

# LETTER

**NUMBER 4 (AUTUMN 2013) – NOVEMBER 2013**

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# The History of *Nordic Association for Semiotic Studies* (NASS)

By Dinda L. Gorlée

The emerging history of pan-Scandinavian semiotics has started with the common feeling of belonging together during the 1980s. The semiotic master of semiotics, Thomas A. Sebeok (Bloomington, Indiana) published the sturdy volume of *The Semiotic Sphere*, initiating that the “still formative, stage of semiotics ... has become a global enterprise” (1986: ix).<sup>1</sup> Sebeok initiated that the global volume of semiotics was “far from saying that the map is uniform or even that world-wide homogeneity is in the least desirable” adding that “While our conjoint ultimate goal remains steadily in focus, the multiplicity of avenues available for its realization is inherent in the adventure of the search itself” (1986: ix).

*The Semiotic Sphere* covered the period from the end of World War II towards the international development of the 1980s. The collection included (in alphabetical order) “Semiotics in Denmark” (Sebeok 1986: 115-143) written by Jørgen Dines Johansen (Odense), Eero Tarasti’s (Helsinki) article about “Semiotics in Finland” (Sebeok 1986: 145-152), “Semiotics in Norway” (Sebeok 1986: 369-385) by Sven Storelv (Bergen), and Per Erik Ljung’s (Copenhagen) survey of “Semiotics in Sweden” (Sebeok 1986: 485-504). Alas, the semiotics in Estonia and Iceland were excluded (or perhaps postponed) for some political or geographical reasons. Sebeok continued in *The Semiotic Sphere* that the collection can be judged “uneven” (1986: ix), since the charge into new territory will direct to the Scandinavian semiotics of many stripes during the 1980s and afterwards. This situation was rooted in Sebeok’s metaphor stating that “When stones are dropped into a pond, the waves emanating from their point of contact encounter obstacles which might deflect them from propagating evenly, as they might in an ideal space free of natural and man-made obstructions” (1986: ix). The successive waves of this image refers to the ups and downs of political turmoils as well as to the priorities of the universities in the Nordic area to stretch beyond the local level into the global survival, keeping track of the growth of semiotic theory and method of the representative countries.

Rapid progress was made over the years. On my initiative, the *Norsk forening for semiotikk* was founded at the University of Bergen (1985), editing the self-fabricated journal *Livstegn* (1986-1992). The membership in Norway grew from a few isolated members to imply some hundred-and-fifty members. The first symposium (1986) convoked a large audience at Bryggens Museum in Bergen to hear Sebeok as main speaker in his influential address, “The doctrine of signs”. On the last moment before the congress, the invitation to Juri Lotman from the University of Tartu, then a closed country to the “capitalized” West behind the Iron Curtain, became suddenly real. Lotman’s

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<sup>1</sup> Sebeok, Thomas A. and Jean Umiker-Sebeok, eds. (1986). *The Semiotic Sphere*. New York/London: Plenum Press.

trip to Norway and his splendid lecture about “Semiotics and culture in the second half of the twentieth century” turn the meeting into a politically adventurous reunion. Lotman and Sebeok crawled into a corner to chat as old semiotic friends. In Sebeok’s words, they addressed “one another mostly in German, with snatches of French, interspersed by his shaky English and my faltering Russian.”<sup>2</sup> This happy encounter was of course an extravaganza to boost Norwegian semiotics.<sup>3</sup>

TEMA: LIVSTEGN, side 5–12

### Tegn i tiden. Teori og praksis

«Semiotikk i teori og praksis» var temaet for det første symposiet arrangert av Norsk forening for semiotikk i Bergen 2. og 3. oktober. Nytt fra Universitetet har tidligere markert selve begivenheten, men det kan likevel være verdt å gi noen av bidragsyterne spesiell oppmerksomhet. På disse sidene presenteres enkelte bidrag med appell utover de innviddes rekker. Som teori kan semiotikken virke utilgjengelig og eksklusiv, men som kjent er ingenting så praktisk som en god teori, noe flere av bidragsyterne på semiotikkmøtet i Bergen demonstrerte – med et glimt i øyet.



Den amerikanske semiotikeren Thomas A. Sebeok (i midten) og den sovjetrussiske semiotikeren Juri M. Lotman, sammen med Dinda L. Gorfée, som representerer arrangørene av det vitenskapelige toppmøtet (Foto: AV-avd).





### Semiotikk/ semiologi

Semiotikk betydde på gresk «diagnostikk», eller observasjon av symptomer. Betegnelsene semiotikk og semiologi brukes i dag om hverandre for å betegne vitenskap om «alle tegn- (eller symbol-) systemer som gjør det mulig for mennesker å kommunisere». Den franske mytekritiker og litteraturteoretiker (m.m.) Roland Barthes definerte semiotikkens, eller semiologiens, emne som «ethvert tegnsystem, av hvilken substans det enn måtte være, og hvilke grenser det enn måtte ha: Bilder, gester, malerisk formede lydrekker, gjenstander og de helheter som er sammensatt av slike substanser og som man finner i riter, i regler for skikk og bruk og i skuespill, utgjør om ikke «språk», så i hvertfall systematisk ordnede betydningshelheter.»

Semiotikken er altså en vidtfavnende og allmenn lære om tegn.

### Vitenskapelig toppmøte

Den unge Norsk forening for semiotikk hadde full klaff med sitt første symposium. To av verdens fremste semiotikere (tegnforskere) – amerikaneren Thomas A. Sebeok og sovjetrusseren Jurij M. Lotman – hadde arrangørene lyktes i å samle til symposiet om «semiotikk i teori og praksis». Dette vitenskapelige toppmøtet noen uker før et politisk toppmøte i Reykjavik, ga arrangementet et mediegjenomslag og en oppmerksomhet som ellers kun er mer «salgbare» emner forunt.

