

Prolegomena to Semioethics.

Bodies and Signs in the World of Global Communication

Susan Petrilli and Augusto Ponzio

But communication would be impossible if it should have to begin in the ego, a free subject, to whom every other would be only a limitation that invites war, domination, precaution and information. To communicate is indeed to open oneself, but the openness is not complete if it is on the watch for recognition. It is complete not in opening to the spectacle of or the recognition of the other, but in becoming a responsibility for him. The overemphasis of openness is responsibility for the other to the point of substitution, where the for-the-other proper to disclosure, to monstration to the other, turns into the for-the-other proper to responsibility. (*From Existence to Ethics*, in Hand 1989: 108-109)

Similarly to nonhuman animals being-communication in human animals presupposes the construction of worldviews on the basis of a species-specific modeling device. However, while modeling and being-communication identify in nonhuman animals, in human beings they do not. The specific modeling device in humans, also called language, allows for interpretations, evaluations and responses. Humans are endowed with a capacity for metasemiosis or “semiotics” which presupposes language which is a species-specific primary modeling device. Syntax, deconstruction and reconstruction, the engenderment of infinite possible worlds, the capacity for “semiotics” thus understood, therefore, for evaluation, the assumption of responsibility, inventiveness, creativity and the capacity for planning are all prerogatives of language. Thanks to language the being of social communication has an *otherwise than being*. In the capitalist production system today, economy confirms identification of being with communication. Concrete abstractions in the processes of social reproduction are oriented by the logic of Identity. Reason is at the service of Identity, of the reproduction of the being-as-it-is of the world. Reason includes the reason of war considered as legitimate, just and legal. Reason includes elimination of the other — from emargination and segregation to extermination. The authors propose a critique of reason in terms of dialogic reason whose point of view is not that of identity but of alterity. Semiotics must take into account and account for the “reason of things”. However, the capacity for detotalization as the condition for critical and dialogic totalization implies that the capacity for understanding the *reason* of things cannot be separated from the capacity for *reasonableness*. The problem may be stated as follows: given the risks inherent in today’s socio-economic system for semiosis, therefore for life, *human beings must at their very earliest change from rational animals into reasonable animals*. This means to aim at a new form of humanism different from the traditional, the humanism of alterity and not of identity. This is the task of that orientation in semiotics which reflects on signs in relation to responsibility, and which we propose to call semioethics (cf. Ponzio and Petrilli 2003a).

A Narrow Concept of Communication

When we consider the concept of “communication”, we generally think of a process of exteriorization through which an interior content is made manifest. On this account communication is an e-mission from a being, the emitter, and takes place between the emitter as a *terminus a quo* and another being, the receiver, as a *terminus ad quem*. Communication takes place between a *being* in its role as emitter and another being in its role as receiver. Thus understood communication presupposes a being that communicates, that *first is* and *then communicates*, that ordinarily *exists prior to and independently from its acts of communication*.

This concept of communication is connected to a given concept of being, to a given ontology. Just as communication is generally considered as a process that begins from a being, as an e-mission of being, being too is generally taken for granted as the presupposition and foundation of communication. Communication theory and ontology are closely connected: all communication theories have their ontologies, whether they are explicit or not; conversely, all ontologies refer to a theory of communication, though it may not be articulated.

Apart from theories, philosophies and ideologies of communication, today a different conception of the communication/being relationship is asserting itself. This may be summarized with the statement that “communication is being”, an assertion which may be inverted with the statement that “being is communication”. However, contrary to the first statement, “communication is being”, which concerns communication theory, the second statement, “being is communication”, concerns general ontology. Though this statement is not the main focus of the present paper, the inevitable connection between communication theory and ontology is important to signal.

The Biosemiotic Basis of Communication

Scientific research in relation to communication develops across a broad range of disciplines. Of particular interest in the present context are those approaches that focus on communication in the organic world, from the Superkingdoms to micro-organisms, collectively identifiable as studies in *biosemiotics*. In the biosemiotic perspective life and communication identify with each other. *Communication* is not only viewed as a condition for life but also as the criterion for identifying life: a living being is a communicating being (it inherits a genetic code, it responds to environmental stimuli, etc.). Life = semiosis, that is, a process in which signs are manifest or detectable (to be precise, “signs of life”), sign activity. According to this approach communication is not viewed reductively in terms of emission and externalization from a living being, whether a question of bacteria, prokaryotes, cells with a membrane and nucleus, or eukaryotes — from micro-organisms to organisms belonging to the three (or four)

Superkingdoms. Far more radically, communication is the living being itself, coincides with it. In the organic world, communication is being and being is communication.

When on discussing the relation between communication and the living being reference is to the human being we enter the more specific sphere of *anthroposemiosis*, beyond *biosemiosis* or more restrictively *zoosemiosis*, in which of course the anthroposemiosis sphere is grounded. The human being is not only a living being but also a *historical-social* being. This is where *language* comes into play (*speech* or verbal language being only one of its many expressions). Language implies that the human being is not only a *semiotic* being similarly to all other living beings that communicate, but also a *semiotic* animal, one capable of *semiotics*, that is, of *metasemiosis*, of reflection and, therefore, is endowed with consciousness. Language is the characteristic prerogative of hominids, the condition of possibility for their past and ongoing evolution. Accordingly, evolution of the *semiotic* animal is not only evolution in biological terms, but also in the historical-social.

Communication, Language, Syntactics

Beyond more familiar acceptations, *language* is a term that has also been proposed to name the modeling device specific to human beings. Understood as a modeling device language must not be confused with *speech*. Such confusion may be described as the “fallacy of the linguist”, the linguist who says “language” for “verbal language” (or “speech”, be it oral or written) and who uses the expression “general linguistics” for the study of verbal language and its relative languages, historical-natural as well as sectorial or special languages.

In truth the term *language* is commonly used for languages that are not verbal (e.g., “gestural language”, “deaf-mute sign-language”, “photographic language”, “language of painting”, “language of fashion”, and “language of merchandise”). This is a case where ordinary language tells us how things stand better than the linguist.

All properly human sign behavior is connected to language, properly human semiosis does not exist without language. Here “properly human” alludes to the human being in its specificity as a historical-social being determined by the fact that humans are endowed biologically with language, their species-specific modeling device. As a biological organism, the human being shares communicative processes which are not (properly speaking) languages with other organisms, including the micro-organisms of which humans are made or which they carry. Anthroposemiosis does not consist exclusively of languages, nor is human semiosis exclusively semiotic, that is, capable of meta-semiosis. The sphere of languages and within that the sphere of semiotics together occupy a very small space in overall anthroposemiosis. Anthroposemiosis also incorporates endosemiosis processes (those which occur in the human organism, enabling its development and reproduction), belongs to the sphere of zoosemiosis,

and, even more broadly, biosemiosis, and is involved with communication throughout the whole semiobiosphere in forms that are no less than vital.

All animals are endowed with a specific-species modeling device. The primary system is an innate modeling device present in all living species. On the basis of this innate simulatory modeling capacity, all species simulate their own worlds in their own species-specific ways. However, differently to the primary modeling device of other life forms, the specifically human modeling device, which Thomas A. Sebeok calls language (cf. 1986, 1991a, b), is able to produce an infinite number of worlds thanks to *syntax*. A finite number of elements are used ever again to form new constructions, an infinite number of worlds through continual deconstruction and reconstruction processes. Language as a primary modeling device is distinct from speech and antecedent to it. This primary modeling system is present in the mute hominid and acts as the starting point for a new course in evolution leading to the rise of *homo sapiens sapiens*. In fact, on the evolutionary scale, hominids in their development through to *homo sapiens sapiens* were endowed with language well before speech or verbal signs appeared and prevailed over other forms of communication. Verbal language came on the scene as a *means of communication* on the basis of the primary modeling of language and its syntactic procedures, through processes of *adaptation*. Subsequently in the history of human evolution verbal language underwent a process of interiorization through processes of *exaptation*. Consequently, speech, as the material of thought, contributed to enhancing primary modeling processes and collaborated with the latter as a “secondary modeling” device. The secondary modeling system allows for modeling processes of both the indicational and extensional type. Indicational modeling may be traced in diverse species. On the contrary, extensional modeling is a uniquely human capacity. It presupposes language understood as the primary modeling system of the human species. Secondary modeling is relative to a given language and to the order of discourse which, in turn, is also connected to a given system of social relations. The tertiary modeling system is at the basis of symbolically structured and highly abstract modeling processes. Tertiary modeling systems are cultural modeling systems specific to the human species (cf. Sebeok and Danesi 2000; Ponzio and Petrilli 2003b; *S/S*, Art. 18, §§ 5 and 6).

Communication and the Human Capacity for Semiotics

Similarly to other animals, being-communication in human beings presupposes the construction of worldviews on the basis of a species-specific modeling device. However, while in nonhuman animals a relation of mutual correspondence and identity is established between modeling and being-communication, as long as the species remains unmodified except for subspecies variations and evolution through exaptation, in human being-communication, the specific modeling device, or language, does not identify with being-communication: language allows for interpretations, evaluations and responses relatively to the being of communication.

As mentioned above, humans are endowed with a specific capacity for metasemiosis or “semiotics”. We may now add that metasemiosis or semiotics thus understood presupposes language, our species-specific human primary modeling device. Syntax, deconstruction and reconstruction, the engenderment of infinite possible worlds, the capacity for semiotics, therefore for evaluation, the assumption of responsibility, inventiveness, creativity and planning are all prerogatives of language.

Thanks to language the being of social communication has an *otherwise than being*, to say it with Emmanuel Lévinas. Insofar as the human being is endowed with language and is a semiotic animal, human behavior cannot be circumscribed to communication, being, ontology. The human being is endowed with a capacity for *otherness*, may present itself as other and propose other possibilities beyond *alternatives* foreseen by being in the world of communication. Our reference here is not to *being otherwise with respect to being*, but to the condition of *otherwise than being*, that is, *otherwise than being-communication*. In fact, the capacity for being otherwise than being subtends all possibilities of being otherwise and presupposes the capacity for *otherness*.

