “an indispensable facet of semiotics” (Merrell, 1992, p. 44) and represents an opportunity to make a fresh start, to be creative.
The Fool, as if adopting Deleuze’s philosophy of transcendental empiricism – even without being aware of it but solely by means of his own “admittedly pure spontaneity” (Peirce, CP 6.59) – will jump into the abyss of real albeit as yet sub-representative experiences and will eventually make sense out of “their implicit conditions or presuppositions” (Bogue, 1989, p. 58) in his journey from sign to sign, unfolding all 22 images, the 22 folds, of Major Arcana and explicating the “unconscious ideas/intensities [to the level of] conscious conceptual representations of common sense” (Bogue, 1989, p. 59).

The individuated Self “has little to do with any subject. It’s to do, rather, with an electric or magnetic field, an individuation taking place through intensities… it’s to do with individuated fields, not… identities” (Deleuze, 1995, p. 98). Deleuze, describing his philosophical method, said, “I wasn’t better than the others, but more naive, producing a kind of art brut, so to speak; not the most profound but the most innocent (the one who felt the least guilt about ‘doing philosophy’)” (Deleuze, 1995, p. 89); indeed as though guided by the archetype of The Fool, displaying the qualities of naiveté and innocence, hence being a priori authentic.

The Fool’s ultimate creativity arises from nothingness, which is symbolized by the abyss in the picture where nothing “stands for the ‘absolute indifference’ qua the abyss of pure Freedom that is not yet the predicate-property of some Subject but rather designates a pure impersonal Willing … that wills nothing” (Žižek, 1997, p. 15). Here we have an archetypal force, Will, as a pure potentiality, “pure enjoyment, of an unassertive, neutral Will that wants nothing” (Žižek, 1997, p. 16). Yet precisely because it is the archetypal force, that is, Will, it “wants this ‘nothing’ … actively [and] effectively” (p. 16), as if putting into practice Peirce’s pragmatic maxim and transforming virtual potentialities into their actual effects as “practical bearings” (Peirce, CP 5.402).

In the world described by the conditions of deterministic chaos (cf. Prigogine & Stengers, 1984) the Fool’s ultimate freedom is itself a necessity. The Fool, who is just about to establish a relation with an environment by leaping into this very environment, is a symbol of an open-ended, interactive, semiotic system as a complex whole that cannot be reduced to the sum total of its isolated parts but represents an interconnected network of relations. The emergence of “another kind of causation” (Peirce, CP 6.59) would not be possible without the aspect of free play, a throw of the dice symbolized by the Fool’s teetering at the edge of chaos.

In this respect, the familiar philosophical problematic strikes again: “What if the thing to be explained is not freedom but the emergence of the chain of reason, of the causal network – or, to quote Schelling … “The whole world is thoroughly caught in reason, but the question is: how did it get caught in the network of reason in the first place?” (Žižek, 1997, p. 3). Well, as it appears, by chance – yet the chance or new opportunity wouldn’t have arisen without the open space of potentialities that are ready to be actualized by the Fool in the experiential school of life. Sure enough, it is not an empty space as nothingness but a significant “place of emergence of a new growth … a new paradigm in its potential and not yet realized form” (Kevelson, 1993, p. 41) indexed by the zero sign.
The sign of The Fool indicates that the “world must actually be such as to generate ignorance and inquiry: doubt and hypothesis, trial and temporal conclusions … The ultimate evidence of genuine hazard, contingency, irregularity and indeterminateness in nature is thus found in the occurrence of thinking” (Dewey in Kellert, 1993, p. 1). The presence of “objective chances” (Deleuze, 1994, p. 83) in the world demands new conceptual categories of description such as “interaction, transaction, teleology” (Bertalanffy, 1972, p. xix) irreducible to linear models. Knowledge exceeds pre-given facts and becomes an outcome of “an interaction between knower and known” (Ibid.). Importantly, the “interactions do not have to be physical; they can also be thought of as a transference of information” (Cilliers, 1998, p. 3). The Fool’s symbolic leap into the abyss represents an instance of transaction or nonlinearity as a feature of complex dynamical systems.

Complexity theory is a conceptual framework for analyzing the behavior of systems that consist of a large number of interacting components. Human culture is a prime example of a complex system; but so too is the natural world: the presence of The Fool defies the universality of linear laws. The term complexity combines the “classic Latin preposition cum [with] the modern Latin term for network, plexus, which derives from the verb plicare, to fold. What is complex is…folded onto itself” (Borradori, 2011, pp. 924-925): fold is “the inside of the outside” (Deleuze, 1988a, p. 96) forming a qualitative multiplicity.

In mathematical terms, if the equations describing a system contain nonlinear, algebraic terms that represent interactions, then an exact, closed-form solution to such an equation is impossible, and the long-term behavior of such a system would be described in terms of qualitative accounts rather than a single quantitative prediction about its precise future state. Tarot Arcana as signs or multiplicities are such qualitative means of description, regardless of whether the system in question is psychological, cultural, or natural.

The process of semiosis – the flow of signs – characterizes the dynamics of the system as fundamentally relational. We repeat that it is a relation, or a sign, that is ontologically basic (cf. Noddings, 1984/2003, 2002). The whole of the system is greater than the sum of its parts, because the system’s nonlinearity – such as the Fool’s leap – precludes its dynamics being described by a simple linear addition of the isolated parts. As Dewey pointed out, the reorganization of experience is a process, a movement that should never stop but always produce more education; its arrest and stasis may lead to “death and catastrophe” (Dewey, 1925/1958, p. 281).

The reference to “death” is poignant: in complex systems discourse “death” would represent a state of total equilibrium of the system or its closure to further interactions. It is the Fool’s transaction that brings “mind … in contact with the world” (Dewey, 1934/1980, p. 267). This is not just an attractive metaphor. The established relation acquires an almost physical reality because the Fool functions so as to overcome the dualistic split between the knower and the known by means of expanding the boundaries of a system.

The zero numbering of the picture appears to signify nothing, but this is not quite so. The Fool’s pure potentiality is akin to “what the world was to Adam on
the day he opened his eyes to it, before he had drawn any distinctions, or had become conscious of his own experience” (Peirce, CP 1.302). The Fool exemplifies zero-point energy, a quantum fluctuation or chaotic information just about to be ordered (see Chapter 8). The Fool’s leap intervenes in the supposedly deterministic world and ensures the human “capacity to change the course of action, to experience novelties … [I]t signifies the power of desire and choice to be factors in events” (Dewey, 1922/1988, p. 209), even if such unorthodox spontaneous choice may lie outside our awareness.

Novelty, as a change in a system’s behavior, is described as a phase transition, symbolized by the Fool at the edge of the abyss in the state of “uneasy or unstable equilibrium” (Dewey, 1925/1958, p. 253). This uncertain chaotic state represents the Fool’s subconscious “striving to make stability of meanings prevail over the instability of events” (Dewey, 1925/1958, p. 50). We can recognize the isles of (in)stability in the individual Tarot images; as signs they are “marked by individuality” (Dewey, 1934/1980, p. 266); indeed, as indicated in the Prologue, the verb σημεῖο – the root of the word semiotics – means “to mark.”

The process of semiosis is grounded in continuity, which is defined as “the intimate, delicate and subtle interdependence of all organic structures and processes with one another” (Dewey, 1925/1958, p. 295). Human experience and the whole of culture cannot be separated from nature. Each fold, each Arcanum, represents a change described by a novel probability distribution of parts acting within the overall dynamics of the complex system; a lesson learned; subjectivity-becoming-other. Dewey considered a part as always “already a part-of-a-whole … conditioned by the contingent, although itself a condition of the full determination of the latter” (Dewey, 1925/1958, p. 65). As embedded in the process of semiosis, signs are always already parts of the whole.

Cilliers (1998) comments that the dynamics of open systems, in neural network terminology, would be understood as unsupervised learning (p. 100) and contrasted with the direct information-processing model of knowledge structure. Such unsupervised learning, which would be above and beyond educational models based on direct instruction, is a condition of the creative logic of education (Semetsky, 2008). This is logic as semiotics enabled by the included middle. There are two kinds of systems understood as ordered wholes: first-order systems effectuating adaptation to the environment, or stabilization, by means of negative, or error-reducing, feedback. Error describes an initial instability, chaotic fluctuation, or disequilibrium as the tension or difference between an organism and its environment that makes the very situation problematic, unstable and uncertain.

Of greater interest to us in the context of Tarot edusemiotics are the second-order systems (cf. Brier, 2008) functioning on the basis of error-amplifying, positive feedback that enables the evolution of a system towards ever higher levels of complexity as a progressive re-organization based on learning from experience. Error as difference is then a prerequisite for learning, for growth. Yet, there are other “misadventures besides error” (Deleuze, 1994, p. 149). Referring to teachers, Deleuze (1994) says that they know how rarely literal errors are found in their students’ homework. Much more frequently, there are banalities, nonsensical
sentences or poorly posited problems. Nonsense is a significant concept. There is a subtle relation between sense and nonsense. Non-sense is neither true nor false but has its own intrinsic value in producing meaning.

Non-sense exemplified in The Fool Arcanum is necessary for meaning-making because this sign functions as a paradoxical – apparently, nonsensical – semiotic “entity [that] circulates in both series … and [is] equally present in the signifying and signified series … [as] at once word and thing, name and object, … etc. It guarantees … the convergence of the two series which it traverses, but precisely on the condition that it makes them diverge” (Deleuze, 1990, p. 40). This convergence/divergence is a feature of the sign in which the a-signifying rupture is bridged by the conjunction and by virtue of the logic of the included middle.

Dewey was adamant that the more an organism learns, the more it still has to learn; and the signs’ growth is possible only through the “observer’s” very participation in the dynamical process enacted in the rhythmic fluctuations between disequilibria and the restoration of equilibrium at a new level within the process of semiosis whenever signs develop and become other as a result of multiple transactions. The notion of rhythm is poignant. Constant rhythms are created by virtue of the tension (error, rupture, difference) represented by the apparent loss of integration with the environment – symbolized by the Fool portrayed as if suspended at the edge of the cliff – followed by the recovery of a new union (cf. Dewey, 1934/1980, p. 15), when the Fool will have connected with the phenomenal world in the images of the subsequent Arcana.

These rhythmic fluctuations of signs-becoming-other-signs enable evolution and growth as a function of the continuous reconstruction of experience based on the “integration of organic-environmental connections” (Dewey, 1925/1958, p. 279). When the Tarot signs are read and interpreted, this edusemiotic process produces self-reflective feedback and entails transformation or evolution of signs toward their becoming-other in the form of increasingly adapted yet further unstable future states. The system “learns”! This transformation, understood as a transfer to a new level of complexity, can be expressed in terms of “the focal culmination of the continuity of an ordered temporal experience in a sudden discrete instant of climax” (Dewey, 1934/1980, p. 24). Such decisive climax, a new awareness, is produced in the semiotic process of reading and interpreting the constellations of Tarot images.

