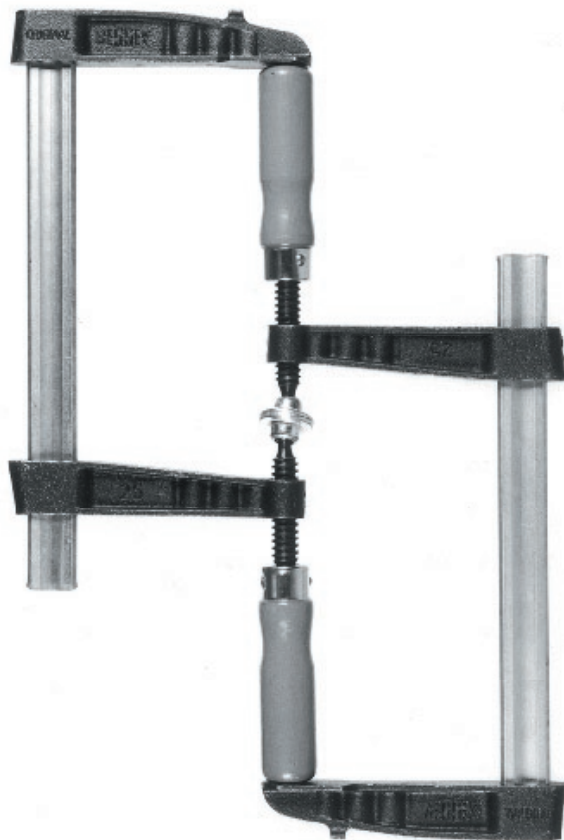


SEMIOTICS

SEMINARS, SPRING SEMESTER 1997



Center for Semiotisk Forskning

Center for Semiotic Research · Centre de Recherches Sémiotiques

UNIVERSITY OF AARHUS

Cover illustration:

Karl Christiansen: *Selv-reference* [*Self-reference*], 1993. Photo: Åge Lund Jensen.

WHAT IS THIS THING CALLED **SEMIOTICS**?

What you need to know in order to decide if this thing going on at the **Center for Semiotic Research**, - open for general scholarly participation on an informal level as well as in formalized terms, and inviting students and researchers from the Humanities at large, and from other scientific disciplines, to take part in the seminars and lectures offered, - deserves your attention, is this:

- Human beings are interrelated and related to the world by understandings based on experience, feelings, beliefs, memories, expectations, phantasy, thoughts, and communication; something is supposed to be common to the elements of this basic list, namely that their contents can all occur simultaneously to us, individually and sometimes collectively, though most often they are perhaps our 'own', not shared; and they can all be communicated, even communication can; the common property is that we all encounter them, in others as in ourselves, as that which allows us to understand things - this is what they mean. They all take part in the enterprise called Meaning. They all necessarily 'mean' something to us. We 'have' them without asking for them, they just 'come' to us. They are all 'here', near, at our disposal, but mean something which is not here, far from here, out 'there' or way back or ahead of us, 'then'... They have a signifying part and a signified part, like signs. But the funny thing is that *there are no signs*, for the signifying part is multiple, or falls apart, and does not form a unit. In thought, we need more than one premise for concluding; we always need more than one element, even in the field of emotions, for having a feeling, a belief, and so on. Meanings are read off from compositions, whether we express them or just receive them.
- Semiotics studies the structures of Meaning and the signifying compositions that make us 'mean' things by them. The exciting and intriguing difficulty is in fact that we do not 'mean' Meaning itself, but always some sort of reality, which would be 'here' 'now' and would in its turn signify things, if only we were 'there'... Meaning makes us mean something else than Meaning, namely some aspect of reality. So, Meaning is unreal, an unreal medium through which we reach out for the real thing. But if this is true, Meaning is *really* this *unreal* medium. Therefore, semiotics must introduce a new concept of reality: R1 is the reality of what we mean; R2 is the reality of Meaning or the meanings by which we mean it. *Semiotics studies R2*. That is the nucleus of the enterprise. Is semiotics then 'realistic'?

