

**DE-SUBJECTIFICATION IN SEMIOTICS:
ARGUMENTATIONS, SELF-DEFENSE AND SIGNS OF
OPPOSING FORCES**

Martin Svantner

Charles University Prague
svantner.m@seznam.cz

ABSTRACT: In this reflection I would like to consider some effects of selected semiologic and semiotic perspectives on persuasion and subjectivity interconnected to general semiotics and theoretical rhetorics. I will argue that there are two possible ways how to "unravel the tangled skein" of some of these interconnections (between semiotic and rhetorical structure of the subject). We can find them inside two basic paradigms of semiotics: first (i) in semiology and (mostly Foucauldian) structuralism and the second (ii) in (mostly Peircean) semiotic. These two methodological viewpoints take as their point of departure general relation which is sign, but in completely different manner: as (i) dyadic relation of two ideas and as (ii) triadic relation of object, sign and idea which is by this sign determined. First perspective emphasizes the socio-cultural construction of subject and is rooted in the view of sign as language/system unit, second one emphasizes the necessary effects of "reality" in the actions and productions of signs. Despite the impossibility of translation between structuralism and semiotic, these two standpoints has in common the desubjectification of self and I would like to explore some consequences of this challenging schism.

1. Semiosis of Rhetorical existence:

**Twofold Articulation of Subject
and Persuasion in Semiology and Semiotic**

This text first arose out of a passage in Philip Roth's novel *Dying Animal*, where one of Roth's alter egos, aging professor of comparative literature David Kepesh, reassesses his broken relationship with a young student:

„Was she persuaded? I don't know. I don't think so. Aren't you? Why, why are you laughing? What's so hilarious? My didacticism? I agree: one's absurd side is never unimpressive. But what can be done about it? I'm a critic, I'm a teacher—didacticism is my destiny. Argument and counterargument is what history's made of. One either imposes one's ideas or one is imposed on. Like it or not, that's the predicament. There are always opposing forces, and so, unless one is inordinately fond of subordination, one is always at war. ” (Roth 2001, 40. Emphasis added: Svantner.)

In this reflection I would like to consider some effects of selected semiologic and semiotic perspectives on persuasion and subjectivity. Persuasion taken seriously often had the same fate in the history of philosophy as rhetoric considered as a specific knowledge. There is a strong tradition (since Plato's attack on sophistic rhetoric in *Gorgias*) considering persuasion as something "dirty" on the face of pure philosophy.¹ Since Nietzsche, Saussure and Peirce many of the 20th and 21st century philosophers considered it important to say that philosophy has to live inside the medium of figurative, metaphorical, persuasive and "emotional" language and has to reflect this basic fact but without any sort of naive subjectivism or psychologism. These semiologic and semiotic perspectives are connected with:

a) The specifics of philosophical didacticism. Saussure's semiology had a strong impact on philosophical consideration of subjectivity and language; this so called movement of structuralism brought the wide criticism of traditional ontologies which were built on the idea of "neutral language". Peirce semiotics and philosophy of pragmatism and also his viewpoints on persuasion, rhetoric and subjectivity are rooted in four main grounds: in (i) the semiotic revision of Aristotelian and Latin logic; (ii) in the works of I. Kant; (iii) in the inspiration of German idealism; (iv) and in the tradition of American transcendentalism.

b) Opposing forces in the frame of historical wars of arguments. I would like to analyze some consequences of our capacities to talk about "persuasive self in often opposing terms of semiology/structuralism and semiotics.

¹ E. g. since Parmenides to Hegel or Sartre many philosophers consider themselves as the translators and amplifiers of universal and eternal truths. We can find another traditions, living in the shadows for a long time (cf. Vitanza 1997) -we can find its sources e. g. in sophistic rhetoric or radically in early F. Nietzsche (and his lectures on language and music), in so called French structuralism and its analysis of discourse practices and also in pragmatism and general semiotics (cf. Eco 1976, 13-14).

These two positions emphasized different features of analysis which determines different questions and different analysis of meaning of "conceptions" and "realities" as "subject", "self" and "persuasion". The general question is: How does process of meaning-making determine the success of communication and how can this success, or the effect, be described? From a standpoint of semiology: what are the cultural and sociohistorical (systemic) layers of these phenomena? From a point of semiotics: what are the syntactical, semantical and pragmatic layers of persuasive discourse?

1.1. Terminology

I completely agree with (Kennedy 1999, 1-2) that "rhetoric in the sense of techniques of persuasion is a phenomenon of all human cultures, and analogies to it are also found in animal communication. All communication involves rhetoric. A speaker or writer has some kind of purpose, and rhetoric includes the ways of accomplishing, or attempting to accomplish, that purpose within a given culture." By subjectivity I mean general term which contains process of subjectivation (in quasi-Foucauldian sense, cf. Balibar 1996) through cultural-semiologic operations, which can also be analyzed as forms of inter-inferences (in quasi-Peircean sense). By "self" or "subject" I mean possible or concrete result of these operations. In the language of general semiotics, "the subject (without any qualifying adjective) normally denotes a narrative function (actant) in the actantial structure of an utterance. In this context, the subject is defined on the one hand by and opposite the object of value that is being pursued; on the other, it exists in relation to the sender (source of values and mandator of the quest)" (Bronwen - Ringham 2000, 126). In my point of view, we can move these distinction further if we look inside concrete traditions of structuralism and semiotic. Therefore I argue for and compare three positions: a) semiology (cultural) b) semiotic (inferential) and c) semiotics (general). Finally, I

would like to avoid the general and very discussed topic of discursive construction of alter ego or the construction of "quasi-mind" as one of the most popular strategies of the "defense of the self in literature (see Galow 2011; cf. CP 4.6): e. g. F. Kafka wrote that he felt liberated when he could say "he" instead of "I".² I would like to follow the slightly different way of reasoning which is inherited in Roth's novel, where author's self (and self in general) is primarily constructed through rhetorical figures and is forced to live inside and through constant dialogue and/or struggle of argumentation. If we take this quasi-Nietzschean³ view on the history and the self seriously we can see these two phenomena as constant rhetorical (ergo semiotic) reaction and invention. Roth opens broad but important question for human conduct: why and how someone wants to be (and sometime is) persuasive? And we can ask further: how instruments taken from general semiotics and general rhetoric can be helpful in understanding this matter?

