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Popularising Semiotics

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Semiotics, deconstructionism, structuralism and postmodernism are words which lurk on the boundaries of the consciousness of most of us. But they remain shadowy presences except on the rare occasions when we need to wrestle out of them an explanation of just what they are all about.

In this issue of *Trends* we grapple with one of them, semiotics. C. S. Peirce, the American pragmatist philosopher who coined the term, saw semiotics as a 'method of methods', useful in many disciplines to clarify their own theory and practice. Everyone uses signs and symbols. Everyone thinks they know the meanings of the signs and symbols they use. But why do they have meanings? Where do the meanings come from? Why are the signs and symbols used by one person or group so frequently misinterpreted by others?

Semiotics may seem esoteric, but its interests are central to all communication. Consequently, all communicators should be concerned with at least some of the problems dealt with by semioticians.

To guide us on our exploration of semiotics the publishers of *Trends*, the Centre for the Study of Communication and Culture, have enlisted the aid of Professor Keyan Tomaselli and his colleagues at the Centre for Cultural and Media Studies of the University of Natal, who for some years have been studying the cultural side of semiotics. So eager has their response been that we have devoted two issues of *Trends* to their reports.

The contents of these two issues manifest the views of the authors more than is usual for *Trends*, and they are not necessarily those of the editors; but the CSCC feels that the perspective of the CCMS deserves both expression and discussion.

Review Article: Semiotics and Social Struggle

I. Semiotics and Related Jargon

...Semiosis began when life began, but it would be erroneous to assume that, as life, including human, changes in the future and eventually terminates, (that) semiosis will also come to a stop (Sebeok, 1988:2).

Semiotics and semiology are words which once struck bemusement, even horror, in the minds of humanities students across the world. Faculty members were either dismissive, or totally hooked. Yet, despite clearly directed attacks against the field from various enraged quarters when it re-emerged in the Anglo-Saxon world in the early '70s, semiotics/semiology refused to go away. Still, anyone who has tried to read Umberto Eco's books has our sympathy, as have the generations of students prescribed Pierre Guiraud's *Semiology* (1975), in the translation of which something went horribly wrong. This is ironic as semiotics is a method which explains *how* meaning is produced in individuals and societies, and how people construct and interpret messages. It is less concerned with *what* meaning is. Semiotics examines how signs (words, pictures, gestures, sounds) come to mean and have meaning.

Applications, Books and Publications

The method is increasingly being used in an ever widening array of both academic (humanities and the sciences) and commercial work in addition to communication and linguistics. Geographers, for example, have developed the idea of a 'spatial semiology' (Keith 1988) in conjunction with class and gender related interpretations of 'urban' and 'rural' spaces/texts (Tomaselli 1988). Some, like literary scholars, are even (re)reading landscapes (Duncan and Duncan 1988). The relationship between semiotics and modern jurisprudence is the subject of *Semiotics and Legal Theory* by Bernard Jackson (1987). In biology, semiotics has been used to study biochemical signs and semiochemistry, (Sebeok, 1988: 263-7), odours (Peirce 1931-35, and 1958:I, p. 313) and memory -- that is, processes which lack speech. Cybersemiosis, the commingling of human and manufactured parts in new life forms, takes us into the frightening realm of a science which is no longer fiction. This involves the exchange of signs between, for example, bacteria and biochips made

not of silicon but of complex organic molecules (Margulis and Dagan 1986 as quoted by Sebeok 1988: 2).

Semiotics certainly has been a bit like a virus -- no matter how much effort goes into developing a serum, it mutates and lives on. In theatre studies, for example, *Forum*, an organ published between September 1979 and mid-1988 and incorporating semiotic approaches, paid the 'price of its success'. The method had 'become so well known that anyone interested in it has had the opportunity to explore it: some were convinced, pursuing serious studies, others assimilated its basic ideas and integrated them in their own approaches, still others were disappointed and turned to other aspects of theatre. The *Forum* lost its raison d'être (Alter, 1988: 1).

That semiotics could be a metadiscipline in-the-making is signalled by Tasso Borbe's three volume *Semiotics Unfolding* (1983). Among journals, the flagship is *Semiotica*, the 'supersign' of the field' (Withalm, 1987: 639), while others like *American Journal of Semiotics*, *Canadian Journal of Research in Semiotics* and *The Semiotic Scene*, as well as *Degrés*, *VS*, *S-European Journal of Semiotics* and those which make extensive use of semiotics, like *Continuum*, *Screen*, *Critical Arts* and *Discourse*, mobilise the method within a political frame. Complementing these publications is *The Semiotic Sphere* and *Handbook of Semiotics*. The Toronto Semiotic Circle even publishes a newspaper, the *International Semiotic Spectrum*. An annual, *The Semiotic Web* (now discontinued), tells of little and not so little groups of semioticians, from those dominating semiotics at the international metropolises, to others tucked away in places like Uruguay. By the end of the '80s, journals like *Cultural Studies* recuperated a popular application of semiotics from the previous highbrow terrain from which it had initially been dislodged by the Methuen 'New Accents' series.

The cause of the sign is very well served by publishing companies. The nether reaches of high theorising and sometimes apparently incomprehensible jargon are to be found in the books published by Mouton, Plenum, Pinter, Macmillan, John Benjamin and others since 1970. The 'New Accents' series (see short reviews) timeously

popularised semiotics on the assumption that 'Modes and categories inherited from the past no longer seem to fit the reality experienced by a new generation'. Each volume sought to 'encourage rather than resist the process of change, to stretch rather than reinforce the boundaries that currently define...academic study' (Hawkes 1977: vii). The success of this series is attested to in its accomplishing the seemingly impossible: making ascendent trends in knowledge accessible, while simultaneously exposing new theoretical territory.

Problems with Proliferation

As with the case of cinema studies, discussed below, semiotics dignified the study of 'popular culture' (Berger, 1987: 369). But as Meaghan Morris (1988: 15) cautions:

'reading magazines like *New Socialist* or *Marxism Today* from the last couple of years, flipping through *Cultural Studies*, or scanning the pop-theory pile in the bookshop, I get the feeling that somewhere in some English publisher's vault there is a master-disk from which thousands of versions of the same article about pleasure, resistance, and the politics of consumption are being run off under different names with minor variations'.

Some pop semioticians, whether recycling their theory through popular culture, or restoring populist discrimination, tend to be opportunistic: the method is also now dignifying the study of marketing and advertising.. 'massaging the message' of consumption under capitalism -- in attempts to introduce a market value into the field (see Umiker-Sebeok: 1987). As one proponent stated, 'semiotics must prove its usefulness outside academic circles'. It must demonstrate that 'it can provide jobs for people "blessed" with a Ph.D. in Semiotics'.

Semiosis spawned an industry which by 1980 had achieved its own momentum. The basics of semiotics/semiology were explained (translated?) to first year students (as well as to those academics who had attacked it) by Terrence Hawkes (1977), John Fiske and John Hartley (1979), Kier Elam (1980), Fiske (1981), Hartley (1982), and numerous other authors engaged by 'New Accents'. These introductory and largely uncritical textbooks, published nearly a century after the original formulations of Peirce and de Saussure, were soon followed by more in-depth studies: particularly well-written, if controversial, are Robert Allen's *Channels of Discourse* (1987) and Fiske's *Television Culture* (1987 - see review in *CRT* Vol. 11, No. 3).

II. Mapping Out the Topic: What's Your Sign?

C. Metz 1974a; 1974b.

U. Eco 1976; 1983; 1984.

David Sless 1986.

Tomaselli and Smith 1991. (See full references at end of Review Article)

Semiotics/semiology scholars often confer the veracity of the field on the authority of its founders. As Marshal Blonsky (1985:viii) states, each warring faction has its own living or dead king of the castle.

Semiology made its first extensive penetration into media studies at Anglo-Saxon universities in the guise of cinema studies (Tomaselli and Smith 1991). The translation of Christian Metz's (1974a, 1974b) books from French to English in the early 1970s took the Anglo-Saxon world by storm. Previously a soft option, an adjunct of literature, communication, journalism, and theatre departments (Banning 1988:28), university-based film studies now obtained

academic legitimacy as an art form (Harcourt 1988). Media and cinema studies cannot be directly traced back to Plato, but Western derived semiotics can be so traced: it has its roots in ancient Hippocratic symptomology, early Greek poetry and music (Eco 1983). Indeed, the subject is much older than most of the contemporary disciplines though it draws extensively from many of them. However, until the publication of David Sless's *In Search of Semiotics* (1986), knowledgeable *critiques* of semiotics/semiology were rare. Sless's book arrests the field and re-examines the roots of this form of analysis (see review, *CRT* Vol.11, No.3). The article by Tomaselli and Smith, like Sless's book, is a re-

reading which aims to raise questions and reconstruct some of the de-construction that structuralism has inflicted upon itself.

A Distinction Often Overlooked

T. Sebeok 1976; 1978; 1979; 1988.
T. Sebeok and J. Umiker-Sebeok (Eds.) 1987.
Gene Youngblood 1970.

It is at this point that the major thrust of our own approach must be revealed. Sless, for all his having brought some clarity amid the murk of semiosis, misses what could be one very important distinction within the topic. The system as revealed in the texts mentioned above seems to be monolithic, however confused and jargon-laden it appears. Every application might just as well be a variation on a common theme. Contrary to this assumption, it is necessary we argue, to draw a line separating two incommensurable trends in semiotics. First we need to point up the differences between the approach commonly used in British cultural studies, and that which originated in American thought; the former is the *semiological* system, while the latter (albeit in a somewhat confused way) is the *semiotic*. Semiotics, initially developed by Charles Sanders Peirce, represents a different formulation to semiology, first propounded by Ferdinand de Saussure. Though both scholars lived more or less at the same time in the 19th century de Saussure was Swiss and Peirce an American. While both coined their terms from the same Greek root, *semeion*, it appears that they were unaware of each other. Both were to be published posthumously, de Saussure by his students, and Peirce by Hartshorne et al (Peirce 1931-58).

