

Consultant Assembly  
for Discussing the Idea  
of Urban Discourse in Semiotic Terms





## ***Consultant Assembly for Discussing the Idea of Urban Discourse in Semiotic Terms***

Organized in Wrocław between Feb. 27 and March 01, 2009  
by the Committee of Philological Sciences of the Polish  
Academy of Sciences, Wrocław Branch, and Philological  
School of Higher Education in Wrocław in co-operation with  
the Research Center for Semiotics of Berlin University  
of Technology and the Metamind-Project of the Latvian  
Academy of Culture in Riga

A book of abstracts, papers and contributions for discussion  
edited by ZDZISŁAW WĄSIK

WROCLAW 2009

Consultant Assembly for Discussing the Idea of Urban Discourse in Semiotic Terms has been financed by the Philological School of Higher Education in Wrocław and the Polish Academy of Science, Wrocław Branch

### The Scientific Committee

PROF. DR. PHIL. DAINA TETERS (Latvian Academy of Culture in Riga)

PROF. DR. HABIL.ROLAND POSNER (Berlin University of Technology)

PROF. DR. HABIL.ZDZISŁAW WĄSIK (Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań,  
Philological School of Higher Education in Wrocław, and Kolegium  
Karkonoskie in Jelenia Góra)

### The Organizing Committee

PROF. DR. HABIL.STANISŁAW PRĘDOTA (Polish Academy of Science, Wrocław  
Branch, and the University of Wrocław)

DR HABIL. PIOTR CHRUSZCZEWSKI, prof. WSF (Polish Academy of Science,  
Wrocław Branch, University of Wrocław, and the Philological School  
of Higher Education in Wrocław)

MGR INŻ. RYSZARD OPALA (Philological School of Higher Education  
in Wrocław)

MGR KATARZYNA PASLAWSKA (Philological School of Higher Education  
in Wrocław)

© Copyright by Wyższa Szkoła Filologiczna we Wrocławiu, Wrocław 2009

ISBN 978–83–60097–02–1

Cover design by MAŁGORZATA TYC-KLEKOT

Editorial proof by SYLWIA RUDZIŃSKA and MARTIN DOLAN

Typesetting by ZDZISŁAW WĄSIK

WYDAWNICTWO WYŻSZEJ SZKOŁY FILOLOGICZNEJ WE WROCŁAWIU

50–335 Wrocław, ul. Sienkiewicza 32, tel. (+48 71) 328 1414

fax. (+48 71) 322 1006, <http://www.wsf.edu.pl>, e-mail: [wsf@wsf.edu.pl](mailto:wsf@wsf.edu.pl)

Wydanie I. Nakład 70 egz. Ark. wyd. 4. Ark. druk. 6

## Spis treści

Unfolding the Semiotic Web in Urban Discourse: <i>Under the auspices of the International Communicology Institute directed by RICHARD L. LANIGAN (Southern Illinois University, Carbondale) at the 10th World Congress of Semiotics. La Coruña, Spain, September 22–26, 2009: Culture of Communication, Communication of Culture</i> .....	7
On the Textual Beginnings of Pre-Urban Societies in the Viking Age (An Anthroposemiotic Study of Runic Inscriptions in North-Central Jutland Against the Background of Selected Civilization Models) by PIOTR P. CHRUSZCZEWSKI .....	9
Beyond Corporate Social Responsibility: The Semiotic Act of Renaming Urban Streets in Bucharest by CAMELIA-MIHAELA CMECIU ...	13
City Furniture and Its Role in the Organization of Human Behavior: A System-Theoretical Approach by ROLAND POSNER.....	19
How Urban Discourse is Patterned Through the Performing Arts (A Poster Session Presenting Drawings of Performers on the Stage Created During Their Interaction with Their Audiences) by VESSELA POSNER .....	23
The City as a Text by GRAŻYNA SAWICKA .....	27
Urban Environment, Metropolitan Discourse and Verbal Proxemics: Searching for the Meanings in the City by MIKOŁAJ SOBOCIŃSKI .....	29
Semiotic Aspects of the City as a Space and the Space in the City (with Special Reference to Riga) by DAINA TETERS .....	39
WELL, WELL ... by MAŁGORZATA TYC-KLEKOT.....	67
Means-and-Purpose-Oriented Functionalism in Architecture and Urbanist Art and the Sources of the Conceptions of Linguistic Functions by ZDZISŁAW WĄSIK.....	69
Contributors .....	87



## **Unfolding the Semiotic Web in Urban Discourse:**

***Under the auspices of the International Communicology Institute directed by RICHARD L. LANIGAN (Southern Illinois University, Carbondale) at the 10th World Congress of Semiotics. La Coruña, Spain, September 22–26, 2009: Culture of Communication, Communication of Culture***

*Convenors: ROLAND POSNER (Research Center for Semiotics, Berlin University of Technology), DAINA TETERS, Moderator (Metamind-Project, Latvian Academy of Culture, Riga), and ZDZISŁAW WĄSIK (Department of Linguistic Semiotics, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań; Philological School of Higher Education in Wrocław; Kolegium Karkonoskie in Jelenia Góra)*

The subject matter of this workshop will constitute a semiotic approach to the discursive patterns and practices of people who communicate in the urban environment. The notion of urbanism will be defined as a way of life in cities, towns, and their agglomerations (metropolises). Hence, the distinction between “urban vs. rural” is to be specified. The notion of discourse, in turn, will be taken as defined by philologists, or in a broader context, by representatives of social sciences. Practitioners of philological sciences, linguists and theoreticians of literature, refer the term *discourse* principally to the relational properties of *text*-types or *text*-processing activities embedded into the social roles of communication participants and their culture. Discourse is seen as the realization of language in spoken and written texts determined by the functional circles, interest spheres or the domains of human behavior as, e.g., family, neighborhood, market, festival or carnival, magazine, school, church, media, office, parliament, army, law, courtroom, prison, hospital, feminism, anti-colonialism, green peace movements, etc. However, from the perspective of social-communicational sciences, discourse is viewed in terms of semiotic codes and processes that link communicating individuals into interpersonal and intersubjective collectivities when they create and interpret meanings embodied in material bearers, as, e.g., indices (or indexes), symptoms, signals, appeals, symbols, icons (pictorial or mimet-

ic symbols), as well as nonverbal and verbal signs forming the means and modes of human understanding. Accordingly, the unfolding of the semiotic web will be understood here, firstly, with respect to observed phenomena, as detecting and evaluating the growth and manifestation of the sphere of meaning-bearers (*semiosphere*) or a sequence of meaning-bearing events, and secondly, regarding the observer's focus of attention, as identifying and explaining the constituents and aspects of discourse in the light of signs and/or sign-processes (*semioses*) that aggregate communicating individuals into communicative linkages on the lower level and discourse communities – on the higher level of social grouping.

It is expected that the workshop may offer the opportunity to bring the practitioners of *text-and-sign-oriented* disciplines together who perceive and apprehend the formative nature of urban discourse at various planes of its expression, creating thus a combination of conceptual simplicity and complexity, as well as the simultaneity of varying types of views where the described and descriptive objects intermingle, where the explanatory statements are explained in terms of other statements. In their papers, they may expose such semiotic aspects of human interrelationships in the urban environment, as the opposition between, e.g., public vs. private, global vs. local, strange vs. intimate, alien vs. proximate, foreign vs. domestic, distant vs. near, anonymous vs. distinctive, etc. Their questions might concentrate around such individual- and group-communication related categories of concern, as for example, requirements, needs, values, power, authority, conflict and accommodation, cooperation and competition, etc. Invited are also those researchers who are interested in the conditions under which the semiotic objects might be treated as vestiges of man's communicational customs which unite the inhabitant of towns, cities and metropolises into organized communities. Proposals for papers following the rules of 10th World Congress of Semiotics as to the length of the abstract should be sent a month before the official deadline to the moderator of the workshop, Daina Teters <teters@metamind.lv>.



**On the Textual Beginnings of Pre-Urban Societies in the Viking Age  
(An Anthroposemiotic Study of Runic Inscriptions in North-Central  
Jutland Against the Background of Selected Civilization Models)**

by **PIOTR P. CHRUSZCZEWSKI**

*University of Wrocław  
Philological School of Higher Education*

ABSTRACT. The author of this paper<sup>1</sup> will speak in favor of the idea that studying old runic texts is of vital importance not only for the development of runology, but also for the development of knowledge regarding the socio-linguistic beginnings of *pre-urban* societies in the Viking Age. The above is presented on the basis of a working typology of existing runic inscriptions found in North-Central Jutland set against the background of selected civilizations models worked out by Alfred L. Kroeber, and Del Hymes' (1969 /1961/: 249) aspects of speech patterning and its cross-cultural variation (*e.g.*: [a] materials of speech (or text) in the form of discourse patterns; [b] patterns of speech (or text) regarding individual participants; [c] the social system of speech situations; [d] the patterning of attitudes and concepts).

In the course of my research work, all linguistic forms of communication have been regarded as dynamic phenomena of a semiotic nature that are composed of sets of symbols which are verbal realizations of physical as well as cognitive realities. For, as it may appear at times, human beings from the earliest history of *Homo sapiens* did not solely describe what they had experienced physically struggling against the adverse forces of nature, but also had the will to express themselves in other, well-refined and more symbolic ways. I have found runic inscriptions to be refined and sophisticated ways of symbolic expressions.

Alfred Kroeber's works on the problem of the delimitation of civilizations seem to be of a great value, insofar as he is not frightened to face

---

<sup>1</sup> This paper is based upon the partial achievements of research results published by the author (Chruszczewski 2006: 112–113, 196–204).

the issue of what delimits a major civilization like, for example, the one of Viking Age Scandinavia, of which written forms of communication are to be analyzed in this project. In Kroeber's (1963 /1953/: 5) opinion "[c]ivilizations resemble organic classes in being natural systems. (...) [T]hey can be said to possess both a structure and a content in this structure". Above all, civilizations are socio-cognitive entities; that is why they are understood by Kroeber as "natural systems". They are structured, mostly owing to their social stratification, and are composed of cultures that show quite a wide range of cognitive patterns.

In other words, while referring to the biological rooting of civilizations, it may be said that civilizations – just like cultures – though they are human-created entities, *do* possess their fractal nature; for there are recurring patterns that are built up of smaller self-images of often much bigger clusters of the entities in question. The fractal nature of civilizations and cultures may be explained by means of interconnections between civilizations and cultures "(...) due to migrations, to contacts and transfers, to learning and exposure to new ideas" (Kroeber 1963: 5). The above would mean that any cultural change is initiated and manifested in the human ability to acquire new information, its analysis, and then its application to changing contextual embeddings in accordance with current needs. Therefore, it is the needs which were quite often at the base of the particular direction which was taken in a specific contact linguistic situation.

Having the above in mind, Alfred Kroeber (1963: 1–15) proposed a working model of delineating civilizations. The model has six basic criteria:

*Discontinuity in space or time.* It would be an easy task if civilizations or cultures were artificial products starting and ending at specific times and in specific locations. If that were so, this criterion could suffice to establish clear-cut borderlines of a civilization or culture. However, it is hardly ever so, therefore other criteria are necessary. In the light of my research concerning Viking Age Scandinavia, it appears that the civilization in question started in a rather well defined location, that is, in Scandinavia (predominantly in Denmark, Norway and Sweden), at the beginning of the ninth century.

*Language.* Kroeber (1963: 10–11) views language as a criterion of delimiting civilizations, and notes that “separate civilizations regularly possess distinct languages”.

*Religion.* Kroeber (*ibid.*) notes that there are world superlanguages and there are also world religions which often become institutionalized and codified as such.

*Economy and technology.* Any civilization (or even a single society) needs a relatively strong economy to survive the winds of history and ought to be continually enhancing its technology in order to keep up with the changes and improvements of other (often competing) civilizations. Even a small society would face tremendous difficulties or could as well disintegrate if there was no economic surplus gathered by the society which would allow the group of people to develop and expand. There may be various modes of development, one of the most certain and common is by means of advancing technology. For it is “the most persistently accumulative, and therefore ultimately the most intercivilizational, of all cultural innovations” (Kroeber 1963: 14). Inventions such as bronze-working, coinage, building seaworthy ships, riding horses (*ibid.*), or storing one’s ideas in the exact form as they were created by means of a number of culture-specific scripts and art forms, could have had their origin in a small and distant location. However, owing to their tremendous utility they were very soon distributed and became “universal international property” (*ibid.*). Therefore, it is probably one of those criteria by which one cannot be defining societies, let alone civilizations, for there always need to be a few criteria taken into consideration, not a single one, as the results in such a case may be misleading. The development and distribution of runic scripts, which I discuss later in this work, would here be a good case in point, if one considers scripts a technological advancement.

*Style.* By this term Kroeber (1963: 14) defines “the cultural activities that are most overtly “creative”, most markedly qualitative, and also most transient on the whole”. Thus, one would find under this nebulous term all “intellectual creativities”, like the arts, science, philosophy, etc. (*ibid.*). I would not completely agree here with Kroeber’s standpoint, for I feel that all the above “stylistic creativities” could easily be accommodated under the previously discussed term “technology”.

## Selected Literature

- Bourdieu, Pierre 1977: *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bourdieu, Pierre 1991: *Language and Symbolic Power*. (Trans. by Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson). Ed. by John B. Thompson. Cambridge: Polity Press in association with Blackwell [Also in: Adam Jaworski and Nikolas Coupland (eds.) 1999: *The Discourse Reader: "Language and Symbolic Power"*. London, New York: Routledge; 502–513].
- Chruszczewski, Piotr P. 2006: *Cultural Patterns in Discursive Practices of Scandinavian Speech Communities in the Viking Age*. Kraków: Tertium.
- Czarnowski, Stefan 2005 /1948/: *Kultura* [Culture]. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Akademickie „Żak”.
- Czarnowski, Stefan 1956: *Studia z historii kultury* [Studies in the history of culture]. *Dziela* [Works] 1–5. Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe.
- Duranti, Alessandro 2005: Culture and communication. [*Anthropology* 33]. A series of lectures given at the University of California. Los Angeles, USA: *Winter Quarter* 2005.
- Gumperz, John 1992: Contextualization and understanding. In: Alessandro Duranti and Charles Goodwin (eds.) 1992: *Rethinking Context: Language as an Interactive Phenomenon*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 229–252.
- Gumperz, John J. 1982: *Discourse Strategies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hymes, Dell 1969 /1961/: Functions of Speech: An Evolutionary Approach. In: Yehudi A. Cohen (ed.) 1969: *Man in Adaptation. The Biosocial Background*. Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 247–259 /In: Frederick C. Gruber (ed.) 1961: *Anthropology and Education*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 55–83/.
- Iversen, Mette 2000 [2000]: *From Runestone to Runestone in Central Jutland: Discovering the Landscape of the Vikings with Detours to Other Attractions and Good Inns*. Trans. P. J. Crabb. Viborg: Viborg Stiftsmuseum (47 pp.) [*Fra runesten til runesten i Midtjylland: På opdagelse i vikingernes landskab med afstikkere til andre seværdigheder og gode kroer*. Viborg: Viborg Stiftsmuseum (47 pp.)].
- Kroeber, Alfred Louis 1963 /1953/: The delimitation of civilizations. In: Theodora Kroeber (ed.) 1963 *An Anthropologist Looks at History*. Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 3–18 /*Journal of the History of Ideas* 14 (2) (April, 1953), 264–275/.
- Kroeber, Alfred Louis 1952: *On the Nature of Culture*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Moltke, Erik 1985 [1976]: *Runes and Their Origin. Denmark and Elsewhere*. English transl. by Peter G. Foote. Copenhagen: The National Museum of Denmark [*Runerne i Danmark og deres Oprindelse*. København: Forum].

## **Beyond Corporate Social Responsibility: The Semiotic Act of Renaming Urban Streets in Bucharest**

*by CAMELIA-MIHAELA CMECIU*

*University of Bacău*

The urban demolition and the reconstruction of blocks of flats will always be part of the signifying system on which Romania built its national identity during the communist regime. This effective urbanism, where quantity prevailed through the act of uprooting people, turned, as Ben Anderson and Adam Holden stated, into an “affective urbanism” (2008: 144) where the fear of alienation seems to be the governing feeling even nowadays. Bucharest and many big Romanian cities are usually labelled as impersonal locations where the social semiotic system of interactive participants (cf. Hodge, Kress 1988; Kress, Van Leeuwen 1996, 2001; Van Leeuwen 2001, 2005) is absent.

Within this Romanian urban context of isolation and indifference, organizations get involved in different corporate social responsibility campaigns because their role as represented participants (cf. Kress, Van Leeuwen 1996) will be perceived as “good citizens” following Kathleen S. Kelly (2001: 285). The final aim of these CSR campaigns is either an emphasis on the importance of environment in a society where crowded concrete constructions are the trademark of many Romanian cities, or an emphasis on the awareness of the inhabitants that they should play an important part in the life of the respective city.

Our analysis on urban discourse will focus on the campaign “Why do we love Bucharest?” which won the Special Award of the International Jury at the 2008 Romanian PR Award. Initiated by ApaNova Company, a public service institution, and GMP PR, this campaign had a twofold cognitive aim:

- on the one hand, to make the inhabitants of Bucharest change their mental representation about the Romanian capital through a process of street rebranding. The findings of the qualitative and quantitative research (Oprea 2008: 29) proved that the main signifieds associated to Bucharest are career opportunities, traffic jams and road bumps;

- on the other hand, to change the ApaNova reputation of a monopolistic supplier of water services in Bucharest into a creative institution which cares for its customers.

A semiotic analysis may help a company to rationally map a network of meanings to the product or the public service they promote. We consider that the ApaNova imaginative approach could be associated to the concept of resemiotization used by Rick Iedema (2003) which “favours the social-processual logic” that “governs how material meanings mutually transform one another” according to Mary Douglas (1994, quoted in Iedema 2003: 30). The empirical data will be provided by the street labels used as semiotic objects in order to change the inhabitants’ perception of an objective type of urbanism. Our analysis will focus on two parts: street naming – a social practice and street resemiotization – a subjective event.

*Street naming – a social practice.* This act of naming is considered by Ciprian Mihali (2001: 128) an institutional mechanism which plays a significant part within the negative normality. Mihali is of the opinion that as mere passers-by we have to obey certain negative norms (traffic rules, behaviour, linguistic or clothing codes).

The interpretation of most street names implies “a shadow triangle” (Poruciuc 2005: 103–104) because any name bears a looming evoked meaning which will either be the denomination of an important person or historical event. Thus the mere reading of street names involves a passing from an immediate interpretant towards a dynamic one in order to finally reach an infinite interpretant (cf. Peirce CP 6.347)<sup>2</sup> through which the image of a city could be mentally shaped.

Once they step out of the private space, inhabitants are just anonymous participants who use the street names as indices to reach their destinations within the public space. This state of anonymity that any passer-by seems to be condemned to could be linked to an asymmetric relation governed by two deictic pronouns “we” (the public institutions) and “you” (the citizens).

---

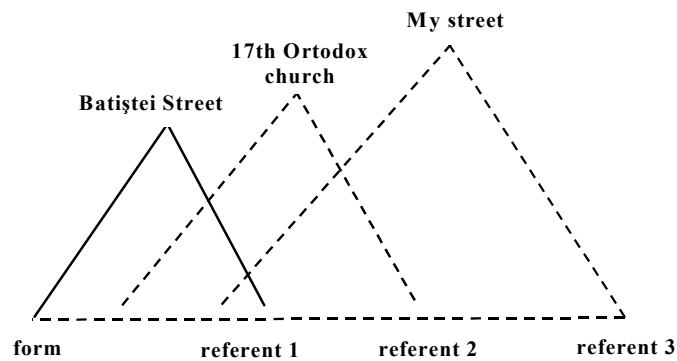
<sup>2</sup> References to *The Collected Papers of Scharles Sanders Peirce* are given as (CP [volume number].[paragraph number]). See the electronic version edited by John Deely.

*Street resemiotization – a subjective event.* The semiotic act of street renaming might be interpreted as a first step within an evolution process of the institutional system. It is actually what Ciprian Mihali (2001: 137) calls “a positive transgression” because this resemiotization of street labels performed in 2008 by ApaNova, even if, in the beginning, stirred some negative reactions,<sup>3</sup> might become, through repetition, a normal civic action. In the table below there are some examples of the linguistic metamorphosis that famous streets in Bucharest underwent in 2008.

Strada Batiștei (Batiștei is an orthodox church – 17th century)	<i>Strada mea</i> (My street)
Strada Vasile Lascăr (Vasile Lascăr – Interior Minister of Romania 1896–1897)	<i>Strada unde am alergat-o pe Ana</i> (The street where I chased Ana)
Strada Lipscani (Lipscani – the most famous commercial center of Bucharest and the whole Wallachia in the Middle Ages)	<i>Strada unde am pupat-o pe Mimi</i> (The street where I kissed Mimi)
Strada Armenească (Armenească is derived from Ar- meni/ Armenians – an important ethnic community in Bucharest since the 14th century )	<i>Strada pe care am bușit mașina lui tata</i> (The street where I bumped dad’s car)
Strada Colțea (Colțea – 19th century tower in Bucharest, the highest building in Bucharest for more than a century)	<i>Strada pe care stătea bunica</i> (The street where my grandma lived)

<sup>3</sup> Some district mayors in Bucharest sued ApaNova Company for having relabelled the street names. But their actions brought more media coverage and, surprisingly, some journalists condemned the mayors for having no sense of humor (cf. Oprea 2008: 29).

