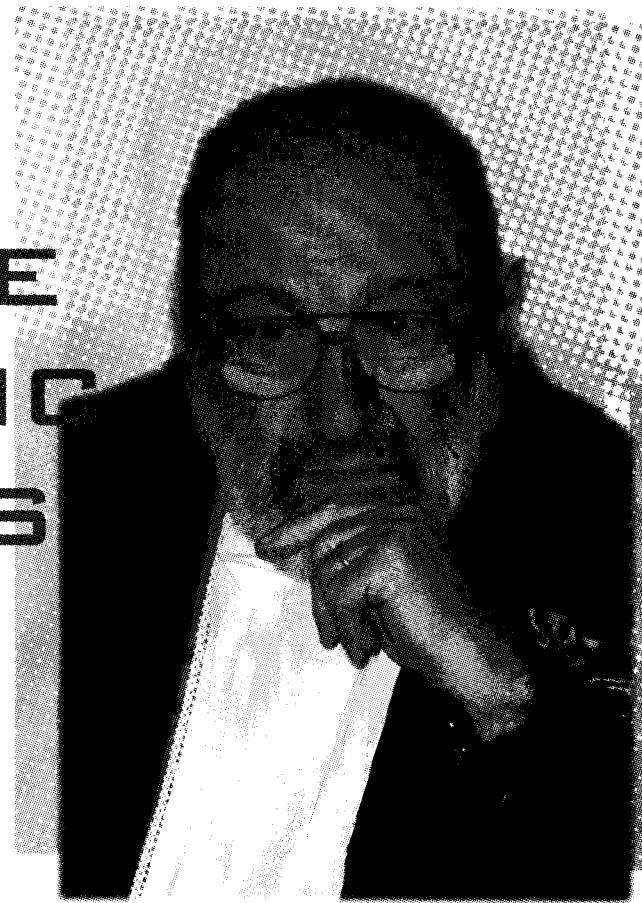


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Sign Systems Studies and the Semiotic Journals of the World

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Abstract: This article provides a brief overview of the journal *Sign Systems Studies*, apparently the oldest journal of semiotics in the world. It was established by Juri Lotman in 1964, produced in Tartu and published by the University of Tartu Press. In addition, we provide a list of all semiotic journals currently published in the world, which includes 46 titles; from these 39 are printed on paper (among them 6 international journals on general semiotics, 14 specialized in some branch of semiotics, and 19 regional semiotics journals). Seven journals appear exclusively on the web. Altogether these journals publish articles in 16 languages.

Keywords: semiotic periodicals; history of semiotics; *Sign Systems Studies*; Tartu semiotics

1. Introduction

The history of semiotics, obviously, goes back to intellectual work in ancient cultures. However, semiotics did not have this history before the formation of semiotics as a discipline and as a branch of academics. Despite a certain institutionalization of medical semiotics already in the early 19th century (if not earlier), semiotics in a more contemporary sense (that covers at least the whole of semiotic phenomena in culture) did not exist institutionally as a branch of science or as an academic field before the 1960s. Only since the beginning of the 1960s, has semiotics acquired a wide spectrum of institutions — its journals, organizations, academic positions, lecture courses, research groups, schools — thus also its identity and history. Among the earliest groups of semiotics in the 1960s, there was Lotman's group in Tartu, together with its journal,

the first in the field.

2. Sign Systems Studies, Trudy po znakovym sistemam

Sign Systems Studies is a journal of semiotics that has been produced since its inception in Tartu and published by the University of Tartu Press.¹ Established by Juri Lotman in 1964, it is apparently the oldest journal of semiotics in the world.

Initially, from 1964 to 1992 (volumes 1–25), the journal was published in Russian, and its title was Труды по знаковым системам (Trudy po znakovym sistemam). The direct translation of this title into English is “sign systems studies”. This English title has appeared on the cover of the journal since vol. 26 (1998). In the earlier volumes 2–7, an English parallel name was provided on the page opposite the title page; this English title was “Works on Semiotics”. However, on some occasions the name “Sign Systems Studies” was used in references to the journal before this became the official title in English (e.g. in Kristeva 1994: 375).

The Estonian version of the title that has been used since 1965 (vol. 2 through vol. 7, 1975) was “Tööd semiootika alalt” (in translation “works on semiotics”), and later “Töid märgisüsteemide alalt”, which can be translated into English as “sign systems studies” (alternatively “proceedings on the field of sign systems”).

