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EDITOR'S FORWARD

Andrew Mark Creighton

Though not having a specific theme, the current publication is a celebratory one, marking Hortus Semioticus' tenth issue. Ten times students of the Department of Semiotics at the University of Tartu have published works covering topics ranging as far as Semiotics can reach. In this respect, the current issue is no different from the past ones, featuring three original articles, all focusing on biosemiotics yet, taking considerably different views while exploring and contending with the implications of the subfield concerning the urban environment of Tartu (Reimann), philosophy (Kozachynska), and synaesthesia and cognition (Treija). Furthermore, we have included two interviews, one with the prominent semiotician Peeter Torop and the second with cultural psychologist Jaan Valsiner. Both scholars are linked to Tartu semiotics, Valsiner from his more current research and recent stay at the Department of Semiotics, and Torop being not only intricately linked to the department but a fundamental part of it for over 40 years, continuously contributing innovative and defining semiotic research and carrying on the Tartu-Moscow school tradition.

Moreover, this 10th issue is marked with the publication of a piece in Sign Systems Studies competently titled, "Hortus Semioticus" by Eleni Alexandri and Tuuli Pern. The two semioticians, Pern being one of the founders of Hortus Semioticus, and Alexandri being an editor of this current issue and a prominent member of the editorial board, present a concise history of the the journal from its founding in Kalevi Kull's garden to its current developments (Alexandri, Pern 2022).

Regarding the three articles, **Hildegard Reimann's** "Avastades visuaalse välitöö kaudu paljuliigilist linnamaastikku. Tähelepanekuid öisest Tartust" is the first in this issue. The scholar takes an interest in nocturnal nonhuman animals and the urban environment of Tartu. The paper has a transdisciplinary approach, innovatively combining visual anthropological methods, mainly observational filming, self-reflection, and ethnography, with eco- and zoosemiotics to study nonhuman animals in the shared settings of Tartu. Reimann concludes by noting the importance and effectiveness of these method combinations for ecological research.

Nina Kozachynska's article, "Removing stones from a thread to string them: How biocentric thinking accentuates human singularity", focuses on the

philosophy of humans in relation to nonhuman animals while drawing from zoosemiotics, philosophy, and corporeal phenomenology. Offering a needed and insightful look at how humans and nonhuman animal relations appear when dualistic differences are discarded, Kozachynska applies her philosophical and semiotic synthesis to subjective time, corporeality, and metaphor.

The third article in this issue, “Synaesthetic tendencies in chimpanzees (Pan Troglodytes) as evolutionary advantages and learning aids, as compared to the human synaesthetic spectrum”, by **Kristine Treija**, focuses on synaesthesia within chimpanzees. Taking a focus through zoosemiotics, cognition, and primate science, Treija makes a thoroughly argued and contemplative discussion on chimpanzee synaesthesia. Specifically, the scholar is concerned with the evolutionary advantages of synaesthesia and its possible benefits in facilitating learning processes.

In the first of two interviews collected here, **Elli Marie Tragel** holds a discussion with the semiotics-oriented psychologist **Jaan Valsiner**. Tragel not only investigates Valsiner’s theoretical frameworks on time, semiotics, psychology, and concepts like ‘upconscious’ but discusses his views on the world and past experiences as a student in Tartu. All of which Valsiner answers with much insight and knowledge by relating them to his experiences as an academic and individual, contemporary issues, and the development of his work.

The second interview is between **Maarja Ojamaa** and **Peeter Torop**, in which Ojamaa inquires about Torop’s early experiences as a student and academic, his definition of semiotics, and what intrigues and fascinates him the most about semiotics, among several other questions. Torop’s responses demonstrate the value of his experiences with Tartu semiotics, issues that are arising within the field, and the importance of transdisciplinary research. Torop and Ojamaa conclude their discussion, with Torop offering advice to new students, emphasising the importance of understanding metalanguage and its relation to objects of study, and other research dynamics.

The texts included in this edition take a wide breadth, revealing the versatility of biosemiotics in its applicability to cognition, philosophy, and shared urban environments, as well as the insights and experiences of the major semioticians Valsiner and Torop. It is no doubt then, that the literature published here, is perfect for celebrating Hortus Semioticus’ 10th issue. Moreover, I am certain that such value that can be found within this 10th issue, will be found in Hortus Semioticus issues from anniversary to anniversary for many years into the future.

This issue was edited by Andrew Mark Creighton, Eleni Alexandri, and Hongjin Song, with the assistance of Katre Pärn and Nelly Mäekivi. The Hortus editorial board consists of Andrew Mark Creighton, Eleni Alexandri, Katre Pärn, Keily Tammaru, Nelly Mäekivi, Hongjin Song, Siiri Tarrikas, Thorolf Johannes Van Walsum, Andrea Barone Renolfi, and Karl Joosep Pihel. Special thanks go to Mark

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AVASTADES VISUAALSE VÄLITÖÖ KAUDU PALJULIIGILIST LINNAMAASTIKKU.

Tähelepanekuid öisest Tartust

Hildegard Reimann

Tartu Ülikool, etnoloogia osakond

Abstrakt: Artikli eesmärk on anda ülevaade, kuidas ja miks kombineerida visuaalse antropoloogia meetodeid zoo- ja ökosemiootilise analüüsiga, et uurida paljuliigilisi linnamaastikke. Kirjutis põhineb 2022. aasta aprillis läbiviidud etnograafilisel välitööl öises Tartu linnas. Välitöö eesmärk oli jäädvustada öise eluviisiga linnaloomade tegemisi, kasutades põhilise meetodina vaatlevat filmimist. Tuues näiteid semiootikast, visuaalsest antropoloogiast ja reflekteerides omaenda välitöökogemust, toon ma välja vaatleva filmimise eripärad paljuliigilises uurimises. Meetodi põhiline väärtus peitub võimaluses ühtaegu jäädvustada, uurida ja suhestuda teele sattuvate mitteinimestega. Esile tuleb tõsta välitöö õist konteksti, minu kui filmija kehalisust ning nähtud linnaloomade agentsust olukordi mõjutada. Jõuan järeldusele, et filmimine on tundlik ja kaasav meetod, mida rakendada linnalooduse semiootilises analüüsis ning pöörata tähelepanu linnaökoloogia probleemidele.

Märksõnad: visuaalne antropoloogia, zoosemiootika, ökosemiootika, paljuliigiline uurimus, öine keskkond, linnaloodus

Exploring multispecies cityscapes through visual fieldwork. Notes from nocturnal Tartu

Abstract: This paper explores the possibilities of combining the methods of visual anthropology with zoo- and ecosemiotic analysis to investigate the multispecies natures of urban landscape. The analysis is based on my own ethnographic fieldwork in the town of Tartu, Estonia, in April 2022. The fieldwork focused on the activity of nocturnal urban animals, using observational filming as the main research method. Through examples from the field of semiotics, visual anthropology and self reflection, I cover the characteristics of observational filming as a way to investigate, capture and resonate with nocturnal non-humans. Important aspect about the research are the nocturnal context, my own embodiment as a filmer and the agency of encountered non-humans. I come to the conclusion that filming is a reflexive and engaging method to bring into the semiotic analysis of urban nature and raise discussions about urban ecology.

Keywords: visual anthropology, zoosemiotics, ecosemiotics, multispecies research, nocturnal environment, urban nature

Minu kirjutis lähtub 2022. aasta kevadel öises Tartu linnas läbi viidud visuaalantropoloogia välitööprojektist. Ühel aprilli hilisõhtul suundusin koos teiste antropoloogiatudengitega Tartu linna. Projekti eesmärk oli jäädvustada Tartu ööelu, ent seadsin enese jaoks fookuse mitteinimestest olendite märkamisele ja jäädvustamisele. Nõnda pakkus välitöö kogemust ning visuaalset materjali, mida tõlgendada zoo- ja ökösemiootika perspektiivist.

Zoo- ja ökösemiootika meetoditesse võib suhtuda kui tööriistavalikusse kastis, kust uurija valib sobiva oma uurimishuvist ning uuritava nähtuse eripäradest lähtuvalt (Maran 2023: 7). Nõnda on lisaks semiootilistele analüüsimeetoditele rakendatud muuhulgas etoloogia ja käitumispsühholoogia meetodeid (vt Martinelli 2010: 1–27). Käesoleva kirjatöö eesmärk on analüüsida filmimise kui antropoloogias tuntud välitöömeetodi rakendamist linnaruumi zoo- ja ökösemiootiliseks uurimiseks. Analüüsi käigus annan ülevaate, kas, kuidas ja miks võib kaamerast olla abi, et märgata ja mõista mitteinimese käitumist inimkesksel linnamaastikul. Oluliseks analüüsimaterjaliks on nii eneserefleksioon kui ka välitöödel salvestatud materjal. Seon semiootilise lähenemise paljuliigilise etnograafiaga (*multispecies ethnography*), kus on filmimist uurimismeetodina rakendatud ning sõnastan, kuidas etnograafia ja semiootika teineteist täiendavad. Töö teises pooles kirjeldan oma välitööprotsessi ning jäädvustatud materjali. Analüüsin oma kogemust välitöödel ning valitud meetodi rakenduslikkust zoo- ja ökösemiootikas.

Märgates mitteinimest. Paljuliigilise etnograafia võimalused

Humanitaarteadustes on loodus, keskkond ja inimese suhe teist liiki organismidega sattunud suurenevasse huviorbiiti. Luues interdistsiplinaarset võrgustikku loodusteaduste, filosoofia ja kunstiga, on nimetatud teemadega asunud tegelema semiootikas bio-, öko- ja zoosemiootika (vt Martinelli 2010; Maran 2022) ning antropoloogias paljuliigilise etnograafia suund (vt Kirksey, Helmreich 2010). Paljuliigilist lähenemist iseloomustab inimkultuuri paigutamine ökoloogilisse võrgustikku ning teiste liikide agentsuse arvestamine. Läbiv on kaasaja keskkonnakriisi problemaatika, mis sunnib inimese positsiooni keskkonnas ümber mõtestama.

Paljuliigiline lähenemine on antropoloogias loonud uue konteksti, milles rakendada etnograafilisi meetodeid. Uurija refleksiivne kogemus ja tähendusloome protsessi dokumenteerimine, tänapäeval järjest enam ka multimodaalne lähenemine, mis pöörab tähelepanu erinevatele tajuelamustele ning nende jäädvustamisele – need on kõik paljuliigilises uurimuses olulisel kohal.

Kogu tajuspektri kaasamine ning mänguline katsetamine jäädvustusvahenditega ei võimalda küll teise organismi reaalsust täielikult kogeda, ent loob mitmekülgse ja empaatilise kirjelduse (Kirksey, Helmreich 2010; Wels 2020). Etnograafilised meetodid pole semiootikas võõrad ning neid on ökösemiootilise tõlgendusega sidunud Eduardo Kohn (2013) ja Andrew Whitehouse (2015).

Filmimine on antropoloogias levinud uurimismeetod ja seda on kasutatud ka liikidevaheliste suhete uurimiseks. Antropoloog Natasha Fijn (2012) on rakendanud vaatlevat filmimist ühtaegu moodusena osalusvaatluse läbiviimiseks kui ka uurimismaterjali jäädvustamiseks. Uurides Mongoolia karjakasvatajaid ning kariloomi, võimaldas filmimine uurija kehalist kaasatust ja kohalolu. Vajalik oli kaamera aktiivne käsitlemine – nõnda pole kaamerat hoidev inimene vaid passiivne andmekoguja, vaid ka olukorras osaleja. Fijn on kirjeldanud oma valikuid kaadrite ülesvõtmisel ning sekkumist filmitavas. Tema tähelepanekutest selgub, et aktiivne filmimine on inimeste ja mitteinimeste suhete uurimiseks väga sobilik. Filmimine võimaldab jäädvustada materjali, lähtudes mitteverbaalsetest väljendusviisidest, tabada liigutusi, valgust, helisid ja paiknemist ruumis. Fijn rõhutab, et sealjuures peab uurija võtma aktiivse positsiooni. Märkamatuks jäämine on võimatu ja pigem isegi mittesoovitav, sest filmimine loob paratamatult uuritavaga sideme ning mõjutab tema käitumist. (Fijn 2012)

Näiteid filmimise rakendamisest zoo- ja ökösemiootilises uurimises on pigem vähe. Pauline Delahaye (ilmumas 2023) seob oma käsilolevas zoosemiootika projektis vaatlusi filmimise ja fotografeerimisega, et uurida linnas elavaid vareslasi. Timo Maran (2020a) on Tartu linnakeskkonna ökösemiootiliseks tõlgendamiseks rakendanud vaatlust, mis Fijni kirjeldatud filmimisest palju ei erine. Maran viis läbi süstemaatilisi vaatlusi Emajõe-äärsel kaldaalal, keskendudes loomade ökoväljadele. Maran reflekteerib oma töös, et vaatleja teadmiste ning tajuvõimekuse piiratuse tõttu jääb suur osa interaktsioonisündmusi märkamata. Maran peab oluliseks teadvustada vaatluse analüüsil lähtepunkti: selleks on inimene, kes teeb lähtuvalt oma teadmistest ning tajuvõimekusest keskkonna kohta järeldusi (Maran 2020a). Nagu filmija, on ka vaatlev inimene keskkonnaga aktiivselt kontaktis, mõjutades oma kohaolekuga teiste organismide tegevust. Võrreldes filmimisega, ei kutsu vaatlus uurijat olukordades aktiivselt osalema moel, mida on kirjeldanud Fijn (2012). Kuidas filmimine võimaldab uuritavaga kehaliselt rohkem suhestuda, kirjeldan ka oma välitöökogemuse analüüsis.