Contrary to the spectator theory of knowledge, Dewey’s transaction – just about to be performed by the Fool, metaphorically – is an “unfractured observation” (Dewey, 1991b, p. 97), which may seem to be a contradiction in terms – but only in the framework of the logic of the excluded middle with its gulf between the observer and the observed. Transaction, however, such as that between the Fool and the greater milieu of experiences, represents an event encompassing a semiotic triad of “the observer, the observing, and the observed” (Ibid.). In biological living systems, processes of a similar kind are referred to as autopoietic (Varela, 1979) or, literally, self-making and devoted to the making-of-the-self. The Fool’s individuation is a creative self-making, indeed. The Fool will ultimately become the fully individuated Self embodied in the last image in the deck numbered XXI
and called The World (see Figure 1.2). This is a symbol of the connection with, and not separation from, the greater, social and natural world achieved by the Fool along the learning path from chaos to order.

Signs, which are full of implicit meanings, speak to us in the language of pictorial semiotics, provided we can read and interpret this language and make sense out of it, make explicit the meanings implicated in the images by means of unfolding the experiential folds symbolized by Tarot Arcana. It is “Sense [that] speaks and not individual” (Williams, 2008, p. 91). As Jung was also saying, “it is not the personal human being who is making the statement, but the archetype speaking through him” (Jung, 1963, p. 352).

Peirce’s pragmatic maxim presupposes the discovery of meanings, notwithstanding that the “meaning lurks perpetually in the future” (Merrell, 1992, p. 189). However, in the Fool’s paradoxical, but semiotically real world, that which exists as a possibility, a might-be-ness which turns into could-be-ness only in some indeterminate future, the future per se is not totally indeterminate but subsists as future anterior. Future that will have been means that it surely culminates in the aforementioned “has been,” which makes it always already projectable (see Chapter 10); such a conceptualization is not only in accord with the Deleuzean logic of sense in theory, but appears in practice as a projection of ideas-signs in the material form of Tarot icons.

Since icons in general “play a key role in modeling, whether speaking of the ‘semiotically real’ object to be modeled or the source from which the model is derived” (Merrell, 1992, p. 189), meaning or sense is always already implicated on the flat surface within the layout of pictures, into which “an adimensional profondeur” (Bogue, 1989, p. 63) of the psyche is being projected. The ultimate intensity as “the force of individuation” (Bogue, 1989, p. 64) is symbolized by the undifferentiated field of the groundless abyss in front of the Fool conveying the meaning of the very beginning of the individuation process.

The Fool’s growth and development, his informal education, depend on the symbolic leap into unfamiliar territory; as Deleuze would say, deterritorialization. This leap is not a result of cognitive decision-making; rather, the Fool’s acquired capacity for learning, thinking, and assigning meaning to his own experiences is contingent on the “veritable becoming-mad” (Deleuze, 1990, p. 1) in the paradoxical act “which destroys common sense as the assignation of fixed identities (p. 3) – of jumping into the abyss as if “towards the border of a compelling danger” (Williams, 2008, p. 82).

It is in the action, through the actual events at the level of the body that the Fool will have integrated the unconscious dimension of experience. The unconscious is not exhausted by its personal, Freudian dimension or “playing around all the time with mummy and daddy” (Deleuze, 1995, p. 144). The unconscious is Anti-Oedipal and demands “a different mode of operation, in another dimension, with other uses of syntheses that feed the autoproduction of the unconscious – unconscious-as-orphan, the playful unconscious, the meditative and social unconscious” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 100). Syntheses
are possible via autoproduction; in other words, via self-reflection. All thinking and
learning starts from “reaching the absent from the present” (Dewey, 1991a, p. 26)
and involves

a jump, a leap, a going beyond what is surely known to something else
accepted on its warrant … The very inevitableness of the jump, the leap,
to something unknown, only emphasizes the necessity of attention to
the conditions under which it occurs so that the danger of a false step may
be lessened and the probability of a right landing increased. (Dewey, 1991a,
p. 26)

The Fool’s inevitable leap is the very condition for initiating learning and
becoming conscious of the unconscious; such is the art and science (as the science
of signs, or semiotics) of the future-oriented productivity of affect embedded in
experience. The Fool/Zero, due to its quality of paradoxical disjunction, does in
fact perform the synthesizing conjunctive role of the production of meaning, of
sense, from its own opposite, nonsense; non-sense, no-thing-ness being the epitome
of the Fool. It is nonsense that produces sense as its own becoming-other via the
series of symbolic conjunctions “and … and … and” (Deleuze, 1995, p. 45).

Each consequent whole number that “indexes” each Arcanum describes the
property that contains zero in itself as an empty set. Each number is marked
off from the consequent one by basic marks or braces {}. Noddings and Shore
in their book *Awakening The Inner Eye: Intuition in Education* (1984) refer to
the mathematical process of iteration, during which the basic marks or braces
are repeated and “the empty set, {} … correspond[s] with zero; then 1 [becomes]
the name of the property belonging to all sets containing the empty set, {{}}”
(p. 51).

The process of becoming-other embedded in the infinite series of events is
illustrated in Figure 1.3.

The braces and marks (also used by Bertrand Russell and Alfred North
Whitehead) are being repeated within the logical process starting from nothing,
from the empty set or zero, symbolized by the Fool in the context of Tarot
edusmiotics. The Fool plays the role, symbolically, of what Deleuze in *The Logic
of Sense* called an *empty square*; yet this emptiness (nothingness) is what connects
the heterogeneous series becoming as such a precursor for putting them into
relation to each other “by virtue of its own power” (Deleuze, 1994, p. 119). Such is
the Fool’s paradoxical significance in his signifying nothing!

In opposition to Russell, mathematician Spencer-Brown (1979) demonstrated
that logic can be arithmeticized, that is, it is possible “to construct logic from the
basic intuitive act of making a distinction and two fundamental arithmetical acts:
(1) making a mark to signify the distinction, and (2) repeating the mark” (Noddings
& Shore, 1984, p. 51), precisely as it is shown in Figure 1.3 and in agreement with
Deleuze’s philosophy of difference and repetition and with Dewey’s assertion that
The Fool’s leap establishes what Deleuze called a line of flight; this line “upsets being” (Deleuze 1995, p. 44), yet along this very line “things come to pass and becomings evolve” (p. 45). Becoming-other indicates diversity, multiplicity, a movable borderline, the conjunction and; it involves the destruction of old subjectivity and the creation of a new one as “always a temporary and unstable effect of difference” (Grossberg, 1994, p. 13).

Psychologically, thinking starts from “intuition as a way of knowing” (Noddings & Shore, 1984, p. 46); logically, it originates with the Fool’s abductive leap into the abyss comprising his experiential school of life. Each conjunction and is a pure relation that, in its own in-between-ness, acts as a distributed marker of “a new threshold, a new direction of the zigzagging line, a new course for the border” (Deleuze, 1995, p. 45) and, respectively, a new subjectivity that, as contingent on new encounters and experiences symbolized by the Tarot Arcana, is capable of expressing itself within the nonverbal, pictorial discourse of Tarot edusemiotics, in
our learning journey through multiple Tarot images. As Deleuze and Guattari (1987, p. 4) said, “‘Long live the multiple,’ difficult as it is to raise this cry.”

The unconscious enfolded in subjectivity entails the insufficiency of reducing subjectivity to a single and fixed identity of the intentional speaking subject. The unconscious extends throughout a sociocultural and natural milieu and manifests indirectly by virtue of its effects at the level of cultural, historical, and collective practices:

It is a question of … identifying races, cultures, and gods with fields of intensity on the body without organs, identifying personages with states that fill these fields, and with effects that fulgurate within and traverse these fields … there is no ego that identifies with races, peoples, and persons in a theatre of representation, but proper names that identify races, peoples, and persons with regions, thresholds, or effects in a production of intensive quantities.

(Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 86)

The unconscious belongs to the collective domain as the field of the Jungian collective unconscious. Tarot Major Arcana all have “proper names” denoted by the archetypes that “fill” this field, thereby generating effects. According to Deleuze, the conscious “intentionality of being is surpassed by the fold of being, Being as fold” (Deleuze, 1988a, p. 110). Because “there is no ego,” there cannot be an a priori self-consciousness: the consciousness of the Self is an effect, a product of informal learning and development by virtue of the creative “logic of discovery [as] abductive or hypothetical inquiry … which is concerned with levels and degrees of the ‘possible’” (Kevelson, 1993, p. 30).

The unconscious represents “a productive machine … at once social and desiring” (Deleuze, 1995, p. 144) and is constituted by “races, tribes, continents, history, and geography, always some social frame” (Ibid.). The different image of thought includes an affective, unconscious, dimension that “guides the creation of concepts” (1995, p. 148) in consciousness. The cultural unconscious manifests in “new connections, new pathways, new synapses … [and is produced] not through any external determinism but through a becoming that carries the problems themselves with it” (Deleuze, 1990, p. 149).

Embedded in the process of becoming, The Fool is called into play whenever novelty appears; or conversely, novelty appears if and when the collective psyche is guided by this archetype. In this respect The Fool, despite being equated with Zero, once again establishes his own significance: chance is to be considered not simply as a feature of randomness but in its creative function “as a principle, or as ineliminable” (Grosz, 1999, p. 20). As a cultural sign, the Fool is inscribed in cultural practices, and his archetypal journey becomes a process of tracing the signifier (cf. Silverman, 1998) in the guise of a nomadic singularity within cultural semiosis.

The Fool’s traces, though, are not easily recognizable, unlike many activities of the Trickster (cf. Spinks, 1991) that finds its expression in a complementary aspect of yet another image in the deck, Arcanum I, The Magician (Chapter 4). The Magician’s semiotic function implies a matter of Firstness, but the wandering Fool,
functioning as pre-Firstness, perhaps finds it easier to escape reasoning and therefore signification. Nevertheless, as a signifier of innocence and nostalgic wholesome times, the Fool’s presence can be traced, for example, in the cultural artifacts of Walt Disney’s world(s) or Kasdan’s *Grand Canyon*, the title itself implying the image. With regard to the latter, this archetype has been interpreted in terms of a “radical innocence [as] the signifier for a hegemonic practice … where luck and chance” (Giroux, 1994, p. 42) acquire power vis-à-vis “struggle and agency.” Such an interpretation, albeit negating the positive qualities of the childhood motif, indicates the diversity of meanings that may be assigned to the notion of innocence and points toward the danger that a naive Fool may encounter when he, facing the brute facts at the level of Peircean Secondness amidst the interplay of signs, becomes not only subjected to manipulation by others but also downgraded from the activated archetype into an ideological construct.

Despite the threat of being reduced to what Henry Giroux qualified as an ideological appeal to nostalgia, the Fool’s presence in contemporary culture is a sign of resilience. The Fool’s adventure is high-spirited, even heroic, and as such is capable of erasing hegemonic practices that might seem to exist as his own counterpart. In this respect the incorporeality of the sign as an intangible *idea* does not diminish any effect it may produce at the level of cultural practices; sign-event is a *lekton*, that is, “an incorporeal surface effect” (Bogue, 1989, p. 69), but in the meantime it is a potentiality of individuation, a powerful archetypal force persisting in its effort of expressing itself; in short, a paradox the “function of [which] in contemporary thought and culture” (Merrell, 1992, p. 116) should not be underestimated.