- How can there be an R2? This is the immense philosophical question.
- What is there to study in R2? This is a technical question, more practical than the first. Think of fiction, of poetry, of painting, of music, or of a technical drawing; these expressions all point towards things beyond them, and do it through the *forms* they convoke. Think of a violent thunderstorm; there are *forces* behind it; we can tell it by its convoked forms...
- What is the form of forms that compose? This is the question of a comparative and systematic semiotics. Here comes the cortege of semiotic concepts, from linguistics, mathematics, logic, cognitive sciences, literary theory etc.
- Why bother about all this? Because otherwise, we lose the whole of what Humanities - and more seriously: the Human World - is about. Except if we know it already.

PAaB

CALENDAR

Spring Semester 1997

F E B R U A R Y

Wednesday, February 5	11-13: Semiotic Modelling	14-16: General Semiotics
Thursday, February 6	12-14: Semio-linguistics	15-17: Psycho-semiotics
Wednesday, February 19	11-13: Semiotic Modelling	14-16: General Semiotics
Thursday, February 20	13-18: <i>Semiotic Research Group Meeting</i>	

M A R C H

Wednesday, March 5	11-13: Semiotic Modelling	14-16: General Semiotics
Thursday, March 6	12-14: Semio-linguistics	15-17: Psycho-semiotics
Wednesday, March 19	11-13: Semiotic Modelling	14-16: General Semiotics
Thursday, March 20	13-18: <i>Semiotic Research Group Meeting</i>	

A P R I L

Wednesday, April 2	11-13: Semiotic Modelling	14-16: General Semiotics
Thursday, April 3	12-14: Semio-linguistics	15-17: Psycho-semiotics
Wednesday, April 16	11-13: Semiotic Modelling	14-16: General Semiotics
Thursday, April 17	13-18: <i>Semiotic Research Group Meeting</i>	
Wednesday, April 30	11-13: Semiotic Modelling	14-16: General Semiotics

M A Y

Thursday, May 1	12-14: Semio-linguistics	15-17: Psycho-semiotics
Wednesday, May 14	11-13: Semiotic Modelling	14-16: General Semiotics
Thursday, May 15	13-18: <i>Semiotic Research Group Meeting</i>	

PLEASE SEE FOLLOWING PAGES FOR MORE DETAILED INFORMATION ON THE SEMINARS.



THE SEMINAR ON GENERAL SEMIOTICS

by Per Aage Brandt

Wednesdays, 2-4 p.m. February 5 & 19, March 5 & 19, April 2, 16 & 30, May 14. Room 219

TEXTS AND MEANINGS

- 1 *Back to Narrativity: Diegesis. Actions and Events.*
- 2 *Narrators and Enunciation. Viewpoints, Focus, Frame; Voice, Mode.*
- 3 *Poetic Textuality. Generalized Meter.*
- 4 *Metaphors in Discourse 1. Models of Metaphor.*
- 5 *Metaphors in Discourse 2. Embedded Metaphors in Poetry.*
- 6 *Dialogues 1. Coherence, Turn taking, Empathy.*
- 7 *Dialogues 2. Speech Acts, Mental Spaces, Reference, Relevance.*
- 8 *The Art of Quarrelling. Ethics, Violence, and other technical Details.*

As it appears from this list, only some rather classic issues are chosen for treatment. This semester is entirely dedicated to addressing current questions of text theory and analysis, and particularly those formerly discussed in Literary Theory, in pragmatics, or in cognitive semantics. The approach characteristic of Dynamic Semiotics has certain bearings on the matter, but they will not be revealed here.

Examples will be analysed, and general perspectives outlined. Perplexities will not be hidden, and the setting will oscillate between different genres of discourse, mainly: conference, workshop, and quarrel.



THE SEMIO-LINGUISTIC SEMINAR

by Lene Fogsgaard and Per Aage Brandt

Thursdays 12 a.m. - 2 p.m., February 6, March 6, April 3, May 1. Room 276.

