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Iuri Lotman: The analysis of Culture from Complexity and Transdisciplinarity / Iuri Lotman, el análisis de la cultura desde la complejidad y la transdisciplinarietà / Iuri Lotman: a análise da cultura segundo a perspectiva da complexidade e da transdisciplinarietà

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ABSTRACT

We have several objectives in this article. Firstly, we return to the category of semiosphere due to its dialectical and polysemic character, but we also introduce some reflections in order to analyze more complex cultural productions. In this same sense, the category of internal and external semiotic border allows us to present the cultural, intercultural, and transcultural translation problems that are articulated with the dynamic changes of every culture. Secondly, we examine the category of culture and articulate it with the no-culture, with the anti-culture, which would lead to propose three types of semiosphere: cultural semiosphere, noncultural semiosphere, and anti-cultural semiosphere, which introduce controversial aspects that must be considered. Thirdly, we study Iuri Lotman's latest approaches on the unpredictable in cultural processes, assuming assumptions of complexity and transdisciplinarity that are present in all his work.

KEYWORDS: Semiosphere; Cultural-intercultural-transcultural translation; No-culture, anti-culture; The unpredictable

RESUMEN

En este artículo, tenemos varios objetivos. En primer lugar, nos interesa retomar la categoría de semiosfera por su carácter dialéctico y polisémico, pero introduciendo reflexiones para analizar producciones culturales más complejas. En este mismo sentido, la categoría de frontera semiótica, de carácter interno y externo, nos permite introducir los problemas de la traducción cultural, intercultural, transcultural que se articulan con los cambios dinámicos de toda cultura. En segundo lugar, retomamos la categoría de cultura, para articularla con la nocultura, con la anticultura, lo que conllevaría a proponer tres tipos de semiosferas: de la cultura, de la nocultura, de la anticultura, que introduce aspectos polémicos que deben ser considerados. En tercer lugar, tratamos los últimos planteamientos de Iuri Lotman sobre lo impredecible en los procesos culturales, con lo

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cual asume premisas de la complejidad, de la transdisciplinariedad que están presentes en toda su obra.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Semiosfera; Traducción cultural-intercultural-transcultural; Anticultura, no-cultura; Lo impredecible

RESUMO

Neste artigo, temos vários objetivos. Em primeiro lugar, estamos interessados em retomar a categoria de semiosfera em seu caráter dialético e polissêmico, mas introduzindo reflexões para analisar produções culturais de grande complexidade. Nesse mesmo sentido, a categoria de fronteira semiótica interna e externa permite introduzir os problemas de tradução cultural, intercultural e transcultural que se articulam com as mudanças dinâmicas de cada cultura. Em segundo lugar, retomamos a categoria de cultura, para articulá-la com a não-cultura, com a anticultura, o que leva a propor três tipos de semiosferas: da cultura, da não-cultura, da anticultura, que introduzem aspectos controvertidos que devem ser considerados. Em terceiro lugar, tratamos das últimas abordagens de Iuri Lotman sobre a imprevisibilidade dos processos culturais, com os quais formula premissas sobre a complexidade e transdisciplinaridade presentes em todo o seu trabalho.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Semiosfera; Tradução cultural-intercultural-transcultural; Anticultura, não-cultura; Imprevisibilidade

Introduction

In this article, we propose to return to Iuri Lotman's theoretical perspective for the analysis of culture, from the point of view of complexity and transdisciplinarity in order to provide an update and highlight its importance for the study of cultural processes, which are increasingly complex in the contemporary world and associated with multiple conflicts and tensions that do not reach acceptable and positive solutions. Besides the latter, it is necessary to emphasize the impact of cultural productions in the digital era, in which a digital culture emerges, encompassing the cyberspace, cybertime (digital chronotope), and cyberanthrope.

Within this framework, Lotman's ideas are still valid because they are organically related to the current problems of political, economic, and cultural globalization, which are generated by several factors.