The Fool is marked off by Zero, which seems to signify nothing, that is, to be an instance of Deleuze’s incorporeal non-sense, yet the very instability of the Fool makes this sign “a state of readiness to receive a certain piece of information” (Bateson & Bateson, 1987, quoted in Hoffmeyer & Emmeche, 1991, p. 159), that is, to start functioning as a production of meaningful ordered structures. The Fool’s pragmatic cash-value, then, is not at all Zero; the quasi-purpose of this sign is to produce sense and initiate the process of creating order out of chaos. We are reminded of the symbolism of the Fool portrayed at the edge of chaos when Peirce says that “primeval chaos in which there was no regularity was mere nothing, from a physical aspect. Yet it was not a blank zero; for there was an intensity of consciousness there” (Peirce, CP 6.265); even if such virtual field of consciousness – the collective unconscious, in Jung’s parlance – is as yet undifferentiated.

Analogously, Deleuze posits the transcendental field as a-subjective, impersonal and “containing” the non-conscious traces of the self. These traces become nonetheless perceived during the edusemiotics of Tarot when the folds are “flattened out, or fully ex-plicated [reaching as such] … pure perception, which coincides with matter itself” (Borradori, 2011, p. 925). The archetypes imperceptible by themselves become available to awareness in the material form of Tarot images “flattened out” in the layout. The abductive leap partakes of intuition “that grants us access to the concrete flow of duration” (Ibid.), of semiosis.
In a state of an unstable equilibrium, standing at the pivotal point at the edge of chaos – which is “seen as Creative (as source of the unpredictable)” (Hoffmeyer & Emmeche, 1991, p. 162) – the Fool finds himself between the two extremes of knowledge and ignorance, fleeing constantly from one to another, explicating the experiential folds and, in such an experimental process, always producing a rhizome and not planting a root. The logic of the included middle is a must: “one connects with something else. One never commences; one never has a tabula rasa; one slips in, enters in the middle; one takes up or lays down rhythms” (Deleuze, 1988b, p. 123) in the semiotic process of becoming-other.

The Fool, embedded in the edusemiotics of “learning [as] a process of growth and change” (Garrison, 1997, p. 5) may, within a split-second, become an instance of blissful, albeit semi-aleatory, ignorance and risk-taking; what Schelling would call a moment of blindness (Žižek, 1997, p. 34). Significantly, in the deck of Old French Tarot the Fool is portrayed wearing a blindfold (Figure 1.4):

![Figure 1.4. The image of The Fool (Le Fou) from the Old French Tarot.](image)

The significance of the Fool pictured as blindfolded indicates the prevalence of a chaotic movement, a fluid Brownian motion (cf. Briggs & Peat, 1984) or – in the world of semiotic reality that expresses itself in the form of images, symbols and indices (all Peircean categories of signs) – an implicate perception of a child prior to language acquisition! The image accords with the importance allotted by Peirce to visual notation and the diagrammatic mode of reasoning and thinking as part of logic embedded in a learning process. The logic of the excluded middle simply represents the same; the logic of the included middle enables learning, thus makes a difference. The Fool in his pre-First, pre-conscious, and pre-verbal state of mind, cannot yet reason diagrammatically and self-reflectively; still this sign initiates this very process.
The information is "perceived" by the blindfolded Fool via the three Is of insight, imagination and intuition, and is oriented inward, towards deep inner knowledge as Gnosis (Greek for knowing) which will have been achieved when the Fool becomes his authentic Self, a whole person. However by the time the child acquires language and "learns" to reason with cognitive tools solely, ignoring abductive leaps of imagination, these three Is might be irretrievably lost!

An engagement of a symbolic child in the continuous play of semiosis signifies the multiple becomings of a nomadic distribution of singular and transitory identities; and now and then there appears that “precious, universal, ‘innocent’ instance in which we can all recognize ourselves” (Copjec in Giroux, 1994, p. 42) as young, adventurous, and paradoxically wise fools.

While keeping untouched Peirce’s “supreme maxim of philosophizing” (Peirce, CP 1.56) let us now invoke his pragmatic maxim and turn to the practical aspect of everything that has so far been said. We repeat after Peirce that “the meaning and essence of every conception lies in the application that is to be made of it” (Peirce CP 5.532) at the level of human experience, in praxis. The psychic reality of Jungian archetypes becomes the semiotic reality of human experiences ascertained by their effects. The effect produced by Tarot edusemiotics is what Deleuze and Guattari called transformational pragmatics, that is, the possibility of change in real human habits, real attitudes and, in the final analysis, real, even if still potential, selves. The Tarot signs are the signs of potential transformation; as such they contribute to our becoming more conscious of ourselves and the objective world in which we are situated. By recognizing ourselves as semiotic agents in the semiosic process we, like other signs, acquire potential to develop and grow. The next essay will focus on the very process of semiosis: the action of signs.

REFERENCES


CHAPTER 2

SIGNS IN ACTION

This chapter addresses the process of semiosis as an action of signs from the threefold perspective of Peirce’s semiotics, Jung’s depth psychology, and systems theory. The word sign is ambiguous. The notion of a sign as it pertains to Tarot edusemiotics follows Peirce’s triadic conception so as to underline the dynamic character of a sign and the important role of this sign-component that Peirce called interpretant. A sign can be anything that stands for something else, its object, in such a capacity so that it generates yet another, different, sign: it is through the interpretant that a sign tends to become-other. The structure of a genuine tri-relative sign is the following (Figure 2.1):

![Figure 2.1. Peirce’s Triadic sign.](image)

The dotted line in Figure 2.1 indicates the dynamic and evolving character of sign-relations as the function of a series of interpretants analogous to the dynamics pertaining to Tarot readings as the interpretation of images and the construction of meanings for experiential situations which are embodied in these very images. Signs’ development, growth, and synthesis implies a “sense of learning” (Peirce, CP 1.377) when these very signs are being read and interpreted. According to the *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Semiotics*, Tarot readings belong to “a branch of divination based upon the symbolic meaning attached to individual Tarot cards…interpreted according to the subject or purpose of a reading and modified by their position and relation to each other from their specific location in a formal ‘layout’ or ‘spread’” (Sebeok, 1994, Vol. 1, p. 99).

This definition, while acknowledging the symbolism of the pictures, still harks back to the stereotypical perception of Tarot as mere fortune-telling that exists at the low end of popular culture (cf. Auger, 2004) and that I have deconstructed in my prequel (Semetsky, 2011) to the present book by developing an empirically
based argument for the hermeneutics of Tarot as an educational aid and a valuable tool for human development.

It was Russian critical psychologist and sociocultural theorist Lev Vygotsky who emphasized the role played by signs in social interactions: by virtue of cultural mediation signs serve as the powerful pedagogical tools and learning aids for developing intelligence. In recent years, a number of educational philosophers and educational psychologists noticed the value of Peirce’s conceptualizations specifically for teaching and learning (e.g., Nöth, 2010; Semetsky, 2005b, 2005c, 2005d, 2010b). In the context of philosophy of education, Nel Noddings (1998) acknowledged Peirce’s pragmatic theory of meaning as an important contribution to the field.

Together with William James, John Dewey, and George Herbert Mead, Charles Sanders Peirce belongs to a school of philosophy that posited logic in terms of dynamic inquiry irreducible to some indubitable and certain knowledge. Learning, for Peirce, is achieved by synthetic consciousness that constitutes an expanded field of meanings in the process of learning from experience, which is always already perfused with signs. Defining signs as fundamentally triadic and comprising three universal categories of Firstness, Secondness and Thirdness, Peirce “located” them at the psychological, logical and ontological levels alike and noticed that “in psychology Feeling is First, Sense of reaction Second, General conception Third, or mediation. … Chance is First, Law is Second, the tendency to take habits is Third. Mind is First, Matter is Second, Evolution is Third” (Peirce, CP 6.7).

Firstness is quality, possibility, freedom. Secondness is physical reality, billiard-ball forces, rigid deterministic laws, direct effects, actions and reactions. Thirdness relates seconds to thirds; it is a category of synthesis, communication, memory, mediation and learning! It is a triad of Firstness (feeling), Secondness (action) and Thirdness (as reason or intelligence exceeding a solely instrumental rationality grounded in the excluded middle) that together constitute a dynamical structure of experience as an extended mind irreducible to the personal isolated Cogito of a Cartesian subject.

The Thirdness of interpretation is what governs Secondness, it produces the objects of knowledge not by means of a priori given sense-data but as an outcome of the logic of inquiry embedded in the process of semiosis comprising the action of signs. Thirdness performs a mediative function and creates or “brings information … [it] determines the idea and gives it body” (Peirce, CP 1.537) in the material world of our practical actions. The semiotic bridge as a communicative link between ideas (mind) and practice (body) is thereby created.

An utterer, as the producer of signs, is not reducible to a solely human dimension. Nature, in its act of dialogic communication with human mind, is assigned the function of the quasi-utterer by Peirce that, for example, “utters” signs of weather; and mind, respectively, performs the function of a quasi-interpreter. Peirce’s logic as semiotics – the science of signs – thus defies a classical tertium non datur principle, the law of the excluded middle, which is the very basis of propositional thinking established long ago by Aristotle’s syllogisms: something is
either true or false, there is no in-between. Ditto for Bertrand Russell, who formulated his laws of thought as grounded in the principle of non-contradiction.

In the West, it was John Dewey’s logic as the theory of inquiry (Dewey, 1938), misunderstood by Russell (Burke, 1998) that together with Peirce’s doctrine of signs dealt a fatal blow to dualisms. Holder (1995), in the context of Dewey’s pragmatic inquiry, contends that ‘higher mental processes are said to be continuous with lower ones (e.g. thinking with the biological pattern of need and search) but such ‘higher’ processes are not reducible to lower ones (e.g. thoughts are not reducible to brain states)” (p. 190f). Two separate Cartesian substances – res extensa (corporeal; material; body) and res cogitans (incorporeal; immaterial; mind) – thus become connected in a flow of semiosis.

Merrell (2002) suggests the all-encompassing term bodymind as pertaining to Peirce’s semiotics and Eastern philosophy, including I Ching (the Chinese Book of Changes) and Buddhism. I agree with Merrell that we live to learn, and we learn to live, within the stream of signs that grow, develop and undergo evolution. Contrary to the Eastern, integrative, mode of thought, mainstream Western philosophy suffered long enough from the “great bifurcation” (Merrell, 2002, p. 54) between body and mind. However, Tarot as continuing the legacy of alternative Western esoteric tradition, namely Hermetic philosophy that I addressed in detail in the prequel (Semetsky, 2011), elicits vast implications for our practical life and education by virtue of healing the split produced by Cartesian dualism.

The crux of the ancient Hermetic tradition that can be traced via Neoplatonic philosophy to its revival during the Renaissance (Yates, 1964; Faivre, 1994, 1995) is the relational worldview grounded in correspondences, sympathies, interdependencies and analogies between the realities of above and below with yet another included third in-between: the archetypal world or, as philosopher Henry Corbin called it, the Imaginal world. Still, the relations appear hidden, secret and hieroglyphic; they need to be deciphered or interpreted just like Peircean signs so as to acquire meaning. Nel Noddings (2006), non-incidentally, wants the profession of education to comprise teachers who, like Renaissance people, would have had a broad knowledge of perennial questions.