1.2. Two Ways of Understanding Signs and Its Consequences for Understanding Persuasion and Subjectivity

I will argue that there are two possible ways how to approach these problems. We can find them inside two basic paradigms of semiotics: the first in the semiology and (mostly Foucauldian) structuralism and the second in (mostly Peircean) semiotic.

² Cf. P. Roth's another novel *THE COUNTERLIFE* (2013) where an overwhelming game is played with multiplicity of the egos constructed in the space of literature. We will not follow famous discussion about the death of Author presented in the works of e. g. M. Blanchot, M. Foucault, R. Barthes and M. Kundera (cf. Ceska 2014; Burke 1998) here.

³ Cf. Nietzsche's criticism on atomic subject vs. subject-multiplicity: "That man is a multiplicity of forces which stand in an order of rank, so that there are those which command, but what commands, too, must provide for those which obey everything they need to preserve themselves, and is thus itself conditioned by their existence. All these living beings must be related in kind, otherwise they could not serve and obey one another like this." (Nietzsche KSA 11.461).

1.2.1. Saussure

The first one is rooted in the heritage of F. de Saussure, who suggested that his approach to linguistics might be generalized into a study of all the sign systems embedded in social behavior. Saussure and later so called structuralism emphasized social/quasi psychological (later called semiologic or discursive) construction of the self as determined through anonymous language-based systems (with the unexceptionable notion on power considered as non-subjective force). Persuasion in this view is a cultural unit which has in general a language (*langue*) structure and therefore can be analyzed in the perspective of semiology, in a perspective considering a sign as a purely mental unit which consists of a dyadic relation of signifier and signified. In other words, sign is considered as an idea of acoustic image and an idea of concept. Persuasion and subjectivity in this perspective are subject to paradigmatic and syntactic principles, stemming in principle from various systemic relations (such as the binary oppositions and permutations of elements, their differences and interdependencies inside analyzed cultural systems etc.). This perspective was criticized⁴ for partially neglecting the concrete manifestations of these systems in specific speech acts, in the sphere of *parole* (cf. Short 2007, 18-20).

1.2.2. Peirce

Second perspective offers the instruments for analysis of the interconnections between thought, signs and (mind-dependent and mind-independent) objects (CP 6.347; 8.332; W 1:303), which can be applied from radically different perspective on persuasive language and its manifestations in informal and formal forces. This perspective is rooted in Peirce's pragmatism, which is

⁴Mostly thanks to misunderstanding the „dialectics“ of *LANGUE* and *PAROLE*, despite of Saussure's warnings, many semioticians refer to these two terms as if they were denoting two distinct realities.

nothing more or less than "maxim for attaining clearness of apprehension"(CP 5.2). This maxim is interconnected with two basic conceptions:

a) First is Peirce's semiotic as the doctrine analyzing triadic process of semiosis (the processes of signs being signs, the process of signs in their forceful actions and the process of understanding signs⁵). Semiotic is then divided through the prism of Peirce's postulated categories to its speculative part (what can be formally considered as a sign, how can we classify signs and what is general structure of the sign), critical logic (which is the theory of conditions of truth) and speculative rhetoric (how can be effects of signs on mind formally analyzed).

b) Second is Peirce's belief that this process of semiosis is teleological, which is sometimes described as Peirce's objective (or semiotic) idealism (and has completely different connotations than "later" pragmatism of Peirce's students, colleagues or misinterprets).

Peircean semiotic then can be the tool for description of semiotic structures of arguments and also can be useful in the formal analysis of "situationality" of arguments (considered as specific signs). Peirce's *semiotic* position can be considered as a theory offering theoretical instruments for analysis of qualitative possibilities, concrete realizations, and general laws of persuasive discourse as basic correlates of "rhetorical existence" (or semiosis) of human life.⁶ It is necessary to emphasize,

⁵ Cf. (CP 5.484) "By "semiosis" I mean, (...), an action, or influence, which is, or involves, a cooperation of three subjects, such as a sign, its object, and its interpretant, this tri-relative influence not being in any way resolvable into actions between pairs." This statement, in my point of view, is not cancelling the fact that sign in semiosis can be seen from phaneroscopy as firstness of thirdness, secondness of thirdness and the thirdness of thirdness..

⁶ Moreover Peircean point of view brings the accent on semiotic structure of cognitive/perceptive processes (EP2:368, cf. CP 5.492; 6.268; 6.174; 7.539-52) and presents a way out from the traditional rationalistic and dualistic schemes of thought.

and make things more complicated, that there are at least "two Peirces" in the matter of Peircean corpus:

a) Through the prism of Peirce's objective idealism, "thought" as the form of semiosis in general is not necessarily connected to human brain (e. g. in spheres of biosemiosis)⁷ and therefore Peirce-oriented position brings the notion on non-human agents in the process of communication (which can determine the effects of persuasion).

b) On the other hand, for Peirce, thought considered as action and development of signs is in another ("anthroposemiosis") plane⁸, necessary connected to the social or communal dimension - in common and individual life.

There is Peirce who believes that "man is a sign", which means that man is a sign of reflection or recognition of consistency of thought (cf. CP 5.313) but also Peirce who "believes that if isolationism and arrogance became a rule, science would become impossible" (Oleksy 2012, 207). For Peirce's rhetoric rooted in semiotic (pragmaticist and objective-idealist) point of view is characterized by the tension between formal statements on one side and strong ethical postulates on the other. That is why he accented, in Aristotelian fashion, the normative side of persuasion, which is rooted in the

logic, ethics and esthetics⁹ of terminology. Peirce's semiotic can be viewed as normative science of theoretical rhetoric and common oratory. Ethics of argumentation (cf. CP 1.219; EP 2:338) is essentially connected to self-control (CP 5.493) and in general to the maxim of the *summum bonum* and positive development of scientific community.¹⁰

I would like to explore later how these divergent points converge in the third branch of semiotic, the speculative rhetoric, which "is the doctrine of the general conditions of the reference of Symbols and other Signs to the Interpretants which they aim to determine" (CP 2.93).