In this sense, the three sections that we develop are approached analytically, that is, related to the complex cultural processes that humanity experiences. In the first section,

there are three analytical lines in regard to the category of semiosphere: internal and external semiotic borders; dialectical movements between the cultural core and the periphery; recursivity between memory and forgetfulness, from the category of cultural memory, and the processes of different types of translation. In the same way, the second section explores the categories of culture, no-culture, anti-culture, in order to problematize them and to deepen the analysis which allows to establish three types of semiosphere, not only that of culture. In the third section, we return to Lotman's main ideas to analyze the unpredictable in culture, with the influence of Ilya Prigogine, and with which it is articulated with greater clarity to complexity and transdisciplinarity.

In short, in this article we go through several theoretical lines and analytical routes, with the aim of presenting the paths that open with the Lotmanian perspectives, which, due to their polysemic nature, allow them to continue in force, valid for any analysis of fast, ephemeral, and changing cultural productions that surround us and bind us in this 21st century.

1 Semiosphere, a Dialectical, Polysemic, and Recursive Category

This category appears in the second period of the Lotmanian production, and although the previous approaches continue, there are important changes introduced as follows (LOTMAN, 1996):

- a) Culture is a semiosphere in opposition to the biosphere. The structural mechanisms of semiosphere organize, hierarchize, memorize, translate, interpret and examine large historical, cumulative or explosive processes, which are basically unpredictable. If we reflect on this definition, we can highlight the complexity of its functions, which gives it a great heuristic scope.
- b) Culture is a text organized in a complex way, where hierarchies of *texts within texts* can be observed, which shapes a complex textual plot.
- c) The fundamental and dialectical category for working the semiosphere is the *semiotic border*, defined as bilingual filters for cultural translation. Returning to this approach, we prefer to propose that there are multilingual filters since, with the processes of

globalization, the translation is much more complex. This, it is more pertinent to use the metaphor of plurilinguism, that is, innumerable languages and texts that are hyperconnected.

From this point of view, multiculturalism, pluriculturalism, inter-culturalism and transculturalism imply the existence of complex semiotic borders, in which spatio-temporal, chronotopic relationships of high semiotic density are established. The foregoing can be illustrated with the relationship between the West and the East, in the macro and micro dimensions, with the indigenous cultures of America that constitute semiospheres, with texts and languages that establish semiotic boundaries between cultures. From this perspective, the cultural goes through the translation of languages or texts so that otherness, the other, the alien can be integrated within an original textual logic in order to avoid physical or symbolic violence. However, in today's contemporary development there are no intercultural and transcultural translations with the necessary degrees to avoid violence, but quite the opposite. In this sense, in the semiotic borders there are fundamental and mainly conflicts in the processes of translation, an aspect that is sometimes invisible in Lotmanian theoretical approaches.

The category of translation is related to those of multiculturalism, pluriculturalism, interculturalism, transculturalism. In cultural studies, the two initial categories that attempt to relate cultures are those of multiculturalism/pluriculturalism, which fail to problematize and deepen internal and external cultural heterogeneity. Multiculturalism (pluriculturalism) is defined as the coexistence of multiple cultures, in a given space, as is practically the case in all the Nation States. The category of interculturalism emerges later, with the aim of deepening the relationships between different cultures, so as to highlight the conflicts and tensions generated in these exchanges, with the intensification of migration processes, based on cultural, economic and political globalization, which has been inevitable since the end of the twentieth century. This category allows an in-depth visualization of the problems derived from the relations between cultures. However, it is important to emphasize that there are two fundamental positions to deal with these intercultural processes: 1) The first one is related to hegemonic positions, studies the intercultural dimension considered as the encounter between cultures, and with which many problems

are excluded and 2) The second one constitutes a critical position emerging from the alternative, with which interculturality requests to rescue a decolonial matrix in order to move away from the dominant schemes (MIGNOLO, 2015; CARLOS GOMEZ; GROSFOGUEL, 2007). This second position requires a redefinition of the problems and the categories that are used from the dominant discourse.

