

TARTU SUMMER SCHOOL OF SEMIOTICS 2019

Semiotic dimensions of spaces & literacies

Juri Lotman proposed that the primary semiotic dualism lies in the duplication of the world in language and the duplication of the human in space: „Genetically speaking, culture is built upon two primary languages. One of these is the natural language used by humans in everyday communication. [...] The nature of the second primary language is not so obvious. What is under discussion is the structural model of space“ (Lotman 1992: 142). The organizers of the next Tartu Summer School of Semiotics find continuous inspiration in this statement and call for discussing the functioning of cultural languages as mediators of human and non-human environments and as developers of cultural competence.

Understanding culture via its spatial organization has been a characteristic of Tartu semiotics. The structural models of space facilitate making sense of nature, society and culture as living environments. The creation of such models is simultaneously creation of descriptive languages for conceptualising cultural experience and on a more essential level, cultural mediation. The latter affects both individual and collective capacity to interpret reality and underpins the formation and perception of cultural identity. On the one hand, the contemporary cultural dynamics has underlined the necessity of studying the cultural environment in relation to the technological advancement: from the digitalization of (everyday) culture to cultural polyglotism, including improved foreign language skills, digital literacy and emergence of transmedial spaces of communication.

On the other hand, the ecological changes in our living environment have created the need to analyse the mutual influences of human cultural and non-human spaces: the ways that different species both encode and interpret their surroundings and contexts. These include the human modes of textualising space in artistic and non-artistic languages, other species' modes of learning about their surroundings and the ways their agency becomes manifested in their relations with our mutually shared environments. At the same time, the scientific understanding of these relations clearly needs to be balanced with the development of related literacies for mediating the knowledge to the members of culture.

We invite all the semioticians studying the dynamics of nature, society and culture to Tartu in order to discuss a topic simultaneously universal and current for the era of the Anthropocene - the semiotic dimensions of spaces and literacies. We welcome both 20 minute presentations as well as more unconventional formats (à 5-10 minutes) that would provoke thoughts by introducing works and ideas in progress. 300-600 words abstracts (for 20 minute papers) or short comments on why you would like to share your work in progress at Tartu Summer School of Semiotics should be submitted by **the extended deadline February 28th, 2019 to semiotics@ut.ee**. Responses to proposals will be given no later than March 13. Topics that we welcome non-exhaustively include:

- Making sense of digital fragmentation through spatial models and metalanguage;

- Spatial applications for mediating cultural heritage;
- Developmental changes in the structuring and literacy of space;
- Animal agencies in adapting to anthropogenic and hybrid environments;
- Interactions of semiotic and spatial practices in environmental education.

Reference: Lotman, Juri 1992a. Tekst i poliglotizm kul'tury [Text and cultural polyglotism]. In: Lotman, Juri, *Izbrannye stat'i. Vol. 1. Stat'i po tipologii kul'tury*. Tallinn: Aleksandra, 142–147.

CONFIRMED KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Kay O'Halloran: Semiotic Dimensions and Spaces

A multimodal (i.e. multisemiotic) perspective is adopted to investigate Juri Lotman's (1992) proposal that the primary semiotic dualism lies in the duplication of the world in natural language and the duplication of the human in space. The study of the integration of language with other semiotic choices (e.g. image, movement, gesture, 3D objects) in various physical and digital spaces (e.g. the classroom, live political debates, online communications, social media) provides a compelling account of how the semiosphere (Lotman 2005) is configured today. In particular, the recontextualisation of text and images across online media platforms is considered, together with the notion of semiotic space invasion which is illustrated through analysis of President Trump's US Presidential campaign. Lastly, a digital approach for building theory and analytical techniques for semiotics research is proposed in order to handle the complexity of the dynamics of nature, society and culture.

- Lotman, Juri (1992). Tekst i poliglotizm kul'tury [Text and cultural polyglotism]. In: Lotman, Juri, *Izbrannye stat'i. Vol. 1. Stat'i po tipologii kul'tury*. Tallinn: Aleksandra, 142–147.
- Lotman, Y. (2005). "On the Semiosphere." *Sign System Studies* 33(1): 201-229.

Professor Kay O'Halloran is leader of the Multimodal Analysis Group and a member of the Curtin Institute for Computation at Curtin University, Western Australia.