As part of the design on the outer cover (dust jacket; since vol. 26 the front cover), a Greek word for “semiotics” has been used. Initially, for vol. 2, Juri Lotman took this from John Locke’s work in the version Σημιωτικ. Later, however, it was noted that the correct form of the word should be Σημιωτικη. Thus, Lotman corrected the spelling and since vol. 3 the latter has been used.²

The first volume of the journal included a monograph by Juri Lotman (1964). The second volume appeared just after the first Tartu Semiotics Summer School, and included a series of papers from that meeting (see also Salupere 2012). The volume also included brief abstracts in English of all the papers. Up to 1992, 25 volumes were published in Russian under the supervision of Juri Lotman. In all volumes, the table of contents appeared in three languages (Russian, English, Estonian).

In 1998, vol. 26 appeared, and since then the journal’s first and main language has been English. However, due to the fact that supporting the diversity of languages

is a policy of the Department of Semiotics at the University of Tartu, the journal acknowledges Russian as the second official language. Each article has at its end an abstract in Russian and in Estonian. In a couple of cases, articles in French have appeared in the journal.

Due to the difficulties related to the control of publications in the Soviet Union, the regularity of publication did not rest with the editors alone. With vol. 26, 1998, publication frequency was one volume per year. From 2001, vol. 29, one volume included two issues, and from 2009, vol. 37, one volume has consisted of four issues.

When issued in Russian, the journal published mainly the works of the Tartu–Moscow school of semiotics. When the main language was changed to English, the scope of the journal was also enlarged — it became an international journal publishing works of semioticians from around the whole world. Simultaneously, it meant a certain widening of the view to semiotics in Tartu — taking into consideration the placement of the lower semiotic threshold close to the origin of life; semiotics as a science has to include both biosemiotics and semiotics of culture. In addition, semiotic research carried on in Tartu has considerably increased its interest towards various western approaches. Indeed, as a result of this, during the period from 1998–2012, the majority of the world’s leading semioticians have been published in *Sign Systems Studies* — including Jeff Bernard, Paul Bouissac, Paul Copley, Marcel Danesi, John Deely, Umberto Eco, Jesper Hoffmeyer, Floyd Merrell, Winfried Nöth, Roland Posner, Thomas A. Sebeok, Frederik Stjernfelt, Eero Tarasti, Thure von Uexküll, Thomas Winner and many others (also, for instance, Noam Chomsky, Jaakko Hintikka and Julia Kristeva). At the same time, the journal nevertheless represents the interests and research results of the Tartu group of semiotics in particular. Accordingly, it publishes the work of contemporary Estonian semioticians, as well as the works by Jakob von Uexküll and Juri Lotman previously unavailable in English.

3. Other Journals of Semiotics in the World

The number of periodicals on semiotics appearing during the last fifty years has been quite large (see a review in Withalm 2004).¹ As common to any branch of science, many of the journals have not lasted long. We have set our task here to make

1 See also the homepage of *Sign Systems Studies* at <http://www.ut.ee/SOSE/sss/>. Some additional analysis of the journal has been done by Jaagus et al. (2012).

2 We thank Mihhail Lotman and John Deely for paying attention to this detail.

1 See also a brief list in Voigt (2008: 284–286).

a list of currently published journals of semiotics.¹ In case of each journal, the year of establishment is indicated.

It is not always clear which journal to identify as a journal of semiotics. We use here a strict approach, including the journals that self-identify as dealing with semiotics.² Some periodicals are not published very regularly, thus the distinction between a journal and an aperiodic bulletin is somewhat fuzzy.³

The list is divided into four categories: (A) international journals of semiotics in general, (B) international journals in special fields of semiotics, (C) regional journals of semiotics, and (D) electronic journals of semiotics. The journals are listed in chronological order of their establishment. We have also tried to add information about the publisher and the language of publication.

A. International Journals on General Semiotics

Sign Systems Studies (1964) [University of Tartu Press; in English, some papers in Russian]

Semiotica – an official journal of the International Association for Semiotic Studies (1969) [De Gruyter Mouton; in English, some papers in French]

Kodikas/Code – Ars Semiotica – an international journal of semiotics (1977) [Gunter Narr Verlag; languages of publication are English, French and German]

The Semiotic Review of Books (1990) [Dept. of Sociology, Lakehead University; in English]

Signata – Annales des sémiotiques / Annals of semiotics (2010) [Presses Universitaires de Liege; in French and in English]

International Journal of Signs and Semiotic Systems (2011) [IGI Publishing; an official publication of the Information Resources Management Association; in English]

¹ Therefore, the list does not include, for instance, the journal *European Journal for Semiotic Studies* (established in 1989), which no longer appears, or the electronic journal *Semiotics. Evolution. Energy. Development (SEED)* that appeared from 2001 to 2007. Of course, in some cases it might occur that the publication will reappear after a break in its publication. We did not include *Acta Semiotica Fennica* (established in 1992) because this is a book series, not a journal.