1.2.3. Some Consequences for Subjectivity

We can see that there are two general forms of analysis of the self (or in a broader term "subjectivity") which have nothing to do with "personality". What these radically different perspectives have in common is the notion on "desubjectification" of theory that is speaking about subject or self. On the other hand, semiotic and semiology claim the right to speak about human conduct in both its generality and its particularity. Self is dispersed in different formal structures: language-immanent structures on the one side and post-Kantian (with the important touch of scholastic realism) on the other. In the case of semiology this dispersion of the self

⁷ See (CP. 4.551), cf. (Colapietro 1988, 19).

⁸ Cf. (Deely 1990, 28): The highest level of semiosis so far as our experience goes is also the one closest to us: ANTHROPOSEMIOSIS. Looked at one way, anthroposemiosis includes all of the sign processes that human beings are directly involved in, and, looked at another way, names those sign processes which are species-specifically human. From the latter point of view, anthroposemiosis includes first of all language, and secondly those sign systems that come after language and further structure perception and modify the environment even for species of animals other than human, although the understanding of these postlinguistic changes in what is proper to them is possible only in and through language."

⁹ Cf. (CP 1.191): "Esthetics is the science of ideals, or of that which is objectively admirable without any ulterior reason. I am not well acquainted with this science; but it ought to repose on phenomenology. Ethics, or the science of right and wrong, must appeal to Esthetics for aid in determining the SUMMUM BONUM. It is the theory of self-controlled, or deliberate, conduct. Logic is the theory of self-controlled, or deliberate, thought; and as such, must appeal to ethics for its principles. It also depends upon phenomenology and upon mathematics. All thought being performed by means of signs, logic may be regarded as the science of the general laws of signs."

¹⁰ From the global perspective Peirce's notion on development of thought is connected with the development of the self and can be taken as the base for semioethics. For the comprehensive volume discussing semioethics, see (Petrilli, Deely 2010; cf. Petrilli 2004).

is based on the conception of sign as a dyadic transcendental unit and in the case of semiotic on the conception of sign mediating an ontological relation of object and interpretant. I would like to show some advantages and possible disadvantages of these two different perspectives, which take the concept of sign as a formal relation as the very basic element of their viewpoints.

2. Some Incapacities of Semiology: Paradox of Neutral Languages

The first tradition was articulated mostly as a critique of Sartre's and Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology and existential humanism¹¹ in the context of so called French structuralism and poststructuralism¹². It is characterized by synthesizing Nietzsche's accent on power (as a purely a subjective structure of will, cf. Deleuze 1962) and some reduced or reinterpreted thoughts of Saussure's (and of Prague and Moscow schools¹³ of) linguistics.¹⁴ The common point for various concepts of that time was, that there is nothing like ahistorical, essential, original and always true Self (of the Author or in general) that we can find behind or under all superimposed (historical, social, cultural) layers: this identical "Self cannot exist in the social sciences in the neighborhood, especially with the language analyzed from the position of semiology

(where "I speak" shatters "I think"). This theoretical world is analogical to the fictional world of Witold Gombrowicz's novel *Ferdydurke*: there is only another mask behind the mask (Klossowski 1958) and these masks/faces are constructed and exercised through divergent socio-discursive practices. When "someone" understands himself/herself (e. g. as the object of desire or desiring subject), he/she can understand himself/herself only through specific historical/rhetorical/discursive instruments, through the complex of technologies of self.¹⁵ Again in the Nietzschean viewpoint: to be the "true self means to give up the concept of will to truth as something "personal". The most important quest for philosophy as a form of structural analysis of systems of thought is to discover quasi-linguistic/semiologic structures inherent in our culture, forming our opinions, behavior, acting or every possible knowledge of given historical era or cultural order.¹⁶ Strategies and technologies that creates self, have to be on the one side discovered through semiologic instruments of structuralism as purely non-essentialist, have to be shown and de-composed as different sociocultural and/or historical forms (we used to consider as "natural"¹⁷). On the other side, it is

¹¹ "Which has started perhaps with works of G. Canguilhem, as is apparent at the ending of Foucault's *THE ORDER OF THINGS*. See (Eribon 1991, 157).

¹² See e. g. (Descombes 1980), (Daix 1967).

¹³ Which was brought into the French discourse mostly through works and influence of R. Jakobson, see (Jakobson - Daix, 1966).

¹⁴ Cf. (Descombes 1980, 47): „More generally, structuralism is associated with various attempts to apply semiotic models of analysis to various cultural phenomena using concepts like code and message, signifier and signified, statement and utterance. (...) Although it made constant reference to linguistics, structural anthropology remained far removed from the real problems of linguistic analysis. At the same time, it elaborated a method for the analysis of institutions that presupposes a particular philosophy of mind. Moreover, Lévi-Strauss has never stopped insisting that the object of ethnological and mythological study is nothing other than the human mind."

¹⁵ We can find this position strongly articulated in M. Foucault's *HISTORY OF SEXUALITY: USING PLEASURES* (cf. Foucault 2010) or in N. Luhmann *LOVE AS PASSION: THE CODIFICATION OF INTIMACY*. Cf. (Deleuze 2004, 184): „Beyond the history of men, and the history of ideas, Michel Foucault discovers a deeper, subterranean ground that forms the object of what he calls the archaeology of thought. Behind real men and their real relations, behind ideologies and their imaginary relations, Louis Althusser discovers a deeper domain as object of science and of philosophy."

¹⁶ That is why semiology was the main theoretical tool for authors as e. g. R. Barthes (in the sphere of culture), M. Foucault (in the sphere of historiography and social philosophy), M. Serres (in epistemology), C. Lévi-Strauss (in anthropology) and J. Lacan (in psychoanalysis).