Otherwise than Being and Responsibility

Only behavior in the sign of otherness that is disinterested allows escape from the being of communication. On the contrary, the logic of identity is connected with communication, or what would be better described as communication-production (see below). Identity is directed at specific interests and characterized by the tendency to assume limited responsibility. Instead, the logic of otherness replaces limited responsibility, safeguarded by alibis functional to identity and its roles, with responsibility beyond and apart from roles, responsibility without the possibility of escape, responsibility that cannot be delegated, that is, absolute responsibility characterized by the tendency to total involvement with the other, by exposition to the other.

We have claimed that communication, better communication-production, is a movement of interiorization, of return, of self-assertion, that communication should not be understood as extroversion, but as introversion. Otherness is the outside of communication, the otherwise of being. The movement without return toward otherness, also in the sense of without gain, is a metasemiotic or semiotic movement, and as such is properly human. Thanks to language human behavior cannot be circumscribed to communication, being, ontology. Because of language and the metasemiotic or semiotic capacity with which human beings are endowed, human behavior is not limited to *alternatives*, to *partial responsibility* as foreseen by the being of the world of communication, but, on the contrary, is invested with responsibility understood as the irrevocable obligation to respond to the other, to answer to/for the other, not only *to/for self as I*, but also *to/for self as other*, and *to/for other as other*, *autrui* as Lévinas would say. The fact that the being of communication finds its own *otherwise* in language means that language *is for the*

other, is for otherness. Therefore, the condition of desperately struggling against losing one's being in communication (*conatus essendi*; fidelity to communication which is *essential infidelity* toward the *other*) may be replaced by the desperate struggle against losing the *otherwise* than being in communication, against losing the *other*, the other of self and from self.

The capacity for otherwise than being characteristic of the human animal, the only semiotic animal, is the capacity for transcending being and the world of communication or communication-production. Such a capacity for transcendence renders the human semiotic animal responsible not only for social reproduction, but for life over the whole planet, from which of course social reproduction cannot be separated. The capacity for otherwise than being means that the semiotic animal cannot appeal to alibis, cannot accept alibis used to justify limited responsibilities. The alibis of limited responsibility would have only been admissible if the human capacity for interpretation, response, action had been limited to being in communication of the world as it is, had the human capacity for choice been limited to alternatives made available by this world as it is, had human beings not been endowed with the capacity for *otherness*.

Critique of Global Communication

In the current phase of capitalistic production, economy confirms the identification of being with communication. This phase is characterized by the industrial revolution, by progress in automation, and in today's world by the processes of globalization of communication and universalization of the market. This is not only a quantitative fact of expansion, but also, and even more radically, a qualitative fact of generalized commodification, the translatability of anything into goods, the continuous production of new goods-things. In this phase in the socio-economic development of capitalist society, communication is no longer relegated to the intermediate phase in the production cycle (production, exchange, consumption), but has now become the constitutive modality of production and consumption processes themselves. Not only is exchange communication, but also production and consumption are communication. Consequently, the whole productive cycle is communication. This is why we propose the expression "communication-production" for this particular phase in the development of the capitalist socio-economical system.

We have seen that the connection between *communication and ontology* characterizes dominant forms of communication-production in today's world. Communication-production means to persevere in being, to persist in being, to insist on being, *conatus essendi*.

To persist in communication-production means to *persist in the same social form*, the capitalistic. Only ideology functional to maintaining capitalism can identify its *being*, that is, *communication-production*, with the *being communication* of social reproduction in general, to

the point that this particular socio-economic system would seem to be natural, the only one possible, a part of the human being's very own nature. In other words, *being communication* as it emerges in this particular phase in social reproduction, that is, at high levels in economic growth, cultural perfection and scientific-technological progress, is made to seem a necessary and unmodifiable way of being.

This mystification aside, the viewpoint of current ideology — the ideo-logic of globalization which is in line with the logic of communication-production — is no different from the viewpoint of the disciplines that form the various branches in biosemiotic research. What they share is what we may call the ontology of being communication.

The globalization of communication does not only involve the extension of communication and expansion of the market at a world level. It also involves englobement of human life in all its aspects in the communication network: development, well-being and consumerism, on the one hand, and underdevelopment, poverty and the impossibility to survive, on the other; health and disease; normality and deviance; integration and emargination; employment and unemployment; transfer functional to the work-force characteristic of emigration or transfer of peoples characteristic of migration where the request of hospitality is denied; trade and use of legal merchandise and traffic in illegal merchandise — from “drugs” to human organs to “non conventional” weapons. Again, englobement is not limited to human life alone. Life over the whole planet is now inexorably implied and called into question, even compromised, put at risk in today's communication-production system; and human sensitivity clearly feels the effects of such compromission, even at a physiological level (cf. Ponzio and Petrilli 2003b, Part Three, III.2.3).

Global communication has modified space, distances, time, feelings and affections. We must decipher the signs of this process and identify the new courses of the commodities proposed, learn how to read the messages of global communication, identify a measure of its planetary extension and velocity, inscribe the criteria it flourishes upon in a new system of values. In other words, it is now necessary to accomplish a semiotic reflection on the new conditions of feeling and reasoning and to construct a *Critique of the Reason of Global Communication* (cf. Ponzio and Petrilli 2000a).

Reason, Identity and Reality. A Critique of Dialogic Reason

This problem leads to the question of the centrality of dialogue in argumentative reasoning (and of dialogism in the biosemiotic universe, though we cannot dwell on this last aspect in the present context), that is, reasoning that has not stiffened into the defense and reproduction of identity, but, on the contrary, is open and available to otherness.

Mikhail M. Bakhtin (cf. 1970-71) evidenced how unilaterality, ossification, rectilinear and unilateral dialectics derives from sclerotized dialogue. Monologic, unilinear and totalizing dialectics is necessarily orientated toward a synthesis and a conclusion and as such calls for a “Critique of Dialogic Reason” (cf. Ponzio 1994a, 1998, 2000; Ponzio and Petrilli 2003b, Part One, III.1.6). From this point of view Bakhtin is a main point of reference given that the whole course of his research, including his most recent paper of 1974 on the methodology of the human sciences, concentrates on the same problem faced by Sartre in his *Critique de la Raison Dialectique*, that is, whether knowledge and understanding in man by man not only implies specific methods but also a *New Reason*. However, this problem cannot be adequately understood in terms of a new relationship between *thought* and its *object* as Sartre believed (cf. 1960). In fact, Sartre’s dialectics remains wholly inside the limits of monologic dialectics given that he reduces the relation of otherness to a relation of identity and of reciprocal objectification: dialectics between *for self* and *for others* is dialectics in totalizing consciousnesses, where the tendency is to assert one’s own objectifying view.

The critique of dialogic reason is the critique of the category of Identity, which is the category currently dominant in Western thought and praxis. In the perspective of identity sense is made to coincide with partial and limited interests and engenders mystification: and this is so whether we are speaking of the identity of the individual, group, nation, language, cultural system or of a macro-community such as the European Community, the Western world, the United Nations.

The category of Identity dominates today’s world because of the *concrete abstractions* which are constructed upon it and form the *Reality* we experience: these concrete abstractions are “internal” to today’s overall system of social reproduction, and include Individual, Society, State, Nation, Truth, Knowledge, Equality, Justice, Freedom, limited Responsibility, Need, Equal exchange, etc. However, it is not only a question of concrete abstractions ensuing from the system. Even more radically the system itself is grounded in the category of Identity which is asserted structurally and constitutively as Universal in the worldwide and global processes of Production, Exchange on the Market and Consumption. The logic orienting concrete abstractions in today’s processes of social reproduction is the logic of Identity. And the category of Individual and its rights, obligations, responsibilities, of Society and its interests, of State and its Politics adhering to Reality as closely as possible, of Equal exchange and its demands, all obey the logic of Identity.

The places of argumentation internal to the order of discourse are the places of the logic of identity. Reason includes the reason of war even if in the form of *extrema ratio*, which presents war as legitimate, just and legal. Reason includes the reason of the elimination of the other — from emargination and segregation to extermination. Reason is the Reason of Identity. Its logic is asserted by barricading, isolating, expelling or exterminating the other thus laying the

conditions for the construction of the concrete abstractions mentioned above. As anticipated, these concrete abstractions include the category of Individual which, in the first place, must sacrifice its own otherness to itself in order to assert itself as identity.

The Critique of Reason and Argumentation thus understood requires a *point of view that is other*. This approach calls for preliminary *recognition of the other*, or, better, recognition of the fact that recognition of the other is an *inevitable imposition* (cf. Ponzio 1995a, 1996a). Recognition of the other not as a concession, a free choice made by the Individual, the Subject, the Same, but as a necessity imposed by alienation, the loss of sense, by the situation of *homo homini lupus*. The situation of *homo homini lupus* consequent and not mythically antecedent to (the allusion is to Hobbes's fallacy!) such concrete abstractions as State, Politics, Law.

Global Communication, Destruction, the Extrema Ratio of War

Communication-production is the communication of the world as it is today. It is *global* communication, not only in the sense that it has expanded over the whole planet, but also in the sense that it corresponds to or accomodates the *world*. Global communication is communication, communication-production of *this world*. *Communication* and *reality*, *communication* and *being* coincide.

Social reproduction in the global communication-production system is destructive. Reproduction of the *productive cycle* itself is destructive. It destroys: (a) machines, which are continuously replaced with new machines — not because of wear but for reasons connected with competitiveness; (b) jobs, making way for automation which leads to an increase in unemployment; (c) products on the market where new forms of consumerism are elicited, ruled completely by the logic of reproducing the productive cycle; (d) earlier products which once purchased would otherwise exhaust the demand and which in any case are designed to become immediately outdated and obsolete as new and similar products are continuously introduced on the market; (e) commodities and markets unable to resist competition any longer in the context of the global communication-production system.