– Vi føler oss beæret over besøket av disse to internasjonale kapasitetene. Det var en uforglemmelig opplevelse å lytte til Sebeoks oversikt over semiotikkens område og til Lotmans plassering av semiotikken innenfor den slaviske kulturtradisjon, forteller amanuensis Dinda L. Gorfée ved Romansk institutt. Sammen med førsteamanuensis Sven Storelv, formann i Norsk forening for semiotikk, sto hun

ansvarlig for symposiet og det vitenskapelige toppmøtet. Hvem er så disse framstående semiotikere?

Thomas A. Sebeok (66) er leder for Research Center for Language and Semiotic Studies, Indiana University, Bloomington. Han er Distinguished Professor i lingvistik, semiotikk, antropologi og ural-altaiske språk ved Indiana University i Bloomington. Som vitenskapsmann, lærer, forfatter og forsker på mange felt, har Sebeok gjort seg bemerket i mange verdenshjørner. Han er også sjefredaktør for «Semiotica», tidsskriftet til International Association for Semiotic Studies.

Jurij M. Lotman (64) er professor ved Universitetet i Tartu i Estland. Han er filolog og litteraturhistoriker, med de russiske gullalderdiktere (Pusjkin o.a.) som spesialområde. Lotman er særlig kjent for sine teoretiske arbeider innen litteratur- og kulturteori.

**Stolthet**  
Filologer og litteraturforskere med sin daglige gange på Nygårdshøyden, legger da heller ikke skjul på at de er stolte. Å ha tatt på, eller endog snakket med Jurij Lotman, gir prestisje i de kretser.  
*Bergens Tidende, 3. oktober.*

Facsimile from *Nytt fra universitetet i Bergen* no. 15-16 1986 p. 5. Pictured (from left):  
Dinda Gorfée, Thomas A. Sebeok and Juri Lotman.

<sup>2</sup> Sebeok, Thomas A. (2001). The Estonian connection. In his *Global Semiotics*. Bloomington/Indianapolis University Press, Indiana: 167.

<sup>3</sup> Gorfée, Dinda L. and Morten Tønnessen (2010). Da Lotman of semiotikken kom til Norge. *Estland of Norge i fortid of nåtid (Norsk-estisk forening 25 år)*. Oslo: Norsk-estisk forening: 258-259. For Proceedings, see *Livstegn* 3 (January 1987).

The isolated contributions of scholars throughout Scandinavia (see the new survey of semiotics in Norway<sup>4</sup>) meant that the adherence among universities remained in various Scandinavian countries at a relatively low ebb. Importantly, the significance of the Moscow-Tartu semioticians for Scandinavian semiotics was a welcome addition to the future of Scandinavian semiotics. The meetings of the *Summer Institute in Semiotics*, organized yearly in Finland, were organized by Eero Tarasti (Helsinki) in Imatra (Eastern Finland) on the borders with Russia. Tarasti invited the Moscow-Tartu semioticians. He also organized the *International Semiotic Institute* to broadcast semiotics. Looking at my files on the early dates of the *Internordic School of Semiotics*, there is in my agenda and notebooks of the first meeting of 1987 the “housekeeping” note of the first entrée of Lotman’s creative term of *semiosphere*, announced by some members of the Moscow-Tartu School, as well as the plans of publishing the journal *Semionordica*. From “underground” to “overground,” Nordic semiotics must, of course, include the five Scandinavian countries, but implying, when possible, Lotman’s “Russian” school.

In 1987, Finland, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and Iceland were joined in the *Nordic Association for Semiotics* (NASS) emerging through the continuous efforts of the international semioticians. First priority of the board was to organize the First Bi-Annual Conference at the University of Odense on 7-9 November 1990. After elections, the board was presided by myself (Bergen), while local organizers were Svend Erik Larsen (Odense, later Aarhus) and Jørgen Dines Johansen (Odense). In his postscript, Larsen reported that one hundred semioticians from Scandinavia and international adherents (such as Robert E. Innis, Valentine Daniel, Donald Preziosi, and Igor Cernov) had assembled in Odense to speak about the overall title, “*Culture as Semiotic – Semiotics of Culture*.”<sup>5</sup> To secure the future, Larsen communicated that the Second Bi-Annual Conference will be organized by Göran Sonesson (Lund) and Kjell-Lars Berge (Stockholm). I remember that during the Odense meeting I sent a message to Sebeok, in which the NASS congratulated him for his 70th birthday on 9 November 1990.

My presidency from 1989 to 1992 ended when I moved from the University of Bergen back to my home country, the Netherlands. My successor was Göran Sonesson, who led the *Nordic Association for Semiotics* from 1992 to the meeting at the Seventh Conference of the NASS in Lund (2011). In between, NASS has changed a lot. Not only has the Association assured a cognitive approach to semiotics, at a certain distance from the earlier art-and-literature-heavy focus. Also it must be stressed that Estonia has become a free country, being part of Europe and part of the Scandinavian countries. Joining the NASS with a number of qualified semioticians, the Scandinavian countries have been enriched with the Baltic environment of semiotics, including the first semiotic journal, *Sign Systems Studies*. Probably a happy end for NASS.

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<sup>4</sup> Gorrée, Dinda L. (1987). Semiotics in Norway: Signs of life on the fjords. Thomas A. Sebeok and Jean Umiker-Sebeok, eds., *The Semiotic Web '86: An International Yearbook*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter: 253-265.