The resemiotization implies a second looming triangle whose referent sends to heterogenous private practices of the same participants. This is the representation of Batiștei Street resemiotization:



The emphasis on linguistic elements (the first person pronoun) and on subjectively performed actions (falling in love, family events, child memories) constitutes the semiotic means by which the inhabitants of Bucharest are invited to identify their existence related to these streets. At the same time, these linguistic elements and private actions are:

- indices of irony through the colloquial use of female proper names (Mimi) or the improper use of genitive case in Romanian (“mașina lui tata” – *dad’s car*);
- indices of an affective urbanism (Anderson, Holden 2008: 144) that this campaign wanted to make all Romanians aware of.

### Selected Literature

- Anderson, Ben, Adam Holden 2008: Affective urbanism and the event of hope. *Space and Culture*, vol. 11, No.2 (London, Thousand Oaks, CA and New Delhi: Sage), 142–159.
- Deely, John. *The Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce* (electronic edition). Reproducing vols. 1–6 edited by Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931–1935), vols. 7–8 edited. by Arthur W. Burks (same publisher, 1958).
- Douglas, Mary 1994: The genuine article. In: Stephen Harold Riggins (ed.) 1994: *The Socialness. of Things: Essays on the Socio-Semiotics of Objects*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter (Approaches to Semiotics 115), 9–22,
- Gibson, Timothy A. 2005: Selling city living: Urban branding campaigns, class power and the civic good. *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 8 (3), 259–280.
- Iedema, Rick 2003: Multimodality, resemiotization: Extending the analysis of discourse as multi-semiotic practice. *Visual Communication* 2 (1), 29–57.



- Kelly, Kathleen S. 2001: Stewardship: The fifth step in the public relations process. In: Robert L. Heath (ed.) 2001: *Handbook of Public Relations*. London, Thousand Oaks, CA and New Delhi: Sage, 279–289.
- Kress, Gunter, Theo van Leeuwen 1996: *Reading Images: the Grammar of Visual Design*. London: Routledge.
- Mihali, Ciprian 2001: *Inventarea spațiului – arhitecturi ale experienței cotidiene*. București: Ed. Paideia.
- Oprea, Luminița 2008: PR-ul a devenit plin de strălucire. *Campaign România*, iulie-august 2008, 28–33.
- Poruciuc, Norbert. A. 2005: *The Status of Anthroponyms in 20th Century Romanian and English Fiction*. Iași: Casa Editorială Demiurg.
- Van Leeuwen, Theo 2005: *Introducing Social Semiotics*. London, New York: Routledge.



## **City Furniture and Its Role in the Organization of Human Behavior: A System-Theoretical Approach**

*by* **ROLAND POSNER**

*Berlin Institute of Technology*

ABSTRACT. Humans are complex organisms living within a concentric system of environments which enable them to interact safely with the world.

I. Each environment is distinguishable from the surrounding one by means of a specific interface. Thus,

- (1) *The skin* encloses a human BODY, separates it from its clothing and distinguishes it from other bodies;
- (2) *The overclothes* enclose a PERSON, separate it from its family and distinguish it from other family members;
- (3) *Walls and ceiling* enclose a FAMILY in its home, separate it from its neighbourhood and distinguish it from other families;
- (4) *Rocks, water expanses, highways and railway tracks* enclose a NEIGHBORHOOD (i.e., a village or city quarter), separate it from its city or country and distinguish it from other Neighborhood;
- (5) *City walls* enclose a CITY, separate it from its country and distinguish it from other cities;
- (6) *A state border* encloses a country, separates it from its continent and distinguishes it from other countries.

II. Each interface is conceived as belonging to the entity which is enclosed by it. The interface serves as a filter which *allows* certain process types to take place in the enclosed entity, *prevents* others from permeating into it and enables specific process types to *connect* the enclosed entity with its environment. Thus,

- (1) The skin belongs to a body and serves as a filter which *allows* neurological and physiological processes to take place within it, *prevents* bumps and scratches from destroying it and *forwards* messages conveyed by touching and stroking to the rest of the body;
- (2) Overclothes normally belong to a person and serve as a filter which *preserves* the body's warmth, *prevents* sunshine, rain and wind from affecting the body and *permits* the exchange of air and humidity with the outside;
- (3) Walls and ceilings belong to a family's home and serve as a filter which *allows* intimacy within the home, *keeps* noise and strangers *out* and *enables* the family members and their friends to enter and leave the dwelling;
- (4) Rivers, highways and railway tracks are normally used by the members of a neighborhood, they function as filters which *stabilize* interaction within it, *prevent* people from other neighborhoods from intruding and *provide* wharfs and piers, crossings and stations for authorized persons to enter;
- (5) City walls ...;
- (6) State borders ...

III. Each environment is equipped with a set of artifacts, its FURNITURE, which determines its identity. Thus,

- (1) A skin encloses not only a body's organs, but also foreign matter, such as thorns, artificial limbs and tooth fillings (i.e., BODY FURNITURE);
- (2) Clothes occur in several layers and are not only combined with accessories such as hats, shawls, watches and bags, but also serve to carry badges, medals, rings, bracelets, necklets and jewelry (i.e., DRESS FURNITURE);
- (3) Family homes are equipped with lamps and curtains, tables and chairs, cupboards and beds, carpets and flower pots (i.e., HOME FURNITURE);
- (4) Neighborhoods are equipped with telephone boxes, fire hydrants, rubbish bins, benches, public lavatories, trees, shrubs and flower

boxes as well as traffic lights, traffic control and directional signs, lamp posts, bus stops and shelters (i.e., STREET FURNITURE);

- (5) Cities are equipped with administrative and cultural infrastructure such as a town-hall, cathedral, opera, theater, cinemas, schools, sculptures, hospitals, fire stations (i.e., CITY FURNITURE);
- (6) Countries are equipped with state infrastructure such as highway-, canal- and airport- systems, military barracks and national monuments (i.e., STATE FURNITURE).

IV. Each furniture type is correlated with a specific set of behaviors. Thus,

- (1) The body and its furniture can be exposed to air (in sailing and sun tanning), to water (in swimming and bathing) and to the skin of other bodies (in erotic and sexual intercourse);
- (2) Clothes and dress furniture are involved in various culturally specific ways of dressing for private and public events and undressing during them;
- (3) Home furniture is involved in patterning family activities such as preparing a meal, having a conversation, taking a rest, playing games and cleaning oneself;
- (4) Street furniture helps pedestrians, cyclists, car and truck drivers behave properly in a given neighborhood and influences the ways in which public events take place;
- (5) City furniture influences the ways in which citizens shape their public life (e.g., elections, public speeches, open air concerts, demonstrations, etc.);
- (6) State furniture organizes the ways in which the members of a state and its representatives interact politically.

V. What is interesting is that a given environment can be assimilated to another one by people performing a behavior in it which is typical for another environment. Thus,

- someone who behaves in a public garden as if he or she were at home and surrounded only by family members tends to be criticized for inappropriate informality or tastelessness;
- someone who paints clothes on his or her skin instead of wearing them (as in certain tattoos) tends to be criticized for indecency or shamelessness.

Such behavior can produce hybrid environments, e.g., when a vehicle used in the streets becomes a mobile home (such as a camping bus). Many regulations which forbid using a camping bus as a home (e.g., eating, drinking and sleeping in it) while it moves on the road can only be justified by the attempt to keep environments of different types separate.

Another example is the taboo of touching a stranger's skin. It is transferred from body behaviour to car traffic and leads to great trouble when someone is assumed to have intentionally driven his car so near to another car that it touches it, bumps into it or partially destroys it. Why does the driver of the other car feel so strongly aggressed even when no one's body is hurt? Why does the aggressing driver perform his or her driving behavior with so much lust?

## **How Urban Discourse is Patterned Through the Performing Arts (A Poster Session Presenting Drawings of Performers on the Stage Created During Their Interaction with Their Audiences)**

by *VESSELA POSNER*

*Atelier, Berlin*

ABSTRACT. Cities are characterized by the fact that most of their inhabitants and visitors continuously interact with each other without knowing each other by personal acquaintance. They enter and leave busses and



trains together, they wait in line for being served one after the other in shops and restaurants; they take part in concerts,

sports events and political demonstrations. Such contexts create specific forms of events which produce transitory group structures allowing typically urban types of group dynamics. Examples are the participants of



public concerts, theater, and variety shows: Individuals and small groups of persons acquainted with each other interact in impersonal ways with other individuals and small groups, thereby forming a more or less homogeneous mass which collectively experiences what happens on the stage. The performers do what they can to turn this mass into an audience which can be

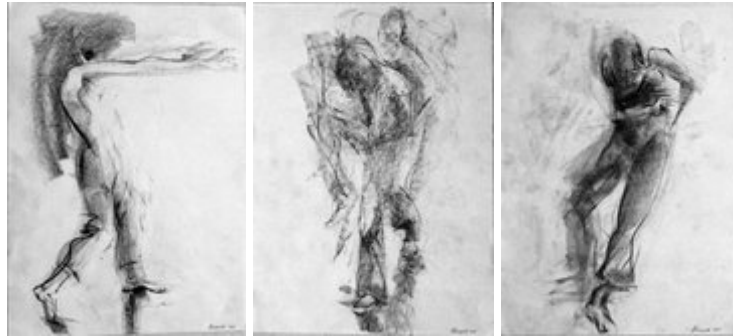
addressed as such and engaged in a multi-faceted dialog. The present contribution analyzes the ways in which performers shape their audience to attract its attention. The semiotic processes involved have been told in many novels and described in sociological treatises. What is of prime importance are the body posture and the gestures produced by the performers, and they can best be captured by drawings and paintings as well as photos, videos and films. The author of the present contribution offers a poster session with her own drawings of famous performers that were produced during pub-



lished in sociological treatises. What is of prime importance are the body posture and the gestures produced by the performers, and they can best be captured by drawings and paintings as well as photos, videos and films. The author of the present contribution offers a poster session with her own drawings of famous performers that were produced during pub-

lished in sociological treatises. What is of prime importance are the body posture and the gestures produced by the performers, and they can best be captured by drawings and paintings as well as photos, videos and films. The author of the present contribution offers a poster session with her own drawings of famous performers that were produced during pub-

lic performances within concert halls, theaters and variety shows in contemporary Berlin.



ZUSAMMENFASSUNG. Städte sind dadurch charakterisiert, dass die meisten ihrer Einwohner und Besucher ständig miteinander interagieren, ohne sich gegenseitig persönlich zu kennen. Sie steigen zusammen in Busse und Züge, warten in Läden und Restaurants in der Schlange, um dann einer nach dem anderen bedient zu werden, und nehmen gemeinsam teil an Konzerten, Sportveranstaltungen und politischen Demonstrationen. Solche Kontexte prägen Ereignisformen, in denen sich vorübergehend Gruppenstrukturen bilden, die zu typisch städtischer Gruppendynamik führen. Beispiele sind die Teilnehmer öffentlicher Konzerte, Theaterstücke und Varietees. Sie zerfallen in Einzelpersonen und kleine Gruppen von einander bekannten Personen, und diese interagieren mit anderen Einzelpersonen und kleinen Gruppen einander bekannter Personen und bilden so eine mehr oder weniger homogene Masse, die gemeinsam erlebt, was auf der Bühne passiert. Die Darsteller auf der Bühne tun, was sie können, um diese Masse zu einem Publikum werden zu lassen, das man direkt als solches ansprechen und in einen facettenreichen Dialog verwickeln kann. Der vorliegende Beitrag analysiert die Art, wie die Darsteller ihr Publikum formen und dessen Aufmerksamkeit fesseln. Die beteiligten Zeichenprozesse sind vielfach in Romanen geschildert und in soziologischen Abhandlungen beschrieben worden. Besonders wichtig sind die Körperhaltung und die Gestik des Darstellers, und diese lassen sich am besten durch Zeichnungen und Gemälde sowie Fotos, Videos und Filme erfassen. Die Verfasserin des vorliegenden Beitrags stellt im



man direkt als solches ansprechen und in einen facettenreichen Dialog verwickeln kann. Der vorliegende Beitrag analysiert die Art, wie die Darsteller ihr Publikum formen und dessen Aufmerksamkeit fesseln. Die beteiligten Zeichenprozesse sind vielfach in Romanen geschildert und in soziologischen Abhandlungen beschrieben worden. Besonders wichtig sind die Körperhaltung und die Gestik des Darstellers, und diese lassen sich am besten durch Zeichnungen und Gemälde sowie Fotos, Videos und Filme erfassen. Die Verfasserin des vorliegenden Beitrags stellt im



Rahmen einer Postersitzung ihre Portraits von berühmten Musikern, Schauspielern und Pantomimen aus, die sie während öffentlicher Vorstellungen in Konzerthallen, Theatern und Varietees im gegenwärtigen Berlin gezeichnet hat.



## **The City as a Text**

*by* **GRAŻYNA SAWICKA**

*Casimir the Great University in Bydgoszcz*

**ABSTRACT.** The present paper is concerned with the semiotics of a city expressed via language texts scattered around city space. The author focuses on a dynamic relation existing between the man and space, viewing city space as a social place moulded by the human being. A city is a product of culture which is interpreted as a form of communication. The author treats city space as a context for language usage. Urban space is believed to contain texts which consist of complex elements of language together with a vivid visual code (e.g., architectural objects) or of mobile carriers (e.g., vehicle markings). However, only a conflation of the three levels of communication makes a text. Such a text results from a conscious and intentional choice made by a message sender concerning the means and place of communication. The analysis of city texts presented by the author in other publications has encouraged her to postulate that city texts can be first and foremost classified and, as a consequence, a methodology of research into city texts can be proposed.

**STRESZCZENIE.** Miasto jako tekst. Artykuł podejmuje zagadnienie semiotyczności miasta wyrażającej się poprzez teksty językowe rozmieszczone w jego przestrzeni. Autorka koncentruje się na dynamicznej relacji pomiędzy człowiekiem a przestrzenią, ujmując przestrzeń miasta jako „po ludzku” ukształtowaną, społeczną, ale także będącą wytworem kultury, którą rozumie jako formę komunikacji. Autorka traktuje tę przestrzeń przede wszystkim jako kontekst dla użycia języka. Uznaje, że w przestrzeni zurbanizowanej występują jako teksty jednostki złożone z elementów języka i kodu plastycznego/wizualnego połączone ze stałymi (np. obiektami architektonicznymi), bądź ruchomymi nośnikami (np. oznakowanymi pojazdami). I dopiero takie połączenie tych trzech poziomów przekazu stanowi tekst. Stworzenie takiego „tekstu” jest efektem świadomego, intencjonalnego wyboru przez nadawcę środków i odpowiedniego dla przekazu miejsca. Analiza tekstów miejskich przedstawio-

na przez autorkę w innych pracach skłoniła ją do zgłoszenia postulatu badawczego dotyczącego stworzenia w pierwszej kolejności typologii tekstów miejskich, co w konsekwencji pozwoli na opracowanie metodologii badań tego rodzaju materiału.

## **Urban Environment, Metropolitan Discourse and Verbal Proxemics: Searching for the Meanings in the City**

*by MIKOŁAJ SOBOCIŃSKI*

*Casimir the Great University in Bydgoszcz*

At the beginning of the 21st century the number of city-dwellers and rural folk has equalled for the first time in human history. However, in the next 30-40 years it is expected that on average two thirds of mankind will live in towns and cities. In the most developed countries the number of urbanites will surpass 95% of all citizens, which will create a new society uprooted from earlier rural connections which were still visible in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In the long history of human kind this situation is relatively new and the drastic transition from a familiar and limited space of a village or town district inhabited by communities (of knowers), we have entered a new city-space environment of poorly bound communities or previous-era ghettos. Those new spaces together with the rapid development of service and industrial sectors as well as enormously inflated legislation on town planning and proper behaviour create a situation where a multitude of signs of various origin and purpose coexist side by side in a cacophony of colours, sounds, and shapes. Nevertheless, urbanites of the last few decades who travel around the world find it relatively easy to manage and navigate those new spaces despite their superficial differences. Therefore, there seems to be a growing need for a thorough discussion of urban spaces and urban signs thanks to which the plethora of messages as well as meanings and interactions could be approached and explained in a manageable paradigm.

Before the proper discussion of metropolitan discourse, which follows in due course, one must realise how vast the field of urban signs is. In order to achieve this aim it is necessary to list just the most essential channels of exchanging information, or more precisely of giving and giving off of meaning to follow Erving Goffman's approach to social communication. The first to be mentioned must be the visual channel due to the number of linguistic and pictorial messages and signs. However, other means of transmitting meaning are equally important in a dense city

jungle: auditory, olfactory, thermal, and tactile. Signs constituting the city may seem to be predominantly visual, but more often than not it is those other channels that are used for sending and receiving of signs and meanings in a visually-crowded environment. Restaurants and factories are found by their smell, markets and concert halls by noise, and charming parks are not limited to nice views but to benches pleasant to touch and warm in the sunshine. It is the amalgam of all those channels with all their signs that create the space, the city, as different from other human settlements or from the Nature. For this reason, when analysing urban signs it is essential to understand that very rarely signs stand on their own, without neighbouring signs from other channels, and in due course it would be much more productive to analyse signs in relation to discourses or even to particular city-type discourses showing those typical connections. A list of channels used for transmitting messages in urban environments should encompass the following:

types of signs and messages, or their elements

visual

verbal

non-verbal

non-visual

verbal

non-verbal

structure of messages

verbal

“pure” verbal

verbal substituting non-verbal

verbal and non-verbal

key verbal elements accompanied by the non-verbal

key non-verbal element accompanied by the verbal

mutually relevant verbal and non-verbal elements

non-verbal

“pure” non-verbal

non-verbal with a (possible to define) verbal counterpart

non-verbal substituting verbal

When finally from the level of individual signs and messages the level of a discourse is reached another dilemma becomes obvious. A century

ago human settlements could be easily divided into villages, towns, local cities, national cities, and global cities – metropolis. However, this division cannot be accepted any longer as there are hundreds of cities and thousands of towns. Even when thinking of metropolis in the nineteenth-century manner, there will be quite a few dozen of cities fulfilling all prerequisites. Modern geography and town planning have not yet managed to cope with the problem of new urban environments and their classifications which can be visible also in the problem of addressing the issue of shanty towns, some of which are cities in their own right. Therefore, the problem of investigating urban signs gained two new facets: it is difficult to decide what types of city-settlements we have, and how far city-types may or do influence urban communication and interactions. A simple list of possible city functions should be sufficient to hint the problem: agrarian, accommodation, production, industrial, trade, colonial, transport and communication, service, employment, political, administrative, military, maintaining law and order, company seat, educational, scientific, publisher and media centres, touristic, religious, leisure, relaxation and health, medical, and metropolitan.

On the other hand, it seems that despite the staggering amount of various messages reflecting those city functions, messages supported or accompanied by additional signs coming from other channels, their number may stand for a limited amount of interactions and a few basic interpersonal linkages, which actually may be quite similar to those of the past. The hundreds and thousands of signs present on any city street around the globe may be grouped under a few major headings reflecting their origin and purpose: municipal, infrastructural, commercial, industrial, and transgressive. After presenting a detailed description and definition of these message types, or more precisely topic-types, it should become obvious that there is a limited number of discourses present in cities. All messages and signs, however varied and multi-channel in nature, can be quite precisely ascribed to one discourse or at least to one discourse predominantly. As before, discussing individual messages and signs from the perspective of their constituent and channels used was difficult, and as pinpointing the connection between towns and signs seems nearly impossible due to the problem with defining city-types, taking the whole discussion of urban signs to the level of discourse may actually solve most of previous problems. Various messages both in form and content may easily be grouped together in one discourse. Moreover, it can be

claimed that if it was possible to create a list of necessary city-discourses, and if they could be successfully set against village-discourses, it should be possible to distinguish numerous town- and city-types on the basis of messages and discourses. In this manner, one could receive a thorough insight into communication and interactions in a particular urban environment only thanks to the understanding of urban signs and discourses they come from.

discourses (a revised version of *Discourses in Place* postulates by Ron and Suzie Wong Scollon)

municipal regulatory (directed to the public)

vehicle traffic and pedestrian traffic

public notices (e.g., from the town hall, the police, fire stations, etc.)

municipal informative (direct to the general public, dwellers and tourists)

public labels (e.g., Oak St, St James School, Regent's Park)

questions directed to the public/community

municipal infrastructural (directed to various town services and institutions)

transparent notices of various city services (e.g., water or gas supply)

commercial and institutional (non-municipal)

advertising (from billboards to shop window notices)

sector of goods or services provided, lifestyle promoted

(e.g., entertainment, food, travel, religion or values)

shops, brands or products (e.g., Harrods, H&M, Adidas trainers)

regulatory (e.g., staff only)

informative (e.g., help desk)

forbidding (e.g., do not touch items at display)

transgressive (unlike in *Discourses in Place* treated as not inherent to any message)

illegal

aesthetic values

against the general public values

community or subculture specific



Such a train of thought inevitably leads to a question if there is a pan-discourse or at least a set of most city-centred discourses, which must be present in order for a space to be treated as urban and metropolitan. This question is difficult to answer and probably is highly dependant on individual definitions of discourse, communication, interaction, and space or environment. Nevertheless, it seems to be a productive approach to assume, at least for the time being, that there is a metropolitan discourse which is brought to existence as a higher function of individual city discourses. Only when there is a need for institutions and individuals to surpass the level of communicating to the community of knowers, to the familiar neighbours, only when the intended recipient of messages is every possible passer-by, only then the number of individual signs grows exponentially, and particular city-discourses create the pan-discourse characteristic of metropolis. The needs and drives of individual sign creators are at the root of this pan-discourse as the legislation and industrialisation are rather the consequence of this trend. However, when the threshold is reached, metropolitan discourse must be used and obeyed in every part of the environment as long as it wants to (or more precisely its users and owners want it to) be perceived as metropolitan. In this way metropolitan discourse is inevitable just as before in towns and villages it was only optional.