Visuaalne välitöö öises Tartus. Tartu linnaloomad

Minu välitööd leidsid aset 22. aprillil ajavahemikus 23.00–05.00. Välitöö läbiviimise ajal oli soe, selge ja vähetuuline kevadöö. Suundusin välitööle Lumix peegelkaameraga. Öine ringkäik algas Tartu südalinnast, siirdus piki Rüütli

tänavat, üle Vabaduse silla, üles Narva mäest (11.00–01.30) ning ringiga mööda Roosi ja Mäe tänavat tagasi all-linna (01.30–02.00). Peale väikest pausi kulgesime piki Emajõe kallast avaturu suunas, sealt Zeppelini keskusesse (02.00–04.00). Jalutuskäik lõppes Karlovas (04.00–05.00). Kuigi jalutuskäik kulges enamjaolt piki tänavaid ning suurema inimasustusega kohtades, tegin kõrvalepõikeid vaikesesse hoovidesse ning parkidesse. Uurimisrühma kuulus veel neli inimest, kellest hoidsin alguses suuremat distantssi. Jalutuskäigu hilisemas faasis liikusime Karlovas kolmekesi ühtse seltskonnana.

Siirdusin välitööle lihtsa eesmärgiga jäädvustada loomade tegevust öises linnas. Valdkondadeüleselt on tähele pandud, et inimese järgi planeeritud linnakeskkond on koht, kus kerkivad esile ootamatud liigikooslused, käitumismustrid ning viisid, kuidas metsikud liigid interakteeruvad inimese ning nende loodud keskkonnaga (Parris 2016: 11). Pöörasin niisiis tähelepanu nii loomade tegevusele linnaruumis kui ka otsestele kokkupuudetele inimestega. Rohkem kui pärisloomi, märkasin inimeste loodud loomakujutisi (skulptuurid ja erinevad visuaalid) ning seda, kuidas need keskkonnaga suhestuvad. Selle materjali jätan aga käesolevast analüüsist välja, kuna paljuliigilise lähenemise keskmes on mitteinimene ise, tema aktiivne roll oma keskkonna kujundamisel.

Videoprojekti eesmärk polnud jäädvustada terviklikku pilti Tartu linna elustiku aktiivsusest loojangust koiduni, kuivõrd linn on kompleksne ja rikkalik ökosüsteem (vt Parris 2016: 12). Tegemist oli subjektiivse rännakuga, kus mängisid olulist rolli minu kui uuriva inimese tähelepanuvõime, liikumistrajektor, paiknemine ruumis (sh tekitatud müra, aktiivne interaktsioon teiste isenditega, nii inimeste kui ka mitteinimestega). Oma kehalisuse ning agentsuse tajumine, mis filmimiskogemusega kaasneb (vt Fijn 2012), on oluline linnaökoloogia mõtestamise seisukohalt – on ju ka inimene osa linnaloodusest. Inimese pidev kohalolu ja mõjusus keskkonna kujundamisel on linlike süsteemide mõistmisel keskse tähtsusega, kirjutab Parris (2016: 2). Kuigi filmisin peamiselt mitteinimesi, paigutasin end aktiivse filmijana teiste linnaloomade sekka.

Välitööl nähtud liikide arv, kontekst ja käitumine võisid olla seotud aastaaja ja ilmaga. Soojemal ajal samalaadi projekti läbiviimine võimaldaks näiteks jäädvustada märksa enam putukaliike. Niisamuti mõjutab liikide aktiivsust loojangu- ja koiduaeg ja selle muutumine aasta jooksul. Samuti suunasid välitöö käiku ja kogutud materjali minu tehnilised oskused. Videomeetod oli minu jaoks varem läbiproovimata lahendus. Olles varustatud professionaalse peegelkaameraga, pidin siiski tõdema, et heast tehnikast jäi väheks ning kohmakuse ja aegluse tõttu jäi märkamata ning jäädvustamata palju loomade tegevust.

Materjali analüüsivõimalusi

Videomaterjali ja välitöökogemuse põhjal saab analüüsida erinevaid teemasid, mis on olulised linnalooduse mõistmiseks ja hoidmiseks. Asetan oma töö paljuliigilise urbanismi konteksti, mis paigutab linnakeskkonna üldisesse ökoloogilisse võrgustikku (Barua, Sinha 2022). Oma materjali uurimisvõimaluste näitlikustamiseks tõstatan kaks uurimisküsimust, mis keskenduvad sellele, kuidas kasutasid öist linnaruumi mitteinimestest loomad:

- 1) kas ja kuidas interakteeruvad filmitud isendid inimtekkeliste objektidega?
- 2) kas ja kuidas interakteeruvad filmitud isendid enda liigikaaslaste ja/või teiste liikidega?

Uurimisküsimused seostuvad üldiste teemadega, millele linnalooduse uuringud tähelepanu pööravad, nt kuidas mõjutavad inimaktiivsus ning tehiskeskkonnad metsikute liikide käitumist, populatsioone, psühholoogiat ja füsioloogiat ning kuidas mõista suhtlust inimeste ja teiste liikide vahel (McCleery et al. 2014: 7).

Minu kohtumised mitteinimestega

Jalutuskäigu jooksul õnnestus mul filmilindile jäädvustada ligikaudu kümme eri liiki isendeid. Mõned ebamäärasemad kohtumised jätan sellest analüüsist välja, nt lindude häämitsused puuvõrades või veesulpsatused Emajõe pinnal.

- 1) tuvastamata liiki ööliblikas Raadi surnuaia tänavalaterna valgusvihus;
- 2) isased sinikaelpardid Kroonuaia silla juures Emajõel;
- 3) eri liiki ämblikud Kaarsilla piiretel ning Emajõe-äärsetel piiretel;
- 4) sajajalgne hotell Tartu esise parkimisplatsi mururiba peal;
- 5) kolm kassi Raadil ja Karlovas;
- 6) taksikoer Peetri tänaval koos teda rihma otsas hoidva inimesega;
- 7) turvakalad Naiivi kõrval Emajõe ääres istuva kalamehe sumbas.

Suhestumine inimtekkeliste objektidega

Enamik isendeid tegutses öises linnas inimesest otseselt sõltumata, aga kohandas oma käitumist vastavalt inimtekkeliste objektide eripäradele, mis on linnas paratamatu. Sealjuures oli näha, et mõned isendid on elukeskkonnaga sedavõrd

kohanenud, et oskavad inimtekkelisi objekte rakendada. Teistele isenditele löi tehismaastik eksitavaid või ohtlikke olukordi

Tuvastamata liiki ööliblikas Raadi surnuaial ning ämblikud Emajõe ääres juhindusid oma tegevuses inimtekkelisest valgusallikast. Surnuaia tänavalaterna valgusvihus lendas eri liiki pisiputukaid, kes lampi ilmselt orienteerumisvahendina kasutasid. Filmimise ajal lendas valgusvihust läbi üks ööliblikas (vt kuvatõmmis 1). Jõe ääres olid ämblikud loonud oma võrgud sillapiirde serva alla paigutatud LED-ribade külge, juhindudes tõenäoliselt valgusallika ligitõmbavusest teatud öösel ringilendavatele putukatele (vt kuvatõmmis 2). Eri liiki ämblikud lõutasid liikumatult keset võrku, ilmselt saagiootuses. Siinkohal on huvitav, kuidas eri tüüpi lülilalgsete jaoks on linnavalgustid omavaheliseks kommunikatsioonivahendiks, kujundades saak- ja röövloma suhteid. Samas on positiivselt valgustundlikele putukaliikide jaoks tegu semiootilise reostusega (vt Maran 2020b: 24), mis isendite loomulikke navigeerimissignaale eksitavad.



Kuvatõmmis 1. Tuvastamata liiki ööliblikas tänavalaterna valgusvihus. 22.04.2022, Raadi surnuaed, Tartu.



Kuvatõmmis 2. Ämblik LED-ribaga valgustatud kaldapiirde küljes. 22.04.2022, Kaarsilla kõrval, Tartu.

Esmapilgul tundus, et hotell Tartu ees kohatud sajajalgne valgusallikast sõltuvalt oma liikumist ei seadnud. Sajajalgne liikus rohukõrvi pidi mööda parkla mururiba, sattudes kord tänavalaternate valgusesse, kadudes kord elektrikapi varju (vt kuvatõmmis 3). Siiski on sajajalgsete puhul tegemist valguskartlike liikidega, seega oli kapi vari tõenäoliselt atraktiivsem keskkond. Minu seisukohalt oli huvitav, et märkasid sajajalgset just tänu valguslaigule ning kaameraaga jäädvustamine oli valguse käes edukam kui varjus. Valguskartlike lülijalgsete märkamine öises linnas on vähetõenäoline ning nende kaameraaga jäädvustamine tehnika piiratuse tõttu veel enamgi.



Kuvatõmmis 3. Sajajalgne muruplatsil, kord valguses, kord varjus. 22.04.2022, Hotell Tartu parkimisplats, Tartu.



Kuvatõmmis 4. Siil ületab autoteed. 22.04.2022, Aida tänav, Tartu.

Siil on linnakeskkonnas vältiva loomuga ning tegutseb pigem pimedas ja vähese aktiivsusega linnaosades. Aida tänaval filmile jäänud siil kinnitas neid omadusi. Siil ületas valgustatud autotee ilmselgelt kiirustades, tegi vahepeatuse tee äärde pargitud auto all ning jätkas teekonda üle kõnnitee pimedasse rohtukasvanud hoovi prügikastide alla (vt kuvatõmmis 4). Tänav, kuigi liiklusest tühi, paistis siilile olevat ebamugav vahelüli, et jõuda ühest olulisest keskkonnast teise. Tee äärde pargitud auto oli oluliseks vahepeatuskohaks, pakkudes varju ning piiratud ligipääsu tõttu ka kaitset.

Pargitud autosid kasutasid varjumiskohana ka erinevad kassid (vt kuvatõmmis 5). Peetri tänaval filmitud kass oli vältiva käitumisega, ületas tänavasiili kombel kiirustades ning jäi kuni klipi lõpuni auto alla varju. Teised kaks Karlova kassi astusid omaalgatuslikult eri inimestega kontakti.



Kuvatõmmis 5. Kass varjub tee äärde pargitud sõiduki alla. 22.04.2022, Õne tänav, Karlova, Tartu.

Oranž kass Karlovas paistis end inimtekkelises keskkonnas mugavalt tundvat. Erinevalt siilist ja Peetri tänava kassist, kõndis see isend keset autoteed, põigates siiski vahest tänava ääres seisvate autode alla. Kass ei ilmutanud pelgavat käitumist seoses sõiduatoga, mis tema kõrval tänavaserva keeras, vaid eemaldus auto tagurdamisväljast vaid nii palju, kui vaja. Barlova baari ees ronis kass baaritrepile ning hiljem ka bussiootepingile, mõjudes oma enesekindlusega inimkasutuseks mõeldud paikades isegi inimesesarnaselt (vt kuvatõmmis 6). Oli näha, et tegemist on isendiga, kes on harjunud inimestega koos elama.



Kuvatõmmis 6. Kass Barlova baari trepil. 22.04.2022, Tähe tänav, Karlova, Tartu.