<sup>5</sup> Larsen, Svend Erik (1992). NASS – et nordisk tegn. *Livstegn* 8: 6.

A personal note: after spending half my life in Norway and part in Finland, I feel half-Scandinavian. Since I am research associate of the *Wittgenstein Archives* associated with the Department of Philosophy at the University of Bergen and, at the same time, have spent teaching semio-translation at the University of Tartu, I feel close to the *Nordic Association for Semiotics* and hope to be welcome to take part in its future.

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## NEWS

### Nordic News

#### Conference publication following NASS VIII: Thematic Issue of *[Sign System Studies](#)*

Following the [The Eighth Conference of the Nordic Association for Semiotic Studies \(NASS\)](#), Aarhus, Denmark, May 29-31, 2013, the participants were invited to submit article manuscripts to a double thematic issue of *[Sign Systems Studies](#)* on the theme of the conference “The Evolution of Signs on Different Time Scales” edited by Luis Bruni and Kristian Tylén. Contributions from all fields, perspectives and approaches within semiotics – theoretical as well as empirical, were invited regardless whether or not they presented a paper or poster at the conference. The deadline for contributions has passed.

#### Eero Tarasti lectures on music history

Lectures by Professor Eero Tarasti, University of Helsinki, on music history are now available on YouTube, entitled [“Music History: Style Periods and Aesthetics”](#). The lectures (7) deal with classical composers, such as J.S. Bach, W.A. Mozart, Ludwig van Beethoven and Richard Wagner; their main works are analyzed at piano, and connected to other arts and philosophies of their times. On YouTube you can also find the lecture course on [“European semiotics”](#) (a series of 5 lectures in English) given by professor Eero Tarasti at the Helsinki University in the autumn semester of 2010.

### International News

#### Foundation of the International Association for Cognitive Semiotics (IACS)

The founding meeting of the *International Association for Cognitive Semiotics (IACS)* was held on May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2013 at Aarhus University, Denmark, within the framework of the Eighth Conference of The Nordic Association for Semiotic Studies. **Jordan Zlatev was elected as the president of the association.** The purpose of IACS is to advance research in cognitive semiotics and facilitate



scholarly discussion and exchange in what is a growing field, as well as organizing conferences and other academic events.

To become member of the association (**the first year for free**), please send an email to IACS secretary Monica Tamariz: [monicatamariz@gmail.com](mailto:monicatamariz@gmail.com) with your name and affiliation. As a member of IACS you, among other things, get a generous subscription discount on the journal *Cognitive Semiotics*.

## Semionaut Award

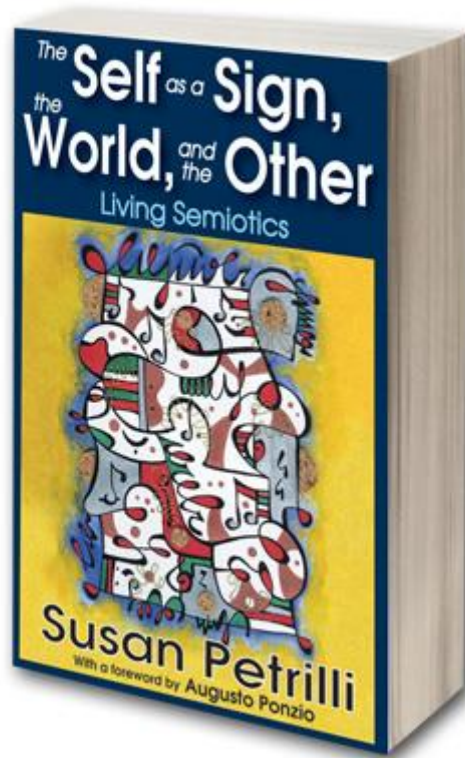
Semionaut Award is a \$1000 short essay prize for students and recent graduates in the area of applied cultural & semiotic analysis. Deadline is the end of November 2013. The award is sponsored by [Space Doctors](#) and all the shortlisted essays will be published, along with the winner, on the independent semiotic and cultural analysis [website](#). See the essay award's [rules & details](#).

## Semiotic publications



- [Leone, Massimo and Pezzini, Isabella, eds. 2013. \*Semiotics of Subjectivities\* \[in English and Italian\]: \[Short description\]\(#\)](#): essays on the semiotics of subjectivity, with specific attention to its visual representations. The book includes contributions by Umberto Eco, Victor Stoichita, Massimo Leone, Eero Tarasti, etc.
- [Peirce and Biosemiotics: A Guess at the Riddle of Life \(Springer\)](#): Edited by Vinicius Romanini and Eliseo Fernández. **Short description:** This volume discusses the importance of Peirce's philosophy and theory of signs to the development of Biosemiotics, the science that studies the deep interrelation between meaning and life. Peirce considered semeiotic as a general logic part of a complex architectonic philosophy that includes mathematics, phenomenology and a theory of reality. The authors are Peirce scholars, biologists, philosophers and semioticians united by an interdisciplinary endeavor to understand the mysteries of the origin of life and its related phenomena such as consciousness, perception, representation and communication.

- [//rhetor.dixit//: Understanding ad texts' rhetorical structure for differential figurative advantage](#): *Author*: George Rossolatos. *Release date*: August 2013. *Pages*: 188. [Download your free complimentary ebook copy \(readable with mobipocket\)](#). **Short description**: This book was put together over the course of the past three years and is the outcome of the author's publications in the multimodal advertising rhetoric research field and projects that were undertaken with the employment of the //rhetor.dixit//© model. It features four chapters that span different, yet interlocking aspects of ad texts' multimodal rhetorical configuration and culminates in a practical guide for the analysis of the verbo-visual rhetorical structure of TV ad texts, based on the unique methodology of the //rhetor.dixit//© model on offer by //disruptiVesemiOtics//.



