SEMIOTICS OF RESISTANCE: BEING, MEMORY, HISTORY, AND THE COUNTER–CURRENT OF SIGNS

Eero TARASTI
(Helsinki, Finlandia)

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Abstract

Semiotics can also be actively participating research amidst the problems of the contemporary world. Yet, it is not sufficient to discover intriguing phenomena, in order to have a chance of a deeper influence there must be theoretical reflection and conceptualization of the field. Therefore the aim of this essay is to constitute a theory of resistance applicable to many contexts. What we want to resist can vary from globalization to any conflictual situations in our living world. However, such a theoretical approach can find its basis in the philosophico–semiotical categories of being, memory and history. Evoking philosophers from Henri Bergson to Martin Heidegger and Georg Henrik von Wright a metalanguage is constituted to discuss the topics. In the first place, this project belongs to the domain of what we call 'existential semiotics'.

Keywords: Existential semiotics. Globalisation. Transcendence. Being. Memory. History. Counterfactuality. Culture/Civilisation. Aesthetics of resistance. Narrativity. Body. Dasein.

СЕМИОТИКА СОПРОТИВЛЕНИЯ: БЫТИЕ, ПАМЯТЬ, ИСТОРИЯ, ПРОТИВОРЕЧИВЫЕ ЗНАКИ

Абстракт

Семиотика может активно участвовать в исследовании проблем современного мира. Тем не менее весьма недостаточно изучать интригующие явления, чтобы иметь возможность более глубокого воздействия должны быть теоретические размышления и осмысление изучаемой области. Таким образом, целью данной статьи является признание теории сопротивления как действующей во многих контекстах. То, чему мы хотим противостоять, может варьироваться от глобализации до любых конфликтных ситуаций нашего мира. Тем не менее такой теоретический подход может найти свое основание в философско–семиотических категориях бытия, памяти и истории. Вспоминая философов от Хенри Бергсона до Мартина Хайдеггера и Георга Хенрика В. Райта, учтём, что метаязык предназначен для того, чтобы обсуждать вопросы. В первую очередь, эта работа относится к области

того, что мы называем «экзистенциальная семиотика».

ҚАРСЫЛЫҚ СЕМИОТИКАСЫ: БОЛМЫС, ЖАДЫ, ТАРИХ, ҚАРАМА–ҚАРСЫ БЕЛГІЛЕР

Абстракт

Заманауи әлемдегі мәселелерді зерттеуде семиотика белсенді түрде қатыса алады. Дегенмен, қызығушылықты тудыратын құбылысты зерттеу жеткіліксіз, терең әсер ету мүмкіндігіне ие болу үшін қарастырылатын саланы теориялық ойлау мен пайымдау қажет. Осылайша, бұл мақаланың мақсаты көптеген контексттерде қолданылатын қарсылық теориясын мойындау болып табылады. Әлемдегі біз қарсы тұрғымыз келген нәрсе жаһанданудан бастап кез келген қақтығыстық жағдайлармен өзгеруі мүмкін. Дегенмен мұндай теориялық тұрғыдан келу өзінің негізін болмыс, жады және тарихтың философиялық–семиотикалық категориясынан таба алады. Философтар Хенри Бергсоннен бастап Мартин Хайдеггер мен Георг Хенрика В. Райтаға дейін еске ала отырып, метатілдің сұрақтарды талқылау үшін қойылғандығын түсінеміз. Бұл жұмыс әуелі біз «экзистенционалды семиотика» деп атайтын салаға қатысты.

Тірек сөздер: экзистенциалды семиотика, жаһандану, трансценденттік, болмыс, жады, тарих, контраргументация, мәдениет / өркениет, қарсылық эстетикасы, баяндаушылық, дене, dasein.

1 Globalization and transcendence

When thinking about the contemporary world, most people probably share the feeling that they are powerless to intervene in its course in any way. "Globalization" has served as the theme of many congresses during recent years, by which is meant a new and particular economic and administrative apparatus that one has no power to change. People are losing their jobs, and those who are still employed are forced to work until drawing their last breath – forced, moreover, by abstract requirements mandated by anonymous senders. All public discourse has been taken over by a single, unquestioned model, the characteristics and demands of which are familiar to everyone, since they now exist practically everywhere.

Traditional terms such as "progress", "development", "results", and "education" are rampantly becoming caricatures of themselves, and serve as a means of adapting everyone and everything to this new global order: a kind of supra–individual, collective power, an actor or mentality that forces real persons to submit to its will. That force is a completely transcendental entity: an amazing phenomenon amidst today's extreme materialism. What has happened is the "naturalization of transcendence" (Pihlstrom 2003). Charles Taylor (1989), pondering the existence of transcendence, has argued that certain real–world behaviors cannot be reasonably explained other than by presupposing that they manifest something transcendent.

When Sartre's Transcendence de l'ego (1957) was recently translated into Finnish, a term borrowed from the business world was used as the equivalent in the title: the externalization of the ego. The whole habitus and distinctive lifeworld of contemporary man appears to suggest the popularity of transcendence. Even communication is mostly virtual and transcendental.We read about people who live in a fictional, Internet reality, preferring to communicate mostly with others of the net community, using traces on a computer screen rather than face–to–face dialogue. The Internet embodies the naturalization of transcendence.

For a philosopher there is something familiar about all this. If, returning to Hegel,we replace the notion of transcendence with so unfashionable

a term as the German Geist (spirit), we encounter a completely consistent theory of the course of our world. In his Philosophy of History, Hegel speaks about Geist, as "absolute Spirit", of which individuals are only tools1. For him, the concept of Spirit is no abstraction but an individualized and constantly active force whose object is the consciousness. Consciousness is the existence of Spirit, its Dasein, which has become an object (Gegenstand) unto itself. Spirit forms a conception of itself and produces to itself a spiritual content. It becomes, so to speak, a content unto itself; it manufactures content about itself. The content takes the form of knowing, but is in fact Spirit itself. In opposition to Spirit there is matter, which is characterized by density and weight, that is, by substance.

Conversely, the substance of the Spirit is freedom. Freedom is thus the essential property of the Spirit. Spirit strives for freedom, for activity is in its essence. Freedom is not based upon quietude, but rather on continuous negation and eventual eradication of stasis. Producing oneself, becoming an object to oneself – that is the proper activity of the Spirit.

Here we find a pragmatic view of Spirit: it is something to be realized; it is not self–existent; it has to be made or created – it must be earned, so to speak. For Hegel (1917: 35), "Spirit is only the end result of some action" (Der Geist ist nur also sein eigenes Resultät). Hegel reasons that man becomes what he has to be only through education (Bildung) and discipline (Zucht). What he is immediately, is only a potentiality (an–sich–sein), as I have also argued (Tarasti 2004b). A person, unlike an animal, must make him–/herself into something. He has to earn everything for himself, since he is spirit and must subordinate the natural

or bodily man to it. Hence, spirit is the result of the subject itself. This Hegelian starting point forms the background to Norbert Elias's (1997) theories of how, through civilizing processes, man gains civilité. Much of Elias's output consists of juxtaposing the German notion of Kultur and the English one of "civilization" (Elias 1997: 33–38). Though he has much to say on those matters, one can condense Elias's argument as follows: Culture is content, ideas, and spirit, whereas civilization consists of more or less "mechanical" habits, manners, and the like. As musicologist Richard Taruskin puts it, "Culture is internal, profound, conceptual – and, of course, German – whereas civilization is sensual, momentary, frivolous ... that is to say, something French or Italian" (Taruskin 1997: 251).

At the time, Hegel's Philosophy of History was one of his most popular works, in no small part because it was relatively easy to read. At the same time, one must remember that it was also one of his most roundly criticized doctrines.

2 Globalization as the new civilization: Some signs of the time

Some feel that civilization is a threat to culture. For Elias, globalization is the new civilization,which expands all over theworld, destroying culture in itswake. Essential is Elias's assertion that, in a civilized society, no human being enters the world already, or "pre–", civilized. One has to undergo acculturation as part of the socializing–civilizing process. This is nothing other than what Hegel meant by his claim that Spirit is not a ready–made product, but something to be earned by work and action.

On the other hand, Elias's comparison of the as–yet uncivilized children of our culture with the "uncivilized" adults of archaic societies is misleading (1978: xiii).

Lévi–Strauss (1967) proved long ago the fallacy of such reasoning, in his essay on the Structures élémentaires de la parenté. Yet, if we interpret Hegel in the context of our time, casting globalization in the role of the "bad spirit" of world history, then plainly such a role can be fulfilled only via the Eliasian civilizing process.

