

**LINNAR PRIIMÄGI. The border of the semiosphere**

Yuri M. Lotman's idea of "semiosphere" resulted from the concept of a "collective memory" as a "model of the "culture as such"". Its genuine meaning can be unveiled by comparison with the "biosphere" of Vladimir Vernadsky, the "monads" of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, the "Ent" of Parmenides, the "transfinite number" of Georg Cantor, the fractal theory of Benoit Mandelbrot and the "morphology" of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe.

**Keywords:** *semiosphere, collective memory, Yuri Lotman, biosphere, Vladimir Vernadsky, monad, Leibniz, Parmenides, transfinite number, Georg Cantor, fractal, Benoit Mandelbrot, morphology, J. W. Goethe.*

**BERK VAHER. Creating self in utopian exoticism: Abdul Mati Klarwein's "Milk N' Honey"**

Inspired by the recent resurgence of academic interest in exoticism, the article elaborates on some of the theoretical vindications of the phenomenon by concentrating on its aspects as the Romantic/Modernist artist's ultimate act of creating Self through the Other. Not being content with the (largely Westernised) genuine exotic cultures, an exote creates his/her own hybrid utopian sign system where elements of various exotic cultures are blended in order to resolve the overabundance of competing identities and establish a superior, transcendent and all-inclusive identity. The artist Abdul Mati Klarwein is a complex and exciting example of this practice. His aesthetic and spiritual act of creating a utopian exotic Self in the book "Milk N' Honey" (1973) is essentially a radical rewriting of the Old and New Testaments, including pictures from his self-designed Aleph Sanctuary chapel and texts blending black slang with Jewish humour. I will argue that it would be short-sighted to view Klarwein in the postcolonialist vein as a mere white "Negrophile" or "Orientalist" who plunders exotic cultures for his artistic career; having a most complex ethnic background from an Arab-friendly German/Jewish family, he was educated in the Parisian avant-garde and found the most supportive cultural context in the Afro-American utopian exoticism of the "astro-black" mentality.

**Keywords:** *exoticism, art, literature, counterculture, mysticism.*

**TIMO MARAN. Ecossemiotic method in the analysis of texts of nature**

The aim of the article is to elaborate ecossemiotics towards practical methodology of analysis. For that, the article first discusses the relation

between meaning and context seen as a possibility for an ecological view immanent in semiotics. Then various perspectives in ecosemiotics are analysed by describing biological and cultural ecosemiotics and critically reading the ecosemiotic works of W. Nöth and K. Kull. The author emphasizes the need to combine these approaches so that the resulting synthesis would both take into account the semioticity of nature itself as well as allow analysing the depiction of nature in the written texts. To this end, the author introduces a model of nature-text, which relates two parties intertwined by meaning-relations – the written text and the natural environment. In support of the concept of nature-text, the article discusses the Tartu–Moscow semioticians’ and other authors’ concepts of text, which are regarded as broad enough to accommodate the semiotic activity and environment creation of other animals besides humans. The concept of nature-text allows us to define nature writing as a verbalized esthetical appreciation of an alien semiotic sphere. The concept of nature-text also elucidates the nature writing’s marginality, explaining it with the need to interpret two different types of texts. In the final section the article introduces the starting points for the practical ecosemiotic analysis, focusing on the relations between the written text and the natural environment, on the selective depiction of nature and on the possibilities for communicating with and relating to the nature presented in the written texts. Within the latter part, ecosemiotic analysis tries to detect the author’s corporeality, the particular nature experience, sensory capabilities used to relate to the environment, and other traces of zoosemiotic modelling in nature writing.

**Keywords:** *context, nature writing, nature-text, text, zoosemiotic modeling, ecosemiotics, ecosemiotic analysis.*

### **KADRI TÜÜR. Definition of nature writing**

In the literature-focused branch of ecocriticism, the notion ‘nature writing’ has been used as a term denoting texts that have been written in an essayistic prose form, that contain information on natural history, and that manifest the ethical beliefs of the authors as citizens in regard to the natural environment.

Among those who study it, nature writing appears to be a clearly recognisable set of texts that has been composed according to certain generally accepted rules. Therefore, in the Anglo-American research tradition, nature writing is predominantly referred to as a ‘genre’.

The main aim of the present article is to find out on the example of Estonian nature writing to what extent such texts share common formal features. Form is an important parameter of genre as it increases the

automatism of the readers in the reception process, i.e., it increases the amount of information that is instantly received upon the recognition of a certain form.

Historically, genre theory has been predominantly normative. Currently, genre is understood as a dynamic and dialogical phenomenon, the recognition of which relies on the expectations of the readers, on the established canon and the context of the cultural situation in general. Estonian nature writing can also be regarded as a sub-literature that proceeds parallel to the mainstream literature. In the article, formal features typical to the texts of Estonian nature writing have been specified. By grouping these, it becomes evident that the core of nature writing is formed in the intersection of the marginal areas of three larger realms – science writing, fiction, and commodity texts.