Due to the fact that in modern cities, the number and size of which is constantly growing, signs are omnipresent and metropolitan discourse seems to hold sway, there is another question which may be posed: how precisely can interactions and interpersonal relations be deduced from individual signs belonging to metropolitan discourse. Again the question is already based on a few assumptions, e.g., that the majority of signs placed in cities are somehow influenced by the relation between sender and receiver in a particular interaction. Despite the fact that all assumptions can be opposed, we should concentrate on the question itself. When individual messages are analysed without relating them to space, time, and a prototypical recipient it may be very difficult if not even impossible to decipher meanings of some signs. A simple word "exit" may seem to mean a way out, however, usually the door marked with an exit sign is an emergency exit that actually may not be used as an ordinary exit. Words "attention" and "watch out" do not imply that pedestrians should be cautious of everything around but rather that they must read a note and

follow the instructions of this particular note. The meaning is obvious in here-now-for me relation.

Exactly for this self-centred reading of messages, the interpersonal factor seems to become so strong in both creation and inferring of meaning of messages and signs. The connection between sender and reader become much more personal, at least on the part of the recipient of the message, than could be predicted before. In metropolitan discourse, which tunnels a limited number of functions and meanings into a plethora of shapes and sizes of signs, the effort invested into inferring meaning and making it relevant becomes so strenuous that any difficulty in arriving at the meaning or any negative meaning may actually be treated as a personal insult. In this way a verbal or non-verbal message posted on a wall may be read just like an utterance in a face-to-face discussion with all possible consequences. Just like in any interactions power relations, ideology, and proxemic barriers play role in reaching and negotiating meaning, also signs and messages of metropolitan discourse, especially those of municipal and institutional origin, seem to exert a similar interpersonal influence. Verbal proxemics is a force used openly in face-to-face exchanges, however, this force, and the illocutionary acts present in messages, is even more important when analysing how messages are read and understood within discourses in urban environments. Therefore, each message is assessed in reference to possible functions of any verbal exchange and in due course the verbal proxemics force is deduced from the inferred and relevant meaning here-now-for me:

function

- informative (e.g., open from 9 am to 5 pm)
- phatic (e.g., customers are kindly asked to ...)
- regulatory or directive (e.g., road closed)
- forbidding (e.g., no bikes allowed at the premises)
- community including-excluding/in-out group binding (e.g., skin-heads rule)
- manipulative and propaganda (e.g., the only toothpaste you'll ever need)
- creating space (e.g., school)
- indexical and deictic (place, person, and/or time) (e.g., “push” for the door or entrance)

In addition, not only the verbal or pictorial elements of signs and messages must be taken into consideration when they are read. Firstly, when a sign is encountered, it is set against the previous experiences and already familiar text types. On this basis a particular register and discourse type is chosen as a decoding tool for the sign. The inferred meaning originates from the discourse the sign is supposed to come from, but also any deviation in meaning and the verbal proxemic force connected to its lexical elements. Therefore, a proper understanding and differentiation of sub-discourses of the pan-discourse seem so vital. In order to assess which discourse and register a particular sign belongs to, which functions and interactions should be inferred, and finally what meanings and verbal proxemic force will be given and given off may be the result of a complicated combination of the following factors (after *Discourses in Place*):

modality

colour saturation, differentiation, and modulation  
 size and shape  
 contextualisation  
 representation  
 depth, illumination, and brightness

code preferences/composition of information

centred

circular  
 triptych  
 centre–margin

polarised

top–bottom (ideal–real)  
 left–right (given–new)  
 earlier–later

inscription

fonts and typeface, letterform  
 material qualities  
 permanence or durability  
 temporality or newness  
 quality  
 layering; add-ons or extensions  
 state changes

- emplacement
  - decontextualised
  - transgressive
  - situated
    - exophoric
    - situated ('feng-shui')
- represented participants
  - narrative
  - conceptual
- interactive participants
  - producer – image participant
  - image participant – image participant
  - image participant – viewer/reader
  - producer – viewer/reader (not included in *Discourses in Place*)

As presented in this paper, the process of reading urban signs may be strenuous and time consuming to individuals. Especially in the new environment of urban settlements as complex as never before, the mechanisms of spotting, assessing, reading, and inferring meanings cannot be limited to the information level alone. Signs and messages become to some extent like face-to-face interactions; they are much more personal and based in the immediate situation. Without the ability to pinpoint here-now-for me relation between sender-message-reader it would be extremely difficult to understand urban signs and to navigate spaces. In this paper the author claims that Verbal Proxemics is the tool which may explain how messages are read within Metropolitan Discourse. Moreover, this pan-discourse is believed to be necessary for two reasons. Firstly, it would be extremely difficult if not impossible to classify towns and urban interactions in any other way. Secondly, the inclusion of sub-discourses and registers explains why signs are read so efficiently despite the multitude of messages and channels in urban environments. Verbal proxemics may also explain one more feature of today's communities and interactions between senders and receivers of messages. As we are becoming homo urbanis, we tend to infer meanings from all and any signs in the vicinity. As social animals, or more precisely as animal symbolism, after Ernst Cassirer, we refer messages to interactions and to people, to the whole society, and we place ourselves in those relations

between other people and surrounding signs. Verbal proxemics may show to what extent the visibly inhuman interaction between a note and readers is actually a fully fledged communicative behaviour, and how much signs at a street corner create urban space and communities.

### Selected Literature

- Beaujeu-Garnier, Jacqueline, Georges Chabot 1971 [1970]: *Zarys geografii miast*. Trans. Wanda Świeżawska [*Traité de géographie urbaine*. Paris: Colin]. Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Ekonomiczne.
- Brown, Gillian, George Yule 1983: *Discourse Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Brown, Penelope, Stephen C. Levinson 1992 /1978/: *Politeness – Some Universals in Language Usage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cialdini, Robert B. 2003 /1994/ [2001 /1984/]: *Wywieranie wpływu na ludzi: Teoria i praktyka*. Trans. Bogdan Wojciszke. 4th new edition. Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne. [*Influence. Science and Practice*. 4th edition. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon /New York: Quill/.
- Cook, Guy 1999 /1989/: *Discourse*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Duszak, Anna 1998: *Tekst, dyskurs, komunikacja międzykulturowa* [Text, discourse, intercultural communication]. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.
- Goffman, Erving 2006 [1967]: *Rytuał interakcyjny*. Trans. Alina Szulżycka. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN [*Interaction Ritual: Essays in Face-to-Face Behavior*. Chicago: Aldine Pub. Co].
- Grabias, Stanisław 2001: *Język w zachowaniach społecznych* [Language in social behavior]. Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej.
- Hall, Edward T. 1990 /1966/: *The Hidden Dimension*. New York: Doubleday.
- Jałowicki, Bohdan, Marek Szczepański 2002: *Miasto i przestrzeń w perspektywie socjologicznej* [City and space from a sociological perspective]. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe SCHOLAR.
- Jay, Timothy B. 2003: *The Psychology of Language*. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Education.
- Johnston, R. J., Derek Gregory, Geraldine Pratt and Michael Watts (eds.) 2005 /1981/: *The Dictionary of Human Geography*, 4th Edition. Malden: Blackwell Publishing. /New York: Free Press/.
- Leech, Geoffrey (Neil) 1989 /1983/: *Principles of Pragmatics*. 7th impression. Harlow: Longman.
- Levinson, Stephen C. 1985 /1983/: *Pragmatics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press /Cambridge [Cambridgeshire], New York/ (Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics).
- Maik, Wiesław 1997: *Podstawy geografii miast* [Foundations of urban geography]. Toruń: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika.
- Markowski, Tadeusz, Tadeusz Marszał 2006: *Metropolie, obszary metropolitalne, metropolizacja* [Metropolises, metropolitan areas, metropolisation]. Warszawa: Polska Akademia Nauk.

- Nęcki, Zbigniew 2000: *Komunikacja międzyludzka* [Human communication] Kraków: Oficyna Wydawnicza Antykwa.
- Sager, Juan C 1997: *Text Types and Translation*. In: Anna Trosborg (ed.) 1997: *Text Typology and Translation*, Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 25–41.
- Scollon, Ron and Suzie Wong Scollon 2003: *Discourses in Place. Language in the Material World*. London: Routledge.
- Sobociński, Mikołaj [in writing] Verbal Proxemics in Metropolitan Discourse.
- Sobociński, Mikołaj 2008: [in print]. Alice-in-Wonderland Pragma-semiotics. In: *Acta Semiotica Fennica. Global Signs. Proceedings from the ISI Summer Congresses at Imatra in 2003–2006*. Helsinki: Hakapaino.
- Sobociński, Mikołaj 2009: [in review]. Towards the definition of metropolitan discourse and metropolis in respect of urban semiotics. Romanian Association of Semiotic Studies.
- Sokołowski, Dariusz 2002: *Człowiek i jego miejsce na Ziemi: Jak i gdzie żyje człowiek?* [Man and his place on Earth: How and where does the man live?]. Poznań: Wydawnictwo Kurpisz.
- Sperber, Dan and Deirdre Wilson 1988 /1986/: *Relevance. Communication and Cognition*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd.
- Szymańska, Daniela 2007: *Urbanizacja na świecie* [Urbanisation around the world]. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.
- Dijk, Teun Adrianus van (ed.) 2001 [1997]: *Dyskurs jako struktura i proces. [Discourse as Structure and Process. Discourse studies: A Multidisciplinary Introduction*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications]. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.
- Pobojewska, Aldona (Teresa) 1998. *Istota żywa jako podmiot*. Wybór pism Jakoba Johannesa von Uexkülla. Wprowadzenie, wybór pism i przypisy Aldona Pobojewska. [The living Self as a subject. The selection of Jacob Johannes von Uexküll's writings. Introduction, the choice of writings and references by Aldona Pobojewska]. Trans. Aldona Pobojewska, Małgorzata Półroła. Łódź: Studio Wydawnicze KARTA.
- Węclawowicz, Grzegorz 2003: *Geografia społeczna miast: Zróżnicowanie społeczno-przestrzenne*. [Social geography of cities: The social-spatial differentiation]. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.

## **Semiotic Aspects of the City as a Space and the Space in the City (with Special Reference to Riga)**

*by* **DAINA TETERS**

*Latvian Academy of Culture in Riga*

The city is among the cultural phenomena, which do not seem to pose any problems in the eyes of daily consciousness, as it seems self-evident. However, at the level of its conceptual definition or reflection, it suddenly turns into totally insoluble riddles. It is mainly the possibility of perceiving and viewing the city at various levels, which creates a paradoxical combination of simplicity and conceptual complexity, and the simultaneity of varying types of views, even their mutual overlapping in the reflecting mind, since a separate “pure” variant of the interpretation of the city can be actually obtained only as a result of abstraction. Thus, every one of us lives in many cities in the world of our thoughts or rather in the diversity of the city.

### 1. Approaching the city as a multiaspectual phenomenon

The simplest way of thinking about the city, which is accessible to everyone, is connected with everyday existence, living and acting in the city environment or, in fact, in some part of the city with a certain set of things and objects and with a similarly definite and familiar procedure of their use. It is a view linked to the daily routine.

Stereotypical repetition in daily life makes us remember and use things and objects or signs in this environment as always relatively equally repeated, never misleading the eye, the hand, or the mind: a regularly repeated similarity in activities and actions also creates a unified facilitated perception. The non-reflecting attitude is connected with a fast and even unconscious use of objects, while the polysemy of these things is always present in the subconscious. To open and shut usual doors frequently you do not only need the knowledge of the function how to open and shut them and skills how to do it but, when using these doors, a range of additional meanings associatively also participate in the regular act of

opening and shutting: you may not open a strange door, you can open the doors of a church only at a definite hour, the doors of banks, the hairstylist's and offices have additional texts inscribed on them: closed, open or when it is either closed or open and the like. It is not only doors – all the surrounding objects of various type report what to open, what to hold, what to avoid, what to look or not to look at, what to grow fond of without even noticing it and what to detest. Thus the everyday environment of city inhabitants does not only present itself, it also points to something beyond itself, to something different. Thanks to its self-understand ability and the fact that both city inhabitants and its visitors perceive and use the city anew from day to day, the everyday city space organises itself almost automatically.

The second level of viewing, which strives to see the city in its totality, at the same time nevertheless linking the overview with a fragmentary view (as a result forming a kind of abstract fragmentation), is shaped when the city or its phenomenon is thematised within the framework of some scientific object, for instance, the city can become an architectonic, a historical or a town planning object and the like. When paying all attention to as precise and detailed an examination of their research object as possible, the separate sciences abandon as unnecessary everything which is characteristic of the city and which does not lend itself to their methods or tools.

Hence, this approach deprives the city phenomenon of a complex and systematic view, moreover, a person needs to have special knowledge and skills to comprehend and research any scientific object (which can also be the city): one needs a good command of the terminology of the particular science, the set of its tools, and the entirety of its methods. Thus, the research object is subjected to a certain code: one will not be able to access this object unless one knows the code.

In the above view, the city is not self-evident any more. It is being explained and understood in a certain clearly defined aspect. A paradoxical situation develops as a result of scientific research: at the level of the scientific and theoretical approach the city has certainly become an object, which is ever more difficult to understand and explain, however, at the same time this approach has “split off” a simplified variant of the object “a city” for its own needs whose informative potential is not that extensive.



## 2. Thematising the city as a research object of semiotics

It turns out that the most complicated thing is the search for an answer to the seemingly trivial question: “What is the city?”, i.e., the formulation of a clear, sense-making meaning of this concept. A reflecting pause at the word the city dissolves the meanings of its specific use, it also alienates us from the context of the concretisation of research objects so much loved by certain sciences. As a result of such an abstract view, the isolated word slowly reveals the infinitude of meanings it hides.

One of the most comprehensive views of the city is its vision as an arrangement of a verbal and a non-verbal sign and the variety of the same signs in the city, or in other words: it is thinking about the city in semiotic terms. However, the type of semiotic rethinking about the city has a fairly recent history: interest in the city as a sign and simultaneously a complex system of signs mainly appeared when the city already had a history of thousand of years. Intuitively the semantic features of the peculiar and concentrated forms of humans living together were identified quite early,<sup>4</sup> however, a theoretical thematisation of the city began only within the framework of semiotics<sup>5</sup> – a new science and a method of thinking. At the same time, representatives of separate sciences tried to expand the boundaries<sup>6</sup> of the traditional view of their science, mostly intuitively trying to find possibilities of a complex solution of the city.

When advancing a new research object or, more precisely, thematising it as a new research object, both of them encountered the following challenges:

- The development of the basic European sciences, their terminologies, sets of tools, methods and the structure of their language has lasted for

---

<sup>4</sup> For instance, the city as the basic opposite of the countryside was already considered at the end of the 19th century. The pathology of the structure of the city was mentioned, literally squeezing people until they became perceived as a crowd.

<sup>5</sup> Due to several reasons, semiotics developed as an internally heterogeneous discipline with different research trends. The major research activity of theoretical semiotics (the American School) was the formation of the terminology of semiotics and its internal logic; cultural phenomena, including the city, drew the attention of the representatives of the so-called applied or descriptive semiotics, for instance, in the French, Italian, and Tartu schools of semiotics.

<sup>6</sup> Architects proved to be especially interested in the search for possibilities of rethinking and different views of the city phenomenon, for instance, Kevin Lynch and others (1960).

centuries; in the cultural reflection of the 19th – the 20th centuries we need to accept the fact that a range of phenomena, which have been newly discovered or have drawn scientific interest only of late, has no “umbrella science”, which would already have researched them earlier.<sup>7</sup>

- When there is no science, the language of its description does not exist either. In this respect, the lack of categories of a scientifically correctly developed description of the city phenomenon is one of the basic difficulties for a complex and comprehensive analysis.
- A way out of the conceptual impasse was found by taking over the structure of the conceptual basis of other, chiefly, separate sciences, which had already paid certain attention to the survey of separate aspects of the city. The appearance of concepts, which had been known and used in other sciences, in the description of the city (and also in the description of all those phenomena, which had suddenly been brought to the centre of attention of sciences) cannot be considered to be a completely normal course of the formation and the development of a new science, since such a way of development hinders the formation of a professional language characteristic of a new science. It is rather a phenomenon of conceptual donorism with all its strong points (for instance, the guarantee of physical survival) and weak points (for instance, the organic rejection of the acquired material, the inheritance of old ailments and others).
- Linguistics and geometry served as the main “donors” in the formation of the language of the city description. Even today we use such linguistic and geometric designations of structures of spaces as “a city language”, “a city text”, “a dot, a line, a square, an angle, a plane”, and the like. In semiotics this language is fairly habitual and difficult to change exactly due to the force of habit.<sup>8</sup>
- Semiotics, culturology, reflections of some sciences about their research objects are a peculiarity of the type of viewpoint of the modern world; the modern view (as the name denotes it), first of all, strives to see the characteristic features of its age. Thus, it is no coin-

---

<sup>7</sup> The same as, for instance, there is no balletology, operatology and the like, there is also no citology.

<sup>8</sup> When describing formations of spaces of a city I use the terminology and the style of expression, which is borrowed from geometry, for instance, “a drawn border”, “defined space”, “a centre” and the like.

cidence that the first descriptions of the city phenomenon were mainly concerned only with a metropolis. A large part of the city development regularities and tendencies was therefore ignored and initially the newly thematised research object produced the impression of a frozen system. The synchronistic approach dominates the city view in the early stage of the research. The historical changeability was then understood as an adaptation of a constant phenomenon (which could not be redefined either in its totality, or in separate parts) to the linear concept of historical data; the problem of the collective and the individual changeability of city perception did not appear at all. This approach turned out to be unproductive and therefore the initially simplified tendency changed very quickly and spontaneously.

A new viewpoint of the research object the city, which at the same time allows following the conditions of its formation or the application of the diachronic aspect to the city research, was connected with a fundamental change in the way of world perception. At the turn of the 19th and the 20th centuries, culture slowly got used to simultaneity or the principle of the simultaneity of various aspects: to editing, collage, and other types of the modification of time and space, which subject the already known phenomena to a more complex structuring than types of viewpoints known and accessible before them.

By slowly overcoming the above difficulties while still retaining their traits, the axiomatic position about the city began to dominate in semiotics basically as a non-verbal designation (although there are also verbal structures in the city, such as signboards, inscriptions and others) or a system of signifiers (Fr. *signifiant*),<sup>9</sup> where the signified (*signifié*), which correspond to signifiers, are fairly freely rearranged or adjusted to them.<sup>10</sup> The main determinant of the freedom of the signified is the fact that the city and its elements are changeable,<sup>11</sup> though at first glance the

---

<sup>9</sup> I use the terminology of Françoise Choay (1965).

<sup>10</sup> This formulation reflects the semiotic tradition, which comes from stoicism and has been retained in the European philosophical heritage with the help of scholastics, and has been creatively elaborated in the works Ferdinand de Saussure. This tradition distinguishes two parts in the structure of a sign, namely, the signifier and the signified.

<sup>11</sup> The city and its elements actually change either their image or their location, however, it does not mean that its name or names of its constituent parts should also change. (Riga is Riga both in the 15th and the 20th centuries, the same is true with

specific “eternal” materials of its signs, such as stone, asphalt, concrete, and bricks testify to their relative stability.

Practically, every element of the city is interdependent. None of them – houses, streets, their names and even emptiness or anything else – have meaning per se in this structure. They gain meaning only in relationship with each other: a house is a house only against a street, streets are streets in relation to houses, which mark their borders, and the directions of movements set in the city, etc. Even the smallest change alters the city in general or, in other words, the system of the signifiers of the city is a historically changeable value, and the directions and trends of its development can be traced and abstracted.