Vabatahtlik ja vältimatu suhtlus teiste liikidega

Kasside puhul oli märgata kõige enam ja nüanseeritumat suhtlust inimestega. Karlovas kohtasin kassi, kes inimestega intensiivselt ja valjude häälistsuste teel kontakti otsis, pannes ristmikul peatuma jalgratturi, kes teda paitama jäi (vt kuvatõmmis 7). Märganud kaamerateaga varustatud uurimisgruppi, järgnes kass meile läbi Karlova, liikudes ühe inimese juurest teise juurde või hoidis paarimeetrist distantssi. Kaasakõndimise vältel suhtles kass meiega valjude häälistsuste teel ning tõstis häält, kui tähelepanu ei saanud. Kaameraga lähenemine ning madalamale kükitamine andis kassile impulsi lähemale tulemiseks ning kaamera uudistamiseks. Nendes oludes oleks olnud võimatu saavutada objektiivseid kaadreid, kui see oleks mu eesmärgiks olnud. Olukord pani mind mõistma, et kaameraga või ilma, olen ma kassi jaoks kommunikatsioonipartner.

Kommunikatsiooniprotsessis ilmnes ka see, et kommunikatsiooniakt teist liiki organismiga on paratamatult puudulik ning jäi arusaamatuks, miks kass inimestega nii aktiivselt kontakti otsis.



Kuvatõmmis 7. Kass paneb peatuma jalgratturi. 22.04.2022, Tähe ja Kesk tänava ristmik, Karlova, Tartu.

Oli loomi, kelle tegevus oli inimestega füüsiliselt seotud. Neil juhtudel pidin jäädvustamiseks ka inimesega kontakti astuma ning filmimiseks luba küsima. Üheks selliseks isendiks oli taksitõugu koer Puiestee tänaval, keda hoidis rihma otsas naisterahvas. Koer jäi kaameratele inimeste tegevust paigale naelutatult kaema ning seetõttu pidi ka temaga jalutav naine peatuma (vt kuvatõmmis 8). Jäädvustasin filmilindile koera huvi, aga ka heitumuse talle suunatud kaameratest. Filmimise ajal seletasin koeraomanikule projekti tagamaid. Koera seismajäämist ja kaamerale püütud käitumist kutsus selgelt esile minu tegevus, filmikaamera ning koera katsed minu atribuutikat mõista. Silmnähtavalt erines filmimine koera jaoks tavalisest kontaktist inimestega. Klipi lõpus kiirustas koer edasi, mis lõpetas suhtluse ka naisterahvaga.

Isased sinikaelpardid hulpisid Emajõe Kroonuaia silla juures, kus veepinnale ulatusid veetaimede ladvad. Isendid pistsid vahetevahel pea toidu otsimiseks vee alla ning interakteerusid omavahel vaiksete hääletsuste, žestide (tiibade sopsutamine) ja puudutuste kaudu (nokaga sugemine) (vt kuvatõmmis 9). Pardid paistsid olevat harjunud kaldal kõndivate inimestega, ent ühe filmija lähenemine kaameraga pani ühe pardi järsult lendu tõusma ning piki jõge südalinna suunas lendama. Teine part jäi maha, ilmutamata ärrituse märke. Partide puhul oli märgata, et kuigi inimtegevus võib nende käitumist mõjutada ning seda tajutakse potentsiaalse ohu või ärritajana, tunnevad nad end linnakeskkonnas koduselt. Parte märkasid öösel nii kesklinnas, kui ka linna südamest kaugemal. Inimeste kohalolu ei kutsu üldiselt esile tugevaid

reaktsioone. Kirjeldatud olukorra põhjal võib öelda, et ruumivalikuid teevad pardid lähtuvalt veekogust ning söögiallikast (veetaimede vahel leidub rohkem süüa). Seega on inimtegevuse ja inimtekkeliste objektide mõju pigem kaudne või vähene.



Kuvatõmmis 8. Taksikoer koos teda rihma otsas hoidva inimesega. Peetri tänav, Tartu.



Kuvatõmmis 9. Isased sinikaelpardid interakteeruvad omavahel. 22.04.2022, Kroonuaia silla kõrval, Tartu.

Lõpetuseks kirjeldan stseeni, mis moodustas omamoodi tähenduskihtide ja liikidevaheliste suhete sasipuntra. Turvakalad, keda sain filmida Naiivi parv-baari kõrval Emajõe ääres, olid kinni kalamehe sumbas. Küsimise peale soostus seal istuv kalamees oma sumba veest välja tõmbama. Selles olukorras oli kaladel tahtmatu kokkupuude inimtekkeliste objektide ja inimesega, olles järjekordne näide linnamaastikul välja kujunenud rööv- ja saakloomasuhtest. Tekkis

groteskne kultuuriline seos kalade käitumise ning ümbritseva helimaastiku vahel. Filmisin, kuidas pealambi valguses visklesid õhuvaeguses kalad Naiivist kostva diskomuusika rütmis (vt kuvatõmmis 7) – seos, mille koheselt olukorda teadvustades lõin ning mille pidin vajalikuks ka helilindile välja pahvatada.



Kuvatõmmis 10. Õhuvaeguses siplevad turvakalad kalamehe sumbas, taustal laul „Ämblikmees”. 22.04.2022, Parv-baar Naiivi kõrval, Emajõe ääres, Tartu.

Diskussioon

Minu välitööd kinnitasid, et keskkonna zoo- ja ökosemiootiliseks analüüsiks on filmimine tulemuslik meetod. Täenduslikuks sai filmimiskogemus, eri liiki linnaloomad ja nendega kohtumise kontekst. Oluline oli välitöö ajastus ööpäeva lõikes. Öisel ajal oli mitteinimestest loomade aktiivsust kergem märgata, sest inimeste aktiivsus ol sedavõrd väiksem. Samas tegi öine pimedus valusalt teadlikuks valitud jäädvustusvahendi ja inimtaju piiratusest.

Filmitud materjal kinnitab, et linn on paljuliigiline keskkond (vt Barua ja Sinha 2022), kus eri liikide aktiivsus vaheldub, põimub ühte, satub konflikti või toimib paralleelselt. Linnas on välja kujunenud liikidevahelised suhtlusvõrgustikud, kaasates inimest (kass püüab tänaval inimese tähelepanu) või toimides inimestest sõltumatult (ämblikud püüavad putukaid). Sealjuures on linnas kerge märgata inimeste ja mitteinimeste vahelisi suhteid, kus mitteinimene on inimesega füüsiliselt seotud. Selliseid olukordi ilmestavad inimese-lemmiklooma interaktsioon ning küti-saaklooma suhe kalastajate näitel.

Linnaloomad loovad uusi tähendusi ning kasutuskontekste inimtekkelistele objektidele, nt orienteeruvad tänavalatena järgi või kasutavad tee-äärset autot peidupaigana. Autoteed loovad seevastu mitteinimeste jaoks

katkestusi, mille läbimine on valguse ja liikluse tõttu ohtlik. Filmitud materjali puhul saaks rohkem keskenduda sellele, kuidas mõjutab inimtekkeline valgus ja heli linnaloomade tegevust ning tekitab nende jaoks semiootilist reostust.

Välitööl viibides tekkisid sensoorsed kontrastid eri linnaosade vahel. Öist südalinna iseloomustas tulede, autoliikluse, inimtegevuse ja -helide rohusus, mis sumbus sumedasse vaikusesse aedlinnaosades ning tagahoovides. On selge, et inimtegevus, selle puudumine või koondumine südalinna, mõjutab öisel ajal loomade ruumikasutust. Heaks näiteks on aedlinnakute "vaikus", mida täitsid erinevad linnuhääled: kirju helimaastik, mis südalinnas täiesti tähelepanuta jäi. Niisamuti oli inimestest kihavas südalinnas palju raskem märgata mitteinimeste liikumist, kui pealtnäha väljasurnud Karlova tänavatel. Materjaliga edasi tegeledes saaks analüüsida tähendusi, mis väiksema liikluse ja müratasemega paikadel mitteinimeste jaoks on ning panustada rohealade väärtustamisesse ajal, mil kasvav linnastumine toimub eelkõige parkide arvelt (vt Parris 2016: 22–23).

Paljuliigilisele linnamaastikule keskenduva visuaalse välitöö zoo- ja ökosemiootilise tõlgendamise suurim potentsiaal peitubki võimaluses tegelda käesoleva ajastu ulatuslike keskkonnaprobleemidega, mille keskmes on inimtegevuse konflikt keskkonna ja teiste organismidega. Visuaalne välitöö on süvenenud ja meeleline kogemus, mis tõstab teadlikkust inimeste ning mitteinimeste vahelistest dünaamikatest tehnilikul maastikul. Suhestumine ja empaatia on mitteinimeste uurimises võtmetähtsusega, kuivõrd inimeste ettekujutus teiste organismide sisemaailmast on niivõrd piiratud (vt Wels 2020). Uurimuse öine kontekst väärib siinkohal taas esiletõstmist. Ökoloogid on rõhutanud öiste protsesside ja loomaliikide haavatavust antropogeensetele mõjudele, mis keskkonnakriisis süvenevad. Ökoloogias defineeritud „öise probleemi“ (*“nocturnal problem”* vt Park et al. 1931) taga peitub öiste protsesside uurimise keerukus, mida peegeldab ka minu välitöörefleksioon. Mitmekülgsete paljuilgisele etnograafia meetodite lisamine semiootika tööriistakasti võiks olla panus nimetatud probleemi lahendamisesse.

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REMOVING STONES FROM A THREAD TO STRING THEM:

How biocentric thinking accentuates human singularity

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Abstract: The paper offers a few observations on the properties of living organisms, which tend to be overlooked while considering human nature through its opposition to the animal world. Hence, by omitting antagonism between non-humans and humans, additional aspects of perceiving and comprehension of both are constituted. Based on the ideas of Uexküll, Bergson, and Merleau-Ponty, the question of the subjectivity of time — actualised differently when it comes to the variety of living creatures — is examined closely. In addition, the paper touches upon cognition and corporeality interrelation, providing examples of how the human body may serve as a cognitive instrument. Alongside that, attention is paid to the daily use of erased natural metaphors and zoometaphors, which confirm the significance of the diversity of living organisms for conceptualising the world around us.

Keywords: temporality, corporeal ontology, natural metaphors and zoometaphors, umwelt, functional Circle, Uexküll.

Eemaldades kive niidilt, et neid nõorida: Kuidas biotsentriline mõtlemine rõhutab inimsingulaarsust

Abstrakt: Käesolev artikkel pakub mõned tähelepanekud elusorganismide omaduste kohta, mida kiputakse tähelepanuta jätma juhul, kui inimloomust käsitletakse vastandina loomariigile. Jättes välja antagonismi inimese ja mitte-inimeste vahel, kujundatakse artiklis täiendavaid taju- ning mõistmisaspekte. Lähtudes Uexkülli, Bergsoni ja Merleau-Ponty ideedest uuritakse aja subjektiivsuse küsimust, mis aktualiseerub erinevalt elavate olendite paljususes. Lisaks puudutab artikkel tunnetuse ja kehalisuse seoseid, pakkudes näiteid sellest, kuidas inimkeha käitub kui tunnetuslik instrument. Selle kõrval pööratakse tähelepanu igapäevastele surnud looduse- ja zoometafooridele, mis kinnitavad eluslooduse mitmekesisuse olulist rolli ümbritseva maailma kontseptualiseerimisesl.

Märksõnad: temporaalsus, kehaline ontoloogia, loodus- ja zoometafoorid, omailm, funktsiooniring, Uexküll.

И отчего же в общем хоре
 Душа не то поет, что море,
 И ропщет мыслящий
 тростник? тростник?¹

Introduction

Christian, Jewish, and Muslim medieval philosophers described a man as the crown of the universe (Butchvarov 2015: 9). Echoing Aristotle's natural classification, Linnaeus emphasised the ability of humans to 'know thyself' ('Nosce te ipsum'), which to his mind distinguished them from animals (Linnaeus 1740: 34); Cassirer, for his part, came to perception a person as an *animal symbolicum* (Cassirer 1954: 44). The only possible way to answer the question "What is a person?" seems to imply one-step back — and a reformulation to "How is a man different from an animal?" However, the endeavour to cognise human nature through its opposition to the animal world is fraught with the alienation of culture from the ecosystem. Furthermore, the motif for cultural superiority becomes more than visible. In Timo Maran's words:

This conviction manifests itself in a number of forms — viewing human language as a closed system of abstract formal relationships (as in the structuralism inspired by the linguistics of Ferdinand de Saussure); rejecting the possibility of direct relations between literary works and the extra-textual environment; treating literature, music, performative and fine arts as belonging to a high culture that is distant from any everyday material concerns, etc. (Maran 2020: 25)

Another difficulty associated with such a formulation of the question is the fragmentation and isolation of the disciplines studying human nature. Humanities tend to approach the issue from different viewpoints, exacerbating the inconsistency. As Max Scheler points out:

The self-problematics of man have now turned out to be maximum throughout the entire period of known history [...] We have a scientific, philosophical, and

¹ Тютчев Ф. "Певучесть есть в морских волнах..." / Tyutchev, F. "In ocean waves there's melody..." (the English translation by Jude, F.):

In the general chorus, why this solo refrain?
 Why do our souls not sing like the sea
 and why must the thinking reed complain?

theological anthropology that know nothing of each other. [...] The ever-growing multiplicity of the particular sciences that are enlarged in the study of men has much more confused and obscured than elucidated our concept of man. (Scheler 1994: 132,133)

Perhaps this is due precisely to the fact that the formulation of so-called questions presupposes some kind of opposition and seemingly emphasises the formed superiority of man over other species. What if, echoing Uexküll, we follow the path of accentuation of nature and transform our question in a slightly different way: How does human uniqueness coexist with their biologically determined similarity with other organisms? And inspired by Uexküll's passion for metaphors, we will illustrate this alternative path using the image of multi-coloured beads made from natural stones.

