



Wednesday



October 11

**Keynote Speaker**

**Prof. Ivo A. Ibri**

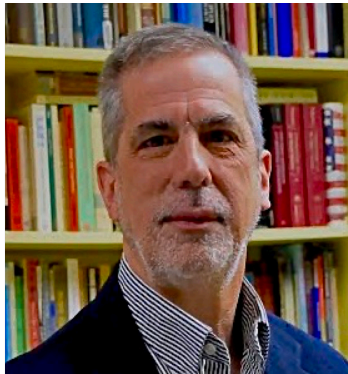
**Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo, Brazil**

## **Rescuing Forgotten Signs: In Search of What Heralds Rebirth and Renewal**

Considering the idea of forgetting as a setting aside and not as some form of mnemonic lapse, the question arises as to what signs the harsh otherness of reality conditions us to forget? A type of forgetting that casts to the wayside what could, in fact, nourish all that is proposed as new, possibly stemming from a rebirth of what had indeed not even been born. I will explore in this text precisely how forgetting is imposed on us by the choices we make, our existential attitude, namely, that which, from the universe of possibly experienceable phenomena, selects from them only what matters for the *telos* that galvanizes our interests, our objects of desire. Inspired by Peirce's philosophy, especially his categories combined with his Semiotics and Pragmatism, I will suggest that we think about the perceptual role given by the very nature of our language and how it outlines our view of the world that reveals as a residue a part of it in which, ultimately, resides what could potentially contain an unlimited genesis of creation and invention.

**Ivo A. Ibri** is full professor of philosophy at the Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo, Brazil. He is the founder and director of the Center for Pragmatism Studies at his university and editor of the journal *Cognitio*. His work is mainly focused on American pragmatism and German idealism. He published several essays on pragmatism and semiotics and the books on Peirce's work called *Kósmos Noetós* (Springer 2017) and *Semiotics and Pragmatism: Theoretical Interfaces* (Springer 2022). He is fellow past president (2014–2016) of The Charles Sanders Peirce Society and honorary president of the Sociedad Latinoamericana Peirce.

Thursday



October 12

**Presidential Address**

**Prof. Michael L. Raposa**

**Lehigh University, USA**

**2023 President of Semiotic Society of America**

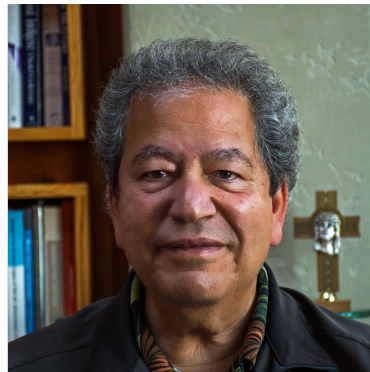
## **Semiotics and Psychotherapy**

The practice of psychotherapy involves the careful reading and continuous rereading of certain thoughts, feelings, and behaviors as potential *signs* of some disorder or maladjustment, in order to facilitate treatment. That treatment itself involves the exchange of signs within a process of verbal communication and interaction. This address will explore some resources in semiotic theory that might be useful for understanding the nature and purpose of psychotherapy. My attention will be directed not exclusively but primarily to Peirce's theory of signs and semiosis as a potential resource, and to contemporary third-wave cognitive behavioral therapies as the focus of my analysis.

Michael L. Raposa is a Professor of Religion Studies and the E. W. Fairchild Professor of American Studies at Lehigh University. He has published four books: *Peirce's Philosophy of Religion* (1989), *Boredom and the Religious Imagination* (1999), *Meditation and the Martial Arts* (2003), and *Theosemiotic: Religion, Reading, and the Gift of Meaning* (2020) He is also the author of numerous articles evaluating the relevance of pragmatism and semiotic theory for contemporary theology and philosophy of religion. Raposa served as president of the Charles S. Peirce Society in 2020 and is currently acting as president of the Institute for American Religious and Philosophical Thought.