Therefore, all processes of globalization put special emphasis on re–educating and "re–civilizing" people into the new system. To provide a framework for theoretical reflections to follow later, I next present a list of those "re–civilizing" traits and processes, as well as some predictions about the human condition, especially in the "global era":

(1) No more future. The concept of a future is obliterated by an atmosphere of uncertainty, a fragmented kind of life. Nobody can make long–term plans; life moves only from one moment to the next. One has to be ready for constant change, since globalization and competition demand it. What is actually meant by "change" we are not told.

(2) No more past. No one can resort to history for support, since the new civilization has divorced itself from the "backwards" past. The past must be forgotten actively. The attitude is that of "nous avons change tout cela". This history–less attitude, as a kind of barbarism, was portrayed by the cultural historian Jakob Burckhardt as early as in the nineteenth century,when he anticipated the triumph of the "global" type of man (Burckhardt 1951: 13–14).

(3) A shift to the metalevel. In work, intent and product are unimportant. What matters is the manner of doing, the techniques and technology of getting things done. This shift is accompanied by the problematizion of all phenomena of everyday life. Nothing can happen by itself: faith in one's own intelligence and in Eliasian civilite requires that everything take place on the basis of "research" and "control" (the new obsession). This mind–set is linked to the principle ofminimizing risks and maximizing efficiency, which is in turn based on the growing conviction that everything and anything can be anticipated, counted, and manipulated.

(4) Perpetual assessment of quality in all domains. People and institutions must undergo continuous self–criticism; at the same time, it is forgotten that the more energy which one puts into the assessment of quality, the less quality there is. From this obsession with assessment emerges a system of total control and self–censorship.

(5) One dominant discourse: Economic–technological. Borrowing its terms from the military, as mentioned in the previous chapter, this discourse allows for assessment and discussion only in terms of functionality/non–functionality, effectiveness/ineffectiveness (see, e.g., Huhtinen 2002).

(6) Only two classes of people:Winners and losers. In this, another extension of the military metaphor, losers are notworth funding; they are kept silent by continuous pseudo–education, therapy, and entertainment. This distinction between the intelligent and the non–intelligent, as kinds of biologically determined entities, is ultimately based on theories of genetics. This classification happens without one noticing that it is just as irrational as the racist–tinged thought of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (e.g., eugenics). Though the latter is thought to have been eliminated, a similar, essentialist doctrine has entered through the back door.

(7) Elevation of ownership as a goal unto itself. Operating on the principle that "to possess things is wonderful",

this unscrupulous form of capitalism equates wealth with honesty; poverty manifests "dishonesty" and is viewed as one's own fault. To see that this view is adopted by everyone, police and other "law enforcement" agencies are developed to new extremes.

(8) The basic emotional moods in society stem from business life. These moods are greed (to assure continuous profits and results) and fear (continuous anguish about losing profits and positions), which are expounded and disseminated everywhere via communications media.

(9) The reservation model of reality. This means the reversion of idea of protected areas for population under threat of vanishing, namely it refers to the seclusion of "winners" in closely guarded sanctuaries; for example, the walled compounds of urban and suburban "gated" communities. "Losers" live outside the walls, in areas rife with continuous terrorism and violence.

(10) Symbolic violence. "External" culture spreads to all corners of the globe by assimilating and destroying "internal" cultures (Finol 2004). Such violence appears in communication as the supremacy of the spectacle: the penetration of global values into cultural micro–processes via music, food, cinema, and other sign systems, along with their attendant behaviors and emotional sates.

(11) Science: Total behaviorism. Everything can be explained by genetics, biology, and physics. The humanities are minimized and suppressed in favor of the natural sciences and technology. Only theology remains, and it is for disciplinary purposes – that is, to keep people in line.

(12) Study is an unnecessary and unpleasant hurdle of life. It has to be cleared as quickly as possible and withminimal expenditure of energy and funds.

(13) The naturalization of transcendence, as discussed at the beginning of this chapter.

(14) The Huntington thesis. This idea proposes conflicts at the level of civilizations, and the transformation of Anglo–Saxon culture by the influx and positive influence of Latino culture. There is much in the present world of terrorism and wars making this thesis credible between the Islamic and Western worlds, some say so.

Do we, as intellectuals, scholars and artists,want to be a part of such aworld? Can we be part of that world even without wanting to be? Or is membership in such a world necessary only so as to preserve our jobs, contacts, or group identities? Many semioticians have started to ponder such questions. In Italy, for example, Augusto Ponzio and Susan Petrilli are trying to create a special theory of "semioethics". The German semiotician Guido Ipsen has pondered problems of solidarity in the global world. Not to mention the existential semiotics of Landowski and myself.

As noted above, Finol (2004) argues that a new global culture has emerged which is not only economic but which also intrudes into the icroprocesses of everyday life. (In Lotman's terms, "outer" culture has invaded "inner" culture and subordinated the latter completely.) Finol compares such "invasions" to the expansion of the Roman empire. In Latin America, particularly, this manifests as the supremacy of Anglo–Saxon culture, as is the case all over the world. Still, in what Eco called "semiological guerrilla war", the inner culture can put up resistance through the use of some very subtle mechanisms. That resistance is based on the notion of semiotic tension. According to Finol's model, tension is created when a

body is being pulled toward, or attracted to, two different sides.

A body (cuerpo) can choose either to resist or to adapt, and a balance can prevail between those choices. If the attraction to culture A is stronger than to culture B, then adaptation or assimilation occurs; whereas if one actively engages with B, then what is involved is resistance. In everyday life these tensions become naturalized. The attacks by global culture occur on all fronts at the same time; struggle and tension emerge everywhere, on all micro–levels of everyday life. Finol believes that elements of an inner culture form the most efficient resistance to threats from the outer one(s).

In turn, the Bulgarian semiotician Kristian Bankov, in his essay "Infinite Semiosis and Resistance", has used Peirce's triangle model to ponder the concept of resistance (Bankov 2004: 175–181). As is known, in Peirce's theory the semiosis is launched by the so–called dynamic object, which is situated outside the sign triangle, in "reality". Bankov illustrates:

... let us imagine a car with five people on board. They are urgently trying to arrive at some destination but on the journey the car breaks down. They all try to guess what caused the breakdown and propose the easiest way to fix the problem. But there is little time and they have to reach a consensus, since they cannot try everyone's solution. At the same time, they make abductive reasonings about what constitutes the material object that is resistant to their purposes. A solution is found, the car is repaired, and the resistance disappears. But then the car breaks down again. Now the passengers start to quarrel with each other. Now the resistance is of a social nature: they have to reach agreement among themselves

if they want to continue the journey. The dynamic object here is not material but spiritual.

Bankov describes those two species of resistance as either static (independent of individual intentions) or dynamic. From this he reasons that the nature of resistance is different in the natural and social sciences. This model fits well with Finol's in so far as, in philosophy and art, the resistance is provided by the community in which those disciplines are formed. The idea of infinite semiosis also fits well with Finol's theory, in the sense that, without the resistance of the inner culture, the outer culture increases and expands unhindered, smothering and destroying the original culture.

Accordingly, semioticians have taken the problem of resistance under examination. That they have done so is crucial, for in the eventual semiotics of resistance, mere comments will not suffice. Resistance will amount to nothing more than a sermon unless it has a theory behind it. The issue must first be problematized, as we have done above, and thereafter conceptualized and reflected upon at a deeper epistemic level. In the end, one must build as systematic a theory as possible, the principles of which must be popularized, so that it leads to concrete human actions. The first step in that direction is a statement that is typically and universally true of all humans: we are all capable of pursuing the spiritual and pragmatic operation that one may call negation. Negation is the crucial notion in existential semiotics. It is also relevant in Hegelian logic, as that which puts the world into motion. In Hegel, negation is followed by Becoming. But what if we should intervene at this phase in his logic, and presume that negation, rather than leading to becoming, is instead followed

by a return backwards? If such concepts as becoming, development, progress, anticipation, directionality and the like have all been subordinated to serve the global system, and if we want to reject this system as a whole, then we have to look at the movement of signs in the counter–current to all of that.

Some of my earlier theories have emphasized the flux of phenomena, their streaming temporality, in contrast to spatial, a chronic examination detached from dynamic, forward–rushing processes. I have underlined that semiotics is progressive; it is no longer a "post–" phenomenon (postmodernism, poststructuralism, etc.) but a neo–phenomenon. Yet, we should also take into account a third alternative: the counter–current of signs, a reference backwards – with all its concepts, such as memory, return, oblivion.

We have to ask, What counts as "progress" in our own time? Or, to recall Tolstoi's question, "What do we have to do?" If all surrounding reality is unacceptable, then progress is made not by pushing "forward", with all the values that entails, despite the deification of speed and efficiency, but rather by a kind of counter–movement, a kind of non–progress, the other side of the prevailing establishment ideology. I do not doubt at all the capacity of semiotics to effect such a turn. If Adorno could write his Negative Dialectics, then is it not possible to write a "Negative Semiotics" or a "Semiotics of Resistance"?

