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***Funktionskreis* and the biosemiotic signifieds: Towards the integration of semiotics**

**Eugenio Israel Chávez Barreto, Oscar S. Miyamoto Gómez,
Tyler James Bennett, Ludmila Lacková, Kalevi Kull¹**

Abstract. The following is a brief synopsis of the 2021 summer Semiosalong event titled “*Funktionskreis* and the biosemiotic signifieds”, held at the Karl Ernst von Baer House, Tartu, Estonia, with presentations by the authors of this review. The included talks revolve around the idea of a ‘second major turn in biosemiotics’ following the more ‘Peircean inspired biology’ turn of the last few decades of the 20th century, and reconciling its findings with other theoretical foundations of general semiotics, such as structural semiology. The aesthetic and textual concerns of the latter invite commentary from the biosemiotic perspective.

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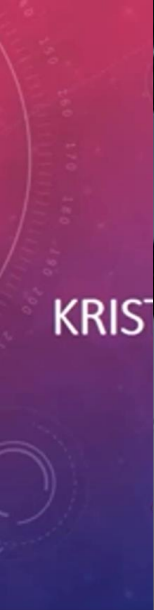
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Semiosalong is the afterhours Tartu semiotic salon, active since 2011.² Semiosalong went fully online in autumn of 2020, but as conditions allowed, it returned for a fully in-person special session in the summer of 2021. The event titled “*Funktionskreis* and the biosemiotic signifieds” was held on 13 July, 2021, and was intended as a pre-gathering seminar for the Stockholm Gatherings in Biosemiotics 2021 that took place on 26–29 July. The impetus for the summer Semiosalong was to interrogate the application of biosemiotics to social science and the humanities, to strengthen the case for using biosemiotics as the foundation for general

The second biosemiotic turn – in the 2020s – provides an important next step. Its main characteristics are: **(a)** extending the integration to Saussurean approaches; i.e. developing a general semiotics which synthesizes Peircean, Saussurean and Uexkülllean theories; and **(b)** grounding aesthetics and ideology in biosemiotics.

Regardless of the area of application – natural science, literary studies, sociology – semiotics utilizes specific textual strategies for managing ideological ossification at the level of discourse, which is just as much a problem for biology as it is for the other fields.

These tools show up in the styles of biosemiotics already – they are not mere deviations from what should be strict scientific writing; they are indispensable strategies of modelling incompatibility and code duality at the level of the living, and are applicable across the board in general semiotics.



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Dump Philosophy! A Command to Dump Metaphysics Wholesale, or the Name for a New Philosophy of Waste?

One answer is provided by reconceptualizing the disciplinary identity of biosemiotics along the lines proposed by the 'second turn in biosemiotics' (Barreto et. al 2022). Biosemiotics may be conceived in the same way as any other application of general semiotics: it superposes numerous non-identical descriptive systems, transposes terms between these systems, and reveals their incompatibilities. [...] This critical method provides a corrective service at the level of the discourse of the given field, regulating the tendency for closed descriptive systems to degenerate into dogmatic ideologies, which is just as much a problem in biology as it is in the humanities. In this view, the only difference between biosemiotics and other areas of applied general semiotics is that the texts which are privileged by biosemiotics are *texts about biology*. The result is that biosemiotics is largely preoccupied with 'deconstructing' the discourse of Neo-Darwinism. But most practitioners of biosemiotics are quite dissatisfied with this way of defining biosemiotics. 13

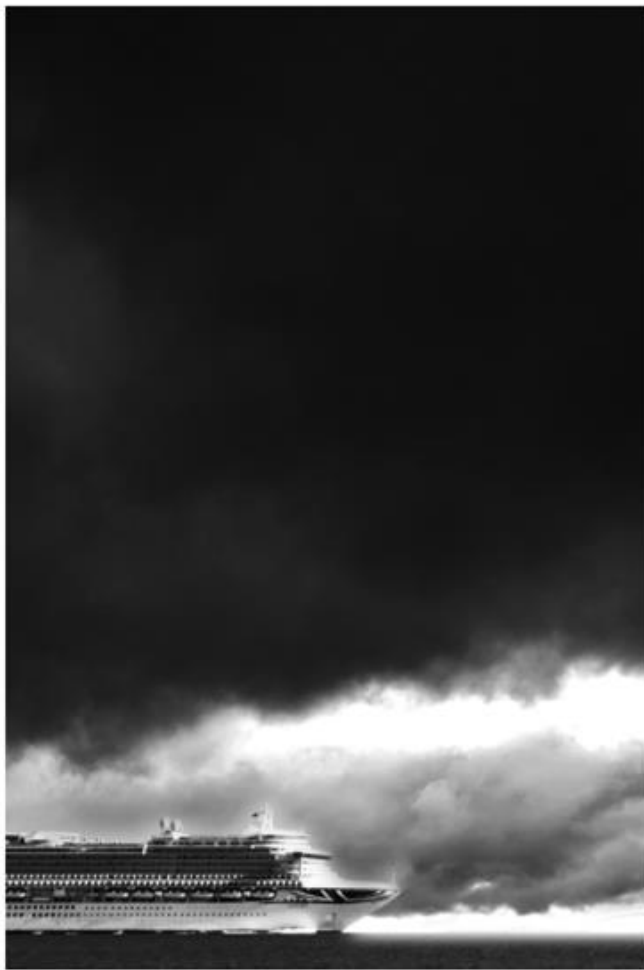


Figure 10 June 10, 2018, Cruz Quebrada, Carbon black level (PM2.5): 12,3 µg/m, Carbon ink print, 100 x 66 cm, Anais Tondeur 2018-20

TURNING BACK THE CLOCK

Ο ΤΡΩΣΑΣ ΙΑΣΕΤΑΙ

These critical aims may be summed up in the formula of *ὁ τρώσας ἰάσεται* (*ho trōsas iasetai*). The world is not given to the subject, contact with reality is the exception rather than the rule, such access requires special measures and is not even something desired, but is experienced as a state of privation. It is better to accept the dispensation of the signifieds into which one is born, than to challenge them and be cast out; however, if one chooses the latter route, one may simply recite the words τρώσας ἰάσεται. 11

HOT WARS AND MEDIA POPULISM
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- *reject the naive romanticism of turning back the clock*
- *reclaim general semiotics (no disavowal of the postmodern)*
- *reconceive biosemiotics from a textual perspective*



cross-, inter-, multi- and trans-disciplinarity



intersectionality and inclusivity



multispecies, linguistic and cultural polyglottism



co-authorship and not-for-profit open access



self-reference, ad hoc modelling, and improvisation



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What is
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Events

thank you!