Organiser:

Department of Semiotics; Graduate School of Linguistics, Philosophy and Semiotics

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TOPICS OF KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:

Suren Zolyan
1) Lotman as a social thinker; his conception of history (dynamics of the social and cultural changes, evolution and revolution, explosion - vs stagnation, the inner structure of society - society as a semiosphere regulating through communication).
2) Lotman and social semiotics - the notions of social context, semiosphere, and communication. Text in meaning as socially determined entities. The social multilingualism multimodality. The comparative analyses between Lotman's conception and London school (Malinovsky, Hallyday, Kress, etc.).

Patrick Seriot
1) Biology for linguists: obstacle or royal path to concept building?
2) Language and nations: two models.

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STUDENT PRESENTATIONS:

Semiotic approach in cultural education
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The research of the current thesis is aimed to show and analyze how the musical language, being a special sign system, influences human development. It is of interest not only from the semiotic point of view; but it also can be used in solving practical problems in pedagogy for solving problems of expanding capabilities of education using the development of musical taste, feeling the language of music, creating own meanings in perception of music.

Studying the role of the musical language in developing consciousness is important for understanding peculiar properties of perception of semiotic texts. During the approbation we conducted the research based on the author's course “The language of music in the modern world”. Research was conducted at the 225 th school (ГБОУ СОШ№ 225) in St. Petersburg where 27 pupils of the 8 th form took part. The results of the research showed that reading and interpretation of musical texts can be used in pedagogy as a special instrument of developing semiotic consciousness. Using the proper pedagogical approach, we can cause cognitive interest in reading different musical texts that can help to develop not only semiotic consciousness but also sensory-associative links.

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Two different relations between building and its site

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This presentation’s main problem is two examples of relation between structure and its place. As an introduction, there is exposed the concept of binary opposition in TMS and way of its application to architecture. At the end, there will be compared two contrast examples of the American idea of skyscraper and idea of a tower, designed on the European continent.

1. Juri Lotman uses dualistic principle towards the culture processes. He describes two methods of structure formation: it could be either elements of something more complex, or a whole that forms a structural unity of parts.

This presentation is interested in applying this approach to architectural theory. Such dualism, supported by Ivanov, Uspensky, and others, derives from the dualistic structure of the human brain. In this way, we have two hemispheres: the right, which responsible for space perception, and the left, which responsible for data processing. From metaphoric position, the name of some phenomenon is the phenomenon itself. So, ancient cities were built according to the world model of that time. Moscow in opposition to idealistic St. Petersburg example (also described by Juri Lotman) was painted by Fyodor Alekseev:

2. Right hemisphere lets us operate with such notions as front/back, up/down, dark/light. It based on the personal experience. It is a metaphor, synonyms in our language. Without this ability we would have to use individual words for each specific situation, availability of synonyms (metaphor, substitution - Jacobson) is a mean of resources saving. This type of thinking reflects in the system of Hieroglyphs.

(Returning the capital to Moscow, Victory over the Sun, sacralization, avant-garde and formalism)

3. Left hemisphere’s proficiency is grammar, due to it we have in architecture such concepts as language, code, rhythm. Cultures of this type use Alphabet writing, they constitute connection and hierarchy between elements. (metonymy, clarification – Jacobson). In metonymy (left hemisphere) type of association a person compliments the right word by the context and explanation (hut – poverty, poor little house, thatch, litter).

4. Relation with context. Inner and outer space.
In the scale of city planning these differences are also very clear. “Moscow type” cultural models are concentrated in themselves. Outer space for them is not a potential for exploding because they possess the centripetal force.

**Moscow, Paris, Tartu**

The opposite city planning pattern focuses on the spreading, it is driven by the centrifugal forces. Outer territory for this type is rather not yet conquered.

**St. Petersburg, Washington Roman military camp**

5. Thusly, there are two approaches to architecture: to make an *analogy* of something, or build structure according to some *code*, some program.

   - Two different avant-garde – constructivism (right) vs suprematism (left)
   - (then - rationalism (right) vs constructivism (left)
   - utilitarianism in capitalistic architecture (right) vs rationalism in socialistic architecture (left)

6. Now then, here is a central question that touches upon two types of relation between a building and its site: *multiply* a plot of land, or *recreate* a model of land.