¹⁷ Cf. (Deleuze 2004, 171): „There is a structure of the unconscious only to the extent that the unconscious speaks and is language. There is a structure of bodies only to the extent that bodies are supposed to speak with a language which is one of the symptoms. Even things possess a structure only in so far as they maintain a silent discourse, which is the language of signs."

important to say that this position does not necessary lead to the forms of radical defeatism or ethic nihilism.¹⁸ Structuralism brought in its radical "program" positive political philosophy and specific ethic, which was diagnosed by Foucault and Deleuze as reversed Platonism: philosopher's task is no more to investigate ahistorical, atemporal and eternal forms of humanity and culture, but to uncover them as semiologic constructions and in other plane to find "minorities" that are excluded and oppressed by them. On the "personal level", this ethic goes hand in hand with the challenge to give up the total, definitive and authoritative Selves.¹⁹ So what is the self and how can be self persuasively performed in this (Nietzschean/structural) discourse? One could say that only through the way of disintegration of total Self. But there is "nothing" to disintegrate: if we want to defend "our selves" we have to invent and question "them" every time, when we regard "them". This position has two important consequences: for the ethics of "democratic subjectivity" and politics and also for the general epistemology. We can illustrate the first dimension of this position in contemporary "social reality" of the so called immigration crisis. Structuralism, which considers self as structured, but constantly created, gives a chance to draw a blind but instructive map for argumentation in the space of democratic systems. We have to admit that our "values" are specific products of semiologic processes between socially constructed systems, their realizations and re-interpretations (in the mentioned

medium of history made of arguments and counterarguments). We have to admit that this trivial fact is of the most important value for the basis of the reasonable argumentation (which philosophy and social sciences helped to articulate in the 20th Century). This constant criticism rooted in semiology shows that culture and self are not something eternal and ideal but something which is enacted, something that correlates with the toolbox of arguments against divergent forms of (as U. Eco said) *Ur-fascisms* and "brown" *Mythologies* that nowadays arises in different cultural forms through the Europe.

One answer to the questions at the very beginning of this text stems from the tradition sketched above and would be in Roth's (Nietzsche's) radical style: dispersion of the self in socially deliberated structures is not an apocalyptic problem but an important value for contemporary democratic political discourse. The main problem and interest of structural analysis of culture here is common violent act, authoritative construction of "differentiating" or "essential difference": the case when someone is excluding (mostly through various *ad populum* or *ad hominem* or other fallacies) others from a "battlefield" just before the struggle (of arguments) begins; i. e. when someone denies the law for free speech in the name of speech itself.²⁰ Structuralism in various analyses showed the misery of ideology of self-predictive/productive discourse, showed that there is nothing as "speech itself". Theoretical and practical rhetoric based on semiology (as the critical discursive analysis) are nowadays facing an important challenge, which has its source in the aforementioned Nietzschean philosophical criticism and "didacticism" and which is not based on pseudo-Platonic/Hegelian perspective of King/Philosopher/Totalself who is evocating eternal truths (through completely pure method of dialectics).

¹⁸ Cf. (Hay 2011, 243): "Nietzsche's analysis of tragedy cannot be understood as a tragic or a pessimistic interpretation, but as one that emerges from the experience of the comic, which, in its turn, must be understood as a form or a result of overcoming the utter absurdness of human life. This will lead us to a further analysis concerning the function of laughter (both as a concept and as a rhetorical method) in Nietzsche's philosophy as a whole. "

¹⁹ We can find this trend, articulated from different positions in other so called post or late modern systems of thought, e. g. in the works of P. Sloterdijk's *CRITIQUE* or in neopragmatism of R. Rorty and his skepticism. Cf. (Rorty 1999, 202).

²⁰ Cf. (Barthes 1972, 46): "We are all potential Dominics, not as murderers but as accused, deprived of language, or worse, rigged out in that of our accusers, humiliated and condemned by it. To rob a man of his language in the very name of language: this is the first step in all legal murders."

The reason is the experience that most of former, contemporary and future ideologists are arguing from these pseudo-platonic perspectives (there is "Nation", "Self and "People"). The practical result of this semiologic standpoint is that normative sciences of argumentation have to adopt the *optique* of deconstructive (not "strictly" in Derrida's sense) position; i. e. leave out the dream of neutrality of philosophical discourse and through formal, structural analysis and mostly through critical semiology uncover seemingly natural and eternal arguments and show them as constructed from various ideological fields and also *teach* how to defend against these fallacies which are spreading through mass and social media.²¹

1.4. Limits of Semiology: the Trap of Super-Structures

The consequence of this position for philosophy of science or epistemology of social sciences is that structuralism in its various forms has paradoxically articulated the idea of quasi-neutral, immanent, deductive "empty" space, from where the scholar can speak (as Foucault noted: classic philosophers connected their names in very grandiose gesture with the Truth, structuralism did the same, but has connected its name with the idea of desubjectification). It has appeared that

²¹ It was Roland Barthes who said that rhetorics made the world of language intelligible. Especially in the twentieth century with its vast development of new forms of communication, resulting from the technological advances, rhetoric was in the center of interest. "The development of this "secondary orality," as it is sometimes called, has been accompanied by the creation of new theory to describe communication to mass audiences, within organizations and small groups, and across cultural lines, often dealing with issues of politics, propaganda, marketing, gender, and other social phenomena. Parallel to this has been the emergence of new linguistic, semiotic, literary, and cultural criticism and theory, some of which can be said to be seeking a general theory of rhetoric. Classical rhetoric, as a theory of discourse, has sometimes directly contributed to these developments, sometimes been an unacknowledged substratum in them, and sometimes been a foil against which writers of new approaches are reacting." (Kennedy 1999, 291-292).

the structure envelops a wholly paradoxical object or element, which G. Deleuze conceived as "empty square" (*La Case Vide*). As Deleuze noted:

"...Even Levi-Strauss, who in certain respects is the most positivist among the structuralists, the least romantic, the least inclined to welcome an elusive element, recognized in the "mana" or its equivalents the existence of a "floating signifier," with a symbolic zero value circulating in the structure. In so doing, he connects with Jakobson's zero phoneme which does not by itself entail any differential character or phonetic value, but in relation to which all the phonemes are situated in their own differential relations. If it is true that structural criticism has as its object the determination of "virtualities" in language which pre-exist the work, the work is itself structural when it sets out to express its own virtualities." (Deleuze 2004, 186)

This "hidden" tendency in structuralism opens the way for various forms of criticism from the standpoint of radical social constructivism, which has its source in so called poststructuralism. It can be described in this way: structuralists changed the platonic forms and philosophical *a priori* for seemingly neutral forms, structuring structures, that were the guarantors not for rejecting rationalisms but for building of a new form of super-rationalism (e. g. as the idea of historical *a priori*). Poststructuralism and also neopragmatism (especially in the works of J. Derrida's and R. Rorty²²) leaves out the idea of the meaning generated by suprarational entities and immanent methods which emanates from them²³.