Having glimpsed the light of day at times during the first half of the 20th Century, semiotics/semiology went into hibernation until reawakened by Hungarian-born American Thomas Sebeok through his extraordinary output in linguistics, psycholinguistics, and biological and animal communication. His semiotics differed from European semiology through its incorporation of certain Anglo-Saxon empiricist assumptions. His were very specialised and often exotic applications, which nevertheless resulted in the notion of a 'semiosphere' as his concepts encircled the earth through what Gene Youngblood (1970) called the 'videosphere'. Youngblood (1970: 57) derived the videosphere from Catholic priest-

palaeontologist Teilhard de Chardin's 'noosphere', the 'film of organised intelligence that encircles the planet, superimposed on the living layer of the biosphere...'. However, most scholars today use the term 'semiotic' as if there is some already unified discipline that studies signs and signification. This conflation of semiotics with semiology does not indicate the existence of such a discipline irrespective of the very broad claims made for or about it by some practitioners. Rather, we are better off if the basic theoretical differences between the two approaches are cleared up before going any further.

III. The Wood and the Tree: Semiology

Ferdinand de Saussure. 1959.
Richard Rorty 1980.

The European approach to the 'Doctrine of Signs' has tended more toward the philosophical path. To a large extent it concentrates on the 'inner' or 'subjective' aspect of signification within the classical Western dichotomy of the subjective and the objective. Indeed, the very basis of de Saussure's seminal *General Course in Linguistics*, is the commonsense (at least in European terms) dichotomy of Word (signifier) and Object (signified). A superb review of this near-obsession with dualism as it relates to the history of Anglo-Saxon thinking can be found in Richard Rorty's *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (1980). Here, the whole agenda of the tradition can be seen to have its origin in the controversy surrounding Galileo's claim to knowledge of the Heavens, made in opposition to the received wisdom of the time. We return to this later.

'Structuralism' is the generic name of that body of theory that bases itself on the work of de Saussure, and under which semiology is subsumed. The tendency has been to naturalise the structure of difference, proposed as an hypothesis in his work, into a formal 'map' onto the grid of which all signs related in one-to-one correspondence with specific reference points. In these theories, every sign consists of a *signifier* and a *signified* in arbitrary dyadic relationships that signify by virtue of their *difference to other such pairs*. In terms of this logic, we are imprisoned in a world of linguistic structures. The mess and confusion found in everyday life were, to use Husserl's term, 'bracketed out' because they obscured the clarity of

the structure; the realisation of this was ultimately to lead to the unpicking, or 'deconstruction', of the structures. Thus, if semiology is itself just such a structure, then one could say that trying to 'see through' the structure leaves one with nothing to which reference can be made, except possibly some prior structure in a potential infinite regress.

The Lack of Reference in Structuralism

Marshall Blonsky 1985.
Calvin Pryluck 1982.
Brian Rotman 1987.

Semiology slips easily into a world of subjectivist 'superstructuralism' wherein practitioners tend to 'live' their theories. Thus, at a lecture delivered at New York University in 1978, a dying Roland Barthes turned his (by then) post-structuralist brand of semiology against himself. He had found a barren theoretical prison, his head separate from his body, but with each nevertheless dependent upon the other (see also Jameson 1972). This kind of listless existence of unstable signs, continuously mutating and transforming in unpredictable and surprising ways, seemingly independent of material processes, provides the shifting sands of post-structural thinking. In this mode of trying to make sense, meanings are continuously overturning and being overturned. Barthes therefore had found himself writhing within the false security of a structuralist understanding of how meaning is created (i.e. in terms of structures of the mind). After the publication of *S/Z* (Barthes, 1974), he had moved to the insecurity that was born from pulling apart the structuring

rules of meaning construction: this led to the deconstruction of even his own structuralist premises. The fading self that was Barthes signified the curse of post-structural semiology because, as Marshall Blonsky (1985: xv) observed, it is 'a language with little responsibility towards the real'. It becomes a pure idealism or superstructuralism.

The curse of post-structural semiology, we might note, also found expression in Salvador Dali's seizure of the moment(s) of his dying to extend this 'event' into a sign to communicate the uselessness of life and the ugliness of death. Dali thus transubstantiated himself into a sign which negated all other signs, including his own creations. Brian Rotman (1987) even tries to show that Nothing signifies as a sign in its own right. Alternatively, Calvin Pryluck (1982) states rather than asks: 'When is a sign not a sign'. Neither Barthes nor Dali could exist, even die, beyond semiology. Peirce held that 'man' is himself a sign born into a universe 'composed exclusively of signs'. Barthes and Dali themselves had become well known signs through their celebrity status -- hence the metaphor of a jail and the problem of the real. Barely half a decade after *Cineaste's* attack on Metz (McCormick, 1975; Brownlow 1980; Durgnat 1982), the semiology of post-structuralism was indeed ill with contradiction, repetition, over-abstraction, subjectivism and stagnation. Having at last defined its own object/not object of study, paradoxically, semiologists began to attack its *raison d'etre*, just as did Barthes of himself. The field, paradoxically but inevitably, continues to survive its own metaphorical suicide.

IV. The Wood, the Trees, and the Timber: Semiotics

Charles Sanders Peirce 1931-35 and 1958.

The Semiotic method, as we will be using the term from now on, embraces the non-dyadic analyses developed by C. S. Peirce. From 1864 to at least 1913, Peirce engaged in a series of studies through which he attempted to articulate a logically and practicably unified system within which it would be possible to relate thought, language and action in ways that made sense in terms of Anglo-Saxon concepts of Science. What set Peirce apart from the 'average' philosophers of his time, was his insistence that science and

knowledge are *habits* that people develop, and that these are part of a dynamic process. Similarly, many of the serious debates within the Left have tended to revolve about the various ways in which the dynamic, even teleological, appearance of history should be explained relative to human consciousness and practice.

However, it would be a mistake to suggest that one could collapse Marx and Peirce together as unwitting radical fellow-travellers. Socialist thought has often referred to the famous line from

Marx's *Theses on Feuerbach* in which it is pointed out that philosophers have always explained the world when the real task should have been to change it. In the case of Peirce, it takes some complex interpretation to read his work as wanting its readers to go beyond seeing it as explanation. At best, one could read Peirce as describing the way *scientists* ought to change. Nonetheless, there are a few extremely valuable theoretical aspects to Peirce that make his 'Semeiotic' (as he spelt it) quite indispensable to those who take seriously the project of changing the world. Firstly, signs are shown to have significance only in triadic interrelationships with mind and habits; secondly, signs themselves have a multiply triadic nature that corresponds to the interrelations of significance; and, third, as John Fitzgerald (1966) has shown, that this semiotic is a necessary concomitant of practical activity as a form of meaning. We will examine the ways in which these points are relevant to our topic.

Semiotics and the Complexity of the World

Jacques Derrida 1967.

In the first instance, the triadic interrelation of significance in semiotic theory enables theorists to begin moving away from the dichotomies that seem to dog the ways of thinking that Europeans have foisted onto the world over the last four centuries (if not longer). Debates have tended to follow agendas that have been set up in terms of these antithetical pairs of value ideas. By a process of force, stealth, habituation, and/or rhetorical naturalisation, we have often accepted willy-nilly that these agendas are the only valid ones. Even writers like Ngugi Wa Thiongo (1986), in drawing attention to the nature of Africa's historical condition, often describe it to us in the very same terms that were used to colonise our antecedents. Common dualisms like good/evil, savagery/civilization, capitalism/socialism, superstition/progress, base/superstructure and so on, are liberally sprinkled throughout the literature of resistance in Africa. This is not the place to argue in any detail for the historical origins of the practice that generated this way of dividing up reality, but (even) European philosophers like Jacques Derrida (1967) and Agnes Heller (1984b) have suggested plausibly that this practice has been around for as long as 2,500 years in one form or another.

The nature of the sign in Peirce is such that we can relate social entities, be they individual or collective, to discourse on the one hand and to practice on the other, in a quite coherent way. Put differently, *semiotics brings together topics that standard-model Europhilosophy has to stand on its head to combine*. Since the semiotic relationship is triadic, a given situation can be analyzed in considerably more complex and creative ways than can be done otherwise. One has the means to look at the simultaneous relations between, say, a sign and the habit it engenders in practice; between the practice and the signifying subject; and between the subject and the system of signification. It follows that any political aspects of such a situation cannot readily be separated out from such a study: one would first have to justify why any links cannot be hierarchical, and consequently *not* be political. Even if one interrelation within a triad is not necessarily definable in terms of superordination and subordination, it does not follow that either or both of the other links in the triad cannot so be defined.

Icon, Index, and Symbol

Turning now to the second aspect of Peirce's theory that is immediately relevant to us, one can use the triadic nature of signs themselves in several ways. It has become something of a cliché that Peirce saw signs as being *always* iconic, indexical and symbolic. Both Umberto Eco and Roland Barthes tried to save European semiology by adopting this classificatory system. At the end of the day, however, their project's inherent tendency to exclude the historical nature of the signifying subject from the process and practice of signification made their efforts a rearguard action rather than a recovery. From our point of view, there are two types of triads that are primarily of interest. In the first case, there is the classification already mentioned above. Secondly, there is the *prior* classification of signs into types: the *qualisign*, the *sinsign* and the *legisign*. Briefly, the first classification has to do with the recognition of signs, while the second is relevant to the *generation* of signs *in specific contexts*.

The sign-types can be said to point to the kind of act of signification that is taking place; sign-levels concern the actual significance present at a given point in the activity of signification. This article can serve as an example of how this works, in that the printed pages before you are a *qualisign* because they are not the desk or office or living room within which they are being read. As

sinsign the article is in this edition of *Communication Research Trends*, and not in a previous one, or in some other journal. Primarily, however, it is experienced as a legisign in that you are interpreting our interpretation of Peirce relative to other classes of Semiotic theory with which you may or may not be familiar. Iconically, the article is printed text. Indexically it points to the practices of communication. Symbolically, it instantiates the rules of grammar associated with the English language in a certain 'stands for' relationship that to a greater or lesser degree connects this context with others in a history relevant to a reading subject.

Whether the article has significance or not is conditioned by the degree to which a reader's habits of signification are exercised in the reading. Peirce made provision for this when he introduced the *Interpretant*, which is the *effect produced by a sign in the interpreter*. It is not important here to go into all the kinds of interpretants that Peirce identified, since what is primarily of interest is their final association with *habit*. A sign can be said to signify completely when there is an *ultimate* interpretant in the form of habit-change or habit formation. Signification that results in the mere exercise of an already existing habit, or in no habit coming into play at all, Peirce calls an example of *degenerate significance*. This does not attach to the reader's moral worth: it only means that the sign in question fails to act at all three levels of sign-type. At its most effective, an interpretant necessarily gives rise to new signs or to new uses of signs.

