

The Role of Language and Ideology in Social Reproduction According to Rossi-Landi(*)

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Abstract

Rossi-Landi elaborated such concepts as *linguistic production*, *linguistic work* and *linguistic capital* in *social reproduction*, identifying homological relations with *material* production. These concepts describe factors that are fundamental in today's social reproduction cycle as also emerges from the circulation of such expressions as 'immaterial resource', 'immaterial capital' and 'immaterial investment' in linguistic usage today. All this is accompanied by awareness of the importance of education, information and specialized knowledge for development and competition in present day *knowledge society*. Until recently material production and linguistic production, that is, manual work and intellectual work, were thought to be separate but related homologically at profound genetic and structural levels. The novelty is that in the world of global communication linguistic and material production have merged. The computer has united *hardware* and *software* in a single unit. The connection between work and material artefacts, on one hand, and work and linguistic artefacts, on the other, is now obvious such that the superior capacity of linguistic, that is, 'immaterial work', is also now obvious. Linguistic work leads the processes of production and development.

1. 'Linguistic work' or 'immaterial work' in global communication-production system

Rossi-Landi authored *Il linguaggio come lavoro e come mercato* in 1968 (now 2003, Eng. trans. *Language as Work and Trade*, 1983) which still today is extraordinarily topical for foresight and analytical capacity. He anticipated problems now centrally important in the present phase of development in the late capitalist system, where communication is a constitutive factor in production and so-called 'immaterial work' is the principle resource. Communication plays a dominant role not only in the intermediary phase in the productive cycle, the phase of *circulation* or *exchange* according to market logic, but also in the phases of *production* and *consumption*, especially with the development of technology, therefore of automation, computerization, and of the communication network at large. After realizing that *commodities are messages*, and, now, that *messages are commodities*, it is obvious that *consumption is essentially consumption of communication*, and *production is production of communication*, and vice versa.

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', which circulate with the statement of awareness of the fundamental importance for development and competition in present-day *knowledge society* of education, information and specialized

knowledge. 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 artefacts, on the one hand, and work and linguistic artefacts, on the other, has been evidenced unequivocally to the point that the superior capacity of linguistic work, which is ‘immaterial work’, is obvious. In other words, linguistic work leads the processes of production and development.

The underlying assumption of this book of 1968 by Rossi-Landi is that *linguistic production* is a fundamental factor in social life, and as such is *homologous* with the production of utensils and artefacts. (This assumption was to be developed more systematically in theoretical terms in his subsequent books, such as *Linguistics and Economics*, 1975). Verbal language is described as a system of artefacts, while other systems of artefacts are conceptualized in terms of *nonverbal sign systems*. This approach led to expanding the concept of linguistic production into *sign production*. In such a framework it is clear that concepts originally developed in different fields from the verbal, such as ‘consumption’, ‘work’, ‘capital’, ‘market’, ‘property’, ‘exploitation’, ‘alienation’ and ‘ideology’, may be applied to studies on language. In the same way, concepts developed in relation to studies on verbal language are applied to nonverbal sign systems, such that we may speak of *linguistic consumption*, *linguistic work*, *linguistic capital*, *linguistic alienation*, and so forth. Rossi-Landi’s research lays the foundations for an approach to *general semiotics* that includes and unites *linguistics* and *economics* as well as other *social sciences*. His view on human behaviour is global and evidences with great foresight that separatism among the sciences in globalized communication-production society is untenable, indeed truly anachronistic.

2. Linguistic work and linguistic use

The originality of Rossi-Landi’s approach clearly emerges if confronted with Wittgenstein’s conception of language as formulated in the *Philosophical Investigations*, some aspects of which Rossi-Landi develops. These include such statements as words are tools, language globally is an instrument oriented by our interests, speech is a human activity among others with which it interacts, a language has meaning in its public context, to imagine a language means to imagine a form of life, and the like. By contrast with Wittgenstein’s position, Rossi-Landi’s interpretation of language as work underlines, firstly, the inadequacy of simply maintaining that language is a ‘public’ fact that may be checked intersubjectively, and that linguistic behaviour necessarily occurs between two or more persons. More than this, the ‘public context’ of language should be considered as a social context. It is not sufficient to describe that which occurs when already formed individuals begin speaking to each other; on the contrary, individuals must be recognized as having developed socially into what they are precisely *because* they speak a given language. As Marx (1953 [1857-58]) says in *Grundrisse*, the individual only relates to a language as *his own* insofar as he is a natural member of a given human community.

