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Eds.

TEXT • REALITY

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Edited by Jeff Bernard, Jurij Fikfak and Peter Grzybek
Language review Renée Gadsden
Graphic art and design Milojka Žalik Huzjan
Cover image Jurij Fikfak

Published by Institute of Slovenian Ethnology at ZRC SAZU
ZRC Publishing, Ljubljana
Österreichische Gesellschaft für Semiotik - Institut fuer Sozio-
Semiotische Studien, Vienna

Represented by Monika Kropelj, Oto Luthar, Jeff Bernard
Co-publishers Department of Slavic Studies, Graz University
Institutum Studiorum Humanitatis, Ljubljana

Editor-in-Chief Vojislav Likar
Printed by XYZ

The publication and symposium were directly or indirectly supported by
Slovenian Research Agency, Ljubljana; Graz University (Vice Rector and Office for International
Relations, Faculty for Cultural Studies, Department of Slavic Studies); Office for the
Government of the Province of Styria (Department for Science); Office of the Mayor of the City
of Graz; Austrian Science and Research Liaison Office Ljubljana (ASO).

ISBN 961-6500-86-4 (ZRC SAZU, Ljubljana)
ISBN 3-900494-46-0 (Österreichische Gesellschaft für Semiotik, Vienna)

© 2005, Založba ZRC, Inštitut za slovensko narodopisje ZRC SAZU
ZRC Publishing, Institute of Slovenian Ethnology at ZRC SAZU.

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LJUBLJANA, WIEN, GRAZ 2005

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INTRODUCTION

JEFF BERNARD, JURIJ FIKFAK AND PETER GRZYBEK

The Symposium underlying this volume continued a series of conferences entitled “Open Borders/Offene Grenzen”. It is a series of bilateral international events which started in 1997, and all meetings hitherto took place every second year in Graz at the Karl Franzens University in Graz, that is, in 1997, 1999, 2001, and 2003. Host of all these was the Department of Slavic Studies which acted also as co-organizer, together with the Austrian Association for Semiotics ...GS/AAS and the Institute for Socio-Semiotic Studies ISSS, Vienna.

The idea was from the start to organize bilateral semiotic conferences together with Austria’s close neighbors, particularly in East Europe, Central East Europe, and South-East Europe. The initial event in 1997 set out from the work and activities of the Hungarian Cardinal Péter Pázmány who, in the Baroque Age, lived for a while also in Graz as a scholar and teacher, and is now remembered as an early semiotician, or proto-semiotician. Accordingly, the event was organized in cooperation with the Hungarian Association for Semiotic Studies, and the results were published as a Special Issue of *Semiotische Berichte* 22(1,2)1998 entitled “Péter Pázmány - Fokus gemeinsamer Traditionen” (*Semiotische Berichte* is the official journal of the Austrian Association for Semiotics).

In 1999, the guests came from Croatia, that is, from the environs of the Croatian Society for Semiotics, which therefore acted as a cooperation partner. While the first Symposium had a rather historical focus (which nonetheless allowed for some extension into the present), the second was dedicated primarily to contemporary questions and problems. At stake was the semiotic examination of the term “border” itself, with all fields of problems connected with it, e.g. in a relativizing way with “transition” and the semantics evoked by it, or of further related terms such as “barriers”, “delimitations”, “segregations”, “demarcations” as well as “transgressions”, “bridges”, “border encroachments” or “aperatures”, etc. etc. The results of this meeting were published as “Borders, Signs, Transitions” in a Special Issue of *S - European Journal for Semiotic Studies* 12(2)2000.

The cultural relevance of a semiotic approach towards the examination of “Open Borders” was further tackled within the third event in December 2001. Guests were this time scholars from Slovakia, especially from the semiotic focus points Nitra and Bratislava. The topic of the Symposium “Form - Struktur - Komposition. Pragmatik & Rezeption” centered on the composition of works of art, that is, on questions concerning the structure of works of art and their components traditionally dealt with in terms of “morphology”, “composition”, “architectonics”, “form”, “structure”, “system”, etc. - but this time the aim was to analyze them in a pragmatic perspective and to examine their efficiency mechanisms. The results can be found in a Special Issue of *Semiotische Berichte* 26(1-4)2002 entitled “Form - Struktur - Komposition. Pragmatik & Rezeption”.