The category with the broadest scope to analyze these complex cultural processes is transculturality, which was taken up again in the 1990s and continues to this day. Interculturality, however, is still the most widespread category. Fernando Ortiz uses the concept of transculturation in 1935, but with other nuances. At present, the category of transculturality has some considerable production, but in almost no research articles is it related to the approaches of the Epistemology of Complexity by Edgar Morin and Transdisciplinarity, which are the theoretical approaches that allow deepening the analysis. The category appears in this sense in the Charter of Transdisciplinarity (1994), in several articles, and with more systematization in Basarab Nicolescu, *Manifesto of Transdisciplinarity* (1996).

This has been presented with the aim of expanding the Lotmanian cultural translation, the intercultural and transcultural translation, focusing on the latter, due to its heuristic scope (HAIDAR, 2013).

1. Modernity and postmodernity accelerate changes and complex transcultural processes, which are inevitable in the present and in the future.
2. The transcultural translation has two basic orientations: one that leads to cultural dialogism, based on the ethical act, as we claim it, and another one that leads to the reproduction of domination, of difference. For the development of positive transculturality, we must overcome the difference between different languages and cultures and seek their translation, promoting dialogism, which will always be possible despite various difficulties.
3. There is the paradox of the open and the closed in transcultural translation. Transcultural processes must overcome the myth: the West, the repository of science, and the East, the repository of wisdom. However, in recursive terms, in each subject the Orient of wisdom and the West of science are potentially reunited.

4. The transcultural translation proposes that there is no culture that can judge others, in discriminatory terms. It has always existed, but in today's world it acquires other scopes with globalization, with the hyper-connection among cultures.

5. The transcultural translation is the condition of being of culture, but it implies a complex recursive relation between the homogeneous and the heterogeneous. In this sense, the transcultural objective is to seek dialogue among all the cultures which will always resist homogenization.

The above approaches to transculturality are related to the category of total translation established by Lotman (1996; 1998, 2000) and by Torop (2000), because there are continuous translation processes between cultures so that they can be intelligible. In these terms, transcultural processes should obey ethical principles, starting from the need to respect the other, to otherness, which does not happen because they do not manage to eliminate conflicts, tensions, wars that are leading to a total crisis, to a whole world civilization crisis.

Transculturality, however, is appealing because the contact with the *other*, with otherness, may be possible in a world where the heterogeneity of languages, rituals and symbolic orders can be overcome by digital media. The best of globalization (the transcultural utopia) will have to confront the serious and still insurmountable problem of the negation of the other, of the complex and different alterities.

In transcultural processes, which involve various types of translation, it is important to return to the recursion between memory and oblivion, related to the category of cultural memory. Lotman (1996) places a lot of emphasis on this category, since it is related to the mnemonic processes of conservation of cultures. The immense and prolific cultural production cannot be conserved in its totality, the reason why cultures select what must remain and exclude what must be forgotten. In this dialectic between memory and forgetting, however, exclusions or disappearances occur for several reasons, among which the important role of power stands out. In effect, power impacts in a fundamental way on the memory of culture, of various types, that are related to the cognitive processes mainly of the dominant classes.

To conclude this section, we return to the semiosphere category in order to

separate its diverse meanings, aiming at how to segment it analytically. Firstly, a macro, general semiosphere is proposed, which encompasses all that is cultural and where an infinity of languages and texts operate (even with the possibility that the texts can precede some languages, which is the case of the text-code) (LOTMAN 1996; 1998). Secondly, the semiosphere of culture is formed by specific and particular semiospheres, each of which is constituted by heterogeneous languages and texts. Thirdly, semiospheres are constituted by semiotic formations, which is Lotman's analytic proposal for segmentation (1996; 1998). From our point of view, the second sense seems more pertinent, in which the macro and micro are recursively articulated, allowing us to cover the semiospheres of music, space, painting, fashion, etc.

To sum up, one can say that the relationship between semiospheres and its internal and external borders passes through a dialectic of conflict, which materializes in the problems of cultural, intercultural and transcultural translation. It implies different types and degrees of translation processes which overlap with the dialectic of memory and oblivion in cultures.

