



**The Research Centre for Languages and Cultures  
School of International Studies  
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

invites you to a lecture

Tuesday 9 September 2008

**Room C1-60, Magill Campus, UniSA**

## **Intercultural Communication – a Capitalist Mystification**

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What goes under the name of *globalisation* is no more than what I propose to call communication-production, a new phase in social reproduction controlling communication today. Communication is production: no doubt what remains is the old production system, its characteristic modality of exploitation through paid labour, the realisation of increasing profits by a minority that is ever more reduced, profit at all costs, even at the cost of destroying the ecological environment, of producing underdevelopment beyond the margins of survival, of resorting to war as a solution to international conflict.

This means that the centre (which is ever more degraded and dehumanized) continues to dominate over peripheries, such that transformation in a globalising world is no more than the adaptation of dominion in terms of a “glocalising world”. This phase in social reproduction is widely recognized as post-, with its pas-partout term “cultural interaction” which also applies to translation. It presents itself as globalisation, interculturalism, hybridisation, contamination, post-capitalism, post-colonialism, post-apartheid, and is what in this presentation I am proposing we call *communication-production*.

Communication in this situation is not only the intermediary phase between production and consumption in the reproduction process. Communication is not only involved in exchange, that is, in the circulation of merchandise, but also in the processes of production and consumption. In other words, not only does the exchange phase call for communication, but so does the production phase – more precisely, production depends on communication, ever more extensive and global communication permitting exploitation of low cost labour at a world level. In addition to this, communication today avails itself of communication channels that can easily cross through space and time, including oil pipes or electronic networks.

In spite of multinationals, the amplification of communication scenarios, encounter among different cultures, foreignisation, today's world is faced with the same misery: the realization of profit by a few at the expense of the many which in “globalisation” are on the increase: exploitation is spreading at a world level because global communication-production is imposing itself at a world level as the only form of production possible.

To make such a claim already in itself means to work in terms of interpretation, dialogue and listening. The interpreter, the translator, the interculturalist cannot rescind from a critical understanding of today's situation of global communication-production, if the aim is to critique the social and impede (through different forms, means and effects) the concentration of control and dominion emanating from small power centres in the world over expanding areas of exploitation. Reference here is to violence and exploitation exerted through control over the communication-production network by so-called “developed areas” (the target of interlingual and intercultural translation), over the large proletarianised, exploited periphery, or so-called “underdeveloped areas” (the peripheral source for interlingual and intercultural translation). This presentation is divided into two parts: Communication and Interpretation in Globalised Capitalism; 2. Communication as Interpretation, Listening and Restitution to Others.

**For catering purposes please RSVP by 5 September 2008  
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**Susan Petrilli** is Professor of Semiotics at the University of Bari, Department of Linguistic Practices and Text Analysis. She teaches Semiotics, Semiotics of Text and Media Semiotics. Her principal research areas include sign theory, subject theory, theory of meaning and language, communication theory, problems of ideology, translation theory, literary theory. She has edited three collective volumes of the series *Athanor* (1999, 2000, 2001) on theory and semiotics of translation, and a recent volume dedicated to Ferruccio Rossi-Landi entitled *Lavoro immateriale* (2003-2004), followed by another on *White Matters*. Her major publications include: *Su Victoria Welby. Significs e filosofia del linguaggio* (1998); *Teoria dei segni e del linguaggio*, (1999); (with A. Ponzio): *Signs of Research on Signs* (1998), *Fuori campo. I segni del corpo tra rappresentazione ed eccedenza* (1999), *Philosophy of Language, Art and Answerability in Mikhail Bakhtin* (2000), *Il sentire della comunicazione globale* (2000), *Thomas Sebeok and the Signs of Life* (2001), *I segni e la vita. La semiotica globale di Thomas A. Sebeok* (2002), *Semioetica*, (2003); (with T. A. Sebeok and A. Ponzio), *L'io semiotico* (2001); *Translation Translation* (ed. 2003); *Linguaggi* (ed. 2003); *Ideology, Dialogue and Logic in Semioethic Perspective* (ed. 2004); *Percorsi della semiotica* (2005); (with a. Ponzio) *Semiotics Unbounded. Interpretive Routes through the Open Network of Signs* (2005); *The Semiotic Animal* (with J. Deely and A. Ponzio 2005), *Reasoning with Levinas* (with A. Ponzio and J. Ponzio 2005), *La raffigurazione letteraria* (with A. Ponzio 2006), *Tesi per il futuro anteriore della semiotica. Il programma di ricerca della Scuola di Bari-Lecce* (with C. Caputo and A. Ponzio 2006), *I dialoghi semiotici. Sul dialogo, sulla menzogna e la verità, sui nuovi mass-media, sulla retorica e l'argomentazione, sulla testualità e la discorsività, sull'ideologia e l'utopia 1982-2006* (with M. A. Bonfanti and A. Ponzio 2006), *Semiotics Today, from global semiotics to semioethics, a dialogic response* (with A. Ponzio 2006), *White matters. Athanor* (ed. 2006-7); *Fundamentos de Filosofia da Linguagem* (with P. Calefato and S. Petrilli 2007), *Comunicazione, interpretazione, traduzione* (ed. 2007), *Lineamenti di semiotica e di filosofia del linguaggio* (with A. Ponzio), 2008.