The present book is based on the fourth bilateral meeting of this kind in which once again fundamental questions of semiotics and related disciplines (text sciences like linguistics, literary studies, media studies, cultural studies, etc.) were examined. As focus of all considerations we chose the classical dichotomy “TEXT & WIRKLICHKEIT”, text and reality, to foreground problems of reference, questions of textual and/vs. extra-textual reality/realities, of the “worldly” content of texts, of the (societal) determinations of text constitution, of reality in “subtexts” and “between the lines”, of the convergences/divergences concerning docu. vs. fiction, etc. - up to philosophical questions regarding the making, recognizability, depiction, reflection, constitution and construction of reality in its sign-mediatedness at large. For the Austrian organizers, it was an honor and a pleasure to join forces in this exploration with profiled guests from Slovenia, particularly from the Slovenian Initiative for Semiotics which started to form itself at that time. The Slovene semioticians are well-known in the semiotic community for being versed in fields like textual, literary, and cultural semiotics, reaching also into areas labeled psychoanalytic-psycho-semiotic approaches. The Symposium took place on Friday and Saturday, December 12th and 13th, 2003, in the Institute for Slavic Studies, Graz University. A delightful side-re-mark, at the end: beside the Slovene delegation, the organizers also had the opportunity to raise the “internationality” of the meeting by some additional guests from Slovakia and from California (two of them also represented here), using favorable circumstances which made this possible. Herewith we present the results of this meeting, and the Austrian organizers and at the same time co-editors express their thanks to the other co-editor for having enabled this book to appear in Slovenia. Further cooperations are envisaged; and the next event in the series “Open Borders” is scheduled for November 2005, this time in cooperation with colleagues from the Czech Republic.

To give first a short impression of the structure of the event, however, in which the organizers also had to take account of availabilites and local circumstances: the actual structure of the book and of its chapters differs from those on the spot, but we considered it useful to give a short glance at the development of the ideas from then to now, to mirror the climate of the event in Graz and leave a trace of authenticity. Some lecture titles have slightly changed, as readers will recognize, because some authors preferred to present the original manuscripts, while some worked theirs over. The initial session was called *Theory 1* chaired by host Peter Grzybek; the lectures were by: Wolfgang Eismann (Graz): “Text - Welt - Textwelt: Bewußtsein und Realität“; Em’lia Nemcová (Trnava): “Wahrheit im Text“; and Marko Juvan (Ljubljana): “Spaces, Transgressions, and Intertextuality”. Eismann’s and Nemcová’s will appear later. It followed *Theory 2* chaired by Jeff Bernard and containing: Peter Grzybek & Emmerich Kelih (Graz): “Texttypologie in empirischer Sicht” & “Texttypologie aus empirischer Sicht” (now in one, with considerations by Ernst Stadlober added); and Jurij Fikfak (Ljubljana): “Reality - Text - Self-presentation”. In the evening of Friday, Dec. 12th, the Mayor’s Reception took place in the Graz City Hall. Next morning we continued with *Theory 3* chaired by Jurij Fikfak; speakers were: Janez Justin (Ljubljana): “Texts, Codes, Inferences, and Representations of the Past“; Peter Deutschmann (Graz): “Die Zugänglichkeit von Welten“; and Bla z;’ Lukan (Ljubljana): “Text, Reality, and Fiction: The Actor’s Body as Text”. Still in the morning session, the chair went then to Gloria Withalm presiding over *Types of Texts*, with: Winfried Kudzus (Berkeley, CA):

“Dichtung und Wahrheit in den Wolfsmann-Texten: Peter Rosegger und Sigmund Freud“; Rajko Muršič; Ljubljana: “Ethnographic Experience, Understanding and Narrative through the Looking Glass of the Lacanian Concepts of the Real, the Symbolic, and the Imaginary: On the Discourse of Popular Music“; and Jeff Bernard (Vienna): “Report’ & Report”.

In the afternoon, the session *Life World(s)* was chaired by Janez Justin and consisted of: Miha Javornik (Ljubljana): “Signifier Versus Signified - The Question of the Border in Times of Globalization“; Elisabeth List (Graz): “Leiblichkeit, Virtualität und Realität“; and Barbara Orel (Ljubljana): “A Question of the Point of View. A Spectator as a Network of Fiction and Reality”. In addition, we had the chance to listen to Jana Kusendová (Banská Bystrica) speaking on “Lexical Richness in Slavic Texts”. The next to preside was Winfried Kudzus; his *Media* session offered these lectures: Christian Mžller (Klagenfurt): “Die Sichtbarkeit der Welt. Ethische Reflexionen zum Diskurs der Medien“; Gloria Withalm (Vienna): “The Filmic Text and its Self-reflexive Materiality“; Dagmar Rieger (Salzburg): “*Traumnovelle* and *Eyes Wide Shut*. Phantasma and Deception or: A World Behind the Mirror“; and Sabine Prokop (Vienna): “Die Illusion von Wirklichkeit. What Would You Rather See - a Disney Crocodile Robot or a Real Crocodile?” The event was closed by the Hosts’ Reception. Sunday morning was reserved for sight-seeing; some participants met informally to continue exchange, some met to visit the exhibition “Pierre Bourdieu: In Algerien” (with his photos of 1958-61) in the Kunsthau Graz. All had the feeling of having attended an important event.