2 Semiotics of Culture, No-culture, Anti-culture

There is an interesting development in Lepik (2002) regarding the relationship between the concepts of culture, no-culture, and anti-culture, which have not been made quite clear in Lotman and Uspensky (1979). Based on the relations that Lepik establishes between culture, no-culture, and anti-culture, in our opinion it is possible to extend the initial proposal of Lotman to suggest that three distinct types of semiospheres are in an organic relationship: *the semiosphere of culture, the semiosphere of no-culture and the semiosphere of anti-culture*, in which the movements of the predictable / unpredictable emerge. This further development seems pertinent because if the semiotics of culture and the semiosphere are established as two basic categories, it is necessary to focus on the other two that logically follow it: semiosphere of no-culture, semiosphere of anticulture. In addition, instead of proposing differences between the three semiospheres, we prefer to propose a recursive continuum between culture / no-culture / anti-culture (HAIDAR; CHÁVEZ HERRERA 2016).

This proposal requires a clearer definition of what is no-culture and anti-culture according to Lotman and UsPENKY's ideas in several articles. Located spatially outside the semiosphere as the unknown, no-culture has a recursive relationship with culture. Mechanisms of different types of translation are made possible between both of them, which is the topic addressed in this work. As an example to illustrate what no-culture is, we can mention the ancestral cultures to which the European culture of the conquest is a no-culture, among many other examples. On the other hand, anti-culture is in opposition to culture, situating both in the negative and the positive sides, reminding us of the cultural mechanism of enantiomorphism (LEPIK, 2002; HAIDAR; CHÁVEZ HERRERA, 2016).

From this perspective, in which we synthesized Lepik's brilliant analysis, we argued that drug trafficking is not a narco-culture, as is used by many authors in many studies. It is located, however, in the semiosphere of anti-culture, where there is a great heterogeneity of languages and texts. This singular and grotesque semiosphere does not produce culture, since, from our point of view, culture must be linked to the ethical, to the constructive. The production of drug trafficking is anti-cultural because it is generated by barbarism, terror, criminal death, with which the category of narco-culture loses relevance, undoubtedly generating multiple controversies.

From complexity and transdisciplinarity, the category of narco-culture has no validity, because it is generated in association with the operation of an unethical, dominant power for which ethical criteria do not work. Drug trafficking products belong to the semiosphere of anti-culture, although they appear to hide all the terror and death they generate, such as narco-events, fashion, cinema, narco-cemetery, advertising, etc.

In this way, the anti-culture of drug trafficking simulates reality through a massive use of degenerate signs and deviated or distorted semiotic productions that seek to represent adulterated modes of life and conceal, through superficial mechanisms, the deep structure of this semiosphere, which has as its core the multiple techniques of horror through intimidation, dehumanization, and exclusion (HAIDAR; CHAVEZ HERRERA, 2016).

In addition, it is presented as disconnected from the development of transnational capitalism and its powers of domination. In other words, this semiosphere of anti-culture is inserted in the heart of global capitalism, in its most perverse and dark side, which forces us

to investigate the socio-political-cultural-historical-economic dimensions that are inserted in these semiospheres of crime. In this sense, we propose the need to name these products from anti-culture and barbarism. Transculturality does not allow narco-barbarism, since it is not sustainable from the minimum values of ethics, and much less from a planetary ethic (MORIN, 2004). In addition, the dissemination and circulation of this barbarism is sustained by the connection of drug trafficking with the transnational factual powers: political, media and military powers, as we have mentioned.

From the movements of the periphery to the core treated by Iuri Lotman in several works, the fascination towards the practices of organized crime and what they represent is still worrisome: heroes, for many marginalized social groups, a situation that continues to be a simulacrum of a tremendously tragic reality that allows them to live as an illegal elite articulated to power. We observe how a semiosphere of anticulture, such as narcotraffic, moves to the core, creating hyper-realities. To support a deep critical position, we turn to the Semiotics of Culture, the Epistemology of Complexity and Transdisciplinarity to argue and contest the uncritical positions that analyze *narcoculture* with positive nuances, excluding all the terror it produces and focusing on its superficial productions, such as music, fashion, houses and even narco-cemeteries.