Second problem lies in the core of semiology and its conception of the sign which can be interpreted as disembodied, constructed only through immanent codes of culture, i. e. that signs are considered only as mentioned transcendental relations²⁴ This perspective works as analytical tool for studying culture and history but is not functional when someone want to understand

²² Cf. (Jonas et al 2003).

²³ Which was for many authors Saussurean semiology or Hjelmslev's glossematics

²⁴ Which is a mind-mind relation; sign is the psychological unit coupling the idea of acoustic image and the concept. See (Deely 2001, 563); cf. (Bains 2014, 18).

e. g. physical effects of the signs, or their connection to the "reality" or "world".²⁵ We can clearly trace the development of this criticism of problem of signs "without bodies" in late French semiology, e. g. in the concept of structural semantics of J. A. Greimas (Greimas 1996), or in linguistics of discourse of J. Fontanille²⁶, or in the "ontological turn" of symmetrical anthropology of B. Latour *et cie*.

When we want to "fully" understand the importance of "embodied" signs, we have to switch to C. S. Peirce and to the semiotic which investigates "the general secret of rendering signs effective" (EP 2:326).

The radical difference between semiology and semiotic standpoint in the field of analysis of phenomena as persuasion is:

a) For semiology, "value" is determined only in the set of relations in given system (as Saussure illustrated in his famous example of Chess set) and has no "essence", only "form".

b) From semiotic standpoint of sign as triadic, "values" can be represented on one side as legisigns (general law, types) and as concrete realizations of this law (as sinsigns, tokens) but also necessary as the signs of qualities (tones).

In the broader context of political rhetoric, values are "iconic" and therefore "worthy of following" because values as signs share specific qualities with objects they represent; values are "indexical" and have "concrete"

effects; and are "symbolic" because values can be seen as particular expressions of laws.²⁷

From the view of Peircean semiotic, we are approaching the main limit of application of semiology in social sciences here, especially in the case of theory of argumentation and analysis of persuasion. From the Peircean standpoint, if we omit the notion that "idea" has no "real", "physical" effect on our acts, we are omitting perhaps most important property of signs and most important property of persuasive discourse: i. e. "pragmatic side of language has no meaning without pragmatism."

2. Normative Semiotics of Persuasive Semiosis: Peircean Outlooks

We can glimpse other adventures through Roth's kaleidoscope. What does it mean when we speak about language not necessarily in the perspective of structuralism - what does it mean that some speech is persuasive in its "emotional", "energetic" or "habitual" dimension? This opens in another plane the question of the specific aspects of human (and non-human) language that can be an important part of semiotic analysis (CP 2.256) of argumentation - why we are (often spontaneously) laughing, shouting or crying (when we are asserting propositions²⁸)? These topics can lead us to the broader view on sign and persuasion than we roughly analyzed in mentioned position of heterogeneous forms of structuralism. If we distort some Peirce's ideas (CP 1.444), we can ask: What are the general conditions of signs being persuasive signs? Does

²⁵ We can see this movement from description to deconstruction (as Descombes emphasized), in concrete way e. g. in Foucault's move from pure method of "archaeology" to "genealogy".

²⁶ See (Klinkenberg 2001): „Car rien ne nous est dit de la manière dont on peut atteindre l'adéquation recherchée. Bien au contraire, la doctrine reste fondée sur une rationalité abstraite et 'décorporealisée' (DISEMBODIED), pour reprendre un terme courant en sémantique cognitive. La sémiotique européenne reste définitivement soucieuse avant tout de la pureté de ses modèles, qu'elle veut mettre à l'abri de toute 'contamination référentielle'".

²⁷ Cf. Peirce's notion on rationally persuasive signs - SUADISIGNS (CP 2.309).

²⁸ See (Redondo 2012, 218) who describes Peirce's concept of proposition as "the possible general content of a speech-act, that is something susceptible of being affirmed, denied, judged, doubted... without becoming different proposition", cf. (EP 2:312) and also cf. the problem of the indexicality of assertion, which has "powerful indexical constraints" (Pietarinen 2004, 296), analogous to brute action of secondness. This shows the importance of the work of U. Eco, who, in my point of view, tried in his THEORY OF SEMIOTICS to connect instruments of structuralism and pragmatics.

there exist any kind of law in the evolution of thought which can be described as the law of necessary conditions of the transmission of persuasive meaning by signs from mind to mind, and from one state of mind to another? Is there a law of force of symbols, or their power of appealing to a mind? Finally, what are the formal conditions of persuasive signs in the relation to truth?

2.1. Semiotic and degrees of persuasion

As U. Eco has emphasized, the only person who made these problems "the very foundation of his theory—semiotic, cognitive, and metaphysical all at the same time—was Peirce. A Dynamical Object drives us to produce a representamen, in a quasi-mind this produces an Immediate Object, which in turn is translatable into a potentially infinite series of interpretants and sometimes, through the habit formed in the course of the interpretative process, we come back to the Dynamical Object, and we make something of it" (Eco 2000, 13; cf. Short 2007, 172).

