Abstracts

DANIELE MONTICELLI. Culture as (de)construction: Lotman's 'translation' and Derrida's différance

If, in the political and sociological jargon and public rhetoric of the last decades, the concept of 'culture' has gradually replaced such discredited and unusable concepts as 'race', 'ethnos', even 'nation', it nevertheless seems to have inherited their position in conservative agenda. In the politics of identity culture is imagined and described as a closed system with clear-cut boundaries whose internality must be defended from possible contamination.

Drawing on the Saussurean conceptual universe, Derrida and Lotman both construct their theory of language and culture on the basis of a thorough (antistructuralistic) critique of that kind of internalizing self-enclosure which allowed Saussure to delimit and describe langue as the object of linguistics. The article tries to pinpoint and compare the fundamental instruments of this critique in Derrida's and Lotman's thought, touching upon the notions of 'mirror structure', 'binarism', 'numerousness'. There emerges an understanding of mediation which is not reducible to any kind of Aufhebung and frustrates the pretences of identity by constantly dislocating and deferring any attempt at semiotic self-enclosure. In the article I compare Lotman's 'translation of the untranslatable' (or 'dialogue') and Derrida's différance as similar ways of describing this kind of mediation.

Derrida and Lotman offer us important instruments to deconstruct from a theoretical point of view the conservative understanding of culture used today as a new (old) kind of ideological justification for sociopolitical conflicts. The (de)constructive nature of culture, as described by Lotman and Derrida, challenges any attempt at theorizing structural cultural constraints as sources of definitive and irreducible identities/differences.

Keywords: *Juri Lotman, Jacques Derrida, différance, translation, dialogue, cultural identity.*

ANDREAS VENTSEL. Hegemony as a visual rhetorical signification

The present paper tackles the questions that can be briefly formulated as follows: 1) how to visualise power? and 2) does rhetorics have anything

to offer to research on the visualisation processes of power? The paper discusses the relationship between the theory of hegemony as elaborated by Ernesto Laclau and the semiotics of culture of Juri Lotman and possibilities to use rhetoric to describe power relations in picture producing regime in society. The ground for believing this incorporation to be successful is the very apparent theoretical congeniality between them. They both belong to the Saussurean ontological terrain. The main functions that Lotman attributes to semiosphere bare the same functional roles as do Laclau's central categories when he specifies his notion of discourse. Laclau's discourse has quite the same attributions as Lotman's text or semiosphere; Laclau's "empty signifier" is similar to Lotman's concept of block of contingent equivalences, metaphorogenous device that makes possible operations of translation in the conditions of untranslatability. They both think that the creation of meaningful totality (text, discourse) can only be figural or tropological construction – not a literal recognition or not only through one language.

For Laclau, hegemony is to be understood only on the terrain of discourse: a hegemonic relation is a certain articulation of meanings. Laclau's background concerning the problem of power and hegemony takes further the Foucaultian notion of positive aspect of power. According to Foucault power does not only say "no" but it also creates knowledge and produces meaningful discourses. One of these instruments through which power relations are established in society is photography. Using as an example the Soviet totalitarian society I show how concept of rhetoric help to clarify this process of hegemonic signification.

Keywords: *visual rhetorics, photography, hegemony, cultural semiotics, "socialist content, national form".*

OTT PUUMEISTER. The construction of the subject in surveillance systems

The article deals with surveillance systems and their relations to the subject, it focuses on power relations constituted in surveillance systems. Attention is also paid at how these systems construct the identities of subjects and groups. The main theoretical foundation is

Michel Foucault's approach to discourse and power; as an example of surveillance systems, the closed and whole structure of school environment is viewed with the help of Foucault's concepts 'panopticon' and 'heterotopy'. Juri Lotman's concept of autocommunication helps us to deal with the problem of subjects' autonomy in surveillance systems. To theoretically approach the more extensive surveillance functioning in society, the concept of surveillant assemblage is used. It describes surveillance systems that are closed only temporarily and are actualized through power relations which are not organized around a fixed centre and do not have stable boundaries. Giorgio Agamben's concept 'biopolitics' and, again, Foucault's concept 'governmentality' support the understanding of management and governing practices of subjects and groups. Building on these foundations, the article studies the surveillance systems' power of constructing the subject and how different system organizations construct different subject positions. To help the understanding of how the differently organized systems are capable of cooperating, the examples of surveillance in Laagri school as well as in the schools of Great Britain are used. Since there does not exist any unified theoretical framework for considering surveillance systems, this article – by uniting different concepts and approaches – tries to give a humble contribution to an understanding of a modern social problem.

