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Category: Academic Meeting

Title: Tartu Summer School of Semiotics 2013 - Autocommunication in Semiotic Systems

Description: Summer School 2013 - Autocommunication in Semiotic Systems
40 years after the Theses on the Semiotic Study of Culture

Summer School 2013 is five-day event taking place from August 18 to 23 in a secluded Kääriku in South Estonia.

Theses on the Semiotic Study of Cultures first appeared 40 years ago, in 1973. The title of this publication indicates that alongside with outlining a conditionally novel semiotic approach the authors were treating the Study of Cultures. Thus, besides establishing the theoretical boundary of cultural semiotics, that publication simultaneously assembled an actual methodological start-up toolkit for practical study of culture and individual cultural phenomena.

There lies a quintessential coincidence between cultural semiotics, Tartu-Moscow school, and the Theses which places this triplet amongst both the important and the amusing in the story of humanities. Besides considered as a classic in the history of semiotics marking the start-off the already born trend of cultural semiotics, Theses is an example to follow in its generation as a result of international collective effort. Our summer school's topic involves a nuance that is seemingly minute, but connects the times of the Theses with today both formally and essentially. The Study of Culture gave birth to cultural semiotics on the basis of so-to-speak negotiated semiotics, and ever since that time it is hardly possible to find similar examples. We may speak of some semiotic subtrends associated with individual visions or decide over theses on (specific or general) semiotics presented by individual scholars.

Taking the example of Theses from the past, and reflecting over it together with its influences across times to today, the semiotic circles might take up reflective autocommunication in order to set future steps in organising both the paradigm of semiotics and communicate the institution of semiotics to neighbouring paradigms. It is noteworthy that autocommunication in the semiotics of today's Tartu has already moved towards communication between also the soft and the hard sciences. Bridging cultural semiotics, biosemiotics, and sociosemiotics, there can be envisaged perspectives for a qualitatively new Tartu semiotics offering the general semiotic paradigm a holistic theoretical ground on which to build a coherent methodological toolkit for the study of man

in his diverse environments.

On this object level, man's communication with his surroundings leads to further autocommunication and reconceptualisation of himself as a semiotic subject. Thus, here is also the meeting point of autocommunication and reflection, or: self-description. The practical holistic study of culture and semiotic subjects in their self-descriptive, autocommunicative, and communicative functioning, leads to simultaneous holistic tendencies also on the metalevel. On such a basis of cultural semiotics, Tartu semiotics may have something to offer for the semiotic paradigm in general.

To celebrate the 40th anniversary of Theses on the Semiotic Study of Cultures, we call for reflections on the context and co-texts leading to and from that milestone in semiotic studies. Let us try to:

- conceptualise developments in cultural semiotics ever since the Theses, as also clues to its applications in neighbouring disciplines and in its seeded trends;
- position Tartu semiotics in cultural semiotics, as also in the general paradigm of semiotics and other disciplines in timeline associated with the 'ground zero' of the Theses;
- contemplate on communication and autocommunication as a specific topic in cultural semiotics – also in exemplary case studies as a possibility to open discussion on cultural semiotics either as a coherent monolith or an open cumulative paradigm developed through ad hoc research;
- formulate terms in which to talk about contemporary Tartu semiotics and semiotics in Tartu?
- hypothesise whether is it possible, both in cultural semiotics and semiotic research associated with contemporary Tartu, to gain the level of systemic coherence presentable in the form of a New Theses?

Date: 17/08/2013 to 22/08/2013

Link: Tartu Summer School of Semiotics

Keywords: Semiotics, Communication, Autocommunication