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Born on June 16 1967

1992: M.A., Comparative Literature, University of Aarhus

1996, Ph.D., Semiotics, Center for Semiotic Research, University of Aarhus

My work divides into the following general domains:

Morphodynamic semiotics and cognitive linguistics

My Ph.D. dissertation (1996a; see bibliography below) was mainly devoted to a critical exposition of so-called morphodynamic semiotics, as developed by J. Petitot and others. It aimed particularly at characterizing its relation to Cognitive Linguistics. More recent results of work done in this domain are the articles 1999a, 2003c, and first and foremost my extensive Introduction (2003b) to the Danish reader *Kognitiv Semiotik* (eds., P.F. Bundgaard et al.), Copenhagen: Haase & Søn, 2003). The latter volume is the first to group certain of the most representative articles in Cognitive Linguistics (written by L. Talmy, R. Langacker, G. Lakoff, and G. Fauconnier & M. Turner). It contrasts them with equally classical texts in morphodynamic semiotics (J. Petitot, R. Thom).

Cognitive Linguistics and Phenomenology

A fundamental property of E. Husserl's phenomenology is its attempt to found categorical thought and judgments on intuition, that is to say the structures given in perception on which we build our predications or categorical judgments. Linguistic meaning is, according to Husserl, essentially founded on pre-linguistic meaning. There are striking affinities between phenomenological linguistics—such as it has been sketched and developed by Husserl himself and, among others, by the Polish Husserl-scholar Roman Ingarden—and cognitive linguistics: if the articulation of meaning performed by the linguistic system is founded on pre-linguistic meaning, that is to say if it serves the purpose of expressing in language the organized thoughts and experiences we have in mind, it is impossible to champion a modular thesis of language, and so much more to consider that the essence of language is its capacity to generate syntactically well-formed sentences independently of the meaning of the symbols it combines. Thus Husserl champions, just as cognitive linguists do, that linguistic semantics is a genuine level of language, irreducible to syntax, governed by its own principles of composition, and not adequately accounted for in mere truth-functional terms. I have established some of these affinities in the articles 2004b, 2004c, 2006 and 2010a, particularly with respect to L. Talmy's "closed-class semantics" and Husserl's notion of "dependent significations". However, the main purpose of the work done, and still to be done, in this domain is to develop a theory of constituency that (1) anchors semantic structure in the structure of the contents evoked by language and thus to motivate the nature of the configurational structure, schemata, frames, scripts, etc. human beings use to organize their thoughts (see in press d, e); and (2) provides a typology of these schemata, which will distribute the latter on a continuum going from the most objectively grounded to the most subjectively and culturally dependent.

Aesthetics, Perception, and Meaning

Along with the above work, I have spent quite some time analyzing both aesthetic objects and aesthetic experience. On the one hand, of course, because these issues interest me as such—beauty makes you wonder. On the other hand, however, also because I believe that the analysis of aesthetic objects and of the experience correlated to them is likely to tell us a lot about meaning in general: how actual meaningful experiences obtain, what guides them, how they are constrained by the qualitative, physical, grammatical, or schematic properties of their object, how parts combine into Gestalts, according to which principles, etc. One of my main assumptions is that there are no specific insights or types of knowledge attached to the aesthetic domain. It is an idea derived directly from Kant's claim that aesthetic experience is (theoretically and morally) disinterested. If this is so, aesthetic works and aesthetic experiences may constitute a privileged domain for the description and analysis of (linguistic and perceptual) meaning proper. Probably because works of art are stripped of all usual, immediate pragmatic interests, but still display the very properties human experience and cognition are naturally tuned in to grasp. The articles 2002a, 2007a, 2007b, 2009d, 2010b and 2011 are representative for my approach to meaning making in art.

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