So, immediately, we are not assigning that rainbow-coloured shimmering beads to a human (although he possesses them deservedly and has worn them for many centuries with dignity). Blinded by this brilliance of the necklace, we risk either returning to the definition of the crown of creation or considering just a few of the most noticeable stones — the uniqueness of speech, mythological thinking [following Aristotle, Rackham (1959), and Lévi-Strauss (1972)], the symbolisation of experience (Cassirer 1980), making choices (Kierkegaard et al. 1959), or instrument creation (Franklin, Bigelow 1904). Instead, we calmly yet decisively remove the beads from the neck and carefully pick up the stones strung on a thread. Looking at them freed carefully, we suddenly realise that each of them had had their own story before they appeared on the human neck. Some may remember themselves as intricate pieces of rocks or mineral salts. But, it often seems incredible that such stones existed in nature by themselves before becoming an adornment of man. Incredible to such a degree that people are sometimes inclined to omit the noun natural and simply name them stones from a wooden jewellery box.

Referring to Uexküll's work, *The theory of meaning and The stroll through the worlds of animals and men*, we will focus on considering the few remarkable properties of living organisms. Or, as Whitehead put it, the operating presence of nature, which is closely intertwined with the life of human beings (Whitehead 1953).

Temporality

The realist-Cartesian philosophical tradition has reduced the concept of the environment to a limited naturalistic ecology: animals here become organisms reacting to external stimuli and possessing no self-awareness:

[...] For a while reason is a universal instrument that is alike available on every occasion, these organs, on the contrary, need a particular arrangement for each particular action; whence it must be morally impossible that there should exist in any machine a diversity of organs sufficient to enable it to act in all the occurrences of life, in the way in which our reason enables us to act. (Leibniz et al. 1990: 81)

Rejecting the mechanistic understanding of René Descartes, and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, however, seemingly falls into the vicious circle we have voiced before, answering the question of what is the difference between people and animals, inasmuch as he deliberately re-builds a hierarchy of cognitive abilities not in favour of non-humans:

The principal difference, however, is that they [animals] do not know that they are, nor what they are. Consequently, not being able to reason, they are unable to discover necessary and universal truths. It is also because they do not reflect regarding themselves that they have no moral qualities, whence it follows that they undergo myriad transformations—as we see a caterpillar change into a butterfly. (Leibniz et al. 1990: 449)

Uexküll, in *A Stroll through the worlds of animals and men*, invites readers to observe living organisms as subjects who perceive the world and act in it. For defining the totality of all perceptions, Uexküll uses the notion of the perceptual world of the animal *merkwelt*; *wirkwelt* becomes the term for actions, comprising the effector world. Together, these two dimensions form a subjective universe — the *umwelt* of animals, astonishing in its diversity. It is the *umwelt* of a certain organism that transforms neutral objects into meanings-carriers with which this animal interacts (Uexküll 1992 [1934]). Hence, for the stem of a blossoming meadow flower, several roles are assigned at once in the *umwelt* of several animals: for an ant, it is essential to use the stem in its original form; the cicada larva seeks to extract juice from it to build the liquid walls of its airy house; the cow is interested in green plant feed. For living beings, the very same flower plays a role of a path, an extraction point, and a morsel of food (Uexküll 1982: 30). Having endowed living organisms with their own perception of the world, Uexküll naturally approaches the question of the subjectivity of time:

There are not only the two varieties of space and time, in which objects are distributed. There is also the variety of *Umwelts*, in which objects assume a multiplicity of ever new and different forms. At this third level, the countless *Umwelts* represent the keyboard upon which nature plays its symphony of meaning, which is not constrained by space and time. (Uexküll 1982: 78)

Even though Henri Bergson and Maurice Merleau-Ponty did not work in tandem, they nonetheless discussed how reasoning about the linearity of time with a focus on the present becomes an obstacle to considering the time that exists for the subject as a vital presence (Merleau-Ponty: 2011). The first one insists on the

importance of pure duration (*la durée*): the transition from one state to another reveals to us more integral continuity that we did not know about before (Bergson 1946: 192-193). The second one accentuates the perspectival nature of the reflection of things; therefore, it is not possible to consider the world as a set of determinate features; rather, as a recognition of our unreflected fonts of experience (Merleau-Ponty 2011: 66). Bergson's idea of duration seems to make us rethink Leibniz's formulation of the impossibility of animal reason, including because of their biological transformations.

To illustrate the dependency of the time category on living creatures, Uexküll refers to the oft-quoted example of a tick, which is able to do without food for 18 years, squeezing time until the signal of butyric acid awakens the animal to its renewal. Here Uexküll emphasises that during her period of waiting, the tick is in a sleepless state. Instead of saying that there can be no living subject without time, we shall think vice versa (Uexküll 1992 [1934]). And then the second, one involuntarily recalls the truth, well-known from school, that living organisms subtly feel the flow of the pre-spring time — migratory birds must certainly understand when to return from southern countries to their nesting sites. This is just one of the encyclopaedic examples of how living organisms interpret seasonality, giving people signals about the coming of spring, which Maran calls *compound ecological signs* (Maran, Tüür 2017).

The key to the perception of invisible time-space lies in observing the spheres of the habitation of living beings. From Lorenz's viewpoint, a person perceives space and time in the same ecological niche as the world of animals, according to the principle of the *reverse side of the mirror* (Lorenz 1973). According to his perspective, the most relevant and accurate human perception of space and time can occur only when a person perceives the world and time in a single biorhythm with the animal world.

Anyone familiar with examples of experiencing creative impulse knows what it is like to forget about the world around him and virtually freeze for a while, losing track of time. The creative process, associated with self-reflection and escapism, is still the result of interaction with the outside world, acquiring meanings. Let us imagine that the clock of the inevitable counting of time is linearly hidden from our eyes — the awareness of individual relationships with time and precisely the extent of modifying its duration become largely possible due to the observation of different time durations of other non-living and living organisms.

Walking after Uexküll in the meadow, filled with the different temporal perceptions of living creatures, a person, it seems, can involuntarily remember that such a variety of transformations of time (as well as the worlds of subjective experiences) is inherent in our species. And it seems to be underrated knowledge received from nature in our time, when, controversially, much attention is paid

both to the cult of progress associated with facilitation, competitive environments, and the mental health of individuals.

Corporality

Introducing the reader to the concept of the functional circle, Uexküll highlights that the bodily (morphological) organisation of a living organism determines the possibilities of its perception of the surrounding world and actions in it. The perceptions and actions are purely selective: the body builds its environment for itself, which affects it back, shaping it (Uexküll 1982 [1940]). Depending on the bodily structure, living organisms perceive the world in different ways selectively. In addition, the boundary between an organism and its *umwelt* is often conditional (as in the case of the body of a spider that builds its web, which is partly a continuation of itself).

If you focus on the seeming oppositional gap between the cognitive abilities of humans and animals, following the abovementioned Descartes and Leibniz, you can lose sight of corporeality: a multilevel cognitive instrument available to both. The story of teaching Helen Keller confirms the effectiveness of the body in the process of cognition. The girl, who, at the age of one and a half lost her sight and hearing due to brain inflammation, was brought up by teacher Anne Sullivan with the help of tactile sensations alone. Sullivan invented the manual alphabet, tracing words in Keller's palm with her fingers (Keller 2003: 12). The transition from simple repetition of the teacher's hand movements to comprehension was completed in one moment. When Helen was taking water, suddenly she realised that the special touch was precisely the liquid:

[...] I [Anne Sullivan] made Helen hold her mug under the spout while I pumped. As the cold water gushed forth, filling the mug, I spelled "w-a-t-e-r" in Helen's free hand. The word coming so close upon the sensation of cold water rushing over her hand seemed to startle her. She dropped the mug and stood as one transfixed. A new light came into her face. She spelled "water" several times. (Keller 2003: 292, 293)

This example, as it were, encourages thinking about the study and knowledge of the world in various ways of feeling, without dividing them into separate blocks of those that supposedly give completeness of perception and are associated with higher human cognitive processes and those that are allegedly characterised by incompleteness.

Generally, people tend to make a smooth transition from recognising the world through various senses to thinking processes, and often it is barely perceptible. For instance, music in human perception may turn into a substance

with a spectrum of colours. Stimulation of one sensory or cognitive pathway may result in involuntary experiences in a second sensory or cognitive pathway: that is how the perceptual phenomenon of synaesthesia occurs. Proust explored artistically another curious phenomenon of unconscious memories — how aroma, sound, and light can awaken intense feelings associated with emotionally charged events (Proust 2002: 152). From simpler daily examples of the complementarity of non-verbal and verbal means of communication, we can recall how the use of gestures enables speakers to illustrate action with their hands before thinking over putting thoughts into words; no less visible are examples of cases of interchangeability when gestures substitute long turns of speech.

Body cognition is also practically inseparable from movement and action. The perceiving and thinking mind is a body in motion. According to Bergson, originally, we think only in order to act. “Our intellect has been cast in the mold of action” (Bergson 1998: 44). Ozorina describes the totality of children’s fantasies, games, dances, songs, modelling, and other types of individual creative activities of children in preschool and primary school age as a continuous world-building work that allows them to maintain a sense of stability, correctness and meaningfulness of their being (Ozarina 36). The world of a living organism arises together with its action. Merleau-Ponty, in turn, emphasises the primacy of knowing one’s own physicality in order to perceive others and gain access to the meanings that were originally contained in the organs of imaginary senses:

The flesh of the body makes us understand the flesh of the world. [...] All that precedes could be summarized as follows: the human body is symbolism — not in the superficial sense, i.e., where a representative term takes the place of another — but in the fundamental sense of: expressive of another. Perception and movement symbolize. And the meanings between them. For the unity of the body. [...] An organ of the mobile senses (the eye, the hand) is already a language because it is an interrogation (movement) and a response [...], speaking and understanding. It is a tacit language”. (Merleau-Ponty, Seglard 2003: 211-219)

In shaping the perception of the surrounding world and self-consciousness, non-verbal means of communication, motor activities and bodily exploration remain significant for non-humans and humans.

Living organisms as origins of metaphors

Croft and Cruse note that metaphors are everyday colloquial forms of conceptualisation that are closely linked with the human experience, the surrounding world, and the individual’s bodily and mental sensations (Croft,

Cruse 2004: 212-214). Consequently, a metaphor by its nature cannot but be anthropometric: when speaking about animals, we must single out *zoonyms*, which act as the primary names of animals and parts of their bodies, and *zoomorphisms* – secondary figurative, metaphorical designations that have a pronounced connotative potential. Seems like it should imply evaluative judgments when transferring the properties of one object or phenomenon to another.

However, figurative associativity, embedded in the metaphor, is supposedly due primarily to the variety of characteristics of living and non-living organisms and has the ability to spontaneously arise when a person conceptualises the new with the help of the already learned properties of the old. A metaphor can grow organically on the basis of observation itself and, at this early moment of its occurrence, does not contain evaluation but may acquire it later, depending on the interpretation of the recipient. James Fernandez compares two ways of describing a person: what is familiar to us, divided into descriptive concepts from different spheres of human life, and symbolic, based on the perception of an animal person and the transfer of his qualities to a person. He comes to a remarkable conclusion: the second option allows our mind to integrate more diverse experiences into a single metaphor (Fernandez 1972: 46):

Of George we say: he is a teller, he is a banker, he is a businessman, he is a Harvard alumnus, he is a father, he is an adult, he is a homo sapiens, he is anthropoid, he is a vertebrate, and so on. Of course, men belong to a number of domains, and hence in qualifying the inchoate pronoun, we must choose one domain or another: the domain of business activity, of educational activity, of domestic activity, of phylogenetic classification. (Fernandez 1972: 46)

But the comparison of George with lobster supposedly allows one to go beyond the boundaries of independent domains and link his personality characteristics into a holistic image: perhaps George is distinguished by haste, the ability to defend himself resolutely, and sometimes being easily irritable.

