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Preface

The contents of the first half of the book at hand represent the transactions of the Semiotic Symposium at Radziejowice, in Poland, organized by the Department of Logical Semiotics of Warsaw University. The symposium took place from May 22 to May 28, 1978.

The congregation included 72 participants from both Poland and foreign countries. Sixteen Polish scientific institutions were represented at the meeting: eight universities, the Polish Academy of Sciences, the Polish Semiotic Society, academic colleges of pedagogy and music, the Institute of Culture of the Ministry of Culture and Art, the Polish Composers' Association, and the Scientific-Technical Publishing House.

Among the participants in the conference were the representatives of ten foreign academic institutions including three U.S. universities (Brown, Indiana, and Yale), the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, four European universities (Oxford, Padua, Turin, and Vilnius), one Australian University (Melbourne), and the International Association for Semiotic Studies.

Thirty-two papers were read, followed by discussions which were so animated and drew so many participants that, on the last day of the symposium, the time allotted to any discussion had to be cut down to two minutes. The theoretical objective of the symposium was to make a scholarly forum available for exchanging ideas, discussing some relevant issues in theoretical semiotics and its applications, and showing what kinds of research were being carried on in particular semiotic centers and who was engaged in them.

The participants are specialists in various disciplines. This may entail a danger of a semiotic kind: if many diverse subject matters are handled by a number of students representing different disciplines, mutual misunderstanding often threatens and spoils scientific results. On the other hand, however, especially at earlier stages of cooperation, it is useful to gather in one place representatives of different fields, specializations, attitudes, opinions, and terminological conventions or habits just to be able to embrace a view of the body of problems, of the whole of interests, and of all the possibilities involved. But at the same time, to counteract or to neutralize possible chaos, the sym-

posium was informally divided into two parts, the first being devoted to theoretical semiotics, especially to logical, philosophical, and general-linguistic problems, and the second to the applications of semiotic methods, namely to literary semiotics and the semiotics of culture, art, music, the theater, film, etc. The same principle of arrangement underlies the ordering of the contents of the present volume, which in the main corresponds with the agenda of the symposium.

The reader should be prepared for the different concepts behind and use of the word 'semiotics' in the papers which are included in the present book. The term in question, as we all know, is ambiguous. It may be useful, then, to review its various meanings:

i. Semiotics is a doctrine of signs: it could properly be called logic. This was John Locke's opinion.

ii. Semiotics is *Lehre von der Bezeichnung der Gedanken und Dinge*, according to Johann Heinrich Lambert.

iii. Semiotics is a 'quasi-necessary or formal doctrine of signs' in one of C. S. Peirce's formulations, while in another it is 'the doctrine of the essential nature and fundamental varieties of possible semiosis'.

iv. Saussurean 'semiology'—which 'does not yet exist'—is a psychological discipline studying the life of signs against a background of social life, and linguistics is a part of this general science.

v. Semiotics is a part of linguistics, more precisely the part concerned with big meaning units; as opposed to Saussure, Roland Barthes subsumes semiotics under linguistics.

vi. Hjelmslev's semiology is a kind of metasemiotics, i.e. of a discipline which studies semiotics, but only its nonscientific branch or version.

vii. For Christian Metz, semiotics is a formalization of the natural sciences, while semiology is a formalization of the humanities.

viii. For A. J. Greimas, semiotics (in the plural) are sciences, and semiologies are the humanities; both of them are to be analyzed with respect to research procedures which are applied in each of them and not with respect to their structures.

ix. Semiotics, according to G. Mounin, is a class of nonverbal communication systems, while semiology is a general science of all kinds of sign systems.

x. Semiotics is any system of signs, and semiology is a science of semiotics; this was Edwin Ardener's and Francis Whitfield's view.

xi. Semiotics is a formalized or formalizable system of signs, while semiology is a general theory of communication phenomena, i.e. of creating messages on the basis of conventional codes; this was Umberto Eco's opinion at one time.