3 The Dialectics of the Predictable / Unpredictable in Diverse Cultural Processes

In Lotman's third period, he continues to discuss the previous themes, but introduces new analytical angles to the problem of cultural changes. In his book, *Culture and Explosion* (2009),¹ the changes do not necessarily imply revolution, but rather the unpredictable, as a scientific object, the casual. With these approaches, he introduces the theories of randomness, chaos, catastrophe, complexity, under the influence of Ilya Prigogine, emblematic exponent of chemistry from complexity. Based on Prigogine, he returns to the symmetrical and asymmetric processes (LOTMAN, 2013), defining the

¹ LOTMAN, J. *Culture and Explosion*. Edited by Marina Grishakova; translated by Wilma Clark. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2009.

former as equilibrium and circular processes and the latter as unstable processes that have the capacity to innovate and produce, in a dynamic way, new information and new ideas.

In his last years of life, Lotman's proposals are oriented to other angles. That is when he analyzes, with special interest, the dialectics of the predictable / unpredictable in cultural processes. Below, we summarize Iuri Lotman's ideas in some topics (1999; 2013):

I. The relationship between the predictable and the unpredictable occurs in different dimensions: in the intrasemiosphere (within each semiosphere) and in the extrasemiosphere (in the intersemiospheric relationship).

II. The author analyzes, in this dialectic, gradual processes opposed to unpredictable, explosive processes. The continuity is an implicit predictability, while the unpredictable is the change made in the modes of explosion. Based on these ideas, Lotman proposes that the unpredictability of explosive processes is not the only form of newness, since complete regions of culture can also be transformed by gradual processes. With these approaches, he furthers his reflections on cultural changes, which was always a nodal concern in the Lotmanian thought and the Tartu School.

III. Gradual and explosive processes are antithetical, but they coexist in a relationship of reciprocity, in such a way that the annulment of one would lead to the disappearance of the other. To sum up, there are two necessary tendencies: dynamic explosive processes and gradual dynamic processes: the former ensures innovation and the latter, continuity in the dynamics of culture.

IV. Explosive and gradual processes are embedded in the dynamic dialectics of the predictable / unpredictable, and both are significant. For example, great scientific ideas are related to art, as its origin is similar to an explosion. This affirmation leads us to the recursive relationship between science and art that is proposed based on complexity and transdisciplinarity. Moreover, it is important to note that the category of explosion does not refer in this sense only to destruction, but to new discoveries.

V. From these last reflections, Lotman turns to the theory of uncertainty, also used by complexity and transdisciplinarity. It covers the pre-explosive situations of chaos, dynamism and change. In these situations, the complex heterogeneity of the language and the translation processes between texts stands out, which oscillate between the translatable

and the untranslatable. The relations between explosion and the unpredictable situate Lotmanian thought in the perspective of the complexity / transdisciplinarity of Edgar Morin (1997; 2003) and Basarab Nicolescu (1996).

VI. Another approach that brings it closer to this epistemology of 21st century refers to the isomorphism between the individual and the social dimension, a relationship that is also found in complexity with the category of the hologram: the whole is in the parts and, at the same time, the parts are in the whole.

VII. The unpredictable has an important feature, because it is situated at a point of inflection from which a variety of possible changes with multiple consequences may originate. It is coupled with the theory of uncertainty. The moment of the explosion is also the space of the abrupt increase of information of the whole system, generating a completely new, unpredictable and more complex path.

VIII. In *Culture and Explosion* (2009),² Lotman makes explicit a simultaneous combination in the spheres of the culture of the two processes: the explosive and the gradual. There is a dynamic of the two processes in the following cultural spheres: language, politics, ethics, fashion, which have different velocities in the changes, in the movements. In addition, the two processes occur diachronically and synchronously.

