

Round table and book presentation of *Redefining Literary Semiotics* on the 10th World Congress of Semiotics

What is happening in the field of literary semiotics? After the bitter competition among conflicting theories and doctrines dominating the field during the last three decades, more complementary approaches are taking its place. Literary semiotics is entering a new phase in which drawing firm dividing lines between the various theories is no longer considered productive. Instead, as the newly published volume *Redefining Literary Semiotics* (Cambridge Scholars Press, 2009, 255 p.) shows, much more is gained by making different theoretical approaches interlink with one another. Inspired by Franco Moretti's conviction that theories should be assessed "not as ends in themselves but for how they concretely change the way we work: for how they allow us to enlarge the literary field and to re-design it in a better way", the book attempts to exploit the full potential of literary semiotics. Extending well beyond the 'narrow' discipline of literary studies into areas such as cognitive studies, neuroscience, philosophy, art and media studies, the collection of essays shows how a synechistic approach to theory opens up yet more new spaces to consider.

This was also the general tenor at the book presentation and subsequent round table session at the Tenth World Congress of Semiotics at La Coruña in September 2009, convened by the editors of the volume, Harri Veivo, Christina Ljungberg, and J. D. Johansen, and chaired by Ljungberg and Veivo. After a brief introduction of the book by Ljungberg and Veivo, three of the contributors gave short presentations of their articles, which evidenced the volume's wide range of approaches. Gabriele Jutz (Vienna) discussed how devices of literary representation interact with other forms of art, especially experimental cinema and digital and visual art, focusing on issues of performance, materiality and the media-specificity in the production of meaning. Sirkka Knuuttila (Helsinki) explored the notion of indexicality in relation to semiotics, cognitive poetics and neuroscience, and showed how these complementary fields of research help us gain an understanding of the role emotions play in text-reader relations. The broad scope of her approach exemplarily demonstrated how literary semiotics can function as an interdisciplinary field, profiting from insights deriving from paradigms that are

otherwise not considered relevant but which might prove very fruitful. Frederik Stjernfelt (Aarhus), finally, gave a *tour d'horizon* of iconicity in the literary text, discussing Roman Ingarden's theory from the perspective determined by semiotic pragmatic theory and convincingly showing how epistemological changes demand new readings. Exploring diagrammatic iconicity in literary texts from a Peircean perspective, he demonstrated how schematic aspects influence concepts such as realism, truth and 'ideas' in the literary work and presented five literary 'pseudo-truths': truth as empirical or typical resemblance, as internal or external (ontological) consistency and truth as the manifestation of metaphysical qualities. A lively discussion followed, with questions being directed to the speakers from a wide set of angles. It was clear that the combination of topics presented in the book struck a chord with the audience and will, it is hoped, lead to further, extended discussion in different contexts and venues.

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