The theory of meaning as use has also proven to be inadequate. This approach reductively describes the use of words in terms of the situations in which linguistic games occur, excluding investigation into *how* a given use is produced. This leads to describing the instruments used for communication as given and natural rather than as historical-social. ‘I would say’, writes Rossi-Landi,

[...] that Wittgenstein lacks the notion of labour-value; that is, of the value of a given object, in this case a linguistic object, as the product of a given linguistic piece of work. From the linguistic object, he moves only forward and never backward (Rossi-Landi 2003 [1968], Eng. trans.: 31).

According to Rossi-Landi's point of view, linguistic analysis must not be limited to simply observing or describing word use. Instead, he maintains that the focus must be on 'linguistic work' through which any specific meaning comes into being, and consequently on its various component factors including motives, network of social relations, interests, economic conditions, historically specified needs of the subject using the pieces of language under examination.

These are the conditions through which language analysis can avoid degenerating into the 'idealism of linguistics', described by Jürgen Habermas in *Zur Logik der Sozialwissenschaften* (1967). To work in such a direction also means to overcome any limits in the linguistic approach to sociology that prevent its construction as a critical theory of society. Habermas's criticism of the linguistic approach to sociology is valid insofar as it refers to such theories of language as Wittgenstein's, or Winch's, or even Oxonian analytical philosophy in general. However, if the linguistic approach to sociology were based on a conception of language such as that proposed by Rossi-Landi, who theorized the relation between language and social work and described language itself in terms of work, Habermas's critique of the sociolinguistic approach would no longer obtain.

3. On the homology between verbal and nonverbal human communication

According to Rossi-Landi, the production and circulation of commodities and the production and circulation of messages are different aspects of the same social process, that is, the process of communication. No 'natural' divisions exist compelling us to allocate messages and commodities to different provinces. In Rossi-Landi's view this justifies the use of categories taken from the economic sciences and applied to the study of language. It is not only by pronouncing and writing words that we speak to each other and exchange messages. '*Man communicates with his whole social organization*', writes Rossi-Landi (2003 [1968], Eng. trans.: 67).

This means that all cultural phenomena may be viewed as communicative phenomena based on sign systems, and that nonverbal communication must be placed alongside verbal communication. Every single cultural fact may be approached and understood as a message assembled on the basis of codes. Therefore, a general theory of society coincides with general semiotics (see Eco 1968). 'The study of any sign-system becomes useful for the study of any other [...] especially because, in studying one system or the other, what one studies is *fundamentally the same thing*' (Rossi-Landi (2003 [1968], Eng. trans.: 57). This becomes clearer when we consider that both in the case of commodities and of linguistic messages semiotics addresses the same problems - the work that produces them and that makes exchange and communication possible (see Kristeva 1969).

Claude Lévi-Strauss (see 1958) used the categories of linguistics in his studies on the rules of matrimony and kinship systems, offering a truly formidable example of the application to nonverbal communication of conceptual frameworks elaborated in relation to verbal communication. Rossi-Landi attempted the opposite procedure: he applied to verbal language categories that had been elaborated in the study of a nonverbal communicative sign system, that is, the categories of economics in its classical phase with David Ricardo and Marx. All the same, there exist substantial differences between the approaches adopted by Lévi-Strauss and by Rossi-Landi to problems of communication. According to Rossi-Landi, Lévi-Strauss's reasoning is questionable when he justifies his application of categories proper to language to his studies on nonverbal communication in terms of 'recurrent hymns to the *esprit humain*', which implies reference to a universal unconscious activity. As Eco explains, some texts by Lévi-Strauss appeal to 'a fundamental combinatory principle at the basis of all codes [...]', to 'an elementary mechanism rooted in the functioning of the human mind [...]'. Thus the universe of social relations, myths, and language, becomes 'the setting for a game which takes place behind man's back and in which he is not involved, if not as an obedient voice which lends itself to expressing a complicated game which

surpasses and annuls him as a responsible subject' (Eco 1968: 296). In other words, human individuals do not determine their own relations; on the contrary, they are 'related' passively according to the universal laws they obey.