It is no incident that the European Commission which has devoted special attention to inventiveness and innovation functional to profit, to “immaterial investment” and “competitiveness” (cf. European Commission 1995), should identify “*innovation*” with “*destruction*” in full respect of capitalist ideologic. The innovative character of a product is made to consist in its capacity for destruction: this product must be capable of destroying earlier products that are similar and still present on the market. The capacity for innovation abreast of the times coincides with the capacity for destruction to the extent that the criteria for evaluating innovation are completely adjusted to market interests and market logic.

The *conatus essendi* of communication-production destroys natural environments and life forms. It also destroys different types of economic systems and diversity in culture, which in fact tends to be eliminated by the processes of homogenization operated by market logic. These days not only are habits of behavior and needs rendered identical (though the possibility of satisfying such needs is never identical), but even desires and the imaginary tend to be homogenized. The *conatus essendi* of communication-production also tends to destroy traditions and cultural patrimonies that contrast with or obstacle or are simply useless or nonfunctional to the logic of development, productivity and competition. It tends to the destruction of those productive forces that escape the logic of production penalizing intelligence, inventiveness and creativity which are over-ruled by or subjected to “market reason “ (and of course this cannot be avoided at a time when production must necessarily invest in “human resources”). The destructive character of today’s production system is also manifest in the fact that it produces growing areas of underdevelopment as *the very condition for development*, areas of human exploitation and misery to the point of nonsurvival. Such logic subtends the expanding phenomenon of *migration* which so-called “developed” countries are no longer able to contain due to objective internal space limitations — no doubt greater than in earlier forms and phases in the development of the social system.

Universalization of the market is destructive, that is to say, the application of the status of commodities to all things and relationships; and the more so-called commodities are illegal and prohibited — think of drugs, human organs, children, uteruses, etc — the more they are expensive. The principle of exploiting other people’s work is destructive. Work obviously costs less the more it produces profit: with the help of global communication developed countries are more and more turning to low cost work in underdeveloped countries (“stay where you are, and we’ll bring you work”). The disgrace of the communication-production world is particularly manifest in the spreading exploitation of child labor that is heavy and even dangerous (much needs to be said and done about children as today’s victims of underdevelopment, in misery, sickness, war, on the streets, in the work-force, on the market).

Realistic politics (but if it is not realistic, it is not politics) is the only approach to politics appropriate to the reality of global communicationis, to the being of communication-production. There is a logical connection between *politics* and *ontology*, which predisposes politics for *war*, the most crudely, brutally *realistic face of being*. Today, politics is specified in the relation with the ontology of global communication, therefore with being communication. The realism of politics coincides with ontology, to the very point of accepting the *extrema ratio* of war, in accordance with the strict law of the *force of things*: being-communication-ontology-politics-war.

The “Gulf War” in 1991 marked a *decisive change* on a worldwide level regarding the conception and practice of war. In fact, from that moment onward the idea of war was imposed

in global communication-production circuits as “just and necessary”, a “policing action”, even as a “humanitarian operation”.

Global communication-production calls for forms of control that are just as global as communication itself. Such forms of control are functional to maintaining world order and to the reproduction of the global communication-production system. World order must be guaranteed and maintained through international accords, pacts and alliances among developing countries, which are *privileged* over others insofar as they are considered necessary to “development” and “competition” in the sphere of global communication-production. In the light of such logic, priority goes to accords that are efficient on the level of military strategy, with an extensive capacity for “defense”. Even if stipulated less recently, such accords respond better to the needs of today’s world than more recent accords. This explains why the newly born European Community was subordinated to fifty year-old Nato; therefore the “inevitability” of its participation in the “humanitarian disaster” produced by the “just and necessary war” in the Balkans.

The conception of war as “just and necessary” was reasserted in 1991 and from that point onwards steadily replaced the conception that had dominated in Europe since the end of World War II. This earlier conception had been officially ratified with the *Helsinki Final Act*, a document produced by the *Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe*, 1975 (cf. European Co-ordination Centre for Research and Documentation in Social Sciences 1990), which excludes war as a solution to international conflict. It’s guiding principle is that recourse to force or even threat among States cannot be justified in any way, whether they undersigned the accord or not (cf. Ponzio).

Global Communication and Global Semiotics

The present phase in the development of the capitalist system may be characterized in terms of globalization, therefore of “global communication”. This expression may be understood in at least three different ways: 1) that communication has now *extended over the whole planet*; 2) that it *accommodates itself realistically to the world as it is*; and 3) that it is omnipresent throughout the entire reproductive cycle. As to this last point, globalization implies that communication is not only present at the level of the market, of exchange, as in earlier phases in socio-economic development, but also at the level of production and consumption. As such global communication today presents itself in the form of communication-production. Globalization is tantamount to heavy interference by communication-production not only in human life, but in all life forms over the planet. Therefore, the expression *global communication-production* does not only refer to the expansion of communication means and of the market at a worldwide level, but also to the fact that all human life, indeed all life forms are englobed by the communication-production system.

An adequate understanding of global communication-production calls for an approach that is just as global. An approach that does not simply consider partial and sectorial aspects of the communication-production system according to internal perspectives functional to the system itself; an approach that is not limited on an empirical level to psychological subjects, to subjects reduced to the parameters imposed by the social sciences, that is to say, subjects measurable in terms of statistics. Global communication-production calls for a methodological and theoretical perspective that is just as global as the phenomenon under observation, a perspective capable of understanding the logic of global communication-production and of proceeding to an adequate *critique* of dominant logic. While the special sciences taken separately are not in a position to provide such a global perspective, the general science of signs or *semiotics* as it is taking shape today on the international scene thanks especially to Sebeok and his ongoing research has the right instruments at its disposal. This does not imply that semiotics as it is practised today is ready for such a task. If anything the opposite is true. However, it is no longer possible to practice semiotics adequately, especially when a question of the science or theory of communication, without keeping account of today's situation of worldwide and global communication.

Moreover, failure to consider the *global* nature of communication today, which in historical terms is a phenomenon that is completely new, will render any communication model proposed for semiotic analysis inadequate. An approach that fails to consider the global nature of communication will prove at the very least to be shortsighted and anachronistic. In the present era, general semiotics formally re-envisioned as *global* semiotics must carry out a *detotalizing* function: it must be designed and used for a critique of all alleged totalities, in the first place the totality global communication. If general semiotics fails to perform such a detotalizing function, its work will prove useless or, even worse, the mere syncretic result of the special semiotics, a transversal language of the encyclopedia of unified sciences, or a philosophical prevarication suffering from omniscience over the various disciplines and specialized fields of knowledge.

Analysis of today's world of global communication-production in all its complexity calls for conceptual instruments which must be as *precise* as possible. These can only be furnished by a *new theory of communication*. Such conceptual instruments must also be as rigorous as possible and this can only be furnished by their philosophical grounding. An attempt in this sense is made by Augusto Ponzio in the volume, *La comunicazione* (1999) as well as in another volume co-authored with Susan Petrilli, *Il sentire nella comunicazione globale* (2000).

The worldwide spread of communication is a surface phenomenon and as such can only be understood by studying its foundations. This approach requires rejection of the reductive and oversimplifying model that likens the communicative process to the transferral of a postal package, where a message is emitted by a source and decoded by a recipient. In 1961, that is to say, at a time when communication was not yet the pervasive phenomenon it is today, the Italian

philosopher of language Ferruccio Rossi-Landi had already subjected this model to a sharp critique. In reality we are speaking of the 1950s when Italy had not yet been exposed to anything approximating the present level of social reorganization as determined by the current communication-production system. To interpret human communication in terms of such a reductive and still influential communication model (with its recourse to such concepts as information and message transmission) means to take an uncritical stance toward virtually all components forming the communication process — that is, emitter, receiver, code, message, the context itself, the “things” communicated as well as the needs propelling communication. Indeed, each one of these components is considered as preconstituted and fully determined antecedently to the communicative process itself (Ponzio 1997a and 1999). Such an approach loses sight of the enormous consistency of the communication phenomenon which no doubt is far broader and more complex than what could be expected on the basis of a model that limits communication to an intentional exchange of messages between distinct and separate individuals, established on the basis of a common code accepted by convention.

A full understanding of global communication today implies a full understanding of the risks involved by global communication, including the risk of the *end of communication*. However, when we speak of the risk that communication may end we are not merely referring to that relatively simple or trivial phenomenon called “incommunicability”, that subjective-individualistic disease which emerged during the transition to communication in its current forms, theorized and represented in film and literature, and which can no longer be separated from production. Far more than this, on the basis of the identification of communication and life, when we speak of the risk of the end of communication we are alluding to nothing less than the risk of the end of life on the planet Earth. With this statement which equates communication with life it is obvious that communication is not considered in the oversimplifying terms described above. As Sebeok’s approach to biosemiotics in particular has made clear, communication and life coincide. And viewed in such terms it is clear that the end of communication involves the end of life. In fact, unlike all other earlier phases in social development, we have seen that communication-production in today’s society is endowed with an enormous potential for destruction.

For an adequate understanding of communication-production that keeps account of its historical-social specificity as a worldwide and global phenomenon and of its interconnectedness to life over the whole planet (remembering that life and communication coincide), semiotics must adopt a global and “planetary” perspective at least in both spatial and temporal terms. Such an approach will grant the necessary critical distancing for an interpretation of contemporaneity that is not imprisoned within the limits of contemporaneity itself.