### 3. Detaching the stages and signs in the spatial formation of the city

Without taking into account the specific types of historical cities (and without claiming to form new principles of the typology of the city), the following development stages can conditionally be singled out (it should be mentioned that their borders are vaguely marked, since these stages merge in the actual system of signs of the city) in the development of the structure of signs of the city:

Stage I. A. The formation of the city space<sup>12</sup> (or its establishment) from/and around the already existing (populated) places, the so-called *loci*.<sup>13</sup> This is the first condition of the probability of the city. This stage

---

regard to Smilšu or Kaļķu Streets, although their formation, structure, street surfacing, the use of the city and its parts have totally and irreversibly changed.

<sup>12</sup> One of the first who paid attention to the phenomenon of the city was the leading semiotician of the Tartu School of Semiotics Yury Lotman. He also advanced a range of hypotheses thereof. An idea, which he proposed, to analyse the city as a word and as space, gained more attention and followers. Both the variants interpret the above mentioned phenomenon as a frozen, time-free formation. It is only because at that time no attention was paid to time or form, in which the space of any city *could* exist. It is possible that the failure to observe the time factor in this case is also a consequence of the atemporal view characteristic of science concerning their research objects. See Lotman (1984).

<sup>13</sup> The formation of cities from the already existing populated areas in the envisaged location is considered to be “a normal case” of the development of cities. The construction variant of the so-called artificially formed cities (for instance, St. Petersburg, Brazil and others) is not considered herein.

could be called “the simple” city or the stage of marking “the city in the non-city”;<sup>14</sup>

Stage I. B. The second pure probability is the condition of “the openness” of city space in time (with a relatively indefinite end point, which is juxtaposed to a definite starting point)<sup>15</sup>. As a matter of fact, the role of time in the city is mostly dual:

- Time is both the form of city space, and:
- The form of the organization of its perception.
- The space of the city develops in time and functions in time; time creates and simultaneously transforms, deforms and destroys space. In this respect, abstract space (namely: the city) or space in general (namely: the city) does not exist. This idea has intuitively been known for a long time, since the most insignificant document is usually supplemented with information about time or a scale of time formalisation, for instance, an inscription: Riga, 1550 accompanies maps or a picture of the panorama of Riga.<sup>16</sup>
- The city is a time-comprising formation. Its perception also materialises in time, namely, the image of the city develops as a result of summing up many instants, abstracting, and ... forgetting them (actually losing time). The loss of time is a determining factor, which allows us to perceive the city as a relatively constant formation.

Stage II. The development of the formation of city space inevitably implies its further complication; the incomprehensibility of space is a natural consequence and that is why spatial signs gradually begin to supplement or stratify other semiotic systems and their signs, mainly words or graphical pictures.<sup>17</sup> Semiotic units, which have initially been chosen situatively in a random way, slowly turn a convention, after they have satisfied the basic requirement of explanatory signs to simplify spatial signs to be denoted. A range of conventions develops as a result of

---

<sup>14</sup> In the case of Riga the stage of the demarcation of the city border can be observed in the transition from *locus Rigae* to *Riga (e)*.

<sup>15</sup> This is where we can find the beginnings of myths about the impossibility of the city. (“When Riga is ready ...”)

<sup>16</sup> In this respect postcards of cities are an exception with an always constant designation indifferent to time: Riga, Madrid, New York ...

<sup>17</sup> The first information, which supplemented the new space in the verbal system, was the name of a definite space: Riga.

the enhancement and the singularization of traits of objects to be denoted. New signs appear in the city, which view all spaces of one type, which it contains, as equal, for instance, houses of the same height and appearance etc.

The appearance of new signs, which explain previous spatial signs, is not only an effect of the multiplication of signs: new systems of signs change both the perception of city space and its use. However, the fusion of various signs and their systems results in their mutual influence or a correlative connection and even interdependence:

- In the city, signs of different temporal origin usually remain mutually translatable and mostly verbally readable in other systems of signs.
- There are some newly created and introduced signs, which change the initial meaning of space or establish a new order of its functioning. For instance, graphical pictures, which are in the streets, affect movement in them. Movement in a medieval street (if no sudden obstacle occurs) is a slow, unhurried flow; in a contemporary street, it is a pulsation of the totality of people and cars from one traffic light to another.
- While new systems of signs adjust themselves in city space and later the initial semantic perception of space is impoverished: space is less and less understood in its “purity”, i.e., *per se*. Some initial spatial signs become understandable only with the help of a verbal text. Here we should also take into account possibilities of the perception of city space, which becomes structured in an ever more complex way: human memory has its capacity borders the same as cultural memory; it ousts the initial information and moves to mostly verbal explanatory texts. Orientation in space already takes place according to the secondary signification, for instance, when casting an eye over a city plan or keeping a slip in one’s hand, which has the name of a street, a house, the number of a flat, and searching for the name of the corresponding street on plates on the walls of houses. Thus, the way is not chosen in real space and the perception and the choice of space do not depend on the human lateral, vertical, or sagittal orientation and movements in space but according to secondary signification: linear conceptions (plans) or a verbally created description (names of streets and the description of their network).

- The most striking example for the above is the names of streets: the beginning of their genesis is the description of movements in space from one definite point to another, which is as definite a point. Moreover, it is essential that in space the movement does not happen chaotically: it is always oriented in the direction from the centre to a periphery. Thus, the movement is directed between the points of departure and destination and is subjected to common space. At the beginning of the development of the city, the movement from the centre to a periphery is described verbally; later language takes over the right to speak about a centre and about a periphery, since frequently they are not recognized in the real space any more. The description of movements, which initially were agreed with the common space, turned into a street name, which did not explain the rhythm of movements in space (for instance, Mārstaļu Street, Pils Street – these were empty squares in the city, which led from Town Hall Square to the Mārstaļu Tower or the castle; later these are streets with names of historical origin).
- The formation process of not only city space but also of the new systems explaining or supplementing the readability of the space is open in time, thus, it is practically endless. Currently these systems differ in character (signs of houses, streets, traffic signs, graphical information signs, numbers of telephones, etc.) and they will also differ in the future, however, on a basic condition: any newly created signs should equally cover all the territory of the city, i.e., city space should have a closed system of signs that is subjected to it.

Stage III. A. The so-called explanatory texts of city space are explained by other explanatory texts; the city and the systems of its signs become a description object in texts about the city. The city does not only slowly include new verbal systems, but itself also becomes a structuring and planning object in other verbal and non-verbal systems. If until the 19th century the city was rather a visual romanticized picture and not an object of theoretical discussion,<sup>18</sup> today it becomes a unified, specified

---

<sup>18</sup> In the Middle Ages, cities of this world were not a sufficient topic to be talked about at all.

object,<sup>19</sup> which is discussed establishing appropriate terminology. In the course of time, new terms subdue the old terms: they are usually abstract, general, and not informative and are fully adapted to the tendency of semantic impoverishment of city space.<sup>20</sup>

Stage III. B. When thematizing the city in a certain research domain, it should be taken into account that it is homogeneous and successively established only in the ideal variant of its description. Since the city is space in time, time adjusts the homogeneous picture of the fusion of space and language, and space and others signs.

Actually, the city cannot be viewed and described as a unified, suddenly frozen research object, instead it can be viewed as complex syntagmas<sup>21</sup> of various signs which are fragmentized and corrected by time. When the new variant adapts itself to an earlier existing arrangement, an unconscious reconstruction of the earlier frequently takes place. Under the influence of the early and the late arrangements on each other, both the syntagmas merge and the city text changes with a tendency to repeat the earlier spatial structure of the city.<sup>22</sup>

Stage IV. The city encompasses a combined structure, which is understandable when the mutual interrelations of its verbal and non-verbal signs are researched and when its space is generally visible. At this stage, the city itself is a sign as a whole and may become an object of semiotics.

---

<sup>19</sup> The development of the city as a view, a perception and a theoretical research object coincides with complex city depictions in time, namely, with the beginning of the development of city plans.

<sup>20</sup> In the 20th century, the city of Riga, which was born in the Middle Ages, realised that there were residential and industrial, green and other areas, parking lots, etc., located in it.

<sup>21</sup> In Ferdinand de Saussure's terminology, syntagmas are real time-sequential or spatial neighbourly relations between specifically used signs. It is the closest location of signs in time and space, which determines their interdependence on each other and their placement together.

<sup>22</sup> The term *city text* has developed by adapting the term *text*, derived from linguistic science, to *the city*. Without specifying about the definition of this term (since actually boundaries between signs and text are not precisely defined in any of the traditions of semiotics: either linguistic or pragmatic), it should be noted that very often (also in this article) *text* is mentioned sooner in a metaphorical, not in a clearly defined and theoretically limited meaning.



The fairly late appearance of the new scientific research object on the horizon of its attention has to be linked with the long way of the development of semiotic structures of the city until the above mentioned stage of development was reached.

Slightly paraphrasing Aristotle's expression and adapting it to the objective of this article, I can say that on the one hand (obviously initially) the object is used for a purposive characteristic of its task (in the beginning the city was a place to live), on the other hand – for a purpose uncharacteristic of its task (e.g., the city as a sign in political, ideological, scientific games).

The city did not develop or was not established to be written or dreamed about. It was one of the spaces of the organization of human lives and existence. The city was destined to develop up to a point where it needed thoughts, reflections, and the expression of both in writings. Currently this cultural phenomenon is the object of reflection in several sciences. Semiotics analyses the city mainly in three variants: (1) as space/time, (2) as language, (3) as text.<sup>23</sup>

#### 4. Specifying the meaning of city space and its symbolic representation

In the beginning, it seems quite hopeless to explain the city phenomenon by using the concept of space: a more unclear and blurred concept is invited to clarify an unclear concept; moreover, it has several considerable development traditions in various non-identical worlds of discourse. When we speak about space, we always need to specify whether we mean mathematical, physical, social, historical, ontological, cognitive, psychological space, space of thoughts, or some other space. Spaces may also have various representations: artistic works, scientific models, etc.

The above examples testify that, even when interpreting at various theoretical levels, space can be viewed as either real, existing and with tangible boundaries, or just as possible and imaginary (as, for instance, all mathematical spaces are) and therefore its implementation is only probable. In a universal meaning, space should have to embrace the diversity of all these spaces, thus it should be a variant totalling all possible

---

<sup>23</sup> This article, initially entitled as "Semiotics of the City. Space", is a contribution to the first semiotic aspects, i.e., the aspect of city space. It constitutes one part of the work *Poetics of Space*, for which I have received a special prize with a scholarship of the Latvian Culture Foundation.

and existing spaces; space, which is able to encompass an infinite number of finite spaces. Such a space would be invariable.<sup>24</sup>

The city as a real space, which included other real and at the same time only possible spaces, developed as a universal model of spatial variants, which are possible in the world. However, the perception of its spatial variability and changeability was studied rather late. Up to the very turn of the 19th and the 20th centuries, practically the only existing perception of city space was fixations of instantly changeable and alterable city space – these were superficial attempts of iconising the form of space. Plans, which see city space at the instant “now”, serve as the most demonstrative example of the above mentioned. Since city space actually never exists but it develops, any real, even the slightest spatial change makes the perceptions of these spatial signs inevitably outdated. And these are not plans which teach us about the city, but it is the city itself and its spaces or spatial situations, which offer a real choice to human perception and direct activity.

Already in the course of its development as a formation of the human hand and mind, space obtained a symbolic character with a meaning reachable only to human understanding: the re-creation of its symbolic meaning materialises in the process of spatial use. Further human spatial formations already use the recognised primary structural spatial model in the created space: a spatial artefact. The process of spatial creation implies irony: the more the spatial primary model is repeated, the more it conceals itself from a superficial view. As a result, space gets complicated and becomes incomprehensible. Therefore, it is inevitable for the creation of space to have an explanatory stage of its structure and existence.

The key, which allows one to reveal peculiarities of the structure of city space, is a primary model, which is multiplied in various ways and an indefinite number of times, thus, possibilities to understand both city space and any space created by the human being are to be searched for at the beginning of spatial formations, in the conditions, regularities and restrictions, which determined the development of the special primary model and all the subsequent after-spaces.

The starting point is ultimately simple: space or, more precisely, the perception of space is created or obtained by a human being<sup>25</sup> (for the

---

<sup>24</sup> I use Charles Sanders Peirce’s terminology to denote spatial invariability.

sake of simplification, it is viewed in the singular and in an abstract form), which is characterised by finitude in time and space and who forms a system, containing initial borders). This mainly demonstrates two logical consequences:

Firstly, all spaces are arranged in relation to the middle – the human being:

- as a centre of time (from him/her) who starts creating (or recreating) space,
- as a centre of space (around him/her), who, by creating space, centres it around oneself

Secondly, the formation of space in accordance with the finitude of the human being represents the production of new borders in space or the multiplication of one's bodily finitude in externally various forms.

Both the specifications of space are a division and unification of space at the same time; they provide the definition of space as ... (That is, the space in a particular meaning).<sup>26</sup> The first definition of space is based on a point; the second definition – on a closed line (not marked by a starting point and an end point).<sup>27</sup>

##### 5. Abstracting significant points and limits in the semiotics of the city

A simple, even common, setting of a border can already be treated as an attempt to define such a space and thus obtain a meaning of space that is significant for the human being: by standing on any street or on the sands of a beach, any point of the world in respect to oneself can be identified as a distant or a near point; by drawing a circle around oneself,

---

<sup>25</sup> If spaces both in the spatial meaning and in terms of time are formed against the human being as a point of reference, they, like the so-called static spaces, are directed. For the eye, the focus of space is always reminded by signs of space, for instance, a door or a doormat in the hall – they are small replacements of streets at home, etc. Focused space excludes its neutrality against the human being – they assist in the formation of special situations where a possibility for the use of space can be realised. All other options for the use of space are excluded then.

<sup>26</sup> Lat. *definire* – the drawing of borders.

<sup>27</sup> When speaking about space, we interpret the perceptions about space on a two-dimensional plane. One could call it “a geometrical vision” of the space (of a city) or a structural picture of a city. The reasons for the use of geometrical terminology in semiotics have been mentioned above.

which can be done even in one's mind, we determine space as ours or unfamiliar and even, in the simplest conversation, we do not permit our interlocutor to cross "our" borderline. Both these specifications of space, as they are "the subjective versions"<sup>28</sup> of space as defined spaces for people, due to the context of their definition, become needed and used, therefore, they transform into objective structures.

The further consequences of the two conditions – the arrangement towards the centre and the production of a spatial finitude – are the locus and the delimitation of the space inhabited by human beings:

### *5.1 The locus and the point of reference in the space*

The variant of space being by or around something can be called locus or the spatial variant. Its origin is related to an ancient idea of the centre of the world (in time) and the idea of the centre (in space), – with *axis mundi*. In this locus, real and stable formations of the cosmos were located next to people: a tree, a mountain, a river ... that both divided and united the world.

Thus, a location became an indicator for initial spatial relations: the existing things were assigned certain stability, they were not dispersed in the expanse, but they were placed against a particular point of reference that immanently possessed sacrality. Everything surrounding the point of reference was arranged, structured and determined. Later the stability and permanency of these points made the readability of space easier.<sup>29</sup> Accordingly, in the characteristics of the space by locations and points of reference, the following features should be outlined:

- (1) One point either characterises or defines it. In this variant of space the relevant element is the point of reference and its function, not the scope of space, therefore the actual border of "the point" can be broad, for instance, points can be a mountain, a city, the motherland, etc. This point, actually the denotation of this point, serves as a signifier

---

<sup>28</sup> A term used by Martin Heidegger.

<sup>29</sup> The space of a location is characterised as follows: at the Hill of Riga, by the River Riga, at the Laima Clock, etc. It is a precisely defined location, although the space around this immobile point of reference is ultimately unclear. However, locations are not dispersed in an uncoordinated space, they are always arranged in bigger systems of space, which allows us to perceive the location as stable and unchangeable.

for the surrounding space – it indicates and characterises something else, namely, the space existing around oneself;<sup>30</sup>

- (2) The space that is disseminated around the point is rather unclear – this variant of space lacks a certain determination of relations with other spaces or locations; as a unit it is not defined and therefore it does not obtain a name. Its only possible verbal denotation is “a location by ...”;
- (3) The origin of this point is free, thus there is a conventional agreement for its further use. To a certain extent this point of correlation can be defined as a denotation – a magnet;<sup>31</sup>
- (4) The point alone exists only in an abstract analysis. As the choice is free, realistically such points could be innumerable. The need to draw borders of spaces, determined by such points, will appear as a logical consequence. But these borders have their own peculiarities:
  - All borders around a person represent variants on how the human being is attempting to overcome one’s bodily restrictions, therefore he/she associates several broader or narrower self-created borders with his/her body (for instance, the walls of a house as his/her skin, the city as his/her body, etc.);
  - A space created around a self-existent point of reference acquires the meaning of belonging; moreover, such spaces can be innumerable, one of them may enclose others;<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>30</sup> This point can be marked as an indexical sign, as a sign pointing to something else. (This is the terminology of Peirce who distinguished three possible variants of relations of signs in respect of their denoted object: the iconic (the relation of actual resemblance), the indexical (the causal, the relation of a real connection) and the symbolic (free, thus a conventional relation).

<sup>31</sup> Samuel Beckett characterises ideally unlimited locations by the magnetic power of a certain point of reference (S. Beckett “En attendant Godot”): The action takes place in an open field by a tree. Estragon: Well, shall we go? Vladimir: Yes, let’s go. (*They do not move.*) (In French: Je m’en vais. – I am leaving (as if across a border that does not exist) – Il ne bouge pas. – He does not move at all.)

A completely different example, I may say, a distant reminiscence of this idea, is felt in the denotation “the Latvian diaspora” (Latvian: *klaida latvieši*), i.e. Latvians who are dispersed (the more distant the space from the point of reference, the more undetermined it becomes) from the place of the point (in this case they do not refer to Latvia as to the borders of a country, but to a point of reference).

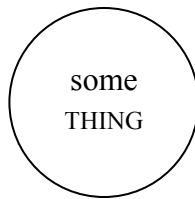
<sup>32</sup> Trivial examples: my house, my region, my city, my country, etc.

- In the course of time, the number of sacral points has increased as they are situative, variable, and chosen freely. Around these points there is a house, a church, a plot of land, etc. It turns out that the initial locations are arranged in one another, the centres of the world are within one another;
- The locations organised in a different manner against various points of reference start delimiting from one another. The separated or delimited space actually does not represent walls, stone buildings or drawn lines – this is a division of one semiotic organisation against another: houses against the street, cities against the countryside, something against nothing. The comparison of spatial formations creates a perception about a delimited structure.

### *5.2 The delimitation and arrangement of spaces: cosmos vs. chaos*

A separated space is formed as a result of the relation of one space – arranged around a centre – against another space – arranged around another space – therefore a singularly separated space actually does not exist. We establish such a delimited space (a room, a house, a city ...) only as an abstraction to economise on our reasoning.

The first known theoretical abstraction of a delimited space or the division of space as an order (the largest united stable system) was the opposition of the cosmos (something delimited) against chaos (the unrestricted nothing):



NOTHING  
(something outside  
the zone of activities  
of a human being)

Chaos, in turn, being opposed to a closed, created world, logically attains the following specifications:

- (1) In relation to the delimited space, it is also restricted (as the borderline refers to both the sides); it acquires dispersion, disorder and in-

finitude only as it distances itself from the ordered or arranged things.<sup>33</sup> Distancing from strictly drawn borders towards unfixable borders equates the space of chaos with an “open abyss”.

- (2) In order to substantiate the borderline that delimits the cosmos and chaos, the latter needs to be characterised by a spatial material. People started to perceive the chaos as a uncertain site that was not deprived of applicability and materiality.<sup>34</sup>

Both space and interpretations about the formation of space are shaped in accordance with the early chaos vs. cosmos scheme: space is “cut out” (or delimited) from the initial continuity and infinity, i.e., a certain meaningful unit is obtained.

- (1) Each spatial unit is denoted in two ways, in particular:
- it is fixed in geometrical systems (for instance, the cosmos as a circle or a sphere, as they represent ideal shapes for the denotation of a closed space that is concentrated around the centre),<sup>35</sup>
  - it obtains a designation, a name (for instance, the cosmos);
- (2) And each spatial unit automatically characterises relations in connection with another space:
- as a determination of oneself is feasible only in relation to someone else);
  - the separation from another space makes it possible to characterise one’s own semiotic individuality

## 6. Places and areas in the semiotic formation of Riga as a space

The above-mentioned abstractions can also be specified in the space of a city. Initially, a city is formed around a stably marked point – a crossroads of waterways or earthroads, at a hill, by a river where a settlement already exists, etc.

---

<sup>33</sup> We are reminded of this ancient arrangement of the world, for instance, by the spontaneous reaction when we evaluate our own environment (a well-ordered house, city, country ...) against the opposed chaotic surroundings: other houses, other cities, other countries ...

