

SEMIOTICS

SPRING SEMESTER 2007



Max Ernst: *Die ganze Stadt*, 1930. Silver gelatin print, 12,1 x 9,5 cm

Center for Semiotics

UNIVERSITY OF AARHUS

SEMINAR

Cognitive Linguistics

Svend Østergaard

Tuesdays in seminar weeks, 12:00 - 14:00

Building I.451, room 225

The course in cognitive linguistics is concerned with four issues.

- 1) What are the structures of meaning? This problem is treated by means of frame semantics, schemas, and blending theory, amongst other things.
- 2) How are sentences composed into a meaningful whole? This is the problem of syntax and we find one possible answer to the question in construction grammar.
- 3) What do we do with language? This concerns the functional and social aspect of language.
- 4) How is language connected to other cognitive functions such as memory, perception, pattern recognition etc?

These questions are mainly treated from the perspective of cognitive linguistics and key authors are, among others, George Lakoff, Len Talmy, William Croft, Adele Goldberg, René Dirven, Michael Tomasello and Mark Turner.

A basic book is René Dirven/Marjolin Verspoor: *Cognitive Exploration of Language and Linguistics*. However, the topic is also treated from the philosophy of language perspective and the main reference is here John R. Searle: *Mind, Language and Society, Philosophy in the Real World*.

SEMINAR IN COGNITION & SEMIOTICS

Intentionality in Language, Mind and the Body

Peer F. Bundgård

Wednesdays in seminar weeks, 12:00 - 14:00

Building I.467, room 415

From a cognitive semiotic point of view, meaning in the broad sense (both linguistically, preconceptually and perceptually) is a complex both objective and subjective entity. Intrinsically objective qualities of meaning contents stem from the physical and phenomeno-

logical properties of the object our meaningful experiences are about or to which our linguistic meaning acts refer. However, this is of course not all their is to it: a meaning content is by and large dependent on the way an individual is intentionally directed toward it, that is to say on the structure of the subject's mode of conceptualization. Intentionality—the aboutness of consciousness and its structure—is therefore key to cognitive semiotics. This course will introduce to the concept of intentionality, historically, but also to its application in contemporary philosophy of mind, psychology, and linguistics as well as to the controversies linked to the determination of its function and nature.

The syllabus is not exhaustive. More references will be added as we move on.

Syllabus

Historical Texts (February 14 and 28)

Franz Brentano: "Von dem Unterschiede der psychischen und physischen Phänomene", excerpt from *Psychologie vom empirischen Standpunkt* (1874)

Edmund Husserl: *5th Logical Investigation "On intentional experiences and their »contents«"* (1901)

Additional reading:

Franz Brentano: I. "The Concept and Purpose of Psychology", Chapter I from *Psychology From an Empirical Standpoint*, <http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/ge/brentano.htm>

Ronald McIntyre & David Woodruff Smith "Husserl's theory of intentionality", available online: <http://consc.net/online3.html> [section "Phenomenology"]

Contemporary Parallels (March 14 and 28)

John Searle: "What Is an Intentional State", *Mind* 88/349, 1979: 74-92.

John Searle: *Excerpts from Intentionality*, Cambridge University Press or from *Mind, Language and Society* (1999)

John Searle: "The Phenomenological Illusion", <http://www.istsocrates.berkeley.edu/~jsearle/PhenomenologicalIllusion.pdf>

Daniel Dennett: "Précis of the Intentional Stance", *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* (11/3), 1988: 495-546

Shaun Gallagher: "Mutual Enlightenment: Recent Phenomenology in Cognitive Science", *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 4(3), 1997: 195-214.

The recent online issue of *Phenomenology and Cognitive Science* is devoted to critical comments on Daniel Dennett's heterophenomenology.

Development and Proprioception (April 11 and 25)

Michael Tomasello et al.: "Understanding and sharing intentions:

the origins of cultural cognition”, *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* (28), 2005: 675-735

Michael Tomasello and Hannes Rakoczy: “What Makes Human Cognition Unique?”, *Mind and Language* (18), 2003: 121-147.

Maxine Sheets-Johnstone: “Consciousness: a natural history”, *Journal of Consciousness Studies* (5/3) 1998: 260-294.

Language and Thought + Conclusion (May 9 and 23)

Texts to be defined.

Useful background literature

Hubert L. Dreyfus (ed.), *Husserl, Intentionality, and Cognitive Science*, MIT Press, 1982.

Barry Smith: *Austrian Philosophy—The Legacy of Franz Brentano*, Open Court, 1994. Preprint available online: http://ontology.buffalo.edu/smith/book/austrian_philosophy/

Do consult David Chalmers’ vast compilation of papers on consciousness:

<http://consc.net/online1.html>

SEMINAR IN COGNITIVE AESTHETICS

Narrative Universals, Emotions: Or how to give shape to our feelings and thoughts

Peer F. Bundgård

Thursdays in seminar weeks, 12:00-14:00

Building 1.467, room 415

The program for this course will be somehow unorthodox. It will be organized as an ongoing comment on Patrick Colm Hogan’s book *The Mind and Its Stories – Narrative Universals and Human Emotion*, Cambridge University Press, 2003. The author marshals the thesis that 1) there exist universals in literature (not surprisingly, but still controversial); 2) there exist universals in emotion (if not commonplace, then fairly uncontroversial), and 3) narrative universal are tied to emotional universals (non-standard!).

We’ll follow the argument step by step, with the aim to establish part of the cognitive import of narrative structure on cognition, while allowing certain digressions into the domain of value and shaping of inner experience in the aesthetic work of art (this includes Roman Ingarden, Kevin Mulligan, Barry Smith, Franz Kafka and the other Franz ... Brentano, among others).