- [The Self as a Sign, the World, and the Other: Living Semiotics](#): By Susan Petrilli. Foreword by Augusto Ponzio. **Short description**: How can semiotics help us understand subjectivity? The question of subjectivity concerns the close and the distant, the self and the other, the other from self, and the other of self. It is thus the question connected to the question of the sign. It calls for a semiotic approach because the self is itself a sign; its very own relation with itself is a relation among signs. [The Self as a Sign, the World, and the Other](#) critiques subjectivity in terms of the “material” that the self is made of, that is, the material of signs. Susan Petrilli highlights the scholarship of Charles Pierce, Mikhail Bakhtin, Roland Barthes, Mary Boole, Jacques Derrida, Michael Foucault, Emmanuel Levinas, Claude Levi-Strauss, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Charles Morris, Thomas Sebeok, Thomas Szasz, and Victoria Welby. Included are American and European theories and theorists, evidencing the relationships interconnecting American, Italian, French, and German scholarship.

## Semiotic journals

- ***Journal of Cognitive Semiotics***: The re-launch of the peer-reviewed *Journal of Cognitive Semiotics*, which from 2014 will be published by de Gruyter-Mouton, coincided with the foundation of the International Association for Cognitive Semiotics. Though the journal is independent of the association, the two will maintain a close collaboration. Members of the association will benefit from an attractive subscription discount among other envisioned benefits. We are pleased to announce the official publication of Vol. 5 Nos. 1-2 on 15 October 2013, on the theme [Conceptual Metaphor Theory: Thirty Years After](#). Follow the link to download the complete issue or select individual papers. [See](#) the style sheet and current call for papers.
- ***The International Journal of Marketing Semiotics (IJMS)***: We are pleased to announce the launch of the first issue of the International Journal of Marketing Semiotics (IJMS). The mission of the IJMS is to constitute a reference point in state-of-the-art academic research in the field of marketing semiotics, by enhancing the relevance of semiotic theories and methodologies across the entire marketing mix, with a dual orientation towards furthering existing theory, while safeguarding managerial saliency. Vol.I is now available for [download](#).
- ***Call for Papers IJMS vol. II***: The *International Journal of Marketing Semiotics* welcomes both conceptual and applied semiotic research, provided that semiotic perspectives have been applied rigorously in the concerned marketing issues and are sufficiently informed by relevant literature, stemming from within both semiotics and marketing disciplines. If you wish to contribute to the IJMS, please send your papers to: [grosolatos123@myway.com](mailto:grosolatos123@myway.com) and [journalmarketingsemiotics@yahoo.com](mailto:journalmarketingsemiotics@yahoo.com). *The closing date for submission is May 30th 2014.*
- ***Southern Semiotic Review – Second Issue***: This journal was launched in May, and there has been a pleasing response to the first issue, in terms of quantity and quality. In addition to general issues, special theme issues are planned, both on line and in print. Papers for review, as well as comments, reviews, abstracts and work in progress are welcome, from all international scholars and writers. Review procedures apply for all contributions, except for shorter reviews, comments and the occasional work in progress. For details on call for papers see [the site](#). Submissions including preliminary abstracts can be sent to the editors to [southernsemioticreview@gmail.com](mailto:southernsemioticreview@gmail.com). [See](#) the terms of publication and additional information.
- ***Semiotic Review***: *Semiotic Review* 2013 (formerly *The Semiotic Review of Books*, 1990-2012) is a multidisciplinary open-access online peer-reviewed journal publishing review articles as well as original essays. It endeavours to monitor those domains in the Humanities, the Social and the Natural Sciences which bear upon symbolic and communicative behaviour, cognitive systems and processes, cultural transmission and innovations, and the study of information, meaning and signification in all forms. *Semiotic Review* publishes three issues a year. Of these three issues, one will be an ordinary open issue and two will be special ‘theme’ issues which will be published on a rolling basis so that new material will continue to be added to them indefinitely. Thematic issues can be proposed by guest editors, for those who have a proposal for call for papers for a thematic issue should contact the editors. For the topics of thematic issues see the Call for Papers.
- ***Signs and Society – vol. 1, no. 1***: The first issue of *Signs and Society*, the new journal of semiotics of the University of Chicago Press has been published. Free access to the issue is available [here](#). *Signs and Society* is a new multidisciplinary journal in the humanities and social



sciences focusing on the study of sign process (or semiosis) in the realms of social action, cognition, and cultural form.