Ilyas Ustunier claims that the same zoomorphism can be used for several characteristics of a person since it has a wide range of connotations associated with different deployments of one basic seme or with a bunch of associations from several semes (units of meaning) in the structure of the original zoonym. For instance, the word donkey can describe an uncomplaining, hard-working, and stubborn person (Ustunier 2004: 13). No less curious, however, are examples of erased natural metaphors and zoometaphors, so inseparable from everyday communication that people often use them automatically, forgetting about their natural origins:

That's a budding theory. (Lakoff, Johnsen 2003: 48)

The seeds of his great ideas were planted in his youth. (ibid: 48)

Here's an idea that I'd like to plant in your mind. (ibid: 48)

The caterpillar turned into a butterfly. (ibid: 74)

The study of natural metaphors and zoometaphors made it possible to draw significant conclusions about many psychological and social phenomena that relate to human traits that are condemned or approved. Therefore, we can define which phenomena are in the focus of a person's attention or on the periphery (Sklyarevskaya 1993: 101). Social and psychological phenomena, which we are accustomed to considering mainly in the context of the people around us, are isolated from the world of the living and non-living organisms, thus becoming the fruits of the conceptualisation of the entire breadth of nature.

Conclusion

Well, we delicately removed the necklace from the man's neck — and, apparently, did not lose anything. Having strung just a few natural stones on the thread, we were equally convinced how much human processes of perception, cognition, and creation of the world are closely related to the environment of other living organisms. In a purely magical way, man can slow down and speed up time in his *umwelt*, just like many other living beings. Seeing a picturesque meadow full of insects and birds, he can indulge in creative inspiration to perpetuate it. Space and time are subject to nature: a person is guided in the first largely due to nature (and freezes in the second due to nature as well).

The border between the human body and his *umwelt* is somewhat illusory, inasmuch as the organs of mobile senses serve us both as language and speech. But here, it seems unexpectedly appropriate to return to the idea of the exclusivity of each person in a new context. Everyone perceives time and space differently, having a different bodily structure, and, as Uexküll showed us, these inner worlds cannot be compared. However, in his most sincere everyday situations, when there is no reason to defend his superiority, a human tends to speak as a biocentrist: he uses erased natural metaphors automatically to express pure joy or uneasiness.

Apparently, we can relate to the dictum of Plato, who found himself captivated by a blooming place of summer sounds and smells and explained his delight by the fact that he rarely goes beyond the fence of the city, where only people can teach him (Plato, Cooper 1997: 510). However, learning may not always imply being aware of it in a given momentum. Paradoxically, though, biocentric thinking of natural stone non-assignment (or barely assignment) allows us to string more and more on our invisible necklace. Stringing them

meekly, without being blinded, ensuring that its brilliance is similar to that of the sun.

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SYNAESTHETIC TENDENCIES IN CHIMPANZEES (PAN TROGLODYTES) as evolutionary advantages and learning aids, as compared to the human synaesthetic spectrum

Kristīne Treija

Independent

Abstract: The present paper investigates how and to what extent synaesthetic tendencies, namely, the visuoauditory mappings between high luminance and high pitch (Ludwig, Adachi, Matsuzawa 2011) and structural isomorphisms across sensory modalities (Ravignani, Sonnweber 2017) discovered in chimpanzees (Pan Troglodytes), can be explained in terms of evolutionary advantages and learning aids. This approach sheds new light on the interpretation of existing cross-modal capacities in chimpanzees, and suggests novel similarities between human and chimpanzee cognition.

This paper introduces synaesthesia and the synaesthetic spectrum, with special emphasis on the nature of audio-visual cross-modal mappings, followed by insights into chimpanzee umwelt. Subsequently, theories about the possible evolutionary benefits of the condition are analysed, arriving at implications about human vs non-human primate cross-modal meaning-making. Results suggest that chimpanzees are capable of all three cross-modal processing forms found in nature: discreet mapping, continuous mapping and cross-modal isomorphisms. These capabilities can broadly be characterised as synaesthetic tendencies and have equivalents in human multi-modal perception. While the existence of vivid synaesthesias in chimpanzees cannot be ruled out, the observed synaesthetic phenomena in chimpanzees are comparable to the cross-modal capacities of pre-teen human children. In this regard, language and culture appear not essential for cross-modal abstract mapping. Therefore, synaesthetic tendencies can be seen as basic, primary sensory processing mechanisms for primates that are evolutionarily earlier than human linguistic abilities. In this case, it can be suggested that synaesthetic phenomena might play an even bigger role in chimpanzee umwelt than human umwelt. As the existing research on this topic is scarce, further directions of exploration might include testing chimpanzees for other kinds of synaesthetic phenomena, and investigating the role of learning human abstract concepts on the ape's synaesthetic experiences.

Keywords: synaesthesia, cross-modal processing, chimpanzee cognition, umwelt

Sünesteetilised tendentsid šimpansites (*Pan troglodytes*) kui evolutsioonilised eelised ja abivahend õppimisel, võrrelduna inimeste sünesteetilise spektrumiga

Abstrakt: Käesolev artikkel uurib, kuidas ja mis määral võib sünesteetilisi kalduvusi, mida on avastatud šimpansitel (*Pan troglodytes*) selgitada evolutsiooniliste eelistena ja abivahenditena õppimisel. Sünesteesia vormid, mis käsitlust leiavad on visuaal-auditoorsed vastavused valgustugevuse ja helikõrguse vahel (Ludwig, Adachi, Matsuzawa 2011) ning strukturealsed isomorfismid tajumodaalsuse vahel (Ravignani, Sonnweber 2017). Siinne käsitlus näidab šimpansite ristmodaalsete võimete tõlgendamisvõimalusi ja pakub uusi sarnasusi inimeste ning šimpansite tunnetustes. Artikkel tutvustab sünesteetisat ning sünesteetilist spektrumi, keskendudes eriti audiovisuaal-ristkaardistustele, millele järgneb sissevaade šimpansi maailma. Järgnevalt analüüsitakse teooriaid, mis käsitlevad konditsiooni võimalikke evolutsioonilisi eeliseid ning jõutakse järeldusteni inimeste ning teiste primaatide ristmodaalse tähendusloome kohta. Tulemused vihjavad sellele, et šimpansid on võimelised kõigiks kolmest ristmodaalsetest töötlustest, mida looduses leidub: diskreetseks kaardistuseks, kontinuaalseks kaardistuseks ning ristmodaalseteks isomorfismideks. Neid võimekusi võib üldistavalt käsitleda kui sünesteetilisi kalduvusi ning neil on ekvivalente inimeste multimodaalses tajuvõimes. Kuigi ei saa välistada, et šimpansite seas võib leiduda ehedaid sünesteete, on seni täheldatud sünesteetilised fenomenid võrreldavad eelpuberteedialiste inimeste ristmodaalse võimekustega. Sellega seoses ei näi keel ning kultuur olevat olemuslikud abstraktse ristmodaalse kaardistuse jaoks. Seega võib sünesteetilisi tendentse näha primaarsete tajumehhanismidena primaatide jaoks, kellel puudub keelevõime. Antud juhul võib pakkuda, et sünesteetilised nähtused pakuvad isegi suuremat rolli šimpansite maailmas võrreldes inimeste omaga. Kuivõrd olemasolevaid uurimusi sellel teemal on vähe, võiks edasised uurimused kaasata katseid šimpansitega, et tuvastada teisigi sünesteetilisi nähtusi ning uurida, kuidas mõjutab abstraktsete mõistete õppimine primaatide sünesteetilisi kogemusi.

Märksõnad: sünesteesia, ristmodaalne töötlemine, heli tajumine, šimpansite kognitsioon, maailm

1. Synaesthesia and synaesthetic tendencies: Short overview

Having existed, as will be suggested later in this paper, even before the dawn of the human race, in its most widespread sense, the neurobiological condition of synaesthesia can be defined as “anomalous perceptual experiences that are triggered by activity in another sensory modality (e.g. sounds triggering colours or touch invoking taste) or by cognitive activity (e.g. numbers inducing colours or emotions provoking experience of taste)” (Ward et al. 2008: 128). The condition affects roughly 4% of the general human population, providing for highly altered conscious and unconscious meaning-making processes resulting

in highly persistent, involuntary and idiosyncratic experiences whereby a certain stimulus (often referred to as “inducer”) produces a concurrent-specific sensory perception (in synaesthetes-projectors) or association (in synaesthetes-associators) (Bargary, Mithcell 2008: 335-336).

Up until the 19th century, documented cases of manifestations of synaesthetic phenomena were scarce and of discussable authenticity (see accounts by Locke, Rondet, Bertrand-Castel, Hoffmann in Jewanski, Day, Ward 2009: 295-296, Baumgarten, Kant in Van Campen 2009:3). The rise of synaesthesia research from the 19th century onwards has been closely linked to advances in psychology during that time, cognitive science research of the 20th century, as well as the medical and technological advances of the 21st century allowing an in-depth study of synaesthetic meaning-making processes in the human brain. However, up until the beginning of the 21st century, scientific thought had not paid interest to possible synaesthetic phenomena in non-human species.

One of the most prominent features of synaesthesia is its multi-faceted nature that makes it an adventurous field of research for a variety of disciplines, among others, psychology, neuroscience, cognitive sciences, linguistics and semiotics, at the same time, leaving a lot to question. Currently, more than 73 types of synaesthesia have been documented (Day 2005), with an overwhelming prevalence of visual synaesthesias. Apart from the vast array of types, the highly idiosyncratic nature of the condition results in each affected individual exhibiting very individualistic and specific inducer-concurrent relations, resulting in something similar to a personal synaesthetic “code” (even within the same synaesthesia type, different individuals have different concurrents for the same inducer).

Neuroscientists tend to limit the scope of synaesthesia proper to the above-explained phenomena, which Marks (2011) denominates as vivid synaesthesia. However, several cross-sensory correspondences and similarities are perceived by the general human population almost universally, as exemplified by the tendency to link higher frequencies with greater luminosity and lower sounds to darker colours, resulting in correspondence between sound pitch and visual lightness/ darkness; louder sounds to brighter colours, higher pitches to smaller images, higher pitches to sharper angles, which establish linkages similar to those of vivid synaesthesia. The existence of widespread perceptual similarities, denominated by Marks’ synaesthetic tendencies, as opposed to vivid synaesthesia, allows talking about synaesthetic phenomena as a spectrum (“perceptual-behavioural continuum” (Marks 2011)), ranging from least synaesthetic (cross-modal metaphor, cross-modal similarity) to most synaesthetic (induced imagery or experience). This view corresponds to synaesthetic monism (Marks 2011: 67-68), which seeks to provide the most inclusive and fluid approach to the synaesthetic phenomena, and is of special interest in the light of existing findings about the perception of audio-visual

cross-modal similarities and detection of cross-modal isomorphisms in chimpanzees, that could be broadly characterised as synaesthetic tendencies (Marks 2011: 52-53).

Among researchers sharing the stance of monism, Hunt (2005; 2011) views adult (vivid) synaesthesias as primarily based on childhood physiognomic associations. The importance of these associations usually declines around the early teenage years, as these “felt meanings” are internalised as full metaphoric understanding/ use. Similarly, Ramachandran and Hubbard (2001) propose that synaesthesia-like processes might have served as the initial impetus for human proto-language origins and its evolution, as language origins can be traced to a cluster of phylogenetically earlier cross-modal mechanisms exaptated for other means. This way, synaesthesia can be regarded as a tool for studying metaphor and creativity since metaphor implies the cross-activation of conceptual maps in a similar way as the cross-activation of perceptual maps or the link between conceptual and perceptual maps in synaesthesia.