Turning to the restructured book now, as presented here: the first chapter with five contributions is entitled “Transgressing Boundaries” and mirrors the conference topic “Text & Reality” as well as, in a way, the series title “Open Borders”. Miha Javornik’s (Ljubljana) contribution “Signifier versus Signified - To the Question of Boundaries in Times of Globalization” focuses on the signifier/signified-relationship in the globalization era, as expressed virtual communication. Based on Lotman’s understanding of the (linear and cyclic) semio-dynamics of culture, he arrives at Bakhtin’s idea of carnivalization affecting the way how signifier/signified are perceived in different eras. It follows the thesis that signifier/signified tend to merge in virtual communication, leading to a revival of myth-centered mentalities and pre-reflexive consciousness. This development throws light on the “crisis of the subject”. In “Texte um die Welt, Welten um die Welt, Welten um den Text. Kritik der semiotischen Fiktionalitätstheorie”, Peter Deutschmann (Graz) argues that, since no textual markers allow for identifying fiction, interpretation is governed by extratextual criteria: a text is either fictional or factual, but one can also find intersections. The latest concepts of fictionality claim that fiction creates distinct fictional worlds. It is argued that fictional texts should not be severed from the actual world. In his “Spaces, Transgressions, and Intertextuality”, Marko Juvan (Ljubljana) claims that the experience of ‘real’ and ‘imaginary’ spaces transgresses their ontological boundary. The text enters inner speech, interpellating the reader to take positions in the imaginary. So the illusion of presence is created, undone by forces producing transgressive spaces. Literary texts intertextually transpose spaces of other texts interfering with their own, or evoke extratextual spaces functioning as contexts for certain types of discourse. The interplay of spaces and discourses constitutes identities. These, however, are in permanent hybridization and mobil-

ity. In “Text, Indexical Background Representations, and Representations of the Past”, Janez Justin (Ljubljana) deals with semantically incomplete fragments of texts serving as means of knowledge transfer. Not only explicit and implicit messages are at stake, he argues, but there’s also a third possibility: the text produces cognitive effects by retrieving background representations supporting explicit or implicit messages. One kind has a special role in establishing a perspective, i.e. indexical background representations. It follows a demonstration using fragments from Slovene and Austrian history textbooks. Finally, Jurij Fikfak (Ljubljana) offers “Reconstructed Rituals between Text and Reality. The *akoromati* Case”. The carnival ritual signifies an inverted world, thus also the crossing (or rejecting) of boundaries between observer/observed, researcher/performer, and WE/OTHER. Carnival displays everybody’s body. Under examination is *S`koromatija* (an event in south-western Slovenia). Important issues are the changes concerning tradition/self-presentation and the relationship researcher/performer (informant).

The next chapter is called “Empirical Text Semiotics” and deals with innovative quantitative research in this field by delivering two substantial contributions. Peter Grzybek, Emmerich Kelih & Ernst Stadlober (all Graz) present in their study “Empirische Textsemiotik und quantitative Text-Typologie” research results concerning text classification. First they discuss general aspects of text theory, then concentrate on an operative definition of ‘text’. Afterwards, word length becomes a central topic. On these theoretical foundations, various quantitative methods of text classification are presented and applied to 398 Slovenian texts. The results are presented in detail; they confirm the method and lead to a new text typology. In “Lexical Richness in Slavic Texts”, Jana Kusendová (Banská Bystrica) offers further statistical methods for analyzing these texts in terms of richness, as exemplified on poems by Válek and a novel by Holka.