3 Aesthetics of resistance

The heading of this section alludes to the novel by Peter Weiss (1978), Ästhetik des Widerstandes, which from an autobiographical perspective portrays events in Europe on the eve of WorldWar II. The term is used in the domain of aesthetics and arts, in which "progress" often consists of the rejection of previous styles and trends, a rejection that occurs in the "hard" sciences, too, as "revolutions" and "paradigm shifts" in the Kuhnian sense. In the present context, the concern would be art whose universal quality is to serve as a power of resistance.

In Vladimir Propp's (1958) now–classic narrative model, the seeking or pursuit of an object by a subject–hero has generally been taken as the self–evident starting point. In Propp's model, the role of opponent has been reserved for the antipathetic villain or the like. In the art and science of resistance, the role of the opponent is now positive, and, in fact, ultimately replaces that of the subject actant.

In later narratives, he is promoted, from an opponent to the status of a main actor. There are many examples of this in biographies of marginal artists that were misunderstood in their time, ranging fromvan Gogh to the Finnish artist Aleksis Kivi. Resistance in these cases is of course dictated by the historical situation, and ironically, the very marginality of the artist lends something universal to his or her posterity.Weiss describes such resistance as follows:

Die soziale Erneuerung, die Ubernahme von Entdeckungen und Eroberungen aus den Herrschende der Herrschende, die Herstellung der eignen Macht, die Begründung unsres eignen wissenschaftlichen Denkens, diese waren Themen, die wir uns in der Kunst, Litteratur, vorstellen konnten. (Weiss 1976: 86; English trans. mine: Social renewal, the complete take–over of discoveries and conquests arising from the hegemony of domination, the establishment of power, the founding of our own kind of scientific thought – those would be the themes that

in art [and] literature we can represent to ourselves.)

When later the narrator of the novel is wandering in a Parisian suburb and finds himself at the atelier of the painter Géricault, he eloquently portrays the aesthetics of resistance, using the life and work of that artist as his illustration. He visits the dilapidated work room which served as the artist's home in the years 1816–1818, during which time he created his great oil canvas, Le radeau de la Meduse (1819).

After traveling to England, Géricault returned to this Parisian atelier, dying there in 1824. The verbal description of the painting is an art work of its own, a literary one. Weiss, fascinated by the extreme situation portrayed in the shipwreck, argues that the painter aimed to put the spectator – whom nobody on the ferry is looking at – somewhere amidst the melee, as if he were clutching spasmodically at one corner of the ferry, but already too far gone to expect to be rescued. What happened above him no longer concerns the spectator. Instead, there is hope for those who stand in the painting, but who are ultimately condemned. Weiss then describes various figures in the picture, including their hopes of being rescued.

After that transcendental moment, which is allotted to the African, Weiss moves into the real historical world of the painting. He conceives the painting as a fragment of a more extensive narration of Gericault's life story, since it portrays the shipwreck which the painter actually experienced. Some of the protagonists, shown in the painting, indeed found refuge off the coast of Senegal on the Isle of Saint Louis, then a center for some of the most horrid colonialist exploitation and slave trading. The English garrison on the island refused to help the Frenchmen, who at last met up with a Moorish tribe in a land ruled by the king of Zaide. Luckily for them, the Moors were admirers of Napoleon and showed hospitality to the starving Frenchmen after they had drawn a map of Europe on the sand. The king himself had witnessed the pilgrimage of Napoleon's army to Mecca. Now the Frenchmen could tell the king that Napoleon had continued to live after his exile to the Isle of Elba. Finally the Englishmen took them into their hospital, but expected reimbursement in the form of the treasures that sank with the Meduse.

Weiss goes on to compare Gericault's work to the corresponding painting by Poussin, which was remarkably conventional and "aestheticizing". For Gericault the important thing was the vision, the psychic phenomenon: his painting does not hold out the promise of safety, which glitters in Poussin. Poussin's harmonious version evokes a kind of serene devotion, whereas Gericault unhesitatingly forces the spectator into an anguished dream. Gericault puts us amidst a rush into the unknown, forcing us to glimpse a passionate, psychic event. Finally,Weiss tells about Gericault's own life during those hard years in which he had lost all hope. Painting had turned into a tool with which he dealt with his inner obsession – the madness that threatened to overcome him. He who had portrayed conquered and doomed, had himself succumbed. Weiss states: "But never later was I so convinced [as in Gericault's atelier] of how, in art, one was able to create values which transgressed the being as excluded and lost, and how by shaping such a vision one could heal melancholy" (Weiss 1978: 30–33). At the same time, he notices that he was suddenly no longer interested in Gericault's life, since the latter "was, in his giving and taking",

says Weiss, still "connected to universal relationships and bonds that constitute the basis of artistic activity" (ibid.).

The just–described example of Weiss is an instance of the aesthetics of resistance in both painting and literature. In music, the same qualities appear in the life and output of composers who go to the core of musical organic process and turn the course of musical events into a counter–current. The spectral composers of our time, for example, can use their knowledge and techniques to create sweet sound surfaces, as do Tristan Murail or Kaija Saariaho in her opera, L'amour de loin. Conversely, and using the same resources, the artist can choose to make music that does not flow pleasingly over the ear; that is, which does not proceed "organically" but anti–organically, denying the normally corporeal logic of music. Such is the music by Finnish composer Harri Vuori, in his new symphony and in earlier works such as Ended Movements (Lopetetut

liikkeet). Such music also exemplifies the artist's willingness to deny the prevailing technological sound culture, to take a critical position towards the dominant Ton–Welt. Also in Finland, Kalevi Aho's earlier works foreground the aesthetics of resistance, for instance, his opera Insect Life (based on Capek), and even more cogently, his abstract works such as the Triptych Laokoon and Fifth Symphony. Other music of resistance, in relation to its time, includes Magnus Lindberg's Kraft in the 1970s. Or one may go even further back in music history, and in this context mention Wagner's Parsifal, in which time stops and changes into space: when the opera begins everything has already happened. This was indeed an art of resistance, in reaction to the militaristic German empire.

On the other hand, resistance does not have to trumpet itself abroad, to be noisily gestural or Fauvist. It can also appear in smaller forms of music that present man's

Figure 1. JEAN LOUIS THÉODORE GÉRICAULT – La Balsa de la Medusa (Museo del Louvre, 1818–19)

existential situation in miniature, so to speak, in a kind of simple, tonal language of interiority. Such can be found in the music of young composers in Finland in Baltic countries, like at Ramunas Motiekaitis (Lithuania). In such cases, negation as resistance becomes an artistic gesture that follows upon an existential experience of the artist.

My aim here, however, is to go even further, and on a deeper level investigate something like the "anti–life" of signs in their counter–current. Certain types of artists and thinkers stand as models of those who do not go with the flow of favored modalities, as Stefan Zweig wrote in his Star Moments of Mankind (1947). In that book he scrutinizes so–called great men, which are often found to be kinds of culminations of human modalities: Will = rulers and explorers; Know = artists and scientists (Handel, Rouget de l'Isle); Can = sportsmen, actors; Must = those who do their duty no matter what the cost. A person's greatness consists in ascending to the crest of a wave and then riding it. Those are the celebrated heroes. But there is also a more exquisite type of hero, who bases his or her deeds upon the human ability of negation by using kinds of antimodalities: Not–Can, restraining from the use of force (e.g., Gandhi); Not–Will; Not–Must; Not–Know.

In my first theory of Existential Semiotics (Tarasti 2000) I have outlined Dasein and the transcendence thereof, the journeys of a subject between Daseins, a kind of traveling towards the future, to Dasein "x" via transcendental acts of negation and affirmation. As noted then, our model contains two hidden aspects. The first concerns negation as a kind of alienation or estrangement. Namely, when the subject temporarily exits his Dasein during his transcendental act, he can stay on this journey for any length of time. It can also happen that, when the subject returns to the world of his Dasein (symbolized by a globe, see figure 1), the latter will have changed. During the subject's journey, that Dasein has itself been in motion, independently of our subject, and perhaps gone in such a direction that our subject does not return to the same world from which he departed. (Heracles long ago observed that we do not step twice into the same stream.) Dasein does not necessarily exist only for our subject nor adapt itself according to his or her existential experiences. The world may well change course during the subject's absence. The subject that returns to a world quite different from the one he left can either accept and try to adapt to such change, or he can deny it.

Figure 2   The turn–around of Dasein

As noted then, a special situation for semiotics of resistance emerges from the latter case. Our subject's theory of the world does not correspond to it. And as discussed earlier, progress in this case need not mean that one go along with the change, but instead look at alternatives, at what might have happened, at what might have been possible. The arrows of Figure 3 show that things can go backward as well. Our subject recalls his earlier Dasein, and returns to it via memory,which has retained images and ideas fromthose previous worlds.

