The Self as a Sign, the World, and the Other

Living Semiotics

Susan Petrilli
With a foreword by Augusto Ponzio

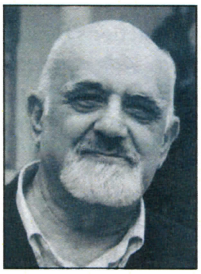
A semiotic approach to our understanding of subjectivity

Ostentation of the Subject is a practice that is asserting itself ever more in today's world. Consequently, criticism by philosophers, psychologists, sociologists, and anthropologists has been to little effect, considering that they are not immune to such practices themselves. The question of subjectivity concerns the close and the distant, the self and the other, the other *from* self and the other *of* self. It is thus connected to the question of the sign. It calls for a semiotic approach because the self is itself a sign; its very own relation with itself is a relation among signs. This book commits to developing a critique of subjectivity in terms of the "material" that the self is made of, that is, the material of signs.

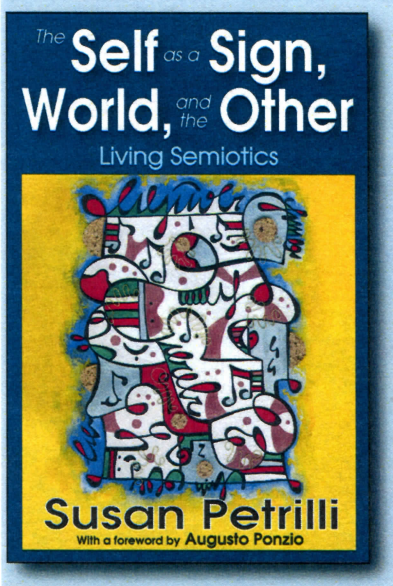
Susan Petrilli highlights the scholarship of Charles Pierce, Mikhail Bakhtin, Roland Barthes, Mary Boole, Jacques Derrida, Michael Foucault, Emmanuel Levinas, Claude Levi-Strauss, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Charles Morris, Thomas Sebeok, Thomas Szasz, and Victoria Welby. Included are American and European theories and theorists, evidencing the relationships interconnecting American, Italian, French, and German scholarship.

Petrilli covers topics from identity issues that are part of semiotic views, to the corporeal self as well as responsibility, reason, and freedom. Her book should be read by philosophers, semioticians, and other social scientists.

Susan Petrilli is the seventh Thomas A. Sebeok Fellow of the Semiotic Society of America and professor of philosophy of language and semiotics at the University of Bari, Aldo Moro, Italy. She is the co-author, with Augusto Ponzio, of *Semiotics Unbounded* and author of *Signifying Understanding,* among others.



Augusto Ponzio is full professor of philosophy of language at Bari University, Italy. His numerous books concern such authors and themes as M. Balhtim, E. Levinas, A. Schaff, globalization, and preventive peace.



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On the author's earlier works:

"[*Interpretation and Expression in Language*] presents a politically committed framework engaged in a critical conversation with major semioticians' concepts and constructs, with emphasis on the construction of identity and otherness and on the relation between signs, values, and behavior. . . . Recommended."
—K. Tancheva, *Choice*

"[*Sign Crossroads in Global Perspective*] is a welcome addition to the power of semiotics to change the world . . . Susan Petrilli is a giant in the field and, like very few others, knows the global village is expanding in sign-based ways."
—Marcel Danesi, University of Toronto; Editor-in-Chief, *Semiotica*