By re-defining some peripheral phenomena, in the present case, texts representing nature, in regard to some new centre, in the present case, nature writing, they become more visible than before. At the same time, they inevitably lose some of their border-zone semiotic activity. Therefore, the model defining nature writing has to be featured in a dynamic manner, as a combination of several shifts, not as a ready-made framework.

**Keywords:** *nature writing, ecocriticism, genre, sub-literature.*

### **INDREK IBRUS. Power in systems as a semiotic problem (the example of new media)**

The article discusses semiotic ways to approach power in the semiotic dynamics. It argues that the role of power is becoming increasingly visible in the evolutionary processes of semiotic objects such as modern new media forms. As the development of the latter is straightforwardly extremely investment-intensive and dependent on the technological development “underneath”, as well as on the political regulation, it becomes increasingly relevant to question how power is applied in these different domains as social systems in Niklas Luhmann’s terms, and how do these “different kinds” of power relate to each other and eventually influence the evolution of semiotic objects such as media forms. The article claims that as in this way the evolution of semiotic objects depends directly on economic and political motives or social dynamics, one hence has to look for a dialogue between the academic metalanguages that are modelling these dynamics from different disciplinary perspectives. The article shows that for understanding the power dynamics that guides the semiotic dynamics in the modern society, the semiotic discipline in the form of Lotman’s semiospheric approach has to learn from the social

theories of power developed in economic innovation studies, as well as by Niklas Luhmann and Michel Foucault. In the end the article cautions for uncritical modelling of the modern media-evolution with the semiospheric centre-periphery dynamics and suggests complementing it with the concept of dialogic control.

**Keywords:** *power, media evolution, dialogic control, interdisciplinarity.*

### **KATRE VÄLI. Poets and poetry on the stage: “The Passion of St. John”**

The article gives an insight into a rather unexplored area, namely the poetry theatre. It gives a short overview of the few theoretical texts that deal with the questions about oral presentation of poetry and the signification of voice, rhythm, tones etc. in the theatre. The main focus of the article is on the play “The Passion of St. John” (premiered in Rakvere Theatre): whether the actors on the stage impersonate the poets while reading their texts, or just focus on the poems themselves, their contents and main ideas creating new roles, nameless persons.

Besides the above-mentioned play also a short introduction is given into several other plays on the Estonian stages in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, where poets and their biographies have been depicted. The conclusion can be drawn that poets are usually seen as tragic personalities. In addition, poetry is considered a very intimate way of expression and the creative work is regarded as a sort of mirror of the real life of the poets.

Another question about presenting poets in the theatre is the issue of the memory of the audience, what kind of stereotypes they have of the writers, whether the few general facts that have been taught at school are the right ones. Therefore material has been gathered from the diaries, articles, and personal letters of the poets and compared with the well-known stereotypes and with the figures we see on the stage.

**Keywords:** *poetry theatre, stereotype, biography, oral presentation.*

### **TIIT REMM. Temporality of place**

Temporal meanings form one part of the conceptualisation of spatial environment. Among a wide diversity of spatial conceptions, the present article focuses on the conception of “place” and its temporality.

Different approaches to place tackle with various aspects, such as experiences, sociality, and physical space. The named aspects are also the basis for understanding the temporality of place. When describing a place as a “text of spatial semiosis”, the structural conformity of different approaches appears. Place as a spatial conception is related to other

spatial conceptions which poses the question of associating temporal meanings of places with temporal meanings of other spatial conceptions.

**Keywords:** *place, time and space, semiotics of space.*

**MARIS SAAR. The spatial time in Emil Tode’s “Border State”**

When Emil Tode’s novel “Border State” was published in 1993, it immediately received extensive attention from the critics. Positive and negative reviews, short and in-depth research have been written. This article seeks to analyse a dimension in the novel’s composition that has largely been overlooked – the chronological organisation of the text and its relations to the spatial structure of the narrated world, deriving specifically from retrospective first-person narrative.

The narration in the “Border State” forms from the letters that the narrator writes, thus the text consists of isolated memories. The chronological and causal order of the events is not explicit, as the memory-time does not follow the rules of “real” time. The transfer from one scene to another is triggered by spatial elements rather than causality. This diffusiveness allows the time of the novel to be viewed as postmodern or mythical – both these characteristics reveal the time as giving preference to other dimensions of the text in organising the structure of it.

Gaston Bachelard’s view of the personal space in “The Poetics of Space” corresponds to the poetics of the “Border State” in many ways. The space – rooms, houses, windows, cities, streets, landscapes – has a distinctive role in the narration. The ways of being, musing and dreaming created by the rooms the protagonist inhabits are all distinct in their influence to the character. The sense of centrality, if found, evokes a feeling of safety and isolation from the world. Thus the textual universe of the “Border State” is created through a projection of individual perception from the spatial organisation rather than the chronological.