Global Semiotics, Bioethics and Semioethics

Global semiotics as proposed by Sebeok (cf. 2001) contributes to the reformulation of *ontology* in semiotic terms. It interrogates being, and does so *from the point of view of life*, for, as says Heidegger, the question of being is inevitably the question of that given being for whom that question is vital. Indeed, not only is it a question of the life of human beings, whether of the single individual or of the whole of humanity, but even more radically of *life over the whole planet*, considering presentday development of the dominant social system, that of global communication-production, therefore its pervasiveness which also invests its capacity for destruction characteristic of anthroposemiosis today. To the ontological question global semiotics responds by identifying *life* with *semiosis*.

Semiotik/Semiotic is a *Handbook* edited by R. Posner, K. Robering and T. A. Sebeok, which includes numerous specialized contributions by authors researching in different disciplines with specific competencies. These contributions are presented in the ontological perspective of Sebeok's global semiotics, which he promoted among semioticians and cryptosemioticians alike, in which they each take their place, whether consciously or unconsciously. From this point of view, this monumental *Handbook* is an official recognition of the status of Sebeok's global semiotics and of the accomplishment of his project.

Global semiotics, or semiotics of life, provides an adequate context for the treatment of bioethical issues. The advantages offered by a global semiotic context, where signs and life coincide, are not only of a quantitative or phenomenological order, a question of extension, deriving from scientific research in the various fields of biosemiosis, but also of a qualitative, that is, ontological order thanks to the approach adopted by *global semiotics as semiotics of life*. In other words, "contextualization" also implies the idea of a *critical founding*. Global semiotics may contribute to a *critical and foundational approach to bioethics*, therefore, to its characterization as a theoretical-philosophical discipline. Bioethics offers a unitary and critical view upon ethical problems thanks to progress in the biological and medical sciences, in particular relatively to the fields of genetic engineering, neurobiology and pharmaceutical research. This bioethical view renders ethical problems the object of study of a specific discipline. But even before the invention of bioethics as a discipline, ethical problems are already part of two totalities which together contribute to the characterization of such problems: one totality is the *semiosphere* understood as the *semiobiosphere* following Sebeok, the other is the current system of *global communication*, or more precisely, *communication-production*.

Coherently with its philosophical vocation, at once critical and foundational, bioethics must necessarily keep account of this dual contextualization, phenomenological and ontological, for an adequate treatment of the problems it is concerned with. In addition to such contextualization as perspected by global semiotics, another type of contextualization is also necessary for an adequate treatment of problems relevant to bioethics, the need of viewing bioethical problems in the light of today's socio-economic context, that is, in the context of

global communication-production (cf. Ponzio and Petrilli 2003b, Part Three, III.1.1). Such contexts are closely interrelated from the point of view of ethics. In this sense, bioethics goes hand in hand with the development of global semiotics in the direction of what we propose to call *semioethics*. Indeed, semioethics must not ignore the benefits offered by global semiotics for its own philosophical vocation. If we consider the contribution made by global semiotics to bioethics in relation to global communication today, it is clear that semiotics developed in the direction of semioethics is faced with an enormous responsibility, that of evidencing the limits of today's communication-production system. Semiotics as semioethics must now accept the responsibility of denouncing incongruities in the global communication-production system with the same energy, instruments and social possibilities produced by that system itself. Semioticians must now be ready to denounce the dangers inherent in this system for life over the entire planet.

As the unique semiotic animal, that is to say, the only animal capable of reflection upon signs and communication the human being is responsible toward life (which is made of signs and communication), a responsibility that is absolute, without alibis. Therefore, the human being is responsible for the quality of life, a responsibility that is enormous at the point we have now reached in the development of the global communication-production system. And when we speak of life reference, as we have already mentioned, is not only to human life, but rather to all life forms throughout the whole planetary ecosystem from which human life cannot prescind. As the study of signs semiotics cannot evade this problem, such that we propose that the ancient vocation of semiotics as "semeiotics" (or symptomatology, a medical discipline), which "cares for life" with a focus on symptoms, should now be reorganized in terms of semioethics.

This perspective is particularly urgent today in the light of growing interference in communication between the historical-social sphere and the biological, between the cultural sphere and the natural, between the semiosphere and the biosphere. *Semioethics* is the result of two thrusts: one is *biosemiotics*, the other *bioethics*.

Biopolitics, Dialogic Intercorporeity, and the "Semiotic Animal"

Globalization related to capitalist production and the expansion of bio-power (Foucault) have led to the controlled insertion of bodies into the production system and to reinforcement of the idea of the individual as a separate and self-sufficient entity. The body is understood and experienced as an isolated biological entity, as belonging to the individual, as part of the individual's sphere of belonging. This has led to the progressive and almost total disappearance of cultural practices and worldviews grounded in intercorporeity, interdependency, the body's exposition to the other, its openness. The technologies of separation as applied to human bodies, to interests, to the life of individual and collective subjects are functional to global communication-production and to the identification of production with consumption

characteristic of today's reproductive system. With respect to all this and thanks to its ontological perspective, global semiotics can, if nothing else, oppose a whole series of signs showing how each instant of individual life is wholly interrelated, even compromised with all other forms of life over the entire planet. In fact, to acknowledge the condition of intercorporeal and dialogic interrelatedness, means to recognize a form of responsibility that far exceeds all positive rights and all limited responsibilities, restricted responsibilities with alibis. Such acknowledgement is ever more urgent the more the reasons of production and of global communication functional to it impose ecological conditions which impede and distort communication among bodies and between the body and the environment of which it is part.

The different forms of perceiving the body by popular culture, discussed by Bakhtin in *Dostoevsky* (1963) and *Rabelais* (1965), the forms of "grotesque realism", are almost extinct. In fact, the body and corporeal life as perceived by popular culture do not respond to today's conception of body or corporeal physiology, for the body is neither wholly individualized nor wholly detached from other life forms over the planet, from the rest of the world. Rather than view the body as an isolated biological entity, as a sphere belonging to the individual, grotesque realism presents the body as undefined, unconfined to itself, in a relation of symbiosis with other bodies, of transformation and renewal through which the limits of individual life are continually transcended. On the contrary, in today's world of global communication-production verbal and nonverbal signs connected to the practices and conceptions of the grotesque body have almost completely disappeared. as the individualistic, private, static conception of body is asserted. What remains are mummified residues studied by folklore analysts, archeological residues preserved in ethnological museums and in the histories of national literatures (the expression of a situation of generalized museumification. Signs of the grotesque body of which only very weak traces have survived in the present day include ritual masks, masks used during popular festivities, carnival masks.

The signs and language of the grotesque body privilege and exalt those parts of the body, excrescences and orifices, that most favour communication with other bodies as well as between the body and the world, with recourse to blends and contaminations which do not know interruptions between the human and the nonhuman:

The grotesque body [...] is a body in the act of becoming. It is never finished, never completed; it is continually built, created, and builds and creates another body [...]. the grotesque ignores the impenetrable surface that closes and limits the body as a separate and completed phenomenon.

The grotesque mode of representing the body and bodily life prevailed in art and creative forms of speech over thousands of years [...].

This boundless ocean of grotesque bodily imagery within time and space extends to all languages, all literatures, and the entire system of gesticulation; in the midst of it the bodily

canon of art, belles lettres, and polite conversation of modern times is a tiny island. This limited canon never prevailed in antique literature. In the official literature of European peoples it has existed only for the last four hundred years [...].

The new bodily canon, in all its historic variations and different genres, presents an entirely finished, completed, strictly limited body, which is shown from the outside as something individual. (Bakhtin 1965, Eng. trans.: 317-320)

Once official ideology functional to maintaining the established order and power of the dominant class is separated from unofficial ideology, the grotesque body is interdicted by official culture. The language of the grotesque body is rich in terms and expressions referring to body parts that most establish relations of interdependency and compromise with the world and the body of others. Such language can be traced among all peoples and all epochs. It always refers to a body that is not strictly delineated, stable, fulfilled in itself, but to a body connected to other bodies, in a relationship that is at least bicorporeal:

The body of the new canon is merely one body; no signs of duality have been left. It is self-sufficient and speaks in its name alone. All that happens within it concerns it alone, that is, only the individual, closed sphere. Therefore, all the events taking place within it acquire one single meaning: death is only death, it never coincides with birth; old age is torn away from youth. (*Ibidem*: 321-322)

As Michel Foucault in particular has revealed (but let us also remember Ferruccio Rossi-Landi's acute analyses as articulated in his books of the 1970s), division and separatism among the sciences are functional to the ideologico-social necessities of the "new canon of the individualized body" (Bakhtin), which, in turn, is functional to the controlled insertion of bodies into the reproduction cycle of today's production system.

An ontological reformulation of bioethics in a global semiotic perspective that keeps account of today's socio-economic context of global communication evidences two fundamental principles, what we may call *dispossession* and *extralocalization*. These principles allude to the human individual as a living body interconnected with all other forms of life over the whole planet thanks to its condition of diachronic and synchronic intercorporeity. The human body is *dispossessed* with respect to techniques that encourage and favor subordination to the knowledge-power of *biopolitics* (Foucault); and *extralocalized* with respect to chronotopic coordinates, projects, structures and roles that are functional to reproduction in the socio-economic system of global communication.

Dispossession and *extralocalization* are manifest in the body's "escape without rest" from the techniques that instead wish to dominate and control it, above all they are evidenced by the body's "persistence in dying". Dispossession and extralocalization are principles that must

be taken into account in the prolegomena for an approach to bioethics that aims to be *critical, philosophical and theoretical*, the condition for recognition of their moral and juridical status.

