



I Think I Am a Verb: More Contributions to the Doctrine of Signs (Topics in Contemporary Semiotics)

By Thomas A. Sebeok

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My writing career has been, at least in this one respect, idiosyncratic: it had to mark and chart, step by step, its own peculiar campaign. My earliest papers, beginning in 1942, were technical articles in this or that domain of Uralic linguistics, ethnography, and folklore, with a sprinkling of contributions to North and South American linguistics. In 1954, my name became fecklessly associated with psycholinguistics, then, successively, with explorations in my theology, religious studies, and stylistic problems. It now takes special effort for me to even revive the circumstances under which I came to publish, in 1955, a hefty tome on the supernatural, another, in 1958, on games, and yet another, in 1961, utilizing a computer for extensive sorting of literary information. By 1962, I had edged my way into animal communication studies. Two years after that, I first whiffled through what Gavin Ewart evocatively called "the tulgey wood of semiotics." In 1966, I published three books which temporarily bluffed some of my friends into conjecturing that I was about to metamorphose into a historiographer of linguistics. The topmost layer in my scholarly stratification dates from 1976, when I started to compile what eventually became my "semiotic tetralogy," of which this volume may supposedly be the last. In the language of "Jabberwocky," the word "tulgey" is said to connote variability and evasiveness. This notwithstanding, the allusion seems to me apt.

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