Figure 2 Counter–current of signs

We earlier noted that he might have forgotten them, and Dasein may have forgotten him. Danger lurks, indeed, if he dwells too long in his position of resistance and outside the Dasein.We noted that real thinkers of resistance are always forgotten and suppressed. Nevertheless, we shall

advance some ways by which such resistance might be possible.

3.1 Forces of resistance I: Being

As is known, Greimas's basic modalities are Being and Doing (Greimas 1966). In Hegel, Spirit is not mere Being but also Doing (action). For instance, if in an ideological context of Being signifies acceptance and even promotion (action on behalf) of the dominant status quo, then one should find a third modality to portray the movement backwards. In English there is the verbal expression to undo, which might fit here in its sense of "to cancel". (I am grateful to Vladimir Franta for calling my attention to the notion of negation as "estrangement" or "alienation".)

On the other hand, the semiotics of resistance involves not only abolishing something but also creating and indicating new content. What might such a new creative activity be if it were directed backwards?

In his Idea of Phenomenology, in the chapter on time–consciousness, Edmund Husserl speaks about two acts: protention and retention (Husserl 1995). By Being he means the purely "now"–moment, which, however, is exceeded not only in protention (reaching toward the future), but also in retention, which preserves the past. Retention concerns the so–called primary memory,wherebywe retain an experience in our mind long enough to receive it as a totality. Husserl illustrates this phenomenon with a tone (Bergson and Peirce also used melody as an example of the immediate recognition of a reality).

Yet, for a scholar who has studied the life of signs as action, as pragmatic production of codes, merely ontological reflection on being no doubt serves in itself as a kind of resistance. Such is the case with Kant e l'ornitorinco (Eco 1997). As a realist semiotician, Eco argues that being exists, or "is", before we speak about it. Therefore being precedes discourse; it is something to which we compare our speech if we want to clarify whether the latter is true or not. Eco's position is in principle the same as Peirce's; that is to say, behind the object is the so–called dynamic object,which "is" and which "kick–starts" the semiosis into motion. This idea is paradoxical in the same way as Kant's Ding an sich: the–thing–as–such produces sensations in us by causal relationships that are always filtered through certain categories. But, if we are chained to our sensory categories, then how can we ever know about what the thing–as–such is, or whether "there" is anything?

For Eco, beyond these categories and signs something exists that demands to be heard: "… this dynamic object, so to speak, shouts to us, 'Speak! Speak about me! Take me into account!' " (Eco 1997: 20). From this Eco comes to an ontological question formulated centuries ago by Leibniz:Why is there something rather than nothing? (ibid.: 21). Eco finally concludes, deferring to Thomas Aquinas, that being is like a horizon or a bath, in the confines of which our thought dwells naturally. At the same time, he notices that the question of being is not the same as the problem of the existence of external reality. For Eco, the question of being comes before any empirical being. Nor can the issue be reduced to a problem of language; for example, by transforming it into a typical Indo–European language structure inwhich a subject is connected to a predicate, in sentences such as "God exists" or "the horse gallops" put into copula forms such as "God is existent" or "the horse is galloping".

For more on this Kantian dilemma,

see the work of Finnish semiotician of education, Esa Pikkarainen (2004: 66–69).

The later Eco (1997) has positive things to say about Heidegger, whom he had criticized negatively in his previous book, Les limites de l'interpretation (Eco 1992: 59–61). There Heidegger was condemned as a kind of hermetic mystic who postulated that behind every being and word there is some true being, which is visible, or makes itself so, only to the elect. Yet, in Heidegger, being always turns into a situation in which true Being (Seiende) appears in Dasein, which is nearest to my own being, and which therefore we cannot speak about except by speaking about ourselves. (Notice that here the category of subject enters the scene.) Heidegger's thought is, in Eco's opinion, completely bound up in the German language: Sein, seiende, Da–sein and so on are all terms of Heidegger's culture. If Heidegger had been born in, say, Oklahoma and had found at his disposal only one word ("to be"), how would that have affected his theory?

The fundamental modality of Being is tinged by its "thrown–ness" (Geworfenheit) into the world – flung against its will into some strange place. On the other hand, the subject is anguished by the limits of being in Not–being or death. Therefore Being signifies, according to Eco, an existential understanding of the finite nature of our existence. Eco refers to Vattimo's interpretation of Heidegger, which distinguishes between "right" and "left" in explanations of the latter's thought.

The former emphasizes the return to being as a kind of negative, apophantic and mystical act; the left, in turn, interprets being historically as a kind of weakening and bidding farewell to history. The first–mentioned interpretation of being has often been criticized. Here we have spoken about genosigns, which bear in themselves their whole development, starting from their emergence as a kind of iconico–ontological process. What a sign is, is the result of its basic Being (Tarasti 2004: 130–136).

Remarkably, Greimas's idea of being is very similar. In his veridictory square, for example, being precedes appearance (manifestation), producing four cases in their combination. Similarly in Greimas, the beginning of the generative narrative process is Being, namely, the existing of isotopies on the deep level. I have criticized both models – Heidegger and Greimas – on the basis that Becoming, in the sense of generation, is not a continuous process starting from basic Being, but that several breaks, ruptures, revolutions and rearticulations take place during the generative course (Tarasti 2000).

In any case, Eco performs a kind of Hegelian experiment: let us suppose the existence of a kind of Spirit and World. Spirit knows the World and tries to speak about it: if the World consists of three atoms A, B, and C, then the Spirit may have three symbols – 1, 2, 3 – with which it names and speaks about the World. In the ideal case, the names match the symbols, such that A = 1, B = 2 and C = 3. Yet the Spirit can also act otherwise, connecting its three symbols in numerous ways and thus producing various manners or languages in which to speak about the World (Eco 1992: 42–43). Still, Spirit is in a way also part of the World, and so one can think that World, in its desire to interpret itself, assigns this task to some part of itself: Spirit can "decide" that a certain, distant part of it exists solely for such self interpretation.

This idea of Eco is naturally a kind of

Hegelian parody, in which the Spirit is the most important ingredient of the world. At the same time, it also evokes Lévi–Strauss's structural studies of the human mind (esprit). If these structures were present everywhere, then were they not also in Lévi–Strauss's mind as he studied the myths of Indians? Mythical thought had thus taken Lévi–Strauss's brain to the scene of its being and would interpret itself by it, as he reasons in his several volumes of Mythologiques. In the end Eco returns, in his experiment with Spirit and World, to his previously–held idea of iconic signs as transformations between two entities. The two have a certain amount of similar units, and when one finds such units to be sufficient, it is said that A is iconic sign of B. In such a case, we can state that Spirit is identical withWorld.

Despite his back–tracking, Eco arrives at a category of interest to our study, namely, the resistance of being. Being resists infinite discourse about itself. Eco first accepts Heidegger's argument that being is always my own being as it is thrown into Dasein. In that state, we sense that our speech about existence has its limits, of which the extreme is the end of our own being. Moreover, so–called nature sets limits on our speech. (Here Eco refers to everyday experience of nature such as day and night, or natural species, in the Darwinian sense.) The existence of biotechnology manifests such limits, as well.

Eco alludes to the theory of possible worlds and notes that we can imagine how things might have happened in another way altogether. Still, such reasoning, for Eco, does not form the basis of our being. He allows that there are spheres in our being about which we can speak. Nevertheless, and in a diversity of ways, languages and cultures divide and articulate the continuum of being. All that is significant, everything which signifies, depends on that articulation. Eco asks, Could being, in a more metaphysical sense, mean this continuum before its articulation by culture? In other words, does that continuous "magma" contain lines of resistance and propensities of flow that prompt us to make articulations in a certain manner? Without noticing it, he puts the question of existence in terms of so–called organic meaning: signifying processes that imitate organically the continua of nature and which would thus be, so to say, universal and natural.

Theoreticians of social constructions and scholars of civilization (such as Norbert Elias) would certainly hesitate to accept this view. Yet the difference between the overtly historical view and Eco's structuralist approach can be resolved in Hegelian terms, by the fact that these articulations, the segmentation of continua as described by Eco, can be examined as processes in which the Spirit gradually realizes itself. The Being of now and today is the consequence of what was before; all choices among alternatives, among various cultural articulations, are processes bound with time and history (which need not lead to the historicizing and relativizing of phenomena, as occurs with Paul Ricoeur).

What is involved is a phenomenon of a deeper level, a phenomenon that has to be elucidated as the core problem of any historical process and temporality of signs. For Eco, Being is ultimately something positive, and its denial or negation is merely a linguistic trick (Eco 1992: 57). Yet, Norbert Elias says the following about the birth of civilité:

It may perhaps seem at first sight an unnecessary complication to investigate the genesis of each historical formation.