Dispossession and extralocalization: the self of consciousness of self as a body flourishing in intercorporeity is displaced, extralocalized, external with respect to the chronotopic coordinates of consciousness. The intercorporeal self has a life of its own, unique and unrepeatable with respect to that circumscribed to the boundaries of the individual, with respect to individual localization of human bodies which once localized, as says Foucault (1988), are mutually replaceable, interchangeable, to the extent that each body thus perceived is defined on the basis of the place it occupies with respect to others and of the difference that separates it from others. What is at stake here is the body's extralocation with respect to structures, mechanisms and techniques of its subjugation to the knowledge-power of *biopolitics*, insofar as it is an individual body, identity-body; extralocation is manifest in the body's "escape without rest" — above all its "persistence in dying" — from the techniques that aim at dominate and controlling it.

Otherness, Dialogism and Detotalization

A global and detotalizing approach in semiotics demands availability in relation to the other, to an extreme degree, a disposition to respond, to listen to others in their otherness, a capacity for opening to the other, where such opening is measured in quantitative terms (the omnicomprehensive character of global semiotics), as well as in qualitative terms. All semiotic interpretations by the student of signs, especially at a metasemiotic level, cannot prescind from a dialogic relationship with the other. Dialogism, in fact, is a fundamental condition for a semiotic approach in semiotics which, though oriented globally, privileges the tendency to open to the particular and the local rather than to englobe and enclose. Accordingly, we are describing an approach that privileges the tendency toward detotalization rather than totalization.

As Emmanuel Lévinas above all has shown, otherness obliges the totality to reorganize itself always anew in a process related to what he calls "infinity", and which (to use a phrase associated with Peirce) we could also relate to the concept of "infinite semiosis". This relationship to infinity is far more than cognitive: beyond the established order, beyond the symbolic order, beyond our conventions and habits, it tells of a relationship of involvement and responsibility with the other. This relationship with infinity is a relationship with what is most refractory to the totality, therefore it implies a relationship to the otherness of others, of the other person, not in the sense of another self like ourselves, another *alter ego*, an I belonging to the *same community*, but of an other in its extraneousness, strangeness, diversity, difference toward which we cannot be indifferent despite all the efforts and guarantees offered by the identity of the I.

Such considerations orient semiotics according to a plan that does not belong to any particular ideology. Rather, semiotics thus described concerns behavior as it ensues from awareness of the human being's radical responsibility as a "semiotic animal". Properly understood, the "semiotic animal" is a responsible actor capable of *signs of signs*, of mediation, reflection, and awareness in relation to semiosis over the whole planet. In this sense global semiotics must be adequately founded in cognitive semiotics, but it must also be open to a third dimension beyond the quantitative and the theoretical, that is the ethical. This is why we propose the term "semioethics" for this third dimension given that it concerns the ends toward which we strive and aim to reach.

For semiotics to meet its commitment to the "health of semiosis", therefore to cultivate its understanding of the entire semiotic universe, it must continuously refine its auditory and critical capacity, that is, its capacity for listening and criticism. It is our conviction that to accomplish such a task the trichotomy (1) cognitive semiotics, (2) global semiotics, and (3) semioethics is important, indeed decisive not only theoretically but also for therapeutic reasons.

Dialogism in Bodies and Signs

In Dostoevsky dialogue is determined above all in the hero's claim to complete independence from recognition, from the other's gaze, from the other's word. Here dialogue arises from ostentation of absolute indifference to the opinion of others, their value judgement. This is particularly obvious in the monologue of the man from the underworld. This obsession with autonomy leads the hero to anticipate the possibility of denial by the other, with his own word. But, says Bakhtin (1929), the hero's anticipation of the other's reply and his response to this reply reveals his dependence on the other (on himself included). He *fears* that the other may think that he *fears* his opinion. But such fear reveals his dependence upon the consciousness of the other, his inability of being satisfied with his own self-determination.

Dostoevsky is not interested in showing the human being engaged in dialogue fully respectful of the other, but rather *in spite of oneself*, of one's own intentions. He shows that the word is dialogic in the sense that it is passively involved in the word of the other, always. Dialogue does not only occur in the composition of viewpoints and identities; on the contrary, it is structured in refractoriness to synthesis, including the illusory synthesis of one's own identity. In fact, identity is fragmented dialogically insofar as it is inevitably implicated with alterity, just as the "grotesque body" (cf. Bakhtin 1965) is implicated with the body of others.

Bakhtin focuses on the relationship between dialogue and body as early as the 1929 edition of his book on Dostoevsky. Dialogism cannot be obtained among disembodied minds. Dialogue takes place among *voices* — not monologic and integral voices, but internally dialogic and divided voices. And the *voice* is treated as representing an ideological position *embodied* in

the world. Bakhtin highlights the problematic of the embodiment of the voice. His statement that Dostoevsky's hero is *voice* and that the author does not show it to us as though it were an object, but lets us listen to it, is misunderstood by René Wellek (1991) as the expression of idealism. Such a misunderstanding is perfectly in line with criticism of Bakhtin by the representatives of "socialist realism" and their unjust accusation of "polyphonic idealism" which repropose the opposition established by Merezhkovsky between Dostoevsky "profet of the spirit" and Tolstoy "profet of the flesh".

Dialogues in Dostoevsky's writings, says Bakhtin, are neither dialectical nor synthetic due to the fact that contradiction does not arise from *disembodied ideas*: the ultimate givenness for Dostoevsky is not the idea conceived in terms of a monologic conclusion, but the event of interacting voices. And it is precisely because *ideas are embodied in different voices that are unindifferent to each other*, in spite of, or even because of the effort to ignore each other and to prescind illusorily from the mix up of voices in which their differences flourish, that the logic of Dostoevsky's polyphonic novel presents itself in terms of dia-logic. Dialogism constitutes the real life of word and thought with respect to which monologic dialogue is an abstract representation relieved of all responsibility without alibis. On the contrary, unlimited responsibility is the condition of being in the world, where the body of each being occupies a position that cannot be exchanged with another, and whose embodiment is expressed through the voice. And when Bakhtin in his 1970-71 notebooks describes the process that leads from concrete dia-logics without synthesis to abstract monologic dialectics, he indicates the voice as a fundamental element in distinguishing between dia-logics and dialectics:

Take a dialogue and remove the voices (the partitioning of voices), remove the intonations (emotional and individualizing ones), carve out abstract concepts and judgments from living words and responses, cram everything into one abstract consciousness — and that's how you get dialectics. (Bakhtin 1986: 147)

In Bakhtin's view, the voice, its incarnation, the body distinguish Dostoevsky's dialogue from Plato's in which (as much as dialogue is not completely monologized, pedagogical), the multiplicity of voices are cancelled in the idea. Plato is interested in the disincarnated ideal, the idea as being and not as a dialogic event, the event itself of dialogue. In Plato, participation in the idea is not participation in dialogue, but in the being of the idea. Because of this, different and unindifferent voices are annulled in the unity of belonging to a common entity. Moreover, in Bakhtin's view another element that distinguishes between the two different types of dialogue is given by the fact that in Dostoevsky, in contrast to Plato, dialogue is neither cognitive nor philosophical. Bakhtin prefers to relate dialogue in Dostoevsky to biblical and evangelical dialogue, for example, dialogue in Job, because of its internally infinite structure that has no possibility of synthesis and is external to the sphere of knowledge. However, Bakhtin also warns us that not even biblical dialogue furnishes the more substantial characteristics of dialogue in Dostoevsky's writings.

Bakhtin made a point of emphasizing the body's direct involvement in the *circumspect word* objectivated by Dostoevsky. He evidences the implications, the effects registered in the hero's relationship with his body ensuing from a word that is aware and cautious of the other, in spite of itself, a word that reveals its unindifference to the other precisely when flaunting maximum indifference, refusal, antagonism. As the example of the man from the underworld makes very clear, the body is overwhelmed by an interference of voices which denies it self-sufficiency and univocality; the body does not belong to the hero, it is not its own, for it is exposed to the gaze and the word of the other.

The body puts the individual's presumed autonomy into crisis, rendering the idea of autonomy and self-sufficiency illusory and even ridiculous, for the body is constitutively intercorporeal in both a diachronic and synchronic perspective. Despite separations, identifications, memberships, distinctions, erasements functional to individuality, the body of each one of us *remembers* its constitutive intercorporeity despite memory determined in the "small experience", and does so in terms of the "great experience". Bakhtin distinguishes between "small experience" and "great experience" in his annotations of the 1950s: small experience is experience that is reduced and partial, experience that adheres to the concrete and effective world, that is appropriate to contemporaneity, that is connected with interest, utility, and knowledge functional to practical action, with economy of the memory which excludes all that which distracts and is dispersive with respect to logicity, unilinearity, uniformity in planning, univocality in terms of sense.

The body is refractory to the "technologies of self" and to the "political technology of the individual" (Foucault). The body is *other* with respect to the subject, with respect to consciousness, to domesticated, graded, filtered, adapted memory; it is other with respect to the narration that the individual or collective subject constructs for itself and through which it delineates its identity. The body is other with respect to the image presented by the subject as its identity card, with respect to the image one wishes to exhibit and wants to interest others in, one's physiognomy offered for recognition, the role recited. This body that is other is viewed in terms of singularity, unrepeatability, nonfunctionality. It finds the expression of its excess in relation to a given project, story, "authentic" choice in death, considered as an unconclusive end: the living body that knows before being known, that feels before being felt, that lives before being lived, that experiences before being experienced. This body is connected to other bodies without interruption in continuity, it is implicated, involved with life over the entire planet Earth, it is part of the general ecosystem, an interrelated complex from which no technology of self can ever free us.

The signs of bodily and dialogic interconnection have not been studied sufficiently, and what studies have been carried out are limited to the sectorial interests of specific scientific fields.

The main contribution made by global semiotics consists in having uncovered the situation of indissoluble interconnection represented by the *sign network*. In Sebeok's terminology, this network extends from the Lilliputian world of molecular genetics and virology to the man-size world of Gulliver and finally to the world of Brobdingnag, the gigantic biogeochemical ecosystem called Gaia. At first sight this system may seem made of numerous separate living species, but at a closer look it becomes obvious that each one of its parts, ourselves included, is dialogically and interdependently connected with all others.