<sup>34</sup> See two interpretations of chaos in ancient nature philosophy: chaos is the initial potential of the cosmos and everything pertaining to it; and at the same time it is an empty, infinite space – a possibility for a delimited space, separated by the human being.

<sup>35</sup> See Greek *Gea-metron* – the cultivation of land.

Riga had several such points – “the places of Riga” or loci, thus, it also had several options for its formation: at a hill, by a river, etc. At the time when “the place besides Riga” was not yet defined (or delimited) as a restricted area, it was undetermined and was not denoted by a name.<sup>36</sup> A defined, delimited space – thus already a city – acquires the name of Riga. Starting with this moment, the city itself becomes a point around which the surrounding space is organised, the so-called outskirts – the by-Riga rural area, etc., receiving names that depend on their point of reference, for instance, the Riga Jūrmala, the Riga patrimonial region, etc.

A city is especially delimited or marked against the space surrounding it. In medieval cities, which refers to Riga as well, the syntagmatic space is defined with the help of a real enclosure (the border of the city coincided with the borders of the city wall). The wall served practical defence purposes against enemies and, at the same time, it pointed to the delimitation of the city – the opposition of the spatial restriction of the earthly borders against the divine borderlessness, it also separated the city’s space from the space outside it or another space with a different semiotic order. External space or the countryside is the “remainder” of the space separated from the city, for by delimitation a marked-off space forms differently organised semiotic structures: internal space and external space. Thus, internal space determines external space, however, its own existence can be identified only from the outside, therefore, a circle is used as the sign of a city: a sign of an ideally-separated space that an eye assesses from the outside. Actually, internal and external space are not divided apart, they form one definite whole, as each of these spaces are determined by its opposition, while the border belongs both to city space and the space outside city – it is a mark where another order begins.

The order of the city is organized in the internal space of the city – here the grammar is intentionally formed so that the construction of internal space is self-understandable for ourselves or unclear to those who do not belong to us. The labyrinth-type organisation of the city serves as protection against strangers; it can be treated as an optical deception instead of a witness of a complex structure.

---

<sup>36</sup> In this case, the disputes of historians whether it was a village or a city at that time, do not seem productive. A city, even if it resembles a village according to external indicators, exists in case the space is defined as a closed space. In the case of restriction, space as a city, that is, one semiotic organisation is opposed to another – the countryside.



During the formation of the city's internal space, similarly to the creation of the city itself, the principle of locations is again applied. Each element of this space – houses, churches, etc. – and their inner premises are formed either as spaces around a centre or as spaces next to a certain centre,<sup>37</sup> or as connectors of places, for instance, streets. And each place of the city retains its peculiarities of arrangement by delimiting against other spaces, as an internal space against an external space (a house in an internal space in relation to the city, a room is an internal space in relation to the house, etc.).

Just as the delimitation of the city from itself determines it that external space – the non-city – is unconnected but as an inner space it itself is fixed from an external point of view, in the same way, each smaller element of the city constitutes an external space, including the city itself, and it can be defined by viewing it from a point in external space.<sup>38</sup>

The concentration of several delimited spaces in the city space results in the fact that the city's internal space is arranged as their external space against these elements. City space is formed in a process of continuous doubling of borders, which in a medieval city like Riga with a strictly structured city space produces the following consequences:

- Plays of delimited our own/strange spatial formations create topological relations on a horizontal plane: the relations of secrecy and infinite closeness.<sup>39</sup> The radical openness and unrestrictedness of the medieval world, the relations of transcendence of distance in this type of a city are formed along the vertical axis: Earth – Heaven, for instance, in a church).

---

<sup>37</sup> Usually the language retains an indication of the significance of a place, for instance, a covered place – a house – is called “an abode”.

<sup>38</sup> Paradoxically, the house – an intimate place of residence, that is such due to the fact that hides us, is depicted from the outside, or as its façade (internal space + its borders, which all together are called “a house”). Practically any internal space – a human body, the sun, a dog, flowers, a head, etc. – is denoted as a protecting borderline of internal space against external space. The iconic sign of the outer appearance as a denotation of internal space appears due to a simple reason, that is, the view of internal space encompasses space as united whole: neither a house, nor rooms, nor a city can be perceived from the inside. Only a meaningful wholeness can be signified.

<sup>39</sup> A medieval city is full, concentrated, and compressed.

- On the contrary, the city's internal space is uneven – it arranges and subordinates in itself and simultaneously contains many delimited spaces, which are grouped or located around one or several points. In the beginning, it has one centre and a periphery<sup>40</sup> around it. The relations of the centre and the periphery are changing. In case they change places in the course of history, the city acquires a completely different structure, another rhythm of functioning, except for one thing: it does not matter where the centre and the periphery are located as their functions do not change in city space.
- The Western world has always attempted to concentrate around the centre, to restrict it and intensify its functionality, as in this cultural tradition the centre is a centre because everyone uses it (or at least every person basically can use it).<sup>41</sup> The periphery, in accordance with the above-mentioned, is the part of the city, with which only a part of its citizenry has any kind of relationship.
- In the beginning, Riga obviously was rather small (being similar to a point or a centre against something else) to have a well-established periphery. In the Medieval Ages, the periphery of a city was better formed through the specialisation of various types of trade, for instance, the places and streets of water carriers, goldsmiths, blacksmiths ...
- Modern Riga acquires a more expressed unevenness, many inhabitants of the city, irrespectiv of their profession, live only in their part of the city; the city itself is segmented in peripheries. Many of these peripheries or outskirts reflect the features of a place, for instance, by Pond Māra, at Hill Grīziņkalns, etc. These peripheries of the city as residential places have relations with “real Riga”, the real city and the real centre.

---

<sup>40</sup> There is a similarity with the structure of the human body – the inner heterogeneity lies at the basis of the idea of the centre and the periphery. Nowadays the human body is also described as follows: central and peripheral blood vessels, the central and the peripheral nervous system, etc.

<sup>41</sup> In the 6th century B.C, Cleisthenes developed the so-called principle of isonomy for Athens, which postulated that the privilege of the centre of the city lies in the fact that it has relations with everyone and all things. Ever since, the centre has played the leading role in cities, which were directly or indirectly influenced by Greek culture.

- The doubling of inner borders promotes an increase in the feeling of being protected, though – to a certain degree – up to the border where borders can be perceived. The more composite the complexity of space, the more complex its perception. At a certain point of its development, the city grows insensitive towards its borders or the inflation of the meaning of a border.
- Then the structure of the city starts seeming like another external world, another wild nature that threatens the existence of the human being. The city turns into a trap. The only possibility for leaving its embracing borders is to move to a city of one's own thoughts (ideas).<sup>42</sup> The space of thoughts or the non-spatial type of existence of thinking<sup>43</sup> is the “place” that may freely and arbitrarily overcome

---

<sup>42</sup> At the beginning of the era of big cities, several creative variants appeared playing around the concept of a city, for instance, an empty city – a trap (Maurice Utrillo), a city of semiotic chaos (Franz Kafka), etc. An idea about the city's interior nature occurred to Søren Kierkegaard's father: if cities, houses, rooms and other premises are built according to one principle – internal/external – then they are characterised by mutual exchangeability or ambivalence. He imagined the following scene: while walking around his house with his son, father saw and also made his son notice all the things going on in the city. In the city, on the contrary, everything was the opposite: houses turned into pieces of furniture, postcards became pictures seen in the city, kiosks changed into libraries, each day a new menu appeared. Finally, while sitting in a coffee-bar, one could revise his or her household.

<sup>43</sup> Up to now there has been an unavoidable verbal and associative link of thinking with internal space, without any doubts about the principal non-spatiality of thinking. Initially it seems paradoxical that thinking, and mental phenomena are frequently characterised by spatial categories, its applicability, in its turn, can be doubted. However, we should take into account the fact that neither thinking, nor solutions of any mental phenomena are autonomous: it is always more or less solved in interrelationship of flesh/spirit, a body/a soul. In simplified variants they are viewed as a relation of form and contents. In the history of philosophy there have been frequent attempts to associatively replace the human body by various variants of the expansion of its borders, for instance, a living space, a house, a city; moreover, these solutions are performed from an inner, thinking point of view, which does not represent any borders, is insensitive of time and is always present. Thoughts or the soul are subordinated to such an internal space and non-space at the same time. A demonstrative example is Saint Augustine's concept *mentis penetralia* or *memoria penetralia* (Aurelius Augustinus 389. *De magistro* 39.22; cf. Saint Augustin 1993: 80): it denotes houses, the internal space of a city or, figuratively speaking, the non-spatial type of thinking. It should be noted that there is no logical mistake in admitting a simultaneous existence of space/non-space. The use of space to characterise inner things prescribe a spatial border in the ontological

almost all divisions of internal/external borders, exchange places of the above-mentioned oppositions or even remove the existence of all borders.

## 7. The non-spatial space or a city in the space of thoughts

During the first moments of reading, we think that the above is a mere play of words: a non-spatial; thus, a self-denying space does not exist, while a city in the space of thoughts<sup>44</sup> – is a slightly exaggerated combination of volumes. Indeed, the relations of a city with thoughts are not unambiguous. We think in a city and about a city, and it is even strange that this phenomenon has no direct place or a metaphor in the space of thoughts. Thoughts are not wandering around streets, but they do wander along paths and roads, they do not stumble across closed doors, but they do knock against stumbling blocks, they are not separated by districts of a city, but they are delimited by abysses, and in case of a successful course of thoughts, they do not climb the spires of city towers, but reach the peaks of their thoughts. Metaphors related to the city have left few footprints in the space of thoughts. There are not a lot of “footprints”, but they are deep and have left their imprints less at the level of superficial spatial metaphors, but rather in perceptions about the formation of the space of thoughts and its structure.

The beginning of the formation of this peculiar space, like all beginnings, was simple, not planned on purpose and recognised only after its creation. While attempting to concretize it, one needs to admit that the development of the space of thoughts actually has no beginning, at least in the usual sense of the word; the space of thoughts is a logical result of another beginning, that is, the development process of the creation of spaces. From the historical point of view, the beginning of the creation of spaces is also rather a blurred period. It is possible to trace back these signs of spaces and their sequence that have been retained in the memory of culture. Their interpretation is outlined below.

The negligible being – the human being, who was restricted in time and within the scope of the Cosmos, found and later started creating arti-

---

meaning, in such cases the application of the word “space” is more like an associatively imagined space, as it is known that non-space is neither imaginable, nor represented.

<sup>44</sup> More about this writes James Morrison (1998).

ficially formed shelters that naturally were associated with a safer and more protective means for than his/her physical body. Shelters developed as places where a human being and his/her body found a well-known and safe place, and his/her border with the external world became the border of his/her bodily safety. In this way, any spatially delimited own world (as, e.g., a cave, houses of various forms, cities, and the like) was the expansion or a continuation of borders of the human body. For the flesh, the newly acquired walls promised a relatively safe hiding-place; for the eyes, they offered an obvious and memorable clarity of the world and the order of all things in it (later this clarity will be identified with evidence). By experiencing sensibility, the mind saw an unlimited means of self-consciousness and self-expression.

As the interface of the mental world and the real world is not direct and the latter does not restrict the former, the mind has no difficulty in using both the ideas of the hiding-place that is understood by the body, and the obvious clarity for the creation of a metaphysical hiding-place or, in other words, pragmatic alternatives for spatial space.

The space of thoughts that is an alternative to the space of the world chronologically developed as a secondarily established space, that is, its possible formation was a rather long and developed humankind's experience of the creation of spaces. However, the assessment of the necessity for the creation of the space of thoughts fosters the division of space into primary and secondary spaces.

By a rather rough assessment at first glance, caves, houses, cities and other spaces seem to fulfil the functional role of a hiding-place for human beings. In all self-found and self-created forms of space one primarily sees oneself, one's limited being in the world. From such an angle, the creation of external borders means the development of external signs to resemble the perceptions of their finitude, which can be established from an external point of view (see above). By arranging and defining the world's space, a human being creates symbolic signs to indicate visible borders in the world's space,<sup>45</sup> which are needed to understand oneself or one's being in the world. Thus, all created spaces – houses, cities, etc. were established as external borders that were needed for thinking – as signs for further interpretation of oneself.

---

<sup>45</sup> It is acknowledged that a sign is something that, by demonstrating itself, indicates something else, what it replaces.

The relations of the human being with the world of special signs are not unambiguous. In case bodily existence and life go on in a special world – in a certain country, city, room, that is, they result in objects, created by the imagination of spirit and therefore they seem real for the bodily system of feelings, and then in the mental reality the spatial borders and all marks of space appear as signs: they represent spatial signs that can be rearranged, transformed, changed or even removed. Instead of thoughts the limited spaces acquire the freedom to play with unlimited possibilities. One of the biggest paradoxical plays of space is the spatial layout of the thinking process and its structure, that is, thoughts are localized in a metaphorical internal space where the main principle is the obvious clarity of the spatial arrangement.

The similarity of the space of thoughts to the internal spaces seen in the world allow thinking to:

- determine oneself as an entirety from a self-created “external” point of view,
- obtain one’s metaphysical place of shelter,
- avoid the restrictions of space, as no external spaces exist that would be adequate for the internal space of thinking, that is, in this case the internal space is not divided by a spatial, but an ontological border.

Thus, the internal space of thinking in relation to the world space is not a semiotically different space, but it is an apparent space – a stage prop where the only possibility of description lies in the analogy with the created spatial forms – rooms, houses, cities ... where the semiotic organisation of the internal space provides for a relatively closed and independent existence. To characterise itself, thinking uses one’s own created space, it is architectonic space that it has developed as one of several possible realities of perception: the bodily internal space (locus of the spirit) acquires features of either the world, or a city or the inner premises of a house.<sup>46</sup>

## 7. Concluding remarks: Riga is a shelter in my thoughts

---

<sup>46</sup> Initially, the action of human beings lies in the development of spaces, later they use self-created spaces. All actions, including activities of thinking, are foreseen in a particular space – a coffee-bar, in the street, at home, in one’s head, etc.

According to the above-mentioned principles, the constructed internal space of thoughts will always be compared to the look-alikes in the external world and will provide a plenteous soil for metaphors, for instance, in the world of thoughts there is a foreground and a background, thoughts align in the centre (as it were in the context of a stable system), they run in parallel, delimit from each other, they have one side and the other side, it is possible to retreat in thoughts, etc.

The above-mentioned metaphors do not conceal their origin and the initial sources of resemblance, or the non-existence of the internal space of thoughts, as there is an area of the visible in the internal space of thoughts itself (as if an assessment from the outside) – it organises itself as an external space that contains its thoughts and visualises them. A respective inconsistency also appears in the assessment of the borders for the space of thoughts. Its border both exists and does not exist.

The existence of borders is evidenced by its structural similarity to city space:

- the world of thoughts is delimited and protected from the outer world; its labyrinth-type organisation and hiding from strangers also serve this aim,<sup>47</sup>
- a negative assessment of the sensibility of the internal borders of thoughts.<sup>48</sup>

At least one condition points to the impossibility of the existence of this particular border, namely, the space of thoughts, which just like the created spaces, is open in time, it is directed and contains a continuous movement of thoughts: it bans it to be existent, but always allows for creation, i.e., to continue creating one's borders.<sup>49</sup>

In this respect, the space of thoughts is not original. Its peculiarity is manifest in only one fact, namely, it is not a space at all. At the level of external denotations thinking resembled its way of being in spatial metaphors, but a spatial perception of oneself is possible only due to the fact that thinking itself is non-spatial. Thus, the reasoned finitude in the space of thoughts borders on the infinitude of metaphysical existence. The

---

<sup>47</sup> For instance, "Speak out! I cannot guess your thoughts!"

<sup>48</sup> For instance, "He has a narrow range of vision", "the view should be expanded", etc.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. respectively a comparison with the formula of unfinishedness of city space: "When Riga is ready, ..."

space of thinking is the imagination of creating spaces with endless possibilities: the multiplication of borders and aligning in the centre; the final and ideal model of processes – that contain all real and possible spaces or ideas about them.

One of the spaces, which is encompassed in thinking and created by it, is the city. Each day goes by with thinking, moving, stopping, taking shelters and expressing oneself in the city. Such an imagination could become real only due to the fact that the city finds shelter and reveals in the world of thoughts, it is the only one that allows us to see us in the city.

I find shelter in Riga, but Riga belongs to the space of my thoughts,<sup>50</sup> my thinking about Riga.

## References

- Arin, Ertekin 1981: Objekt und Raumzeichen in der Architektur: Analyse und Synthese auf den Grundlagen der abstrakten Semiotik von Charles Sanders Peirce und der erweiterten Semiotik von Max Bense und Elisabeth Walther. PhD thesis, Universität Stuttgart.
- Arnheim, Rudolf 1977: *The Dynamics of Architectural Form*. University of California Press.
- Bonta, Juan Pablo. 1979: *Architecture and its Interpretation: A Study of Expressive Systems in Architecture*. London: Humphries.
- Broadbent, Geoffrey, Richard Bunt, and Charles Jencks (eds.) 1980: *Signs, Symbols and Architecture*. New York: Wiley.
- Burkhardt, Armin and Eberhard Rohse (eds.) 1991: *Umberto Eco: Zwischen Literatur und Semiotik*. Braunschweig: Ars et Scientia.
- Choay, Françoise 1965: *L'urbanisme: utopies et réalités*. Paris: Editions du seuil (Collection: Points).
- Choisy, Auguste 1899: *L'Architecture Civile du moyen age* (volume 2, chapter 17, pages 411–441). Paris: Gauthier-Villars.
- Cousin, Jean 1970: Organisation topologique de l'espace architectural. Montréal: Presses de l'Université de Montréal.
- Eco, Umberto. 1971: Funktion und Zeichen: Sémiologie der Architektur. In: Alessandro Carlini and Bernhard Schneider (eds.) *Konzept 1. Architektur als Zeichensystem*. Ernst Wasmuth, Tübingen, 19–68.
- Eco, Umberto. 1988 /1980/: *La struttura assente*. 5th edition. Milano: Tascabili Bompiani.
- Fischer, Günther. 1991: *Architektur und Sprache: Grundlagen des architektonischen Ausdruckssystems*. Stuttgart: Karl Krämer.
- Fustier, Pierre. 1968: *La route. Voies antiques, chemins anciens, chaussées modernes*. Paris: Picard.

---

<sup>50</sup> Each person has his or her own “my”.



- Harms, Wolfgang. 1970: *Homo viator in bivio: Studien zur Bildlichkeit des Weges*. München Wilhelm Fink.
- Kent, Susan (ed.) 1990: *Domestic Architecture and the Use of Space: An Interdisciplinary Cross-Cultural Study*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Le Corbusier (alias Jeanneret-Gris, Charles Édouard) 1926: *Kommende Baukunst*. Stuttgart: Dt. Verl.-Anst. (Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt).
- Lefebvre, Henri. 1991: *The Production of Space*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.
- Lotman, [Yuri] Jurij Mihailovič 1984: Simbolika Peterburga i problemy semiotiki goroda. *Semiotika goroda i gorodskoi kultury, Peterburg. Trudy po znakovym sistemam XVIII* (Tartu), 30–45.
- Lynch, Kevin. 1960: *The Image of the City*. Cambridge, MA: The Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press.
- Magnano-Lampugnani, Vittorio 1977: *Ästhetische Grundlagen der architektonischen Sprache: Ansätze zur Entwicklung qualitativer Maximen für die gehaute Form*. Stuttgart: Karl Krämer.
- Morrison, James 1998: Thinking space. *Semiotica* 121 (3/4), 317–337.
- Muckenhaupt, Manfred. 1986: *Text und Bild: Grundfragen der Beschreibung von Text-Bild-Kommunikation aus sprachwissenschaftlicher Sicht*, Tübingen: Gunter Narr (Tübinger Beiträge zur Linguistik 271).
- Mumford, Lewis. 1938: *The Culture of Cities*. New York: Harcourt Trade Publishers.
- Nerlich, Graham 1994 /1976/: *The Shape of Space*. 2nd edition. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Pehnt, Wolfgang 1990: Drinnen und Draussen: Splitter und Späne zur Geschichte der Tür. In: Otl Aicher, Jürgen Becker und Wolfgang Pehnt 1990: *Zugänge – Ausgänge*. Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung (p. 7ff).
- Rykwert, Joseph. 1972: *On Adam's House in Paradise. The Idea of the Primitive Hut in Architectural History*. New York: Museum of Modern Art.
- Saint Augustin 1993 /389/. *De magistro* [On the teacher]. Paris: Éditions Klincksieck /Aurelius Augustinus. *De magistro*/.
- Schreiber, Hermann. 1959: *Sinfonie der Strasse: Der Mensch und seine Wege von den Karawanenpfaden bis zum Super-Highway*. Econ-Verlag, Düsseldorf,.
- Simmel, Georg 1957: *Brücke und Tür: Essays des Philosophen zur Geschichte, Religion, Kunst, und Gesellschaft*. Koehler, Stuttgart.
- Trabant, Jürgen. 1976: Die Stadt und die Sprache: eine saussuresche Analogie. In: Alessandro Carlini and Bernhard Schneider (eds.) 1976: *Die Stadt als Text*. Tübingen Ernst Wasmuth, (Konzept 3), 79–88.
- Winfried Nöth 1996: The (meta-)textual space. In: Martin Pütz, René Diven (eds.) 1996: *The Construal of Space in Language and Thought*. de Gruyter, Berlin, 599–611.
- Wunderlich, Dieter 1985: Raum, Zeit und das Lexikon. In: Harro Schweizer (ed.) 1985: *Psychologische und linguistische Aspekte der Aneignung und Verarbeitung von Räumlichkeit*. Stuttgart: Metzler, 66-89.
- Zweig, Adam 1997: *Symbolik von Ort und Raum*. Bern: Peter Lang (Schriften zur Symbolforschung 11).