Thursday  
October 12



**Joint Plenary Speakers**

**Br. Norman Hippius**  
Saint Vincent College, USA

**Prof. Farouk Seif**  
Antioch University Seattle, USA

## **Contemplative Reflections on Signs of Rebirth and Renewal**

This is a dyadic conversation between Br. Norman Hippius and Prof. Farouk Y. Seif, as they engage in contemplative reflections on the theme of the 2023 SSA Conference: *Signs of Rebirth and Renewal*. It is not a coincidence that such an inspirational theme is exemplified in a fraternal dialogue and takes place at the University of the Incarnate Word, which is a genuine representation of God's incarnation in a human form. These contemplative reflections shed light on maintaining a serene disposition despite life's unpredictable vicissitudes. Such a disposition is congruent with the notions of Aristotelian *eudaimonia*, Benedictine spirituality, and Peircean Agapism, which not only are stable and persistent but also persevere through traversing the threshold of life's ups and downs. By way of recalling milestone events in their life-experiences and through engaging in dialogical relation, Hippius and Seif evoke a glimpse of the palingenetic (rebirthing) and synechistic (continuous) process of the lifeworld, where the possibilities for regeneration and revitalization are inexhaustible.

**Br. Norman Hippius, O.S.B** is a professed Benedictine monk of the Saint Vincent Archabbey. He served as the seventeenth President of Saint Vincent College from 2010 until 2019. Although he earned his Ph.D. in mathematics from Northwestern University in 1976, he has held administrative positions (acting as dean, provost, and chief operating officer) at Saint Vincent beginning in 1980. While he was president, the College completed a \$100+M campaign, which enabled the construction of the Dupre Science Pavilion (146k sq ft) and Latimer Library (53k sq ft), as well as stimulating an increase of the endowment from \$63M to \$113M. He played a significant role in the development of the Fred M. Rogers Center and the Winnie Palmer Nature Reserve. He is now semi-retired, teaching part-time, assisting as a mission officer for the College, and coordinating the Deely Project.

**Farouk Y. Seif, PhD, AIA** is a Professor Emeritus, Antioch University Seattle, a former President and Executive Director of the Semiotic Society of America, a registered architect, and an artist. Seif serves as the Editor of the Semiotic Society of America Yearbook, *Semiotics*. Prior to becoming an American citizen, Seif was born and raised in Egypt with a Coptic background. His main interests are design, semiotics, paradoxes, transdisciplinarity, and transmodernity. He has taught in universities and lectured at conferences worldwide. He was the recipient of the 2010 Fulbright Specialists Program at University of Sofia, Bulgaria. He has authored more than 70 articles and a dozen book chapters. His book "*De-sign*" in the *Transmodern World: Envisioning Reality Beyond Absoluteness* is a state-of-the-art integration of design and semiotics.

Friday



October 13

**Plenary Speaker**

**Prof. Seema Khanwalkar**  
CEPT University, Ahmedabad, India

## **Principles of Karma and Environmental Ethics: Searching for Signs of Renewal in Modern India**

In keeping with the theme of the conference, this presentation will highlight the Pre-Modern relationship of Nature and Culture in India, in profound theories like the Karma that is intrinsic to a human-nature cyclic renewal as it sees the animals, humans, the universe, the stars in a largely profound ecological vision that encapsulated a large part of the civilization. This vision that sees humans as interconnected with nature and to harm nature, plants, and animals amounts to harming oneself has undoubtedly been lost in the quest for modernity in India. A significant part of this presentation will also invoke the Eco semiotic perspective of the Tartu School of Semiotics that has highlighted interesting arguments in the anthropocentric writing about nature. “How is our thinking about rocks conditioned by those rocks? Or, better yet, how is our thinking about grass or about an old irascible professor, say, conditioned by our thinking about rocks?”

