

COGNITIVE SEMIOTICS

#3 (FALL 2008)

NEO-STRUCTURALISM - HOMAGE TO CLAUDE LÉVI-STRAUSS

In celebration of the 100th birthday and continued influence of the legendary French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss (and his structuralist contemporaries) we invite authors to submit articles on the theme of “Neo-Structuralism” for publication in *Cognitive Semiotics* (Issue 3, Fall 2008).

By using the term “Neo-Structuralism” we refer to the apparent influx of a novel kind of structuralist theory to the humanities following the general rise and influence of the cognitive sciences in recent years. Cognitive Linguistics, Cognitive Musicology, Cognitive Theories of Art and Culture, Cognitive Semantics, and numerous other areas of research now sporting the modifier “Cognitive”, all utilize structuralist tools or frames of reference to get at the inherent meaning of their object. A case in point is the abundance of diagrammatical representations in the current literature of how meaning occurs or is exchanged, i.e. Image Schemas, Idealized Cognitive Models, Blending Networks, Mental Space mappings, etc. Furthermore, given the current prominence to the advances of neuroscience, it is often the supposed structure of the human nervous system that indirectly (and still somewhat furtively) forms the basis for this multitude of representations and, in turn, is being used to implicitly back up diverse ideas like viewpoint positions in grammatical constructions or the effective components of aesthetic experience.

Accordingly, the “neo-structuralist” element of the cognitive sciences offers a clean break with Post-Structuralist thought. For the first time in years, meaning is seen as grounded in a real relation between human subjects and the world, mediated by a brain-body organization with an ever more discernable structure. Focus has shifted from emphasis on the individual (and unstable) interpretation of the world to a search for human universals, global schemas, and other invariances that our nervous system and our propensity for particular kinds of social interaction seem to create for us, both on a phylogenetic and ontogenetic level.

In relation to the above, the editors of *Cognitive Semiotics* find it timely to mark the 100th birthday of one of the fathers of Structuralism by critically examining the *merits* of the return of structuralist theory in the guise of the purported “neo-structuralist” elements of cognitive science and its influence on the humanities. Thus, we invite submissions that:

- Pay tribute to Lévi-Strauss, either directly by re-evaluating his original insights within a modern context, or by tracing the influence of his thoughts, or the thoughts of his Structuralist fellows, to contemporary “neo-structuralist” theories.
- Analyse current “neo-structuralist” theories and their individual merits towards understanding human meaning production and exchange.
- Present a “State of the Art” review of “neo-structuralism” or the significance of “neo-structuralist” elements in Cognitive Science and the Humanities.

We welcome multi-authored submissions.

THE EDITORS

Special issue editors of *Cognitive Semiotics* (Issue 3, Fall 2008) are:

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Potential contributors are encouraged to contact any of the editors in advance of submission. Submitted publications should follow the style instructions for *Cognitive Semiotics* (<http://www.cognitivesemiotics.com>).

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Deadline for submissions: March 3rd 2008.

ABOUT COGNITIVE SEMIOTICS

The first of its kind, *Cognitive Semiotics* is a multidisciplinary journal devoted to high quality research, integrating methods and theories developed in the disciplines of cognitive science with methods and theories developed in semiotics and the humanities, with the ultimate aim of providing new insights into the realm of human signification and its manifestation in cultural practices. Accordingly, readers will have the opportunity to engage with ideas from the European and American traditions of cognitive science and semiotics, and to follow developments in the study of meaning – both in a cognitive and in a semiotic sense – as they unfold internationally.

The initiative to create a transatlantically based journal comes from the Center for Cognition and Culture at the department of Cognitive Science at Case Western Reserve University (Cleveland), and from a group of researchers, based in Aarhus and Copenhagen, trained in cognitive semiotics at the Center for Semiotics at the University of Aarhus, and in language and literature at the University of Copenhagen. By bringing together scholars from multiple disciplines, the editors hope to provide a revitalized perspective on the semiotic field.

Further details of the journal, including a free-to-download Issue 0, can be found at <http://www.cognitivesemiotics.com/>.

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