ADVERBS AND ADVERBIAL EXPRESSIONS

Word classes exist in all human languages, and despite important variations from language to language, they have essentially the same reasons to exist, namely that 1) languages must be word-based (sentences cannot be words); 2) words, lexical units, must have a semantic source (their meaning cannot spring from their 'signifier'); 3) semantics must be anchored in human cognition (it cannot spring from pure imagination or float freely in spiritual arbitrariness); 4) cognitive semantics is evolutionarily bound to dominant fields of interaction with extra-mental and pre-mental realities (semantic domains, including a mental domain allowing for spiritual floating), from which a series of characteristic schemata and types of content seem to be regularly related.

The seminar has discussed verbs and adjectives lately; the results now lead us to the extremely intricate class called *adverbs*. What do they mean, and why and how do they do their semantic job. Adverbs are often active as introducers of *mental spaces*, a newly highlighted mechanism in semantic composition (G. Fauconnier). The seminar will apply space and blending theory to semio-linguistic standard semantics.

The significant cognitive contrast between *open and closed word classes* also concerns adverbial expressions. These involve in general lexemes of both types, but simple *root adverbs* form a closed class with - according to our recent analyses - a finite schematic morphology of circumstantial semio-syntactic (stemmatic) meanings. There seem to be a deictic series, an anaphoric series, and an interrogative series, all cross-unfolded by standard functional distinctions (means and style [how?], location [where, when?], mode [why?]). All anaphoric adverbs are space openers, we claim, and might guide other space openers in a decisive way. Also, the distribution of adverbial meaning over the semantic domains - crossing other distributions - is an amazing issue that will be raised.

As hopefully demonstrated, this fertile family of questions should *indeed* (adverb) give rise to a healthy exercise of linguistic, semiotic, and philosophical routines, models, and concepts, *respectively*.



THE PSYCHO-SEMIOTIC SEMINAR

by Bent Rosenbaum, Per Aage Brandt, and Hans-Erik Larsen

Thursdays 3 - 5 p.m., February 6, March 6, April 3, May 1. Room 219.

FACES AND GAZES

The study of semantic domains has isolated a specific field of human experience, characterised by empathy, intimacy, eye contact, face reading, and probably related to the (first and second) 'persons' of enunciation in language. Current research in Theory of Mind thus focusses on the basic mechanisms of cognition implying assumptions about the Other's Mind, its epistemic content, and its intentions, as based on face-to-face experiences. Here, we shall initiate a semiotic study of the specificity of *gaze and face perception and interaction*, as distinct from body perception, and closely linked to the attribution of feelings to both self and other. We will examine the erotic and the sexual situation as particularly relevant (since intimacy is the pragmatic condition for substantial unfoldings of these phenomena) by analysing visual pornography and by setting up new experiments (non-pornographic, though).

Among the feelings we want to study in this workshop are Anxiety and Strength of Will in faces and gazes of both sexes. Also, the classification of gaze types - object-directed, face-directed, observer-directed, etc. - and their sequential 'syntax' will be discussed and, hopefully, tested.

The pathological dimension - face and gaze interaction in psychosis - will still be of central interest.



THE SEMINAR ON SEMIOTIC MODELLING

by Peer F. Bundgaard and Svend Østergaard

Wednesdays 11 a.m - 1 p.m., February 5 & 19, March 5 & 19, April 2, 16 & 30, May 14. Room 219

INTRODUCTION

In the seminar we will, on a general level, discuss the problem of modelling as well as provide specific models within cognition and semiotics. On the general level, we have to examine the exact relation between the *model*, the *theory* of the semiotician, and the object of the semiotician's investigation. It is a possibility that the model is just a convenient way for the semiotician to illustrate his theory. In this case, any new discovery concerning the *object* has to be reflected in the model. A dual possibility is that the model has an *objective* foundation. In this case, any discovery concerning the model reflects unnoticed properties of the object of investigation. Of course, the notion objective is controversial, but, for example, a mathematical model is objective in the sense that it exists independently of the semiotician's ideas and theories.