xii. The term 'semiotics' was used by Edmund Husserl as synonymous with the phrase 'the logic of sign', while the adjective 'semantic' occurred in

Husserl's texts as synonymous with either 'semiotic' or 'syntactic', e.g. in 'semantic category'.

xiii. The noun 'semeiotics' was chosen by Leon Chwistek as the translation of the Polish word *semantyka* [semantics], the latter being understood in the broad sense, i.e. identical with that of the term 'semiotics'.

xiv. Semiotics is a study of meaning—or sense, connotation—that is to say, of those properties or functions of signs which are independent of the extra-textual reality and which are conditioned solely by intentions of sign-senders. Semantics, on the other hand, analyzes designata, denotations, or reference of signs, i.e. those sign functions which are contingent upon both the sender's intention and the extratextual reality. The distinction was mentioned by Tadeusz Kotarbiński, who, however, mostly used the term 'semantics' in its broad sense, in which it is synonymous with 'semiotics'.

xv. Semiotics is concerned with meaning as transmitted by any sign, while semantics studies those semiotic properties which are connected with language; this opinion was expressed by Henryk Hiż, who adopted it after Roman Jakobson.

xvi. General semantics is a psychobiological doctrine and movement aiming at a therapy by means of symbols; it was Alfred Korzybski who set up the theory and practice.

The above survey, partly based on Thomas A. Sebeok's comments on the word "semiotics" and its congeners, is far from being complete. Its aim is to make us cautious but at the same time tolerant toward each other's terminology. Let us not assume that a speaker does not speak of semiotics because his use of the term may be unknown to us, strange, or hardly acceptable. Instead, let us rather try to overcome both conceptual and terminological difficulties: not so much by choosing one concept only and rejecting the others, but rather by becoming aware of the distinctions which issue from the above survey, at least of the most important of them.

The term 'semiotics' was used there to refer, among others, to the following different things:

- i. semiotic properties of the object language or object signs;
- ii. a study of (i), most often together with
- iii. a study of (ii), where (ii) is formulated in a metalanguage of level one and (iii) in a metalanguage of a higher level;
- iv. semiotic methods; one of them, perhaps the most frequently applied, consists in considering various kinds of things, events, and phenomena to be signs and, consequently, in interpreting them, i.e. in ascribing meaning to them;
- v. applied semiotics, i.e. the application of the above-mentioned semiotic method to a certain discipline, art, or body of facts; for instance, semiotics of literature, semiotics of religion, or semiotics of culture.

Bearing in mind these distinctions, we should associate neither positive nor negative emotional meaning with any of the terms enumerated above. Nobody should tend, for instance, to respect philosophy of language as scientific and to disregard semiotics as nonscientific, or vice versa, because it would be against the principle *sine ira et studio*, so important in scientific research. Instead of complaining that no one in his right senses can possibly know what the noun 'semiotics' stands for, we should do our best to clear up the matter; I do hope that if we bear in mind the entanglement of semiotic problems, and if we are cautious and tolerant, we shall succeed in making a step or two toward the right path in the semiotic labyrinth.

The meeting at Radziejowice was assembled for two different reasons, and the semiotic symposium constituted only one part of it and was to effect or at least to serve solely its one purpose. Another but no less important objective of the conference was to provide a formal opportunity for negotiating and signing an agreement on permanent scientific cooperation in semiotics between the Center for Research in Semiotics of Brown University at Providence (Director, Professor Thomas G. Winner), the Center of Semiotic Studies of Yale University at New Haven (Chairman, Professor Edward Stankiewicz), the Department of Logical Semiotics of Warsaw University (Head, Professor Jerzy Pelc), and the Research Center for Language and Semiotic Studies of Indiana University at Bloomington (Chairman, Professor Thomas A. Sebeok).

The idea of cooperation between the above-mentioned semiotic institutions as well as between individual scholars has its own history.