Peirce’s semantic criterion of sign-object relation includes icons, indexes and symbols; all three, depending on the pragmatic function of each, are liable to mutually exchange their roles. The icon is a sign, which is capable of signifying by its own quality, the index is in some way causally dependent on its object, and the symbol, as saturated with significance, usually designates a conventional sign. Examples of icons include pictures and diagrams to the extent that they signify by virtue of some relative similitude, an analogous structure, between the sign and what it stands for. Iconicity in turn can be further classified into three categories, the first being hypoicons that, according to Peirce, include both images and metaphors, or even a “pure fiction” (Peirce, CP 4.351) as an imaginary object represented by an icon. Importantly, signs as “used by every scientific intelligence … may embody any meaning” (Peirce, CP 2.229).

The pedagogical role of icons and images has been known since antiquity: visual arts were used as educational tools already in the fourth century presenting
imagery as a means of edification especially valuable for the illiterate. Ivanovic (2010) refers to the doctrine of John Damascene in relation to the “conception of an icon as an educational instrument useful for the communication with the divine” (p. 71). The communicative function serves as a semiotic bridge that forms a relation between what we habitually perceive as binary opposites that supposedly can never be reconciled, such as subject and object or, on the metaphysical scale, the human and the divine.

The table of contents in Shlain’s book, to which I referred in the Prologue, is exemplary in this regard: Shlain (1998) starts from singling out image versus word and traces the perceived dualisms through history via the figures of Dionysus versus Apollo, to mystical thought versus scholastic thought, to sorcery versus science, to right brain versus left brain, to page versus screen; while contrasting, both explicitly and implicitly, feminine holistic thinking with stereotypically male “cool” reason.

In other words, for the modern Western thought historically “there could be no tertium quid” (Merrell, 2002, p. 204) defined as something of uncertain or unclassifiable nature, which is related to, but distinct from, two – perceived as opposite, things – precisely as the interpretant in Figure 2.1, which is related to, yet distinct from, a sign and its object and serves as a necessary component, the included middle, of a triadic structure comprising a genuine sign. Similar to the indirect mediated relation between a sign and its object, the causal influence embedded in the semiotic process of cognition is indirect and mediated by means of inclusion of the third category that breaks down the direct dyadic cause-effect connection.

Nonetheless the formal, albeit vague, principle, called by Peirce the rule of abduction – and exercised by the Fool, as we stated in the preceding chapter – enables mind to reason from a vague premise to an uncertain conclusion; such an inference being described by the following logical form: if A is B, and C can be signified by B, then maybe A is a sign of C. The interpretation of Tarot images is triggered by the Firstness of abduction which, functioning as a sort of perceptual judgement, is a hypothesis-bearing statement that asserts its conclusion only conjecturally; yet, according to Peirce (CP 5.189), there is a reason to believe that the resulting judgement is true.

The given premise must entail some empirical consequences in terms of producing pragmatic effects by virtue of a sign taking upon itself “value, meaning, and importance” (Merrell, 2002, p. 209). The explication of the initial perception is achieved by analogical reasoning which unfolds into inferences to the would-be consequences of abductive conclusions eventually leading “to a result indefinitely approximating to the truth in the long run” (Peirce, CP 2.781) and merging into synthetic inference in this process.

The epistemic process, for Peirce, means denial of the Cartesian notion of arriving at propositions that exactly represent reality. The notion of a proposition, whose subject designates reality and whose predicate describes the essence of said reality, is transformed by Peirce into the interpretation of reality and living it out experientially. Indeed, this is a sign by knowing which we can know something
more and something other than a sign itself. Pragmatism as a method of ascertaining the meaning of ideas, understood by Peirce as intellectual concepts that are nonetheless enriched with the qualitative Firstness of affects and emotions, is essential for communication and creating new knowledge, ultimately leading to the transformation of our old outlived habits of mind and actions alike.

As Noddings (2006) notices, the task of critical lessons should be to “challenge deeply held beliefs or ways of life” (p. 1) that tend to become our unconscious habits. It is the creation of novel meanings for lived experience versus transmitting some pre-existing facts from a generic teacher to a generic student that breaks the old habits of thinking or behaving and should become the aim of education from the perspective of edusemiotics. Meanings are to be verified in experience, but they are fallible and always already exceed their own verifying instances; a meaning can always be determined further.

What is the aim of education, we may want to ask. Or, rather, what are the (plural) aims of education? This long-controversial question renders multiple answers. Dewey asserted that the aim of education is more education, Maxine Greene emphasized the role of imagination (cf. Semetsky, 2011), and Alfred North Whitehead explicitly stated the aim of education as our guardianship against useless and harmful, inert, ideas. Dewey defined education as a continual process of the reconstruction of experience, that is, real-life experiential problem-solving activity based on the human mind actively interacting with an open world. For Dewey all education is necessarily moral education devoted to the realization of meanings in lived experience.

The edusemiotics of Tarot not only agrees with this but also, because of a string of interpretants during the readings, assists in transforming a particular situation embodied in the layout of pictures from what Dewey would call problematic and obscure into “clear and luminous” (Dewey, 1934/1980, p. 266). Abduction – a mode of inference – functions like intuition; however intuition that enables Tarot readings and the interpretation of images is not reducible to Descartes’ direct and immediate intuition (see Chapter 10). For Peirce, all cognition is mediated by signs. What makes Tarot readings efficient is a perceptual judgement triggered by an abductive guess that partakes of intuition as a sort of paradoxical “mediated immediacy” (Peirce, CP 5.181). Psychological immediacy and logical mediation coalesce. Abduction is hypothetical conjecture that Peirce describes in the following form: a surprising fact is observed; but if our hypothesis of this fact was to be true, then this fact would be a matter of course; therefore there is reason to suspect that our hypothesis is true.

The process of Tarot readings accords with Peircean diagrammatic reasoning when an authentic reader, passing from one picture in the layout to the other, from one image to yet another, “from one diagram to the other … will be supposed to see something … that is of a general nature” (Peirce, CP 5.148), even if abductive leaps proceed below the level of awareness and cannot be expressed in the precise language of propositions that are supposed to be either true or false with nothing in between. Abduction appears to function instantaneously but not because there is no
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temporal – even if appearing imperceptible to the conscious mind – interval produced by the inferential, reasoning, process.

Peirce noticed that “the first premise is not actually thought, though it is in the mind habitually. This, of itself would not make the inference unconscious. But it is so because it is not recognized as an inference; the conclusion is accepted without our knowing how” (Peirce, CP 8.64-65), as though intuitively. Intuition, albeit achieving intellectual knowledge, related to what the ancients described as the Nous, is not of something but is something; as an epistemic pragmatic method, it is a process of knowing rather than knowledge as a scientific episteme. Developing one’s intuition is a challenge for the reader, and the information “contained” in the collective unconscious, outside Cogito, intensifies and widens the boundaries of the individual consciousness, contributing to its organization at a higher level of complexity.

In the context of Tarot edusemiotics, intuition functions in accord with its literal meaning, that is, learning from within, from the very depth of the psyche, thereby affirming its place in the semiotic process founded on “communication … across the … levels of perceptions” (Jantsch, 1975, p. 145). Access to knowledge then, “and this is a crucial point, is available within ourselves” (Jantsch, 1975, p. 146) as much as without, making a semiotic “relationis transcendentalis” (Spinks, 1991, p. 444) in fact immanent in perception! Two opposites are thereby reconciled: “immanence and transcendence [are] inseparable processes” (Williams, 2010, p. 94) embedded in the symbolic dialogue. Dewey, addressing intuition, puts the word per se in quotations marks so as to strengthen its unorthodox, anti-Cartesian, definition:

“Intuition” is that meeting of the old and new in which the readjustment involved in every form of consciousness is effected suddenly by means of a quick and unexpected harmony which in its bright abruptness is like a flash of revelation; although in fact it is prepared for by long and slow incubation. Oftentimes the union of old and new, of foreground and background, is accomplished only by effort … [T]he background of organized meanings can alone convert the new situation from the obscure into the clear and luminous.

(Dewey, 1934/1980, p. 266)

The old and new together is a province of semiotics: signs grow and become-other because of a string of interpretants creating novel meanings as new signs. As a result of interpretations – the creation of meanings – signs are continuously becoming-other-signs, enriched with ever new meanings; they grow and engender other signs because the triadic logic leads to signs always already becoming something else and something more, contributing – in the process of their growth – to human development and the evolution of consciousness. Importantly signs embody real experiences: “thoughts are events” (Peirce, CP 5.288).

When we look at the patterns created by the Tarot pictures comprising the constellation of images representing real events in human experience (Semetsky, 2011), we enter what Noddings and Shore (1984) called an intuitive mode of perception. Etymologically, intuition is derived from the Latin verb intueri, which
means to look upon. The word intuition in the Middle Ages was used “to describe an ineffable mystical experience of identification with God” (Noddings & Shore, 1984, p. 11).

Dewey used the metaphor of a spark – “old and new jump together like sparks when poles are adjusted” (Dewey, 1934/1980, p. 266) – that implies a sense of connection, which is established via relation rather than an immediate contact; it is a relation that brings “mind … in contact with the world” (Dewey, 1934/1980, p. 267), yet such a contact is what contemporary physics would describe in terms of non-local, that is, indirect, connections. It was in collaboration with physicist and Nobel laureate Wolfgang Pauli that Jung posited his principle of synchronicity as an acausal correlation between two different, non-local, events: mental and physical.

Synchronicity addresses the problematic of meaningful patterns generated both in nature and in human experience, linking the concept of the unconscious to the notion of “‘field’ in physics … [and extending] the old narrow idea of ‘causality’ … to a more general form of ‘connections’ in nature” (Pauli, 1994, p. 164). Pauli envisaged the development of theories of the unconscious as overgrowing their solely therapeutic applications by being eventually assimilated into natural sciences “as applied to vital phenomena” (Pauli, 1994, p. 164).

Referring to various phenomena that may appear random and senseless if not for their meaningful synchronistic significance and addressing a problem of forming a picture of the symbolic process Jung referred to alchemy, Tantric chakra system and Chinese meridians. He also stated that it “seems as if the set of pictures in the Tarot cards were distantly descended from the archetypes of transformation” (Jung, CW 9i, 81). Those habitual patterns of behaviors, feelings, and thoughts below the level of awareness that have been accumulating within the course of humankind’s evolutionary history Jung described as the archetypes acting in a field that he dubbed the collective unconscious.

Jung’s brief mention of Tarot subsequently inspired a substantial body of work produced by contemporary post-Jungians. Andrew Samuels refers to “systems such as that of the I Ching, Tarot and astrology” (1985, p. 123) as probable, even if questionable, resources in analytical psychology, and quotes Jung who wrote in 1945: “I found the I Ching very interesting. … I have not used it for more than two years now, feeling that one must learn … or try to discover (as when one is learning to swim) whether the water will carry one” (Samuels, 1985, p. 123).

