



Centro Internazionale di Studi Interculturali di Semiotica e Morfologia
Università degli Studi di Urbino "Carlo Bo"

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The *Centro Internazionale di Studi Interculturali di Semiotica e Morfologia* (International Centre for Intercultural Studies in Semiotics and Morphology) of the University of Urbino "Carlo Bo", on the occasion of the annual colloquia organizes an Inter-doctoral Symposium:

Semiotic Research 2.
Dialogues, Comparisons, Confrontations between Semiotics and Other Disciplines

Coordinators: Alvisè Mattozzi (Iuav University of Venice) and Dario Mangano (University of Palermo)

The Symposium will take place on **Sunday the 5th and Monday the 6th of September 2010**

Introduction

Semiotics' position within the organization of scientific knowledge is somewhat peculiar. As a discipline which analyzes processes of meaning production, sometimes Semiotics has been considered a descriptive methodology, some others an epistemology, always oscillating between a "meta" and an "infra" role. This ambiguity doesn't only regard its relationship with Philosophy or Linguistics, from which it firstly developed, but also the applications it has undergone in fields such as Architecture, Mathematics, Marketing, Arts, Literature, Theories of Culture etc. Certainly not an easy role which, when well played, has shown new perspectives both to traditional approaches and to Semiotics itself. Thanks to these dialogues, a relevant reservoir of semiotic knowledge now lies within studies which do not appear explicitly semiotic.

The main goal of this Symposium is to "take a picture" of the most original and innovative researches which have come across Semiotics as well as those that, spawned within Semiotics itself, have engaged other fields. Taking into account specific case studies, the Symposium aims to reflect upon possibilities and limits of the dialogue between disciplines, with particular regard to the issue of "epistemological requirements" which Semiotics demands to other disciplines, as well as of those that, vice versa, other disciplines demand to semiotics. The Symposium will eventually produce a reflection which will address both Semiotics' exterior as well as its interior: Can Semiotics be considered a discipline? Up to what extent Semiotics' object of study is defined? Up to what extent Semiotics' core can be negotiated?

On the wake of the experience of the first edition of the Symposium, which took place last year, we want to consider such questions moving from current doctoral researches. Ph.D. students of various fields are then welcome to take part to the Symposium. In addition, this year, in order to reach a non academic *milieu* where contamination between different kinds of knowledge is sometimes very intense, we want to open the Symposium also to scholars operating in market research and consultancy firms. Our purpose is to create an "heterogeneous mass" of scholars that may become a "critical mass" and eventually an "innovation engine", creating new ideas and collaborations between those who have chosen Semiotics as their main field of research and those who decided just to make use of its methods and tools. We think that only through such an exchange the complexity of the contemporary world and the problems that it raises (globalization, revolution in media and forms of communications, new economies, environmental issues, management of urban spaces, migrations and interculturality, etc.) can be faced and positively solved. We need to find original approaches which – it's now clear to everyone – lie into those spaces where up to now none has looked: those at the borders.

As we said, we are very open to contributions from various fields and approaches, but, in order to prevent the exchange from being too dispersive and therefore not productive, we want, as already done last year, to point some domains of interest which the proposals will need to address. For each of those domains, a short



description is provided in order to suggest some possible topics. In any case, such suggestions should not be considered a limitation to proposals which may address, within a specific domain, all possible topics.

1) Marketing and Consumptions

Trends: trend making processes, trend effects and transformations. Economy in general, for example with regard to the issue of degrowth or post-growth (Latouche, Fabris etc.), but also with regards to how communications influences the functioning of markets (i.e. the microcredit phenomenon deeply related to diffusion of the Internet). Traditional topics such advertising and communication strategies will be taken in consideration only if contributions are highly innovative. Design considered as the global "configuration" of a commodity.

2) Spaces, Paths and Enviroments

Issues related to evolution of urban spaces seem to be particularly interesting, as well as socialization models that develop in such environments. Also relationships between real and virtual spaces and their transformations. Workplace analysis (offices, companies, public spaces) and all the studies that conjugates with Semiotics and Anthropological perspectives. Issues related to movement in space, i.e. transportations, are a good starting point for reflection.

3) Cultural and Visual Studies

A particularly wide domain that includes studies about Visual Culture as well as about Politics, Gender Studies, Anthropology and many others. Semiotics' interest is mostly oriented toward the relationships between social constructions and systems of representation, with particular regards to phenomena related to symbolic efficacy. As for Visual Studies, for example, proposal that investigate how pictures collaborate to construct identities of various kinds (from that of a nation to that of a company) are welcome.

Organization:

The Symposium will be articulated into two days, each one hosting two sessions for a total of four sessions. Each of the selected speaker will have 25 minutes to present her/his paper, highlighting how s/he used Semiotics. At the end of each session, some discussants, selected by the coordinators among the most important experts in Semiotics as well as in other disciplines, will discuss the papers. The last session will be dedicated to a round table in which all of the discussants will make the point on the state of the art of semiotic research and will discuss about future directions and developments.

Those who will be selected to present their papers to the Symposium will be hosted (food and lodging) by the International Centre for Intercultural Studies in Semiotics and Morphology during the whole Symposium (nights of the 4th, the 5th and the 6th of Septemebr 2010) and will not have to pay the registration fee.

Available places: 18.

Application can be submitted in English, French, Italian and Spanish.

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Applications:

In order to participate to selection, applications must be received by June 15th to the International Centre for Intercultural Studies in Semiotics and Morphology via e-mail or paper mail

Ph. D. students' applications must include

- an abstract (up to 4000 characters), specifying the domain concerned and three keywords
- a description of the Ph.D. research project being carried out.



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Ph. D. students of any year can send their application. Ph.Ds can send their application only if dissertation has been defended during this academic year (2009/2010).

Researchers working in market research and consultancy firms' applications must include:

- an abstract (up to 4000 characters), specifying the domain concerned and three keywords
- a CV
- a company profile

Deadline for application is June 15th 2010.

The selected applicants as well as the whole organization of the Symposium will be published on the Internet site of the International Center for Intercultural Studies in Semiotics and Morphology (www.uniurb.it/semiotica/home.htm) by June 30th, 2010.

Selected applicants will be also notified by e-mail.

Evaluation criteria

Most important evaluation criteria are: innovation related to the topic addressed, role played by Semiotics, originality of the approach. In order to make the debate more organic and profitable, preference will be given to contributions able to create thematically coherent sessions.

Participation to the Symposium (auditors)

Participation is open to everyone.

The payment of a registration fee of € 30 is required.

The International Center for Intercultural Studies in Semiotics and Morphology offers 10 scholarships for Ph. D. students who want to take part to the Symposium as auditors. Each scholarship comprises hospitality (food and lodging) for the duration of the event (nights of the 4th, the 5th and the 6th of September 2010). The scholarship does not include the registration fee.

Scholarships will be assigned to the most interesting research project selected by the Symposium's coordinators. In order to participate to the selection, a Ph. D. students must send by **July 15th 2010** an application specifying his or her Ph.D. program and the abstract of his or her research project by e-mail or paper mail to the International Center for Intercultural Studies in Semiotics and Morphology. The names of the scholarship recipients will be published on the International Center for Intercultural Studies in Semiotics and Morphology internet site (www.uniurb.it/semiotica/home.htm) by July 30th 2010.

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