

**Ferruccio Rossi-Landi**, b. Mar. 1, 1921, Milan, Italy, d. May 5, 1985, Trieste, Italy; philosopher, semiotician, who compared linguistic production to economic production on the basis of what he called the homological method.

After having taught at various American universities, Rossi-Landi accepted the chair of Philosophy of History at the University of Lecce. In 1977 he was appointed professor of Theoretical Philosophy at the University of Trieste.

Following his pioneering monograph on C. Morris (1953), Rossi-Landi (1961) defined '*common speech*' as a theoretical construction (namely, as a set of communicative techniques found in all languages), rather than as an empirically observed real-life process. He further defined 'common speech' in terms of *work*. He applied categories from economics to general sign theory, invoking the *homology* between the production and circulation of commodities and the production and circulation of messages, seen as aspects of social communication and social reproduction. His theory of common speech became a theory of *common semiosis* (1972, 1974).

Rossi-Landi sharply criticized the linguistic theories of E. Sapir and B.L. Whorf (1973). Considered essential to the study of signs, the concepts of *ideology* (interpreted as '*social planning*') and *linguistic alienation* are central themes in (1978).

In his later years, R. focused his attention on the relationship between social structure and social superstructure, achieved through the *mediation* of verbal and nonverbal sign systems. This relationship justifies a 'semiotics of social reproduction', the central theme of Rossi-Landi's last work (1985).

Rossi-Landi elaborated such concepts as *linguistic production*, *linguistic work* and *linguistic capital* in *social reproduction* identifying

homological relations with *material* production. As revealed by certain expressions now in use in everyday language such concepts are recognized as describing factors that are no less than fundamental in today's social reproductive cycle. The expressions we are alluding to include 'immaterial resource', 'immaterial capital' and 'immaterial investment'. Until quite recently material production and linguistic production, in the form of manual work and intellectual work, were conceived to be separate though related homologically at profound genetic and structural levels. The novelty is that in the world of global communication linguistic production and material production have come together and become one. With the advent of the computer in which *hardware* and *software* come together in a single unit the connection between work and material artifacts, on the one hand, and work and linguistic artifacts, on the other, has been evidenced unequivocally to the point that the superior capacity of linguistic work, which is 'immaterial work', is obvious (see R. 2002). In other words, linguistic work leads the processes of production and development.

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