Seema Khanwalkar is an Adjunct Professor in the faculty of Design, CEPT University, Ahmedabad. She teaches Design Semiotics, Semantics, Cultural Anthropology to Bachelors and Post Graduate students. She is also a visiting faculty to the Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad where she teaches a highly successful course to Post Graduate students on Semiotics Media and Brand Communications. She is also engaged with doctoral program at CEPT. She is the author of India's first book on Applied Semiotics for the Indian Culture Context that covers a wide range of themes from performing cultures, digital futures, space and geographies, architecture and design. She is the Vice President of the Asian Semiotics Association Seoul, South Korea. She is on the executive committee of the IASS.

Saturday



October 14

**Plenary Speaker**

**Prof. Sally Ann Ness**

University of California, Riverside, USA

## **Pregnant Signs: Simultaneous and Immediate Sign Relations in the Semiotics of Saussure and Peirce**

“Synchrony” factors prominently into Saussurian structuralist semiotic theory, while “the Immediate” is of central importance in the later pragmaticist semiotic of Charles Sanders Peirce. While the two approaches are often characterized as fundamentally different, an alignment between the two is conceivable when synchrony and immediacy are examined as both relate to rebirth. Three aspects of rebirth are of important here: 1) “(re)birth” represents a moving, irreducibly triadic reality; 2) (re)birth belongs to a conceptual complex oriented around “bearing” and “being born/e;” and 3) this complex exhibits a processual spatial phrasing of opening-before/after-closing. When seen in relation to these three aspects, both semiotic traditions may be understood to deal comparably with a condition that might be termed *sign pregnancy*. This convergence, however, depends on the definition given to “synchronic,” a definition that must be grounded in simultaneity of action rather than in the spatial trope of a “point” in time.

**Sally Ann Ness** is Professor Emerita of Anthropology at University of California, Riverside. She is author of *Body, Movement, and Culture; Kinesthetic and Visual Symbolism in a Philippine Community* (U Pennsylvania Press, 1992), *Where Asia Smiles* (U Pennsylvania Press, 2003), and *Choreographies of Landscape; Signs of Performance in Yosemite National Park* (Berghahn Press, 2016), as well as co-editor with Carrie Noland of *Migrations of Gesture* (U Minnesota Press, 2008). Other publications have appeared in *American Anthropologist*, *Semiotica*, *TAJS*, *Cultural Anthropology*, and *American Ethnologist*. Areas of research interest include the anthropology of tourism, symbolic and semiotic anthropology, cultural performance, and Southeast Asian Studies. She is currently conducting a study of rock climbing in Joshua Tree National Park.

Sunday



October 15

**Plenary Speaker**

**Prof. Massimo Leone**  
University of Turin, Italy

## Facial Rebirths

In the aftermath of the tragic 2018 shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas School, where their son Joaquin lost his life, Manuel and Patricia Oliver harnessed advanced deepfake technology to virtually resurrect Joaquin. This initiative, conducted through their nonprofit organization Change the Ref in collaboration with McCann Health, aimed to raise awareness about stricter gun safety laws. Using deep learning and synthetic images, they recreated Joaquin's essence in a deepfake, allowing him to deliver a powerful message advocating for voters to support candidates committed to ending gun-related tragedies. This digital projection symbolized Joaquin's unrealized potential in the democratic process due to his untimely death. The subsequent analysis delves into the societal, technological, and communicative aspects of this case study, exploring its impact on the U.S. political landscape and its reception by media and society. It also widens its scope to consider deepfakes' broader role in virtually resurrecting individuals, particularly in fostering positive community engagement and digital collectives.

Massimo Leone, University of Turin, specializes in the philosophy of communication, cultural semiotics, and visual semiotics. He is a part-time professor at the University of Shanghai and an associate member of Cambridge Digital Humanities. He directs the Institute for Religious Studies at the Bruno Kessler Foundation. Leone has authored books, edited volumes, and published numerous articles on semiotics, religious studies, and visual studies. He holds prestigious grants and editorial positions for academic journals and book series.