As one may well have noticed, Peirce divided into three as a matter of course. This had partly to do with the overall nature of his project, which originally was to reconstruct the 'Architectonic' philosophy of Immanuel Kant. Indeed, Weiss and Burks (1945) have shown how Peirce's system leaves one with a total of sixty-six different sorts of sign. This situation does not point to our attempting to create another kind of structure, however; the important thing for our purpose is the stress on the *irreducibility* of the triadic relations. There is an aspect of *activity* that accompanies a subject's use of signs that makes this triple link the minimum necessary for understanding, since if a sign is to *mean* then there also has to be at very least somebody signifying *and* something that is signified. For our project of making the power of semiotics accessible to those at the sharp end of social struggle, this is of no small import. It provides a tool with which

it is possible to explain the way in which a plurality of interpretations can both take place and also become subject to criticism.

Being vs. Becoming

Peirce, in the Anglo-American tradition, was in part concerned with the relationship between things in the world and the claims people make about knowledge of these things. Where he parted company with his peers was in the way he saw existence in the world. While the received wisdom of his day posited a stationary creation, Peirce saw a dynamic process. Put differently, the Tradition investigated being where Peirce was interested in *becoming*. Thus, his division of the sign into icon, index and symbol presupposed a signifying subject with a history of signification and a context of signification that could be linked to a history of such contexts. At the same time, though, the prior division of signs *as signs* into qualisign, sinsign and legisign allowed for the process whereby the signifying subject developed experience into a communicable entity. Each of these sign-types more or less corresponds to those levels of comprehension that can be said to be characteristically human: the qualisign has to do with the immediately presented surroundings of the subject (or phaneron, to use Peirce's term); the sinsign with that which can be separated out from the overall context as being different from whatever else can be so separated; and legisigns are concerned with the relations that might obtain between what has been separated out. (Peirce, it might be worth noting, suggested that phaneroscopy, the kind of process involved here, holds for *any* entity that thinks).

How Signs Relate

John Fitzgerald 1966.

The third aspect of Peirce's thought that is of interest to our project is the relationship that can be made between signs and practice. John Fitzgerald has examined in some detail the way in which Peirce can be taken to have constructed his theory so that the pragmatic side of it, to which frequent reference is made in modern philosophical texts, makes sense more completely in the terms of his semiotic. Ironically, writers like Ian Hacking in *Representing and Intervening* (1983) often express great admiration for the *scope* of Peirce's thought, but then dismiss this as a sort of eclecticism or dilettantism. More relevant is the

reality: Peirce was concerned with the possible or latent *unity* of all intellectual activity. He did not conceive as possible, in the long term, the rigid separation of ethics, criticism and science that is so 'common sense' today that physicists, for example, are more or less barred from having any say as to what may or may not be done with the technologies that develop out of their experimental or theoretical labours. There is a hint here of a connection between science and ethics that runs counter to the conventional wisdom which tells us that these two 'disciplines' are irreducibly separate. Indeed, we find that the world has been ordered socially and politically in ways that 'naturalise' this kind of division to such a degree that attempts to act across the divisions are subject to strong disapproval.

In the terms of Peirce's theory, however, we find that this tradition tends to be undermined by the way in which humans as social beings use signs and practice to relate to the world. Given that signs operate in a 'stand for' relationship with objects, Western philosophy has been taxed by the need to explain how meaning can take place within such a relationship. In general, no really satisfactory explanation has emerged. There are those who go so far as to suggest that the parameters of the debate preclude **any** consistent explanation or theory of meaning at all (see Rorty 1980). If, however, we posit the idea that meaning is a function of practice, then it becomes possible not only for people to have sensible relations with and within the world, but it also becomes possible to make some sense of the tendency for meaning to proliferate.

Peirce: Not Just a Lone Voice

Ludwig Wittgenstein 1958.

It should be noted at this point that thinkers other

than Peirce have suggested this. Ludwig Wittgenstein took up such a position in the last book that he permitted to be published in his lifetime, the seminal *Philosophical Investigations* (1958). In the review (*CRT* Vol. 11, No. 3) of Rotman's *Signifying Nothing: The Semiotics of Zero*, Shepperson points up three central theses from Wittgenstein in terms of which one can conceive very differently of how language and practice relate. In more general terms, one may say that we see the way in which words relate to objects as being a reference of signs to practices as each in turn relates to a signifying subject. In epistemological terms, we are suggesting that objects are known not as things-in-themselves, but rather as things-with-which-we-do. The term 'phenomenon' does not come into the discussion; that can safely be left to the practice of visual neurophysiology or whatever discipline it is that tries to track down the 'pictures' and/or 'mirrors' in our minds, of which Rorty was so dismissive.

Graphically, the relationships take on the general form of triangles, at each apex of which stands one of the three aspects of the signifying act. Thus, at one corner we place the subject, be it individual or collective; at the second, the sign or signifying system at whatever level or of whatever type; and at the third the practice or matrix of practices through which both the sign *and* the subject relate to some or other concrete reality (see sketch in Rotman review). Each of the three will be *internal to semiosis*: that is to say, no semiotic act or relationship can be considered completely in the absence of any of the participant aspects. Since there is a relationship *via* practice to something real, it becomes possible to talk sensibly about Peirce providing the basis for a form of realism.

V. Representing the Real: Semiotics and Understanding

Realists are faced with some problems: often their commitment is interpreted as a *metaphysical* rather than an *ontological* one. For many the idea of metaphysics is taken to involve airy-fairy the-

orising about universal laws of creation. Some think of it as a sort of meta-discipline that makes large claims about the insignificance of cabbages and kings as compared to the inexorable and

inscrutable forces of the whole of Creation. Others condemn metaphysics as pure idealism, as a concatenation of absolutely mental constructions that issue from the ruminations of the idle rich in order to justify their continued oppression of the poor. Historically, there is indeed some truth in these (and other less-than-flattering) ways of describing metaphysics. However, the choices available to the metaphysician do not validly include realism: generally speaking, they commit themselves to idealist, materialist or eschatological frames of reference.

Metaphysics and Ontology

The idealist position holds that the universe can be no more than a product of Mind; materialism starts from some form of 'building block' theory that posits the likes of atoms or monads, and then tries to support the claim that *all* existence conforms to explanation in terms of these; the final position, the eschatological, describes existence in the framework of some or other variation on the theme of Divine Agency. Realism, on the other hand, deals with the status of entities or theories as having or not having logical and confirmable true existence. Putting this in other terms, the realist-about-entities wants to prove that words like 'consciousness' and 'electron', for example, have to do with things that can cause other things to happen; realists-about-theories add to this the concern that scientific theory makes true causal statements about things, and is not simply a verbal construct with which phenomena are described. One might as well take note of the fact that a commitment to, say, an eschatological metaphysics does not exclude one from holding to a realist ontology.

When we talk of Peirce as a realist, then, we have to be clear as to how his realism must be characterised. As we pointed out above, phenomena do not figure independently in our reading of Peirce, his semiotics is coherent with a theory of pragmatics, and he saw process and becoming as the basic conditions of the natural world. In terms of all this, then, we have provisionally concluded that he cannot consistently be read as an idealist, despite Hacking (1983: 58-61) having classified him as such. Given further that he associated formation and change with the ultimate effect of signification, we come to the additional provisional conclusion that there must be an integral aspect of historicity that cannot consistently be excluded from semiotics proper, or from semiotically-linked analysis and criticism.

The point of Peirce's Pragmatics was that knowledge is a kind of consensus reached by a community of practical investigators -- that is to say, people who **do** things in the world -- as they become skilled and familiar with the practices in question. In other words, Peirce wanted to emphasise the aspect of skill and growth that attaches to knowledge socially in the everyday world of everyday people.

This historically-inclined reading, although it permits one to start thinking about using it in a radical way, does not necessarily allow one to conclude that the work stops here. The classic socialist paradigm has always tried to proceed from the premise that human existence is subject to social laws that have a more or less determinate effect on our consciousness. Historical Materialism in its many guises, however, has never quite succeeded in reconciling the idea of a Law of Social Existence with the real experience of the powerless and the disempowered. If there is such an 'iron law of History', the argument goes, then surely it must determine the future irrespective of whether people act or not. A great deal of the theory produced since the collapse of the 1917 revolution into the Stalinist Gulag has tried to address this specific problematic. In the Soviet Union, in its former European colonies and in the so-called 'Third World', events of the last decade have stressed even further the need for radically creative approaches to the plight of the everyday person. In more philosophical terms, the 'ought' of radical thinking does not always seem to fit the 'is' of real-world politics.

Realism and Real People - 1

To make it possible for ordinary needs and concerns to have relevance in terms of the needs and concerns arising from the global predicament, it is necessary that the complexities of this predicament be spelled out in ways that engage with the everyday language of those most affected. Grand theory is needed, to be sure, but if there is to be any chance at all of a decently democratic outcome in the aftermath of the collapse of what many regarded as the only powerful champion the non-industrialised world had, then there is a real challenge ahead just to make it possible for this major part of the 5.5 billion people on the surface of this planet to begin to understand their real plight, *let alone begin doing something about it.*

Our Peircean approach does not arise from any fascination we might have with complexity for

its own sake: we want to be able to make sense out of the stories told by the women, the children, the aged, and those disabled by war, famine or poverty, who might want to motivate a different order in the world. More, we in the privileged reaches of higher education must learn a whole new language if we are to be able to negotiate relevant new ways of living with and for these people. They and we have to talk about *real* action in real situations so that some kind of future is possible which will be a result of something done by themselves within their own contexts. When we make a commitment to realist theory, it is exactly responding to this need for real results at every level for real people. To make sense, what

we talk about must resonate with the real historical conditions of our interlocutors; the rhetoric must be chosen that neutralises the inconsistencies that exist as a consequence of historic relations of superordination and subordination. And, most important of all, the consequences of all action must be such that globally relevant values become realised in ways that do not reproduce (and indeed positively diminish) the inequities of the past. A tall order, indeed, but no taller than the one Europeans set themselves at the Congress of Berlin, in 1884, when they carved up the known world as one might carve a Sunday roast.