We can illustrate this notion with Peirce's famous example with the soldier who "grounds arms" (CP 8.315), which can be considered as the analysis of specific layers of persuasive communication based on Peirce's conception of interpretant, where the term "interpretant" refers to an effect produced in the interpreter by a sign, or is the result of determination by sign in interpreter's (not necessary human) mind.²⁹

²⁹ Cf. (Short 2007, 171): "Consider an example. Jones pokes Smith in the back so as to call attention to himself, for the further purpose of asking for a loan. The attention - an interpretant of the poke - is therefore elicited as a means to an end. But it is not the sign - the poke - that elicits its interpretant as a means. It was Jones, the pocker, who poked for that purpose. The poke, itself, compels attention mechanically. Our possessing the mechanism by which attention can thus be directed exists and operates for a purpose. Furthermore, its operation is not utterly mechanical: for example, we can ignore the insistent poking by a child when more important business is on hand. Regardless of whether Jones poked on purpose, Smith has a purpose in taking

We will follow the basic fact that "every communication is rhetorical because it uses some technique to affect the beliefs, actions, or emotions of an audience. The simplest verbal techniques are pitch, volume, and repetition, as in "help, Help, HELP!" (Kennedy 1999, 12; cf. Romano 2012, 142). If every communication is rhetorical, we can say: it is rhetorical because it is composed of signs which can "be" persuasive power, which can "have" persuasive power and which can be "recognized" as persuasive. Interpretants are not potentially infinite only as immediate objects and are not potentially determined only by dynamic object (and its "primary iconism") but are also potentially determined by the potentially infinite forms of dynamic interpretant (and their "primary indexicalism") and potentially could be determined by general immediate (and final) interpretants.

If we follow G. A. Kennedy here, we find that he opens interesting question of "degrees of persuasion" - the question of intensity of a persuasive act, the question of effects that a persuasive act could have.³⁰ This leads us to another dimension of analysis of basic modes of persuasive discourse. Persuasion can be accomplished by direct means, such as force, threats, or bribes, or it can be done "symbolically" by the use of signs, of which those most important are spoken and written words, images or gestures.

The persuasion can be practiced directly through more or less violent techniques (in the mechanical way

notice. And it is only thus that we can account for Smith's reaction as being not merely an effect of the poke but an interpretant of the poke, attention being directed not to the poke especially but to its cause."

³⁰ "The white pages of the telephone directory show a relatively low degree of rhetoric. Their main rhetorical technique is alphabetization, which accomplishes the purpose of allowing a reader to find a particular name easily, and except for occasional flashes of bold type their author does not seek to influence a reader to call one number rather than another. The yellow pages are distinctly more rhetorical, seeking to make an effect upon the reader and using visualization of products and other typographical devices to influence a decision." (Kennedy 1999, 2).

presented in the secondness of thirdness) but also can be exerted through the punishment of the soul: the most striking feature of Peirce's semiotic is the fact that in semiotic both of these dimensions can inhere. In these systems violence is gradually translated from direct influence on the body to the "symbolic" violence - i. e. concrete violence is translated into general law, as in the case of penal system, i. e. translated "through" and "in" to the ideological, rhetorical, semiotic process.³¹ These processes then have different modes of persuasion, which can be considered in the most abstract and general plane (of Peirce's most developed semiotic theory, CP 8.342) as dynamic (effect actually produced on the mind by the sign) and immediate (the possible interpretability represented in the sign) interpretants, and from other perspectives, which can be more useful as the tool for analysis of communicative situation, as forms of emotional, energetic and emotional interpretant³² (MS 318). The normal interpretant (effect

that would be produced on the mind by the sign after sufficient development of thought) can be seen as the function unifying both of these planes through teleological time of semiosis³³ (e. g. in the case of development of scientific research in open-ended community or in the sense of catching someone's idea³⁴).

2.2. Modes of persuasion

What are then modes of persuasion Peirce himself has used? As V. Colapietro pointed out, Peirce "is anything but indifferent to the manner in which he expresses himself; his rhetorical models are, however, found among the medieval scholastics rather than the Renaissance humanists and their progeny" (Colapietro 2012, 16), which is the same in the case of Peirce's many philosophical positions that are often evidently stemming from two streams, from nominalism on the one hand and realism and its criticism on the other (CP 4.68; 5.101).³⁵ On the other side, we don't need to fully accept Peirce's somewhat radical scholastic "classification" of philosophy in two dimensions of

reference to objective fact. And, ultimately, the concept must be understood in terms of a habit of response. To say, however, that a meaning or a concept is a habit of response in an interpreter seems somewhat inadequate for a position that places so much stress on both the interrelation of meaning and logic as well as the dissociation of meaning and psychology. Peirce held that conceptual meaning must include within itself the emotional, energetic, and logical interpretants or, in other terms, the elements of Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness found, in some form, in all analyses; in this case: Firstness as feeling core or sensuous content; Secondness as response or set of acts; and Thirdness as structure or resultant image." See (Bergmann 2009, 119; Liszka, 1996).

³³ Cf. (W 2:241), CP 2.334), (Short 2007, 171, 182): "The normal interpretant goes beyond what is required for the immediate interpretant: it is 'all' that would be revealed to a 'sufficiently penetrating' mind..."

³⁴ See (CP 3.424; 5.425; 5.479);

³⁵ Peirce called himself a realist of "extreme stripe" (CP 5.470), which can be questionable, see (Short 2007, 48n12); cf. (CP 6.24-5).

³¹ These procedures and strategies were in the field of social philosophy and history described in detail in famous works of M. Foucault, N. Elias, J. Galtung and P. Bourdieu, in the field of cultural semiology and semiotics were analyzed e. g. in the works of R. Barthes and U. Eco. In my point of view, this development of studies of persuasion on the field of philosophy of language, semiotics and other studies of discourses, goes hand in hand with the aforementioned revitalized interest in the marginalized philosophies as were e. g. the sophists. - we can see it clearly in the works of M. Foucault, G. Deleuze or P. Sloterdijk, but also in pragmatism (as is the interpretation of Sophist as humanistic political thinkers in Dewey and especially in works of Schiller) and neopragmatism (S. Mailloux). The interest in the question of practices of persuasion discourse lies in the basis of our culture.