SEMINAR

Mind and Cognition

Svend Østergaard

Thursdays in seminar weeks, 14:00-16:00

Building 1.467, room 415

This course concerns the particular cognitive functions such as perception, attention, memory, imagery, linguistic competence, social competence, etc., as well as the more general question of how to understand the relation between human phenomenology and brain functioning. The lesson from brain research is that what is experienced as unitary at the phenomenological level can in fact be dissociated into several functional parts at the neuronal level. This raises fundamental questions of what a unitary experience is.

In this semester we will concentrate on attention and the function of memory, mainly by consulting the work of D. L. Schacter. We will also discuss Edelman’s idea of the symbolic memory and the relation between memory and language, cf. G. Edelman (1992): *Bright Air*, Brilliant Fire, Penguin Books. Another useful handbook is Michael W. Eysenck and Mark T. Keane (2005): *Cognitive Psychology*, Psychology Press.

SEMINAR

Signs, Symbols, Form-Meaning Pairings, and Symbol Systems

- From E. Husserl to Terrence Deacon

Peer F. Bundgård

Fridays in seminar weeks, 10:00 - 12:00.

Building 1.455, room 127

Traditionally, Semiotics is defined as the study of signs, both on this side of the Atlantic Ocean and on the other side. Its continental outspring is tightly connected to Saussure’s characterization of *semiology* as the investigation of the circulation of signs in social life. In its American, that is Peircean, outspring it is the all overarching study of sign par excellence, since on this view, any physical or phenomenological manifestation of matter can be determined as a type of sign, and any cognitive processing can be determined as a sign-interpreting mental operation.

In order to honor the historical background of semiotics we will go through some exemplary sign-theo-

ries, among these standards as Saussure, Hjelmself and Peirce himself, but also Ernst Cassirer's philosophy of symbolic forms as well as far more recent redevelopments of the sign as a fundamental unit in cognition (for example in Ron Langacker and Terrence Deacon).

Student Symposia

Organized by the students

Fridays in seminar weeks, 13:00 - 15:00.

Building 1.465, room 415

The Student Symposia offer the students the opportunity to present their current research interests within the diverse field of Cognitive Semiotics and hereby try themselves on an oral presentation among fellow students. With issues ranging from Cognitive Semantics, Musicology and Interface Design to Cognitive Psychology, Neurolinguistics and Neuroaesthetics, the Student Symposia always give rise to fruitful discussions triggered by the application of theory to real-life phenomena. Through open discussions, the students are allowed to share their research interests, readjust their focus and, most importantly, develop new ideas for future papers.

Practical Exercises

Peer F. Bundgård & Svend Østergaard

Wednesdays in seminar weeks, 14:00 - 16:00

Building 1.467, room 415

In the practical exercises the students will have to prepare small papers on topics discussed in the courses Cognition and Semiotics and Cognitive Linguistics and make textual analyses applying methods and concepts from the same courses.

SEMINAR CALENDAR · SPRING 2007

FEBRUARY

Tuesday 13	12-14: Cognitive Linguistics		
Wednesday 14	12-14: Cognition and Semiotics	14-16: Practical Exercises	
Thursday 15	12-14: Cognitive Aesthetics	14-16: Mind and Cognition	16-18: Guest Lecture
Friday 16	10-12: Signs and symbols	13-15: Student Symposium	

Tuesday 27	12-14: Cognitive Linguistics		
Wednesday 28	12-14: Cognition and Semiotics	14-16: Practical Exercises	

MARCH

Thursday 1	12-14: Cognitive Aesthetics	14-16: Mind and Cognition	
Friday 2	10-12: Signs and symbols	13-15: Student Symposium	

Tuesday 13	12-14: Cognitive Linguistics		
Wednesday 14	12-14: Cognition and Semiotics	14-16: Practical Exercises	
Thursday 15	12-14: Cognitive Aesthetics	14-16: Mind and Cognition	16-18: Guest Lecture
Friday 16	10-12: Signs and symbols	13-15: Student Symposium	

Tuesday 27	12-14: Cognitive Linguistics		
Wednesday 28	12-14: Cognition and Semiotics	14-16: Practical Exercises	
Thursday 29	12-14: Cognitive Aesthetics	14-16: Mind and Cognition	
Friday 30	10-12: Signs and symbols	13-15: Student Symposium	

APRIL

Tuesday 10	12-14: Cognitive Linguistics		
Wednesday 11	12-14: Cognition and Semiotics	14-16: Practical Exercises	
Thursday 12	12-14: Cognitive Aesthetics	14-16: Mind and Cognition	16-18: Guest Lecture
Friday 13	10-12: Signs and symbols	13-15: Student Symposium	

Tuesday 24	12-14: Cognitive Linguistics		
Wednesday 25	12-14: Cognition and Semiotics	14-16: Practical Exercises	
Thursday 26	12-14: Cognitive Aesthetics	14-16: Mind and Cognition	
Friday 27	10-12: Signs and symbols	13-15: Student Symposium	

MAY

Tuesday 8	12-14: Cognitive Linguistics		
Wednesday 9	12-14: Cognition and Semiotics	14-16: Practical Exercises	
Thursday 10	12-14: Cognitive Aesthetics	14-16: Mind and Cognition	16-18: Guest Lecture
Friday 11	10-12: Signs and symbols	13-15: Student Symposium	

Tuesday 22	12-14: Cognitive Linguistics		
Wednesday 23	12-14: Cognition and Semiotics	14-16: Practical Exercises	
Thursday 24	12-14: Cognitive Aesthetics	14-16: Mind and Cognition	
Friday 25	10-12: Signs and symbols	13-15: Student Symposium	

Center for Semiotics

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