VI: Signposting a Future: Making Semiotics Significant

K. G. Tomaselli 1981a; 1986; 1988.

K. G. Tomaselli, A. Williams, L. Steenveld and R. E. Tomaselli 1986.

Much of the work of the Centre for Cultural and Media Studies discussed in these pages is still in progress. It is being approached with the methods illustrated in the following works

K. G. Tomaselli 1980; 1981b; 1989a; 1989b

K. G. Tomaselli, R. E. Tomaselli, P. E. Louw and A. S. Chetty 1988

K. G. Tomaselli, R. E. Tomaselli and J. Maller (Eds.) 1987.

The theoretical paradigm Tomaselli and his associates at the Centre for Cultural and Media Studies of the University of Natal propose to develop for this family of projects is one of Historical Realism. In the terms of reference of such a paradigm, the things that people discuss in their everyday situation must be considered as real in the sense that daily life does go on relative to just such terms. The introduction of a team of social analysts into a community has to be understood by all parties to be an addition to everyday life, with the further understanding that life will change for all (especially for the analysts themselves, as time goes on) in ways relevant to a wider global need. Research will be necessary in order to get such ambitions into order, so that the project does not become another form of intellectual colonisation. As we see it, this requires the formulation of an ethic directing such work so that other people are always ends in themselves, and no longer means to the ends of others.

Formulating a Programme

Agnes Heller 1976, 1984a, 1984b.

To this end we will re-read the work of radical sociologist Agnes Heller. We want our interpretation to incorporate Peirce's semiotics so that resulting habit changes and habit formation tend to the democratisation of culture, practice and social relations as time goes on. Heller's book *A Radical Philosophy* (1984b) acts as a kind of working manifesto, because of her consistent stress on the need for a fundamentally democratic understanding of social process in a world that has moved beyond the crude forms of industrialised production that so taxed the ingenuity of Socialism's founders (*sic*). We want to use the historical nature of the sign to empower the oppressed within contexts of *this* global reality to devise programmes of action that are relevant to *their* specific reality, so that *they* might manage

the transition of *their* communities into a developing reality based on democratic interaction on a global scale between all free communities.

The programme will take into account the historical nature of the signifying subject, applying Vygotsky's (1986) developmental psychology for its understanding that people in real cultural contexts tend not to accept new ways of life as a matter of course. While this, in terms of the commitment that others are to be treated as ends in themselves, will obviously preclude expectation of radical across-the-board change as soon as any community begins to talk of democracy, it does reinforce the understanding that fundamental transformation is in and of itself an historical process. Peirce based the idea of habit-change on the understanding that, although people understand nature in terms of laws, the laws of nature are interpretations of semiotic activity. Being interpretations, these laws are themselves subject to reinterpretation and this in part forms Peirce's notion of chance.

This idea, in short, he evolved in his work in order to make allowance for scientific and practical innovation, but we will apply it on a wider front to accommodate Peirce's observation that in time any society under stress will produce dissidents (see review of Hebdige in *CRT* Vol. 11, No. 3), and that for us this dissidence will show at the level of signs. The programme for such a context of dissent must then proceed by taking into account the collateral practices and subjects in ways that do not treat other people in the community as means to the ends of others. In a more general formulation, any programme of change must be adequate to the situation to which it applies. Further, all action taken as a result of the programme must conform to values that are developed in the relevant context as interpretations of value ideas that by consensus apply generally.

Finally, any programme undertaken in terms of the project will proceed on the understanding that practices -- signifiatory, technical *and* social -- have histories and are hence subject to change. We add this as a caveat, since conditions in those countries that once laid claim to practise 'Really Existing Socialism' suggest that not enough attention was paid to the fact that practices in industrial society do change in unplanned ways. Part of this problem may have arisen out of too fixed an idea interpreted from the Marxian analysis of capitalism as a function of class relations. This body of work analysed quite

completely the labour relations of 19th century English society in terms relevant to the history of that country's industrial system. By the time Engels got to analysing the condition of women, however, other categories were needed for completeness. In the Centre for Cultural and Media Studies one hypothesis for the collapse of the radical tradition is that European thinking still clings to a scriptural version of truth that seeks authoritative confirmation of belief in the 'core texts' of visionary thinkers. Even though we part company with him on the infinite deferment of interpretation, we concur with Jacques Derrida that the reading of a text like Marx's *Capital* does not lead to the revelation of any self-present truth.

Globalising Methodology

This point we stress as being of special relevance in contexts where a community's way of describing itself historically incorporates myth as a dominant factor. Although it would be wrong to suggest that there are communities that have eschewed the mythical altogether, and that consequently their members have some especially 'scientific' understanding of the real, we recognise that European cultures incorporate certain Middle Eastern 'myths', such as *creation ex nihilo*, and the paternal principle, into their language and social organisation at a very fundamental level. The point is that because we operate within a Eurocentric academic tradition, it must be remembered that such myths lie close to the centre of all the other traditions and values that define it. For we Africans, the role of these myths in the history of Europe's colonisation of our continent needs to be assessed as critically as those myths that anthropologists may have identified as crucial to hunter-gatherer cultures. The long-term objective is to bring the European mythical core into the coldest possible critical light so that a more globally relevant culture can evolve from the examination thus made possible. That is to say, our programme starts at home and its consequences elsewhere must never be thought not to have relevance to our own future situation whatever that may be.

Thus the search for a method for such critical assessment is part of our project, and once again a primary source is to be found in Agnes Heller. An early work, *The Theory of Need in Marx* (1976), serves as a valuable critique by a European thinker of certain core notions of the industrial tradition. Her later work, *A Theory of History* (1982), contains some aspects that warrant

further study, particularly with respect to the interactivity of myth, history and philosophy. This latter text we want to reread carefully in the light of our understanding of Peircean semiotics, because of the highly symbolic nature of history as a form of interpretation. Finally, there is much of value in Heller's *Everyday Life* (1984a) that serves to remove Peirce from his preoccupation with the primacy of Western science, and with which it seems possible to generate strategies to reduce the gap that currently divides academic from everyday practice.

Given our remarks above on the European 'scriptural' tradition, one ought to be asking whether we are not walking right into the same

trap. This would be the case if it were posited that there could be no value whatever in a *textual* tradition, but the point is not that Peirce or Heller or Wittgenstein are gurus of the sort Derrida has become in American literary circles. The writers to whom we refer base their work on the critique, as we see it, of Idealist Humanism. We do not reject the basic humanist premise, and our reading of these texts does not suggest that any of those writers have done this either. Their value lies in their having stressed the *practical nature of objectivity*. To paraphrase our earlier epistemological point: what we know of the world cannot be divorced from all that we do in the world.

VII: Really Significant Semiotics: Checkmating Ideology

Louis Althusser 1971a, 1971b.

Slipshod housekeeping is the scandal of semiotics, and the ironic curse of the communication sciences is their failure to articulate their messages in a consistent terminology (Sebeok, 1988: 185). Another term guaranteed to drive students to distraction, not to mention many of their teachers, is 'ideology'. More was probably written about this concept in the '70s and '80s than any other in Western social science. But very little was written by semioticians. Where there is now basic definitional agreement as to what semiotics is (or shouldn't be), discussions of ideology are conflicting and usually much more emotional. The nature of our project means that we have to enter the fray also, and our approach to the topic will build on what is laid out above.

In lay terms, 'ideology' is what everyone else has, usually 'communists', whether of the 'ultra-liberal' or Soviet kinds. Ideology is important because it has a semiotic content related to social origins, culture and history. It is true that some 'communist' writers figure above. We also do not deny that our aim is to transform the way in which the 'capitalist' metropolitan nations conceive (and enact) their relationship with the rest of the globe (both politically and, especially, environmentally). The *concept* of ideology has exercised many great thinkers since Marx and Engels adopted the term. While, for many, the less-than-accurate reading of the original Marxian use of the term to denote 'forms of false consciousness' would seem to be a sufficient one,

Heller (1976) has shown that there are several valid ways of reading the term in Marx's work.

An influential reading for Cultural Studies has been that of Louis Althusser, the French Communist philosopher who combined the structural linguistics-influenced psychoanalysis of Jacques Lacan with Marxian economic theory to obtain his theory of ideology (1971a, 1971b). As with the other structuralist approaches outlined above, this one also created a prison-like superstructure that made it hard to conceive how the experiencing subject could escape it. Another influential approach followed the ideas of Georg Lukacs, for example the theory offered by Karl Mannheim. Here the approach was *via* a sociology of knowledge, but, as Larrain (1979) has pointed out, this led to the collapsing together of culture and ideology so that the latter concept becomes redundant.

The Budapest Approach: Ideology in Exile

Agnes Heller 1982.

The concept remains a useful one, however, because of its association with the notion that certain ways of thinking have socially negative effects in real terms. We again take Heller as a starting point, this time working from her conception of historical consciousness. This she lays out in detail in *A Theory of History* (1982),

which begins by expanding on the idea that there are stages through which people have conceived of the correct way in which historiography is to be carried out. These stages correspond to levels of cultural development through which societies can be thought of as having passed.

Heller begins with the stage of unreflected generality. During this stage the Myth is the standard in terms of which people tell the story of their being in the world. Heller then identified four other stages ending with the one that has characterised formal historical understanding during the century-and-a-half up to the beginning of the third quarter of our own. This is the consciousness of reflected universality. That is to say, of the concept of the philosophy of history that '...can cherish the messianic idea of the unification of individual and species, or make a case for the 'invisible hand' of economic relations, for legal institutions as the repositories of future perfection' (Heller 1982: 21). Some formulations along this theme spoke of the future as determined by a quasi-Newtonian 'dynamics' of history: the present is the initial condition that describes all subsequent events.

From this conception, one can posit History (with a capital 'H') as the guarantee of social science, since this family of disciplines should enable us to ascertain what this initial condition is and consequently permit the future social state of any subject (individual or collective) to be 'read off' from its state within the current historical nexus (or whatever jargon is fashionable in the discipline being employed). 'Man', as Heller (1982: 23) puts it '...becomes the subject of history, but not the *person*', and History becomes the story of its own instantiation in the 'man of genius' or the 'man of resignation' (from history). The everyday person in her or his particularity becomes removed from consideration in general, because the general (the person -- 'man' -- as humankind) can 'no longer be reflected upon *directly*, [but] only indirectly' (p.24). People become 'first order' regimes of signification, conceptually always at one remove from the 'second order' truths of Universal History.

Ideology in Ordinary Life

L. S. Vygotsky 1986.

From our point of view, the question is 'What happens to the Person in the way s/he relates in everyday life to the real world if this is the way in which all people are constituted relative to the

true history of things?' Ordinary people *learn* their way into life as social beings in a social process, and their learning is a time-bound development of linguistic/semiotic and logical/practical (or 'scientific/spontaneous') skills obtained and exercised within a specifically communal situation (see Vygotsky 1986). Put differently, the things we learn and the way we learn them cannot easily be divorced from our own historical 'when and where'. The important thing here is that under ordinary conditions we learn things to an acceptable level of proficiency, until we can demonstrably 'carry on in the same way' for all practical purposes, and then go on with learning other relevant things for our situation.

