Semiotic Ideologies

Semiotics: Signs of the Times

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Semiotic Ideologies

Patterns of Meaning-Making in Language and Society

By

Massimo Leone



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Contents

Acknowledgments xi
List of Diagrams, Tables, and Figures xv

PART 1
From Language Ideologies to Semiotic Ideologies

1 **Introduction and Synthesis** 3
1 Introduction 3
2 A Theory of Modish Usages 6
3 The Origins of the Concept of "Semiotic Ideology" 8
4 Beliefs and Assumptions 10
5 The Semiotics of Language Ideologies 12
6 Meta-syntax 12
7 Meta-pragmatics 18
8 Meta-semantics 20
9 Conclusions 21
10 A Summary of the Ensuing Chapters 24

2 **Research Methodology** 31
1 Introduction 31
2 Cultures, Brains, and Maths 32
3 Fractals and Semiotic Resemblance 37
4 Semiospheric Symmetries 41
5 A Typology of Symmetries in the Semiosphere 44
6 Conclusions 47

PART 2
The Coordinates of Meaning-Making

3 **Semiotic Ideologies of Agency** 53
1 Introduction 53
2 The Energy of Motivation 56
3 Objective, Subjective, and Inter-subjective Motivation 57
4 Indexical Motivation 58

5 Iconic Motivation 59
6 Promoting Motivation 60
7 Demoting Motivation 62
8 Motivational Rhetorics 63
9 Conclusions 64

4 **Semiotic Ideologies of Time** 65
1 Introduction 65
2 Temporal and Aspectual Cultures 69
3 Non-verbal Aspectuality 72
4 Towards a Cultural Semiotics of Temporal and Aspectual Ideologies 76
5 Ideologies of the Past 76
6 Ideologies of the Future 79
7 Ideologies of the Present 89
8 Conclusions 99

5 **Semiotic Ideologies of Space** 102
1 Introduction 102
2 The Semiotics of Invisible Frontiers 105
3 Invisible Frontiers and the Task of Social Scientists 109
4 Ethno-semiotics as a Seismometer of Invisible Frontiers 112
5 Invisible Frontiers in an Italian Street Car 114
6 Invisible Frontiers in an Italian Post Office 118
7 Conclusions 120

PART 3
The Dynamics of Meaning-Making

6 **Semiotic Ideologies of Perception** 125
1 Introduction 125
2 The Cognitive Physiology of Déjà Vu 127
3 The Semiotics of Déjà Vu 129
4 The Recognition of the Unseen 130
5 The Signification of Singularity 133
6 The Necessity of Imperfect Memory 134
7 Hallucinating 135
8 Towards the *Pan-mnemonicon* 136
9 Conclusions 138

7 **Semiotic Ideologies of Relation** 143
1 Introduction 143
2 Semiotic Ideologies of Connection and Mystical Stereotypes 145
3 The Meaning of Connectedness 146
4 Expansions and Contractions 147
5 Ontologies and Phenomenologies of Connectedness 149
6 Agencies of Connectedness 150
7 Grounds of Connectedness 151
8 Semiotic Ideologies of Connectedness 152
9 Conclusions 154

8.1 **Semiotic Ideologies of Generation: Causation** 160
1 Introduction 160
2 Three Kinds of Randomness 163
3 Random Networks 164
4 Semiotic Randomness 166
5 Semiosis Unchained 167
6 Semiosis in Chains 169
7 Semiosis and Semiosphere 171
8 Interpretive Scales and Meta-habits 172
9 Inhabited and Uninhabited Semiosis 174
10 Over-complexification, Over-simplification, and Significance 176
11 Conclusions 178

8.2 **Semiotic Ideologies of Generation: Motivation** 180
1 Introduction 180
2 Being, Mind, and Sign 181
3 Reflexes, Signs, and Symptoms 183
4 Interpreting Interpretants 185
5 Faking Indexicality 188
6 Indicality and Indexicality 190
7 Conclusions 192

8.3 **Semiotic Ideologies of Generation: Cognition** 194
1 Introduction 194
2 The Ultimate Nature of Scripts 196
3 Scripting Rhetorics 197
4 Script Ideologies 198