³² Where the emotional interpretants are feelings, energetic interpretants actions and logical interpretants are thoughts (and habits) that I see as layers of interpreting a sign (cf. Short 2007, 181). Moreover Peirce specified that "not all signs have logical interpretants, but only intellectual concepts and the like" (EP 2:410). Then the logical interpretant, which can be considered as most important for analysis of argumentation, is a concept, it is the only interpretant "properly denominated a concept" (CP 5.467), and it is the concept "upon the structure of which arguments concerning objective fact may hinge" (Ibid.). Cf. (Rosenthal 1994, 29): "Thus far, then, it would seem that the logical interpretant is a concept in the interpreter that can have

nominalism and realism³⁶. There is still Peirce from who we cannot eliminate the "...sense of sacred, the spirit of playfulness, and a contrite consciousness of iradicable fallibility, [which] are woven into the very fabric of Peirce's texts" (Colapietro 2012, 16). Analogical tension was described by Matts Bergman (Bergman 2012) who has shown that one of Peirce's normative, political and (according to his synechism) scientific principles was meliorism, the belief that there is an inherent tendency toward progress or improvement in the human condition. Peirce's philosophy has melioristic aspirations in abstract and general plane, which is his critical common-sensism and the "reconstruction of normative disciplines in terms of criticism of habits" (Bergman 2012, 125). Peirce was on the one side exponent of radical freedom in science (CP 1.662), but in the political sphere, moral and social thinking, he was "sentimental conservative"³⁷ and, in contrast to Dewey and Rorty, he was manifestly skeptical to attempts to apply philosophy to concrete human affairs ... In his Cambridge Conferences Lectures (1898), Peirce notoriously not only seems to advocate a rather sharp distinction between theory and practice as two incompatible forms of life, but also to disparage melioristic conception of the philosopher's task. In his expressed view, philosophy is a theoretical science that should not be compromised by concerns with concrete applicability or societal relevance (Bergman 2012, 125). Although "this" Peirce was in general sceptic in applicability of philosophy in human affairs, "other" Peirce "applied" philosophical (logical/semiotic) concepts and on these bases developed a strong theory of norms in human conduct, quasi-sociological view on scientific community.³⁸ His

³⁶ As e. g. did J. Deely in a radical/Peircean way, especially when we consider the depth and width of interpretations of Saussure in structuralism.

³⁷ Cf. (Bergman 2012, 126); (CP 1.50; 6.292). Of course there is the question of Peirce's personal ETHOS (cf. Colapietro 2014), his personal life...

³⁸ As (Redondo 2012, 220) showed we can consider logic as "rooted in the social principle" of open-ended community (W 3:284; cf. CP 1.588) and "the social principle is rooted intrinsically in logic." (W 2:271)

pragmatism can be taken as an inspiration for normative theory of rhetoric and argumentation. If we follow Roth's illustration here, we can say, that from a Peircean point of view, the struggle of arguments does not necessary lead on one side to war and on the other to submission, but can be the way for cultivation (and change) of the self (in personal and in general in the context of scientific community).

This complex theory has its sources in semiotic (at least in the case of Peirce's "mature philosophy" guided by phaneroscopy), which is the base for the analysis of habit (CP 2.292) and habitual change: habit is "acquired law", therefore it is acquired sign, type of integrated legisign. Logical/semiotic self-control is essentially connected to the cultivation of the habit (or the highest kind of habit, the "cerebral habit" which is belief).³⁹ The semiotic cultivation of the self is executed through methods of pragmatism and so called critical common-sensism and in general leads to the (semio)ethics of communication (cf. Pape 2012, 151). If habits are many-world entities that inhabit not only our actual world but also connect possible situations and scenarios with acting according to, or being guided by, the habit⁴⁰, then the semiotic analysis is critical discipline which helps us to understand the range of possible communicative situations⁴¹ and also the tool for "melioristic" cultivation of the self⁴².

³⁹ See (CP 3.160), cf. (Bergman 2012, 136): "Peirce pragmatistic method is primarily a tool for clarifying the habitual nature of beliefs (...) Interestingly, in his pragmatic analyses, Peirce does not tend to introduce any principled division between habits transmitted by tradition and habits acquired as the consequence of scientific experimentation." Cf. notion on "anti-pragmatistic Platonism" in Peirce in (Bergman 2009, 55).

⁴⁰ "More precisely, what corresponds to such habit is a mapping from possible worlds or situations to actions. The range of those mappings is defined by the acts that are permitted (or determined) by the habits in whatever kind of world situation." (Pietarinen 2012, 176)

⁴¹ Especially if we consider that semiosis can be seen as communication oriented to a purpose.

⁴² Cf. (CP. 8112).

In Peirce's philosophy is evident a strong connection between logic and ethics, the belief that meaning, and also meaning of the habit, is rule governed and that these rules can be analyzed from a semiotic perspective, where semiotic is considered as meta-logic growing from phaneroscopy and can be also useful as normative science of communication in most general sense. The power of self-control grows from "semiosic" consciousness⁴³ and consists: "first, in comparing one's past deeds with standards, second, in rational deliberation concerning how one will act in the future, in itself a highly complicated operation, third, in the formation of a resolve, fourth, in the creation, on the basis of the resolve, of a strong determination, or modification of habit. This operation of self-control is a process in which logical sequence is converted into mechanical sequence or something of the sort. How this happens, we are in my opinion as yet entirely ignorant. There is a class of signs in which the logical sequence is at the same time a mechanical sequence and very likely this fact enters into the explanation" (CP 8.320; cf. 3.160).

We can interpret (with the awareness on some parts of Peirce's philosophical roots in German idealism and scholastic logic) this perspective as "hermeneutic"⁴⁴: if one can acquire cerebral habit/belief, he/she/it has to "understand" it: thought⁴⁵ always has a virtual character,

⁴³ Cf. (Uexkiill 1982); (Deely 2010, 32n10); (Redondo 2012, 220): "... This is due to our fallibilistic awareness - i. e., that we can never be absolutely sure we have reached a final and definitive belief. It is this semiotic consciousness that compels us to adopt habits of self-control and self-criticism. But the most important point is that in being deliberate, reasoning becomes a kind of action, for it shares the same self-controlled character of deliberative conduct." Cf. (CP 8.191; EP 2:337).

⁴⁴ And we can see the development of these Peirce's ideas in German sociological thought (in works of K.O. Apel and J. Habermas) concerning critical-normative standards of social and collective action (Bertilson 2009, 30). Cf. (Daube-Schackat 1996), (Riemer 1996).