## WELL, WELL ...

by *MALGORZATA TYC-KLEKOT*

*Atelier in Wrocław*



The sign of time.

Passing by. Building up the layers

What once was sharp and new, now ancient and fading ...

Smoothened out by time, by people's breathing and their feet ...

People need towns, they need other people..., need homes, joy, need consumption –

fast, more or less worthwhile ... in quest for something new

That's the way we are.

Still, we cannot miss the time of reflection over a dew-drop ...

over the sky seen in the tiny well

What is a town without a watering place?

Stratification is a natural thing with the flow of time ... building something new. Searching the

ashes of hope ... overcoming fear

Anyway, there is always a chance of finding peace and harmony ... of striking the balance of

two opposites that co-exist

My design focuses on searching for a source. Searching for a fixed point.

The symbolic well – the eye of both our past and our future.

The place of reflection and the place of encounter.

A touch of inner depth.

## **Means-and-Purpose-Oriented Functionalism in Architecture and Urbanist Art and the Sources of the Conceptions of Linguistic Functions**

by **ZDZISŁAW WĄSIK**

*Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań  
Philological School of Higher Education  
& Kolegium Karkonoskie in Jelenia Góra*

### 1. Functionalism as an epistemological perspective

Inquiries into the nature of functionalism belong to the metascientific level of epistemology. Epistemology is a branch of philosophy which answers the questions connected with the theoretical and methodological status of scientific knowledge. As such, epistemology makes a survey of approaches to the object of a scientific discipline for determining the boundaries of its investigative domain. This survey aims at specifying the consequences that result from the acceptance a particular position assumed by a subject of science in order to realize his investigative goals. For construing the model of the subject-matter of his research activity, it is important for him to detach a set of relevant properties from the essential and accidental qualities of an investigated object. While modeling his subject matter, a researcher must delimit the domain of his study by defining the nature of his object through the choice of a given epistemological orientation, which stipulates, in turn, the choice of an appropriate perspective determined by both its ontological and the gnoseological properties.<sup>51</sup> The task of epistemology on a metascientific level is thus to check how far the commitment of scientists to their attendant views on their object of study corresponds to its investigative approachability.

---

<sup>51</sup> The understanding of epistemology following the usage in the dictionary of Greimas, Algirdas Julien, Joseph Courtés (1979: *épistémologie*) has been accepted after Paul Lucian Garvin (1919–1994). Cf. Garvin 1978, 331–51 and Wąsik, Z. 1987, 12f. An important source of inspiration, as regards the distinctions between object, domain and investigative perspective, have been the positions of Roland Posner (1988, 2003). See also Wąsik, Z. 1988 and 2003.

## 2. The interdisciplinary background of functionalism

Depending upon the nature of functional objects and the respective understanding of function derived from different frames of reference, there are in fact two sources of linguistic functionalism: the first one is connected with the search for functional invariance in language, and the second – with the search for various uses of language. To inquire about their provenance, we have to make a survey of functionalist perspectives which were widespread in the end of 19th and the second quarter of 20th centuries, on the one hand, in such disciplines as psychology, biology, cultural anthropology, and, on the other, in architecture and art. As a result of interference between the methodologies of applied arts and architecture and the behavioral sciences, biology and psychology, it is possible to distinguish in the domain studied by social sciences, cultural anthropology and sociology two ways of functional thinking, and in effect two kinds of functionalist perspectives.

The first kind of a functional approach to language arose in the “climate” of an instrumentalism which dominated in philosophy, literary studies, architecture and applied arts in the 1920s and 1930s. But it borrowed some categories and notional distinctions partly from the second kind of functionalism, namely, from those prevailing in biology, psychology, cultural anthropology and sociology, which exhibited dispositional properties of an investigated object satisfying the requirements of a given environment or contributing to the proper activity of a given living system. The followers of an instrumentalist view exposed the principle of “abstractive relevance” aiming at the detection of functional invariants within the substance of an investigated object which plays a serviceable role for its user. One speaks about an instrumentalist functionalism in the case when the fulfillment of a function by a given element depends on externally determined purposes, that is, when the element, determined as functional, is used a means for accomplishing a certain purpose of an acting subject. However, when the homeostasis is exposed, i.e., the tendency to maintain internal stability of a living system as a self-sustaining being, due to the normal functioning of its parts, then the perspective in question is called an organicist functionalism. An overview of many faces of functionalism in a historical perspective is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Epistemological positions of functionalism from an interdisciplinary perspective

<p><i>constructivism:</i> <i>(in architecture):</i> Louis Henry Sullivan (1856–1924), Frank Lloyd Wright (1867–1959)</p> <p><i>philosophy of (essentialist) phenomenology:</i> Edmund Husserl (1891)</p> <p><i>functionalist rationalism (in architecture and applied arts):</i> Adolf Loos (1908) “Ornament und Verbrechen”</p> <p>Walter Gropius (1883–1969) and the “Bauhaus” School (1919–[1934])</p>	<p><i>(systemic-relational, instrumentalist-utilitarianist, and pragmaticist) functionalism in the cultural anthropology:</i> Bronisław Malinowski (1922)</p>	<p><i>(mentalist, organicist and systemic) functionalism in psychology (and biology):</i></p> <p><i>philosophy of mental acts:</i> Franz Brentano (1874)</p> <p><i>(mentalist-pragmaticist) adaptationism:</i> William James (1890) John Dewey (1896) James Rowland Angell (1904, 1907)</p> <p><i>(organicist-utilitarianist) functionalism in social anthropology:</i> Alfred Reginald Radcliffe-Brown (1922)</p> <p><i>(mentalist-pragmaticist) adaptationism:</i> Hervey Carr (1925)</p>
<p><i>(essentialist-instrumentalist) functionalism in linguistics:</i> Karl Bühler (1929, 1934)</p> <p>Nikolaj Sergeevič Trubetzkoy (1939)</p>	<p><i>(instrumentalist-utilitarianist, systemic-relational) functionalism in linguistics:</i> Alan H. Gardiner (1932) John Rupert Firth (1935) Jan Mukařovský (1936)</p>	
<p><i>(essentialist-instrumentalist, systemic-relational and/or utilitarianist) functionalism in linguistics:</i> Roman (Osipovič) Jakobson (1960)</p>		<p><i>(systemic vs. organicist) functionalism in sociology:</i> Talcott Parsons (1949) Robert King Merton (1949)</p>
<p><i>(essentialist-instrumentalist) philosophy of functionalism:</i> Karl Raimund Popper (1972)</p>		<p><i>(organicist-utilitarianist and systemic instrumentalist) philosophy of explanatory functionalism:</i> Ernst Nagel (1956) Carl Georg Hempel (1959)</p> <p>Larry Wright (1976) Andrew Woodfield (1976)</p>
	<p><i>(systemic-relational, instrumentalist-utilitarianist) functionalism in linguistics:</i> M.A.K. Halliday (1973)</p> <p><i>(systemic-relational and pragmaticist) functionalism in linguistics:</i> Dik, Simon C. (1982, 1978) Leech, Geoffrey Neil (1983) Talmy Givón (1984)</p>	<p><i>(systemic mentalist-pragmatist) functionalism in linguistics:</i> Robin P. Fawcett (1980)</p>

### 2.1 *Functionalism as a search for invariance*

Within the framework of an instrumentalist functionalism, the main attention of researchers was paid to the abstractively relevant features inherent in the structure of elements playing a serviceable role with regard to human needs and social requirements. Through the mediation of constructivism this movement had turned into a kind of functionalist structuralism, which aimed at detaching in the elements and/or structures, things or events, what is typical and general from what is accidental and individual, in other words, at determining what is relevant and what is irrelevant, with regard to their primary functions.

An instrumentalist functionalism arose undoubtedly in the “climate of opinion”, prevailing in Austria, Switzerland and then in Germany after World War I, which promoted the perspectives of purpose-and-need-oriented rationalism in architecture, utility products, and environmental urbanist constructivism. As a mode of thinking and tendency among intellectuals and architects, functionalism was opposed to expressionism. Its propagators postulated to consider the needs of average people while producing the utility goods which are rationally conformed with/to the purposes of everyday life, and which are not falsified by abundant ornament and excessive useless form.<sup>52</sup> This rationalist principle demanded that architecture and applied arts should reflect pure relationships between man and his environment while taking account of his biological, social and culture creative nature. As Walter Gropius (1923), the founder of the Bauhaus School in Weimar and then in Dessau, stated – the concept of rationality is based on the function of what is adequate in relation to purpose, and the beauty is the mirror of what grows as a result of appropriate use for specified purposes.

The methodology of purpose-and-need-oriented rationalism appealed to the following principles:<sup>53</sup> (1) the Ockham-razor-principle (meaning the fight with Kitsch and ornament, imitation and stylization), (2) the

---

<sup>52</sup> Worth mentioning is here the statement of Adolf Loos known since 1908 from the title of the article “Ornament und Verbrechen” published later, *inter alia*, in: *Programme und Manifeste zur Architektur des 20. Jahrhunderts*. Cf. Loos 1981 /1964/ {1962 [1908]}.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. some related articles edited by Heide Berndt, Alfred Lorenzer, Klaus Horn (1968), e.g., Berndt (1968), Horn (1968) and Lorenzer (1968). Important is here also the book of Abraham Moles (1971: chapter IX, for detailed information and references).



ergonomics principle (stating the design of devices, systems, and physical working conditions should be coordinated with the capacities and requirements of the worker), (3) the economy principle (demanding the requirement analysis), and (4) the testing of prototypes.

## *2.2 Functionalism as a teleological or etiological explanation of goals*

The notion of function in biology was connected with functional statements or functional explanations ascribing directly or descriptively the activity or role of certain organs for the attainment of final goals of the whole organism. The goals of living systems were seen in (1) striving towards the preservation of species (reproduction, procreation), (2) the maintenance of constant forms of existence and survival (homeostasis), and (3) the steady development towards the natural end by providing the energy in the processes of consumption, utilization and discharging waste matter from the body (metabolism).

Followers of naturalist evolutionism based on Charles Robert Darwin's (1809–1882) view of the development of living species stressed the role of “natural selection” in the “adaptation” of individual organisms to conditions encountered in their ecology. Trying to detect the nature of natural changes they asked for functional explanations as to why certain organs disappeared or were modified in form by nature, being functionally exploited or not. The teleological explanation in biology followed the principle that, all organisms constitute goal-directed autonomous systems that possess their own subjective universe of needs and their own functional circles. Such an approach led, in consequence, to the statements that some requirements have to be fulfilled in order to sustain their reproductive, homeostatic, and metabolic potentials of organisms.

Functionalism in psychology appeared at the end of the 19th century as a set of opinions opposed to structuralism. Psychological functionalism stressed the role of the human mind as a biological instrument that is utilized in the adaptation of individuals to varying requirements of the environment, i.e., the role of thinking in the formation and optimization of the living conditions. Functionalism developed on the ground of psychology paid attention rather to mental activities than to mental contents, aiming at the explanation in what way judgments, perceptions, feelings, desires and other dynamic acts of thinking are helpful to man to resolve his problems which he encountered in the everyday life.

Although the psychological framework of functionalism,<sup>54</sup> was not uniform as a trend some of its principles may be summarized in the following statements: (1) psychology is to be concerned rather with mental functions than with contents, (2) psychological functions are interpreted as human adaptations to the environment, (3) psychology should be utilitarian, i.e., allowing practical applications, (4) mental functions constitute a part of activity of the whole world, which embraces both mental and physical activity, (5) psychology is closely related to biology, so that the understanding of anatomy and physiology is helpful in the understanding of mental activity.

### *2.3 Functionalism as a search for dispositional properties of objects satisfying the needs of organisms or requirements of culture and society*

A functional model of conducting anthropological studies appeared in the year 1922. As summarized by Robert King Merton (1957 /1949/: 22), it was marked by the publication of two works, namely, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* by Bronisław Malinowski and *The Andaman Islanders* by Alfred Reginald Radcliffe-Brown. Malinowski stressed the study of culture as a teleological system constituting an instrumental apparatus which enables man to adapt to his natural and social environment. In Malinowski's views, every part of culture existed as a means to an end. Functionalism of Radcliffe-Brown was based on the notion of social function analogical to the organicist notion developed in biological sciences. For Radcliffe-Brown: the function of a particular usage, as a socially standardized mode of activity, or mode of thought, was its contribution it makes to the existence and continuity of the total social system.

As standing very close to the views of Malinowski one should discuss Talcott Parsons (1949, 1967 /1951/) for whom social systems constituted roles of particular personalities determined by cultural patterns, as systems of norms, standards, rules, values, ideas, beliefs, etc. These roles are considered as internalized by individual personalities and institutionalized by social groups. The functionalistic conception of sociology according to Parsons stresses the motivational character of the action of individuals and societies oriented toward the achievements of particular

---

<sup>54</sup> Represented by and John Dewey (1896), James Rowland Angell (1904 and 1907), and Hervey Carr (1925), undoubtedly under the influence of Franz Brentano (1874).

goals and organized around certain roles within a particular social system determined by individual and social needs, labeled as functional requirements or imperatives, such as: adaptation, (1) attainment of a goal, (2) integration, (3) sustainment of a cultural pattern adjusted to individual and collective needs.

Another conception of functionalism was developed by Robert King Merton (1957 /1949/) who stressed the importance of functional analysis in the study of society as a system of particular elements. Merton postulated to investigate functional consequences in the interpretation of cultural products and behaviors which contribute to the survival, maintenance, and compactness of the whole society. From the viewpoint of consequences Merton distinguished functional alternatives, functional equivalents, and functional substitutes, being aware that some cultural forms and institutional activities, some cultural items or practices can be functional for one social group and dysfunctional for the other. Functions and dysfunctions as consequences for the society depend, in Merton's view, on the one hand, upon subjective dispositions (needs, interests, motives and purposes) of individuals and communities, and objective functional consequences not limited to conscious and explicit purposes, on the other. Guided by a premise that all social and cultural items fulfill sociological functions, Merton arrived at a conclusion that there are not only manifest but also latent functions, i.e., not only consciously motivated consequences which are intended and by social subjects (having a subjective aim-in-view) but also unintended and unrecognized consequences as caused by incidental circumstances. As it appears, Merton equated the function in the teleological sense with purposes and with causes and effects in the etiological sense.<sup>55</sup>

---

<sup>55</sup> The debates over the functional approach to society and culture within the framework of biological organicism were summarized by philosophers of science, Ernst Nagel and Carl Georg Hempel. Nagel ([1967 /1956/) proposed "A formalization of functionalism" by replacing functional statements with unified formulae using synonymous descriptive terms, as, e.g., The function of X is Y by the statement: X is a necessary condition for Y. Hempel (1965 /1959/), in turn, confronted the functional studies in biology and psychology with functionalism in sociology on the basis of differences between functional statements and teleological statements. In Hempel's view the idea of universal functionalism is untenable as long as the scientists are interested in the search for self-regulatory aspects of social and other systems comparing them to the biological organisms striving for homeostatic and regenerative or reproductive processes. The best reflections of these philosophical

It has to be noticed that the understanding of function, for example, in biology and socio-cultural anthropology is not the same when it is ascribed to natural body parts or processes fulfilling the goals of an organism or cultural artifacts as purposeful products satisfying the needs and requirements of its producers. The distinction between etiology aiming at the explanation of causes, causation or causality, and teleology ascribing the evidences of purpose or design to the objects of nature and culture, appears to be of crucial importance. In biology, the term *function* is used in both the behavioral sense, that is, in terms of a goal-directed act, and in the vitalist sense, that is, in relation to the role of an organ or organismal processes within an organism as a whole. Behaviorists claim that human or animal psychology can be accurately studied only through the examination and analysis of objectively observable and quantifiable behavioral events, in contrast with subjective mental states. Followers of vitalism, in turn, attribute the viability of a living organism to a vital principle distinct from the physical and chemical processes of life. Adopted from biology to the field of socio-cultural anthropology, the functional way of reasoning, as a cognitive attitude, is based on the justification or explanation of the *raison d'être* of a given element with regard to its function within a given society or culture, or on the search for the functions, which a given element fulfils with regard to its source or destination, with regard to an acting subject or with regard to a frame of reference, in which it is situated.

#### *2.4 Between instrumentalist and organicist views of linguistic functions*

A functional approach to language as a tool of communication exposing the features of elements that are abstractively relevant for playing a serviceable role in relation to their users or makers was popularized in the program of the Linguistic Circle of Prague, particularly in the context of the distinction between phonetics and phonology. It was due to Karl Bühler's instrumental model of language (*Organon-Modell der Sprache*) which can be summarized under at least four statements:

---

debates on the nature of functionalism in biology and sociology had found its best expression in the philosophical works of Larry Wright (1976) and Andrew Woodfield (1976) devoted to the distinction between teleology and etiology.

(1) In Bühler's *Organon-Modell*, there were four sensorially perceivable constituents: Sender, Sign, Receiver, and (extra-semiotic) Reality, i.e., Things and States of Affair, in which only one principal element, i.e., the linguistic sign stood in relation to the three remaining constituents of the scheme of verbal communication.

(2) Bühler defined the communicative function of language (*Mitteilungsfunktion der Sprache*) along with the representational function of language (*Darstellungsfunktion der Sprache*) in terms of a threefold performance of language (Bühler 1965 /1934/: 28, "Dreifach ist die Leistung der menschlichen Sprache, Kundgabe, Auslösung, Darstellung"), while considering the role of the linguistic sign in its relation to the sender as a symptom (*Ausdruck, Symptom*), in relation to the receiver – an appeal signal (*Signal, Appell*), and to the extra-lingual reality – a symbol (*Darstellung, Symbol*). These three relationships have been later interpreted as three separate functions, namely, the *expressive, impulsive, and semantic* functions of language, speech or text.

(3) Bühler's aim was not to enumerate the particular functions but to show that there are functionally relevant and functionally irrelevant features within the substance of verbal signs which are to be separated from each other through the application of "the principle of abstractive relevance". He also proposed to distinguish redundant features of the sign where the functionally relevant features reduced in a fast speech are supplemented though apperception (memorized traces of experience). The distinction between functional and non-functional features of speech sounds was one of the most important contributions of the Linguistic Circle of Prague to the separation between phonetics as a discipline of natural sciences and phonology as a discipline of linguistics.

(4) However, Bühler did not specify the boundaries of the Sign as such, to be interpreted as a synonym of text or text elements. Thus, he was neither interested in the functions of discourses, utterances, sentences, sentence equivalents, nor in the functions of clauses, phrases, words, stems of words and morphemes.

These four statements expose only some aspects, under which we can make comparisons with other authors extending the list of language functions. If we take, for example, only the proposal of Roman Jakobson, then we can notice that Jakobson enriched the scheme of communication with two additional elements, *contact* and *code*, proposing to take into consideration six constituents: *sender, receiver, context, message, con-*

*tact*, and *code*, while distinguishing parallel six functions of language. The first three: *emotive*, *conative* and *referential* are similar to Bühler's expressive, impressive and representational functions), the fourth: *phatic* follows Bronisław Malinowski's concept of "phatic communion"), the fifth: *poetic* undoubtedly copies the idea of Jan Mukařovský's "esthetic function", and finally *metalingual*, which belongs indeed to another frame of reference. Being familiar with critics,<sup>56</sup> we might wonder how it is possible to distinguish six constituents and six functions; which element plays then a role in relation to which constituents of the scheme; if it is the message then you might expect to distinguish five functions in relation to a context = referential, in relation to a sender = emotive, in relation to a receiver = conative, in relation to a contact = phatic, and in relation to a code = metalingual; but where to place the poetic function. In such a case, the reader has to believe that there is such a function of the message where the message itself focuses on the message for its own sake. In order to understand the idea of the poetic function as "not the sole function of verbal art but only its dominant determining function" (Jakobson 1960: 356), we have to return to Jan Mukařovský's (1936 and 1970) idea of esthetic function, connected with social and individual norms and values, which is to be explained by the idea of the so-called *autotelic* function, i.e., the estheticity as a purpose in itself. However, the empirically inclined practitioner of linguistic sciences would ask then: Who is the subject of that esthetic or poetic function? Is the poetic function individually- or collectively-oriented? Who has thus the right or who is capable to evaluate what is esthetic? The recipient or the creator? Or, at least: Is the art without a subject?