On the level of specific models, our aim, among other things, is to provide models explaining how space structures language, thereby inverting Talmy's title: *How language structures space*. The idea is that inherent properties of the *geometries* of space are regulative for the conceptual structure pertaining to space and location of objects in space. During the seminar we will relate properties of Euclidean and projective geometry to their cognitive counterpart.



OTHER EVENTS

Center for Semiotic Research, Spring/Summer 1997

Guest Lectures by

CHRISTOPHER HOOKWAY, Professor, University of Sheffield, England

Christopher Hookway is a Guest Professor at The Center for Semiotic Research in April.

Hookway's major interest is American Pragmatism: he has written extensively on Charles S. Peirce, and wrote *Peirce* (1985) for Routledge's Arguments of the Philosophers series. In 1995, he was President of the *Charles S. Peirce Society*, a leading American organization devoted to the study of American philosophy. His interests in pragmatism have led more recently to an examination of the ideas of *William James* and *John Dewey* on rationality, truth and mind.

Although much of his current research is not historical, his ideas are shaped by this exposure to the pragmatist tradition. As well as completing a book on the influence of pragmatist ideas on recent philosophy, he has written a book on *Scepticism* (1990) and papers on epistemic evaluation which try to preserve what is of value in pragmatism. A major interest is in the relations between the evaluations of beliefs studied by epistemologists and the evaluations of actions and agents examined by those working in ethics: he hopes for a general account of norms and evaluations which finds room for both.

CHRISTOPHER HOOKWAY WILL GIVE 4 LECTURES AT THE CENTER:

<i>April, 1</i>	1-3 p.m.	Truth, Reference, and Pragmatics I	(room 221)
<i>April, 3</i>	10-12 a.m.	Truth, Reference, and Pragmatics II	(room 276)
<i>April, 9</i>	1-3 p.m.	Sentiment and Self-control	(room 219)
<i>April, 10</i>	1-3 p.m.	Pragmatism and the Limits of Science	(room 221)



L'IMAGE DANS LE LANGAGE ET DANS LES NON-LANGAGES.

[Colloquium at Centro Internazionale di Semiotica e di Linguistica, URBINO, ITALY, July, 10-12, 1997]

Présentation

La fonction imageante ne se confond pas avec l'image au sens strict même si celle-ci en est l'un de ses aboutissants. Elle est à l'oeuvre dans les textes sous forme de descriptions mais aussi sous forme de figurations et requiert tout un dispositif de points de vue, de contournements des objets, d'expressions tactiles, gustatives etc. des personnages à leur propos. De la sorte, à côté de l'image réglée de certaines descriptions (descriptions anatomiques, par exemple), se rencontrent un grand nombre d'images incomplètes parfois simplement suggérées par la gestuelle des personnages, les parcours du sujet énonciateur ou même de simples événements perceptifs.

Il peut être utile pour comprendre le fonctionnement de ces images parfois évanescentes d'envisager les processus qui font passer une image d'une sémiotique à une autre.

Il s'agit par exemple d'étudier la fonction imageante dans des moments de traduction :

- Passage de l'image au texte ou du texte à l'image.
- Passage de la perception à la description.
- Passage du texte littéraire au cinéma.
- Influence de la photographie sur l'image picturale.
- etc.

Il s'agirait plus généralement de comprendre le fonctionnement et la nature de l'image dans ses moments de traduction entre sémiotiques, mais aussi de transition entre des ordres :

- Image et concept
- Image et narration
- Image et perception
- etc.





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ADDRESS

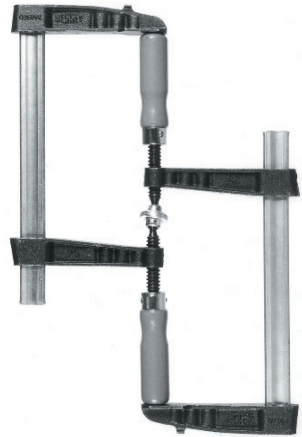
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