Vivid synaesthesia and synaesthetic tendencies, while sharing several characteristics, differ phenomenologically. Vivid synaesthetic experiences, as briefly introduced above, are highly persistent, involuntary and idiosyncratic, as well as absolute (inducer-concurrent relationships are persistent and specific), and rigid (invariable over time), whereas synaesthetic tendencies are much more relativistic and context-dependent (such as linking the brightest colour to the highest pitch or vice versa), as well as flexible. Whether the difference between synaesthetic tendencies and vivid synaesthesia is of quantitative or qualitative nature is still under discussion. However, the abundant prevalence of perceptual and cognitive tendencies in non-synaesthetes allows suggesting that the basis of the sensory processing mechanisms of synaesthesia might be shared between synaesthetes and non-synaesthetes alike and that sensory processes might have a leading role in cognitive processing, not just a supporting one (Marks 2011: 53-59). The similarity of these sensory processing mechanisms allows the synaesthetic spectrum of synaesthetic monism to include both vividly synaesthetic persons, a large part of the general human population experiencing synaesthetic tendencies, as well as non-human individuals (chimpanzees) experiencing at least some part of the synaesthetic spectrum. Before proceeding to further analyse the nature and implications of synaesthetic phenomena detected in chimpanzees, it has to be emphasised that the overwhelmingly audio-visual character of synaesthetic tendencies in humans, and, as will be elaborated upon later in this paper, in chimpanzees, is in congruence with the historical and modern-day demographic data about the prevalence of different vivid synaesthesia types. Visual and colour-type vivid synaesthesias abound overwhelmingly: 18,5% of synaesthetes report experiences of coloured musical sounds, 14,3% perceive coloured general sounds, and 10,8% see coloured musical notes (Day 2005: 15). These data about vivid synaesthesias, along with the structure of synaesthetic metaphor in language and synaesthetic tendencies

exhibit the same trend for following a certain “lower-to-higher” hierarchy of mapping one sensory domain onto another: from touch as the “lower” sense to taste, smell, sound and sight as the “higher” sense. Shen and Aisenman (2008: 108) suggest this is a universal preference in natural language. In this way, for example, “red melody” is a more widely experienced synaesthetic link than “melodic redness”. In this regard, in the light of synaesthetic monism, it can be suggested that the mappings from least to most synaesthetic phenomena generally exhibit very similar structures both above and below the linguistic threshold and have similar prevalence – another point in favour of viewing them as a continuum, rather than separate phenomena.

2. Chimpanzees: Umwelt of and cross-modal processing

Generally, chimpanzees (*Pan Troglodytes*), being human’s closest relatives¹, are thought to share several commonalities with humans regarding colour perception and categorisation, independently of a human’s or chimpanzee’s previous colour categorisation training (Matsuno, Nobuyuki, Tetsuro 2004). This is largely due to chimpanzees possessing trichromatic colour vision, just like humans do. However, chimpanzees tend to exhibit greater superiority in processing local over global features in response to hierarchical stimulus, whereas humans as young as a few months old are more capable of perceiving the global level of such stimuli (Imura, Tomonaga 2013). Moreover, studies show that the visual world is perceived quite similarly by such species as humans, chimpanzees, and dolphins, despite the variable dependency on vision and adaptation to different environments (Tomonaga, Uwano, Saito, 2014). Additionally, research shows that chimpanzees, just like some other animals, have clear colour preferences, with more attention given to blue and green stimuli (with no observable preference among them) than red, preferences that are comparable to those observed in humans, suggesting that such colour preferences might be a result of evolutionary predispositions, despite red being supposedly biologically more relevant. These findings could suggest an innate relationship between the colour and the psychological reaction it invokes in the individual (Wells, McDonald, Ringland, 2008). Interestingly, psychological states such as moods (both clinical mood disorders, such as anxiety and depression, and non-clinical negative moods) have been proven to also influence the

¹ Chimpanzees are the closest relatives alongside bonobos (*Pan paniscus*) to humans. To this day, research on the cross-modal abilities of bonobos is very scarce and does not allow a full assessment of the whole spectrum of cross-modal processing. For reference, see Margiotoudi et al. 2022.

synaesthetic perception of colour, with induced colours becoming less luminescent and/or saturated (Kay, Carmichael, Ruffell, Simner 2014: 487).

Cross-modal processing in different types exists across the animal world. In this regard, Ravignani and Sonnweber (2017) establish three forms: discrete mapping, continuous mapping and cross-modal isomorphisms. Discrete mapping establishes a link between concrete units of different modalities, such as mapping species' mates' faces to their voices in monkeys, chimpanzees, dogs, and horses. In turn, continuous mapping supposes a cross-modal linkage between graded percepts (such as the spontaneous mapping between louder sound and greater luminescence in human infants). Finally, cross-modal isomorphisms require the individual to recognise the similarity in structural characteristics across two or more modalities. Such a cognitive task requires the combination of discrete and structural traits, which may include continuous elements as well (for example, processing the analogy between a patterned string of letters and a musical sequence of an isomorphic structure) (Ravignani, Sonnweber 2017: 74-75). While the first type of cross-modal processing, discrete mapping, has been proven to exist in both humans and some non-human species alike, continuous mapping and processing of cross-modal isomorphisms, which could be likened to synaesthetic tendencies, have lacked documented evidence in non-human species. Such lack of research could be partially explained by the assumption that such higher-level cross-modal abilities require linguistic abilities or cultural predisposition, which are seemingly unique human traits.

In this regard, of special interest are the findings by Ludwig, Adachi and Matsuzawa (2011), Ravignani, and Sonnweber (2017). Ludwig, Adachi and Matsuzawa (2011) have shed new light on the evolutionary roots of synaesthetic tendencies by discovering that they are indeed shared by humans and their closest primate relatives, chimpanzees. It had been previously noted that some chimpanzees, with varying levels of difficulty, are capable of identifying both amodal (for example, voice to conspecific face) and arbitrary cross-modal (for example, sound to individual/object producing it) links (corresponding to discrete mappings).

The previously unknown existence of continuous cross-modal mapping tendencies in chimpanzees with no previous training was detected by giving several individuals a task to classify stimuli as black or white while hearing either high- or low-pitched background sound. As a result, it was found that the chimpanzees' performance was significantly affected by a "wrong" background sound (low-pitched sound for white stimuli and vice versa) (Ludwig, Adachi, Matsuzawa, 2011).

In similar regard, in 2017, Ravignani and Sonnweber added to the discussion concerning the third kind of cross-modal processing, cross-modal isomorphisms, by proving that chimpanzees, not only humans, being previously trained to choose symmetrical structures, are capable of processing and spontaneously detecting structural isomorphisms across visual and auditory

modalities. Suggesting, “basic cross-modal abstraction capacities transcend linguistic abilities and might involve evolutionary ancient neural mechanisms” (Ravignani, Sonnweber, 2017: 74). The discovery of synaesthetic tendencies in chimpanzees is fascinating not only as a finding that places what was thought of as a rare human ability in non-humans but also in the way that these discoveries can shed new light on the evolutionary perspective of human language and abstract thought development. Synaesthetic tendencies in perception are widely observed in human children at an even higher rate than among adults. Children as young as four years old readily establish links between pitch and loudness, as well as loudness and brightness, and pre-teens from 11 years old perceive links between pitch and size (Marks 2011: 58). Some reports even trace synaesthetic perception to infants as young as a few months old, clearly allowing to discuss the relationship between cross-modal abstract concept mapping, learning and origins of the human verbal language, since it becomes obvious that linguistic abilities are not the prerequisite for synaesthetic perception, but probably rather vice versa. The early onset of synaesthetic tendencies in perception implies that they might be innate, hard-wired into human brains, suggesting, in the framework of synaesthetic monism, that, at least partially, similar neural coding mechanisms are responsible for both synaesthetic tendencies and vivid synaesthesias (Marks 2011: 55), as will be discussed in more detail further in this paper.

3. Evolutionary and learning advantages of synaesthesia: Discussion

Contemporarily, many hypotheses regarding the possible origins and functioning mechanisms of vivid synaesthesias have been put forward. Among them, most researchers agree on the hereditary aspect of the condition (Brang, Ramachandran 2011: 1), changes in brain structure and differences in cortical connectivity of synaesthetes, improved connectivity or hyperconnectivity between adjacent or nearby sensory brain regions caused by defective brain pruning in childhood, anatomical differences in the inferior temporal lobe, elevated amount of white matter and grey matter volume (see Anaki, Henik 2017: 143-144; Brang, Ramachandran 2011: 1). Regarding specifically the sound-colour synaesthesia, similar tendencies of which have been found in chimpanzees, research suggests that humans who see sound in colour have enhanced structural (white matter) connectivity, as well as significantly greater white matter integrity in the right inferior frontal-occipital fasciculus of the brain (Zamm, Schlaug, Eagleman, Loui 2013: 359).

Some of the most recent hypotheses involve suggestions that synaesthesia might “serve as cognitive and perceptual anchor to aid in the

detection, processing and retention of critical stimuli in the world [...]” (Brang, Ramachandran 2011: 3). Synaesthesia could also be a “leftover” from associations formed in childhood when the child tries to make sense of abstract concepts by associating them with concrete characteristics (such as colour) (Letalieur-Sommer 2015: 30), or even serve as an impetus for verbal language evolution in ancient times and human metaphorical and symbolic capacity (see Ramachandran; Hubbart 2001:20-21; Hunt 2005: 40- 41). A “middle way” theory between genetics and learning also exists too. Rouw, Schölte, and Colizoli (2011: 235-236) explain synaesthesia as a mixture of hereditary and environmental factors (inherited propensity to synaesthesia allows the development of particular synaesthetic links through learning and culture), which would explain, as previously mentioned, the increased prevalence of synaesthetic tendencies as the child matures and acquires language.

The theories regarding synaesthesia as a perceptual anchor for processing critical stimuli, as well as a learning aid, are of particular importance in light of the findings of the cross-modal capacities of chimpanzees. Findings of cross-modal meaning-making and detection of audio-visual cross-modal structural isomorphisms in chimpanzees, human’s closest relatives, and the possibility to classify such phenomena as synaesthetic tendencies naturally give way to an array of implications.

3.1 Learning advantages of synaesthesia

Treating synaesthesia, as well as synaesthetic tendencies as a learning aid, highlights their role in normal primate sensory functioning and meaning-making, especially in childhood (Ludwig; Adachi, Matsuzawa 2011: 20661-20663). As previously mentioned, some synaesthetic tendencies appear to be inherited, as is the propensity to develop vivid synaesthesias. The whole process occurs in close relation with the environment in which the human (or, as can be suggested, chimp baby) is born and raised. In this way, particular vivid synaesthesia links could be explained as built upon similar neural mechanisms as the widespread synaesthetic tendencies.

As previously mentioned, certain synaesthetic tendencies seem to develop at certain ages, with four-year-old humans acknowledging similarities between pitch and loudness, as well as loudness and brightness, and older children from the age of eleven perceiving links between pitch and size (Marks 2011: 58), with the former being closer to similarity, and the latter, to metaphorical capacity. Such phenomena are in congruence with what Marks (2011) refers to as unity of senses, stating that, in human cognition, sensory processes might have a leading role, not just a supporting one (Marks 2011: 58). Linguistic capacities, therefore, appear to be essential for more cognitive-type synaesthesias and

synaesthetic tendencies (such as cultural concepts and metaphor). However, even these higher synaesthetic phenomena seem to be built upon sensory processes. Their primary level, which, as I would like to suggest, might have a feedback loop, such as cultural concepts being mapped on gnoseologically earlier sensory categories and, in turn, manifesting themselves in these categories (such as in the cases when cultural concepts, such as days of the week, are perceived as induced perceptual experiences, such as tastes).

Even though chimpanzees seemingly do not have access to verbal language and the higher-level abstractions that it allows to perform, findings about chimpanzee cross-modal meaning-making and detection of audio-visual cross-modal structural isomorphisms are proof that mapping of abstract structures is not a cultural or linguistic phenomenon, but rather a pre-linguistic ability (both in the scale of individual human or chimpanzee development, as well as the evolutionary split between humans and chimpanzees) (Ravignania; Sonnweberb, 2017:78).

As Marks (1975: 326) summarised, synaesthesia is of great importance in childhood as it is an iconic representation. Thus its role diminishes with the acquisition of an abstract language. However, it is closely related to non-synaesthetic experiences, synaesthesia being “a cross-modal manifestation of meaning in its purely sensory, and in one sense its strongest, form” (Marks 1975: 326). Moreover, as stated by Hunt (2005: 29-34), evidence supports the notion that adult synaesthesias are “imagistic forms of semantic reference” or “felt meanings” that can be compared to a specific form of the internalised imagistic side of what Vygotsky referred to as “inner speech”.