Keywords: *surveillance, power relations, subject position, identity, autocommunication.*

VILMOS VOIGT. Joannis Barclaii "Icon Animorum" (1614): Early characteristics of European nations

Culture mediation today follows different ways of communication. There is a long tradition of comparing European cultures, but that material was not often studied in semiotics. In my paper I discuss one of the earliest and most interesting books on that topic.

The famous political essayist and writer John Barclay (1582–1621), born to a Scottish teacher of law and a French mother, was an English nobleman, who spent most of his life on the Continent, writing exclusively in elegant Latin on European state affairs and social life. His first important book was the "Satyricon" (1603), a picaresque novel

in three parts, mirroring everyday life. The next book "Icon Animorum" (London 1614) was understood by the contemporary European public as the fourth book of the "Satyricon", presenting its theoretical summary. After a dedication to the French king, there are two chapters of introduction (on the four ages of man, on genius seculorum et regionum) and seven descriptive chapters according to states and peoples (Gallia, the English, Scots and Irishmen, Germans and Belgians, Italians, the Spanish, Hungarians, Poles and Muscovites, the Turks and Jews). Then seven synthetic chapters follow, about mental capacities, characterology, types of power and rulers, men in the service of courts, magistrates and patrons, divine experience and religious leaders. No explanatory notes, maps or illustrations are included. In the later (German) editions of the book exhaustive commentaries have been added.

Barclay's book is an excellent source for the historical culture mediation. Especially the third topic in the book – description of a dozen European peoples – offers good material for comparative semiotics.

It will be analysed in the framework of later characteristics of the European peoples/cultures.

Keywords: *John Barclay, "Icon Animorum", European nations.*

TERJE LOOGUS. Cultural foreignness of texts as translation problem

Relying on the on-going discussions on translation studies in Germany – especially in the Göttingen school of literary translation – this article considers foreignness originating from the culture of texts and translation problems arising from that. To begin with, the article gives an overview of the concept of culture, discusses the role of culture in translation studies and defines the relationship between the notions of the 'Self' and the 'Other'. Subsequently, the article looks at the cultural foreignness of texts and ways to cope with this in the translation process. Foreignness is primarily defined through culture-specific elements. For the translator, a text is "foreign" if it contains features which the translator who relies on his own language and culture cannot straightforwardly interpret and integrate into the translator's own

language and culture without any difficulty. The said foreignness of the text may entail both translation problems and the translator's internal decision conflicts. Based on Huntemann and Rühling (1997), a distinction between two types of foreignness – cognitive and discriminatory – is made in the article. A text or its elements are cognitively foreign to the translator if the latter lacks the theoretical or practical knowledge necessary for understanding the text. Discriminatory foreignness rests on negative allocations of an object and its class or of objects belonging into different classes. By analysing cognitive and discriminatory foreignness, also cultural-specific translation problems are sought to be defined. When a source text contains foreignness manifesting itself in one or another way, the translator is faced with not only inevitable difficulties, but also with contingent problems. As anticipated, the translator needs to deal with problems related to transmission of the cultural other as well as contingently subjective cognitive foreignness. The translator's problem is not only lessening the cognitive foreignness of the text for himself, but also finding a way to convey the discriminatory foreignness in the form of a translation to the target text receivers, drawing on the potentialities of his own language and culture.

Keywords: *translation, translation process, foreignness, cultural differences.*

MAARJA LÄÄNESAAR. Terminology and the concept of translation in translation criticism

The role and percentage of translations in Estonian culture is considerably larger than in the Anglo-American world, therefore it is crucial to analyse the methods, possibilities and actual practices for understanding and describing translations adapted to our situation. As translation criticism supposedly both prescribes and describes the translation norms of a society (according to Toury 1995), the study of explicit and implicit statements on translation in translation reviews is a good starting point for understanding the visibility and role of translations in Estonia.