- [\*\*\*Lexia – Journal of Semiotics\*\*\*](#) [in Italian]: The Lexia Journal of Semiotics, edited by Massimo Leone, is an international, peer-reviewed journal of CIRCE, the Center for Interdisciplinary Research on Communication of the University of Torino, Italy. The journal has published a new issue n° 13-14 “Protesta”. Click here to [download](#) the PDF presentation.
- [\*\*\*International Journal of Semiotics SEMAT\*\*\*](#): The journal aims to create a space in which ideas, views and findings are articulated by scholars and researchers in human fields and research, as communicative mediums of knowledge, is maintained and developed. At the outset, the journal appears biannually before transforming itself into quarterly. You can [download](#) full articles from Vol. 1 published in May 2013.
- [\*\*\*Punctum – International Journal of Semiotics\*\*\*](#): *The Hellenic Semiotic Society*, founded in 1977, held its last International Conference at the University of Cyprus (Nicosia), in November 2010, on the topic of ‘The Everyday’. It recently organised the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual ‘Young Scholars Symposium in Semiotics’ and held its 10<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Semiotics, entitled [Changing Worlds & Signs of the Times](#) at the University of Thessaly (Volos, Greece), from 4 to 6 October 2013. *The Hellenic Semiotics Society* is currently planning to publish an online, free access, peer-reviewed international journal devoted to semiotics. The journal, named *Punctum – International Journal of Semiotics*, will be published twice a year, in English – although submissions in French and German will be accepted as well. *Punctum* will be the first Greek-based international and online-only academic journal in the field of semiotics, and aspires to become a forum for the advancement of both indigenous and international scholarship. It also aims to foster a closer intellectual exchange and cooperation between the scientific communities of Eastern & South Eastern Europe with those of Western and Northern Europe.

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## UPCOMING ACADEMIC EVENTS

### IN THE NORDIC COUNTRIES INCLUDING ESTONIA<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> This list of events, and the academic news presented above are indicative and do by no means pretend to be exhaustive. Therefore, our members are strongly encouraged to send their suggestions to be considered for further editions of the newsletter to the editors (at [post@nordicsemiotics.org](mailto:post@nordicsemiotics.org)).

**First Norwegian Research Seminar – [Animals in Changing Environments: Cultural mediation and Semiotic Analysis](#). December 13, 2013, Stavanger, Norway**

*Time:* Friday December 13th 2013 at 10.00-12.45

*Place:* Kjell Arholms hus, room 053, University of Stavanger

*Speakers:* Kristin Armstrong Oma (“Beyond dualist explanations: the deep history of domestic animals in human societies”), Timo Maran (University of Tartu – “Initial cultural exposure to a new mammalian species, golden jackal (*Canis aureus*). Preliminary results”), and Morten Tønnessen (University of Stavanger – “The symbolic construction of the Big Bad Wolf in contemporary Scandinavia”).

To register, send an [email to Morten Tønnessen](#).

**[Framing Nature: Signs, Stories, and Ecologies of Meaning, April 29-May 3, 2014, Tartu, Estonia](#)**



‘No meaning without a frame’ – thus one might boil down the insights yielded by a century of research in the humanities. To interpret something as meaningful is to put it into a context, into a frame of reference within which it can begin to make sense. This holds not only for human signification, but also for the processes of signification that occur in the natural world, as they have been studied by biosemiotics. In a double take on its title, this conference inquires into the multiple, complex ways in which humans frame nature and are in turn framed by it. It seeks to explore the figure of the frame as an ecological concept which draws attention to the way in which meanings are embedded in and sustained by environments that are at once material and semiotic. At the same time, it invites a closer examination of the strategies of framing and contextualization that are

constitutive of ecocritical research, as well as a comparison of ecocritical methodologies with those of neighbouring disciplines in the environmental humanities.

### [First International Association for Cognitive Semiotics \(IACS\) Conference, IACS-2014. September 25-27, 2014, Lund, Sweden](#)

The First International Association for Cognitive Semiotics (IACS) Conference (IACS-2014) will be held in September 25-27, at Lund University, Sweden. Founded in Aarhus, Denmark, on May 29, 2013, The International Association for Cognitive Semiotics aims at the further establishment of Cognitive Semiotics as the trans-disciplinary study of meaning, combining concepts, theories and methods from the humanities and the social and natural sciences. Central topics are the evolution, development of, and interaction between different semiotic resources such as language, gestures and pictorial representations.

Theme of the conference: *Establishing Cognitive Semiotics*. *Plenary speakers*: Søren Brier (Copenhagen Business School), Merlin Donald (Queens University), Brian MacWhinney (Carnegie Mellon University), Cornelia Müller (European University Viadrina Frankfurt), Raymond Tallis (University of Manchester).

Deadline for abstract submission (theme sessions): 31 Dec 2013. Deadline for abstract submission (oral presentations, posters): 1 Feb 2014.

## INTERNATIONAL

### [Third congress of the Moroccan Association of Semiotics](#)

*Moroccan group of Semiotics Moulay Ismail University*



**Semiotics and Society: new challenges, new approaches;**  
**November 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>; 2013, School of Arts and Humanities,**  
**Meknes, Morocco.**

Ferdinand de Saussure could not dissociate Semiotics from social life. Before him, Peirce also stated, but within another perspective, that there is one conclusion and one limit to Semiosis: the community. Eco qualified Semiotics as a science that can be used to lie, considered a discipline constantly called to support the analysis

of forms and contents by a philosophy of action. In all these definitions or visions of Semiotics, society is deemed indispensable. This is not only because society would be better explained once approached by Semiotics, but also because this similar semiotic explanation would result in changes such as: other ways to see, to seize, to interpret and, therefore, to change the world. Signs and society interact, influence each other, and educate mutually.

Today's society offers a rich and diverse discipline, new forms of extremisms, Sufism, new totalitarian discourses which make their appearance through knowledge and politicians' support. These phenomena have caused (created) diverse and varied reactions such as: being concretized in open protests and in other deaf and hidden ones.

The disaster provoked by the collapse of Lehman Brothers, and those that followed have showed the supremacy of economic extremism supported by academia and have led to several waves of protests and challenges in the world. This upheaval was dubbed *Arab Spring* by Western media. Suffice it here to list the movement of protest against finance and against aberrations such as rating agencies, the protests of students and academics in many regions of the world, or other social movements concerning minorities. All these movements agree to defend one form or under another (form) the meaning of the human, the meaning of life, the meaning of the other, the meaning of particularity and of difference. That is to say meaning (as it is).