Instead, by recognizing human beings as the concrete subjects of history, the responsible agents of culture and communicative systems, Rossi-Landi was able to formulate his thesis of the *homology* between verbal and nonverbal communication. Linguistic work and non-linguistic work necessary in the production of physical objects may be placed on the same level. 'If we don't want to admit that something *human* can exist for man without the intervention of man himself, we must adhere to the principle that every wealth or value, however understood, is the result of a work that man has performed and can repeat' (Rossi-Landi 2003 [1968], Eng. trans.: 36). Precisely because we recognize that human beings are constructed historically through the production of tools and verbal messages, we wish to render the definition of man as a speaking and working animal a unitary definition, therefore these two modes of social behaviour are considered to be homologous.

The structural homology between material and linguistic production throws light upon the concept of double articulation in language as described by André Martinet (1960). Transition from the articulation of sentences into words and monemes to the articulation of monemes into phonemes proves to be oriented in the opposite direction from the real processes of linguistic production (see Rossi-Landi 2003 [1968], Eng. trans.: 119-121, 158-158). Speakers carry out linguistic work - phylogenetically and ontogenetically - proceeding from sounds that are initially disarticulate, but that are subsequently articulated into words, phrases and sentences of increasing complexity.

The linguistic theory of double articulation assumes that language is no more than a formal machine, while neglecting the facts of experience and the needs upon which linguistic behaviour depends. It puts aside the problem of the rise of meaning and use of sentences, limiting its approach to describing their constituent parts. Rossi-Landi observed that when we analyze or 'order' (as Martinet says) sentences into words and monemes and monemes into phonemes, we are not saying anything about 'semantic content' which is 'added' at the level of sentences as opposed to the level of monemes and words, and at the level of monemes as opposed to the level of phonemes. Nothing is said about the human operations through which semantic content is produced. The work of analyzing sentences into words and monemes, and monemes into phonemes is abstract-analytical work that has very little to do with the social linguistic work through which the objects studied by the linguist are originally formed and must not be mistaken for this.

In chapter VI of his book of 1968 (see Rossi-Landi 2003 [1968], Eng. trans.: 118-152), Rossi-Landi proposes a *homological scheme for linguistic production*, which unlike 'double articulation theory' is potentially interdisciplinary because it is intentionally *pre-disciplinary*. To refer to a pre-categorical level means to question the idea of science as something that has already been formed and defined, as well as to criticize scientific specialization insofar as it loses sight of the human needs for which it was originally developed.

4. Ideology and linguistic alienation

To consider language from the point of view of historical materialism and of the categories of economics, affords a better understanding of another important phenomenon evidenced in contemporary literature, that of *linguistic alienation*. The global approach to linguistic and non-linguistic techniques views linguistic alienation in terms of a process that concerns technique in general - the process of losing sight of the function of work.

In this way the speaker loses his contact and exchange with nature and with other men: that contact and that exchange which had originally presided over the formation of his language, and which had

been deposited and taken shape in it as specific productive operations together with the results of such operations understood as use-values. Since that happened, the linguistic product has been handed down only as already-produced, and the model of the product is being re-produced only for the purpose of consuming its tokens in order to aliment the system of production. The needs which language should satisfy - basically, that of being able to really express oneself and that of communicating and being really understood within the division of labor - have moved into the background. (Rossi-Landi 1994 [1972]: 172)

In a situation of linguistic alienation, as maintained by Roland Barthes (1967), a given language is elaborated by a decision-making group, not by the mass of speakers. The speaking subject follows 'logotechniques', on other words, prefabricated languages. The speaking subject lives the condition of *being spoken by his or her own words*, the passive repeater of superpersonal models, the spokesman of totalized reality, which s/he did not construct nor whose purpose and function s/he understands. In such a situation, the speaking subject does not know *why* s/he speaks *as s/he speaks*, and yet s/he belongs to linguistic production processes which condition him/her from the very beginning of life, which impose a specific worldview, and which make original or simply different work activity rather difficult (see Rossi-Landi 2003 [1968], Eng. trans.: 62-63).