Jung’s biographer Laurens van der Post, in his introduction to Sallie Nichols’ (who was Jung’s student) book Jung and Tarot: an Archetypal Journey, notices Nichols’ contribution to analytical psychology in terms of “her profound investigation of Tarot, and her illuminated exegesis of its pattern as an authentic attempt at enlargement of possibilities of human perceptions” (in Nichols, 1980, p. xv). Irene Gad (1994) connected Tarot cards with the process of individuation and considered their archetypal images “to be … trigger symbols, appearing and disappearing throughout history in times of transition and need” (1994, p. xxxiv); the very need that Noddings posited as the core of her ethics of care in education. It
cannot be emphasized strong enough that Tarot edusemiotics represents an urgent response to one’s needs.

When the images are narrated and interpreted, the information encoded in symbolic form becomes decoded and, in a seemingly astonishing way, novel meanings become available to human consciousness. It is the absence of a linear cause-effect link as a reductive form of mechanistic causality in the apparently random distribution of the pictures that is the reason for such customary astonishment and the flavor of mysticism usually associated with the phenomenon of Tarot. What takes place, however, is an indirect, non-local – nonlinear and mediated via the process of interpretation – synchronistic connection ensured by the triadic structure of signs embedded in semiosis. Tarot edusemiotics as such provides an unorthodox epistemic access to the Peircean semiotic, virtual, reality; the reality of Jungian archetypes.

The nature of the archetypal patterns inhabiting the collective unconscious is analogous to Peircean habits, or deep unconscious dispositions to act in a certain way under specific circumstances. Tarot edusemiotics is consistent with Peirce’s pragmatic maxim by means of creating an expanded field of meanings via a series of interpretants. Such an approach agrees in principle with the view that regards Peirce as one of the founders of postmodern, post-positivist, philosophy (Deely, 2001; Griffin, 1993).

Peirce, as long ago as 1868, stated that cognition exists only “in the relation of my states of mind at different instants …. In short, the Immediate (and therefore in itself unsusceptible of mediation – the Unanalyzable, the Inexplicable, the Unintellectual) runs in a continuous stream through our lives; it is the sum total of consciousness, whose mediation, which is the continuity of it, is brought about it by a real effective force behind consciousness” (Peirce, 1955, pp. 236-237) enabling the recursive process of re-presentation upon presentation – or dual representation defined as such by Noddings and Shore (1984).

Cognition as learning is achieved, for Peirce, only by synthetic consciousness in which the unconscious dimension is fully integrated. Even if we usually “think of ...learning as a conscious mental process [there is also] chiefly bodymind learning” (Merrell, 2002, p. 15) – or what Australian educator Marian de Souza has been referring to as “nonconscious learning” (de Souza, 2009, p. 677). Addressing young people’s spirituality and wellbeing, de Souza notices that a specific and distinct role of the nonconscious mind in the learning process is often overlooked. She draws our attention to the importance of multi-sensory environments as significant for developing students’ emotional and spiritual intelligences.

As Jung (1963) contends, “there are things in the psyche which I do not produce, but which produce themselves and have their own life … there is something in me that can say things that I do not know and do not intend, things which may even be directed against me” (p. 183), that is, which act at the unconscious level beyond one’s voluntary control or conscious will. In terms of semiotic categories, Thirdness as consciousness will have always included Firstness in itself as an unconscious subtle feeling which nevertheless functions as
a real force behind consciousness: Peirce’s onto/logical categories are expressed in *cardinal* numbers with Thirdness encompassing Firstness in itself.

For Peirce, “the mode of being of a representamen [i.e., a sign] is such that it is capable of repetition” (CP 5.138), that is, of creating recognizable patterns. Yet, because every interpretant may be a precursor to a new meaning, different from the preceding one, the repetition is never the repetition of the same. In the broadest sense, Peirce used the word representamen to designate a sign, in agreement with the word representation describing both the dynamic process of signs becoming yet other signs and the terminus of such a process. For Peirce, “our concepts … literally ‘participate’ in the reality of what is conceived” (Esposito, 1980, p. 42) thereby implying a sense of holism and self-reference – a recursive feedback – between the inner and outer realities.

Every sign is subject to interpretation by a series of subsequent thought-signs, and the whole triad enveloping the “the relation-of-the-sign-to-its-object becomes the object of the new sign” (Sheriff, 1994, p. 37) as demonstrated by the semiotic triangle in Figure 2.1. A genuine sign both *closes* on itself in the ternary structure and also *opens* itself to its becoming-other-than-itself because of novel meaning due to the inclusion of interpretants. Such is the paradox of self-reference (cf. Kauffman, 2010; Semetsky, 2001a, 2001b; Kelso & Engstrøm, 2006) elicited by the logic of the included middle peculiar to semiotics.

By virtue of their meanings, ideas in the mind play part in the real physical world; they produce effects in accord with Peirce’s pragmatic maxim. A sign can become “sedimented into bodymind; it becomes habituated, it becomes part of individual or cultural practices” (Merrell, 2002, p. 128). It is the very nature of habits that, “when imagination and perception and conceptions of a sign” (Ibid.) occur again and again, the signs may sink deep into the unconscious and become fixed and rigid habits of which we are likely unaware. Nonetheless, they function as real, effective and affective archetypal forces even if staying out of one’s conscious awareness akin to the near-physicality of Deleuze’s affects embedded in experience. These habitual, typical, patterns of human behaviors, thoughts and feelings are reflected in Tarot images; each constellation of images in a particular reading denoting a specific psychodynamic process in the context of each particular problematic situation (Semetsky, 2011).

The instance of Firstness is manifest in the postulate of propensity that assigns “an ontological status to the tendencies or propensities of the various possible outcomes of a singular chance event” (Shimony, 1993, Vol. II, p. 237) – not unlike the dynamics initiated by the Fool’s chance encounters with chaotic events “populating” the abyss of experiences as we said in the preceding chapter. The natural world, for Peirce, is *tychistic*, although at the level of Seconds, among the brute facts of action and reaction, the physical world appears strictly deterministic. Considering however that the real world, contrary to classical conception, is not reducible to the category of Secondness, knowledge is always already fallible and laws themselves are subject to evolution and change.

“The idea of fallibilism objectified” (Peirce, CP 1.171) implies the diversity embedded in nature. What may bring about a change is chance itself (illustrated by
the image of The Fool in Chapter 1) that defies the absolute necessity of a cause. There are no axiomatic truths for Peirce, instead chance or the absence of a direct causal link has to be admitted as a paradoxical part of natural laws. As a sign of the uncertain character of the real per se, knowledge for Peirce is constituted by both observable and unobservable instances of general laws. The field of knowledge is greater than a single Truth and includes virtual potentialities that become actualities in our very experience.

The inferential process of interpretation is a series of thought-signs, and the meaning of each thought becomes understood in each subsequent thought creating a process of unlimited semiosis. No thought is ever instantaneous because it needs an inferential stretch for its own interpretation. Still, the immediacy of Firstness is always presented in an instant and, as Firstness, it is had prior to being mediated by Thirdness; hence making an abductive inference border on association and guessing. The value of knowledge is in its practical import, that is, the way we, humans, will act, think, and feel – in short, assign meaning and value to our own experience – as the pragmatic effect of the said knowledge. As embedded in Tarot edusemiotics, learning is not only cognitive; it is moral as well, thereby strengthening Dewey’s point that all education is always moral.

Importantly, the field of knowledge must include generalizations independently of their having been already actualized in one’s experience or taking place in the past, present or potential future. Reality is not reduced to the actual, in fact “the will-be’s, the actually-is’s and the have-been’s are not the sum of the reals. They only cover actuality. There are besides would be’s and can be’s that are real” (Peirce, CP 8.216), the would-be-ness constituting the realm of the virtual: the semiotic reality of signs. Peirce attached a special significance to the community of inquirers:

The real … is that which, sooner or later, information and reasoning would finally result in, and which is therefore independent of the vagaries of you and me. Thus the very conception of reality shows that this conception involves the notion of an unlimited COMMUNITY, without definite limits and capable of a definite increase of knowledge. (Peirce, CP 5.311)

By virtue of the pragmatic maxim, such ontology asserts the reality of potentialities not yet actualized, as Firstness. The natural world, as Secondness, becomes an object of interpretation, and human cognition may be considered the necessary Thirdness in this relationship because “man is nature’s interpreter” (Peirce, CP 7.54) and both are embedded in the process of semiosis. Peirce asserted that all logical relations – hence, the process of semiosis – can be studied by being displayed in the form of existential graphs or iconic representations; such diagrammatic thinking may yield solutions to the otherwise unsolvable logical and moral problems, that is render a perplexing problem potentially solvable.

Diagrammatic thinking takes place in the mind; it is an act of imagination; still all signs have a tendency “to affect certain others which stand to them in a peculiar relation of affectability” (Peirce, CP 6.104) analogous to Deleuze’s (and Spinoza before him) conceptualizations. It is a set of relations that are capable of
constructing the unpredictable experiential world, which unfolds in a paradoxical manner resembling:

a Harlequin’s jacket or patchwork, made up of solid parts and voids, blocs and ruptures, attractions and divisions, nuances and bluntesses, conjunctions and separations, alternations and interweavings, additions which never reach a total and subtractions whose remainder is never fixed. … This geography of relations is particularly important … one must make the encounter with relations penetrate and corrupt everything, undermine being … The AND … subtends all relations … The AND as extra-being, inter-being. (Deleuze & Parnet, 1987, pp. 55-57)

The relations that put “to flight terms and sets” (Deleuze & Parnet, 1987, p. 57) elicit the intensive capacity “to affect and be affected” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. xvi). It appears impossible to know ahead of time “the affects one is capable of” (Deleuze, 1988b, p. 125): human life is experimental and experiential as constituted by our encounters with affects. However these affective, archetypal, forces become exteriorized in the process of Tarot edusemiotics during the embodiment of the diagrammatic thinking in practice when a particular Tarot layout as such represents the very “portraiture of Thought” (Peirce, CP 4.11).

The meaning created by Peirce’s diagrammatic method is “altogether virtual … [it is always contained] not in what is actually thought, but in what this thought may be connected with in representation” (Peirce, CP 5.289); a series of representations ultimately culminating in our actual actions at the level of practice. Tarot edusemiotics therefore, both theoretically and practically, demonstrates the reality of the virtual, which is imperative for both Peirce and Deleuze (May & Semetsky, 2008; Semetsky, 2006, 2009). Never mind meaning being virtual, it is maximally real because of its capacity to produce real effects in terms of consequences, or “practical bearings” (Peirce, CP 5.402) in accord with Peirce’s pragmatic maxim.

Peirce considered consciousness a vague term and asserted that “if it is to mean Thought it is more without us than within. It is we that are in it, rather than it in any of us” (CP 8.256). Everything is a sign: the whole universe is perfused with signs; yet “nothing is a sign unless it is interpreted as a sign” (Peirce, CP 2.308). What seems to be a paradoxical statement is derived from the nature of the pragmatic method itself. The meaning and essence of every conception depends, in a pragmatic sense, on the way the latter is applied: it “lies in the application that is to be made of it” (Peirce, CP 5.532) at the level of practical life. In this respect, Jungian depth, or analytical, psychology not only involves the interpretation of signs, and specifically Tarot signs in terms of the archetypal images constituting the realm of the collective unconscious, but partakes of Peircean unlimited semiosis in terms of the archetypes’ “manifold meaning [and] their almost limitless wealth of reference” (Jung, CW 9ı, 80).

