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Type: Monograph

Title: The Machinery of Talk: Charles Peirce and the Sign Hypothesis

Author: Freadman, Anne

Year: 2004

Place: Stanford

Publisher: Stanford University Press

Abstract: This radical reevaluation of one of the foundational figures of semiotics presents Peirce as the theorist of the "machinery of talk" rather than of the mind and its contents. The book is a genealogy of Peirce's writings on signs that seeks to account for the changes displayed across forty years of his work. The author's comprehensive knowledge of Peirce's work brings an incisive understanding to his notoriously elaborate and complex theory of signs, at the same time challenging some standard readings in Peirce scholarship. Freadman introduces the postulate of "genre" in order to argue that the transformation of materials from one genre in and by the objectives of another can account for the modifications in sign theory observable through the course of Peirce's career. The Machinery of Talk engages on a theoretical level with general issues in semiotics, taking Peirce's writings as a case study through which to investigate the adequacy of a theory of signs to account for the way "talk" works. It finds that "the sign" is inadequate without the accompanying postulate of "genre."

Language: English

Keywords: Semeiotic, Semiotics, Sign