The problem of linguistic alienation cannot be adequately solved by simply denouncing deviations from paradigms that are pre-established or are proposed within the boundaries of this or that language viewed as a self-sufficient system; or by simply constructing one's own model of how language should be. To place the problem in such terms means to consider language in relation to itself, therefore to raise an issue of mere *syntax* (on this aspect see the chapter entitled 'Sintassi e scienza nuova', in Semerari 1965). On the contrary, we must consider language in relation to existence and connect the linguistic to the non-linguistic. In this way linguistic analysis may carry out an effective therapeutic function, offering an opening onto the world of life as it is effectively experienced.

In chapter IV of *Language as Work and Trade* (Eng. trans.: 83-106) entitled 'Ideology as Social Planning,' Rossi-Landi addresses the problem of ideology in strict relation to the semiotic approach to society. Furthermore, Rossi-Landi acknowledges that his own viewpoint is ideological and attempts to explain it. He maintains that language described in terms of work and its products should not only be related to reality as it has already been formed - 'the already-made-world' of Husserlian descent (see Husserl 1948) - but also to reality that does not yet exist but that may be imagined on the basis of historical context, and assumed as a project. Reference here is to the notion of social reality as it may have come into existence had man not forgotten the intentionality of certain concrete operations, had his praxis not been reified. The ideology subtending Rossi-Landi's approach, as he explains himself, is that of 'a social planning founded on a dynamic rather than a static privilege, founded in the future rather than in the past, intra-historically rather than extra-historically [...]. This type of planning gives rise not to a science of what has already been done, but to a *science of what is to be done*' (Rossi-Landi 2003 [1968], Eng. trans.: 106).

5. Doctrine of ideologies and semiotics of social communication programs

The quarterly journal *Ideologie* (Ideologies) was founded in the spring of 1967 by Rossi-Landi. The general policy was 'non academic and anti-specialist'. The journal and the collateral activities ended in 1972.

In the spring of 1979, the first issue of another quarterly journal *Scienze umane* (Human Sciences) appeared. Also founded and directed by Rossi-Landi, it was published in Bari by Dedalo Editrice. The editorial offices were located in Bari under the direction of Augusto Ponzio. The sixth issue,

distributed in December 1980, was its last.

The first number of *Ideologie* did not include a presentation or an editorial. Editorials and introductions to monographic issues or to sections of issues began to appear with the third issue, in 1968. They were later assembled together in a volume of the Edizioni di *Ideologie* under the title *Scritti programmatici di Ideologie* (Programmatic writings of *Ideologie*) (1972). This volume also contained some of the 'Forewords' to the 'Dizionario teorico-ideologico' (Theoretical-ideological dictionary) published in *Ideologie* starting with the twelfth issue in 1970. The goal was to examine, demystify and redefine some of the concepts that are at the basis of the humanities such as 'Semiotica' (Semiotics), or that are used in political circles and in related theoretical debates, such as 'Calcolatori e cervelli' (Computers and brains), 'Corpo' (Body), 'Progresso tecnologico' (Technological progress), 'Razzismo' (Racism).

The first editorial, 'Per un rinnovamento della elaborazione ideologica' (For a renewal of ideological elaboration), had already been printed in the journal 'Il sedicesimo', 13, in the spring of 1968. On the one hand, this editorial reiterated the list of subjects that the journal aimed to cover, and which was published in the first issue of *Ideologie*. On the other hand, it echoed the concept of 'ideology' as it was analyzed and defined in the paper by Rossi-Landi entitled 'Ideologia come progettazione sociale' (Ideology as social planning) with which the first issue had opened.

This is the third notebook of *Ideologie* and it is the first of 1968. As we have begun to show, the journal intends to study contemporary ideologies. This will be done both by analyzing systematic and recurring aspects of ideology in general, starting with its nature and structure, and focusing the attention on several topics which require updating: communist polycentrism and the revisionist trends of Marxism in socialist and capitalist countries, populist and/or trade unionist or corporativistic ideologies (fascism, nationalism, some tendencies of political catholicism), the ideologies of capitalism and economic development, the foundations of Marxian doctrine with respect to the new sciences of man and the ideological character of these sciences, discernible in the manifestation of their 'objectivity' and 'neutrality' (and it remains to be seen if this obtains only with neo-capitalist manifestations or if it is inevitable even at a deeper level). *Ideologie* puts forth a concept of ideology as false thought and false praxis necessarily embodied by some social programming or project. With the latter I mean a design, proposed or only just experienced (knowingly or not), of a historically grounded construction of society. (Rossi-Landi 1967-72, 3 [1968]: 1)

In his paper 'Ideologia come progettazione sociale' Rossi-Landi brought to completion an important operation: he had managed to go beyond the pseudo-definition of ideology as *false conscience* that, in effect, is a negative evaluation of ideology (the definition is due to an extrapolation from the particular sense Marx and Engels had given to the concept, going still further back it is due to the pejorative connotation attached to the term coined by the 'Ideologues').