IX. The mechanisms of the gradual processes have been studied much less, and it would seem that they are absent and that they are not important. Gradual processes constitute an important aspect of the historical movement, and additionally they are not stable. The meaning of slow, gradual processes in history does not give way to the role of explosive processes. In the reality of history, all these types of processes are plotted and one acts on the other, either accelerating or slowing down the general movement.

X. The predictable / unpredictable in relation to time: In relation to the future, to history, the moments of explosion are impossible to foresee, because development allows multiple possibilities. Unpredictability implies a complex of probabilities, of which only one is probable. The moment of exhaustion of the explosion produces a point of inflection, by which there is a recoil movement to the starting point. In this way, the same event can be

² For reference, see footnote 1.

inserted in both the predictable and the unpredictable. Every great event not only opens new paths, but cuts off entire future potential paths.

XI. The logic of the explosion, of the unpredictable, can be carried out as a chain of coherent explosions, one following another. The moment of the explosion is the moment of unpredictability, which should not be understood as unlimited possibilities, because each moment of explosion has its set of possibilities, but within certain limits.

XII. A very interesting approach refers to the fact that the same event can be inserted in both the predictable and the unpredictable, with which the dynamics of culture prevail over the static elements. Consequently, each great event not only opens new paths, but cuts off whole future potentialities; here again is the presence of the contradictory dialectics: opening and closing paths at the same time.

Based on this synthesis, we address some contemporary events from the predictable/the unpredictable dialectics, the latter being what is prevailing in this turbulent world, without horizons of hope. Predictability / unpredictability processes can arise in several cultural fields, with different temporal movements: in art, fashion, politics, wars and revolutions, socio-historical-cultural-political movements, etc.

Lotman (2013) argues that the greatest degree of unpredictability is in the artistic field. The author proposes that art is the fundamental essence of knowledge, and therefore has an impact on the historical-cultural development. It is necessary to explain why the unpredictable finds its best example in the field of art, in which there is the highest degree of unpredictability. According to Lotman, it is due to two factors: a) freedom in creation (although there are canons), and b) to the rapid and unpredictable changes of the field, which are based on the search for originality, for novelty. In this sense, dialectically, art extends the space of the unpredictable, of information, and at the same time creates a conventional world, that of the canon. In addition, the author places the highest degree of unpredictability in the metaphor.

In socio-cultural-historical-political-economic movements we emphasize the movements of difference, in which there are diverse cultural productions, materialized in semiotic-discursive practices, such as public demonstrations, the semiosis of bodies, discourses. These movements are unpredictable more than predictable as well as their

forms of manifestation. The different, the alternative is located in the Lotmanian periphery, but in many occasions they move to the core and occupy it.

Final Thoughts

With our previous exposition, we look at the scope and limits of the category of semiosphere and the necessary developments, which we have synthetically outlined.

Systems and semiotic practices that make up human culture are subject to a mandatory law of development by the dynamism of social relations. This premise covers the other factors of change, such as intercultural, transcultural relations, and cultural domination, which can produce profound transformations, such as the current phenomena of political, economic and cultural globalization.

To explain the phenomena of cultural globalization, we return to the Lotmanian proposal that the cultural explosion is not so much a sudden change, but the unpredictable in cultural development. This approach to the unpredictable is located in the most advanced current proposals in the field of social sciences connected to uncertainty.

Globalization implies, therefore, working from the transcultural, the heterogeneity of dialectical movements of semiotic-cultural boundaries, which involve cultural, intercultural, transcultural and, therefore, cultural changes. Nowadays, when globalization, in positive terms, really only exists for a small part of humanity, heterogeneity imposes on everyone the challenge of preserving difference in the face of homogenization. It is a complex challenge, because there are two possibilities: the possible irruption of peripheral cultures at the global and local level, which then occupy the nuclear spaces of the core, or the opposite, the destruction of the cultures that are outside the core, in the periphery.

