

Call for papers

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On the Reader's side: *Lector in Fabula*, Forty Years Later

Edited by Isabella Pezzini

This issue of *Versus* has its roots in the 40th anniversary of the publication, in 1979, of the Italian version of *Lector in fabula. La cooperazione interpretativa nei testi narrativi*, by Umberto Eco (the same year of the American edition, even if this presents many significant differences from the original version).

Among Eco's complete works, *Lector in fabula* can be regarded as a fundamental cornerstone: it is both the culmination of previous researches and the starting point of their further developments. In this book, Eco's semantic perspective confirms its textualist option, and broadens the notion of "text", elaborated in a Theory of Semiotics among the modes of sign production, through a more accurate articulation based on C.S. Peirce's formulation of an interpretative semiotics, combining it at the same time with the methodological tools derived from narratology, pragmatics, logic of possible worlds.

In this book, concepts and ideas already proposed in *Opera aperta* (1962) – when Eco was studying the new vanguard artistic movements of those years, in which the interpreter's involvement dimension was crucial – come back in a revised version. Furthermore, contemporary research on popular literature was confirming the very same principle: in order to be understood, even before being interpreted, a text requires an active collaboration by its "user". In the *Lector in fabula*, levels of progressive complexity in textual interpretative cooperation are accurately identified and articulated.

This approach is made even more explicit in the English edition, both in the table of content and in the preface, which are structured around three parts, respectively titled: *Open, Closed e Open/closed*. Essays and textual analyses written from 1959 (*The Poetics of Open Works*) to 1971 (*The Myth of Superman*) are here included, to introduce the Model Reader Theory.

A similar approach will develop in an original theoretical proposal, constantly balanced between different "reading theories" - semiotic, aesthetic and hermeneutic - at the time divided between more "technical" approaches to the reading practice and more phenomenological perspectives, interested in empiric readers and their historical dimension. From *Lector* onwards, Eco will always remain faithful to the idea of *intentio operis*, different from *intentio auctoris* and *intentio lectoris*. The former has to be respected in order to honor the reading contract, intended as a form of negotiation between interpretative freedom and textual constraints. Eco will maintain the same position also in the postmodern debate about interpretation and deconstruction. Besides, the following year after publication of the *Lector*, Eco will publish his first novel, *The Name of the Rose*, and from then on a creative literary activity will complement his theoretical reflection on literature.

Expected contributions to this issue will focus on the several themes indicated in the call, in particular:

- Current developments of the debate on interpretation;
- New theoretical contributions (both empirical and critical) related to reading practices;
- The category of *use versus interpretation*, especially in comparison to the new forms of interaction and discussion produced by new media;
- Textual forms fostered by new communication technology, where the cooperation between Author and Reader evolves in interaction between enunciators, and where the notion of “beginning” and “end” of a text become blurry;
- Storytelling and figurative argumentation, typical of literary texts and today broadly practiced in different fields, from politics to marketing (with a particular focus on forms of manipulation and effectiveness on the reader);
- Relation between reading and writing;
- The extension of the notion of Model Reader (its appropriate and/or metaphoric use), seen as enunciational simulacrum inscribed within the text to other semiotic forms;

Deadlines:

- 30/01/2019: submission of an abstract no longer than 500 words (plus a bibliography and a short biography)
- 15/02/2019: notification of abstract acceptance or refusal
- 15/06/2019: full paper submission

Abstract will be selected through a preliminary editorial review. All papers will be double-blind peer reviewed.

Abstract and papers must be sent to the following addresses: redazione.vs@gmail.com
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Accepted languages: English, French, Italian.

Publishing style guide at http://versus.dfc.unibo.it/VS_guidelines_ENG.pdf