Rossi-Landi's overcoming of this understanding of ideology rested on the interpretation of ideology as *social planning*. Such an interpretation permitted the preservation and even the theoretical justification of the meaning of ideology as false consciousness. It placed it, however, in a wider horizon that, albeit referring to ideology in general, did not give a merely descriptive or relativistic interpretation. Thus, ideology was characterized (negatively) as 'false thought and false praxis' while it was examined as 'social planning'. This, in turn, made it possible to address the issues in a manner that acknowledged the inevitable historical conditioning of all ideological discourses. At the same time Rossi-Landi's approach was undertaking a project leading to the critique and the dialectic overcoming of false consciousness and false praxis, and, hence, toward the recovery of a positive

evaluation of ideology as *revolutionary* thought.

Ideology was placed by Rossi-Landi within the framework of the totality most relevant to it, that is, the alienated human condition. It was a move entirely in synchrony with the logical-historical method adopted by *Ideologie*, in opposition to specialist separatism and the tendency to abstract the object of study from the totality of which it is a part. And it is the method used in the collection of Rossi-Landi's essays published in 1968 under the title of *Il linguaggio come lavoro e come mercato* (Eng. trans. 1983; see Rossi-Landi 2003 [1968]), in his earlier (1967) paper on ideology, and in a subsequent volume, *Semiotica e ideologia* (1972, now 1994), that expanded his study of ideology by considering it in necessary relation with sign systems. Indeed, a doctrine of ideologies can only become reality through the mediation of semiotics, since ideologies transmit themselves by signs that are then scrutinized and demystified through the study of sign systems. By the same token, Rossi-Landi in his foreword (1971) to *Semiotica e ideologia* stated that

a semiotics unsupported by a doctrine of ideologies remains a specialized science, detached from praxis, despite the fact that it presents itself as a general science of signs [...]. (Rossi-Landi 1994 [1972]: 8)

According to Rossi-Landi, the discourse that has ideology as its object fits within general semiotics understood as a Hegelo-Marxian science, based on the logical-historical method, on the use of abstractions which isolate historically real totalities but also join them to larger totalities, thereby determining the specific structures. Against specialism, the separatism of the various disciplines studying sign systems, semiotics must fulfil itself, Rossi-Landi believed, as a global science that situates the objects of research resulting from necessary, solitary and abstracting operations, in the totality of which they partake. Semiotics takes a stand against the social system of which ideologies and the object of study are a part, thus rendering explicit the social planning that presides over the system. Said differently, semiotics does not only foreground the programs that sustain, even unconsciously, human behaviour, but precisely because of its totalizing perspective, because it brings to awareness the place of programs in the social system - thus making evident their historical and social specification, their political function - affirms itself as a critique of sign systems, as the formulation of new and more human projects.

In this sense, the semiotic study of ideologies transcends the limit usually found in research on social communication (Rossi-Landi, in those years had in mind positions such as those of the psychiatrist Albert E. Schefflen and the semiotician Edward T. Hall). It is a prime requirement of the semiotic study of the programs of social communication to pose the problem of the interests governing the integration of sign systems in a given social organization, the problem of the conditions of power. Such a study assumes each sign system as a totality whose functioning does not only depend on 'the play of its parts, but on the play of the totality as a part', so that each program would result controlled by a higher social level. This is the problem of ideologies that, in so far as they are ideologies of the dominant class, signify and organize behaviour in a certain manner. In the light of this premise, Rossi-Landi defined the dominant class ('Programmi della comunicazione' [Programs of communication], an entry in the 'Dizionario teorico-ideologico', *Ideologie* 16-17: 34, now in Rossi-Landi 1994 [1972]: 203-204) as the class that owns the control of the emission and circulation of verbal and nonverbal messages constituting a given community.

