

Umberto Eco and the Semiotic Foundation of Interpretation

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Inspired by Hjelmslev's linguistic insights, and influenced by Peirce's work on the interpretive dimension of the sign, which is the outcome of his contemplations on *unlimited semiosis*, Umberto Eco has tried to put forward innovative ideas on the ways in which the interpretation of the text takes place. Drawing on structuralist methodology and American pragmatism, Eco offers a semiotic foundation for interpretation and, consequently, shows that interpretation is the result of the reader's interaction with the text. Therefore, interpretation is by no means restricted to *intentio auctoris* (the author's intention), and moves beyond such limitations. This article attempts to examine the theoretical origins of Eco's thought as well as the arguments deriving from these origins. It demonstrates that, in contrast to 'aberrant interpretation', which requires a subject-oriented reading, 'authentic interpretation' results from the reader's restricted freedom. In other words, thanks to its semiotic possibilities, the text forces the reader to move in certain interpretive directions which could be predicted and explicated through the semiotic analysis of the text.

Key words: Umberto Eco, Semiotics, Interpretation, Hermetic Drift, Openness, Dialectics of Text and Reader.

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