In general, we want to suggest that what people learn at the early stages of their process of social integration is *indistinguishable from myth for all practical purposes*. Unless a person consciously embarks on a programme of additional learning, or by virtue of her or his position in a society is inducted into one, then what they have previously learned relates to the subsequent totality of their social activity as a consciousness of unreflected generality. For example, a normal child anywhere in the world is going to learn to speak if it survives long enough in the sociocultural setting normal to its society of birth. S/he will, all things being equal, eventually become sufficiently skilled in language to be able to interact in an effective enough way with her or his social partners, and should get by pretty well to boot. Once an acceptable level of speech proficiency has been obtained, however, how many real people in the world spontaneously go on to learn to read, *let alone learn grammar*? Very few.

The point is that at the level of the Everyday, people speak and make themselves understood without *ever* thinking about the way in which they string their words together: we can say that for them grammar works at the level of *unreflected generality*. That is, when asked about *why* they phrase a speech act in a particular way, we are likely to be told that they did so because 'that's the way people talk, innit.' The response *mythologises* grammar, and for the most part we get on well enough despite this. We suggest, though, that this can become socially negative in its consequences if subjects carry this approach into social activities that involve power relationships: if economic, gender or racial custom is questioned and elicits a 'that's the way it is' response, then one can start talking about ideology.

If the idea of ideology as mythologising is not a *reflected* one, then we can easily end up with the whole of our conscious discourse in and about social activity becoming in itself ideology. The concept will, in other words, become a trivial one. We propose that the semiotics of Peirce, as we have interpreted the method above, provides a solid starting position for a non-trivial use for this sense of the term 'ideology'. Combining the method with a realist reading of what Heller proposes as the nascent form of post-universal historical consciousness, and locating Ideology within the realm of practice as well as within that of discourse, should bring to everyday people a tool with which they can begin to articulate the needs relevant to their situations so that adequate strategies for addressing their real conditions can be formulated.

An Evolving Consciousness

In the era following the world wars, the Holocaust, Hiroshima, the *gulag* and *apartheid*, the cast-concrete icons of universalist thought are looking shabby indeed. If the world as it is today represents the pinnacle of human achievement, then our tale is the tragedy of a species condemned to a Sisyphean cycle of destruction, and certainly not one of successively greater triumphs. There is, however, a growing understanding that Reality can be dealt with in different ways that are not *necessarily* contradictory. The consciousness of reflected generality, the understanding that there is a history of historiography as an activity of telling the story of humanity according to the concepts that historians have had of humanity, sets the task of 'overcoming the discomposed historical consciousness' that has driven us to the disasters of this epoch. In terms of this form of consciousness:-

...all historical changes must be explained by the *real needs* producing them, and these needs and their contribution to such changes must in every case be explained in relation to their particular character by historiography (Heller, 1982: 330).

In other words, what has gone before must be evaluated in terms of the historical specificity of the needs that were invoked at the time and the consciousness of the actors who articulated these needs. What needs are to be articulated today and

tomorrow must be so articulated as to include the *ethical* need for a future.

Any future for humanity will be, as it always has been, a consequence of human action. Consequences are never consciously ignored if an action is to be called rational. If change is the rationale for action, then we are obliged as rational beings to justify the rationale in terms of a value. Under the universalist regime of rationality, it was reasoned that moral *action* was to be universalised. Within reflected generality, we act according to the adequate interpretation of a general *value idea* for the real situation at hand. A fully triadic semiotic analysis of an articulated need will neither confirm nor deny the validity of any action for the satisfaction of that need; what we suggest is that the use of semiotics and reflected generality can address the articulation itself such that people can envisage the consequence of the fulfillment of a need as being coherent *generally* with respect to value ideas democratically developed concomitant with the totality of social change.

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At the end of the day one wants ordinary people in everyday life to be able critically to relate to those value ideas like 'good' and 'true' *as they apply to the general reality of the global human situation*. One or other interpretation of a value idea may mythologise an aspect of the situation relative to reality. That is, it may universalise it unreflectedly. But, then, because needs articulated as signs relate to the world *via* practice, the semiotics of the situation can highlight the ideological aspects of the need. Thereafter the people on the ground can, in a reflected way, set about negotiating the need (or a different one) in a way that is consistent with reality.

The beauty of this approach is that one cannot begin to act without there having been an articulation of a need. It avoids the we-know-better-than-you imposition of change that is the hangover of the great European Colonial Binge, but it nonetheless cannot deny that reality necessarily includes all the other consequences of the party. Because signification is central to the method, and because it seeks realist understanding of how people are to act so that a future is possible, it includes as part of this existing reality precisely the discrepancy in the social control of signs and signification occasioned

by the Binge. It calls for a more sober way of celebrating our consciousness of our humanity, and it relies on the possibility that we can indeed learn from history. History as signs is the idea that history and historiography are interpretations, and learning from history includes the judgement of

some interpretations as not relevant. The realism of semiotics as method allows the relevance of interpretation to be judged adequately to situations, so that the values and consequences are what are important and not the actions only.

VIII: Signs and Community: Denaturing the Tribe

'Community' and 'communication' share a common root. Communication is that matrix of signification that has in common the practices whereby community is achieved in reality. There is, in other words, a Peircean triad which has at one corner the collective subject 'community'; at another the set of practices included in the infinitive 'to communicate'; and at the third apex the semiotic class 'communication'. This Peircean Model offers a far more appropriate means of understanding communication in human communities than does the overused C-M-R (Communicator-Medium-Receiver) Model developed by Claude E. Shannon and Warren Weaver (1948) out of a background of wartime cryptanalysis. Although it has been useful in building theories of information transfer and engineering systems, about the only real human community to which the C-M-R model seems applicable is the military unit, in which one-way, top-down communication predominates. The model can represent many of the pragmatic needs of such a limited kind of organisation, but military communities are far from normal human communities.

Communication as Command

Turning to Peirce's interpretants, military practice bases itself on the need for an order to be obeyed without question. That is to say, the objective is for a command (a symbol) to invoke a singular action (an energetic interpretant) in the greatest number of subordinate agents. Anybody who has seen the training sequences in Stanley Kubrick's film *Full Metal Jacket* will appreciate the practices required for the production of the necessary hordes of subordinate agents. No doubt there are those who might judge that what was portrayed in the movie is paradigmatic of some social ideal. If so, we hope that our approach never finds application in the realisation of it. The point is that the Shannon and Weaver (1948) model has been used with the utmost seriousness for establishing methods and organs of community signification for too

long. (e.g., Fiske 1982). If their model forms the basis of the organisational and programming system of the electronic media, then globally we might be in considerably more trouble as a society than we know (see also Sless 1986).

First, the hierarchical linearity of the model excludes response: it is derived from a situationally adequate need for the clearest transmission -- over the greatest possible distance and to the greatest number of preselected recipients -- of the discursive equivalent of "Ten-hut!". The response 'Why?' does not exist in the discourse. This leads to the second problem: any *dialogue* conceived in these terms will be more or less a succession of reversing Communicator-Medium-Receiver (C-M-R) processes in which C and R undergo some mysterious sort of role-change from one line of the dialogue to the next. If the basic thesis of this model is the Military's ideal of a stimulus-response event, indefinitely repeatable under any condition in which a C requires a given R to respond *so*, then there is the question as to what it is that actually distinguishes a line of dialogue from a warrant officer's command to 'ground arms' (Peirce's example). In short, we can imagine that *anything* is going on since there is little indication as to how contexts other than the Military are to be accommodated.

Communication as Non-democracy

Returning to the context of our discussion on ideology above, we would suggest that the task within which the C-M-R model was initially conceived mythologised a practice relevant to a specific historical consciousness. This would be Clausewitz's Prussia in the immediately post-Napoleonic era. Thus our conclusion is that the great bulk of communications research on, say, TV in a democratic society, is highly questionable exactly because the theory that sets the terms of this research bases itself on the precise needs of the (invariably self-styled) least democratic

institution of *any* in contemporary society. More, the Military often *prides* itself on the 'fact' that democracy relies on non-democratic practices and organisation for its material defence. More specific to the way we approach the question of communication, there is an ideology of *command* and *obedience*, specific to a limited community of practice in democratic society, internal to at least one major paradigm of the field.

Semiotically speaking: there is a strictly definable historical practice to which the symbol 'communication' relates; this practice is one that attaches to a limited number of specialist subjects; and the practice itself can be seen to engender other practices that are inconsistent with the values to which practitioners (we cannot doubt their good faith) subscribe as communicators. That is to say, a triad of sign/subject/practice can be visualised in this context. Ideologically speaking: the context of the sign 'communication' in contemporary practice is associated with a set of historical practices explicitly anti-egalitarian in their intended consequences. In the case in hand, ideology attaches specifically to a degenerate interpretant in that a habit is exercised which limits the use of the sign to a specific kind of politics. More precisely, a politics of authoritarian corporatism.

Non-democracy Complicated: South Africa

The community as a semiotic subject is a problematic of peculiar relevance in the South African context, since the term has figured prominently in late-apartheid discourse. The State has favoured a view that derives in its entirety from the North-European *Ethnos* theoretical tradition of early twentieth century anthropology (e.g. Shirokogoroff 1924), which often has been used in a racial-determinist way. This has as one of its major premises the idea that a subject's culture is somehow inherent as a genetic function of a subject's tribal or national origins. Given that culture is a factor in the identity of communities, then the line spun in defence of apartheid was that the ethnically defined 'cultural community' (or 'sign-community') of one's birth determined the life one officially lived, the language one officially spoke, and the practices that one officially appropriated in order to live.

That this 'community' was but 'race' writ large in the language of science rather than of Calvinist Divinity, imparts a special aspect to the idea of communication in a society ordered on such a basis. Since practice generally subsumes action,

and since action is judged to be justified in terms of one or more values that are held by the agent to be relevant in the context of activity, the exchange of signs across the South African 'communities' inherently cannot be communication: values are held to be culture-specific, and the values of one community are as good as incommensurable relative to those of another. On the basis of the statement made at the opening of this section, we conclude that the matrices of signification employed by such a state do not communicate. Further, the State's appropriation of technologies of signification modelled on those of the industrial metropolises suggests that in our society the practice 'communication' is at least *twice* removed from any practice that might achieve or confirm community in any real sense.