5 The Populist Script in Education 200
6 The Contagion of Cognitive Populism 201
7 The Subversion of Scripts 202
8 The Infrastructure of Cognitive Populism 203
9 The Masochist Script of Irony 204
10 The Masochist Hero 205
11 The Quest for a New Script 206
12 Examples as Narrative Gradients 207
13 Kitsch Dandies and Kitsch Jihadis 208
14 Conclusions 209

PART 4
The Mechanisms of Meaning-Sharing

9 **Semiotic Ideologies of Interpretation** 215
1 Introduction 215
2 A View from Distance 216
3 Semiotics under Scrutiny 217
4 Moving Forward 219
5 The Purpose of Literature? 222
6 Conclusions 228

10 **Semiotic Ideologies of Observation** 230
1 Introduction 230
2 Modes of Existence of the Observer Actant 232
3 The Anorexic Observer Actant 233
4 The Deep Ideological Roots of a Semiotic Confrontation 236
5 An Oscillatory Model of Cultural Change 239
6 Transparency and Opacity in the Juridical Observer Actant 243
7 The Circuit of the Veil 248
8 Counterbalancing Trends 249
9 Conclusions: Fashion as a General Semiotic Framework 251

11 **Semiotic Ideologies of Mediation** 255
1 Introduction 255
2 The Gestural Common Sense 256
3 Gestural Normativity and Meta-normativity 258
4 *Sprezzatura* 259

5 The Cognitive Economy of Semiosis 260
6 Semiosis and Technology 262
7 Diagrams and Schemes 263
8 Loss of the Indexical Aura and Disintermediation 264
9 The Aura of the Face 266
10 Facial Stereotypes and Schemes 267
11 Reenchanting the Face 268
12 A Paradoxical Thirst for Uniqueness 269
13 The Market of Indexicality 271
14 Conclusions 272

PART 5
Making and Unmaking Sense

12 Semiotic Ideologies of Orientation 277
1 Introduction 277
2 Public Hermeneutics Endangered 277
3 Topological Relativism 280
4 Extreme Features 281
5 Deontic Meta-discourses 282
6 Extreme Rationales 283
7 The Semiotic Danger of Extremism 284
8 Extreme Agencies 286
9 The Conundrum of Cultural Change 287
10 Internal Dynamics of Semiospheric Changes 288
11 Reversing the Big Question 289
12 The Metaphysics of Fashion 290
13 Conclusions 291

13 Semiotic Ideologies of Memory 292
1 Introduction 292
2 Nostalgia at Home 293
3 The Invention of Nostalgia 298
4 Types of Urban Nostalgia 301
5 The Dialectics of Ersatz and Phantom 307
6 Conclusions 309

14.1 Semiotic Ideologies of Identity: Sameness 312
1 Introduction 312
2 Reproduction as Triadic Relation 313

3 Nature and Culture in the Semiotic Ideologies of Reproduction 314
4 A Different Sense of Reproduction 316
5 Paradoxes of the Copy 319

14.2 Semiotic Ideologies of Identity: Selfness 321
1 Introduction 321
2 In Praise of Ignorance 322
3 A Blind Literary Date 328
4 Digital Literary Dating 331
5 Conclusions 333

14.3 Semiotic Ideologies of Identity: Otherness 334
1 Introduction 334
2 Encountering the Other 335
3 A Typology of Unfamiliarity: Otherness, Extraneousness, Unawareness 337
4 From Otherness through Extraneousness to Unawareness: Chinese Examples 339
5 Conclusions 345

15 Conclusion 346

Bibliography 363
Index 387

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People who are acquainted with the author know that he is restless. In the past twenty years, and even more intensely, during the years of completion of this book, I have rarely stayed at home more than one consecutive week. Some may call it folly, but to me that is the judgment of the sedentary, who since Biblical times has always cursed people on the move. Nomadism is in my veins and, above all, it is in my mind and in my heart; to me, the best way to refresh ideas, to develop thoughts, to pursue curiosity, and, most importantly, to connect fellow souls in a network, is to do it with a suitcase in hand. Traveling with open eyes and attentive spirit, moreover, is to me the best antidote to a discipline, semiotics, that tends to universalize its own cultural assumptions. That would have been inexcusable in a book devoted exactly to the power and reach of those assumptions. This book owes a lot to my continuously moving from place to place, following the only thread of my ideas. It is impossible to establish an order among the people and institutions I owe something to, so the most practical and uncontroversial way of doing it is perhaps along the same order of the index of this book, mentioning and listing the spatial, temporal, and, above all, the scholarly influences behind each of the chapters.