Moreover, the tendency to link high pitch and high luminance seems to have evolved between human and chimpanzee lineage split, suggesting that such mapping is a basic characteristic of primate meaning-making sensory system rather than being conditioned by human cognition, culture or language or being a byproduct of the way primate brains processes multisensory information (Ludwig; Adachi, Matsuzawa 2011: 20661-20663). Similar views regarding human synaesthesias were expressed already by Wheeler and Cutsforth (1922: 102), stating that synaesthesia is a normal mental function, “not a surplus process but an essential one [...]”. Since chimpanzees do not possess verbal language but do exhibit synaesthetic tendencies, upon which higher-level abstractions, such as language, metaphor, and induced synaesthetic imagery and experience, can be built, several questions remain: could it be the case that chimpanzees and humans do share the mechanisms necessary for the development of language. However, chimpanzees have not (yet) built upon these mechanisms or are perhaps incapable of doing so due to some other internal factors? Since cross-modal metaphor, according to the synaesthetic spectrum of synaesthetic monism, is treated as less synaesthetic than perceptual similarity, could it be the case that chimpanzees have the means for metaphorical capacity, but it is not expressed? As has been mentioned several times throughout this paper, the

synaesthetic tendencies found in chimpanzees could be compared to those of a small human child; however, while human children grow up to acquire new, more metaphorical synaesthetic tendencies that tend to diminish with age (acquisition of language and consequently increased reliance on abstract cognitive, rather than iconic, sensory processes), no such processes have (yet) been discovered in non-humans. According to the notion of synaesthetic tendencies as normal, basic mechanisms of primate sensory meaning-making, it could even be suggested that the cognitive processes of chimpanzees, not possessing the advanced abstract tools of verbal language, could be even more dependent on primary sensory meaning-making than humans. Subsequently, synaesthetic tendencies, as well as induced synaesthetic imagery and perception (with the latter two not having been researched in non-humans), could also form an integral part of a varying yet unknown degree of chimpanzees' daily lives.

3.2 Evolutionary advantages of synaesthesia

The evolutionary hypothesis about synaesthesia as a cognitive and perceptual aid in recognising, processing, and learning vital stimuli in the environment (Brang; Ramachandran 2011: 3) is in direct relation with the above-discussed "learning-aid" theory. This relation is so as much as it emphasises the innate character of at least some degree and type of synaesthetic phenomena, applicable to both humans and chimpanzees, and is compatible with the idea of both synaesthetic tendencies and vivid synaesthesias possibly sharing the same perceptual roots and functioning mechanisms.

The synaesthetic experience has direct implications on Jakob von Uexküll's concept of *umwelt* as a closed unit formed by the organism's perceptor world and effector world. *Umwelt*, which can be understood as the subjective world of the organism, consists of signs that it receives through sense organs called "receptors", and therefore "sense perception surrounds all living beings like a bubble – clearly delineated but invisible to outside observers" (Uexküll 1992: 281). Since synaesthetic capacities, as discussed before, largely depend on the structural connectivity of the brain and have a proven genetic character, it would not be an exaggeration to claim that a synaesthetic individual is "equipped" with a brain as a central receptor that allows a significantly different sensory and conceptual interpretations and experiences. The fact that synaesthesia is an essential, integral part of a synaesthetic person's *umwelt* can be observed by the many accounts in which synaesthetes admit having never thought of their condition as something special (Ramachandran 2016: 26). This notion can be extended to both humans with vivid synaesthesia, as well as humans and chimpanzees experiencing synaesthetic tendencies.

Generally, the findings about cross-modal similarity and isomorphism capacities of chimpanzees allow proceeding with several hypotheses about human verbal language development. Several researchers have pointed to the intrinsic similarity between metaphorical structuring and synaesthetic perception and cognition processes, suggesting that synaesthetic perception might serve as a key to understanding human symbolic and metaphoric thought and even the origins of verbal language. As stated by Marks (2011: 58), similarities in synaesthetic perception, cognition, and metaphor can be observed, primarily in perception. Further, during development, they become available to more abstract representations in language, such as cross-modal metaphor. Suggesting that metaphor's roots may also reside, like those of synaesthesia, in fundamental cross-modal perceptual similarities. "These inferences suggest that the perceptual roots of synaesthesia might also serve as a root of metaphor per se." (Marks 2011: 58). Moreover, for Marks (1996: 39), synaesthesia is a "notable example of metaphorical perception", with both synaesthetic and physiognomic perception revealing the parallels between various sensory modalities, that have to do, at least in part, with the characteristics of human perception.

In turn, Hunt (2005) states that, according to the synaesthetic internalisation hypothesis for metaphor, the gradual development of metaphor in human beings, which manifests in late childhood, might stem from the underlying synaesthetic capacity of the early development. As Hunt indicates, it is logical in the developmental sense that the unfolding of metaphor in young humans between ages eight and twelve would have its roots in the internalisation of physiognomic and synaesthetic processes as the imagistic side of inner speech (Hunt 2005: 37). Subsequently, the full human symbolic capacity would be a result of open-ended cross-modality translations among vocalisation, kinaesthesia, and vision, that, after their internalisation, would guide the development of metaphoric usage and understanding. Suggesting that "synaesthesias may prove to be the Rosetta Stone for our human symbolic capacity and its form and level of consciousness", with an abundant amount of phenomenological and experimental evidence that adult synaesthesias are imagistic forms of semantic reference (Hunt 2005: 40-41). In this regard, synaesthetic tendencies in chimpanzees could be referred to as a pre-metaphoric state, possessing the necessary mechanisms for metaphoric capacity, which, however, are not developed.

Ramachandran & Hubbard (2001) propose a synaesthesia-based solution to the riddle of language origins and evolution because of (i) sharp phonemic inflexions (such as "kiki") mimicking sharp changes in visual direction and vice versa, suggesting natural constraints for mapping sounds on objects; (ii) sensory-to-motor synaesthesia, such as the rhythm of movements mimicking the auditory rhythm (as in dance), suggests the existence of a natural bias for mapping concrete sounds on certain vocalisations; (iii) the fact that synaesthesia can

cause cross-activation between two motor maps (such as clenching teeth when using scissors) In short:

representation of certain lip/ tongue movements in motor brain maps may be mapped in non-arbitrary ways onto certain sound inflections and phonemic representations in auditory regions and the latter in turn may have non-arbitrary links to an external object's visual appearance. [...] lip and tongue movements and other vocalizations may be synaesthetically linked to objects and events [...] in closer ways than we usually assume, and this may have been especially true early in the evolution of the proto-language of ancestral hominids [...] suggesting that these factors provided the initial impetus for language evolution (Ramachandran; Hubbard 2001: 20-21).

In this way, it can be suggested that synaesthetic tendencies in chimpanzees are a unique example of how human proto-language might have evolved and how the beginnings of human verbal language might have rested on what are essentially synaesthetic tendencies in perception. Consequently, paving the way for further abstraction in the form of language and metaphor, which might have, in turn, lessened the dependency on sensory perception.

4. Conclusion

The aim of this paper has been to research and acknowledge where the visuoauditory mappings between high luminance and high pitch (Ludwig; Adachi; Matsuzawa 2011) and structural isomorphisms across sensory modalities (Ravignani; Sonnweber 2017) discovered in chimpanzees (Pan Troglodytes), which can be classified as synaesthetic tendencies, stand in the framework of some of the most widespread theories of the human synaesthetic experiences. The main findings and conclusions of this paper are as follows:

- 1) The existence of widespread perceptual similarities in the human population, denominated by Marks' (2011) synaesthetic tendencies, as opposed to vivid synaesthesia, allows talking about synaesthetic phenomena as a spectrum ranging from least to most synaesthetic.
- 2) The ("perceptual-behavioural continuum" (Marks 2011)) of the synaesthetic experience corresponds to synaesthetic monism, an inclusive approach to the synaesthetic phenomena that is capable of accommodating the findings about the perception of audio-visual cross-modal similarities and detection of cross-modal isomorphisms in chimpanzees. This could be broadly characterised as synaesthetic tendencies and have equivalents in human multi-modal perception.
- 3) Both vivid synaesthesias, as well as synaesthetic tendencies, despite phenomenological differences, share several structural properties, mapping hierarchy preferences, as well as prevalence trends. As such, suggesting that the

basis of the sensory processing mechanisms of synaesthesia might be shared between synaesthetes and non-synaesthetes alike, further emphasising the continuity of the experience.

4) The similarity of the underlying sensory processing mechanisms allows the synaesthetic spectrum of synaesthetic monism to include both vividly synaesthetic persons, a large part of the general human population experiencing synaesthetic tendencies, as well as non-human individuals (chimpanzees) who experience at least some part of the synaesthetic spectrum.

5) In light of existing studies about the cross-modal abilities of chimpanzees, it can be concluded that chimpanzees are capable of all three cross-modal processing forms found in nature (Ravignani; Sonnweber 2017): discreet mapping, continuous mapping and cross-modal isomorphisms.

6) The extent to which chimpanzees experience synaesthetic phenomena is still scarcely researched. Apart from mappings between high luminance and high pitch, and the recognition of structural isomorphisms between visual and sound structures, chimpanzees could possibly experience a vast array of other synaesthetic phenomena, as exemplified by the multi-faceted nature of the human synaesthetic spectrum.

7) With the intention of fully acknowledging the continuity of the synaesthetic spectrum, the existence of vivid synaesthesias in chimpanzees cannot be ruled out. However, it might be very hard to detect and properly assess, considering the relatively low prevalence and highly idiosyncratic nature of vivid synaesthesias in humans.

8) If human synaesthetic phenomena are to be likened to those found in chimpanzees, the most advisable realms for researching possible vivid synaesthesias in chimpanzees would be the types with sound inducers and colour concurrents, which are the most prevalent sensory vivid synaesthesia types found in humans.

9) The existence of vivid synaesthesia types with cognitive inducers in chimpanzees (such as with time unit inducers and visual concurrents, the most-widespread cognitive type of vivid synaesthesia in humans) is under question since it supposedly entails cultural and language aspects.

10) Human synaesthetic tendencies are widely manifested in language and metaphor, a realm unavailable to chimpanzees. However, how synaesthetic tendencies appear in children (firstly, as cross-modal similarity, which around the pre-teen age develops into the metaphorical capacity) allows the likening of synaesthetic phenomena found in chimpanzees (up to current data) to those observed in pre-teen human children.

11) The pre-linguistic character of synaesthetic tendencies in chimpanzees allows the conclusion that human language, cognition and culture are not a prerequisite for cross-modal abstract mapping. Therefore, synaesthetic tendencies can be considered as basic, primary sensory processing mechanisms for primates that are evolutionary earlier than human linguistic abilities.

12) It is widely shown that primary sensory synaesthetic processing is the prerequisite for the further development of metaphor, abstract thought, and verbal language in humans. It appears that, theoretically, chimpanzees might have the necessary mechanisms for a further metaphorical perception, but these higher-level mappings are not expressed due to an absence of verbal language.

13) Linguistic capacities, therefore, appear to be essential for more cognitive-type synaesthesias and synaesthetic tendencies (such as cultural concepts and metaphor), which chimpanzees do not have access to. However, even these higher synaesthetic phenomena seem to be built upon sensory processes.

14) Since chimpanzees do not have access to the synaesthetic phenomena on the other side of the linguistic threshold, which determines the lessening of the reliance of sensory-type iconic synaesthetic tendencies in humans, it could be the case that chimpanzees are more dependent on primary sensory meaning-making mechanisms than humans. As a result, synaesthetic phenomena might be, to a varying and yet unknown degree, an integral part of a chimpanzee's daily life to a wider extent than it is in humans.

15) The discoveries about the cross-modal capacities of chimpanzees have direct implications on our understanding of chimpanzee umwelt. The kind and extent of these implications depend on future discoveries on the topic.

16) Synaesthetic tendencies in chimpanzees might serve as an example of the structural bases of human verbal language development, highlighting the role of sensory processes in cognition. In this regard, synaesthetic tendencies in chimpanzees could be referred to as a pre-metaphoric state and provide valuable insights into the origins of human verbal language, both at the level of the individual and at the level of the whole human species. Further research on the topic could include testing other primates, or testing chimpanzees for other types of synaesthetic tendencies or vivid synaesthesias, following the data about the prevalence of certain vivid synaesthesia types in humans. The scarcity of current research on the topic leaves a lot for investigation, such as the prevalence of synaesthetic tendencies (and possible vivid synaesthesias) among chimpanzees, the role of learning human-like concepts and their possible serving as cognitive synaesthetic inducers, among others. The findings on synaesthetic tendencies in primates and their possible role as prerequisites for further development of abstract thinking, metaphor, and language raise the question about the role and place of vivid synaesthesias in this process.