² Thus, we did not include for this reason, for instance, the journal *Symbolic Interaction – A Journal of the Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction* (established 1977), or *Metaphor and Symbol (formerly Metaphor and Symbolic Activity)*, established in 1986).

³ For instance, *Almen Semiotik*, and *Semiotiche*.

B. International Journals in Special Fields of Semiotics

Cahiers Ferdinand de Saussure – Revue de linguistique générale, Publiée par le Cercle Ferdinand de Saussure (1941) [Genève, Librairie Droz S.A.; chiefly in French, some articles in English, German or Italian]¹

Transactions of the Charles Peirce Society – A Quarterly Journal in American Philosophy (1965) [Charles S. Peirce Society; in English]²

Degrés – revue de synthèse à orientation sémiologique (1973) [in French and English]

Discurso – Revista Internacional de Semiótica y Teoría Literaria (1987) [Asociación Andaluza de Semiótica; in Spanish]

International Journal for the Semiotics of Law / Revue Intenationale de Sémiotique Juridique (1987) [Springer; in English and French]

Social Semiotics (1991) [Routledge / Taylor & Francis; in English]

Cybernetics and Human Knowing – A Journal of Second Order Cybernetics, Autopoiesis and Cyber-Semiotics (1992) [Imprint Academic; in English]

Applied Semiotics / Semiotique Appliquée (1996) [journal devoted to literary semiotic research; Lulu Press; University of Toronto at Mississauga; in English and French]

Visio – International Journal for Visual Semiotics (1996) [Laval University, Diffusion Publishing; in English and French]

Variaciones Borges – Journal of Philosophy, Semiotics & Literature (1996) [The University of Pittsburgh; in Spanish, English and French]

Interdisciplinary Journal for Germanic Linguistics and Semiotic Analysis (1996) [University of California, Berkeley; in English]

Cognitive Semiotics (2007), or *The Journal of Cognitive Semiotics. Multidisciplinary Journal on Meaning and Mind*. [Vol. 4(1) of the latter was launched in August 2012. This seems to be the follower of *Cognitive Semiotics*, however published only as an e-journal up to now.] [in English]

Biosemiotics (2008) [Springer; in English]

¹ The journal does not identify itself as a journal of semiotics; however, as about a major classic of semiotics, it can be included here.

² Same as previous footnote.

International Journal of Marketing Semiotics (2012) [in English]

C. Regional Journals on Any Field of Semiotics

Versus: Quaderni di studi semiotici (1971) [Bompiani; in Italian, French and English]

Significação – Revista Brasileira de Semiótica (1973) [Annablume; in Portuguese]

Zeitschrift für Semiotik (1979) [the journal of German Semiotic Society, in cooperation with Austrian and Swiss semiotic societies; in German]

Recherches sémiotiques / Semiotic Inquiry (1980) [The official publication of The Canadian Semiotics Association; in English and French]¹

The American Journal of Semiotics (1981) [The Journal of the Semiotic Society of America; in English]

Semiotopos (1981) [initially *Semiotic Studies*, since 2003 *Series Semiotopos*; Japanese Association of Semiotic Studies; in Japanese]

Szemiotikai szövegtan – Semiotic Textology (1990) [Department of Hungarian Language and Linguistics at the Juhász Gyula Teacher Training College in Szeged, in Hungarian and English]

Almen Semiotik (1990) [Aarhus Universitetsforlag; in Danish and English]

Signa – Revista de la Asociación Española de Semiótica (1992) [Institute of Literary Semiotics, Theatre and New Technologies at the National University of Distance Education (Madrid), in Spanish]

Lexia (1994) [Semiotic journal of the Center for Interdisciplinary Research on Communication of the University of Torino; in English, Italian, French and Spanish]

deSignis (1999) [Federación Latinoamericana de Semiótica; in Spanish]

Respectus Philologicus (1999) [Vilnius University and Jan Kochanowski University; in English, Lithuanian, Polish and Russian]²

Kpymuka u cemyomuka [Kritika i semiotika] (2000) [University of Novosibirsk, Department of Semiotics and Discourse Analysis; in Russian]