**Keywords:** *narrative analysis, postmodern time, spatial organisation of narrative, retrospective first-person narrative, poetics of space.*

**RENATA SÕUKAND. What makes a plant the medicinal plant: the attempt to categorize the relations between the plant and the disease**

Potential medicinal plants of Estonian ethnomedicine make one third of all local flora. The present paper seeks an answer to the question: what makes a plant the medicinal plant? The subject of this analysis is the material collected at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that came as an answer to the folklorist Jakob Hurt’s appeal from 1888 to collect local folklore. The data is first analysed according to the division made by the Finnish

folklorist Ilmari Manninen, in which he suggests that Estonian folk medicine is based on three principles: the similarity of the plant to the disease, the relation between the origin of the plant and disease, and the potency of medicine. However, these principles cover less than half of the texts on Estonian herbal folk medicine. It appears that the first two categories of I. Manninen have a remarkable overlap with the first two sign categories of American semiotician Charles Sanders Peirce (e.g. origin of plant = index, and similarity = icon) and the third category fits in with the concept of symbol of Ch. S. Peirce. Still, the symbolic relation allows including also such subcategories as the name of the plant and texts where the described contact with human body is insufficient to achieve biological effect. The performed analysis shows that unlike the herbal folk medicine described by I. Manninen, the Estonian herbal folk medicine of the 19<sup>th</sup> century relies on a tradition that reflects the cultural concepts held with regard to the plant and not to its origin or its physical similarity to the disease.

**Keywords:** *Estonian ethnomedicine, medicinal plants, relation between the plant and the disease, name of the plant.*

### **EVA LEPIK. On the leitmotifs of “The Burning Banner” by Karl Ristikivi**

The present article analyses the leitmotif structure of the historical novel “The Burning Banner” (1961) by the Estonian writer Karl Ristikivi. The novel commences a 12-volume series of novels on European history setting the course and remaining the key text of the series. The method of analysis used is Boris Gasparov’s induction of ideas that considers text dual-natured: a text is simultaneously a hermetic coherent artefact as a whole and an open accumulator of the flowing continuum of cultural memory and experience. Using Gasparov’s method, the component ideas from different levels of the text are associated and the functions of these relations in creating the artistic unity of the text are elucidated. The method presumes an open approach to the logic of motif development and asserting induced meanings in order to show how motifs are intertwined in the semantic configurations of the work and determine the positions of the said motifs.

The article charts the underlying mythic structure of “The Burning Banner” as well as the hidden layers of meaning of the novel. The mythic and hidden intertextual themes analysed in the novel include:

- historical events projected onto Biblical events (identifying the protagonist, the last Hohenstaufen Conradin, with king Solomon

of the Old Testament and projecting various episodes of his campaign in Italy onto the Passion of Christ)

- implicit and explicit occurrences of the *axis mundi* motif as well as its transformations (tree, mountain, temple) in the structure of the work and
- the intertwined motifs of *Doppelgänger*s of the protagonist as birds.

**Keywords:** *Karl Ristikivi, historical novel, the mythic, motifs.*

### **ESTER VÕSU. Culture as Drama**

The metaphorical comparison of drama (play) with life (socio-cultural phenomena) has been popular in the tradition of Western thinking, being part of the wider idea of *theatrum mundi*. The heuristic potential of drama as a “root metaphor” has likewise proven attractive for many social scientists during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The first part of the paper focuses on an analysis of the terminological field of drama, by providing a critical-comparative analysis of the approaches in the theory of theatre and social sciences since the middle of the past century. The aim of this review is to demonstrate the genesis and variety of drama as an analogy among different disciplines, traditions and authors in social sciences. The second part of the paper focuses on an in-depth analysis of the two major, distinct traditions that apply the drama analogy. The first, cultural anthropology, regards “social drama” (Victor Turner) as a model for studying extraordinary, special events in cultural life, connecting drama with rituals, traditions, liminal phases, conflicts and crises. Here the emphasis is on dramatic, exceptional experiences, where the scenarios “written” in the collective consciousness are outlined as if they are forces of tragedy, functioning above the individuals and thus destining their behaviour. The second tradition comes from sociology and it does not propose a concrete model but rather a dramaturgic perspective (Erving Goffman) for interpreting social interaction between people. Performing social roles in everyday life is treated as an act of self-dramaturgy, where mutual influences between social actors are of utmost importance. Drama therefore becomes a cognitive strategy that supports us in everyday social situations, helping us to understand the others and likewise contributing to the formation of the self, which consists of diverse social roles.

**Keywords:** *drama, analogy, social sciences, Victor Turner, social drama, Erving Goffman, dramaturgic school, social roles.*