Juri Lotman in English: Updates to bibliography

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A bibliography of Juri Lotman’s texts that have appeared in English was published in *Sign Systems Studies* 39(2/4). The list included 109 entries that had been published from 1973 to 2011 (Kull 2011). Hereby, some additions are made to this list, including both new findings from the period covered earlier, as well as publications that have appeared after 2011. We follow the numeration of entries of the earlier list; the updated list includes 122 entries, with years of publication now ranging from 1973 to 2014. The publications were described *de visu.*³

As an illustration (Fig. 1), the first page of Juri Lotman’s first publication in English from 1973 is added ([2] in our bibliography).⁴

**Bibliography**

[32a] [Lotman, Juri] 1976. Program proposal of the fourth summer workshop on secondary modeling systems. (Defoe, Martha, trans.) *Dispositio: Rivista Hispánica de Semiótica Literaria* 1(3): 216–218. [Author not shown, as in the Russian original publication of 1970; however, there is clear evidence supporting Lotman’s authorship (Salupere, Torop 2013: 24). A new translation has been published in 2013 [114].]

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⁴ Note the spelling of first name (Juri) that follows his own preference (that we suggest be observed).

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Different cultures, different codes

BY JURI LOTMAN

It is very important, in this context, to define the concepts of code and message, taken over from linguistics following the researches of Roman Jakobson, but so far not adequately used in the history of literature, of figurative arts, or of social thought, etc. It is absolutely necessary, in preparing a history of culture from the typological and structural point of view, to divide the contents of each cultural text from its "language." It is also necessary to pick out from the sum total of facts available to the historian of culture, the system that can in theory be reconstructed (the language of a given culture) and the way in which this culture is realized from the mass of material external to the system (its parataxes).

The concept of culture as information determines certain methods of investigation. It allows one to consider the whole system of historical and cultural facts as an open text, to the study of which the general methods of semantics and structural linguistics can be applied.

It is this second aspect—culture as a hierarchy of codes which have developed during the course of history—that is of particular interest to specialists in the typology of culture, since every type of codification of historical and cultural information turns out to be linked to the first forms of social awareness, to the organization of the collectivity and the self-organization of the individual. The typology of culture must therefore aim to describe the main types of cultural code on the basis of the "languages" of individual cultures, with their comparable characteristics (these being the inventory of what is universal in human culture, and the way in which this culture is realized from the mass of material external to the system (its parataxes).

In this way, all the material for the history of culture can be considered from two points of view: as a set of semiotic meanings, and as a system of social codes which allow people to express this information with determinate signs so as to make it part of the parataxis of a human collective.

Already it is possible to put forward the hypothesis that the total number of fundamental types of cultural code is fairly small and that the remarkable diversity of historically given cultures is a result of complex combinations of fairly few and relatively simple types.

One of the characteristic particularities and, at the same time, fundamental difficulties in the study of social codes lies in the fact that, compared with the natural languages, upon which the cultural systems are to be built (and it is therefore convenient to define them as "second any modelling systems"), these cultural systems appear as extraordinarily complex structures. Let us try to define the reason for this to the complexity of a cultural code on its own. As a result of the primary modelling systems (natural languages) to the secondary modelling systems.

First of all, one must point out that any cultural text (in the sense of "type of culture") can be seen both as a single text with a single code, and as a set of texts with a determinate set of codes (relative to the text). Besides which, the set of texts with a determinate plurality of texts that cannot be deciphered through a common code, or else may be structural: it may include texts that demand different codes only at a determinate level, whereas at other levels they can be deciphered through a single system of signs. In this latter case, two different cultural codes can be considered as variants of one invariant scheme.

Thus, for instance, the ideal norms of behaviour of the knight and the mask in the framework of medieval culture will be different (for the historian of medieval culture the texts will be given in actual practice in the permanent form of writing, or in ideal norms that can be reconstructed only with difficulty), as is the case with the study of levels of text. Their behaviour will seem the "we shall understand its "meaning" only if we adopt, for each one of them, the structure of particular codes (any attempt to use another code makes the behaviour appear "senseless", "absurd", "illogical"; in other words, does not decipher it). An example of how, so far as the knight is concerned, extremely sensible behaviour within the framework of the code proper to him may appear "senseless" from the point of view of another type of culture, and the different type of behaviour linked with it, appears in Don Quixote.

It is interesting, too, to see how the perception of another system as having "no meaning" may be of two kinds: (1) In the first case, the observer knows what cultural code to judge the behaviour of the person observed, but thinks the code wrong and refuses to use it. In this case, which is the commonest assumption, the code is either not meaningful, or may represent the observer's misunderstanding of the "method" in Hamlet's madness (for example, in the observer cannot imagine a cultural code that would show the behaviour he is watching to be inadequate, or to be a collection of unconnected and incoherent actions). Or else, (2) in any "method" is meaningless, and it appears entirely meaningless, as is the case with the greatest "alienation" from the system observed, the.


[114] Lotman, Juri 2013. Proposals for the programme of the 4th Summer school on secondary modelling systems. (Pern, Tanel, trans.) In: Salupere, Silvi; Torop, Peeter; Kull, Kalevi (eds.), *Beginnings of the Semiotics of Culture.* (Tartu Semiotics Library 13.) Tartu: University of Tartu Press, 41–43. [See also [32a].]


References

