

Introduction

For a further deepening in semiotics there are the books of the three influential thinkers on meaning and information: Saussure, Peirce and Shannon.

Ferdinand de Saussure

The *Course in General Linguistics* by Ferdinand de Saussure's (1857 - 1913), assembled after his death by his students, is easy to find on the web. By moving from language to other social sign systems, such as cinema, storytelling or fashion, other authors are emerging, such as Christian Metz, Algirdas J. Greimas or Roland Barthes.

Charles S. Peirce

Charles S. Peirce (1839 - 1914) left us an impressive work that is available in several editions. Christiane Chauviré has published a philosophical study that helps to understand the context of Peircean thought. Jérôme Vogel has published a study on the beginning of Peircean thought, when his ideas began to crystallize around a theory of information.

Claude E. Shannon

Unfortunately, the complete works of Claude E. Shannon (1916-2001) are less accessible. Like Peirce (in a letter to Allan Marquand in 1886), Shannon applied Boole's logic to electronic circuits. And his theory of information is traceable back to Peirce: the "real thing" for Shannon was the article of Ralph V. Hartley on the transmission of information, published in 1928. Instead of talking about a transmission of *intelligence*, which at the time was common in the Bell Labs, Hartley introduced Peirce's concept of *information*. But, unlike Peirce, it is limited to manipulating the symbols of a signal, excluding semantics. Shannon followed him in this direction to formulate his theory of information.

Références

Shannon's quotes are from the article *The Potentialities of Computers* (april 1953).

Umberto Eco's quote is from the article *Semiotics in the next millennium* (oktober 1999)