Community and Communication

A language user can (and predominantly does) have proficiency in several discourses. Language users, in turn, develop within a practical/normative community that constitutes the discourse(s) within which the user can become proficient (see Vygotsky 1986: Chapter 5). Our position is that communication is fundamentally the *interactive* constitution of at least one discourse at the level of a community. This, in turn, necessitates that communities are dynamic entities defined, on the one hand, by the sum over the internal histories of these interactions, and, on the other hand, by the sum over the histories of interaction with other such communities that shared or came to share at least one discourse in common (that is to say: the history of communication).

The point behind the above is that *all* the practices, discourses, and communities involved in a particular historical situation participate at the apices of a semiotic triad. Ideology realises itself in the relations that can be analysed between discourse and practice; oppression in those between community (subject) and practice; and the possible relations between community and discourse condition the values that actors can invoke in communication. What we are saying here is that cultural differences at the level of the 'community' (in South African terms) have their genesis in an ensemble of historical interrelations, and *not* in the relevant subjects' DNA. Conscious as we are of the confusion of historical consciousness that *determines* the Eurocentric tradition not only of academic enterprise but also of the politics of social action in a world dominated

by paradigms *specific* to the historical concerns of European Powers, the idea of a Task Planetarian Responsibility, that is to say, a consciousness of

history as the consequence of the generality of human action (see Heller, 1982), both daunts and challenges.

IX: Radical Slogans: the Semiotics of Transformation

Following the global events of the last half-decade, there has been a sort of general falsification of the theoretical standpoint that has underpinned all of our previous work: Socialism in its formal guise as the Soviet Union has undergone a radical collapse, Africa's post-colonial countries' social programmes have been forced to reevaluate their priorities, and the theory that provided the motivating call for the struggle against apartheid has more or less been repudiated by the leaders of that struggle. However, the alternative that has been very much forced onto the non-European world still does not seem to offer any solution more valid than that applied to the past. Despite the adoption by African governments of policies based on catchphrases like 'development', 'pluralism' and so on, the poverty, starvation, and human degradation persist unabated. The fact that the real conditions in our world have largely been replaced on Western television screens with images of instability in the oil-rich Gulf Region or with reports on the condition of the former Communist Bloc, does not make it true that the Triumph of Capitalism is as real in our world as the lack of these television or newspaper reports might suggest.

Inside South Africa, the Centre for Cultural and Media Studies maintains a Semiotics Working Group that operates within a society that has, since 1987 at least, been very much in the public's consciousness. This society, with and because of its institutionalised differences of cultural and linguistic practice, has started to experience a disturbingly high level of conflict deriving from these differences. A great deal has been reported in the media regarding this growing recourse to violence, and the Centre remains concerned that the style and methods of the media may be preventing the resolution of the conflict, despite the good faith of media workers. It is the Centre's contention that the semiotising of communication studies within an inter-disciplinary context based on the cultural studies approach, and incorporating the value-directed project of Radical Sociology, has promise as a validly alternative approach to the effective investigation of the

conflict and oppression specific to the South African situation.

Realism and Real People - 3

The proposal is to approach this in terms of Historical Realism, both recognising the effective existence of human consciousness as an outcome of real cultural/historical influences, and that history and culture are conditioned, in turn, by consciousness. The Centre rejects any idea of explanation or theory or theological dogma that sees the sex or race of other subjects, individually or collectively, as excluding those others from articulating relevant concerns. In turn, they accept as relevant any concerns articulated within negotiated contexts, but recognise nonetheless that local situations may preclude such interaction because of long-running conflict: under such conditions their policy is to assist where possible in resolving such conflict to the point at least that the parties involved agree to begin discussion.

Much still has to be done in identifying research material relevant to the programme. There is a lot of existing material, already used by or generated through Cultural Studies, that needs to be reinterpreted through realist rather than materialist spectacles. The effects of the cultural boycott have yet to work through in their entirety: texts that were not permitted to South Africans, and which may already have covered the ground people here are only beginning to find relevant, will have to be studied so that duplication and/or plagiarism are avoided. The worst problem facing the Centre, however, is the reality not ten kilometres from where this is being composed: people are being killed in an unacknowledged civil war, and yet the academic response seems to be no better than Rotman's ruminations on *The Semiotics of Zero*. At the same time, attempts to solve the conflict in the terms of Eurocentric paradigms common to the ideomorphical discourse of both capitalist and socialist sides of the war often turn out to be ludicrously inadequate.

Of course, academics tend to work within these parameters since their historical situation as persons tends to condition their practice in relation

specifically to the language with which they have grown up: they are Africans, but their mode of operation is pretty well English. However, because this is *not* Merrie England, there seems to be no reason why anybody *ought* to touch their colonial forelocks whenever the Great Tradition is invoked.

The point we are trying to make is that the logical context of the Tradition's everyday use in academic professional disciplines, especially as it applies to value discourse, has little or no significance (pun intended) in the necessarily complex situation that is *everyday life* in Africa. By providing a ready-made non-dualistic model upon which the necessary work can be started, Peircean semiotics combined with radical philosophy has some distinct advantages over the standard models, so to speak. In the South African context, one can only keep at it as long as time has not run out.

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Current Research on Semiotics

Argentina

Research Institute on Social Communication, Avda. 44 No. 676, (1900) La Plata National University. La Plata offers courses in Semiotic Analysis in Political Discourse and International Reciprocal Image of Countries into the Mass Media.

Australia

Communication Research Institute of Australia, GPO Box 655, Canberra, ACT 2601. Engaged in policy research and practical applications of semiotics in business, industrial and road safety, telecommunications and allied media. The emphasis is on useful and applied semiotic research.

John Hartley, Dept. of Human Communication, Murdoch University, WA 6150. Semiotics of news. He has published in the Methuen 'New Accents' series.

David Sless, Executive Director, Communication Research Institute of Australia, GPO Box 655, Canberra, ACT. Applied visual thinking and information design linked to project planning, management, and organisational politics. Research on designing and decoding industrial and public safety symbols, meaning in photographs, design of forms and documents, and communications policy. Sless's publications are very accessible and useful for application in other contexts.

Sydney Association for Studies in Society and Culture, c/o French Studies, University of Sydney,

Sydney, NSW 2006. See especially its conference proceedings, *Semiotics, Language, Ideology*, (1985).

Austria

Austrian Association for Semiotics, Projektkoordinationsbüro, Viktoriagaße 14B/4-5, A-1150 Wien. Publishes a quarterly, *Semiotische Berichte*, and a book series.

International Association for Semiotic Studies, Viktoriagaße 14B/4-5, A-1150 Wien. Publishes *IASS-AIS Bulletin* providing information on researcher bio-bibliographies and notes on events, national and regional associations, groups, Centres, publications, research projects, conferences, books, journals and so on. The Association publishes *S-European Journal for Semiotic Studies*

Belgium

Centre for Semiology, University of Brussels, 1050 Bruxelles. Publishes *Degrés*, and hosts the International Association for the Semiology of Spectacle, which researches theatre, opera, circus and cinema.

Andre Helbo, Faculté de Philosophie et Lettres, Université Libre de Bruxelles, 1050 Bruxelles, le. Editor of *Degrés*. Helbo has written excellent accessible articles on theatre semiotics.

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Centro Latino-Americano de Semiotica, Rua Marques de São Vicente 225 - Gavea, 22453 Rio de Janeiro, RJ. Researches carnival and Brazilian culture.

Centro Latino-Americano de Semiotica: Post-Graduate Studies in Communication. R. Monte Alegre 984, 05014 São Paulo. Researches semiotics of culture, literature, visual communication, psychoanalysis, literature.

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Département d'Anthropologie, Université Laval, Québec, G1K 7P4. Offers courses in semiography, empirical semiotics, computer developments and applications, ethnosemiotics and semiotics of tourism.

Theory and Methods of Culture Group, York University, Downsview, Ontario M3J 1P3. Graduate programmes in sociology, social and political thought, and English, discourse analysis, knowledge and representation.

Victoria College, University of Toronto, Victoria College, 73 Queen's Park Cr., Toronto, Ontario M5S 1K7, is the home of the Toronto Semiotic Circle, an interdisciplinary group that has been meeting since 1973. In June 1980 the International Summer Institute for Semiotic and Structural Studies was founded at Victoria. In addition to the College's publications it offers three courses in semiotics.

Colombia

Centro Latino-Americano de Semiotica, Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia, Aptdo. Aereo 843, Tunja (Boyaca).

Finland

International Semiotics Institute, Imatra Culture Center, 55100 Imatra. Established 1988. ISI creates, publishes and disseminates an international database on advanced teaching and research in semiotics. It provides practical information on how qualified students can best tap sources of knowledge, regardless of disciplinary and national boundaries. The Institute has offices in India, Brazil, USA, Australia, Italy, Austria and Japan. Its task is threefold: first, it has established an international database of all advanced teaching and research centres relevant to semiotics. Second, it facilitates mobility of students to overcome the excessive protectionism of universities which try to restrain students from wider investigations transgressing disciplinary and administrative boundaries. Third, the Institute sponsors interdisciplinary conferences and courses in conjunction with other institutions.

Eero Tarasti, Chairman of the International Semiotics Institute.

France

Certificat d'Etudes Approfondies en Architecture: Sciences de la Conception, 144 Rue de Flandre, F-75019 Paris. Offers graduate courses in semiotics of space and architecture.

International Association for Visual Semiotics, 15 Rue de Plessis, F-4100 Blois. Established in 1989, the Association's aims are: a. to create a network of research in pictorial and visual semiotics; b. to circulate information on the state of research in visual semiotics; to encourage universities to offer degrees on the topic.

Patrice Pavis, Department Theatre, U.F.R. Arts Philosophie Esthetique, Université Paris VIII, 2 Rue de la Liberté 93526, St. Denis Cedex 2. Semiotics of Theatre

Germany

Johannes Ehrat, Berchmanskolleg, Kaulbachstrasse 31a, D-8000 München 22, recently completed his doctorate at the Department of Communication, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Université de Montréal, Canada on 'Peirce's Iconicity and Meaning Processes in Audivisual Communication - The Religious Form in Aesthetics, Narratives and Social Form of Film and Television.

Achim Eschbach, University of Essen, Universitätstraße 2, 4300 Essen 1, edits the 'Foundations of Semiotics' series, published by John Benjamins Publishing Co., of Philadelphia and Amsterdam.