The linguist who has confined himself to the understanding of function which is connected with a fulfillment of services performed by a certain product or with an aim or purpose in-view attained by a certain actor will probably be not eager to compare Michael Alexander Kirkwood Halliday's (1972 /1970/) functions of language as *ideational*, *interpersonal*, and *textual* with Karl Bühler's function of verbal signs, such as expressive, impressive and representational or symbolic ones. Should they be placed on the same level or do they in fact belong to different

---

<sup>56</sup> A critical account of Jakobson's function is to be found in the academic handbook of Antoni Furdal (1990 /1977/: 50ff). Details are discussed by Elżbieta Wąsik (2007: 129ff).

spheres of consideration. Both Bühler's expressive (*Symptom* or *Ausdruck*) in his terms and Halliday's ideational function are not to be matched with the purposes or aims-in view of language users.

If an adept of linguistic sciences were, in turn, introduced into Robin P. Fawcett's (1980) cognitive view of functionalism as related to "socio-psychological purposes of communicating minds", then he might be aware that the so-called "functional components of grammar", as, e.g., *experiential, logical relationships, negativity, interactional, affective, modality, thematic, informational, inferential, metalingual, discourse organizational* functions, cf. (Fawcett 1980; 20) are modeling only "the psychological reality of language". So far, he would probably be aware that Fawcett's (1980; 23) understanding of linguistic system as a network stored in the mind of its users, consisting in a set of behavioral options i.e., "as a code in which we have to choose between alternative types of behavior", or "as a way of displaying a number of interrelated options in linguistic behavior", is incommensurable with Bühler's (1965 /1934/: 24) definition of language as a tool (existing *nota bene* substantially beyond the knowing subject), by means of which one person communicates to the other person about things because these definitions refer to two different forms of existence of the same reality called language. Then, this assumed adept would be curious whether Fawcett was indeed entitled to mention Bühler within the same framework as Halliday (1970 & 1973) or Malinowski (1949 /1923/). Halliday according to Fawcett owed the notion of function to Bühler and not to Malinowski. But because of his understanding of language functions equated with the meaning of speech acts for the satisfaction of human needs, he might be called the pupil of Malinowski, (through the mediation of John Rupert Firth, especially the definition of meaning as function in context (cf. Firth 1957 /1935/: 31). To be remembered is the fact that Malinowski was not satisfied with the definition of language as the expression of thought by means of speech sounds stating that its three fundamental uses in active, narrative and ritual speech acts realize such functions or meanings as: *phatic, pragmatic, magic*, and *narrative*. What Fawcett (1980: 25) considered as an important contribution of Halliday (1973: 105–108) in comparison to Bühler was his resignation from the idea of a dominant function while promoting the plurality of language functions. There is a tacit recognition, as Gunther R. Kress (1976: viii–ix) points out, that Halliday borrowed the treatment of language as a multi-functional devise from Mali-

nowski, without taking over any of the major speech functions defined by Malinowski, despite the fact that he made use of them in several ways. Halliday's interpersonal, ideational, and textual functions incorporate some of the facets pointed to in Malinowski's functions. In particular, there is quite a strong affinity between Malinowski's pragmatic and Halliday's interpersonal function.

On drawing a parallel between the phylogenetic aspects of language development generally, and the ontogenetic aspect of language development in the child, Malinowski felt that the categories, which he discovered in language, had developed in response to the needs of the societies that used language. In a similar manner, Halliday sees the language development of the child as the expression of its needs in sound. The child learns to express his needs becoming familiar with conventionalized functions of a language which is spoken around him, and conventional structures that are available for their expression. This is due to the fact that the child is growing into a society which already has an established and conventional way of expressing certain needs.

Those who indiscriminately search for the functions of language have to bear in mind that the number and the kinds of functions result from the differences in the definitions of the language itself and from the fact that the material object of linguistic studies, due to its heteronomous nature, may be also studied from other non-linguistic perspectives. Therefore, taking a holistic approximation to language as a natural and/or cultural phenomenon, it is important to find the sources of frameworks that have shaped so many faces of linguistic functionalism. Thus, it seems to be obvious for us that another kind of function may be distinguished in language understood as a system of communicative means, some others in the language treated as an instrument of mental cognition, and still others – in the context of receptive and productive activities or the communicative faculties and habits of language users. Thus, a linguist must be aware of the fact that his object, language as a system, is situated within other systems, i.e., becomes a member of the same paradigm in other kinds of settings. In such cases, we do not describe the function of language as a means of communication but rather the function of language as a kind of other objects, e.g., of art, of ritual, of behavior, of national symbol, of entertainment, as a social institution.

Without specifying whether we mean the function of natural language as an ethnolect or as an anthropolect, and furthermore, whether we are



interested in the function of communication, of speech acts, the functions of linguistic structures, of different language uses, the function of linguistic faculties and cognitive abilities, the function of standard varieties in relation to dialects, the function of sub-languages in relation to the standard language (cf. Garvin, Mathiot (1970 /1968/), etc. we might encounter in some dictionaries a collection of linguistic functions, such as, e.g., in an alphabetical order: argumentative (the use of language for reasoning and logical operations within a mind, according to Karl Raimund Popper, 1972: 70, 106, 117, and Geoffrey Neil Leech, 1983: 48–58), cognitive, collaborative, communicative, competitive, conflictive, controlling, convivial, deceptive (to make perceptually misleading), deferential, degrading, delimitative, developmental function of language (connected with the child language), diacritic, discriminating, distortive (to give a false, perverted, or disproportionate meaning), emotional, enculturating, evocative, excluding, experiential, expressive, heuristic (learning generalizations about someone's environment), ideational, identifying, imaginative (creating one's own world), impressive, conative, including, informational, informative, instrumental (satisfying someone's needs by the use of protolinguistic symbols), interactional (mediating someone's togetherness with people), interpersonal, interpersonal, logical, ludic, manipulative, matetic "macro-functions" (personal, heuristic, imaginative; language is used to explore the environment, i.e., language as learning), metafunctions of language (reflected in the internal organization of language, for example in the systems of Transitivity, Mood, and Theme), metalingual, persuasive, phatic, pragmatic "macro-functions (instrumental, regulatory, interactional; language is used to manipulate the environment), pragmatic, prevaricating (to speak falsely, misleadingly, or so as to avoid the truth; deliberately misstate; equivocate; lie), regulatory (using language to order the adults about), representative, ritual, semantic, separating, significative, stimulative, symbolizing, textual, transactional, unifying, etc.

To ponder the applicative appropriateness of the term *function* in relation to so many aspects of language, we may propose to consider the following example: Imagine that you have jammed a newspaper under the door so that the door, in consequence, does not close. *Can you say that it is the function of the newspaper to block the door?* Your answer would be: *No, of course not.* The newspaper has obtained in reality another function, which means: "to bring news collected and edited by

journalists". What is true is the fact that the respective newspaper may be subsumed under different types of objects, namely, in this particular case, an obstacle. A newspaper may be considered as being good also for other purposes. But in such a case it is no more a newspaper serving its primary function. Thus, while speaking, e.g., about the ludic, deceptive or therapeutic function of language, we can explain that the use of verbal means of communication is good to entertain, to tell the lie, or to console someone. But there are also other nonverbal means that can be used for such purposes.

To sum up, one can state that the differences characterizing various schools of linguistic thought in the understandings of *function* in a functional description of language, have been expressed either in means-and-purpose oriented (teleological) or cause-and-effect-oriented (etiological) terms. They have resulted from the oscillation between the notion of function: (1) as an exponent of a certain role or (2) a relation between certain elements that play a serviceable role and the notion of function synonymous to (3) purposes or (4) ends of certain activities, intended or not intended. Thus, functionalism as an investigative perspective in linguistics appears to refer, in general, to such notional and methodological frameworks: (i) which take a functional view on the nature of language, (ii) which attach primary importance to functional relations at different levels in the organization of language; (iii) which mean the practical method applicable to the analysis of diverse aspects of language and language use, or (iv) which specify "functional realms" being encoded in human language.

Studying various uses of the terms *function* and *functional* in linguistics, it has to be noticed that linguists have either applied the principles of functionalism in relation to the whole system of verbal means of communication or to its particular elements. Some have shared the belief that there is only one function of language, which can be derived from the assumption about the serviceable role of verbal means, and some others have accepted as true that one can enumerate a number of principal functions of language, bearing in mind that the products or acts of speaking and understanding activities can realize various purposes of language speakers or users. Not to be omitted are those researchers who place among language functions also observable consequences, as the results of the use of language. Thus, on the opposite poles stand the practitioners of linguistic sciences who are interested in linguistically and communica-

tively relevant features of verbal means, and the theoreticians who pay attention to the serviceable role of language in the fulfillment of purposes (aims or tasks) of communicating people by the utilization of verbal means. In summary, it is impossible to speak about the functions of language in general. The researcher has to choose such an understanding of language, which exposes its aspects and constituents, its manifestation forms and the modes of its existence.

## References

- Angell, James R(owland) 1904: *An Introductory Study of the Structures and Functions of Human Consciousness*. New York: H. Holt.
- Angell, James R(owland) 1907: *The Province of Functional Psychology*. Baltimore. Md.: Review Publishing.
- Berndt, Heide 1968: Ist der Funktionalismus eine funktionale Architektur? Soziologische Betrachtung einer architektonischen Kategorie. In: Heide Berndt, Alfred Lorenzer, Klaus Horn (eds.) 1968, 9–50.
- Berndt, Heide, Alfred Lorenzer, Klaus Horn (eds.) 1968: *Architektur als Ideologie*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.
- Brentano, Franz 1874: *Psychologie vom Empririschen Standpunkt*. Leipzig: Teubner.
- Bühler, Karl 1965 /1934/: *Sprachtheorie. Die Darstellungsfunktion der Sprache*, 2 Auflage. Stuttgart /Jena/: Gustav Fischer.
- Carr, Hervey 1925: *Psychology, a Study of Mental Activity*. New York et al.: Longmans, Green & Co.
- Dewey, John 1896: The reflex arc concept in psychology. In: *Psychological Review* III (July): 357–370.
- Dik, Simon C. 1987 /1982/: Some principles of Functional Grammar. In: René Dirven, Vilém Fried (eds.) 1987: *Functionalism in Linguistics*. Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 81–100. /Some basic principles of Functional Grammar, Preprints of the plenary session on syntax, 13th International Congress of Linguistics. Tokyo, 66–76/.
- Dik, Simon C. 1981 /1978/: *Functional Grammar*. 3rd printing. Dordrecht: Foris /Amsterdam: North Holland/.
- Fasold, Ralph W. 1984: *The Sociolinguistics of Society*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Fasold, Ralph W. 1989: Naturalism and the search for a theory of language types and functions. In: Ulrich Ammon (ed.) 1989: *Status and Function of Languages and Language Varieties*. Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 107–121.
- Fawcett, Robin P. 1980: *Cognitive Linguistics and Social interaction. Towards an Integrated Model of a Systemic Functional Grammar and the other Components of a Communicating Mind*. Heidelberg: Julius Groos Verlag. University of Exeter.
- Firth, J(ohn) R(upert) 1957 /1935/: The technique of semantics /Transactions of the Philological Society/. In: J. R. Firth, *Papers in Linguistics 1934–1951*. London: Oxford University Press, 7–33.

- Furdal, Antoni 1990 /1977/. *Językoznawstwo otwarte*. [Open linguistics]. 2nd enlarged edition. Wrocław /Opole/: Zakład Narodowy imienia Ossolińskich.
- Gardiner, Alan H. 1932: *The Theory of Speech and Language*. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press.
- Garvin, Paul L., Madeleine Mathiot 1970 /1968/: The urbanization of the Guarani language: A problem in language and culture. In: Joshua A. Fishman (ed.) 1970 /1968/: *Readings in the Sociology of Language*. 2nd printing. The Hague, Paris: Mouton, 365–374.
- Givón, Talmy 1984: *Syntax, a Functional-Typological Grammar*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Givón, Talmy 1995: *Functionalism and Grammar*. Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Greimas, Algirdas Julien, Joseph Courtés 1982 [1979]: *Semiotics and Language: An Analytical Dictionary*. Trans. Larry Crist et al. Bloomington: Indiana University Press (Advances in Semiotics) [*Sémiotique. Dictionnaire raisonné de la théorie du langage*. Paris: Hachette (Langue, linguistique, communication. Classiques Hachette)].
- Gropius, Walter 1923: Idee und Aufbau des Staatlichen Bauhauses Weimar. W: *Staatliches Bauhaus Weimar 1919–1923*. Weimar, München: Bauhaus-Verlag, 7–18.
- Halliday, M(ichael) A(lexander) K(irkwood) 1972 /1970/: Language structure and language function. In: John Lyons (red.) 1972: *New Horizons in Linguistics*. Harmondsworth et al.: Penguin Books, 140–165
- Halliday, M(ichael) A(lexander) K(irkwood) 1973: *Explorations in the Functions of Language*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Hempel, Carl G(eorg) 1965 /1959/: The logic of functional analysis. In: Carl G. Hempel *Aspects of Scientific Explanation. And Other Essays*. New York: The Free Press and London: Collier-Macmillan, 297–330 /*Symposium on Sociological Theory*. New York: Harper & Row, 271–307/.
- Horn, Klaus 1968: *Zweckrationalität in der modernen Architektur. Zur Ideologiekritik des Funktionalismus*. In: Heide Berndt, Alfred Lorenzer, Klaus Horn (eds.) 1968, 105–153.
- Husserl, Edmund 1891: *Philosophie der Arithmetik*. Halle an der Saale: Max Niemeyer.
- Jakobson, Roman (Osipovič) 1960: Closing statement. Linguistics and poetics. In: Thomas A. Sebeok (ed.) 1960: *Style in Language*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 350–377.
- James, William 1890: *Principles of Psychology*. Vols. 1 and 2. New York: H. Holt.
- Kress, Gunther R. (ed.) 1976: *Halliday: System and Function in Language*. Selected Papers. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Leech, Geoffrey (Neil) 1983: *Principles of Pragmatics*. London, New York: Longman.
- Loos, Adolf 1981 /1964/ {1962 [1908]}: Ornament und Verbrechen. In: Conrads, Ulrich 1981 /1964/: *Programme und Manifeste zur Architektur des 20. Jahrhunderts*. 2. Auflage Übersetzung, Henni Korssakoff-Schröder. Braunschweig: Vieweg Verlag (Ullstein Bauwelt Fundamente I), 15–21/. {In: Adolf Loos 1962: *Sämtliche Schriften in zwei Bänden*. Ed. Franz Glück. Wien, München: Herold, 276–288 [Buchhandlung]}

- Lorenzer, Alfred 1968: Städtebau: Funktionalismus und Sozialmontage? Zur sozialpsychologischen Funktion der Architektur. In: Heide Berndt, Alfred Lorenzer, Klaus Horn (eds.) 1968, 51–104.
- Malinowski, Bronisław 1949 /1923/: Supplement I. The problem of meaning in primitive languages. In: Ogden, Charles Kay, Ivor Armstrong Richards *The Meaning of Meaning. A Study of the Influence of a Language upon Thought and of the Science of Symbolism*. With supplementary essays by Bronisław Malinowski (Kasper) and Francis G(raham) Crookshank, 10th edition. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 296–336.
- Malinowski, Bronisław 1922: *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Malinowski, Bronisław 1926: Anthropology, In: *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. First Supplementary Volume, London, New York: The Encyclopaedia Britannica, 132–133.
- Merton, Robert K(ing) 1957 /1949/: Manifest and latent functions. In: Robert K. Merton 1957: *Social Theory and Social Structure*. Revised and enlarged edition. Glencoe, IL: The Free Press, 73–138 /1957: 1st edition, 19–84/.
- Moles, Abraham 1971: *Le kitsch. L'art du bonheur*. Paris: Maison Mame.
- Mukařovský, Jan 1970 [1936]: *Aesthetic Function. Norm and Value as Social Facts*. Trans. from Czech with notes and afterword by M. E. Suino. Ann Arbor: Michigan Slavic Contributions [Eстетická funkce. Norma a hodnota jako socialni fakty. Praha: Borový]
- Nagel, Ernst 1967 /1956/: A formalization of functionalism. In: Ernest Nagel, *Logic Without Metaphysics* New York: The Free Press /Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press/, 247–287.
- Parsons, Talcott 1949: *The Structure of Social Action*. New York: The Free Press.
- Parsons, Talcott, and Edward A. Shils (eds.) 1967 /1951/: *Toward a General Theory of Action*. 6th printing. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
- Popper, Karl R(aimund) 1972: *Objective Knowledge: An Evolutionary Approach*, Oxford: The Clarendon Press.
- Posner, Roland. 1988: What is an academic discipline. In: Regina Claussen, Roland Daube-Schackat (eds.), 1988: *Gedankenzeichen*. Festschrift für Klaus Oehler zum 60. Geburtstag. Tübingen: Stauffenburg, 165–185.
- Posner, Roland 2003: The relationship between individual disciplines and interdisciplinary approaches. In: Roland Posner, Klaus Robering, Thomas a. Sebeok (eds.). *Semiotics. A Handbook of the Sign-Theoretic Foundations of Nature and Culture*. Volume 3. Berlin – New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2341–2374.
- Radcliffe-Brown, Alfred Reginald 1922: *The Andaman Islanders*. New York: Free Press.
- Trubetzkoy, Nikolaj Sergeevič 1967 /1939/: *Grundzüge der Phonologie /Travaux du Cercle Linguistique de Prague VII/*. 4. Auflage Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht.
- Woodfield, Andrew 1976: *Teleology*. Cambridge, New York, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press.
- Wright, Larry 1976: *Tleological Explanations. An Etiological Analysis of Goals and Functions*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press.

- Wąsik, Elżbieta 2007: *Język – narzędzie czy właściwość człowieka? Założenia gramatyki ekologicznej lingwistycznych związków międzyludzkich*. Poznań 2007: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu im. Adama Mickiewicza (Seria Filologia Angielska Nr 28).
- Wąsik, Zdzisław 1998: *An Outline for Lectures on the Epistemology of Semiotics*. Opole: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Opolskiego.
- Wąsik, Zdzisław 2003: *Epistemological Perspectives on Linguistic Semiotics*. Frankfurt am Main, Berlin, Bern, Bruxelles, New York, Oxford, Wien: Peter Lang (Polish Studies in English Language and Literature 8. Edited by Jacek Fisiak).

## Contributors

DR HABIL. PIOTR P. CHRUSZCZEWSKI (born 1973 in Zielona Góra), employed as Associate Professor in the Institute of English Studies at the University of Wrocław, teaches in the second position of *profesor extraordinarius* at the Philological School of Higher Education in Wrocław, Poland. He obtained his PhD degree in linguistics at the University of Wrocław in 2001, after having defended his doctoral thesis: “The Communicational Grammar of Political Discourse. On the Basis of Inaugural Addresses of Presidents of the United States of America” written under the supervision of Professor Zdzisław Wąsik. He obtained his habilitation with the degree of D.Litt. in linguistics at the School of English, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań, in 2007 on the basis of the dissertation: *Cultural Patterns in Discursive Practices of Scandinavian Speech Communities in the Viking Age* (Kraków 2006, Tertium).

He lectured and conducted research in many European countries, as *inter alia*, in U.K., Germany, Denmark, Italy, Romania, Malta) and in the United States. He received several senior tutor’s awards and commendable academic achievement certificates for his studies on different aspects of linguistics, sociolinguistics, anthropolinguistics and discourse oriented issues as a researcher, guest visitor and grant holder at following institutions of higher education: the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, USA (1995/1996); the University College London, U.K. (2000); the Free University of Berlin, Germany (2000, 2004, 2006); the University of California San Diego at La Jolla (Junior Fulbright Scholar in 2001); the University of California at Los Angeles (Kosciuszko Foundation Visiting Scholar in 2005); Stanford University (Visiting Scholar in 2009). Piotr Chruszczewski has supervised over 70 M.A. students (in Wrocław and in Poznań), has presented over 40 papers. He is the author of over 60 scholarly works (including three original books, two editorships, and three co-edited collected works).

Contact address: University of Wrocław, Institute of English Studies  
50–138 Wrocław, ul. Kuźnicza 22

E-mail: [piotrchruszczewski@poczta.onet.pl](mailto:piotrchruszczewski@poczta.onet.pl)

<http://www.chruszczewski.info>

DR CAMELIA-MIHAELA CMECIU (born 1975 in Roumania) is a lecturer at the Communication Department, Faculty of Letters, University of Bacău. Her research interests include semiotics, (cognitive) semantics, public discourse (political and institutional discourse). She is a graduate from the University of Bucharest (Faculty of Foreign Languages, English & Dutch – 1998; Faculty of Journalism and Sciences of Communication – 2004). She obtained her MA in theoretical linguistics (1999) and her PhD in Philology in 2005. Her PhD thesis was on *Persuasive Strategies in Political Discourse*.