Subjectivity Between Identity and Alterity

The category of "identity" and that of "subjectivity" intimately connected to it perform a particularly decisive role in worldwide and global communication, whether this be identity of the individual subject or of the collective ("Western world", European Union, nation, ethnic group, social class, etc.).

Both the concepts of individual and of community identity need to be analyzed in a semiotic key. And identity in either form may prove to be governed by logic that is either monologic or dialogic. The difference is profound and pervasive.

Charles Sanders Peirce's reflections have contributed significantly to a redefinition of the subject (cf. Ponzio and Petrilli 2003b, Part One, I.2; see also Colapietro 1989; Petrilli 1999a; Sebeok, Petrilli and Ponzio 2001). The human being, the I, is a sign of an extraordinarily complex order, made of verbal and nonverbal language: "It is that the word or sign which man uses *is* the man himself [...] the man and the external sign are identical, in the same sense in which the words *homo* and *man* are identical" (CP 5.314). Consequently, the subject may be described as a semiotic process, indeed, thanks to its interpretive-propositional commitment, the subject consists of a potentially infinite number of signifying trajectories.

As a developing sign, a sign in becoming, the subject is a dialogic and relational entity, an *open* subject emerging in the intrapersonal and interpersonal interrelationship with other signs and other subjects. Therefore the boundaries of the subject-sign are not defined once and for all, but can only be defined in and through dialogic encounters with other signs, with other subjects.

The human person develops in sociality, relatedly to the experiences of others and never in isolation. Indeed, the self, the subject is a community that obeys the laws of the logic of otherness. The self is a community of dialogically interrelated selves. If we interpret the word "in-dividual" literally as meaning "non divided, non divisible", using Peirce's words we may make the claim that "a person is not absolutely an individual" (CP 5.314; cf. Ponzio and Petrilli 2003b, Part One, I.2.1). Peirce rejected the "illusory phenomenon" of a finite self or a self-sufficient self.

The social and communal character of self does not contrast with its singularity and uniqueness or with its signifying otherness with respect to any interpretive process that may concern it. The self is ineffable (cf. *CP* 1.357), it is saying beyond the said, the utterances of self convey significance beyond words. At the same time, however, the ineffability and uniqueness of self do not imply incommunicability.

The identity of the subject is multiplex, plurifaceted and plurivocal, it is delineated and modeled in the dialogic relation among its various parts. Victoria Welby, whose unpublished manuscripts include a file entitled *Subjectivity* containing texts written between 1903 and 1910 (Welby Collection, York University Archives, Toronto, cf. Petrilli 1998a for a description of the materials available at the archives; see also Petrilli 1997 and 1999a; Ponzio and Petrilli 2003b, Part Two, I.2) establishes a distinction between the I and the Self. She analyzes the problem of subjectivity in terms of the complex and articulated relation between what she calls the “I”, or, introducing a neologism *Ident*, and the “self” (cf. the manuscripts of 1907-10). The self, also designated with the neologism *ephemeron*, is mortal, ephemeral like the body. By contrast, the I tends toward immortality beyond the mortality of the body and of the self. Formed in this way, identity is not unitary or compact, but on the contrary presents a surplus, something more with respect to identity itself. Identity is constructed in the dialogic relationship of the self with the I. Welby’s conception of identity recalls Peirce’s as we have already mentioned it. I or Ident is not the “individual” but the “unique”. Indeed, “It is precisely our di-viduality that forms the wealth of our gifts”, as says Welby.

That the subject is inevitably an incarnate subject, thus intercorporeal being, that is to say, a body connected to other bodies from the very outset, an expression of the condition of intercorporeity on both a synchronic and diachronic level for the whole of its subsequent life, that the subject is not incarnated in a body isolated from other bodies is not indifferent to our conception of the human being. The subject is an incarnate entity from the point of view of biological evolution, of the species, as well as from the point of view of sociality and of cultural history. The body plays a fundamental role in the development of awareness or consciousness. Consciousness is incarnate consciousness. The body is a condition for the full development of consciousness, of man as a semiotic animal. The self develops interrelatedly with other bodies through which it extends its boundaries, therefore the boundaries of the world it experiences. The word is an extension of the body. Indeed, echoing Bakhtin, we may claim that the word forms a bridge joining one’s own body to the body of others. Peirce makes recurrent use of the expression “flesh and blood”(cf. *CP* 1.337, 7.591) for the physiological body which can only be distinguished from the semiotic body by abstraction similarly to the distinction between physical, extrasign and instrumental materiality, on the one hand, and sign material which ultimately has a physical referent, on the other, even though it may not be immediately obvious as in the case of dreaming or silent thinking (see Petrilli 1986 and 1998b, new ed.: 38-48, and 146-147).

From the rational animal to the reasonable animal

Given its broad scope, semiotics must keep account of and account for the “reason of things”. However, the capacity for detotalization as the condition for critical and dialogic totalization implies that the ability to grasp the *reason* of things cannot be separated from the capacity for *reasonableness*. The issue at stake may be stated in the following terms: given the risks inherent in the current phase in historical development for semiosis and for life, *human beings must at their very earliest transform from rational animals into reasonable animals*.

Both Welby and Peirce have contributed to the development of a truly global science of signs capable of accounting for signifying processes in all their complexity and articulation, of considering meaning not only in terms of signification, but also of sense and significance. For both Peirce and Welby, study of the life of signs and of the signs of life cannot be conducted in merely descriptive terms, that is to say, with claims to neutrality. If Welby coined the term “significs” her aim was to indicate a sign theory that is comprehensive and critical, one squarely confronting the problem of the relation of signs and values. The term “significs” designates the disposition for evaluation and, therefore, the value conferred upon signs, their pertinence, scope, signifying value, significance.

In Welby’s view, hedonist ethics, an ideology which dominated in her time as in the present era, reduces the vast multiform cosmos to the status of mere annex of the planetary egoist and parasite.

It is significant that Peirce too should have turned his attention specifically to the normative sciences in the final phase of his research. He linked logic to ethics and to esthetics: while logic is the normative science concerned with self-controlled thought, ethics is the normative science that focuses on self-controlled conduct, and esthetics the normative science devoted to ascertaining the end most worthy of our espousal. In this context, Peirce took up the question of the ultimate good, *summum bonum*, or ultimate value which he refused to identify with either individual pleasure (hedonism) or with a societal good such as the greatest happiness for the greatest number of human beings (English utilitarianism). Rather, he insisted that the *summum bonum* could only be defined in relation to the “evolutionary process”, that is, to a process of growth. Specifically, he identified the highest good in the continuous “growth of concrete reasonableness”.

The dialogic relation between self and other (the other *from* self and the other *of* self) emerges as one of the most important conditions for continuity in the creative process. A driving force in this creative process is love in the sense of *agape*. According to Peirce, the most advanced developments in reason and knowledge are based on the creative power of reasonableness and the transformative suasions of *agape*.

Thus conceived, reasonableness is endowed with the power of transforming one’s horror of the stranger, the alien, one’s fear of the other understood as the fear one experiences of the

other foreign to oneself, into sympathy for the other become lovely. Developing Peirce's discourse in the direction of Lévinas's philosophy of subjectivity, we might add that under the hardened crust of its identity the subject rediscovers through love its fear for the other, for the other's safety, a fear that renders one incessantly restless and preoccupied for the other. Love, reasonableness, creativity are all grounded in the logic of otherness and dialogism, together, as we learn from the authors thus far cited, in the terms described not only do they move the evolutionary dynamics of human consciousness but far beyond this of the entire universe taken globally.

While working on pragmatism with reference to the problem of subjectivity, the self considered as a set of actions, practices, habits, Peirce identified "power" as opposed to "force" as a fundamental characteristic of the self. He describes the self as a center oriented toward an end, an agent devoted to a more or less integrated set of "purposes". This may be related to what Welby understood with the terms "purport" or "ultimate value" when she described sense as the signifying value designated by the third element of her meaning triad, that is to say, "significance". Power is not "brute force" but the "creative power of reasonableness", which, by virtue of its agapistic orientation rules over all other forms of power (cf. *CP* 5.520). We could say that power, that is, the ideal of reasonableness, is the capacity to respond to the attraction exerted upon self by the other; power and reasonableness are related to the capacity for response to the other and the modality of such response is dialogue.

The relationship between the self's humility and fragility, on the one side, and the risks implied in the self's readiness to venture toward that which is other, on the other side, has already been portrayed by Plato in his myth about Eros (in the *Symposium*), a sort of intermediate divinity or demon generated by Penia (poverty, need) and Poros (the God of ingenuity), who is capable of finding the way even when it is hidden. With reference to the human world, Welby described the connection between self enrichment and risky opening toward others as a condition for evolution. Such connection engenders an orientation which may be described in terms of the critique of "being satisfied", that is, in terms of "transcendence" with respect to reality as it is, with respect to ontological being given and determined once and for all: "We all tend now, men and women, to be satisfied [...] with things as they are. But we have all entered the world precisely to be dissatisfied with it". "Dissatisfaction" is an important ingredient for the concept of "mother-sense" and signals the need to recover the critical instance of the human intellectual capacity. So beyond the cognitive capacity, it should now be obvious that we are alluding here, in the first place, to the capacity for otherness, to the structural capacity for creativity and innovation, for shifting and displacing sense. And thanks especially to the procedures of abductive logic this critical instance allows for prevision and "translation" in the broadest sense possible, that is translation understood as interpretation and verification of verbal and nonverbal signs beyond the mere limits of interlingual translation.