Olga Lavrenova: The Cultural Landscape as a Metaphor

The paper is devoted to analysis of geographical images from the viewpoint of the theory of metaphor. The cultural landscape is a process and a result of semiosis, and it is interesting to find a place in it to such semiotic concept as a metaphor. In a metaphor the meaning is important; in a symbol the form is important. The cultural landscape is a place for both of them, because in culture genetically related to the landscape actual geographical objects having some visual, quantitative and qualitative characteristics (height of mountains, river length, the breadth of the plains) act as symbols. According the cognitive theory of metaphor the cultural landscape is as a complex concept to which metaphors open up «epistemological access», and vice versa, the landscape – as a concept, organizing a series of abstract frames (Gestalts) in the mentality of culture. In the study of cultural landscape a metaphor is used as a tool for learning, giving

birth to new meanings. Interrelationship of culture and space is metaphorical in nature. For example, the metaphor «life – a river» might well be corresponded with the metaphor «water – this is life». Both metaphors mentioned referred to well-defined landscape connotations, which implicitly arise in the minds of the media culture either during the utterance of this metaphor, or when one looks at the landscape from the high bank of a river. From this point of view a metaphor, which includes names of the places can be considered. The most striking visual metaphors transfer related place names in the category of iconic signs. For example, a sustainable culture-geographical metaphor «the gold-domed Moscow» creates out of two images a new semantically extended mental construct. The first one is a visual appearance of the city, its architectural feature – an abundance of gold-domed churches. The second one is a latent image of the mythological giant with the golden head, symbolizing the state power. The second metaphor is hidden away under the pressure of the first, but it is impossible to deny its existence. Spatial metaphors have similar landscape imagery. (For example, the metaphors, structuring the concepts «up – down» and specific landscape connotations entering into the very flesh of the language – «Soar to the clouds», «to be on top of Happiness», «lay low»). Each concrete landscape appears as a metaphor, depending on the nature and type: a mountain landscape – as a metaphor for the ontological vertical, a flat steppe landscape – as a metaphor for the limitlessness and infinity, a river landscape – as a metaphor for life and ways and so on – all sorts of variations. All these metaphors are iconic, and the brightness of the image, constructed in language, is replaced by visualization of the image, observed or represented as a landscape in this case.

Olga Lavrenova works at Institute of Scientific Information on Social Sciences (INION), Russia

João Queiroz: Conceptual Space Transformation in Arts through Iconic Intersemiotic Translation

It is well known that several experimental artists who have creatively transformed their fields dedicated themselves to the intersemiotic translation of aesthetic procedures from one sign system into another -- Gertrude Stein translated Cézanne and Picasso's proto-cubist and cubist approaches into literature; Kandinsky translated Arnold Schoenberg's methods into painting; Morton Feldman translated abstract expressionism's formal procedures into music; Paul Klee translated polyphony's music structures into painting; Augusto de Campos translated Anton Webern and Klangfarbenmelodie models into concrete poetry. Intersemiotic translation is an anticipatory, generative, and metasemiotic tool that takes advantage of iconicity (self-referentiality of semiosis) to transform conceptual spaces in arts. As an anticipatory technique, intersemiotic translation works as a predictive tool; anticipating new, and surprising patterns of semiotic events and processes, keeping under control the emergence of new patterns. At the same time, it works as a generative model, providing new, unexpected, surprising information in the target system, and affording competing results which allow the system to generate candidate instances. As a metasemiotic tool, intersemiotic translation creates a metalevel semiotic process, a sign-action which stands for the action of a sign. Here we associate Charles S. Peirce's pragmatic theory of meaning with Margaret Boden's notion of creativity as modification of conceptual spaces. For Boden, the most impactful type of creativity achieves conceptual space transformation. We consider Boden's conceptual space as a regular pattern of semiotic action, or 'habit' (sensu Peirce). The central results of this inter-theoretical

association are the claims that creativity is a semiotic process and that IT is creative (transforms conceptual spaces) because it is iconic. The icon is the only type of sign that involves a direct presentation of qualities that belong to its object. In operational terms, the icon can be defined as a sign that, when manipulated, 'reveals' one or many aspects of its object. In IT, iconicity allows metasemiosis. What is 'translated' is not only a sign, but sign-action (semiosis) itself. In this sense, IT involves a sign-action (action of a translation target) which stands for the action of a sign (action of a translation source): a metalevel semiotic process. The self-referentiality of the icon is not reference to the sign itself alone, but to the sign-action itself. We exemplify with a historical case of conceptual space transformation in dance: the influence of one-point perspective in the emergence of classical ballet. One-point perspective is a technique developed as a solution for how to represent tridimensional space in bidimensional surfaces. In painting, one-point visual perspective consolidated a pictorial space observed frontally by the audience. The application of one-point perspective principles in theater architecture translated this pictorial space to the newly developed Italian stage. Classical ballet developed in this new conceptual space, exploring more vertical morphologies of dance movement, pictoric visual compositions, and background-foreground visual relations.

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