The current state of Estonian translation criticism (relying on the author's analysis of book reviews published from 2000 to 2009 in

literary magazine "Vikerkaar") is looked at from two aspects. Firstly the amount of terminological language usage in translation criticism (aka the part of reviews that deals with translation either explicitly or implicitly), the possibility for an accurate description is discussed. The terminology used for scientific discourse in Translation Studies is context-dependent and largely built on loan words that function poorly in terms of connotative understanding. In the absence of a definitive dictionary the scientific discourse cannot be adopted easily, forcing the critics to turn to figurative language use. Secondly, there is the issue of conceptualising the translations as adaptations, accurate copies or mirror images, thus different practices for stressing or hiding the role of the translator are described.

In a book review for a journal, it is useless to expect a methodological, overtly explicit and strictly scientific translation analysis, especially if the metalanguage lacks clarity and if there are no strict norms for reviewing a translated book. The figuratively expressed subjective views however carry an understanding of translation that can and needs to be made explicit.

Keywords: *translation criticism, terminology, conceptual metaphors, translation norms, translator's invisibility*.

MARGUS TAMM. What is plural author?

A plural author is not an unknown neither a new form of authorship, yet, what emerges in descriptions of contemporary plural authors, is an emphasis towards counter-cultural, towards undermining of the traditional author figure. One could say that this often disregards the productive aspects of collective authorship and reduces the plural author into nothing more than a group of critics for the Author, into an illustration to the Death of the Author. Yet many plural authors have been very productive, influential and even institutionally recognised, also censored – it means that they have possessed the qualities of the Author in a way which cannot be reduced barely to the level of parody or deconstruction.

In his essay "What is Author?" Michel Foucault also mentions some plural authors such as Homer and, from the 20th century, Nicolas Bourbaki. Because of what is stated above and even more because of

the great influence of his essay, I use some tools from Foucault's toolbox to analyse the author's positions of plural authors with the purpose of closely observing the aspects into which the plural authors fit and how they fill author's functions, as well as the aspects which conflict with the latter.

As the objects for this analysis I take three quite well known plural authors – Luther Blissett (Italian writer and media persona), Nicolas Bourbaki (French mathematician) and Subcomandante Marcos (Mexican guerilla-leader, writer and essayist).

Keywords: *Author, plural author, pen name*.

KRISTIN VAIK. On beginning and ending formulas of Estonian tales of magic

In this article the beginning and ending formulas of Estonian tales of magic (tale types 300–749 in ATU catalogue) are examined. The aim of the article is firstly to draw from the theoretical part the main functions of the beginning and ending formulas of the tales of magic and secondly to analyse the typical beginning and ending formulas of the Estonian tales of magic and explain their functioning. To achieve the first goal, folklorists' descriptions of the formulas are explored and analysed from a semiotical perspective, making use of the relevant aspects of cultural semiotics (Juri Lotman), the frame theory of narratology (Katharine Galloway Young) and the theory of literary fictional worlds (Ludomir Doležel). As a result the beginning and ending formulas are viewed as guiding frames between Storyrealm and Taleworld, which lead listeners to the Taleworld and back, letting them know that what is beginning or ending is or was a tale of magic, and notifying them, in the case of beginning formulas, that for the appreciation of what follows a peculiar state of mind effected by a "voluntary suspension of disbelief" (see Dégh 1981) is necessary.

In the second part of the article, typical beginning and ending formulas of Estonian tales of magic are analysed based on their lexicon, keeping in mind their main functions. As a consequence the meaning and functions of typical formulas are revealed in a cognitive perspective.

Keywords: *cultural semiotics, tales of magic, frame theory, fictional worlds.*

MARIA-KRISTIINA LOTMAN, MIHHAIL LOTMAN, REBEKKA LOTMAN. Autometadescription in Estonian poetry IV

The purpose of the paper is to systematize the sign mechanisms in Estonian poetry. Special attention is paid to these forms which Roman Timenchik has called autometadescriptive (1975). The subject of the study is Estonian poetry in its entirety, beginning with Kristjan Jaak Peterson and ending with contemporary authors. Full analysis has been made of the authors of the end of the 19th century – the beginning of the 20th century and of the end of the 20th century, selectively also the texts from the 1930–1980 have been studied. The fourth part of the paper studies rhythm.

Keywords: *theory of verse, autometadescription, Estonian verse, semiotics, verse rhythm.*