But since every historical phenomenon, human attitudes as much as social institutions, did actually once "develop", how can modes of thought prove either simple or adequate in examining these phenomena if, by any kind of abstraction, they isolate the phenomena from their natural, historical flow, deprive them of their character as movement and process, and try to understand them as static formations without regard to the way in which they have come into being and change? (Elias 1978: xv)

Steering between what he calls the Scylla of static theory and Charybdis of historical relativism, Elias's psychogenetic and sociogenetic investigation sets out to reveal the "order underlying historical changes, their mechanics and their concrete mechanisms" (ibid.). From this point of view, Being, in its static nature, is not the appropriate point of departure. The only correct epistemic theory would be a model of flux.

In Eco, Being forms resistance to discourse.We cannot develop infinitely our speculations without deciding whether they are significant to our existence. Perhaps unaware of it, Eco comes to accept the hermeneutic idea of preunderstanding: the being which exists before explanation and which makes the latter meaningful. If we, as Heidegger, accept the idea that Being and Dasein are my Being, then we have included the subject. Further, we have discarded our behaviorist–positivist models, in which our being is made out to be mostly an illusion, in which we are treated as mere objects. If we reject this theory as one of the ideological errors mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, we are led to think that a semiotics of resistance might be sought in this direction.

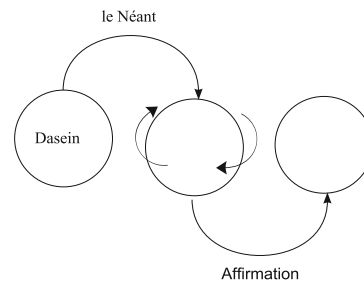We can go still further and ask, Is it

Figure 4. Temporal axis, showing forward and backward currents.

conceivable that signs and the habitual, "common–sense" temporal axis might have their own counter–current (Figure 3)? Might this counter–current also constitute resistance to the straightforward movement of being as it is supposed to unfold? Very often, and dangerously so, certain forms of civilization use myths in order to justify and legitimate themselves as "natural". Therefore one has to be careful when speaking about the natural becoming of signs and about "normal" temporal processes. For they, too, might be only cultural practices:

3.2 Forces of resistance II: Memory

Memory is one of the fundamental experiences of mankind and one of its historic themes. All over the world we can follow the traces of mankind in architecture, art, narration, myths. It is commonly thought that real culture, in the German sense of the word as interiority and profundity, is based upon memory. Among other things, so–called living music culture is based upon music that is remembered, music that stays in one's mind. (Boris Asafiev referred to that phenomenon with his concept of memorandum.) When we return home from a concert, for example, we do not remember all of the music we just heard, but probably only one tune, which we continue humming. When we listen to a familiar piece of music, previous hearings of it are evoked by association, and thereby we start to listen to our own life story,

our own history. Or we may be joined to the Hegelian Volksgeist of the nation: "... the conception of spirit which realized history. What a spirit knows about itself that constitutes the consciousness of a people ..." (Hegel 1917:36). For instance, when a Frenchman hears the Marseilles, he participates in the collective memory of his people. The same occurs when a Pole hears Chopin's Revolutionary Etude, when the Italian hears Verdi, a Finn the Finlandia, and so on.

The great theme of literature is memory. The monumental cycle of novels by Proust begins with a memory, which Henri Bergson called memoire involontaire (Bergson 1982 [1939]). In Proust, entire worlds and fates emerge from the unconscious, all catalyzed by a single sign (a sound, taste, smell, perfume, gesture). The themes of return and of remembering the past are crucial in literature, as in Evelyn Waugh's Brideshead Revisited. To remember means that some place or time or person is "revisited"; in a sense, the absent past is made present, but in transcendental form. Memory, an apt and well–used vehicle for transcendence, is also a force for resistance: as long as subjects can remember how things were done in their culture and community, they are saved by their identity. The following quote comes from my travel book, New Mysteries of Paris:

"History represents collective memory. History–less, synchronic societies ... like media society, do not possess a "memory" in this sense ... . Every art work is a paradigm of memory and when we experience it, a reminiscence remains for us ... . Art work can be detached from its original world and transferred to a new environment. When one sees immortal works of European art in an American museum, or [in a concert hall

in that country] hears a performance of Beethoven, the experience is no longer that of the same Rembrandt, El Greco or Beethoven, but of something else. How is this possible, even though the work itself is the same? Because those invisible threads of memory, those nets knitted by the Norns, which connect art to a certain destiny, have broken; people no longer remember them ... . Memory is power ... someone decides what is remembered ... . Man's ability to create signification is completely bound with memory. For what is the value of signs if there is no memory to preserve them? Even if we ... experience something existentially ... that is not sufficient to us. The experience must be preserved, maintained". (Tarasti 2004: 100–103)

There is thus no question of resisting the force of memory. One should rather ask, On what kind of mental mechanism is memory based? My concern here is not with psychological theories of memory, but with its philosophical content. Henri Bergson distinguishes between matiere et memoire as two phases or elements of memory (Bergson 1982: 163): (1) first, something is presented to a consciousness; (2) what is represented becomes logically or causally connected with what preceded or followed it. The reality of any mental object or psychological state is based on a double fact: that our consciousness observes it, and that it belongs to a series, either temporal or spatial, in which the terms define each other. Peirce would have called
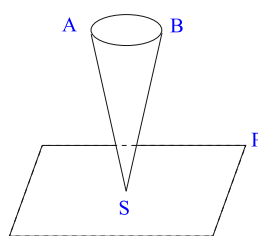

Figure 5. The functioning of the memory according to Bergson.

such a chain an example of "unlimited semiosis".

Upon this epistemic foundation Bergson distinguishes two species of memory. First, there is the permanent memory of the organism. It designates all those mechanisms whereby the organism is able to react to various challenges of its environment. This species is in fact a habit rather than a memory. It consists of our past experiences, but it does not form images. The second kind of memory is true memory; it sorts and preserves all our experiences and puts them in their proper places. On the other hand, this memory has to function as an immobile storage place in constantly mobile time, whereas the apex of memory blends together with the present,which changes and continuouslymoves according to the scheme shown in Figure 5.

The level AB means the store of memory, with S as its apex, which touches the surface of reality. It is therefore clear that, so understood, the memory directs, from point S, our acts and choices in the present.

3.2.1. Remembering similitude
As did Bergson, Rudolph Carnap, another great thinker though from a completely different school (theVienna circle), built his entireworld−view upon the concept of memory. In his treatise, Der logische Aufbau der Welt, Carnap argues that reality is based on a unified "field of entities" that can be described or "constituted". To constitute, for him, means the following: a being, entity, or concept can be reduced to another entity when all the expressions concerning it can be reshaped into expressions concerning those other entities. For Carnap, science can only describe structures: there is no difference between spiritual and physical entities; there is only one field of beings. Statements about physical entities can be reduced to statements about perception (Wahrnehmungen). Carnap defines autopsychic and alien psychic entities as follows: the psychic states of an alien− psychic subject can be perceived only via physical entities, but the observation of our own psychic states requires no physical mediation. Rather, it occurs immediately. Carnap puts his entities in the following, descending order of importance: (4) spiritual entities; (3) alien psychic entities; (2) physical entities; (1) autopsychic entities.

His starting point is so−called "elementary experience",which in turn is based upon "reminiscence" (Ähnlichkeitserinnerung). When one notices a similarity between two elementary experiences, x and y, then the previous occurrence in memory x has to be compared to y. The asymmetrical relationship portraying such an occurrence of perception y means that between x and y there prevails a reminiscence of similitude (Erinnerung). However, by reminiscence Carnap does not refer to our keeping in mind some experience that has just occurred, has not yet vanished, and that is still influencing experience (Husserl's notion of retention). Rather, the foundation of the Carnapian system lies in long errange memory. It is interesting, for instance, how he "constitutes" other persons' elementary experience of the world by their means of expression and how they impart information (we would say: by their sign relationships).

Also of interest is how Carnap constitutes values from the experiences that one has with them. Carnap argues that to do so is not a matter of psychologizing. Value itself is not experiential, but exists independently from its instantiation as

experience. In experience, value only becomes observable. What is essential for Carnap is the "reminiscence of similarity": the recognition of values at moment S by a comparison of that moment to the "values" of the store AB.

Carnap interprets causality as a purely interoceptive phenomenon; that is to say, cause and effect are concepts of the experiential world, not of physical reality. Here he continues a line of critique going back at least to David Hume. For in Carnap's system, what ultimately distinguishes real entities from unreal ones consists of the following principles: (1) every psychic entity belongs to a more extensive, law–like system, physical entities belong to a law–like physical system, psychic entities to a psychic system, and so forth; (2) every real entity is intersubjective; (3) every real entity has its place in a temporal order.

