

SCHOOL OF SEMIOTICS FROM TARTU: GENESIS OF SEMIOTICS OF CULTURE AND SEMIOTICS OF NATURE

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Abstract

The paper presents the importance of the School of Semiotics from Tartu (Estonia) in the appearance and development of the Semiotics of Culture and Semiotics of Nature. Although the studies of speciality and some critics often speak about the influences of the Western structuralist linguistics and anthropology on the development of the school, it has been recognized that the School from Tartu has managed to preserve its independence and originality. The School of Semiotics from Tartu hasn't got an unique methodological approach, but concrete and different methodological patterns focused on a way of thinking directed, on the one hand on the understanding of the character of structure and system of the object under study, and, on the other hand, on the search of several methods for the semiotical description of different languages from non-linguistic fields. The language, the text, the structure, the model, the system of modelling have represented the major notions and concepts in the studies of the Tartu semioticians till 1973, when the Semiotics of Culture was born. In the first half of the '90s it was noticed a change of the linguistic concerns in the semiotical publications of the time, followed by a more and more marked attraction towards a semiotical approach of some new non-linguistic disciplines. Thus, in 1998 the first articles of eco- and biosemiotics were published in *Sign System Studies*. Since their appearance eco- and biosemiotics have developed significantly and have been considered subfields belonging to the Semiotics of Nature. One can say that the Semiotics of Nature was born as a result of the increased interest of the biologists for the activity of the sign system, and bound to it the assumption of the communicative character of the natural processes. If the School of Semiotics from Tartu was founded by humanists, who sometimes in their studies have resorted to the help of some non-linguistic disciplines, the Semiotics of Nature may be considered as the result of an analogous approach coming from the specialists in natural sciences, who have resorted to semiotics in order to elucidate some phenomena from biology and ecology, in other words we are witnesses of a new "retelling" of some aspects from biology and ecology, using the language of Charles Peirce and Ferdinand de Saussure.

Key words: School of semiotics from Tartu, Semiotics of Culture, Semiotics of Nature, non-verbal communication

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