It is significant for our discussion that Welby, in a letter of January 21st. 1909, agreed with Peirce's observation that logic is the "ethics of the intellect", which she related to a concept central in her own theory, "primal" or "mother-sense": "Of course I assent to your definition of a logical inference, and agree that Logic is in fact an application of morality in the largest and highest sense of the word. That is entirely consonant with the witness of Primal Sense" (in Hardwick 1977: 91). Scientific rigor in reasoning results from agapastic logical procedures, from "primal sense", and therefore from the courage of admitting to the structural necessity — for the evolution of sign, subject and consciousness — of inexactitude, instability and crisis.

Signs of Humanity, Humanity of Signs

In the light of what has been said so far, semioethics may be considered as proposing a new form of humanism. In fact semioethics is committed at a pragmatic level, furthermore it is capable of transcending separatism among the sciences relating the natural sciences and the logico-mathematical sciences to the historical-social or human science, and again it evidences the interconnectedness between the problem of humanism and the question of alterity.

This new form of humanism cannot but be the humanism of alterity, a point convincingly demonstrated by Lévinas throughout his writings and especially in *Humanisme de l'autre homme* (1972). The claim to human rights centered on identity, the approach to human rights to have dominated thus far, has left out from the very concept of "human rights" the rights of the other. This approach must quickly be counteracted by the humanism of alterity where the rights of the other are the first to be recognized. And our allusion here is not just to the rights of the other *beyond self*, but also to the self's very own other, to the other *of self*. Indeed, the self characteristically removes, suffocates, and segregates otherness that is mostly sacrificed to the cause of identity. But identity thus achieved is fictitious, so that all our efforts invested in maintaining or recovering such identity are destined to fail.

Semiotics contributes to the humanism of alterity by bringing to light the extension and consistency of the sign network connecting one human being to every other. This is true both on a synchronic and a diachronic level: the world-wide spread of communication actually means that a communication system is progressively being established on a planetary level and as such is a phenomenon susceptible to synchronic analysis; and given that the human species is implied in all events, behaviors, individual decisions, in the overall destiny of the individual from its most remote to its most recent and closest manifestations, in its past and in its evolutionary future, on a biological level and on a historico-social level, diachronic investigations staggering for diversity are necessary. This sign network concerns the semiosphere as constructed by humankind, a sphere inclusive of culture, its signs, symbols, artifacts, etc.; but global semiotics teaches us that this semiosphere is part of a far broader semiosphere, the semiobiosphere, which

forms the habitat of humanity (the matrix whence we sprang and the stage on which we are destined to act).

Semiotics has the merit of having demonstrated that whatever is human involves signs. Indeed, it implies more than this: whatever is simply alive involves signs. And this is as far as cognitive semiotics and global semiotics reach. But semioethics pushes this awareness farther in the direction of ethics and even beyond ethics; for semioethics makes the question of responsibility inescapable at the most radical level (that of defining commitments and values). Our ethos, but more than this, the cosmos itself falls within the scope of our responsibility. Among other things, this means that we must interpret the sign behavior of humanity in the light of the hypothesis that if all the human involves signs, all signs in turn are human. This humanistic commitment, however, does not mean to reassert humanity's (monologic) identity yet again, nor to propose yet another form of anthropocentrism. On the contrary, this commitment implies a radical operation of decentralization, nothing less than a Copernican revolution. As Welby would say, "geocentrism" must be superceded, then "heliocentrism" itself, until we approximate a truly cosmic perspective. The attainment or approximation of such a perspective is an integral part of our ultimate end, hence a point where global and 'teleo-' or 'telosemiotics' or, as we now propose, 'semioethics' intersect. As already observed, otherness, more than anything else, is at stake in the question of human responsibility and, therefore, of humanism as we are now describing it. But the sense of alterity here is other than what has previously been acknowledged: it is not only a question of our neighbor's otherness or even of another person at a great distance from us, in truth now recognized as being extremely close thanks to today's situation of global communication, but also of living beings most distant from us on a genetic level.

Reformulating a famous saying by Lucretius ("*homo sum: umani nihil a me alienum puto*"), Roman Jakobson (1963) asserts that: "*linguista sum: linguistici nihil a me alienum puto*". This commitment on the part of the semiotician to all that is linguistic, indeed, endowed with sign value (not only relatively to anthroposemiosis nor just to zoosemiosis, but to the whole semiobiosphere) should not only be understood in a cognitive sense but also in an ethical sense. And this commitment involves concern not only in the sense of "being concerned with...", but also in the sense of "being concerned for...", "taking care of...". Viewed in this perspective, such concern, taking care of, responsibility which is not limited by belonging, proximity, community, communion is not even that of the "linguist" nor of the "semiotician". Modifying Jakobson's claim, we could state that it is not as professional linguists or semioticians that we may consider anything that is a sign as "*a me alienum*", but rather (leaving the first part of Lucretius's saying unchanged) we could claim that "*homo sum*", and, therefore, as humans we are not only *semiosic* (like all other animals), but also unique in the sense that we are *semiotic* animals. Consequently, nothing that is semiosic, including the biosphere and the evolutionary cosmos whence it sprang, "*a me alienum puto*".

Semioethics does not have a program to propose with intended aims and practices, nor a decalogue, nor a formula to apply more or less sincerely, therefore, more or less hypocritically. From this point of view, it contrasts with *stereotypes* as much as with *norms* and *ideology*. If at all, semioethics may be described as a *critique* of stereotypes, norms and ideology, consequently of the different types of value as characterized by Charles Morris in *Signification and Significance*, 1964 (above all, his tripartition of values into operative, conceived, and object values, along with the subordinate distinctions of the dimensions of value into detachment, dominance, and dependence). Semioethics is the capacity for critique and its special vocation is to make manifest sign networks where it seemed there were none, bringing to light and evaluating connections, implications, involvement, intrigues and plots which cannot be evaded, where it seemed there were only net separations, precise boundaries and distances with their relative alibis. The latter serve to safeguard responsibility in a limited sense, therefore consciousness which in fact readily presents itself as a “clean conscience”. The component “*telos*” in the expression “teleo-” or “telosemiotics” mentioned above, does not indicate some external value or pre-established end, an ultimate end, a *summum bonum* outside the sign network, but rather it indicates the *telos* of semiosis itself understood as an orientation beyond the totality, beyond the closure of totality, transcendence with respect to a given entity, a given being, infinite semiosis, movement toward infinity, desire of the other. And in the present context one of the special tasks of semioethics is to expose the illusoriness of the claim to the status of indifferent differences (cf. Ponzio 1995a).

Semiotics, an attitude and the critical work of semioethics

Semiotics not only as a science but also as an attitude or disposition arises and develops within the field of anthroposemiosis. Therefore, it is not connected with the *Umwelt* fixed for each species and proper to other animals, but rather with the species-specific modeling capacity proper to man, which as we have described it above is capable of producing a great plurality of different worlds. Semiotics is decided as a part of the world given that it is produced historically and socially by human beings. Semiotics is a fact of the human species. But the effective possibility of its realization, its capacity for the conferral of further understanding and awareness is a fact of the historical-social order. Our *Umwelt* is a historical-social product. Therefore all possibility of transformation or alternative hypotheses find their effective grounding, starting point, terms of confrontation, materials necessary for critique and programming in historical-social reality as it gradually emerges in semiosis.

The critical work of *semioethics* shows how the condition of differences that are reciprocally indifferent to each other is an illusion and how, on the contrary, the whole planet’s destiny in the last analysis is implied in all our choices. Semioethics must necessarily begin with unprejudiced analysis and interrogation of the social system which has formulated and advocated it. Semioethics must start from where we are today in historical-social terms, that is to

say, from a lucid reflection on contemporaneity, which must involve a rigorous and precise analysis of today's system of global communication-production relationships.

Semioethics is favored in this operation by the fact that global communication-production has already attained high degrees of homogenization in modeling social forms of production. In fact, a sole kind of market dominates over the whole planet, a sole form of production and consumption prevails with ensuing homogenization not only at the level of behavior, habit, fashion (in the sense of dress fashion too), but also in the life of the imaginary. We could claim that in the communication-production system as it dominates and englobes the entire planet today, difference understood as *otherness* is replaced ever more with difference understood as *alternatives*, therefore with indifference to differences.

The “advantage” of such a situation consists in the fact that observers must deal with a unified object of analysis. Consequently multiform aspects will not have to be taken into consideration, which implies that there is no risk of wasting one's energy. However, the word “advantage” here is also intended ironically because the implication is that what we have before us is nothing less than reality taken as a single, solid block. This is the so-called “advantage” of *monologism*, which inevitably backfires and translates into severe difficulty for effective critique, for successful critical analysis, by contrast with a situation of plurivocality and polylogism which instead favor fruitful interpretation and critical questioning. The possibility of critique for semioethics is rendered extremely difficult by the fact that conceptual instruments are not already available and must be invented; categories other than the dominant ones must be constructed, assumptions that are not those taken for granted must be introduced in reply to innovations in the present phase in history.

We believe that semioethics is the widest perspective possible that human beings may now reach in their role as semiotic animals and, therefore, as *cosmically* responsible agents. Today, perhaps more than ever before, not only must we explain this perspective but we must also stress the inexorable need of cultivating it in the most conscientious, imaginative, and responsible way possible. Dialogic otherness requires nothing less.

Freedom as responsibility and freedom to buy and sell

It is vital today more than ever before that human signs recover their humanity, identifiable in their capacity for otherness, dialogism, difference and nonfunctionality (see Introduction to the present volume). To refer to such values is indicative of the will to friendship and freedom, which is not the freedom of the free market, the freedom to buy and sell – and reserved of course to the privileged few whose privileges are dependent upon the violation and exploitation of the many. On the contrary, by freedom is understood here freedom which cannot prescind from responsibility. Life, love and peaceful living, hospitality and listening interrelatedly with the

other, whether the other of self or the other of the other person, are values from which human life cannot prescind. The subject is grounded in the logic of alterity and is theorized as an intersubjective and unique event, that is to say, as emerging in its singularity from the web of interrelations with others, interdependently with others. The healthy subject is an open subject, a plurivocal and polylogic subject, a subject open to the signs of diversity and capable of giving without return, of orienting its behavior according to the logic of the well-being of the other – the other understood as an end and not as a means and instrument for the achievement of one's own selfish, egotistic interests.