Semiotics - as it was conceived by Rossi-Landi starting with his 1965 essay 'Il linguaggio come lavoro e mercato' (which appeared in *Nuova Corrente* and, as explained above, was later republished as a book with the same title in 1968: see Rossi-Landi 2003) - recognizes the existence of non-ideological spaces of social reality. By unmasking the ideology that subtends - both in the realm of common behaviour and in the scientific or literary realm - what is presented as 'natural', 'spontaneous', as 'a given', as 'realistic', semiotics shows the inescapable placement of every behaviour either in the program of the maintenance and reproduction of the classist society, or in the

program of its critique and of its undoing. And thus it becomes disalienating, revolutionary praxis.

6. Ideology and false consciousness

Starting with the specification that the reality of alienation is socio-historical, Rossi-Landi considered ideology on the basis of the following hypothesis:

In the complex exchange between nature and man and between man and man, during which man has slowly become something other than nature and is conscious of such differentiation, some real fundamental operations must have become lost or confused and some fictitious fundamental operations must have been introduced: as a result of which the course of civilization, including the theories that man himself started to form in the so-called historical period, in the strict sense of the word, has not been what it could have been without those losses, those confusions and those intrusions. That is, as they say, the course of civilization has falsified itself. [...] Alienation is a falsification, a general malfunction in the formation and the unfolding of history. (*Ideologie*, 1: 3)

As mentioned, Rossi-Landi's merit on the question of the specification of the concept of 'ideology' consists in having shown that, although one may say that ideology is false consciousness, it does not exhaust itself in the latter. The concepts of ideology and false consciousness do not coincide. Rossi-Landi identified two types of differences between them: a *difference in degree* and a *qualitative difference*.

The first consists of the fact that false consciousness is a less developed and determined ideology while ideology is the more developed and determined consciousness. From this point of view, the relationship between false consciousness and ideology corresponds to the relationship between consciousness and thought: false consciousness is present at a low level of conceptual elaboration while ideology occurs at a higher level. More exactly, ideology is a discursive rationalization, that is, a theoretic reordering of an attitude or state of false consciousness.

The second difference, the qualitative one, concerns the relationship between ideology and signs, and, in particular, the use of verbal language: ideology is false consciousness that uses sign elaboration and verbal forms in a specific language. Both differences may be synthesized by stating that ideology differs from false consciousness insofar as it is false thought. Rossi-Landi observes:

this corresponds to the fundamental intuition of Hegel, that puts the entire elaboration of the 'theoretical' spirit somewhere between consciousness and thought, that is, between intuition and representation. It is in the second phase of representation, the imagination, that the sign surfaces and it is in its third phase, memory, that language is formed.

And in parenthesis he adds:

(In Hegelian terms, it is possible, therefore, to have a phenomenology of false consciousness or ideology, a psychology - and perhaps today one could say, a semiotic phenomenology may only concern itself with that which precedes language).

But ideology, according to Rossi-Landi, is not only explained in terms of false consciousness and false thought. It is also false praxis. In the case of both false consciousness and false thought one is dealing with a separation from praxis and vice versa. Therefore, ideology is false thought and false praxis. The dialectic between false consciousness, false thought or ideology, on the one hand, and false praxis, on the other, is connected to the fact that ideology manifests itself as social planning. In

order to understand ideology, once again it becomes necessary to consider it as part of the totality to which it belongs. According to Rossi-Landi:

It is always a question of a separation among the parts - and in this case originally two parts - of a totality. The totality is grasped in two different phases of its complexification, at the consciousness level and then at the level of thought. Reflecting on its immediate past of false consciousness (and false praxis of that consciousness) and finding itself juxtaposed to false praxis or even under the urgency of these factors, thought tries to save itself by rationalizing procedures that at least give it the illusion that it is a member, an active member, of a less lacerated family. The definition I am elaborating, therefore, is not in any way that of thought which would be false because it is separated from praxis, and that is all. It is also, *ipso jure*, the definition of false praxis, because it is separated from thought. [...] There is no thought that may take pleasure *on its own account* (independently of its relationships with praxis) in the property of *not being false*: so that only on the basis of thought, and that alone, is it possible to measure and denounce false thought. (Rossi-Landi 1967-72:1 [1967]: 7)

Every ideology is social planning and consideration of the dialectic between consciousness and praxis allows Rossi-Landi to specify the difference between innovative or revolutionary planning and conservative or reactionary planning. Thought, action and the social programs that tend to draw together consciousness and praxis are revolutionary, social planning that tends to create obstacles to this is conservative.