How can Semiotics be useful to these phenomena, and to the global society, in general, and to the Arab or Moroccan society, in particular? How each of these phenomena would win to be better grasped and understood once approached from a semiotic perspective? How could the refusal, the protest or the denunciation, its language, its codes, its recourses, and its encyclopaedia be presented in general? How can the history of the refusal be useful, existing or to reconstruct, in the Arab or Moroccan society? How can the semiotic approach help to better understand, and perhaps, even to react on these new discourses or phenomena?

### **15<sup>th</sup> *International Conference on Informatics and Semiotics in Organisations*, 23-25 May 2014, Shanghai, China**



[This International Conference on Informatics and Semiotics in Organisations \(ICISO 2014\)](#) is the fifteenth in a series of international events devoted to the latest research and application of informatics in organisations and organisational semiotics. The aim of the conference is to provide a focal forum for participants from various domains of information management and information



systems, computational science, semiotics, finance and accounting, business and enterprise, service science, and business and engineering. The conference enables the sharing and exchange of the latest research and practice. ICISO 2014 continues the effort of the international research community in the development of the emergent discipline of informatics and its applications. See the [Call for Papers](#). **Deadline for regular paper submission: 15 December 2013.**

**[Language, Culture and Mind VI](#), *Inside/Out: Practice and Representation*, 23-26 June 2014, Lublin (Poland)**



The [Language, Culture and Mind](#) conference series aims at establishing an interdisciplinary forum for an integration of cognitive, social and cultural perspectives in theoretical and empirical studies of language and communication.

Human natural languages are biologically based, cognitively motivated, affectively rich, socially shared, grammatically organized symbolic systems. They provide the principal semiotic means for the complexity and diversity of human cultural life. As has long been recognized, no single discipline or methodology is sufficient to capture all the dimensions of this complex and multifaceted phenomenon, which lies at the heart of what it is to be human. In the recent past, perception and cognition have been the basis of general unifying models of language and language activity. However, a genuine integrative perspective should also involve such essential modalities of human action as: empathy, mimesis, intersubjectivity, normativity, agentivity and narrativity. Significant theoretical, methodological and empirical advancements in the relevant disciplines now provide a realistic basis for such a broadened perspective. This conference will articulate and discuss approaches to human natural language and to diverse genres of language activity which aim to integrate its cultural, social, cognitive and bodily foundations. We call for contributions from scholars and scientists in anthropology, biology, linguistics, philosophy, psychology, semiotics, semantics, discourse analysis, cognitive and neuroscience, who wish both to impart their insights and findings, and learn from other disciplines". [See the full Call for Papers](#).

**Deadline for abstract submission of individual papers and posters: Dec 31, 2013. Deadline for abstract submission of symposia: Nov 30, 2013.**



## **The Charles S. Peirce International Centennial Congress: Invigorating Philosophy for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, University of Massachusetts Lowell, July 16-19, 2014**



In commemoration of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of C. S. Peirce, The Charles S. Peirce Society and The Peirce Foundation invite the submission of new papers and panel proposals for [The Charles S. Peirce International Centennial Congress](http://www.peirce-foundation.org/2014.html), to be held on July 16-19, 2014 at the University of Massachusetts Lowell. The general theme of the congress is 'Invigorating Philosophy for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century'. Confirmed plenary speakers include Douglas Anderson, Vincent Colapietro, Susan Haack, Christopher Hookway, Nathan Houser, Ivo Ibr, Cheryl Misak, Nicholas Rescher, Claudine Tiercelin, and Fernando Zalamea. Information about registering for the Congress and reserving hotel rooms will be made available early in 2014.

## **12th World congress of IASS/IAS “New Semiotics: between Tradition and Innovation”. Sofia, 16-20 September 2014, New Bulgarian University**



This is the first call for papers of the 12th World Congress of the International Association of Semiotics. The strategic objective of this Congress is the expansion and reinforcement of the semiotic web. The Congress will not only attract the leading figures in contemporary semiotics but will, with Sofia as host city, provide exceptionally favourable conditions for wide participation. These include a specially organized low fee, comfortable budget accommodation and excellent organization.

"Innovation" is not only a theme from the title but also informs the organization of the Congress. The Congress will be preceded by a broad discussion on social media so as to enable participants to select the most interesting topics and facilitators for scientific sessions and round tables. This will also provide an opportunity to highlight the profile of new semiotics – that which constantly occurs on separate sites but which today needs to be strengthened by common formulations and a common strategy, new tactics for the affirmation of this disciplinary field both in the new academic realities and outside the university, in the labour market and the market of research services. New semiotics is thus global, project-oriented, and focused on its contribution to human endeavour within the flexible boundaries of interdisciplinarity.

Read the full Call For Papers and further info on [the event webpage](#). For more information, contact [info@semio2014.org](mailto:info@semio2014.org).

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## NORDIC ASSOCIATION FOR SEMIOTIC STUDIES (NASS)

### MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

**Date :** May 30th 2013 (Thursday)

**Place :** University of Aarhus, Denmark

**Present:**

The NASS 2013 general assembly counted with the presence of 31 registered members with voting rights.

**NASS Board members that were present:** Luis Emilio Bruni (NASS President, Denmark's Ordinary Representative), Göran Sonesson (NASS Treasurer, Sweden's Ordinary Representative), Morten Tønnessen (NASS Secretary; Norway's Ordinary Representative), Kristian Tylén (Denmark's Supplementary Representative), Sara Lenninger (Sweden's Supplementary Representative), Riin Magnus (Estonia's Supplementary Representative), Inesa Sahakyan (NASS Organisational Assistant).