*Idea of skyscraper (arch. fantasy) and arch. fantasy of socialistic city by G. Krutikov*
1) Skyscraper grows out of the earth, it is unthinkable to remove it. Its main purpose – in limits of technical possibilities – multiply its usable site. These individual cells are elements, that compose more complex phenomenon. The same tendency is on the city pattern – environment was a potential resource for expanding by using this typology.

![Building compaction in American colonies](image)

2) The opposite approach in high towers building tends to disconnect from the ground, as an extreme there is flying city by G. Krutikov. The common idea was to build new society, and every formation was a functional part of it – aspects of people role in this society were separated and reflected in architecture. An individual family house was expanded to the city scale, and city-model was a prototype of the whole country. It was the “whole” that forms structural unity of parts. Environment for this ideology belongs to people, and plurality of projects put houses on the columns with aim to free the ground for green and citizens. It was an opposition between free land and building structures. All exchange between the house and its site tends to one minimal bearing point, until the city disconnects completely.

![Ivan Leonidov Socialistic New city Magnitogorsk proposition](image)

There is not a question about individual or collective values (both systems have both types of values, especially in evolution), but the model of relation. Even visually, these two ideas look similar, each of them has individual flying modules. But if they have some differences, they based on this relation with earth, relation between inner and outer space.

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Publishing Houses as Actors in the Autocommunication Processes of a Culture

Ehte Puhang

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In my paper I am going to look at publishing houses as actors in the autocommunication processes of a culture. The presentation will be based on the interviews I have made with Estonian publishing houses, focusing on their image of Hispanic literature. However, in the present paper I will focus on the interplay of economic and cultural arguments in these interviews. Theoretical models used will be polystem theory by Itamar Even-Zohar and Lotman’s ideas of cultural autocommunication. Some references will be made also to other ideas of sociosemiotics concerning social coherence and social identity.

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Who is the subject of biopolitics?
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It is common knowledge that biopolitics and biopower take as their object "life". But qualifying biopolitics as governing life is simply a circular definition. However, this circularity points us to a crucial problem: can we speak of "life" that is outside politics or one that would be somehow opposed to politics or the political field of practices? Thinking biopolitics, we are, it seems, forced to think also life as constituted in the political field of power relations. Applying semiotics, we can conceptualize power relations as significational, as constituting the (possible) forms of being for the governed life. Biosemiotics, however, enables us also to consider life - and not only politics and government - as meaning-making activity that is perhaps able to resist the prescribed forms of being. Biosemiotics, then, enables us to consider how it would be possible to elaborate on Michel Foucault's statement that as soon as power takes life as its object, life also starts slip away from the grip of power. The argument of the presentation is that we can conceptualize this movement of life as biosemiotic agency. This approach does not mean a return to essentialism in order to constitute a realm fundamentally outside (bio)politics but a move towards considering the significational relations created by "life".

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Code Incompatibility and the Smart City
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Principals of "smart city" development demand a centralized, unified code to maintain coherence between the urban space and its virtual representation. This code also helps to direct the city toward a predetermined set of "best practices" which, in turn, are expected to make the city more desirable to individuals, businesses and the like. Lotman makes it clear that generative communication can only happen when at least two codes are in operation - as such, the smart city's mono-code approach to urban socioeconomic management appears to
solve certain problems in the name of efficiency while sacrificing the natural, creative social evolution inherent to code plurality. By analyzing current examples of this utopian vision, we can predict that, in the long term, such artificially constrained social dynamics may result in a reduced quality of life for its citizens, while perhaps also creating an atmosphere of coercion in which only certain types of citizens - those most aligned with the city's codified and automated socioeconomic values - are comfortable and valued. Another significant semiotic byproduct could be an increased alienation to that which is considered "external" to the smart city culture. This suggests not only a false Lotmanian typological maturity but one that denies the cyclical nature of cultural progression, perhaps due to the smart city's unique means of dealing with memory and its peripheral relations (or lack thereof). This begs the questions: what is the fate of individuals who make the smart city their home? And what is the fate of a smart city which does not dialogue with its inhabitants?