In other words, entities are defined as identical or different on the basis of memory, which compares them to other entities and puts them into a temporal axis. What is essential is that this activity is intersubjective; that is, others besides myself can replicate this kind of thinking. In this respect, one might say that the Carnapian system differs from the Heideggerian Being, which is always being mediated by ego. Of course, this is the case even in the Carnapian autopsychic system, in which the smallest comparable units are elementary experiences; yet, they are "pure" experiences, so to speak, which do not depend on the subject carrying them. Husserl, in his phenomenology, believed likewise; but Heidegger did not. One might ask if Carnap's recognition of values at moment S by comparing that moment to the "values" of the store AB involves an iconic or an indexical relationship.

If we then think of Bergson and the

aforementioned store of memories AB, which is included in each of our acts, then we constantly live "backward": phenomena and experiences of our now–moment, on the surface of our reality, are immediately transferred to the store of memory, from which the movement continues back to other experiences to which the now–moments are compared. It is precisely in this manner that the richness of the experiential world emerges. In semiotics, an analogous case is poetry, whose richness of language, according Roman Jakobson's famous definition, derives from the same kind of projection: of a paradigm into a syntagm. The same occurs in Peirce's Firstness, which we "live" at the apex of S. In Secondness this experience has already been transported to the level of AB; in Thirdness, it is compared to the entire store. In fact, the entire movement of our subject(ivity) takes place against the grain, so to speak, against the counter–current. The idea of a continuous becoming is, thus, an illusion.

Hegel declares the substance of the Spirit to be freedom. The goal of the Spirit in history is thus the freedom of the subject: freedom to have knowledge and morality, to have common goals, in order that the collective subject might have infinite value: "... this goal of the spirit of theworld is reached by the freedom of everyone" (Hegel 1917: 41).

Hegel later states that this goal has not yet been attained: "Spirit is not a piece of nature, like an animal. The animal is what it is immediately. Spirit is what it does of itself, what makes it what it is. Its being is in its activity, not in peaceful existence; its being is an absolute process".(ibid.: 52)

Why do we quote Hegel so often and so closely? It is because the idea of freedom, particularly in Hegel, is the one which Anglo–analytic philosophers have scoffed

at the most. And one cannot deny that certain comical elements do appear in Hegelian reasoning: In the Orient only one was free: the despot; in antiquity some were free but others slaves.

Nowadays, i.e. in contemporary Germany [at the beginning of the nineteenth century!], all are free, since they are conscious of themselves, as spiritual beings. Of course, we cannot read Hegel almost two centuries later with any sort of naïve immediacy. We read him via a filter of interpretation. This occurs, for example, when we think, Aha! ... spirit! ... the global community of our time ... Baudrillard's bubble world, and the like. Therefore, it is essential to heed the following: the representation of reality from the subject's activity – retention, reminiscence of similitude, and other operations – at the same time represents the liberation of our subject from false restrictions. It is the subject's way of resisting the constitution–model of the global world into which he or she is constantly being forced.

What is involved here, is the return of the valuation of the subject and of his liberation. Pure philosophy can in this way be provided with ideological content. Science, however, can never posit values, but only investigate them. On the one hand, all arguments can be read ideologically, and all research is guided by some ideology. Yet, any
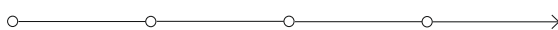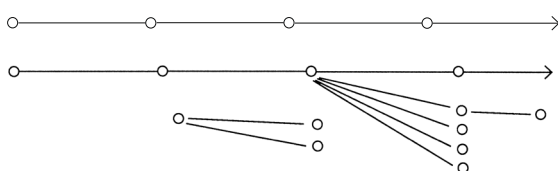
argument advanced by science cannot set values but only examine them. Since all judgements can be read ideologically, and all research be guided by some ideology, it is crucial that a scholar be conscious of his/her ideological position. For when we are aware of such, and when we put the aforementioned philosophies (from Hegel to Bergson and Carnap) in the context of forces of resistance, then we know what we are doing and are thus able to observe the ideological nature of our reasoning, so that we do not stray from objectivity or intersubjective validity.

3.2.2. Counterfactuality

The models we have dealt with thus far concern the surface of reality, its recollection, its store of memory, the now–moment, causality. In the background looms the subject, whose very being is involved. What, then, does it mean to say that this subject's goal would be "freedom"? It means that the course of the subject is not predetermined, but that an energetic action can take place by the subject, which, through its acts, moulds its reality.

How can that process be analyzed more closely? Instead of dealing not only with what something has been, with its registration in memory – in the form, say, of the texts of history and arts – we can also inquire as to what might have been. What if a subject had chosen otherwise? This concern brings our inquiry to what Anglo–analytic philosophy refers to as a so–called "counter–factual" statement.

Figure 6.

world of the past   world of today

-P

P & Q

P & Q or possibility, the "unreal"
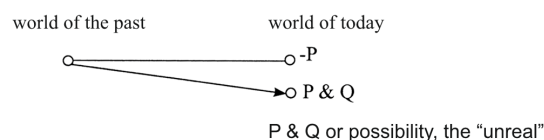
Figure 7. Structure of the counterfactual statement world of the past world of today or possibility, the "unreal

The Finnish philosopher, Georg Henrik von Wright has examined counterfactual statements, and what follows deals with some ideas presented in his lectures and my notes on those ideas.

The counter−factual statement is as follows: "If p had been, then q would have been as well". The statement is also possible if non−p prevails. (The most common expression, "If ... then", describes causality.) In other words, we scrutinize here cases that could have occurred under certain conditions. The freedom of our subject and the Hegelian Spirit, which is always in the process of becoming free, are of course tightly bound with what might have been possible. In this way, modal concepts necessarily penetrate into causal explanation, despite the fact that the positivist attitude in philosophy is very skeptical of modal concepts.

Let us imagine that the surface of reality, the series of Bergsonian now−moments, could be described with a line:

Next we can probe our knowledge of what lies beneath the surface of
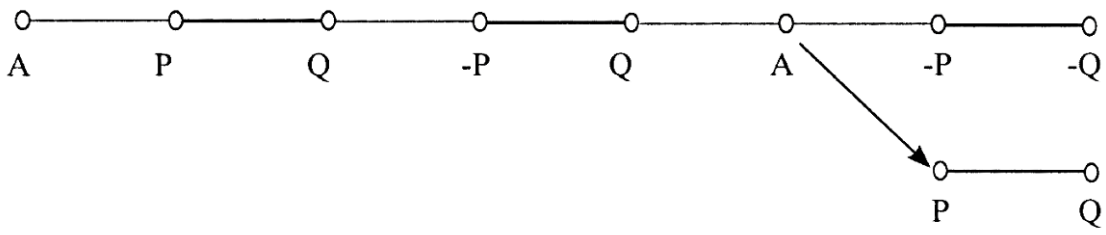

Figure 8. Alternatives under the surface of the reality.

the given, linear reality. In that case, the counterfactual statement is an argument about what is, rather than about what might be or what might have been. The graphic representation of the counterfactual statement would thus be the following:

The models above portray alternativity: from the world of the past, alternative −P was realized. But the alternative P & Q also would have been possible. Only via this alternative does discourse on possibilities become meaningful, and only via this alternative can one speak about the freedom of an acting agent.

From this, can we further infer that the more alternatives, the more freedom our subject has? If so, it would confirm that the further world history proceeds, in the Hegelian sense, the freer the "Spirit" becomes, since it would have more and more alte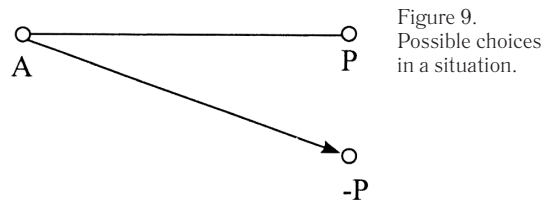rnatives stored in its paradigm of memory. In that case, the degree of freedom is essentially bound with memory, that is to say, with the fact that the subject recalls previous events and becomes aware of them. Such recollections and awareness give purpose to world history, as described by Hegel in the following statement: "World history presents ... the development of the consciousness of the spirit beginning from its freedom and the fulfilment of such a consciousness. Development means that it is a gradual unfolding, a series of determinations of freedom, which with a concept anticipates issues [and] the nature of the freedom of the spirit [becomes] conscious of itself. The logical and dialectical nature of the concept lies in the fact that it determines itself and carries in itself definitions and rejects them, and in this rejection or negation attains its positive and richer, more concrete determination.