The editorial in the third issue, 'Per un rinnovamento dell'elaborazione ideologica' (Toward a renewal of theoretical elaboration), rehearses once again the conception of ideology as false thought and false praxis necessarily materializing in some social plan, or in short, in a design proposed or suffered, consciously or not, aiming at the historical construction of society. The doctrine of ideologies is presented as a general science of the socio-historical domain. This is expressed in the subtitle of the journal 'Quaderni di storia contemporanea' (Notebooks on contemporary history'). In the editorial, Rossi-Landi confirmed the ideological character of the journal, which he envisaged as working toward an innovative, revolutionary, disalienating type of social planning. In this text he revisits Marxian critique, inserting it within the dialectic of its particular totality, that is, capitalist society in the phase of high industrial development, and enlarges upon it, developing it as critique of the superstructure and complementing critique of the economic structure. In his analysis, therefore, Marxian thought figures as an exhaustive critique of the techniques of economic, social, psychological and linguistic integration elaborated by the system.

His interest in the theory of ideology clearly emerged in his book of 1978, *Ideologia*. Of particular value in this book is the section on 'Sign Systems, Ideologies and the Production of Consensus', because of the connection established between Rossi-Landi's concept of ideology and Antonio Gramsci's thought. According to Rossi-Landi, Gramsci had already identified the role that sign systems play in social reproduction and in the relationship between 'structure' and 'superstructure', even if in pre-semiotic terms. We could make the claim that Rossi-Landi's meditation on ideology represents the development of Gramscian intuitions (on the relation between Rossi-Landi and Gramsci, see Ponzio 1991: 205-291). Placing the Gramscian concept of the New Prince in semiotic terms Rossi-Landi wrote in *Ideologia*:

The basic structure for the new prince will be constituted by continually interacting verbal and non-verbal sign systems, reorganized so as to constitute the realization of a revolutionary social teleology. In this way, and to this extent, a social practice upheld by those who exercise political power can promote and implement a new ideology. (1982 [1978]: 76-77)

7. Social reproduction

Rossi-Landi's book on *Ideology*, it too translated into English (as *Marxism and Ideology*), opens the third phase in his research. This volume is a long, detailed and articulate development of his ideas as previously formulated in his above-mentioned essay 'Ideology as Social Planning' (Rossi-Landi 2003 [1968]), presented with new ideas in the framework of his reflections on social reproduction. This volume is rich in exhaustive exemplifications and also includes an interdisciplinary bibliography on ideology.

However, the working hypothesis around which Rossi-Landi's research rotates as it develops into his volume of 1985, *Metodica filosofica e scienza dei segni* (a collection of essays belonging to a unitary research project), is the following: that recurrent difficulties in the study of the relations between structure and superstructure derive from the lack of a mediating element. According to Rossi-Landi, this mediating element consists in the totality of sign systems, verbal and nonverbal, operative in all human communities. The pieces in the game are not two, but three: to the modes of production and to the ideological elaboration of the superstructure must be added sign systems. Consequently, a central topic throughout this volume is social reproduction viewed in terms of semiosis:

Once the position of sign systems within social reproduction has at least been glimpsed, we can afford to state that every typology of signs is necessarily a function of social reproduction. [...] If there is one metaphysical belief which is invalidated at its roots by this approach, it is the belief that it may be possible never to discover a typology valid for all times and places, and perhaps common to all living beings. From this it does not follow, however, that common elements in various instances of social reproduction, or in the reproduction of human and other animals, cannot be discovered and usefully investigated. (Rossi-Landi 1985a: 144)

In Rossi-Landi's view the end of the skein of social reproduction must lie somewhere, which if pulled should lead to the proposal of a typology of signs. The end of the skein that Rossi-Landi believed we should begin pulling was the methodological notion of 'sign residues'. These are present in the semioses of all human communities on the side of both *signantia* and *signata*. And Rossi-Landi's theory of sign residues plays an important part in his *methodics of common semiosis* as it evolves out of his *methodics of common speech*.

Translation from the Italian by **Susan Petrilli**

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