The combination of words analytical psychology may seem to be a contradiction in terms unless we remember that Peirce’s semiotics blurs the boundaries between logic and psychology; it blends them into an area of interest for contemporary
cognitive science; Peirce, in fact, introduced the distinction between token and type. Signs are not merely tokens of the actual semiotic process. As types – or archetypes – they delineate the potential field of meanings because of their pragmatic ability to produce effects in practical experience via sign-users.

Respectively, the archetypes of the collective unconscious and the acausal connective principle of synchronicity postulated by Jung in 1952 are not solely mystical entities. What is required is a change in conception. An acausal connection seems to be an irrational statement; for Peirce, however, a paradoxical, that is, “a self-contradictory proposition is not meaningless; it means too much” (Peirce, CP 2.352). Semiotics recognizes that the principle of non-contradiction is not all there is to logic. Similar to Peirce, Jung rejected solely dyadic logic and in an anti-dualistic manner asserted that “psyche and matter are two different aspects of one and the same thing” (Jung, CW 8, 418).

As if anticipating the post-Cartesian philosophies, Jung did not draw a line of great divide between the products of imagination and those of intellect: both affect thinking, and all thinking aims at the creation of meanings. Briefly, Jungian depth psychology in its practical sense incorporates “the paradigm of an active, interventionist therapist” (Samuels, 1985, p. 197) who facilitates an analytic session by means of interpreting images that appear as unconscious material in the analysand’s dreams, or art forms like drawings or pictures, including the Tarot images, or in the course of the active imagination during sessions.

The unconscious is specified as lacking meaning, that is, as yet staying out of our conscious awareness prior to being mediated due to the included middle of interpretation, in Peircean terms. The unconscious is collective – it “includes” the experiential heritage and history of humankind; its content is determined by the activity of archetypal dynamical patterns manifesting as universal motifs in human behavior in the course of evolution as “habits-taking” (Peirce, CP 1.409). Habits, for Peirce, are dispositions to act in a certain way “when actuated by a given motive” (Peirce, CP 5.480).

Considered as a sign, the unconscious per se belongs to the category of Firstness that functions, according to Peirce, as a powerful and real force behind consciousness. As for unconscious archetypes, they were conceptualized by Jung as being “a real force charged with specific energy” (1963, p. 352). Acknowledging their powerful effect on human conduct, Jung also defined archetypes as “system[s] of readiness for action” (CW 9, 199). A sign, “in order to fulfill its office, to actualize its potency, must be compelled by its object” (Peirce, CP 5.554), therefore it strives to appear in the mode of Thirdness and become available to integration into consciousness. A sign is genuine only if and when it is interpreted; that is, its logical structure is triadic with an interpretant being the included Third.

For Jung, the archetypal images are “endowed with a generative power; … [the image] is psychically compelling” (Samuels, Shorter, & Plaut, 1986, p. 73). The goal of Jungian psychology – the very purpose of life that as such becomes the aim of education – is individuation, which is seen as a process of integration of conscious and unconscious aspects in the psyche. Integration as the production of
meanings implicated in the archetypal imagery of Tarot pictures leads to potential change in one’s habitual ways of thinking, feeling and behaving as eventual effects of the interpretive process in accordance with Peirce’s maxim that regards our conception of practical “effects [as] the whole of our conception of the object” (CP 5.402).

Tarot edusemiotics does not contradict Peirce’s pragmatic maxim. We can infer the reality of the archetypal patterns embedded in images from the effects these very patterns as signs produce at the level of our observable, actual, actions. The world of ideas is connected with the world of practical action. Such active relation between the ideal (or virtual) and actual has been considered by John Dewey as a representation of the idea of God in all forms of human action grounded in specific religious attitude in contrast to dogmatic religion as a set of beliefs.

Jung conceptualized the archetypes of the collective unconscious as primordial images engraved in our psychic constitution; these archaic unconscious images may have inspired the artists who designed the Tarot pictures. Never mind the archetypes’ status as ideas, or rather because they are indeed regulative and generative ideas of the collective unconscious or what Jung called the objective psyche, archetypes as symbols of transformation are effective in the physical world: Peirce’s objective idealism posits ideas as a constitutive part of the real world. Tarot images are not pure icons, they become enriched with indexicality; they perform a definite sign-function and point to some real event in the present, past or potential future that may have left its traces in the collective unconscious.

The field of the collective unconscious thereby functions as what Deleuze, following Henry Bergson, called the memory of the future and which, together with all of the past, is enfolded in the cosmic “gigantic memory” (Deleuze, 2001, p. 212). New information, derived from the unconscious as the effect of interpretation, not only determines the idea conceptually but also “gives it body” (Peirce, CP 1.537) in the world of practical action. The archetypal images in Tarot pictures are edusemiotic by virtue of enabling our learning from the embodied, symbolic, representations of typical human experiences, situations and events embedded in the collective unconscious: we remember that the unconscious is capable of spontaneously producing images “irrespective of wishes and fears of the conscious mind” (Jung, CW 11, 745).

Jung used the word symptom (cf. Sebeok, 1991) within clinical discourse. However symptoms do not serve merely a diagnostic purpose. The collective unconscious encompasses possibilities and potentialities, even if to the rational mind they may seem to be just a fantasy; still, a “purposively interpreted [image], seems like a symbol, seeking to characterize a definite goal with the help of the material at hand, or trace out a line of future psychological development” (Jung, CW 6, 720), that is to perform a prospective, prognostic function. The synthesis of time inscribed in the collective unconscious as the universal memory pool accords with Peirce’s semiosis acting within a shared layer of human experiences that includes dimensions of past, present and future:
A man denotes whatever is the object of his attention at the moment; he connotes whatever he knows or feels of this object, and is the incarnation of this form … his interpretant is the future memory of this cognition, his future self, or another person he addresses, or a sentence he writes, or a child he gets. (Peirce, CP 7.591)

Dewey, stressing the ethical task of the reconstruction, or revaluation, of experience, pointed to the necessity of both diagnosis and prognosis as related to a particular situation. While diagnosis refers to assessing the symptoms as the signs of the present, a problematic situation demands also “a look into the future … anticipation, or a prediction … of some possible future experiences” (Dewey, 1933/1998, Vol. 2, p. 143). Dewey compared reflective, critical, thinking with the task of a physician who has to make “a prognosis, a forecast of the probable future course of the disease. And not only is his treatment a verification – or the reverse – of the idea … but the result also affects his treatment of future patients” (Dewey, 1933/1998, Vol. 2, p. 143). Such self-reflective thinking is a feature of Tarot edusemiotics, indeed.

In this respect, Peircean modal categories of might-be-ness and would-be-ness “located” at the level of virtual reality pertain to potentialities implicit in the Jungian collective unconscious defined not only as the repository of human past dispositions, but also future developments. Jung’s position appears to affirm the concept of final causation – lost in the scientific “progress” of modernity – in his saying that “the archetype determines the nature of the configurational process and the course it will follow, with seeming foreknowledge, or as if it were already in a possession of the goal” (Jung, CW 8, 411).

This configurational process is semiosis, the action of signs permeated with the archetypal dynamics. The archetype’s function is that of a Peircean “general idea [which] is already determinative of acts in the future to an extent to which it is not now conscious” (Peirce, CP 6.156). The interpretation of the Tarot signs, symbols and images – in the process of Tarot hermeneutic (Semetsky, 2011) – performs the mediating, what Jung called transcendent, function. The pictures are the amplifiers that as such constitute the basis of the synthetic method which implies the emergence of novelty – that is a leap to a new meaning in the semiotic process of signs-becoming-other – as carrying the utmost significance.

The synthetic method thus reflects the future-oriented path to knowledge, the memory of the future, or what Jung called a prospective function of the unconscious, and Tarot readings take us above and over traditional Freudian psychoanalysis, which was considered by Jung as reductive because of its sole orientation to the past marked by a single signified. For Jung, as for Peirce, “psychological fact...as a living phenomenon... is always indissolubly bound up with the continuity of the vital process, so that it is not only something evolved but also continually evolving and creative” (Jung, CW 6, 717).

Moreover, Jung’s defining the collective unconscious as the objective psyche posits it analogous to “the Reality which … contrives to determine the Sign to its Representation” (Peirce, CP 4.536). Reality, as if contriving to determine the sign
to its representation, is, for Jung, the psychic reality: as a sign, the very depth of the psyche creates a relation between the worlds of mind and matter. Jung called the deepest level *psychoid* and asserted that it is at this level where, in a holistic manner, body and mind, *physis* and *psyche*, become united as two different aspects of one world, *Unus Mundus*. He used the Latin term *coincidentia oppositorum* for the apparently mystical coincidence of opposites, such as psyche and matter, occurring in synchronistic experiences.

Archetypes are general tendencies and subsist, rather than actually exist, *in potentia* only. As skeletal concepts, their significance is not exhausted by noumenal ideas: in their semiotic Firstness, they are only “forms without content, representing merely the possibility of a certain type of perception and action” (Jung in Spinks, 1991, p. 448). But the vague and unconscious forms are to be filled with informational content embedded within real, flesh-and-blood, human experiences in the phenomenal world. Situated in the midst of the Seconds, within real human actions and reactions, they need thought and interpretation as Thirds so as to acquire meaning by virtue of being “altered by becoming conscious and by being perceived” (Jung in Pauli, 1994, p. 159). And it is in the form of Tarot images that we can discover the meaningful contents implicit in the collective psyche.

The Tarot images as icons are immediate objects in their Firstness – as Peirce was saying, “this is present to me” (CP 5.289) – but the meanings of the archetypal patterns that are embodied in pictorial artifacts accord with the Peircean definition of the dynamical object “which … the Sign … can only indicate and leave to the interpreter to find out by collateral experience” (Peirce, CP 8.314). The plurality of evolving meanings finds their expression in the symbols of transformation represented by Tarot Arcana that comprise a series of thought-signs and sign-events.

A sign “points beyond itself to a meaning that is … still beyond our grasp, and cannot be adequately expressed in the familiar words of our language” (Jung in Nöth, 1995, p. 119) but needs a relevant medium of communication for its expression. Importantly, as Shlain (1998) remarks,

images approximate reality: they are concrete. The brain simultaneously perceives all parts of the whole integrating the parts synthetically into a gestalt. The majority of images are perceived in an all-at-once manner. Reading words is a different process. When the eye scans distinctive individual letters arranged in a certain linear sequence, a word with meaning emerges. The meaning of a sentence, such as the one you are now reading, progresses word by word. … The use of analysis to break each sentence down into its component words, or each word down into its component letters, is a prime example of reductionism. … An alphabet by definition consists of fewer than thirty meaningless symbols that do not represent the images of anything in particular; a feature that makes them abstract … the comprehension of written words emerges in a one-at-a-time fashion. (Shlain, 1998, pp. 4-5)
The complementarity between word and image as a feature of edusemiotics is important in the hermeneutic process of Tarot readings. When mental images are externalized and take their most concrete, pictorial, form, they need to be filled with meaningful content. During their interpretations, the meanings are narrated and articulated; however they are not exhausted by verbal expressions. The words are abstract – but the feelings, emotions, and the transformation of habits that they elicit are concrete and particular and determine our actual behaviors at the level of practice. Human development engenders itself via the symbolism of the pictures as multiple expressions of the unconscious that precede and exceed the verbal expressions of the conscious mind: “it is not the personal human being who is making the statement, but the archetype speaking through him” (Jung, 1963, p. 352).