She delivered visiting lectures through Erasmus-Socrates programme at the Institute of English Studies, University of Wrocław (2006) and Université Michel de Montaigne, Bordeaux 3 (2005). She took part in national and international conferences: Bacău, Suceava, Bucureşti, Iaşi (Romania), Chişinău (The Republic of Moldavia), Rome (Italy), Poznań (Poland), Volgograd (Russia), Helsinki (Finland), Valencia (Spain), Szeged (Hungary), Tbilisi (Georgia). She is a member of Romanian Association of Semiotic Studies, International Association for Semiotic Studies, Association of Trainers in Journalism and Communication, Romania, Romanian Association of Anglo-American Studies) and European Society for Anglo-American Studies.

Her recent publications include: 2005: *Strategii persuasive în discursul politic* [Persuasive strategies in political discourse]. Iaşi: Universitas XXI.; 2006: Fairy-Tales as Political Advertising. In: Piotr P. Chruszczewski, Michał Garcarz, Tomasz P. Górski (eds.) 2006: *At the Crossroads of Linguistic Sciences*, Kraków: Tertium, 221–233; 2007: Iconic Faces of Corruption. In: Doina Cmeciu, Traian D. Stănciulescu (eds.) 2007: *Proceedings of the 1st ROASS Conference Semiotics beyond Limits*. Bacău: Alma Mater, 580–593; Cmeciu, Camelia, Zdzisław Wąsik 2008: Metaphors as a Semiotic Means in the Molding of Political Identities. In: Zdzisław Wąsik, Tomasz Komendziński (eds.) 2008: *Metaphor and Cognition*. Frankfurt am Main et al.: Peter Lang, 133–148; 2009: Spinning the thread/(t)s around images of time. In: Piotr P Chruszczewski, Jacek Fisiak (eds.) 2009: *Studies in American Language, Culture and Literature*. Kraków: Tertium, 151–167.

Contact address: 600008 Bacău  
2 Vasile Alecsandri Street, B, 7  
E-mail: cmeciu75@ gmail.com



DR. VESSELA POSNER, geboren am 24. 2. 1962 in Teteven (Bulgarien), hat Master-Diplom in Malerei an der UdK in Brüssel, sowie Dr. Phil. im Bereich der Kunstwissenschaft und bildender Künste und Dr. Phil. in der Semiotik. In Sofia war sie als Kuratorin für moderne Kunst an der Nationalen Kunst-Galerie tätig (1986-1999).

Nach Berlin kam sie 1998 mit einem Berlin-Stipendium im Programm „Künste und Medien“ des DAAD. Auf der europäischen Kunstbühne ist sie aktiv mit zahlreichen Ausstellungen und interdisziplinären Projekten, die die Malerei mit der Kunstgeschichte und der Semiotik verknüpfen.

Seit 1996 steht sie in künstlerischer Zusammenarbeit mit Roland Posner (u.a. *Palimpsest – Architektur, die das Leben umschreibt* (Berlin 1999: Info Box, Potsdamer Platz); Ikonisch. Eine Meta-Ausstellung zur Kultur des Christentums (2001: Buxtehude-Museum); „Leben mit Wasser“ (Berlin 2003: Umweltbundesamt), Kuppeln und Zeichen (2005: Berliner Dom); Gestufte Sicht. Zur Symbolik in der Architektur des Kriminalgerichts Moabit (Berlin 2006: Kriminalgericht). Seit 2005 ist sie Mitglied des VBK (Verwertungsgesellschaft bildender Künstler). 2006 erhielt sie den Berliner Kunstpreis „Benninghaus“.

Contact address: Atelier  
10117 Berlin, Leipziger Str. 46  
Tel.: +49 30 7477 9255  
Fax.: +49 30 821 8183  
E-mail: [vessela\\_posner@hotmail.com](mailto:vessela_posner@hotmail.com)  
[www.vesselaposner-atelier.de](http://www.vesselaposner-atelier.de)  
<http://vessela.posner-berlin.de>

PROF. DR. HABIL. ROLAND POSNER is Professor of Linguistics and Semiotics and Director of the Research Center for Semiotics at the Technische Universität Berlin. Born in Prague in 1942, he studied philosophy, comparative literature, linguistics, and communication theory at the Universities of Bonn, Munich, and Berlin. After having received his Ph.D (*Dr. phil.*) degree in linguistics, he habilitated in linguistics, general literature, and the philosophy of language.

He was guest professor at Hamburg University (1973), Université de Montréal (1977) and the University of Toronto (2005). He taught also at the Linguistic and Semiotic Summer Institutes in Salzburg (1977), Tunis (1979), Toronto (1982 and 2005), Lisbon (1983), Mysore (1984/85), São Paulo (1985), Lund (1992), and Sofia (1995, 2001 and 2003), and spent the academic year 1986/87 as a Fellow at The Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study in Wassenaar.

He has written the books *Theorie des Kommentierens: Eine Grundlagendstudie zur Semantik und Pragmatik* (1972, 2nd edition 1980) and *Rational Discourse and Poetic Communication: Methods of Linguistic, Literary, and Philosophical Analysis* (1982). The more than 250 volumes co-edited by him include *Zeichenprozesse: Semiotische Forschung in den Einzelwissenschaften* (1977), *Die Welt als Zeichen: Klassiker der modernen Semiotik* (1981, English translation 1986), *Post-Chomskyan Linguistics* (1985), *Iconicity: The nature of Culture* (1986), *Semiotics and the Arts* (1988), *Zeitliche und inhaltliche Aspekte der Textproduktion* (1989), *Wall Street Gallery* (1990), *Code-Wechsel: Texte im Medienvergleich* (1990), *Warnungen an die ferne Zukunft: Atommüll als Kommunikationsproblem* (1991), *Signs, Search and Communication: Semiotic Aspects of Artificial Intelligence* (1993), *Lebenswelt: Zeichenwelt/Life World: Sign World* (2 vols, 1994), *Signs for Time: Notation and Transcription of Movements* (1995), *Signs of Work: Semiosis and Information Processing in Organizations* (1996), *Semiotics: A Handbook on the Sign-Theoretic Foundations of Nature and Culture* (4 vols, 1997–2004), and *Atmosphären im Alltag* (2007).

He is editor of the series *Foundations of Communication and Cognition* (de Gruyter, since 1973; LIT, since 2003), *Approaches to Semiotics* (Mouton, since 1978), *Problems in Semiotics* (Stauffenburg, since 1983), and *Body, Sign, Culture* (Weidler, since 1998). Having founded the German Association for Semiotic Studies (DGS) and established the quarterly *Zeitschrift für Semiotik* (1979ff), he served for two terms as President

of the International Association for Semiotic Studies (IASS) (1994–2004), of which he is now Honorary President. In the year 2005, he was nominated as Fellow of the International Communicology Institute on the recommendation of the Director Richard Leo Lanigan from the United States of America, and belongs to CI Bureau of Regional Coordinators for Europe.

Contact address: Research Center for Semiotics  
Berlin University of Technology  
10587 Berlin, Secr. FR 6–3, Franklinstr. 28–29  
E-mail: [posner@kgw.tu-berlin.de](mailto:posner@kgw.tu-berlin.de)

DR. HABIL. GRAŻYNA SAWICKA (born 1952 in Piotrkow Trybunalski), is engaged as Associate Professor in Polish linguistics at the Casimir the Great University in Bydgoszcz. She specializes in ethnolinguistics, Polish linguistics, psycholinguistics, and the theory of language. She began her academic career at the University of Szczecin after having finished her M.A. studies in the Polish Philology at the University of Łódź in 1980. Her PhD dissertation on the creativity pre-school children in the construction of names, she defended at the Silesian University in Katowice in 1992. The domain of her doctoral research bore fruits in the publication of the book: *Nominacja rzeczownikowa: Na przykładzie mowy dzieci przedszkolnych* (Szczecin 1994 & 1995), which was followed by a series of articles pertaining to the names as lexical units and the role of stereotypes in the naming activity of people. Some of them were based on experimental studies conducted among children.

In turn, her postdoctoral research was inspired by the participation in the seminar: „Language and Culture“ („Język a kultura”), co-organized by the University of Wrocław and the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin. Starting from the year 1991, she contributed to the Polish ethnolinguistics, the main trend of this seminar, with her articles on the language of politics, language stereotype, emotions in language and culture, and tabu as a linguistic-cultural category. Taking part in the discussions on the current trends of cognitive linguistics, she investigated also some topics in semantics, and some in morphology and cultural phenomena of stereotyping in language. Applying the empirical methods of cognitive linguistics, she inquired into the nature of metaphors, as in the case of the concept *house*, and the idealized cognitive models of the concepts *god's child* and *modern man*. Working at the University of Szczecin, she edited a collection of papers devoted to the problem of The House in Language and Culture (*Dom w języku i kulturze*, Szczecin 1997). Having started to work at the Casimir the Great University in Bydgoszcz since 1997, Dr. Grażyna Sawicka engaged into the studies of linguistic pragmatics. Her next research domain, at the turn of the 1990s and the first years of the 21st century, became then the description of recent changes in spoken language, such as acronimization and the expansion of borrowings especially in the style of modern advertising. To important contributions belong also her studies on various kinds of graphic and mechanically painted inscriptions on the walls of city buildings. These studies led her to the semiotics of the city. The results of her

studies the urban graffiti, she had the opportunity to present in Cincinnati at the session of the VIII International Seminar on Urban Form, in September of 2001. From that time on, she has concentrated on the semiotics of urban texts, which are written in the urbanized space, both in the official and unofficial sites and centers of attention. In her recent works, she undertakes actual attempts at defining the notion of the “urban-text” searching for its exponents and its connections with the urban environment.

Three years ago, she published a dissertation on Language and Convention (*Język a konwencja*, Bydgoszcz 2006), for which she received a D.Litt degree, called in Poland habilitation, at the University of Łódź in 2007. She is the author of above 60 articles having been published in prestigious Polish journals, series and editions, such as *Język a kultura*, *Prace Filologiczne*, and *Poradnik Językowy*. Some of them appeared in conference proceedings in Poland and abroad. Apart from her engagements in academic research, she also acts in the editorial board of the Casimir the Great University journal. Since 2005 she was the editor-in-chief of *Kwartalnik Uniwersytecki*, and since 2006, the associate editor of the journal *Forum UKW* published bimonthly.

Contact address: Casimir the Great University in Bydgoszcz  
Institute of the Polish Philology  
Department of Journalism and Social Communication  
85–067 Bydgoszcz, ul. Jagiellonska 11  
Tel.: +48 52 321 3181  
E-mail: [grazkasaw@wp.pl](mailto:grazkasaw@wp.pl)

MIKOŁAJ SOBOCIŃSKI, M.A. in English linguistics, studied at the English Department of Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń between 1996 and 2001. In 2000 he spent a year at the University of Hull under the Erasmus Programme. At that time he conducted his research for an M.A. thesis on the ideology in mages (based on the analysis of press photography and posters). After having graduated from the English studies in 2001, he worked at the Language Centre, and two years later he entered the PhD studies in linguistics at the Faculty of Philology of the NCU in Toruń working under the supervision of Prof. Zdzisław Wąsik. Utilizing the results of his M.A. thesis, he published his first article in 2005 on the Information Chain in Linguistic Theories of Sign and Mediation. The participation in semiotic and pragmatic conferences, e.g., IPrA in Italy and Sweden, LACUS Forum in the USA, Semiotic Web in Finland, enabled him, in turn, to write some next papers in semiotics, such as: “Alice-in-Wonderland Pragma-Semiotics”, „Kawa czy Herbata?” and “Sexuality”. Working as a teacher at his home University as well as at Vocational Schools of Higher Education in Świecie and Olsztyn, and later also, after having moved to the English Department at Casimir the Great University in Bydgoszcz, he took also an active part at conferences of the International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign language by delivering several papers, e.g., “What Teachers Need? What Teachers Lack?” with George Pickering and Peter Whiley. During his last four years of PhD studies under the guidance of his supervisor and due to the exchange of ideas with the academic staff, he concentrated on the study of visual communication in cities with special reference to London. In consequence, he was able to present his findings at the conferences in Poland and abroad arguing for the inclusion of verbal proxemics to the domain of urban discourse. At present he has two articles waiting for publication, „Językowy obraz miasta. Czy miasto może coś o sobie opowiedzieć? Czy z miastem można porozmawiać?” and “Towards the definition of metropolitan discourse and metropolis in respect of urban semiotics”.

Contact address: Casimir the Great University, Bydgoszcz,  
Department of English Studies  
85–064 Bydgoszcz, ul. Chodkiewicza 30  
E-mail: melkor@mikolaj.info  
<http://www.mikolaj.info>

PROF. DR. PHIL. DAINA TETERS is a leading researcher in semiotics at the Academic Research Centre in Riga (Latvia). She is the Latvian representative on the Executive Committee of the International Association for Semiotic Studies. Born 1963 in Riga, she attended the University of Latvia and the University of Salzburg, received her M.Sc. in 1987 and the Ph.D. in 1996.

Between 1987–1990 she taught as Lecturer at the Latvian Academy of Music, and 1990–1999 as Lecturer and Associate Professor at the University of Latvia. Since 2001 she has occupied the positions of Associate Professor and Full Professor at the Latvian Academy of Culture, Academic Vice-Rector and the Director of the Scientific Research Center for Semiotics. Since 2006 she has acted as Head of the international research arts project Metamind.

Her research interests include methodology of science, theoretical semiotics, semiotics of culture, especially of the 20th century, and the semiotics of time and space. She has presented her research at international conferences and has published several articles in scientific journals including the Proceedings of the Latvian Academy of Sciences. Among her latest publications are: *Metamorphoses of the Mind: Out of one's Mind, Losing one's Mind, Light-mindedness, Mindlessness. Proceedings of the International Research Conference* (2008), *Šiek tiek informācijas apie informāciju ir su ja susijusius paklydimus* (2007), *Der epistemologische Wert des Nicht-Verstandenen in kognitiven Strategien* (2007), *Innovative Raummodelle der zweiten Avantgarde und die Konsequenzen ihrer Reproduktion* (2006), and: *Lenin. Das Gestenrepertoire eines "ewig lebenden Körpers"* (2005). In the recent year she organized an international conference METAMIND 2008: *Metamorphoses of the World: Traces, Shadows, Reflections, Echoes and Metaphors* which was held in Riga, Latvia, October 2–5, 2008.

Contact address: Latvian Academy of Culture  
Rīga, LV-1003, Ludzas iela 24  
E-mail: teters@metamind.lv

MAŁGORZATA TYC-KLEKOT, M.A. (born 1964 in Wrocław), an art designer and idea designer, was graduated from the Wrocław Academy of Fine Arts in the Faculty of Painting and Sculpture. She received her master's diploma in graphic art and graphic design at the studio of Jan Jaromir Aleksium and painting at the studio of Konrad Jarodzki. She started her professional and creative life in 1992 after having been awarded a honorable distinction at the Sevilla Expo'92 for the design of an Expo gadget. In the course of her career, she has been participating in numerous exhibitions and contests at the Polish and international forum where she was enabled to present various forms of her handcraft, as, e.g., in Bielska Jesień – a painting contest, a new kind of toy design Animals of the World, sketches and pictures for a children's magazine, set design for a puppet theatre.

In the early period of her creative work, a significant number of her paintings and designs was addressed to small children. Subsequently, as a mature artist, she has diversified her interests in a search for a union with a typically adult environment, i.e., a town, a city, a place to live and a milieu of a human being with his relatively widespread associations and linkages. Particularly, she has been interested in her hometown, Wrocław, the capital of Lower Silesia. In 1997, her work, entitled as Wrocław Souvenir, was highly estimated by the Wrocław Bureau of Art Exhibition, and 10 years later, in 2007, her design Wrocław Gadget won a special prize from the President of Wrocław. In the meantime, she took part in an idea contest *Time in the City* organized by Dom na Brestskoj in Moscow where she presented her designs depicting a watery place in a town being a source of life and building up the layers of both the past and the future.

Małgorzata Tyc-Klekot has distinguished herself in the artistic world not only as a painter, a graphic artist and an art designer but also as a craftswoman who additionally specializes in glass, metal, ceramics, as well as in typography, company identification design sets, and photography. She has co-operated with numerous institutions, companies, art galleries, and organizations, as, e.g., BWA Design Gallery (Biuro Wystaw Artystycznych, Polish Office of Art Exhibitions, Wrocław), Glass Poland (Warsaw), UPS (United Parcel Service, Wrocław), Raitaro Consulting (Warsaw), Saint Gobain (Dąbrowa Górnicza), Wrocław Bureau of Promotion, Wrocław City Council, and Philological School of Higher Education in Wrocław.



Her works, which will be presented at the Consultant Assembly in Wrocław, include:

- *The Well (Studnia)* – a poster designed on a basis of a three-dimensional model of a watery place in a city with a short artistic idea description,
- *Wrocław Main Square (Rynek wrocławski)* – a black-and-white poster-made photography representing Wrocław market square houses previously made of glass by the artist where the main subject is constituted by the paths city-dwellers create and the life they bring into the very heart of the city,
- *Klekot through the Backdoor (Klekot od kuchni)* – a documentary film of the act of creation; a series of oil and acrylic paintings for Art Hotel in Wrocław.

Contact address: Atelier  
50–335 Wrocław, ul. Sienkiewicza 32  
tycklekot@interia.pl

PROF. DR HABIL. ZDZISŁAW WĄSIK (born 1947, Poland), Professor titular of humanistic sciences in Poland, is engaged at present in the first position of Professor (*profesor ordinarius*) and Head of the Department of Linguistic Semiotics in the School of English at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, and the second as Professor and Rector of the Philological School of Higher Education in Wrocław, as well the third as Professor and Head of the Commission for the Quality of Education at Kolegium Karkonoskie in Jelenia Góra.

His primary academic education, from the position of Teaching Assistant to Professor, he received at the Wrocław University, where he had acted (for 14 years) as Director of the Chair of General Linguistics and editor of *Studia Linguistica. Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis* as well as the secretary (for 15 years), and then the president of the Language Commission of the Wrocław Scientific Society (for six years). He was the grantee of the Fulbright Fellowship for Senior Scholars (1982–1984): in the Department of Linguistics at the State University of New York at Buffalo (5 months), Research Center for Language and Semiotic Studies at the Indiana University at Bloomington (12 months), and, furthermore of the Oxford Hospitality Scheme for Polish Scholars (1987): in the Trinity College (6 weeks), as well as the International Exchange of Scholars (1991): in the Brown University English Language Program (1 month); Department of Linguistics and Semiotics Rice University, Houston, Texas (2 months), Department of Linguistics at the University of Southern California and the Department of Linguistics at the University of California, Los Angeles (2 months).

His didactic experience has been enriched through a long-lasting cooperation with the universities in Opole and Torn and lately also with three vocational schools of higher education in Silesia.

He is the author of 5 books, 13 editorials and over 100 articles devoted to the structural typology of questions, semiotic paradigm of linguistics, ecology of languages, and the history and methodology of general and applied linguistics. Among his 95 conference papers 68 were delivered at the international forum, *inter alia*, in the USA, Yugoslavia (Kosovo), Brazil, Norway, the Netherlands, Bulgaria, Germany, Italy, Finland, Sweden, Slovenia, Belgium, France, and lately also in Roumania, Latvia, China, and again the USA. He is a member of the Polish Society of Linguistics, International Association for Semiotic Studies, Polish Fulbright Alumni Association, and Romanian Association of Semiotic

Studies. As a semiotician he took part in 4 Semiotic Congresses: Barcelona–Perpignan 1989, Berkeley 1994, Dresden 1999, Helsinki–Imatra 2007, and 6 Summer Schools organized by the International Semiotics Institute at Imatra: 1995, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2005. He is known at the international forum as the author of *Epistemological Perspectives on Linguistic Semiotics* (Peter Lang 2003) and the co-editor of *Hard-Science Linguistics* (with Victor H. Yngve, Continuum Books 2004). In acknowledgement of his outstanding achievements Zdzisław Waśnik is a subject of biographical record in the *Marquis Who's Who in the World* (A Who's Who in America Publication of Reed Elsevier) starting from 1995. His biography has been also listed in: *The Golden book of Polish Science 2000 – The Scientists of the Turn of the Century*. Gliwice: Helion, 2001; *The Golden Book of Humanistic Sciences*. Gliwice: Helion, 2004; *Who is Who in Poland*. Verlag für Personenzyklopädien AG, Switzerland, 2004, 2005; *The Golden Book of the Polish Science – The Scientists of the United Europe*. Gliwice: Helion, 2006. Moreover, in the year 2005, he had been elected as Fellow of the International Communicology Institute on the recommendation of the Director Richard Leo Lanigan from the United States of America.

Contact address: Philological School of Higher Education  
in Wrocław, 50–335 Wrocław, ul. Sienkiewicza 32

E-mail: [zdzis.wasik@gmail.com](mailto:zdzis.wasik@gmail.com)

<http://www.wsf.edu.pl/28657.xml> &

[http://ifa.amu.edu.pl/fa/Wasik\\_Zdzislaw](http://ifa.amu.edu.pl/fa/Wasik_Zdzislaw)