**NASS Board members that were absent:** Timo Maran (Estonia's Ordinary Representative), Bergljót Kristjánsdóttir (Iceland's Ordinary Representative), Ahti-Veikko Pietarinen (Finland's Ordinary Representative), Tommi Vehkavaara (Finland's Supplementary Representative), Sigrun Marget Gudmusdottir (Iceland's Supplementary Representative), Torill Strand (Norway's Supplementary Representative).

**Agenda:**

1. Election of a chair for the meeting
2. Election of a keeper of the minutes
3. Election of three members to check the minutes
4. Approval of the constitution
5. The President's report
6. The Treasurer's report
7. Election of six board members; six supplementary representatives; and the President, Secretary and Treasurer (among the elected representatives)
8. Optional topics and announcements

The General Assembly was called to order at 16:30 by the NASS President, Luis Emilio Bruni. He proceeded with introducing the meeting agenda to the participants. He called for any comments on the meeting agenda that was previously sent out to the NASS members via the newsletter (No.3, Spring 2013). In the absence of any feedback from the participants, the meeting agenda was approved.

**1. Election of a chair for the meeting**

Luis Emilio Bruni was elected to chair the meeting.

**2. Election of a keeper of the minutes**

Inesa Sahakyan was elected to take the minutes.

**3. Election of three members to check the minutes**

The following three members were elected to check the minutes: Peer Bundgaard; Sara Lenninger and Frederik Nielbo.

**4. Approval of the constitution**

The constitution of NASS was approved by the board of NASS on August 31st 2012 with mandate from the General Assembly of NASS in Lund, Sweden, May 7th 2011. At this board meeting, which was convened via telephone conference, it was decided that “at the next NASS conference in

Aarhus in May 2013 the constitution will be treated by the General Assembly of NASS. However, it is already from August 31st 2012 to be considered as being in effect.”

After being approved by the board, the new NASS constitution was then made available to the members on the NASS website (<http://nordicsemiotics.org/>) and through the newsletter (No. 2 2012, Fall 2012). Furthermore, a call for proposals for amendments to the constitution was sent to NASS members in the Spring 2013 issue of the newsletter.

Given that no proposals for amendments to any aspect of the constitution in effect were sent to the Governing Board, the new NASS constitution was approved as it is by the General Assembly.

## 5. The President's Report

Luis Emilio Bruni started his report with a brief historical overview of NASS since its foundation in 1987 in Imatra, Finland with Dinda L. Gorlée serving as NASS' first President.

On June 9th 2012, NASS marked its 25 year anniversary in Imatra, as part of the 27th International Summer School for Semiotic and Structural Studies (June 8-12), arranged by the International Semiotics Institute (ISI). The venue of the anniversary celebration was very much appropriate, given that NASS was founded in Imatra in 1987 – while its first conference was held in Lund, Sweden, in 1992.

Since its foundation in 1987, NASS had organised 6 conferences. However, Luis Emilio Bruni pointed to the difficulties that the association underwent during the period of 2000 to 2011 with no conferences being organised. The revival of NASS took place in 2011 in Lund through the organization of the 7th conference due to the initiative of its by then president Göran Sonesson and the re-foundation of the new Governing Board.

Further, the activities of the new Governing Board were pointed out. In particular:

- **Drafting of the new constitution**, working via e-mail correspondence and conference calls.
- **Governing the organisation** of the 8th NASS conference in Aarhus.
- **Transferring** the NASS bank account from Sweden to Denmark for practical considerations (in process).
- **Recruitment** of country representatives for Iceland and Finland (2 members per country), following the amendments of the constitution and given the fact that no representatives for these countries were elected during the General Assembly in Lund in 2011.
- **Creation of a new webpage** by Morten Tønnessen and Kristian Tylén, with the former currently serving as web administrator by regularly maintaining the NASS website (<http://nordicsemiotics.org/>)
- **Adoption** of a new logo (that serves as a heading to the minutes) designed by Timo Maran.

- **Launching** of the newsletter and its distribution through the website and the mailing list, edited and distributed by Morten Tønnessen and Inesa Sahakyan.

- **Representation** of NASS in the 11th World Congress of the International Association for Semiotic Studies (5-9 October 2012, Nanjing, China) by Luis Emilio Bruni and Göran Sonesson (The official representatives of NASS in IASS are Luis Emilio Bruni and Morten Tønnessen).

Luis Emilio Bruni thanks the local organisers of the 8th NASS conference that serves as a step towards contributing to the continuity and the stability of the activities of the association. In the same line, he calls for suggestions as to the venue of the 9th NASS international conference.

On the behalf of his colleagues at the University of Tartu, Estonia, Kalevi Kull expresses the wish to host the next NASS international conference to be held in 2015.

To conclude, the role of the Board in ensuring the smooth running of the association and the importance to guarantee the continuity of the NASS biennial conference series was pointed out.

## **7. The Treasurer's report**

The NASS treasurer, Göran Sonesson, reported on the financial situation of the association, since its re-establishment in Lund in 2011, as follows:

Membership fees (8th NASS conference in Lund): 20.250 SEK (2357,20 Euro)

Website expenses: 564,70 SEK (64,40 Euro)

**Balance: 19.685,30 SEK (2292,80 Euro)**

The sum of **19685,30 SEK** corresponding to 2292,80 Euros is in the NASS old bank account in Sweden and will be transferred to the new NASS bank account to be opened in Denmark.