Globalization today is imposed on the extended community by a restricted but powerful community in terms of totalization, through the prevarication of military power, control over economic resources and even more extensively over the global communication network. Globalization in its popular acceptance in the present era is oriented by the logic of identity, egotistic interests, separation, barriers, power and control. The tendency is to impose a single voice, a single logic at a worldwide level over the joyous relativity of the many – monologism versus polylogism, monolingualism versus plurilingualism, the world free market versus different, local economies. Such logic is destructive of the condition of dialogic differences and alterity, marching to the rhythm of segregation, exploitation, oppression and violence. It is undeniable that the global world as conceived today with its global communication network and global market is developing together with the tacit and ever more widespread acceptance of the ideology of global war. Indeed, global and permanent war.

The “open self” flourishing in and engendering an “open society”, theorized by twentieth century American semiotician Charles Morris in response to the dominant ideology which led to the second World War, is a far cry from the global and “open society” planned and auspicated in the document entitled *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (September 2002). The adjective “open” as used by Morris evidences the vital condition of detotalization, therefore, the necessity to give voice and life to differences, the multiple, the plurivocal, to dialogic otherness, and without any implication of irresponsible relativity. On the contrary, as used in the document just cited, “open” is synonymous to patriarchal totalization, with the inevitable consequences that must ensue for politics, economy and society at large as described in this document despite lip-service to the values of freedom, democracy and difference.

Globalization as enacted from the point of view of life and its evolution, that is, of biosemiosis, on the one hand, and as a cultural anthropological goal yet to fully achieved, on the other, is grounded in the logic of alterity, dialogic intercorporeity and unindifferent differences. Therefore, from the perspective of life and healthy living globalization must be understood in terms of dialogic detotalization. Globalization as detotalization, and not as corporate-led globalization, totalization, is the key to the happy continuity of life in a global perspective.

References

- Mikhail M. Bakhtin (1929). *Problemy tvorchestva Dostoevskogo*. Leningrad: Priboj. It. trans. *Problemi dell'opera di Dostoevskij*. It. trans. and intro. by M. De Michiel. Pres. by A. Ponzio. Bari: Edizioni dal Sud, 1997.
- (1963). *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. Eng. trans. and ed. by C. Emerson. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984.
- (1965). *Rabelais and His World*. Eng. trans. and ed. by Krystina Pomorska. Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1968. New trans. by H. Iswowsky. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984.
- (1970-71). From Notes Made in 1970-71. Eng. trans. in M. Bakhtin 1986, 132-158.
- (1974). Toward a Methodology for the Human Sciences. Eng. trans. in M. Bakhtin 1986, 159-172.
- (1986) *Speech Genres & Other Late Essays*. Eng. trans. by V. W. McGee. Ed. by C. Emerson and M. Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Colapietro, Vincent. M. (1989). *Peirce's Approach to the Self*. State Albany: University of New York Press.
- Delors Jacques (1994). *Libro bianco. Crescita, competitività, occupazione*. Milan: Il Saggiatore.
- European Commission (1994). *Libro bianco. Crescita, competitività, occupazione*. See Delors 1994.
- (1995). *Libro verde sull'innovazione (Green book on innovation)*, typescript.
- European Co-ordination Centre for Research and Documentation in Social Sciences (1990). *L'acte final d' Helsinki*. Wilhelmsfeld: Gottfried Egert Verlag.
- Foucault, Michel (1988). *Technologies of the Self. A Seminar*. Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press.
- Hand, Séan (1989). *The Levinas Reader*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Hardwick, Charles S. ed. (in collab. with J. Cook) (1977). *Semiotic and Significs. The Correspondence Between Charles S. Peirce and Victoria Lady Welby*. Intro., ix-xxxiv. Bloomington-London: Indiana University Press.

Jakobson, Roman (1963). *Essais de linguistique générale*. Paris: Minuit.

Lévinas, Emmanuel (1947). *De l'existence à l'existant*. Paris: Vrin.

Peirce, Charles S. (1931-1966). *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*. Ed. by Charles Hartshorne, Paul Weiss, and Arthur W. Burks, 8 vols. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, Harvard University Press. (Our references are to *CP*, followed by volume and paragraph numbers).

Petrilli, Susan (1986). On the Materiality of Signs. *Semiotica* 62, 3/4, 223-245.

— (1997). “Subject, Body and Agape. Toward Teleosemiotics with Peirce and Welby”. In *Working Papers and pre-publications*. Centro Internazionale di Semiotica e di Linguistica. Università di Urbino, 261-262, 1-39.

— (1998a). *Su Victoria Welby. Significs e filosofia del linguaggio*: Naples: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane.

— (1998b). *Teoria dei segni e del linguaggio*. Bari: Graphis. New ed. 2001.

— (1999a). “About and Beyond Peirce”. *Semiotica* 124 (3/4), 299-376.

— (1999c). “The biological basis of Victoria Welby’s significs”. *Semiotica* 127-1/4, 23-66.

— (1999b). “Charles Morris’s Biosemiotics”. *Semiotica* 127-1/4, 67-102.

Ponzio, Augusto (1993). *La ricerca semiotica* (with O. Calabrese and S. Petrilli). Bologna: Esculapio.

— (1994a). *Scrittura, dialogo, alterità. Tra Bachtin e Lévinas*. Florence: La Nuova Italia.

— (1994b). *Fondamenti di filosofia del linguaggio* (with P. Calefato and S. Petrilli). Rome-Bari: Laterza. New ed. 1999.

— (1994c). *I segni dell'altro. Eccedenza letteraria e prossimità*. Naples: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane.

— (1995a). *La differenza non indifferente. Comunicazione, migrazione, guerra*. Milan: Mimesis.

— (1995b). *Responsabilità e alterità in Emmanuel Lévinas*. Milan: Jaca Book.

— (1995c). *El juego el comunicar. Entre literatura y filosofía*. Ed. by M. Arriaga. Valencia: Episteme.

— (1995d). *Segni per parlare dei segni. Signs to Talk About Signs* (bilingual text). Eng. trans. S. Petrilli. Bari: Adriatica.

— (1996a). *Sujet et altérité. Sur Emmanuel Lévinas, suivi de Deux dialogues avec Emmanuel Lévinas*. Paris: l'Harmattan.

— ed. (1996b). *Comunicazione, comunità, informazione*. Manni: Lecce.

— (1997a). *Metodologia della formazione linguistica*. Rome-Bari: Laterza.

— (1997b). *Elogio dell'infunzionale. Critica dell'ideologia della produttività*. Rome: Castelvechi.

— (1998). *La revolución bajtiniana*. Madrid: Catedra.

— (1999). *La comunicazione*. Bari: Graphis.

Ponzio, Augusto and Susan Petrilli (1998). *Signs of Research on Signs. Semiotische Berichte. Österreichischen Gesellschaft für Semiotik. Special Issue Jg. 22, 3/4.*

— (1999). *Fuori campo. Il segni del corpo tra rappresentazione ed eccedenza*. Milan: Mimesis.

— (2000a). *Il sentire nella comunicazione globale*. Rome: Meltemi.

— (2000b). *Philosophy of Language, Art and Answerability in Mikhail Bakhtin*. New York-Ottawa- Toronto: Legas.

— (2001). *Sebeok and the Signs of Life*. Icon Books: London.

— (2002a). *I segni e la vita. La semiotica globale di Thomas A. Sebeok*. Milan: Spirali.

— (2002b). "Sign vehicles for semiotic travels: Two new handbooks", *Semiotica* 141-1/4 (2002), pp. 203-350.

— (2003a). *Semioetica*, Rome: Meltemi.

— (2003b). *Semiotics Unbounded*. Toronto: Toronto University Press, forthcoming.

Posner, Roland; Robering Klaus and Thomas A. Sebeok (eds.) 1997-1998. *Semiotik/Semiotics*, Vols. I and II. (Vol. III forthcoming). Berlin: Walter de Gruyter

Sartre, Jean -Paul (1960). *Critique de la raison dialectique*. Paris: Gallimard.

Sebeok, Thomas A. (1986). *I Think I Am a Verb*. New York-London: Plenum Press. It. trans. and intro. by S. Petrilli, *Penso di essere un verbo*. Palermo: Sellerio, 1990.

— (1991a). *American Signatures. Semiotic Inquiry and Method*. Ed. by I. Smith. Norman-London: Oklahoma Press.

— (1991b). *A Sign Is Just a Sign*. Bloomington-Indianapolis: Indiana University Press. It. trans. and intro. by S. Petrilli, *A sign is just a sign. La semiotica globale*. Milan: Spirali, 1998.

— (2001). *Global Semiotics*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Sebeok, Thomas A. and Marcel Danesi (2000). *The Forms of Meanings. Modeling Systems Theory and Semiotic Analysis*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Sebeok, Thomas A.; Jesper Hoffmeyer; and Claus Emmeche eds. (1999). *Biosemiotics. Semiotica*. Special Issue 127-1/4.

Sebeok, Thomas A. and Susan Petrilli (1998). Women in Semiotics. In G. F. Carr *et alii* eds., *Interdigitations: Essays for Irmengard Rauch*. Bristol, England: Thoemmes Publisher.

Sebeok, Thomas A.; Susan Petrilli; and Augusto Ponzio (2001). *Semiotica dell'io*. Rome: Meltemi.

Wellek, René (1991). Mikhail Bakhtin. In *A History of Modern Criticism*, VII. New Haven: Yale University Press.