The imaginative narratives created during the interpretive edusemiotic process make us aware of the unconscious archetypal dynamics. The relationship between the collective unconscious and individual consciousness was of utmost importance for Jung. Signs are “always grounded in the unconscious archetype, but their manifest forms are molded by the ideas acquired by the conscious mind. The archetypes [as] structural elements of the psyche … possess a certain autonomy and specific energy which enables them to attract, out of the conscious mind, those contents which are better suited to themselves” (Jung, CW 5, 232). Referring to the tertium non datur, Jung was looking for the included third that, even if not logically foreseeable, will have reconciled the opposites in a conflict situation whenever the tension between the opposites has been held in consciousness, and the analysis has constellated the opposites so powerfully that a union or synthesis of the personality becomes an imperative necessity …. [This situation] requires a real solution and necessitates a third thing in which the opposites can unite. Here the logic of the intellect usually fails, for in a logical antithesis there is no third. The “solvent” can only be of an irrational nature. In nature the resolution of opposites is always an energetic process: she acts symbolically in the truest sense of the word, doing something that expresses both sides, just as a waterfall visibly mediates between above and below. (Jung, CW 14, 705)

The supposedly irrational nature of the included “third thing” is of course problematical; the central idea of this book is that it is the triadic semiotics that gives logical, rational, legitimacy to Thirdness represented by Peirce’s interpretant in its many guises among which the edusemiotics of Tarot is exemplary! Signs always express “both sides,” partaking of their objects in accord with a genuine Peircean triad that transcends, or crosses over, the dualistic gap between the apparent opposites.

Jung posited the transcendent function that arises from the tension between consciousness and the unconscious and effectuates their union by virtue of transcending the opposites, in other words enabling a sign to become-other. He called this function transcendent because of its ability to make the transition from the unconscious into consciousness, “from one attitude to another organically
The effectiveness of the transcendent function depends on us becoming aware of the unconscious material such as in dreams or, indeed, during Tarot readings.

New meanings produced in the course of Tarot edusemiotics will have governed “the whole [new] attitude, putting an end to the division and forcing the energy of the opposites into a common channel. The standstill is overcome and life can flow on with renewed power towards new goals” (Jung, CW 8, 827) in the lifelong, at once developmental and learning, process of individuation as self-education. Jung noticed that habitually “we educate people only up to the point where they can earn a living and marry: then education ceases altogether … Innumerable … professional disappointments, are due to this lack of adult education” (Jung, 1954, p. 47).

Significantly, “the education of the educator … will eventually rebound to the good of [the] pupils” (Jung, 1954, p. 47). Such self-education, however, should not be defined in terms of the currently popular professional development or lifelong training, but “should make [one] properly conscious of himself” (Jung, 1954, p. 47, brackets mine). This is a prerogative of Tarot edusemiotics as the means for self-education, for reorganization of experience.

Peirce has stated that “the most perfect of signs are those in which the iconic, indicative and symbolic characters are blended as equally as possible” (CP 4.448). Such an optimal combination is displayed in the sign-system of Tarot pictures. Pictures are by definition iconic, and the patterns displayed in the layout are indexical by virtue of their pointing to real events and experiences (even when they “subsist” in the archetypal field of the collective unconscious); and it is an interpretant that fixes symbolic meanings, which however are always already subject to further interpretation, to becoming new signs from which we learn amidst ever new experiences.

Each Tarot image positioned in a layout is “an Icon of a peculiar kind” (Peirce, CP 2.248); together the images perform the function of “rendering literally visible before one’s very eyes the operation of thinking in actu” (Peirce, CP 4.571). Functioning in the mode of Peircean existential graphs, a Tarot layout asserts “the epistemological thrust” (Spinks, 1991, p. 446) by virtue of enabling epistemic access to unconscious, what Michael Polany dubbed tacit, knowledge. The Thirdness of interpretation of Tarot images reconstructs this implicit knowledge by making it explicit via the mediation of pictorial language so that this deep inner unconscious knowledge becomes available to consciousness. In this manner, Peircean symbolic logic, when embodied in its own visual notation, does contribute to reasoning and the creation of meanings implicated in the layout.

As signs, that is relational entities, that cross over the perceived separation between culture (experience), nature, and the human mind, the archetypes embodied in Tarot images demand their “naturalistic interpretation” (Laszlo, 1995, p. 135). Asserting their naturalistic, and not supernatural, status, systems philosopher Ervin Laszlo approached Jungian archetypes from the perspective of dynamical systems theory (that we touched upon in the preceding chapter) and respectively argued that they, as well as “the collective unconscious that frames
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them, are not just ‘in the mind’: they are in nature’ (Laszlo, 1995, p. 135) thereby making Jungian psychic reality conceptually analogous to “the collective, space- and-time-dimensionless” (1995, p. 136) field in nature that was first conceptualized as such by Pauli.

To reiterate, it is the interpretation of images as Thirdness that “brings information … determines the idea and gives it body” (Peirce, CP 1.537). The idea of Tarot as embodied mind has been addressed by systems theorist Erich Jantsch (1975) who has included Tarot in his systematic overview of approaches and techniques of the inner way to knowledge. Jantsch placed archetypes and Tarot at the mythological level among genealogical approaches and, emphasizing the continuous self-organization of systems through self-realizing and self-balancing processes, has noted that “Tarot cards may be seen as embodying … [and] mapping out the field of potential human response” (Jantsch, 1975, p. 163).

In its capacity as a semiotic system, and following Peirce, Tarot can be moved up to a level identified by Jantsch as evolutionary and at which he acknowledged the human potential of being capable of “tuning in” (1975, p. 150) to the aforementioned field in nature, thus overcoming the limitations of three-dimensional space or chronological time. As for the complicated task of tuning in to such a field, Jantsch anticipated a dynamic “communication mechanism, which is at work across the … levels of perception, so that, for example, ‘insight’ from the evolutionary level may be received in some other form at the mythological level, e.g., in the form of intuition, or dreams, or general vibrations felt as quality” (Jantsch, 1975, p. 149) at the subtle, affective, level.

Such a communication mechanism as semiosis is grounded in the logic of the included middle represented by the Peircean interpretant and embodied in the layout of Tarot images, which are to be read and interpreted. The transformational pragmatics of Tarot, that is, the potential effect of each reading on human development and learning, is provided by means of the intervention of the Thirdness of interpretation as conducted by a reader. The authentic reader’s interpretive strategies (Semetsky, 2011) are based on the semiotic principle of polysemy.

In contrast to popular publications that usually present a given set of keywords for each picture, there cannot be a forever-fixed meaning attached to an image; rather meanings are contextualized depending on a particular situation, as well as inferred from specific positions occupied by this or that picture in a typical Tarot layout. While some positions in a spread traditionally describe common semantic categories, the archetypal content as the information embodied in the imagery will vary as a function of their place, of relational topology. The subjectivities of both participants in a semiotic communication – a reader and a person seeking a reading – are equally important and represent significant “situational variables.”

For Jung, there are as many archetypes as there are typical situations in life. The 78 images of Major and Minor Arcana in a deck can combine in many unpredictable combinations and permutations reflecting the richness and unpredictability of human experiences and their associated affective states. What may be “predicted,” though, is the tendency for an event to occur or a singular state
of the system which embodies the corresponding informational content. Interpretation contributes to transformation of in-formation from the unconscious into consciousness; such transformation implying a possibility of not only habits-taking but also habits-breaking! This transformation would be practically improbable if not for the future acting upon the present, being pulled into the present by the archetypal, affective, forces that play the role of “inward [or] potential actions … which … influence the formation of habits” (Peirce, CP 6.286).

Jantsch (1980), from his systems-theoretical perspective, acknowledged a somewhat backward causation as a feature of anticipation pertaining to a self-organized, self-referential complex system, the present state of which contains “not only the experience of past evolution, but also the experience of anticipated future [that] vibrates in the present” (Jantsch, 1980, p. 232). A Tarot layout reflects on the possibility of anticipating the future by enabling a peculiar “gazing” into the possible future that may be described as “the options in further evolution” (Jantsch, 1980, p. 232) in the overall dynamics of Tarot edusemiotic system.

As the necessary Thirdness, the Tarot spread itself mediates between one’s conscious mind and the collective unconscious, thus serving as a logical interpretant of the latter, as well as a dynamical interpretant for the subject of a reading. So in our physical world the structure of a layout seems to appear as if from nowhere, by virtue of synchronicity, but in fact appears out of the process of semiosis due to the action and the interplay of signs representing the relational nature of Nature itself! This process, as the Peircean category of Thirdness, indeed governs Secondness and creates or brings information. Therefore, Jungian synchronicity as “an acausal connection may manifest itself in the form of non-local correlations that appear to lie outside the normal confines of space and time” (Peat, 1992, p. 199).

Each Tarot image, by definition, is a sign. As such, and in the animate manner of “living signs” (Merrell, 1999) it “endeavors to represent, in part at least, an Object which is therefore in a sense the cause, or determinant of the sign” (Peirce, CP 6.347); these determinants being the archetypal ideas of the collective unconscious embedded in the semiotic reality. Jung maintained that in analysis “every interpretation necessarily remains ‘as-if’” (Jung, CW 2, 265). Indeterminacy abounds, “certain fundamental meanings … can only be grasped approximately” (Jung, CW 8, 417) in agreement with Peirce’s asserting any prediction as being of general and incomplete character. Ultimately however, if the images just like “certain sorts of ink spots … have certain effects on the conduct, mental and bodily, of the interpreter” (Peirce, CP 4.431, in Von Eckardt, 1996, p. 151), then it is quite logical to assume that eventually interpretation will lead to habit-change according to some lawful relationship.

Peirce asserted the possibility of transformation not only at the mental level but at the level of actions: habit-change means “a modification of a person’s tendencies toward action” (CP 5.476), such a modification at the social level being the ultimate purpose of Tarot edusemiotics. Habits, however, are resilient – they wouldn’t be habits otherwise – and their function is similar to the action of
archetypes that, according to Jung, can sometimes possess the psyche in a guise of an individual or collective Shadow, the latter corresponding to Arcanum XV, The Devil (see Chapter 7). Archetypes can be “the ruling powers” (Jung, CW 7, 151). The encounter with one’s own powerful Shadow constitutes a fundamental part of Jungian depth psychology and Tarot hermeneutic alike.

The Tarot system functions as a dynamical interpretant by virtue of it being a sign that stands for one’s real emotional, behavioral and cognitive patterns expressed via the symbolism of the pictures. Jung commented that “our brains might be the place of transformation, where the relatively infinite tensions or intensities of the psyche are tuned down to perceptible frequencies and extensions” (Jung in Laszlo, 1995, p. 135) so as to enable reading and interpretation. Due to the mediating function of interpretation, the latent, unconscious, contents of the mind are rendered conscious, and the signs which are brought to the level of awareness, that is, amplified up to the point of their integration into consciousness, are capable of creating a momentous feedback – a semiotic bridge, a synchronistic connection – in the psychodynamic processes of the subject of a reading. A current structure – or a person’s present level of self-knowledge – tends to some instability threshold.

