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# **ABSTRACTS**



**LIINA REISBERG. The field of legal semiotics and its objectives**

This overview article about the research field and the main research questions of legal semiotics summarizes the emergence of the legal semiotics in the footsteps of Ch. S. Peirce, F. de Saussure and German hermeneutics. The article is in dialogue with Vadim Verenich's "Semiotics of Law" published in the textbook "Semiotics" (ed. Salupere, Kull 2018). The article points out that semiotics of law is geographically and thematically fragmented and therefore has several research objectives. These do not coincide with the research objectives of legal theory. Therefore, legal science cannot be used instead of legal theory, but together with it. American legal semioticians, who use the concept of sign by Peirce, are interested in process of understanding a law; process of argumentation and the change of law. For their study, Peirce's categories of metaphysics, definitions of sign and a model of infinite semiosis are used. Authors using Saussurean perspective analyze the relationship between a single rule and the whole legal system. German legal semiotics continues the tradition of German legal theory and asks for appropriate methods for the interpretation of law.

**Keywords:** *semiotics of law, legal semiotics, law, hermeneutics of law*

**TÕNU VIK, PEETER TOROP, MAARIS RAUDSEPP.  
Culture-dependent meaning-making: Theoretical models**

The paper examines the ways the process of meaning-making (or: meaning-formation) is conceptualized in hermeneutics, phenomenology, semiotics, and cultural psychology. Meaning-making is understood here as a semiotic process by means of which the human world is organized into meaningful, and hence recognizable, familiar and customary things, units and processes. Culture-dependency of this process refers to the fact that at least some results of the meaning-making process of human beings depend on a social and cultural context. In other words, the process of human meaning-making is culturally patterned. The paper reviews and compares the ways in

which the culture-dependency of human meaning-making is viewed in hermeneutics, phenomenology, semiotics and cultural psychology. We will show that all four disciplines argue for a certain structure of collective meanings that functions as a “cultural language” or a “secondary modelling system”. This structure makes the outcome of meaning-formation dependent on a social and cultural context, and distinguishes the options of meaning-making of one social group from another.

**Keywords:** *meaning-making, culture-dependent meaning-formation, phenomenology, hermeneutics, semiotics, cultural psychology*

### **ELE LOONDE. Internet memes in the political communication of Estonian Conservative People’s Party**

The aim of this article is to explicate the relations between political internet memes, the auditorium and other texts in the context of cultural semiotics. In the article, I observe how the three Internet memes shared on the official Facebook and Instagram account of Estonian Conservative People’s Party (ECPP) during the election campaign of 2017 constructed their auditorium and which are their socio-communicative functions. Umberto Eco’s concept of the model reader allows to conceptualize the text–auditorium relation through competences that the text sets to the reader. To identify the socio-communicative functions of the Internet memes, I will use Juri Lotman’s framework of the five textual functions. The Internet memes shared on ECPP’s page imply two spectrums of competencies: one of being familiar with the culture of Internet memes and the other of knowing etnofuturism. The fact of the analyzed Internet memes being shared on an official page of a political party seems to act as Roland Barthes’s *punctum*. This together with the model reader and the auditorium not overlapping leads to interpretational confusion. The article uses the lens of semiotics to demonstrate the inner mechanisms of three political Internet memes and how they were used in political communication.

**Keywords:** *Internet memes, political communication, text functions, model reader*



**RIIN MAGNUS, TIIT REMM. The meanings of alien species in Estonia: Formation and the context of urban space**

Alien species are characteristic to the era of anthropocene, reflecting the ubiquity of human influence. The formation of the “alien species” concept and its meanings in different contexts have always been tied to the cultural imagination about relations between nature and culture, but also with the (unexpected) activities of other species in a novel environment. In the current study, we analyse the formation of the meaning of alien species in Estonia and the relevance of the ecological alien species paradigm in the context of modern urban greenery. The development of the discourse of alien species was analysed on the basis of the articles about alien species in the journal *Eesti Loodus* (from 1958 to 2017). To analyse the relevance of the alien species topic in modern greenery, we made expert interviews with people, who have been practically or theoretically involved with the topic of urban greenery. Although the first critical articles about alien species were published in the 1960s in *Eesti Loodus*, a more comprehensive discussion of problems related to alien species takes place in the second half of 2000s. In urban greenery, the polarity “local species–alien species” is not of major significance today and may become relevant on some specific occasions only (e.g., the trees for honorary citizens) or in some concrete parts of the city. The interviews also revealed a discrepancy between the official and the cognitive idea of alien species – several species, which are perceived as one’s own, have been introduced here a couple of centuries ago and are hence alien species by definition. The interviews also pointed out other distinctions between self and other, which were considered to be more important in the context of urban greenery than the opposition between local species and non-native species. When applying the ecological alien species paradigm, the historical background of the meaning of species in a particular culture should hence be considered, as well as various distinctions between self and other that are specific to particular environments (e.g., cities).

**Keywords:** *alien species, urban landscaping, urban planning, semiotics of self and other*

**RASMUS REBANE. Autocommunication from Peirce to Lotman**

This paper gives a brief overview of a variety of semiotic approaches to self-communication (autocommunication) in the semiotic theories of six important thinkers, ordered as a chronological chain of influence. These include: Charles S. Peirce, putting forth that a person's thoughts are what he is saying to that other self emerging in the flow of time; George H. Mead, for whom the mechanism of talking to oneself serves the construction of a self; Charles W. Morris, who discusses self-communication in the key of behavioristic self-conditioning; Jurgen Ruesch, who differentiated intrapersonal communication on different levels of abstraction; and Juri Lotman, whose theory of autocommunication contains aspects of all the above mentioned and appears to be the most comprehensive.

**Keywords:** *autocommunication, self-communication, Charles S. Peirce, George H. Mead, Charles W. Morris, Juri Lotman, Jurgen Ruesch*