This necessity and contingency of purely abstract definitions of concepts is studied in logics." (Hegel 1917: 148)

In the quotation above, Hegel refers to the same process that von Wright describes. Yet, von Wright inquires into that reality of the past which unites the aforementioned alternatives (Hegel's Begriffsbestimmungen). Where is the starting point of those alternatives? What now−moment in Bergson's model opens up that point of view? What occurs is a shift from temporality to counterfactual examination. We get a series of consecutive situations:

The connection from A to its causal consequence (if P then Q, or P Q) is not visible and thus not observable. What, then, justifies drawing a line from the surface of reality to its alternative or possibility? Von Wright's answer is that at least once in the past, the occurrence A P Q must have occurred. That experience demonstrates that after A, P is possible. This perception is a necessary condition for drawing the figure. But is it a sufficient one? Similarly, world A sometimes precedes P, and sometimes −P.

It must be underlined that, if we accept this argument, then in reality nothing would ever happen that has not already happened at least once before. It follows that the possibilities of the "spirit" of history for creative activity would be highly restricted. Yet, even intuitively speaking, there must be acts and consequences that are new, unique and unpredictable. According to von Wright, what is thought about the depth of possibilities is largely a consequence of what is observed on the surface of a given reality. Our conception of potentialities is a reconstruction of possibilities based upon what we know about the surface of that reality. In the context of theories of memory, such a

conception is based upon retention: what we have stored in our paradigm of memory determines our view of what might have happened. Applied to history, at both the individual and collective levels, this would mean that, the more alternatives of which individuals are aware – either on the basis of their own experience or of historical descriptions – then the freer they are. To this point, Heidegger's concepts of Dasein and Da−sein serve to distinguish between the entire reality, with its possibilities and alternatives (Dasein), and the mere surface of reality, or just being−there (Da−sein).

For the semiotics of resistance, this distinction is essential. If the surface of reality is occupied, and subordinated to, an ideology or hegemony, then it is essential that alternatives to that ideology be recognized. The more alternatives, and the more the subject becomes conscious of them, together increase the resistance. Yet, in some cases it also prevents action: the more critical one becomes, the more difficult it is to choose the right alternative, and the harder it is to start defending it with the full passion (Passion, Leidenschaft) that Hegel considered an indispensable force in history.

On the other hand, one must note that not just any observation about the surface of reality can or does fulfil its potentials. We select certain observations according to images that we have even prior to the perception of potentials. Hence it would be a great mistake for one not to distinguish among and weigh the different possibilities as weaker and stronger. (In this light, one can consider the surface

of reality to be a particularly "strong" alternative.) Concerning the model of cause and effect, for example, P would lose its causal role (its force as a cause related toQ) if we cannot claim that there is a valid alternative to P. Of course, one can also say that, if we want to become convinced about the validity of some counterfactual statement, then we do something:we produce the needed situation. But if a large scale, collective event is involved, then we of course cannot create it artificially; instead, we resort to our historical memory and judge whether something similar could have happened earlier.

In any case, a sign of a genuine act is a genuine alternative. What gives us full certainty about the worth of alternatives is that they enable us to intervene in the course of the reality, and the fact that they provide us with something we can choose. For instance, we know the following:

We can say that A is the reason for (or cause of) P only in the situation A, in which both P and −P are as possible. If we are passive, then the world changes into P; if we intervene in the world, then −P follows. What would have happened if we had not allowed the world to change into −P? This question is justified by the fact that the situation is in our control. Therefore we get a chain of interconnected concepts: causality is based upon counterfactuality, and the latter, in turn, is based upon the concept of act.

For our theory of semiotics of resistance, what is most essential is that the matter of memory brings us to referring backwards, to the counter−current of signs, to the pondering of what might have been possible (counterfactuality). We have shown here that to do so is possible, via theories of memory (Husserl, Bergson, Carnap) based upon the retention of the subject, the comparison

of the now−moment with moment S and its alternatives AB − ultimately, the comparison of moment S with the recognition of the values retained as paradigms, the store−house of values, their "encyclopaedia", to use Eco's term.

At the same time, it has been argued here that this return is possible as a logical, mental operation only if it is conceived as the act of a subject. Such a subject can effect this operation by means of many alternatives, whether they are previously fulfilled connections between P and Q, or perhaps imaginative innovations, which our subject infers to be possible in his or her situation. Altogether this shows that, even in those realities in which everything seems to be linked to only one scheme of events, there are alternatives, depending on our subject's mental capacities and paradigm of memory.

3.2.3. Causality

Causality is a central philosophical category that, moreover, comes amazingly close to the idea of communication. We arrive here at the core of semiotics: Can one conceive of communication as causal activity? If so, then what would counterfactuality mean in communication? In the speech−act theories of Austin and Searle, the focus is on the speech act as communication or intention. But, as Karl Jaspers once asked, why do we want to communicate? Would it not be better not to communicate, that is, to be alone? (Jaspers 1948: 338) Before an act of communication, the agent can choose whether to communicate or not. But after the sign has been emitted, it cannot be canceled. (Computers, of course, have an "undo" function, even for e−mail, which one can use to retract a communication; left as it stands, however, the message is indelibly and irretractably there.)

When Mr A sends a signal to Mr B, in the famous diagram by Saussure, does that process represent causal influence? The answer is, of course, yes, if one thinks that the effect or consequence is the meaning–effect that emerges in the mind of the receiver, Mr B. If Mr B's behavior changes after he receives the message, then it doubtless has had a causal effect. On the same issue, Finnish semiotician of education, Esa Pikkarainen, has this to say: "Causal effect is therefore a change in some entity,which happens because it has come through a certain relationship to some or some other entities ... The partners of the causal relationship are beings and not events ... . In order to have a causal relation at least one partner must have the 'causal power' to make the other partner change in one way or another" (Pikkarainen 2004: 69). In communication, however, we do not always intend or mean to cause changes. Jakobson describes this special kind of communication (phatic) as participating in the conative function. Yet, say, in autocommunication, wherein the sender and receiver are one, it is hard to see what the "effect" would be, namely, how the world has changed after the communication.

Can we also think of a countercurrent of signs in communication? Can we aim the arrow of communication to go counter–clockwise? Paul Ricoeur (2000), in his magisterial treatise La mémoire, l'histoire, l'oubli, closes with a chapter on "Le pardon difficile", in which he deals with the themes of guilt, giving and forgiveness, of happy memory and unhappy history, and in the end, with the theme of forgetting. If we repent of sending a message and want to cancel it – which is impossible, if it has already happened – there remain alternatives: to regret, forget, and forgive. This is the only way to go against the counter–stream of communication and to cancel what has happened. This is true in spite of what one reads in Dostoievsky's The Brothers Karamazov, when the oldest member of a monastery says that a man's acts accrue to him, until time runs out and nothingmore can be done.

3.3. Forces of resistance III: History

Perhaps unnoticeably, we have come through philosophy (both phenomenology and Anglo–analytic logic) and arrived at problems of history. The sense of history forms an essential aspect of resistance to the global reality of real, synchronic time. It can also prevent savage theorizing and experimentation in science, life practices, and social processes. The causal relationship is one of the most central ones in historical investigation, as Raymond Aron notes in his Introduction to the Philosophy of History (Aron 1948 [1961]). He joins the causal relationship to the question of responsibility. Moral, legal and historical responsibilities are all based on the same logical scheme: the search for reasons. The basic difference among them concerns the order of reasons: a moralist studies intentions, historians study acts, and lawyers relate acts and intentions to judicial concepts. The historically responsible person is one who, by his or her actions, catalyzes an event whose origin is sought. In Aron's view, any historical investigation is, by definition, retrospective. All causal research looks backwards. A historian starts with effects and goes back to antecedents. But a fact always has a number of antecedents. How, then, can we determine the true cause?

To this situation, one could add that a historian's work is always abductive, a form of guess–work in getting at the reason. But as Aron states, the historian can only be

psychologically – never "mathematically" rigorous – certain of having found the real reason or cause. Even if Napoleon did cause the defeat at Waterloo, I shall never be able to prove it, because that historical sequence of events, unique in time and peculiar in quality, can never recur. Hence every historian, in order to examine what happened, must ask what might have happened.

For instance, Leonard B. Meyer (1989), in his Style and Music, considers the examination of alternatives a central factor in music history. The genius of an individual composer (Mozart, Haydn, and the like) can show itself only against the background of alternatives that a composer of that time could have used, that is to say, the contemporaneous network of possibilities. Aron recommends the following research strategy: (1) analysis of the phenomenon–effect; (2) discrimination of antecedents and the isolation of one them, the efficiency of which is to be measured; (3) the construction of unreal developments, including alternatives, or "counterfactuals" in our earlier terminology; (4) comparison of mental images and the actual events (Aron 1948: 161).

