



EDITOR'S FOREWORD

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This issue of *Hortus Semioticus*, the seventh, comes after a 10-year gap from the last. When looking through the journal's archive, it is apparent that many of those who published here as students, 10 or more years ago, are now accomplished academics. Moreover, several of whom have taught many of the authors whose articles you will find in the present issue. Therefore, while a decade has passed the intentions of *Hortus Semioticus*, to engage with semiotics, to be creative, and to be thorough in investigations and methods when dealing with the field and subject, have always been present and shaping the attitudes and habits of students.

This issue presents a range of subjects, though all the texts follow a zoosemiotic theme. You will also find an interview conducted by **Pauline Delahaye**, with, zoosemiotician, ecosemiotician, and head of the semiotics department at the University of Tartu, **Timo Maran**, regarding his new book *Ecosemiotics. The Study of Signs in Changing Ecologies*.

The first publication, **Yekaterina Lukina's** article, "A Mongolian coaxing ritual for camels. A zoosemiotic perspective on human-non-human animal communication", analyses communication and relationships between human and non-human animals among Mongolian pastoralists and various ungulates, with a specific focus on camels. Lukina uses a zoosemiotic perspective to analyse how these communities communicate and relate to and understand each other; she also attempts to use this analysis to broaden zoosemiotics' understanding of such interspecies relations. The author notes that that enculturation within these herding communities facilitates, and is facilitated by, herders considering ungulate Umwelt; anthropomorphising and zoomorphising as processes further enforce this relationship.

Jaanika Palm presents a comparison of Umwelts, between the 'biological' fox and the fox as represented within *Pax*, a children's book by American author Sara Pennypacker. Palm's article, titled "Rebase representatsioon Sara Pennypackeri jutustuses *Pax*" (The representation of the fox (*vulpes vulpes*) in Sara Pennypacker's children's book *Pax*)", focuses on the communicative and perceptive abilities and perception of foxes and the corresponding organs, and applies this to Pennypacker's text. This in turn allows her to understand the similarities and



differences regarding perception and communication in comparison between biological foxes and foxes as represented within the children's story. The scholar concludes that Pennypacker was able to realistically portray the fox's Umwelt regarding inter and interspecies relations, as well as perceptive abilities. However, Palm also notes the Umwelt of the fox is represented artistically too, and with consideration for the book's audience. This is especially notable regarding the memory and interpretive abilities of foxes.

Rhea Colaso's article "One piggy went to the market: Using economic theory to discover animal rationality" focuses on the application of biological markets theory (BMT) to non-human animal interaction, with the intent of highlighting the abilities for several species – including ants (*Lasius*), butterfly larva (*Polyommatus Icarus*), and cleaner fish (*Labroides dimidiatus*) – to act consciously and rationally with other entities and their environment. Colaso uses BMT and literature, as well as wider scholarship on the subject to argue against the position that non-human animals lack consciousness and rationality; targeted specifically at those following Tim Ingold's late 1980s position. Through these interactions, largely associated with 'trade' – i.e., the case of butterfly larva creating nectar, which they use to 'purchase' protection from ants – Colaso uses BMT and the associated literature to present rationality and self-preservation within non-human animals by focusing on their 'market' choices.

Carlos H. Guzmán's "Pretending to pretend: The trickster's mind in animals", develops his concept of the 'trickster's mind' which relates to the cognitive abilities of human and non-human animals that allow them to deceive in pursuit of a goal or goals. The article argues the concept is constructed from cognitive abilities and characteristics related to narrative figures found throughout numerous cultural contexts. These characteristics relate to those associated with a trickster, including 'playful ingenuity'. Guzmán then uses this concept in a zoosemiotic application to examine human and non-human animals and their abilities to understand falsity and deception. The author continues and reviews literature arguing for and against non-human animals' abilities to knowingly deceive as a means to an end, and contextualises the trickster's mind concept within this debate.

Mirko Cerrone's article, "Second reflexive modernity and non-human animals: A few reflections on the ape language experiments", attempts to build upon Ulrich Beck's risk society. Cerrone focusses specifically on the concept of second reflexive modernity, and the blurring or loss of borders between nature and society. He relates this to the ape language experiments, which are used as an example to demonstrate further influences of risk society, mainly relating to the reflexivity of modernity and the resulting anxieties of losing borders. The semiotician notes that the ape language experiments within the context of second reflexive modernity marks the loss of qualitative differences between humans and non-human animals concerning language abilities.

Siiri Tarrika's article "Ritualiseeritud käitumine ja loovus loomade kommunikatsiooni" (Ritualised behaviour and creativity in animal communication), takes an interest in creativity among non-human animals. Specifically, the scholar focuses on ritualisation in comparison to creativity, and how these types of behaviours contribute to



meaning making processes. The author also examines the neglect of studying creativity within academic literature, as well as the relevance this topic holds in today's climate. Tarrikas concludes that interaction with others and the environment facilitates creativity, and she notes that this raises questions on how much content is required to maintain the validity of ritual behaviour.

Delahaye's interview with **Maran** regarding his book *Ecosemiotics. The Study of Signs in Changing Ecologies* brings about numerous interesting insights regarding ecosemiotics, semiotics, and academia as a whole. Maran discusses the future of ecosemiotics, its relationship to wider semiotics, and research methodology within the field. Moreover, Maran also shares his views on the popularisation of academics for the general public, and his experiences supervising PhD students.

As I noted above, each of these articles follow a zoosemiotic theme, however, when viewed together, the versatility of zoosemiotics for wider academics can be seen. For instance, literature (Palm), relationships (Lukina), cognition (Colaso, Guzmán, and Tarrikas) and societal change (Cerrone) are all examined in this issue. It is then, perhaps, not a coincidence that Maran mentions the increasing popularity of biosemiotics within semiotics while being interviewed by Delahaye. If this journal issue is regarded as a marker for wider zoosemiotics, and if zoosemiotics can be taken as a marker for wider biosemiotics, the versatility the study allows its scholars in their choice of research object – and it should be noted transdisciplinary potential as well, i.e., Lukina draws from anthropologists, and Colaso draws from economics – means the field is likely to continue to be one where innovative research is constructed, and scholarly debate and dialogue are fruitful. I hope that this seventh issue of *Hortus Semioticus* can contribute to this innovation and dialogue, not only by presenting academic findings and research, but by also convincing new scholars to enter the community and research process.