Importantly, the “integration is not continuous but rather marked by the kind of discontinuities and phase transitions associated with complexity theory, as formulated, for example by Thelen and Smith (1994)” (Muller, 2000, p. 59; cf. Semetsky, 2010a); such dynamics capable of producing “a change in the subject’s mental life which, in turn, changes his or her disposition to act … in ways dependent on the content of representation” (Von Eckardt, 1996, pp. 283-284). This change takes place in the actual physical world asserting the objective reality of the archetypes embodied in the Tarot images and also warranting Peirce’s pragmatic maxim as the production of real, and not just metaphorical, effects.

“The habit alone” (Peirce, CP 5.491) is capable of abruptly interrupting the semiotic regress, effecting its own transformation by the operational “closure of the process … a closure which itself opens possibilities” (Colapietro, 2000, p. 145), such temporary closure represented by a singular Tarot reading (Semetsky, 2011). Indeed, the explication of the information implicated in the collective unconscious is grounded in complication – the unconscious becoming conscious – thus fulfilling the edusemiotic, learning, function. It is “the deliberately formed, self-analyzing habit” (Peirce, CP 5.491) that is produced by means of self-reference, when the subject of the reading can reflect on her own psychodynamic process due to the interpretation of Tarot signs; such habit also ultimately verifiable in the reconstructed experience.

“An acausal parallelism” (Jung, 1963, p. 374) of synchronicity would perhaps, in Peircean terms, be classified as a precognitive quali-signification, that is the qualitative immediacy of experience. The immediate Firstness, a sort of pre-modern natural attraction, was together with the Thirdness of mediation left out as insignificant by positivist science and substituted by dualistic signification and instrumental rationality based on the conventional logic of the excluded middle. However in the Tarot edusemiotics we witness dual representation: a layout prior to the Thirdness of interpretation is just “the presentation of the unconscious, not
the representation of consciousness” (Deleuze, 1994, p. 192) and ultimately demands the Thirdness of interpretation so as to integrate that which is still unconscious in and of itself.

It is in the very “interstice … between seeing and speaking” (Deleuze, 1988a, p. 87) – between seeing the Tarot images and interpreting or narrating them – where meaning emerges! The interstice functions as the included, in-between, middle; the Third! The actualization – via the “magnitude of thirdness” (Deely, 1990, p. 102) – of many potentialities “hiding” in the unconscious is taking place due to the subjective, bottom-up, “intervention of the mind” (Shimony, 1993, Vol. II, p. 319) of the interpreter into a signifying chain of semiosis. Yet this very intervention may be considered objective in the sense of itself being implemented by a choice of a global, top-down, character, analogous to the semiotic functioning of the relation between immanence and transcendence embedded in one inseparable process of semiosis.

A choice of this kind may be accounted for by means of what philosopher of science Abner Shimony, addressing “the status of mentality in nature” (in Penrose, Shimony, Cartwright, & Hawking, 1997, p. 144) dubbed the hypothetical superselection rule in nature that enables the very “transition between consciousness and unconsciousness … not … as a change of ontological status, but as a change of state” (p. 150). What takes place is a transcendental relation (relationis transcendentalis) in the form of projection (see Chapter 10): the static structure of the layout may be considered a projection, in the framework of projective geometry, or a minute snapshot of a dynamic process of semiosis as the action of signs.

This conceptualization is supported by the psychological function of Tarot as a kind of projective technique (Semetsky, 2005a, 2011) or a psychological tool that not only parallels but even exceeds the Rorschach method used in clinical practice for the purpose of assessment and testing: the ink spots used in projective testing function as signs. By definition, the projective method is viewed as a structured interview or a dialogue, that is, an open and flexible arena for studying interpersonal – and intrapsychic (Semetsky, 2011), in the case of Tarot – transactions.

The transformational pragmatics of Tarot is effectuated because of the included middle of Peircean Thirdness, but the interpretation itself is triggered by abduction that is always already present as Firstness: a first, hypothetical, step to interpretation. Such Firstness-in-Thirdness is being “tested” and deliberated upon during the reading among the continuous interplay of all three forms of inference: abduction, deduction and induction. The latent, unconscious, contents of the mind become available to cognition and are therefore rendered conscious because of the logical coupling – the included third – created by interpretation.

So in Tarot edusemiotics we witness a strict self-referential function: as a sign of a deep psychodynamic process, the reading “addresses somebody, that is creates in the mind of the person an equivalent sign or perhaps a more developed sign” (Peirce, CP 2.228), notwithstanding that “the first sign” (Ibid.) is still the same yet different, because one was not yet conscious of oneself as “somebody.” The Tarot
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layout, when narrated, functions as the ultimate “interpretant of the first sign” (Ibid.). The interpretant stands for its object “in reference to a sort of idea” (Ibid.) as the mind’s archetypal ground.

A singular Tarot reading then performs a double function of being a sign-object for the signs which act in, or in-habit, the collective unconscious, as well as a sign-interpretant contributing to one’s habit-change and the creation of subjectivity in practice by means of learning from experience. Jung pointed to amplification as a cornerstone of his analytical method. Another function operative in the psychological process was, as Jung noted, compensation, that is, a tendency of the unconscious to maintain balance and stay in a homeostasis with the conscious mind for the purpose of self-regulation.

In other words, and in terms of information theory, there is a natural presence of negative feedback as self-correction necessary for adaptation. But the functioning of Tarot is more complex. It functions in the twofold manner of second-order cybersemiotics (cf. Brier, 2008): both as an amplifier by rendering the subtle aspects of one’s psyche vivid and substantial, and as a positive feedback that directs the amplified information back into the system and hence leads to transforming it by virtue of making the latent unconscious contents manifest and rendering them meaningful. Peirce used the terms ampliative and explicative to distinguish between those forms of reasoning that aim at increasing knowledge and, by contrast, to make hidden or implicit knowledge explicit, to make manifest what is latent. Indeed, what is implicated in the mind is not only explicated but complicated as well in the process of acquiring meaning in the format of more fully developed signs.

The double contingency (cf. Luhmann, 1995) embedded in Tarot complex, self-organizing, dynamics leads to a new level in the system’s organization; the surplus of information immanent in the collective unconscious leads to learning and changes in the levels of complexity: from unconscious into consciousness. The double-folding is a feature of a nonlinear evolutionary process of semiosis, which can be defined from the “systems-theoretical viewpoint [as] a circular process that constitutes itself in reality… Every system that participates in interpenetration realizes the other within itself as the other’s difference between system and environment, without destroying its own system/environment difference” (Luhmann, 1995, p. 216).

This means that only by virtue of our own participation in the multiple interactions and transactions that comprise the fullness of human experience, and the quantity and quality of which, even if finite in our human lives, cannot be predicted in advance, can we achieve full self-realization as individuation constituting the aim of Jungian self-education and Tarot edusemiotics alike. It is such participation comprising a relational dynamics of experience – and not an objective detached observation as belonging to the “scientific method” of modernity – that mystics around the world have been practicing for centuries.

Mystics traditionally played a participatory, embodied, role in what today is called the knowledge economy. Their practical “epistemology” was based on the method of analogy or likeness comprising the relations, correspondences and
sympathies embedded in life, even if the relations as such appear at first sight to be
hidden as ciphers, hieroglyphs or, sure enough, Arcana; thereby in need of
interpretation for their very deciphering. What common sense habitually perceives
as mysticism, such as the phenomenon of Tarot, is therefore thoroughly semiotic: *it is the same logic of the included middle that underwrites the science of signs and mystical experiences alike*. As Matthew Fox (1990) commented, “more and more
scientists come out of the closet as mystics” (p. 19); and vice versa, mystical
experiences appear to be open to explanation, provided of course that science itself
is re-conceptualized as the science of signs or semiotics.

We are signs among signs in a continuous flow of semiosis that blurs the
boundaries between opposites. It is our active participation in the process of
semiosis – whence our actions, experiences, thoughts, feelings, emotions, hopes,
fears, desires, and the relationships with significant others (Semetsky, 2011) are
symbolically represented in Tarot images – that contributes, from the evolutionary
perspective, to our growth and learning from experiences in a continuous process
of becoming other and “more fully developed” (Peirce, CP 5.594) signs.

Individuation, as a never-ending process toward a maximally integrated
personality, was used by Jung in the same holistic sense as Peirce’s: “the identity
of a man consists in the consistency of what he does and thinks” (Peirce, 1955, p.
250). And because “consistency belongs to every sign ...the man-sign acquires
information and comes to mean more that he did before” (Peirce, 1955, p. 249).
Psychic residues are formed by recurrent experiences and are laid down in the
archetypal structures, but – we repeat, as “system(s) of readiness for action” (Jung,
CW 9, 199) – those structures themselves in a self-referential manner can “exert an
influence on experience, tending to organize it” (Samuels, et al., 1986, p. 24) thus
effecting transformations and changes, thereby creating new possibilities in the
experiential world.

The ethical question arises of how to treat the information that becomes
available as a result of Tarot readings and implies, by virtue of it being a
motivational force behind the transformation of habits, a possibility of producing
becomes a must. Care theorists recognize not the abstract universals of moral
philosophy as a theoretical discipline, but particular, though typical, experiences –
that is, those arising from concrete human conditions. Those common human
feelings and desires are inscribed in Tarot images because they are ingrained in the
human constitution at the level of the psyche, of the soul, each image representing
an archetypal pattern subsisting in the collective unconscious.

Importantly, a caring attitude foregrounding relational ethics will also have to,
by definition, respect the presupposed “anomaly” of Tarot. In the framework
of objective science and logical positivism that used it as a model, Tarot of course
appears to us as a mystical and mysterious phenomenon located outside this very
science, hence falling into the range of anomalous or paranormal experiences. But
it is considered anomalous only in the strictly causal terms of classical mechanistic
science when an observable effect directly follows an equally observable cause
without mediation or interpretation that interrupts and breaks into a presumed linearity.

The acausal principle of synchronicity, understandably, does not belong within the reductive paradigm. It is “another kind of causation” (Peirce, CP 6.60) due to which a perceived anomaly falls into the range of normal, albeit novel, science, effecting as such a definite paradigm shift grounded in the “different logic of social practice: an intensive and affective logic of the included middle” (Bosteels, 1998, p. 151). It is our practical experience that performs the role of the Peircean interpretant whenever our own behavioral patterns and mostly unconscious actions offer us, upon critical reflection, a glimpse into the deeper reality of the archetypes, into the very depth of the psyche at the unitary level of existence reflected in the Tarot images.

It is the continuous process of semiosis as the action of signs – crossing over the Cartesian bifurcation between nature and mind – that allows for, in the words of contemporary physicist Henry Stapp, “the emergence, in human brains, of holistic structures that can mirror, simultaneously, both the structural forms and functional effects of human thoughts” (Stapp, 1993, p. 178). To participate fully in a play of semiosis we have to be able to read, understand, interpret, and speak its language. And the perfect language is available, a language encoded in beautiful images, each one telling a story which is happening, or could be happening, or would be happening providing certain circumstances are met, to its protagonists – ourselves! This language is the subject matter of the next chapter.

REFERENCES


CHAPTER 2