In 1975, a conference was convened at the University of South Florida in Tampa, namely the First North American Semiotics Colloquium, which took place within the framework of the 1975 Linguistic Institute held under the auspices of the Linguistic Society of America. Thanks to the friendly initiative and efficient help of Thomas A. Sebeok, a few Polish scholars were invited; one of them was the present writer. In our talks with Thomas A. Sebeck and Edward Stankiewicz, carried on during the meeting in Tampa, the idea of our respective semiotic university centers entering into collaboration emerged for the first time. As a matter of fact our personal collaboration had started earlier: Sebeok, Stankiewicz, and Winner participated in semiotic conferences organized in Poland, all four of us met more than once at various international meetings, our articles appeared together in the same publications. Moreover, the meeting in Tampa was itself an excellent example of such interpersonal collaboration and a cornerstone of cooperation between our institutions.

Such was also the international symposium on 'Semiotics and Theories of Symbolic Behavior in Eastern Europe and in the West', organized in April, 1976, by Professor Thomas G. Winner on behalf of Brown University in Providence, to which four semioticians from Poland were invited. Thomas G.

Winner, too, like Sebeok, Stankiewicz, and myself, was positively in favor of interuniversity cooperation in semiotics. Its plan was outlined more clearly in the conversations carried on between the four of us in Providence and during Sebeok's visit to the Department of Logical Semiotics of Warsaw University and the Polish Semiotic Society in May, 1976, as well as during Winner's visits in June and December, 1977. Official letters came from Indiana University and Yale University in 1976, and from Brown University in 1977, to Warsaw University containing a proposal for such cooperation.

In the meantime, the cooperation prospered: Sebeok delivered semiotic lectures at Warsaw University in 1976, a young Polish semiotician from the Department of Logical Semiotics of Warsaw University stayed as a fellow at the Research Center for Language and Semiotic Studies of Indiana University at Bloomington during the first semester of the academic year 1976/1977, and beginning with the year 1977 articles written by the U.S. partners in the collaboration were published in *Studia Semiotyczne* [semiotic studies] edited by the present writer and issued by the Polish Semiotic Society.

Finally, at Radziejowice in May, 1978, the details of an agreement on our cooperation were cleared up and a 'Memorandum of Understanding' was signed by Professors Sebeok, Stankiewicz, Winner, and me, acting on behalf of Indiana University, Yale University, Brown University, and Warsaw University, respectively.

The agreement has stipulated collaboration in semiotics as including:

Among other extensions, general semiotic theory, logical semiotics, semiotics of verbal and a verbal communication, the history of semiotics, semiotics of culture, semiotics of verbal and a verbal arts (including the theater and cinema), the mass media, medical semiotics, zoosemiotics, psychosemiotics, sociosemiotics, praxeosemiotics, and applications of semiotic methods in the sciences, as e.g., in genetics, theory of information, etc.

The collaboration, under the terms of the agreement, consists in exchange of persons, organizing bilateral conferences, publishing the results of various forms of scientific cooperation, planning and setting up research teams, seminars, and symposia, and establishing banks of bibliographical information.

The U.S./Polish Bilateral Conference 'Semiotic Systems and Their Functions' held at Indiana University, Bloomington, October 1-3, 1979, was one of the first consequences of the agreement, undoubtedly a successful one, as can be seen from the second part of this volume. Other steps toward the fruition of our plans of collaboration are our work on the Encyclopedic Dictionary of Semiotics and on the Encyclopedic Handbook of the Semiotics of Culture, in progress but not yet finished at present, as well as the international semiotic symposium

‘Theoretical Semiotics: Verbal Signs—Visual Signs’ organized by the Department of Logical Semiotics of Warsaw University, September 23–24, 1980, and the international semiotic symposium ‘The Philosophy of Sign’ held in Pulawy, Poland, September 25–26, 1980, and organized by the Department of Logic and Methodology of Science of Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin.

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