⁴⁵ Cf. "Thought, says Plato, is silent speech of the soul with itself. If this be admitted immense consequences follow; quite unrecognized, I believe, hitherto. . . . From this proposition that every thought is a sign it follows that every thought must address itself to some other,

in the sense that it always refers to its future development into further interpretants (W 2:241, CP 2.334). For Peirce this understanding has deeper roots than traditional logic offers⁴⁶, i. e. understanding that the law is composed of signs (CP 5.594) and of various interpretants and contains, as every phaneron does, universal and observational categories, which means that understanding of the law/habit/belief is processual and is "dialogical" (cf. Brock 1975); a knowing mind deliberates, with past deeds and common standards, i. e. tries to see different possibilities from a modification of given habit through the sets of hypothetical inferences⁴⁷. As Peirce emphasized, thinking always proceeds as dialogue between different phases of ego and is composed of signs (R 298:67). Thought has dialogical and inherently assertoric character (W 2:172; cf. Hilpinen 1982) and also has its social dimension. Peirce considered the dialogue as social fact subjected to social (and in specific cases scientific) norms (CP 2.315, cf. Bertilsson 2009, 30), i. e. "...for Peirce an assertion is a kind of action, and as such it has some consequences one is responsible for. Peirce conceived logic as being dependent on ethics, and this is the one of the foundations of the moral dimension of dialogue" (Redondo 2012, 19). As Peirce has asserted (CP 8.112), "we must not begin by talking of pure ideas, - vagabond thoughts that tramp the public roads without any human habitation, - but must begin with men and their conversation. We are familiar with the phenomenon of a man's expressing an opinion, sometimes decidedly, often otherwise. Perhaps it will be a mere suggestion, a mere question. Any such suggestion that may be expressed and understood relates to some common experience of the

must determine some other, since that is the essence of a sign" (W2:172-3; cf. Bergmann).

⁴⁶ Cf. (Redondo 2012, 220): "...The most important turning point in history of sign is the point to at which deliberate critical appraisal of the norms themselves begin (Savan 1988, 63). This is the very task of logic, which Peirce identified with semeiotic." Cf. (EP 2:376-377)

⁴⁷ Cf. (CP 1.46): "When a man desires ardently to know the truth, his first effort will be to imagine what that truth can be." Cf. (2.444).

interlocutors, or, if there is a misunderstanding, they may think they refer to some common experience when, in fact, they refer to quite different experiences. A man reasoning with himself is liable to just such a misunderstanding. About this common experience the speaker has something to suggest which is supposed to be new to his auditor"⁴⁸. Then the liberal interpretation of speculative rhetoric (the third branch of semiotic as not understood as pure methodetic⁴⁹, but as the framework for studying concrete instantiations of reasonableness in contexts of utterance and interpretation), "provides us with a standpoint from which to search for normative roots of communication through concrete instantiations of reasonableness in situated contexts of utterance and interpretation" (Redondo 2012, 215). If we want to "fully grasp the social and communicative nature of assertion, it may be helpful to recall that Peirce envisioned thought as essentially communicative, as a sort of dialogue between two or more quasi-minds" (Redondo 2012, 216; cf. CP 5.546). The difficult and complex question which is, in my point of view, in the true core of semiotic is: What are habits of these quasi-minds and how can we analyze these formal habits? Semiotic and its sign taxonomy based on the conception of sign as triadic ontological relation, classified thanks to phaneroscopy, is an attempt to "enumerate" possible habits of quasi-mind, i. e. to show effects that specific sign relations have (interpretants) and how are these relations structured (in the relation to themselves, to the object and to the interpretant and later, e.g. in *Lady Welby*, to other habits of mind). That is why semiotic (at least as speculative grammars but also as speculative rhetoric) is "formal" or "quasi-necessary" doctrine of signs (CP. 227).

⁴⁸ In Peirce's pragmatic picture, ideals are not dead abstractions but living forms that aim to be expressed in reasonable conduct (Parker 1998, 204).

⁴⁹ Methodetic, part of semiotic which studies which signs used to effectively communicate the outcomes of scientific investigation within community of inquirers (Liszka 1996, 10); i.e. the scientific rhetoric. Cf. (Bergman 2009, 63; EP 2:329).

Concluding Remarks

This reflection attempted to explore the challenge presented in Roth's novel on the base of two main semiotic paradigms which constitute two realms of theories of sign and which are not fully translatable into each other: semiology and so called structuralism, and the tradition of Peircean semiotics, with the focus on the two core philosophical themes, which are articulated in these traditions: subject, considered as semiotic, semiotic or semiologic self, and persuasion as the basic fact of human conduct composed of signs. The common ground for these two realms is (persuasive/acting) language, considered again from two positions: (i) as an abstract system composed of socio-psychical dyadic relations of signifier and signified, which is on the one side practice and basic human experience (connecting in unity selected elements from amorphous continuum of contents and expressions) and on the other side a model for our understanding of our culture and its artefacts; (ii) as the system composed of ontological triadic relation of object, representamen and interpretant which leads us to understand human conduct as the constant semiotic "struggle", where the self is implicated in the open-ended action containing the reality of qualities, brute force and continuity, which can be considered from the viewpoint of speculative rhetoric as a field of study for general rhetoric and are also main modes of the existence of persuasive language. One has to defend the Self in the field of cultural politics in the most abstract sense against myriads of vague and/or concrete arguments based on competing values, against sometimes forcefully and aggressively asserted statements and laws that are acquired or are presented as laws that have to be acquired. The highest importance of semiotic (as critical science) is the fact that these forms of struggles, which are sometimes presented as "natural and eternal", can be taken as necessary composed from signs, which means that the only natural and eternal thing is fallibilism and possibility of critique. Furthermore, the second point of view (Peircean)

extends the notion to non-human (or to quasi-minds) aspects in language in general. Language is not "only" an "arbitrary system of dyadic signs" (despite the results which this position can achieve) but it is also a tool which is not conceivable without the action of nonhuman agents (or actors and actants), affectivity and power (in Foucauldian sense).

That is why we are still at "war" - we are living in the basic conflict that has its source in this conflictual "structure" of language. This structure stems from the fact that we are communal individuals - we are living in various forms of semiosis, we are facing the fact that we have to build our identities through various conflicts, but we also strongly believe that this semiosis could be in various senses teleological.

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