It is, however, often impossible in practice to isolate a single immediate cause, since the causes can of course be quite general in nature. Thus we come to sociological theories in which the causes of an individual event are believed to lie in complex social and statistical processes. As examples of such vast, tightly procedural studies of history, one can mention Fernand Braudel's Matérialisme et capitalism (1967 [1973]) and Norbert Elias's Studien über die Deutschen: Machtkämpfe und Habitusentwicklung im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert (1989 [1997]). In the first–mentioned text, the background

theory is a view of human material life as characterized by routines and in which changes occur very slowly. Braudel dares to use the term "progress", but underlines that, though it proceeds very slowly, it is not totally static. His examination concerns the period from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century. In contrast, Elias focuses on shorter time periods, namely, the development of the German national habitus or character. The latter is in turn based on the dialectics between inner and outer forces, on the civilization process, whose special nature and collapse in Germany are Elias's quarry. This study, too, involves events on a large temporal scale, in which individual acts remain in the background and the criteria of explanation lie in general social processes. The case of Elias clearly illustrates that national histories are still being written. But as Ricoeur asks (2000: 396), Is it still possible to write "cosmopolitan" or "world histories"? Specialized histories constitute a resistance to globalizing histories in which the present is so strongly prioritized that the past is not appreciated at all. Such globalizing histories seem to accelerate and, hence, to rush headlong to the end of history itself, by portraying so many events occurring within such relatively short periods of time.

As early as for the French annalists, history was being distinguished into different levels, such as long–, medium–, and short–term structures, a distinction also used by Greimas in his Sémantique structurale (Greimas 1966 [1980]: 172). To write a "structural history" is to take some institutional or mental entity as an invariable quantity and schema, into which framework the historical changes and details are inserted. Such reasoning is not far from Kant's ideas about history, nor from Hegel's action of the "Spirit" in world

history. The notion of "idea" or leading principle has been replaced by that of structure. Lotman's school of semiotics, for instance, supposes that the structure of a "text" is a universal, multileveled formation comprised of phonetics, metrics, syntax, semantics and symbols. Using this constant structure, Lotmanian semioticians have been able to reconstruct ancient Slavonic texts, once considered beyond recovery, by postulating units that take the place of missing elements, that is to say, units which should be there in order for the structure to be completed. (In principle, this reasoning is not far from the astronomy of the Renaissance, which supposed that a certain heavenly body had to exist in order for the mathematical and musical scale of eight tones to be fulfilled [cf. Eco 1986: 32].)

Narrativity can in this way serve as such a structure. Historical research is naturally narrative, and all that is considered discourse obeys the laws of narration. Ricoeur scrutinizes history as narrative, but with the warning that the latter cannot function as an explanatory or epistemological criterion. In their work, of course, historians encounter narratives – stories of events – out of which they create their own narratives. A narrative theory that has developed from legends, folklore and myths, is considered by historians as too primitive to serve as a model 5.For more on the dialectics between inner and outer forces, refer back to the analysis of the principles of Moi and Soi (see Tarasti 2015) for the writing of modern history. Narration easily leads one to study history as "individual cases" against which Braudel juxtaposed his long–term changes.

For historians (and others), the greatest attraction of the narrative model is the concept of "plot", since the latter organizes temporal events into a given order. Something changes into something else – this has been taken as the minimal condition for any narrative. Further, the plot has an impact on people's behaviour. Lotman's essay on theatricality provides us with good examples: The last words of heroes of the French Revolution often seem like speeches from antiquity. Louis II, for example, felt that he had conducted himself like the protagonist of aWagnerian opera. Thus, plots can be shifted from one domain of life to another. Insofar as the writing of history uses the same narrative structure as that of a fictional story, the text becomes its own reality and its connection to the real world is lost. Thus, the historian has to probe details and piece together fragments. Ricoeur speaks instead about the "scale" of durations, borrowing the term from cartography. When we look at a map, it is essential that we know the scale to which it has been drawn. Similarly, in historical investigation we must ask first if it concerns micro– or macro–history. The object of micro–historical studies can be an individual, whose life is scrutinized in all its details; but at the same time, that individual is understood to represent something more general. The microhistory which thus emerges can come dangerously close to unreliable, anecdotal history, or local history in its extreme. Braudel rejected such accounts as a "history of events", since one cannot know anything about a single, unrepeated event.

Paradoxically, an individual event is significant only if it has been repeated, as Carlo Ginzburg has noted. In semiotics, an equivalent view of "event" is Eco's theory that semiotics cannot tell what a work or text was or meant to someone, but rather studies the structures that enabled such an experience. This thesis, however, is denied by existential semiotics, as argued earlier. Ginzburg takes Tolstoi's War and

Peace as an example of micro−history in which the individual (peace) and the public (war) interpenetrate. Micro−history is a kind of anti−narrationwhen compared to theories of great men, inwhich, according to Hegel's model, the reader's attention is captured by exceptional personalities. In a chapter entitled "The Destiny of an Individual", he says the following: "Let us fix our gaze on world−historical individuals and their fates, who have had

the joy of functioning as leaders in the realization of a purpose that forms only one phase in the general course of development" (Hegel 1917: 78).

But in general can one think, in the context of historical exploration, of antinarrativity in a sense other than texts that declare the end of history, its vanishing by becoming synchronized with the world? The fact is that all history, as a retrospective activity, as collective or individual memory, is also a narration of resistance, because in such activity one always transcends the surface of reality.

In this respect, merely to defend the existence of history is itself resistance − and progress.

4 What are we resisting?

It is proper to end with a self−critical look at what was said above. Namely, if all theories are only rationalisations of certain life experiences and positions of a scholar, then the same must be true about the present essay on the semiotics of resistance. To make the question more precise: In the end, what has been (or is being) resisted here? Have I fallen into the trap of which Ricoeur warns, namely, the idea that the present time is somehow qualitatively different fromprevious times?Modernity −"our" time − is especially privileged when one wants to join (or intervene) in the classical activity

of history−writing on the theme of the worsening decadence of modern times and symptoms of apocalyptic destruction, as compared to a past, now−lost, "golden age" when everything was better. If many have taken the "present day" or one's own era as somehow decadent (and this has been happening at least since the seventeenth century), it is clear that the decline cannot stem from mere chronology but from some other paradigm or context, into which we try to insert our own time.

Today is most notable the vanishing of the moral dimension (Charles Taylor's thesis): the loss of sense and meaning, accompanied by the search to regain it. The second main theme of our time is the development of technology, which threatens our freedom; and the third is the supremacy of the state. For Taylor, the first of these problems leads to the ethics of self−realization of ego, of defense of authenticity, the central value of the principle of Moi. By contrast, the worst fault of Hegel was his exceedingly strong emphasis on state or world history, or Soi. Yet, such argumentation means a relativization of the phenomenon, an historicism, as when one adopts an anthropological position. In all these relativizations we reduce the phenomenon to something else: "It is only this or that." Globalization and its values, whose principles were summed up in my list of 14 points, can only belong to this type of literature of resistance, which has been available as early as Antiquity and the classics therefrom.

Our point of departure, however, has been the phenomenological principle that the thing has to be examined as such. This requires that we engage with the existential situation of the people of our time as it appears. Being is precisely our being here and now. The Heideggerian

concern, about the surrounding world in which we live, is the only credible fulcrum for theoretical reflection. But in order to speak about our own situation we have to take distance from colloquial speech and create a special metalanguage – a unique discourse and concepts with which to analyze adequately our being. To that end, I have dealt here with three important categories – being, memory and history – aspects ofwhich can illuminate and engage with the situation of our time. At the same time, my aim has been not to lose contact with the reality of this situation, not even for one moment. We can write science about reality, at the same time as we participate in it.

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Author's data: Eero Tarasti (b. 1948) is Professor of Musicology at the University of Helsinki (chair) since 1984. He was President of the IASS/AIS (International Association for Semiotic Studies) 2004−2014 and is now its Honorary President.
e−mail: eero.tarasti@helsinki.fi

Краткие сведения об авторе: Тарасти Эеро (1948) − доктор PhD, профессор Музиологии в Университете Хельсинки, Финляндия (директор) с 1984. Специализируется в области семиотики, автор более 30 монографий. Почётный доктор Эстонской музыкальной академии, Нового Университета Болгарии, Университета Индианы и других.
e−mail: eero.tarasti@helsinki.fi

Автор туралы мәлімет: Тарасти Эеро (1948) − PhD доктор, Хельсинки университетінде Музиология профессоры, Финляндия 1984 жылдан (директор). Семиотика саласының зерттеуші, 30−дан астам монографияның авторы. Эстон музыка академиясының, Болгария Жаңа университетінің, Индиана университетінің және т.б. құрметті докторы.
e−mail: eero.tarasti@helsinki.fi