Institut für Semiotik und Kommunikationsforschung, c/o Dr. H. W. Schmitz, Rheindorferstraße 159, D-5300 Bonn. Established in 1986.

India

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Faculty of Communication, Central College, Bangalore University. Semiotics of film/TV, rural communication, traditional media studies.

Leela Rao, Associate Professor in the Faculty of Communication, Bangalore University, Central College, Bangalore University, Bangalore 56001. Has done research into the impact of video in Southern India and on satellite communication for rural communities.

Italy

Centro di Ricerche Semiotiche, c/o G. Giappichelli, via Po 21, 10124, Torino. Established in 1977, the Centro has published numerous texts on semiotics.

Centro Internazionale di Semiotica e di Linguistica, Piazza del Rinascimento 7, I-61029, Urbino. Research emphasis is on typology and analysis of discourse. Publishes Working Papers in a variety of languages.

Keir Elam, Istituto di Inglese, Università di Firenze, Via San Gallo, Firenze. Theatre semiotics.

International Centre for Semiotic and Cognitive Studies, University of San Marino, Gallerian del Leone 2, 40125 Bologna. Established in 1988, the Centre's goals are: organisation of international workshops; to award research fellowships to young scholars; and to offer short courses to academics and the public.

Institute of Communication, Via Zomboni 38, 40126 Bologna. Concentrates on semiotics of the Middle Ages.

Giampaolo Proni, Istituto di Discipline della Comunicazione, Via Toffano 2, 40126 Bologna. Semiotics and marketing: encyclopaedic models and the brain.

Japan

Japanese Association for Semiotic Studies. Founded in 1980. The aim of the Association is to apply semiotics to a study of Japanese society.

Yoshihiko Ikegami, Department of Arts, Culture and Science, University of Tokyo, Hongo, Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo, recently edited *The Empire of Signs: Semiotic Essays on Japanese Culture*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1991.

Nigeria

Nigerian Semiotic Association, c/o Department of Literature in English, University of Ife, Ile-Ife. Founded in 1987.

Norway

Norwegian Association for Semiotic Studies, c/o D. L. Gorlee, c/o University of Bergen, Romansk Institutt, Sydnesplass 9, 5000 Bergen. Established in 1985.

Poland

Department of Logical Semiotics, Warsaw University, Krakowskie Przedmiescie 3, 00-047

Warsaw. This Department hosts the International Association for Semiotic Studies.

Alicja Helman, Jagiellonian University, Golebia 24, 31-007 Cracow. Semiotics of film, sound and art.

Polish Semiotic Society, c/o Department of Logical Semiotics, Warsaw University, 3 Krakowski Przedmiescie, 00-047 Warsaw, set up in 1968.

San Marino

Umberto Eco, Centre for Semiotic and Cognitive Studies, Contrada della Mura, 47031. Republica di San Marino. Research only. Also on the faculty of Institute of Communication, Università di Bologna, Via Zamboni, 38, 40126 Bologna, Italy.

South Africa

Centre for Cultural and Media Studies, University of Natal, King George V Ave., Durban 4001. This graduate teaching/research Centre, set up in 1985, has developed an anti-apartheid materialist approach to semiotics of media, culture, performance, and resistance to apartheid. It publishes *Critical Arts: A Journal for Cultural Studies*. In 1991, the Centre established a semiotics working group to reconstitute semiotics historically and philosophically as a useful method for social change and praxis. Members include:

P. Eric Louw, materialist semiotics related to class struggle and reconstituting Marxism in the information Age. Co-editor of *The Alternative Press in South Africa* (James Currey, London, 1991).

Department of Afrikaans, University of Western-Cape, Private Bag X17, Bellville 7535. Members of the Department are engaged in popularising semiotics in terms of anti-apartheid cultural activism.

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John van Zyl, School of Dramatic Art, University of Witwatersrand, P.O. Wits 2050, Johannesburg. Semiotics of cinema, TV and performance. Author of an introductory schools film analysis text. *Imagewise* (Johannesburg, Hodder and Stoughton, 1989).

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Switzerland

Semiotic Association of Switzerland, c/o Claude Calame, Chemin de Chandieu 18, CH-1006 Lausanne. Established in 1985.

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United Kingdom

Max Atkinson, ESRC Centre for Socio-legal Studies, Wolfson College, Oxford. Author of *Our Masters' Voices: The Language and Body Language of Politics* (London: Routledge, 1984). Identical format to the Methuen 'New Accents' series.

Department of Cultural Studies, Birmingham University, PO Box 363, Birmingham B15 2TT. Previously the graduate Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, it has had a seminal influence on Anglo-Saxon media and cultural studies in the '80s. The theories developed in the Centre during the '80s have permeated into virtually every humanity subject, including accounting, geography and, especially, politics and sociology. The Centre incorporated Volosinov's materialist theories of language into media semiotics. It publishes books and working papers.

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Sandor Hervey, Linguistics Department, University of St. Andrews, St. Andrews, Scotland. Author of *Semiotic Perspectives* (Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1982).

Bernard S. Jackson, Department of Law, University of Kent, Canterbury. Author of *Semiotics and Legal Theory* (London: Routledge, 1987).

Len Masterman, Department of Education, Nottingham University, University Park, Nottingham N67 2RO. Media Education, teaching media analysis. Author of *Teaching the Media* (London: Co-media, 1985). Masterman is a consultant to UNESCO and the Council of Europe.

International Association for Semiotics of Law, c/o Professor B. S. Jackson, 18 Lawton Road, Roby, Merseyside L36 4HW. Publishes books on law and semiotics through Deborah Charles Publications (same address).

United States

Robert Allen, Dept. of Radio, TV and Motion Pictures, University of N. Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC 27514. Semiotics of television and film.

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David Barker, Dept. of Radio, TV-Film, Texas Christian University, 2800 S. University Drive, Fort Worth, TX 76129. Encoding/decoding research. See entry on *Journal of Film and Video*.

Arthur Asa Berger, Broadcast Communication Arts Dept., San Francisco State University, San Francisco, CA 94132. Semiotics in relation to popular culture, humour, comics, etc. Has published a number of introductory books which apply semiotics to aspects of popular culture.

Centre for Twentieth Century Studies, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, PO Box 413, Milwaukee, WI 53201. A post-doctoral research institute established in 1968 studying contemporary culture with an emphasis on critical and cultural theory, literary studies, experimental arts and film, and technology. The Centre publishes *Discourse*, a journal of theory in media

and culture, a Working Papers series and books. Emphasis is on annual themes such as 're-writing modernism', 'critical appraisals of continental thought', 're-reading cultural criticism in America'.

Department of Cinema, San Francisco State University, 1600 Holloway Ave., San Francisco, CA 94132. Runs courses on film semiology

James S. Duncan, Department of Geography, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY 13244. Has written extensively on the use of semiotic methods in urban geography.

John Fiske, Department of Communication Arts, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Vilas Hall, 621 University Ave., Madison, WI 53706. Applied semiotics to communication studies, TV and popular culture. Current General Editor of Methuen 'New Accents' series; first editor of *Cultural Studies*.

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Michael Hertzfeld, Dept. of Anthropology, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN 47405. Ethnosemiotics; works in using semiotics in developing critical anthropology.

Frederic Jameson, Literature Studies Program, Duke University, Durham, NC 27706. Pre-eminent post-structuralist critic of our times.

Gorem Kindem, Dept. of Radio, TV and Motion Pictures, University of N. Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC 27514. Semiotics of cinema; semiotics and cinema technology. Author of *Toward a Semiotic Theory of Visual Communication in the Cinema* (New York: Arno Press 1978.)

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Dept. of Cinema, San Francisco State University, 1600 Holloway Ave., San Francisco, CA 94132, runs courses on film semiology. **Bill Nichols** of that Department studies documentary film as a signifying system with special attention to representation, ethics, rhetoric and ideology. Author of *Ideology and the Image* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981).

North American Semiotics Institute, Trinity University, 715 Stadium Drive, San Antonio, TX 78212.

Walter Ong, English Dept., St. Louis University, 221 North Grand Ave., St. Louis, MO 63103. Has published extensively and with great insight on characteristics of oral and literate cultures.

Popular Culture Association, c/o Bowling Green University, Bowling Green, OH 43403. The Association has an Area Chair for Popular Culture and Semiotics. It publishes the *Journal of Popular Culture*

Calvin Pryluck, Dept. of Radio-TV-Film, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA19122. An early US scholar of cinema semiotics in the Sol Worth mould. Author of *Sources of Meaning in Motion Pictures and Television* (New York: Arno Press, 1976.).

Research Center for Language and Semiotic Studies, Indiana University, PO Box 10, Bloomington, IN 47402-0010. The Center offers a concentration in semiotics teaching and research unmatched anywhere else. Its emphases are: all forms of human and animal communication; and applications of semiotics to the professions including business, consumer behaviour, education and nursing. The Center publishes a variety of book series for example, *Advances in Semiotics*, *Animal Communication* (Indiana University Press), *Approaches to Semiotics* (Mouton de Greyter), *Topics in Languages and Linguistics* and *Topics in Contemporary Semiotics* (Plenum). The Center offers consulting services for educational, business, and other organisations. It offers exchange programmes and undergraduate and graduate courses involving most humanities disciplines. The Center also publishes *Marketing Signs: A Newsletter at the Crossroads of Marketing, Semiotics and Consumer Research*. Members of the Center include: **Thomas Sebeok**, best known for his research on biologically-based semiotics, including anthropology, linguistics, psycholinguistics, and he is editor of *Semiotica* and author or editor of numerous books. **Jean Umiker-Sebeok**, working in semiotics, advertising and marketing. is author or editor of numerous books and editor of the newsletter *Marketing Signs*. The Center also is the address of the **Semiotic Society of America**.

Paul Roberge, Dept. of Germanic Languages, University of N. Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, NC 27514. Language, semiotics of Afrikaans and social struggle.

Bernard Timberg, Dept. of Theater Arts and Speech, Rutgers University, Newark, NJ. Encoding/decoding research. See entry on *Journal of Film and Video*.

Peter Wollen, Dept. of Cinema-Television, University of California, Los Angeles, CA 90024. Pioneered the application of Peircean semiotics to the study of cinema in *Signs and Meaning in the Cinema*. (London: Secker and Warburg, 1969.)

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Centro Latino-Americano de Semiotica, Universidad de la Republica, Av. Rivera 6195, Montevideo. Visiting faculty members have included Sebeok, Metz and Derrida. Contact person: Lisa Block de Behar.

U.S.S.R.

