



Fig. 1—Jespersen, Otto. (1922). *Language, its Nature, Development, and Origin*. Alan & Unwin. Jakobson, Roman (1971). Shifters, verbal categories, and the Russian verb. *Selected Writings II*, 130-147. The Hague: Mouton. Krauss, Rosalind. (1993). Notes on the Index: Part I. *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths*. MIT Press.. Robinson, Julia. (2009). From Abstraction to Model: George Brecht's Events and the Conceptual Turn in Art of the 1960s. *October Magazine*. October Magazine and the MIT.

The *index* has commonly been considered a category of sign connected to *cause*: insomuch we know *causal* relationships, we may connect known *effects* to their underlying cause. However, indexicality relates to more broadly to human experience: more precisely, to *deixis*—the indication of *events* in clusters of meaning, which thereby will orient them. Clusters of meaning that harbour events therefore constitute an *expanded index*. We thereby are placed in an orbital attraction to varieties of semiotic clustering that may harbour events: that is, *environmental semiotics*.

Environmental semiotics is partly indebted to the development of the theory of *shifters* in linguistics and art-theory: featuring in the works of Otto Jespersen, Roman Jakobson, Rosalind Krauss and Julia Robinson. At the level of *civic* infrastructure and -education it is indebted to the prospective of the current development of *bimodal search* at the National Library of Norway, and the framework established by the UNESCO for *media- and information literacy (MIL)*. It is a springboard for the broader assignments of the *learning theatre*, developed at KHIO and elsewhere.

However, environmental semiotics leaves *structural* linguistics—and also -art theory—by abandoning the notion that meaning is based on *opposition* of contrastive pairs, in so-called binary oppositions. Opposition was a strategy to bring clarity/acuity to variations so subtle that they otherwise would escape our attention, fly in under the radar of human awareness, and remain hidden in plain sight. The needed degree of clarity in environmental semiotics lies in the criterion of harbouring events, as the resident principle of environmental semiotics. Recalling Norman Potter's literalist precepts: 2. *seek always the resident principles*; 3. *find them where they belong, in the job itself*: working-definition of environmental semiotics.



Fig. 2—work as a semiotic exchange and calibration between *experience* and *event*. Exchange within/beyond the sign hatches *shifters*.

It serves the limited purpose of *indicating* the QUAD: **A**) the same; **B**) the similar; **C**) the different; **D**) the other. *The resident principles*: the identifier of an event (the *same*). *Finding them where they belong, in the job itself*: moving the event unto something alongside (and *similar*). Then letting the difference between the two articulate in the job: e.g. by only letting a selection of industrial products and local crafts become part of the job. Hence to design a situation that is *specific* to the site (the *other*). This take on environmental semiotics is not only restricted to value and meaning, at the level of semiotic signs, but constitutes the basic tenet of triangulating environmental *learning*.

The design *work* here becomes an intermedium between the *reality* of it and the human *experience* of it. Featuring *realism* (the resident principles) and *phenomenology* (find them in the job itself) articulated in the play of free form, within certain constraints: in Norman Potter's work these are rather mean and lean. Designer Bjørn Blikstad, however, is one to have proceeded in the opposite direction, with some surprising consequences: featuring a crisis between reality and experience in a language of exasperation. His artistic research is cleared of function—and from *form follows function*—thereby revealing some disquieting aspects of what we routinely understand as function. Thereby moving *from* utility *to* indexicality. Perhaps.

That is, moving the prerogative of design *from* utility as our main focus in how we understand the world—why we are here, and that it is there

—to hosting environments: the design of arrangements in which the hospitality to events of the world happening, brings us to the *learning theatre*; at a crossroads between the *workshop*, the *studio* and the *archive*. Realism, phenomenology and free form apply differently in the three located work-situations, which the learning theatre seeks to conceive and extend in *topological* terms: the learning theatre is *cartographic* in its designs. What prompts orientation comes from within: from free form (as a third and different framework from realism and phenomenology).

In the *workshop*—which invariably hinges on forms of *apprenticeship*—realism is usually present in the framework of *briefs*, then free form applies in the ensuing design *process*, and finally the phenomenological format applies to project-*presentations* (when work is expected to be rooted in an experience with a threshold professional depth). The workshop, in this sense, can be expanded to any practical domain in which learners seek tutorials: notably, in the widespread use of *video-tutorials*. The learning theatre defines such usership within the precincts of *education*.

In the *studio*—which invariably hinges on forms of collaboration—autonomy is expressed in the *experiences* that the practitioners are bringing to the table. Finding efficient ways of situating the variety of experience around the table, by communicating the inner workings of embodied experience, gives the studio a phenomenological starting point. Again, free form comes in the *middle*: it no longer is a vehicle in a creative problem-solving process, but is turned into a vehicle of *investigation* with a design of intercepting the realities that will make a project happen.

Clearly, the workshop and the studio—as discussed above—can be tied to specific locations, equipment and interiors. But *not* necessarily. The workshop and the studio can also determine the *work-situations* with their different *-modes*. By situating the *work* as the connective fulcrum *between* experience *and* event, it doesn't make any difference whether digital technology is involved/not. From this vantage point, separating between digital and analog is a category error. What is important is the *alternation* between the workshop and studio in the work of learning.

Which means that in our concern with *cause*—which is the province of the *index*, but also the locus of *metaphysics*—we are operating in the *electrosphere*. That is, field, frequency, wavelength and intensities. So, when we move from the workshop and the studio to the *archive*, we will expect it to be located in what we, with a term coined by Anthony Dunne, will call *Hertzian tales*. The archive is accordingly the work-situation in which a *deeper* understanding of *free form* is to be expected: specifically, a deeper practice of the free play between electronics and usership.

This *contemporary* affordance of the archive, might be bewildering to people accustomed to a more rigorous concept of the *modern* archive: with its regime of accession, boxes, dust-gloves and restricted condition of consultation. But there are two counter-points to this rigorous idea of the archive: **1)** the boxes and other tooling of the archive adds an *arbitrary* layer to the contents [of the box]; **2)** the archive's organisation by provenance/legal deposit makes the job of the archivist similar to a *field-research* without which it would be a long stretch for anyone to even consult the archive.

The electrosphere is a watershed in the history of the archive: first with the advent of *electronic media* that record/replay, next with the digital technology. Much of the landscaping previously in the hands of the archivist, now is in the hands of the usership. With the digital turn comes the possibility of *editing* the landscaping done to develop a re/research design. It hatches a cartographic affordance which is explored and exploited in the learning theatre: the archive deconstructs the workshop/studio as an *opposition*.

The archival work-situation—with its recent additions—solves the need for clarity by means of *orientation*. The new archive is not only bimodal in its search infrastructure for text-image compounds, but also in facilitating the *shifts* between the workshop and the studio as modes of learning, by *cartographic* means; working out *events* | *experience* in *free form*.

Fig. 3—W = Workshop; S = Studio; A = Archive. The W, S and A are conceived as *work-situations*, they can correspondingly be understood as *learning-modes*. If we look at how W and S are organised around the diagonal axis (A) we readily understand how W and S can be conceived in *oppositional* terms. If opposition has worked as an amplifier to otherwise weak signals (e.g. linguistic nuance), this amplification can also be achieved through directional terms/orientation (A)