

## **Editorial: Signs and communicators**

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On 9 and 10 January 2019 the Language and Communication Research Cluster at Middlesex University London hosted the first Middlesex Roundtable on Signs, Language and Communication, with the theme “Integrationism, Biosemiotics, Philosophy of Communication”. The roundtable aimed at creating an opportunity for dialogue among representatives of these approaches to the study of communication. The workshop was the result of the joint effort of the research cluster, the International Society for Biosemiotic Studies, the International Association for the Integrational Study of Language and Communication (IAISLC) and the Section for Philosophy of Communication of the European Communication Research and Education Association (ECREA).

We are grateful for having the opportunity, offered to us by one of the participants in the Roundtable, Kalevi Kull, to prepare this issue of *Sign Systems Studies* on the basis of a selection of the papers presented at the workshop.

While there are vast differences in aims and orientation of the three fields that the workshop brought together, there are also similarities. Integrationism, the language and communication theory of Roy Harris, seeks to dispel what it calls the ‘language myth’: the idea that language is an entirely separate mode of communication, that languages are systems of abstract linguistic signs, that linguistic communication involves the transmission or reproduction of mental content between individuals. Harris uses the dismissive term ‘telementation’ for the latter view, an implicit assumption in our lay thinking about how linguistic communication works. Instead, integrationism holds, the sign is a ubiquitous feature of all experience, is radically contextualized and individual, and is that by which a subject “integrates” what it encounters in the constitution of its being. Signs come into being the moment they are needed and they perish as soon as an individual act of integration has been completed. Not only language is a practice of integration; any relationality that we can think of comes about on the basis of integrating cotemporal activities of various kinds. Integrationism takes the radical nature of its proposal seriously: as sign-making is a radically contextual and