This is the mark of the third millennium, of the 21st century, which Lotman considers in his last writings: how to preserve differences in the face of the dominant processes of homogenization. We believe that it is necessary to return and develop a critical and analytical thinking that can propose alternatives for the development of humanity and of the subjects themselves.

It is necessary to open analytical paths for the concept of semiosphere, as Lotman *Bakhtiniana*, São Paulo, 14 (4): 99-116, Oct./Dec. 2019.

himself has done in some way in *Culture and Explosion* (1999).³ For example, it is important to articulate Lotmanian approaches to the problems of globalization, to which the proposals must be adequate and modified for the new cultural processes of deep complexity. In the same way, it is important to rethink many reflections regarding the perspectives of Iuri Lotman and the School of Tartu alongside the Epistemology of complexity, and the transdisciplinarity of Edgar Morin and Basarab Nicolescu.

In the work of Lotman, which we know mainly by the excellent translations of Desiderio Navarro (†1917) and some others, we note some significant gaps that may be in other texts not yet translated. Therefore, taken this into consideration, the limits are outlined. There is a relative absence of a theory of power in the operation of culture, although there are approaches that suggest this problem with the category of domination. There is also the absence of a conflict theory, that is, the cultural operation connected to the concept of power, ideology, which is necessarily conflictive. Finally, there is the significant absence of an objective theory of the subject, with which Lotman's proposals would undoubtedly acquire other scopes. We can not fail to mention, however, the peculiar proposal of considering the text as a subject, a semiotic person who dialogues with the recipients.

As an important task of reconstruction of Lotmanian thought, we think that it is necessary to carry out a reconstruction of multiple categories, such as culture, text, border, dialogism, semiosphere to achieve a better totality of his proposals so that the categories can recover their complex dialectical nature, which is sometimes lost in the fragmented readings of his work. There is also the need to know the most complete contributions of Lotman and the School of Tartu, to which we have not yet had access, in rigorous translations, such as those made by Desiderio Navarro, in *Criterion Journal*, published for four decades and in the three semiospheres, and the dissemination by Manuel Cáceres, in *Entretextos. Revista Eletrônica Semestral de Estudos Semióticos da Cultura* [*Entretextos. Semi-annual Electronic Journal of Semiotic Studies of Culture*].

In dialectical terms, however, these limits help us to continue analyzing the theoretical-methodological fertility of this current, which still has many unexplored paths,

³ For reference, see footnote 1.

such as the Lotmanian approach to the continuity between *social sciences, natural sciences, quantitative sciences and artistic sciences*. This approach is clearly articulated with the epistemological proposals of Edgar Morin.

The Lotmanian proposals are valid because they have to do with multiple issues that concern the scholars of culture and history. Besides, they seek to cross the boundaries of interdisciplinarity through innovative theoretical considerations, approaching clearly the epistemology of complexity and transdisciplinarity. Hence, it is important to read and reflect on his work in the 21st century, in which we continue to live chaotic and unpredictable times, with uncertainty in relation to the future of humanity and even the planet. Lotman is present and will continue to present what he always tried to observe in his academic and personal life with his reflections and contributions from his critical and ethical thinking.

Finally, we cannot fail to recognize that the reflections, the works, and the contributions of the School of Tartu, of Iuri Lotman, are invaluable in analyzing semiotic production in all its density and complexity. Paths are open: some are more known than others, but there is still a long way to show the theoretical-methodological richness that he proposes. It is not fair that most of the academic world does not take into consideration all this broad and fertile contribution and promote wrongful exclusions. In order to fill so many gaps we hereby summon all the intellectuals to know Lotman's oeuvre with the rigor and seriousness that he always had and that he deserves for his existential trajectory and impeccable ethics.

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Irina Avramets, Yuri Lotman, Peeter Torop, Mihhail Lotman, Igor Chernov (1992)
(Photo Gallery of the Tartu School)



Sculpture in Tartu in Honor of Iuri Lotman
(Photo Gallery of the Tartu School)