Semikolon – Tidsskrift for Idéhistorie, Semiotik og Filosofi (2000) [University of Aarhus; in Danish, Swedish, Norwegian and English]

Galáxia. Revista do Programa de Pós-Graduação em Comunicação e Semiótica (2001) [formerly *Face: Revista de Semiótica e Comunicação* (1998)] [in Portuguese]

Acta Semiotica Estica (2001) [Estonian Semiotics Association, University of Tartu Press; in Estonian]

Semiotiche (2003) [Ananke edizioni; in Italian]

Chinese Semiotic Studies (2009) [Nanjing Normal University Press; in English]

Signs and Media (2009) [Sichuan University Press; in Chinese]

D. Electronic Journals on Semiotics¹

AdVersuS – Revista de Semiótica (1990, from 2004 online) [Istituto Italo-argentino di Ricerca Sociale (IIRS); languages of publication are Spanish, Italian, French and Portuguese]

texto! (1996) [Institut Ferdinand de Saussure; in French, English and Spanish]

Entretextos – Revista Electrónica Semestral de Estudios Semióticos (2003) [University of Granada; in Spanish]

SemiotiX – A global information bulletin (2004) [The Semioticon; in English]

Hortus Semioticus (2006) [University of Tartu, Estonia; in Estonian and English]

Signs – International Journal of Semiotics (2007) [Royal School of Library and Information Science, Denmark; in English]

The Public Journal of Semiotics (2007) [Toronto; in English]

Thus, we have found altogether 46 semiotic journals currently published in the world.² From these, seven are published exclusively in electronic form.³

Leaving out *Cahiers Ferdinand de Saussure* and *Transactions of the Charles Peirce Society*, which do not identify themselves as specifically semiotic journals, we have 37 currently published paper-journals on semiotics, from which two were

1 Since the web journal format may have many forms, we use the term here in a narrow sense. There exist several Internet publications that may also belong to the list, for instance *Fuhaoxue Dongtai* (*Bulletin of Semiotics*), published monthly by the Institute of Semiotics and Media Studies, Sichuan University (in Chinese).

2 We thank Claudio Rodríguez, Yongxiang Wang and Hisashi Muroi for their help in finding information for some of journals.

3 We would greatly appreciate receiving additional information about periodicals that are absent in the list.

1 Recent issue from 2009.

2 This journal describes itself as a philological periodical dealing with the problems of grammar, semiotics and semantics.

established in the 1960s, five in the 1970s, five in the 1980s, 13 in the 1990s and 12 since the year 2000.

Languages of articles accepted for publication in the semiotic journals are the following (for each language, we give the number of journals from all 45 listed): English 33, French 14, Spanish 8, Italian 5, German 3, Portuguese 3, Russian 3, Danish 2, Estonian 2, Chinese 1, Hungarian 1, Japanese 1, Lithuanian 1, Norwegian 1, Polish 1, Swedish 1.

It is notable that some journals were established and are edited by students — e.g. *Semikolon* and *Hortus Semioticus*.

Taking into account the overall number of academic periodicals in the world, the share of semiotic journals is certainly not high. However, for semiotics itself, the situation looks quite stable and provides a platform that will surely guarantee the continuation and development of our field.

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CogSem Notes IV

— From Structural Semantics to Cognitive Semiotics

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These notes are dedicated to bringing information and comments on current research, reflection and academic activities in the new discipline of cognitive semiotics, a field of studies in which cognitive science and general semiotics merge, collaborate or contribute to the inquiry into meaning and the mind. I am honored by the generous invitation and grateful to the editor of this important journal for the opportunity to offer its readers these *CogSem Notes*.

In this issue I venture to show my readers a somewhat heated debate that recently took place in an email list for cognitive linguists (CogLing), which is run from the Center for Cognitive Science at the University of San Diego and often dominated by Californian participants. This time the topics were images, imagery and metaphor; since these iconic phenomena are classical in various traditions, some participants, including myself, were on a line of thinking less common in Californian cognition, and more inclined toward semiotic views. The result, so far, includes the following series of comments (1–11) (slightly edited). At the end, I add some personal thoughts on the problems discussed.

A CogLing [email list]¹ Debate on “Image Metaphor”:

1. Orazgozel Esenova writes, July 16:

Dear colleagues,

According to the theory, image metaphors are not used in everyday reasoning and there is no system of words or idiomatic expressions in the language whose meaning is grounded on them. If this is the case, how should we interpret metaphorical expressions

¹ In the following, square brackets enclose supplementary information.