The chapter “Discourses & Sign Processes” contains ten contributions. “Dichtung und Wahrheit in den Wolfsmann-Texten: Freuds Beiwerk und Peter Rosegger” by W.G. Kudzus (Berkeley, CA), to begin with, takes Freud’s Wolf Man case study as an example of a scientific text whose relationship with a literary forerunner, Rosegger’s version, has been overlooked, although it anticipates key elements. The author studies the intricate intersections and intertextual relations, in which also Grimm fairy tales intermingle. Dagmar Rieger’s (Salzburg) “*Traumnovelle* and *Eyes Wide Shut*. Phantasma and Deception, or: A World Behind the Mirror” compares Schnitzler’s novel and Kubrick’s film adaptation to examine the different ways in which the “real” and “unreal” narrative universes interfere here and there. Both interpretations can also be seen as single interpretations of the same old story, of love being challenged by deception. Rajko Murs`ic`’s (Ljubljana) “Ethnographic Experience, Understanding and Narratives in the Discourse of Popular Music” is a Lacanian study examining the double nature of music and musical texts/performances, based on a timeless “space” as well as on historicity and sociality. Difficult to describe what music expresses, it’s a symbolic practice whose understanding lies not so much in the material but in the receiver. Music is either crypto-propositional or crypto-performative. As to popular music texts, neither the authors/producers nor the audience are fully able to understand. Elisabeth List’s (Graz) “Leiblichkeit, Realität und Virtualität in semiotischer Perspektive” deals with the new possibilities of digital technologies, esp. the construction of *avirtual reality*. She deconstructs the “realness” of this world by arguing for body-

bound experience as the ultimate ground of experience. Blaz' Lukan's (Ljubljana) "Actor's Body as Text" deals with the dominance of the "staged" body in performances and poses the question about the reality within and behind: how and to what degree does the spectator take part in this fiction/reality? Setting out from Pavis he questions the sustainability and visual "truth" of the actor's performance. Barbara Orel (Ljubljana) examines "The Question of the Point of View. The Spectator as the Melting Pot of Fiction and Reality". At the core of theater is a fiction/fact opposition but the boundary in between is blurred. Today's theater privileges the body of the spectator as the major site of the interlocking of fiction and reality, as exemplified by Hrvatin's works and views, resting on the manipulation of the spectator's gaze. Perception is determined by the gaze, the subject of vision thus by the locus of looking.

Sabine Prokop (Vienna) examines "Die Illusion der Wirklichkeit" in TV, where "reality" has reached a new quality in the *reality-soaps*. But traditional TV worked with an ostensible illusion of reality, too. The big hidden effort behind audiovisual texts has an impact: hidden content creates "realistic illusion". Gloria Withalm's (Vienna) "Der filmische Text und seine selbstreflexive Materialität" studies how extra/non-diegetic, paratextual, and other non-filmic elements in/of film interfere self-reflexively in movies' contents. Throughout the decades, various codes and devices were used in this way of "materiality". Withalm uses examples from early cartoons, 1990s commercials, and diverse feature films to show the strategies: (1) the diegetization of elements which accompany the main text; (2) the focus on cinematographic codes; (3) the textualization of the film strip's physical properties. Jeff Bernard's (Vienna) "Drogen'report'" draws from not yet entirely published results of a research project entitled *Drugs, Media, and the Public*, examining the "drug problem" in the media, actually a "media problem": beside the material "War on Drugs" also a semiotic one is going on, here exemplified by a special analysis of the "non-fiction book" entitled *Drogenreport ...sterreich* which shows all features of a manipulative-mythological tabloid press coverage of the problem, without serious links to reality. In "Die Sichtbarkeit der Welt. Ethnische Reflexionen zum Diskurs der Medien", Christian Mzller (Klagenfurt) deals with the growing visibility of the world as central phenomenon in cultural theory, thus mirroring those world views centering on techno-pictorial perception. Visible (media-)culture produces determined individuals. The media arrange visibility in the development of postmodernism. An ethics of the media age has to reflect the relationship of picture, media, and discourse, and further, the individuals' being in their (self-referential) world.

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BERNARD, J.; GRZYBEK, P.; POKRIVČEK, A. & G. WITHALM (EDS.)

2001 "Form - Struktur - Komposition. Pragmatik & Rezeption / Form - Structure - Composition. Pragmatics & Reception" = *Semiotische Berichte* 26(1-4); 382 S.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The realization of this book was made possible by support from the Steiermärkische Landesregierung as well as by indirect support from the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, and the City of Vienna.

The underlying Symposium could be staged thanks to support by the Steiermärkische Landesregierung, by the City of Graz, and by the Karl-Franzens-University Graz as well as by indirect support from the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, and the City of Vienna.

The organizers and co-editors express their warm thanks for these valuable efforts.