Moisei Boroda, Chair of Aesthetics and Art Theory of Tbilisi State Conservatoire, Ul. Griboedova 8, 380004, Tbilisi, Georgia, is largely concerned with the quantitative approach to repetition and variation of rhythm in music, employing semantic/linguistic methods among others. Contact person: Prof. Jurgen Schmidt-Radefeldt, Sprachwissenschaftliches Institut der Ruhr-Universität Bochum, Kiel University, Olshausenstr. 75, D-2300 Kiel. Germany.

Venezuela

Centro Latino-Americano de Semiotica, Universidad de Los Andes, Aptdo. de Correos 671, Merida.

Latin American Federation of Semiotics, c/o Professor Ivan Belloso, Aptdo. Postal 1714, Maracaibo. Founded in 1987. Promotes Latin American semiotic research and teaching.

We would refer readers to the International Semiotics Institute's *Database Parts 1 & 2 (1990)* for listings of individual researchers and teaching and research institutions concerning advanced semiotics programmes. The ISI will, on request, send copies of the *Database* to people requesting it. The *Database* is also available through electronic networks. A second document which gives detailed information on 35 semiotics researchers and teachers is *Semiotic Studies at Indiana University: A Guide to Teaching, Research & Consulting*. Some individuals mentioned in these references are listed above.

Additional Bibliography

Journals

American Journal of Semiotics, a quarterly journal of the Semiotic Society of America, Dean MacCannell, Editor, University of California at Davis, Davis, CA 95616, U.S.A.

Assaph: Studies in the Theatre, Department of Theatre Studies, Tel Aviv University, Ramat Aviv, 69978 Tel Aviv, Israel. Publishes papers on the semiotics of theatre.

CinemAction, 106 Blvd. St. Denis, Courbevoie, 92400 France. See especially issue No. 58 '25 ans de semiologie'.

Continuum: An Australian Journal of the Media, Communication Studies, Murdoch University, Murdoch, WA 6150, Australia. This journal applies semiotics to cultural and media studies topics.

Critical Arts: A Journal of Cultural Studies, Centre for Cultural and Media Studies, University of Natal, King George V Avenue, Durban 4001, South Africa. Applications of semiotics within cultural studies theoretical frameworks.

Cultural Studies. Routledge, 11 New Fetter Lane, London EC4P 4EE, England. The journal seeks to transform those perspectives which have traditionally informed the field -- structuralism and semiotics, Marxism, psychoanalysis and feminism. Theories of discourse, of power, of pleasure and of the institutionalisation of meaning are crucial to its enterprise.

Degrés, Pl. Constantin Meunier, 2, Bte. 13, B-1180, Bruxelles, Belgium. Publishes on the problems of interdisciplinary transfer of concepts in linguistics, literature, aesthetics, communication and semiotics. An excellent academically-oriented journal.

Discourse: Journal for Theoretical Studies in Media and Culture, published by the University of Indiana Press, is a journal of the Center for Twentieth Century Studies, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI 53201, USA.

Information Design Journal, P. O. Box 185, Milton Keynes MK7 6BL, England. Multidisciplinary

articles on the communication of information of social, business, technical and educational significance incorporating design methods and management, human-machine interaction, electronic publishing, typography and public information signs. Very useful *applied* articles on topics of interest to communicators, media designers and so on.

International Semiotic Spectrum. Published by Toronto Semiotic Circle, Victoria College, University of Toronto, 73 Queen's Park Crescent East, Toronto, Ont M5S 1K7. A highly readable, informative and accessible newspaper on a wide range of fascinating developments in semiotics.

Iconics. Published by the Japanese Society of Arts and Sciences, c/o Department of Film, College of Art, Nihon University, 8-24 Kudan-Minami, 4-chome, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, 102, Japan. Academically orientated.

Livstegn (Signs of Life), published by the Norwegian Association for Semiotic Studies. University of Bergin, Romansk Institutt, Sydneplass 9, 5000 Bergin.

Marketing Signs: A Newsletter at the Crossroads of Marketing, Semiotics and Consumer Research. Published by Research Center for Language and Semiotic Studies, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN 47405. Contains substantial and accessible articles written by both academics and marketing and advertising practitioners.

S - European Journal for Semiotic Studies. Published by ISSS, Viktoriagasse 14B/4-5, A-1150 Vienna, Austria. An excellent academically-orientated publication.

Screen, Oxford University Press, Pinkhill House, Southfield Road, Eynsham, Oxford OX8 1JJ, England. This journal has been considerably revamped and has jettisoned its previous formalistic Screen Theory orientation. It's new editorial address is The John Logie Baird Centre, University of Glasgow, Glasgow G12 8QQ, Scotland.

SEMA Semiotic Abstracts. Published by Institute for Semiotics and Communication Research,

Rheindorferstraße 159, D-5300, Bonn, Germany, provides non-evaluative abstracts.

Semiotica, Mouton de Greyter, Postfach 110240, Berlin 11. Germany. The flagship of the field.

Semiotic Review of Books, published since 1990 by Toronto Semiotic Circle, University of Toronto, Victoria College, 73 Queen's Park Crescent East, Toronto, Ont M5S 1K7. A multidisciplinary review journal monitoring the humanities, social and natural sciences which bear upon symbolic and communicative behaviour, cognitive systems and processes, cultural transmission and innovations, and the study of information, meaning and signification.

Studia Semiotica, published by the Japanese Association for semiotic studies.

Studia Semiotyczne, published annually by the

Polish Semiotic Society, c/o Dept. of Logical Semiotics, Warsaw University, 3 Krakowskie Przedmiescie, 00-047 Poland.

Toronto Semiotic Circle Monographs, Working Papers and Pre-Publications. Titles include: *The Communication of Culture: Models of Learning for Troops and Children* (1979); *Power, Silence and Secrecy* (1980); and *History and Semiotic* (1985). These range from the above titles to monographs on pure theory.

Zeitschrift für Semiotik, Arbeitsstelle für Semiotik, Technische Universität Berlin, Sekr, Tel 6, Ernst-Reuter-Platz 7, D-1000 Berlin 10, Germany. A forum for the German, Swiss and Austrian Associations for Semiotic Studies.

Znakolog, Ruhr-Universität Bochum, 4630 Bochum, Universitätstrasse 150, Germany. A forum for semiotic research in Slavic countries.

Book Reviews: Televangelism Revisited

Since our issue on 'Televangelism and the Religious Uses of Television' (*Communication Research Trends* Vol.11 No.1 (1990)), two books have come to our attention which supplement and extend the contents of that issue.

We knew the book by Quentin J. Schultze was on the way, but unfortunately garbled the reference to it in the 'Current Research' section of 11/1. Our apologies to Professor Schultze.

The second book is from ISCOS (Istituto di Scienze della Comunicazione Sociale) of the Pontifical Salesian University in Rome. This reader illustrates the growing interest by Catholics in serious thought about communications issues.

Quentin J. Schultze. *Televangelism and American Culture: The Business of Popular Religion*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991, 264 pp., ISBN 0-8010-8319-2 (hardcover), US\$16.95.

Dr. Quentin J. Schultze, Professor of Communication Arts and Sciences at Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan, is one of the most incisive critical analysts of the phenomenon of televangelism.

In this book Schultze develops the thesis that modern marketing techniques, as manifested in the American consumer society, owe much of their form and intensity to lessons learned from

the religious evangelists of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Conversely, he 'shows how and why televangelists are helping transform American Christianity from the church into a business -- from an historic faith into a popular religion based on superstition', according to the publisher's description.

Although the news media have stereotyped and sensationalized the televangelists, in the process distorting the whole image of religion in the eyes of the American news audience, Schultze looks beyond the stereotypes to find the reality of televangelism -- and he does not like what he finds there, either. The financially audience-supported, personality-led, technologically sophisticated, entertainment-oriented, expansionary-minded character of televangelism has, to a degree, been forced upon the preachers by the media environment in which they function -- vulnerable as it is to audience likes and dislikes. These characteristics each conceal further imperatives which distort the electronic church into the caricature of religion which Schultze describes.

But the author is no opponent of religious television. On the contrary, he devotes his last chapter, 'Redeeming the Electronic Church', to a six-point programme for reshaping religious broadcasting to properly fulfill its intended purpose. These points are as follows:

'1. Televangelists should be sponsored by either a large church, a denomination, or a board of directors composed primarily of people greatly respected in public life.' (pg. 227)

'2. The Christian media should do a far better job of evaluating and assessing televangelism in America.' (pg. 231)

'3. Religious education desperately needs to address the implications of living in the television age.' (pg. 236)

'4. The secular news media must take religion far more seriously than they have in recent decades.' (pg. 241)

'5. Christians should be more careful about which religious broadcasters they will financially support.' (pg. 244)

'6. Denominations and especially ecumenical evangelical organizations should be much more involved in producing and financially supporting religious broadcasts.' (pg. 246).

W. E. Biernatzki, S.J.

Franco Lever (Ed.) *I Programmi Religiosi Alla Radio E In Televisione: Rassegna di esperienze e prospettive in Italia e in Europa.* Turin: Editrice Elle Di Ci, 1991. 348 pp. ISBN 88-01-14575-6 (Paperback) US\$29.95 L.35,000.

This book, edited by Franco Lever of ISCOS, contains the proceedings of the inauguration of ISCOS (Istituto de Scienze della Comunicazione Sociale) at the Salesian University in Rome in December 1989. This international conference was based on theme of Religious Broadcasting on Radio and Television, both in Italy and in the rest of Europe, and was the first in a series of conferences on Mass Media and Religion, the next of which will take place in February 1992 on the theme 'The broadcasting of the Eucharist on Radio and Television'. Details of this conference can be obtained from Prof. Roberto Giannatelli at ISCOS, Università Pontificia Salesiana, Piazza Ateneo Salesiano 1, 00139 Roma, Italy.

As well as the inaugural addresses the book, divided into four sections, contains papers by scholars and practitioners in broadcasting from across Europe. There are sections on the international and Italian situation with regard to

religious broadcasting; on the experiences of religious communicators in Europe with regard to prayer and worship; on religious education and on the organization of the transmission of religious programmes. Participants were given the opportunity to rework their papers to include more matured ideas developed from the discussions that followed their presentation. Some of the papers are printed in both Italian and in the native tongue of the presenter, and the texts of the discussions following papers is also included.

ISCOS hope that this book will provide a new impetus to the study of religious programming on radio and television, something which they consider is understudied and/or underused.

Maria Way

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