## **7. Election of six board members; six supplementary representatives; and the President, Secretary and Treasurer (among the elected 12 country representatives)**

Morten Tønnessen, who chaired the elections, first presented the current board of NASS, which counts the following members:

### **Country – Ordinary Representatives – Supplementary Representatives**

**Denmark** Luis Emilio Bruni (President) – Kristian Tylén

**Estonia** Timo Maran – Riin Magnus

**Finland** Ahti-Veikko Pietarinen – Tommi Vehkavaara

**Iceland** Bergljót Kristjánsdóttir – Sigrun Marget Gudmusdottir

**Norway** Morten Tønnessen (Secretary) – Torill Strand



**Sweden** Göran Sonesson (Treasurer) – Sara Lenninger

The board has appointed Inesa Sahakyan as NASS' Organizational Assistant.

Following the call for nominations of candidates to the board announced through the last newsletter preceding the General Assembly (i.e. No. 3, Spring 2013), 2 nominations were received and presented as follows:

Sara Lenninger – Sweden's Ordinary Representative

Aleksei Semenenko – Sweden's Supplementary Representative

Candidates for country representatives, especially for Finland and Iceland, were called among the participants of the General Assembly.

In view of his prior election in the board for the IACS (International Association for Cognitive Semiotics), Kristian Tylén called for other candidates as supplementary country representatives for Denmark. Following this call, **Søren Brier** was nominated as Denmark's Supplementary Representative. Since no further nominations were advanced, the rest of the outgoing board was renominated, including the absent board members.

Before proceeding to the vote, it was reminded that the President, Secretary and Treasurer could hold the same position for 3 periods.

Given the fact that there were no two nominations for the same position, a general vote was suggested to approve the election of all the nominees. All the nominations were approved unanimously by the General Assembly's 31 participants.

The current President and the Secretary were re-elected, and Sara Lenninger was elected as the new NASS Treasurer.

The new Board is conformed as follows:

**Country – Ordinary Representatives – Supplementary Representatives**

**Denmark** Luis Emilio Bruni (President) – Søren Brier

**Estonia** Timo Maran – Riin Magnus

**Finland** Ahti-Veikko Pietarinen – Tommi Vehkavaara

**Iceland** Bergljót Kristjánsdóttir – Sigrun Marget Gudmusdottir

**Norway** Morten Tønnessen (Secretary) – Torill Strand

**Sweden** Sara Lenninger (Treasurer) – Aleksei Semenenko

## 8. Optional topics and announcements

### *Venue of the 9th NASS international conference (2015)*

Luis Emilio Bruni called for suggestions as to the venue of the 9th NASS conference.

Kalevi Kull pointed out the willingness of the Semiotic Department of the University of Tartu, Estonia, to host the next NASS conference. In the absence of other suggestions and in view of the experience in the organisation of such international events of the University of Tartu, the latter was designated as the possible venue of the next international conference of NASS to be held in 2015. This suggestion will be treated by the new NASS Governing Board.

The 9th NASS conference will coincide with another event of importance for the semiotic community, namely, Tartu's Summer School of Semiotics. The possibility of combining the two events while at the same time keeping the identity of each, will be discussed by the board. Kalevi Kull concluded his remarks with a wish that 'Semiotics should flourish!'.

### *Developing NASS activities*

The idea that the conference participation fee and the membership fee could be used in developing and organising new NASS activities, besides its regular biennial conferences, was discussed. The following suggestions were put forward by the participants:

- Attributing scholarships to young semioticians (e.g. Master and PhD Students) for the best abstract contributions.
- Subsidizing the participation to NASS conferences (e.g. financial aid for the trip and/or accommodation) for graduate students who would have their abstracts accepted.
- Organizing Workshops in the framework of the conference, where specialists could give their feedback on the projects presented by students.
- Including a list of the NASS members with their contact details on the website. However, as this could run against the privacy policy, Morten Tønnessen, webmaster and one of the editors of the Newsletter, pointed out that an invitation to voluntarily submit name and contact addresses, and possibly links to articles written by NASS members, would appear in the next newsletter (No. 4, Fall 2013).
- Promoting graduate level exchanges for students in semiotics among Nordic countries.
- Organizing Nordic Summer schools
- Essay prizes for graduate level students in semiotics.

The above suggestions will be taken into consideration and dealt with by the NASS Governing Board.

The General Assembly was adjourned at 17:45.

Following the communication of the present minutes, an updated action plan will be established and sent out to the board members and country representatives by the NASS President.

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## Invitation to be listed on NASS webpage

*By Morten Tønnessen, secretary of NASS*

At the General Assembly of the Nordic Association for Semiotic Studies (NASS) in Aarhus, Denmark, on May 30<sup>th</sup> 2013, it was suggested that the NASS webpage should be used to list the contact info etc. of the association's members. This is what the minutes say about the matter:

Including a list of the NASS members with their contact details on the website. However, as this could run against the privacy policy, Morten Tønnessen, webmaster and one of the editors of the Newsletter, pointed out that an invitation to voluntarily submit name and contact addresses, and possibly links to articles written by NASS members, would appear in the next newsletter (No. 4, Fall 2013).

In other words, we will, on our webpage <http://nordicsemiotics.org/>, *not* list all members, but only those that explicitly ask to be mentioned there with contact info and possibly other information. This can include:

- Contact info
- A brief bio-note
- A brief overview of relevant publications (with links where applicable)

If you wish to be listed on the NASS webpage, write to [post@nordicsemiotics.org](mailto:post@nordicsemiotics.org) using the subject line “Re: Invitation to be listed on NASS webpage”.