I shall start from the beginning, from a "Metamind" conference organized by Daina Teters at the Latvian Academy of Culture in Riga, where on October 2, 2008, I delivered a talk on "semiotic ideologies", which became the first embryo for the introduction of this volume. The first chapter was first conceived as a talk that I gave on May 25, 2015, in the framework of the momentous symposium "Sign—Thought—Word—Work", organized by Artur Galkowski and Monika Kopytowska at the University of Łódź, Poland, on the occasion of the award of a doctoral honorary degree to Umberto Eco. I am particularly fond of the origin of the third chapter, which was first thought as a plenary talk that I delivered in Italian on December 5, 2017, at Ca' Foscari University in Venice, Italy, within a symposium entitled "Inertia and Solicitude of the Text", organized by the doctoral students of the Department of Asian and Mediterranean African Studies (not to be too long, I mention just the first of them in alphabetical order: Carlotta De Santis). The fourth chapter first came to light during a stay of mine as an Eadington Fellow at the Center for Gaming Research, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, USA, in September 2017, upon an invitation of Director David Schwartz. The fifth, on July 11, 2009, as a plenary talk at the Interdisciplinary Social Science Congress held at the University of Athens, Greece. The sixth chapter in its latest version was delivered in Portuguese as a plenary talk within the symposium "Experiência, discurso e

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Diagrams, Tables, and Figures

Diagrams

1 The "performative" conception of language: "hypo-energetic" vs. "hyper-energetic" construal 18
2 The semiotic square of veridiction 106
3 The semiotic square of the shibboleth test 107
4 The alternative semiotic square of the shibboleth test 107
5 The reduction of complexity in a shibboleth test 108
6 The alternative reduction of complexity in a shibboleth test 108
7 The rhetoric of the shibboleth test 109
8 Greimas's square of veridiction 349

Tables

1 The potential articulation of temporal dimensions with semiotic types 70
2 A taxonomy of ontological ideologies 351
3 Dynamic tensions among ontological ideologies affecting the semiotic epistemology 352

Figures

1 Raphael, *The Ecstasy of St. Cecilia*, 1514–1517 55
2 Antonello da Messina, *Salvator mundi*, ca. 1465–1475 61
3 Architectural pareidolias in the Grand Canyon 67
4 Diego Velázquez, *Las Hilanderas* ("*The Spinners*"), ca. 1657 75
5 Johanna Basford, Coloring pattern for adults, 2015 98
6 Doris Salcedo, *Shibboleth*, 2007 103
7 Christo and Jeanne-Claude, *The Reichstag 'Wrapped'*, 1995 241
8 The Reichstag in 2023 242
9 Billboard in Shanghai advertising a Versace-branded hijab 249
10–12 "Casas-Museu da Taipa" ("Museum-House of Taipa"), Taipa, Macau 294
13–14 "Casa da Nostalgia" ("Nostalgic House"), Taipa, Macau 295
15–19 "Museu Vivo Macaense" ("Macau Living Museum"), Taipa, Macau 296
20 Johannis Hofer, *Dissertatio medica de nostalgia*, 1688 298
21 Erasmus Darwin, *Zoonomia*, 1796 300

22 *The Venetian*, Macau 301
23–25 *The Venetian*, Macau, 2018 302
26 Nikolaiviertel, Berlin 304
27–29 Gondolas and gondoliers in *The Venetian*, Macau 306
30 A lost face of Macau in "Casa de Nostalgia", Macau 307
31 Praça Lilau, Macau 310
32 Ruins of the church of Saint Paul 311
33 Tawaraya Sōtatsu (俵屋 宗達), *The Shinto Gods Wind and Thunder*, Edo period / 17th century 317
34 Ogata Kōrin (尾形 光琳), *The Shinto Gods Wind and Thunder*, 18th century 317
35 Sakai Hōitsu (酒井 抱一), *The Shinto Gods Wind and Thunder*, first half of the 19th century 318
36 First page of leaflet for Bayer Aspirin 325
37 Excerpt from the instructions leaflet of a Dyson vacuum cleaner 326
38 Excerpt from the assembly instructions of the IKEA "Billy" bookcase 327