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A CONVERSATION WITH JAAN VALSINER

Interviewed by

Elli Marie Tragel

Tartu, May 7th 2022. Toome cafe's terrace by the tennis courts.

Elli Marie Tragel: *We are now at the end of your time here at the University of Tartu as an Expatriate Estonian visiting professor¹. Yesterday [May 6th, 2022], in our last seminar of the course [Semiosis in Irreversible Time²], you encouraged students to put a lot of thought into the first and the last sentence of their writing. If you were to write about your time here in Tartu this past year, how would you start?*

Jaan Valsiner: When I drove into Tartu and entered into Tähtvere, I felt weirdly at home and, at the same time, not at all. Weirdly at home because I would expect Tartu to be home—it was home for me for eight years in the 1970s. The weird part is, Tartu looks so familiar and at the same time completely non-familiar. I'm not even speaking of the town centre or the area near the bus station, which is completely new. Even the old Tähtvere seemed strangely unfamiliar, although it is almost like it was then. And then I got lost driving into town. Somewhat sad for me to get lost in my hometown, but I did.

EMT: *In "Hyper-Generalization by the Human Mind"³ you point out that the focus of the cultural psychology of semiotic dynamics is on the UPconscious rather than the UNconscious, which for example, psychoanalysis focuses on. Neither upconscious nor unconscious are verbally expressible. In the way you described your experience just now, are you "translating" the UPconscious? Perhaps you could elaborate on the idea of upconscious a little bit?*

¹ <https://ut.ee/en/content/university-tartu-scholarship-expatriate-estonian-visiting-professors-granted-jaan-valsiner> 01.12.2020

² <https://ut.ee/en/content/expatriate-estonian-visiting-professor-jaan-valsiner-teaches-course-semiosis-irreversible> 09.09.2021

³ Hyper-generalization by the human mind: The role of sign hierarchies in meaning-making processes. Psychosozial Verlag, 2021

JV: Yes, if we think of it, I have been away from Tartu for more or less three years after a very short visit in 2017. Now I came for nine months — back for nine months to a town which was home for me for eight years. You feel differently about the road from Tallinn to Tartu. And then you arrive. It's almost like an end of a pilgrimage. One hundred eighty kilometres is similar to the road to Santiago de Compostela. You have expectations that are not verbalised, but they are deeply built on all of your life experience over the last 40 years outside of Estonia and, before that, 29 years inside Estonia. They are not verbalised. I am feeling a strange recognition of familiarity and non-familiarity at the same time. In the theoretical sense, unconscious means effectively overgeneralised sign-fields — that are linked with semiotics. The only thing I do differently [from general semiotics] is to make signs into sign-fields. I make them hyper-generalised at two moments, nothing more. I then consider that these sign-fields that we all carry with us in our lives come from our experience, we've set up certain expectations for the next moment of arrival or departure from a particular place. That is more or less what happened on my way to Tartu. In general, I'm claiming — and this is now a very strong theoretical claim — that most of human subjectivity is built out of these hyper-generalised fields. It can be translated into some verbal expression, yes, but such expression will never completely characterise what is in that highest level of unconscious. It's a read-out from the unconscious, but only a specific read-out here and now for specific purposes. For example, if somebody asks you what kind of person you are, I say I'm a happy person. This statement happy person is completely empty, because you cannot verify it in any way. I can say that because it comes out to my unconscious, but nobody else can understand what I mean by that. They accept it because it's a socially acceptable statement (it need not always be socially acceptable).

EMT: *Often, we have unconscious habits, habits of doing, thinking, and so on. How would you describe habits in relation to the unconscious?*

JV: In terms of unconscious, Freud would have answers, I don't. In terms of unconscious we can see habit when you have hyper-generalised a particular aspect of very ordinary activities or very ordinary phenomena. For example, feeling into nature. Feeling into nature is something that comes with us through childhood or adolescence. The feeling into nature leads to different feelings here and now in the nice spring—finally!—and very specific statements about that nice spring, such as trees are becoming green. This is an objective statement about the trees, but the way I'm making that statement comes out of my unconscious of feeling into the nature and waiting for the spring to come. Now it is here, and I make the simple comment trees are getting green. For everybody else, this is simply a statement of the obvious. For me, that simple statement is actually the expression of the affective appreciation of spring arriving.

EMT: *It has the aspect of change in it already: we appreciate it because it's becoming now and it wasn't before.*

JV: Yes, and it is anticipated, desired. I looked out my window in the winter seeing ice and ice and more ice, and my anticipation for spring was growing. There was no spring. Finally, it comes and then I make a trivial comment: trees are becoming green.

EMT: *Anticipation is forward-oriented. As you say: semiosis is forward-oriented.*

JV: Yes, that is exactly the point. I make a statement that is oriented forward. When I say trees are getting green, I anticipate that they get even greener and everything gets warmer, and so on, and summer will come. But all of it is not expressed in my little statement implied by the feeling that goes back to the hyper-generalised form that nature is changing, nature is becoming and so on. There is no way back to the winter before the next winter. I have a Norwegian friend who becomes positively ecstatic when snow comes. He is so happy when the snow starts to fall. Cannot but jump into the snow. I understand his sentiment based on the background, but I cannot enter his background of hyper-generalised feeling with the same focus on snow.

EMT: *From this description, I hear an aspect present in all your theoretical approaches: the emphasis on irreversible time.*

JV: Yes, and affect, both ways. Affective primacy of all our mental functions. Affective over-cognition — not the other way around. And it all happens in irreversible time. The mechanisms are semiotic. Semiosis comes into it exactly at the intersection of affect and cognition—and at an intersection of the future and the past.

EMT: *Why is it so important to emphasise irreversible time?*

JV: In terms of theory, it was just a lucky discovery of Henri Bergson's notion of irreversible time and taking it seriously, and also wrongly, because my version is actually the opposite of Bergson's. So that's the technical side of the past history of how I invented it or came to it. Now, the more subjective side. I reached that [emphasis on irreversible time], maybe somewhere in the move out of Estonia in 1980. Before that, I was feeling very depressed for about two years. This interfered with everything. I couldn't finish my doctoral thesis at that time fully. Fortunately, I finally did it, but I was very depressed. It seemed meaningless to

do what I was doing. It seemed I had no future in the then Soviet Estonia and the lifeworld of academics, despite the fact that I was supposedly considered to be very promising, but I didn't feel promising in any sense. So, the nasty idea of leaving the Soviet Union came to me, but there was no way to get out at that time. We make all kinds of ideal stories, and none of them are realistic. So the depression grows, and so on, and so forth. Finally, I could get out, by coincidence, basically. I remember very clearly January 13th, 1980, standing in the back of the big ship that took all the tourists to Helsinki, looking at the view of Tallinn disappearing into the darkness, thinking that I will never see this place again. Slow distancing from home, hometown, home country. And this was a very strong experience. I can still feel that experience of departure. Very ambivalent. On the one hand, I'm getting out. Getting out of not only my state, but also my depressive stance. On the other hand, I don't know where I'm going, but it did not really matter. I knew that 'I'm going ahead'. The future orientation was unquestionable, but totally unclear. The past was being lost together with my home country, town and so on, but at the same time, it was exactly what I had wanted, so it was not that I'm now losing everything. I'm losing in order to gain. And if you look carefully into my theories which emerged maybe 15-20 years later, this kind of past-to-future move is already in that particular experience of departure from Estonia. It was exactly thematic because this was seen at that time as irreversible. Fourteen years later, I was back in independent Estonia, but also in a very cautious way. I didn't rush to come back after 1991. Most exiled Estonians were happy to come back to teach Estonians how to be democratic. They failed because American democracy is not the same as Estonians gaining independence. There was a big difference between them. Well, I didn't rush back, I came two years later. I think when I came to Tallinn then I had somewhat similar feelings as I described about coming to Tartu now. So maybe the irreversible time comes from my personal experiences of exiting and entering. Maybe that's the background, I've never analysed it. It's the first time I'm trying to put it into words.

EMT: *This year, on Estonian Independence Day [February 24th, 2022], Russia started a war in Ukraine. How have you been feeling here in this context?*

JV: First of all, enormous internal anxiety and anger about that kind of change in the Russian case, which I did not expect. I was assuming Russia was politically more rational. Even on the day before the actual invasion, I still thought that what was going on was an effort to show power to divide Europe, which was obviously one of the political goals of Russia. I was wrong. They invaded, the war started — later failing, which is very good. I am anxious about the enormous loss to everything that this brought not only to Ukraine, but to Estonia, for example, and to that part of Russia, which is not nationalistic. A very big part of the Russians

are against this particular act, but they have no freedom to say that. What is happening very quickly is a return to what I remember from Russia in the 1970s where everybody would speak through anecdotes. After 1991, anecdotes disappeared in Russia, and now they're reappearing again. People can't say anything directly, they will use anecdotes for expression. And of course, this is a tragedy for those Russians who have either built up something of their own in relation to the West. This includes even oligarchs, because they are losing much of the international business side. It includes people who are deeply linked with the two countries: people who are living in one country and working in another, people who live in St. Petersburg and go to the Estonian church (which now is probably being closed down) and so on. There are many very specific personal aspects touched by this change, not to speak of the enormous sacrifices made from the Ukrainian side. It's something that you can feel into very deeply, and then you start to develop all kinds of cognitive interests. This morning I was actually studying a particular period of Russian history: 1796–1801, which was a period of the tsar Paul I. Paul I was only tsar for four years, until he was assassinated. Quite obviously I was looking for a scenario where assassination could happen in 2022... which is unlikely, but still you think of it, because in Russian history changing of the tsar has not been unusual. But more interesting is a question of what was problematic for Paul I: he was about to join with Napoleon to try to capture India. India, of course, was part of the British East India Company. So the British were the ones who would then start to fight diplomatically against Russia. Turns out that the British ambassador to St. Petersburg at the time was directly involved in the tsar's assassination. The question of dividing political power zones was present in the 19th century, very much a negotiation of "you take this, you take that" between Napoleon, Russia and so on. This is more or less what is happening now. The fight about which country belongs to which powers is a continuity over 200–300 years. This is very disconcerting, very horrifying. It goes on and on. It may change one way, find some temporary solutions. And another way. All the fears of Estonia about Russia potentially being dangerous are very serious. It's not just that Estonia is something to capture, Estonia is simply part of the question of to which the power goes to. And this has nothing to do with people. People live their ordinary life, but somewhere there is this big "game-making" between the politicians that start to make the impact on ordinary people very directly from life and death, and ending wellbeing in ordinary life. Very, very difficult feeling in a way.

EMT: *How can we as semioticians and cultural psychologists help with this?*

JV: Well, first of all, probably, to neutralise propaganda. Nowadays so much becomes a war of propaganda. War, more than ever before, becomes a problem of social media. To neutralise oneself from that, and literally see through the

information from the enormous power of suggestion that is around us. This means basically that one should not always take very specific political invitations seriously. In my case, this refers to Russian propaganda, because I have been looking at some of it in the past years. The image I had of it is that they had used all the Soviet era propaganda, plus learned everything from the West about how to make propaganda. So, not only political statements, but an old babushka making a very emotional claim about something is utilised in propaganda. All levels from very personal, very ordinary to hyper-political are used in the propaganda. The moment there is something to use, they use it. That is very dangerous because it creates, in psychology, particularly introduced by Kurt Levine, a situation where the person has no exit. A person cannot leave the field of this kind of propaganda. If I leave it on the political side, I'm deeply impressed by the babushka trying to tell some personal story, which works in the direction of propaganda. The only way not to be captured by the propaganda is to neutralise it, to create a barrier against the propaganda as a whole. For example, this is when my American colleagues ask, how do you counter the effect of television on young people or yourself? My answer is very simple: just don't have a television or turn it off. It's not necessary. How can you do that, you have no news? Well, let's think carefully. What is the news these days? What do we know from the news? We know only these particular aspects that are highlighted by whoever makes the news. We do not know the continuity of some stories somewhere else. For example, I learned yesterday that in Turkmenistan on March 17th, a new president was inaugurated⁴: a 40-year-old man who is the son of the previous president. Not surprisingly he "won" the presidential election in very much the style that we know from the Soviet era. Most importantly, what happened when he was inaugurated? The first foreign diplomat whom he accepted was an Afghanistani Taliban representative. You see this very specific, very relevant piece of information because this tells us about the diplomatic outreach from Afghanistan outside and towards the Russian Empire, so to say. But we have completely overlooked this in the middle of all the concerns about Ukraine. This is equally dangerous as the war in Ukraine, because it is definitely expanding the particular Islamic militancy towards the north. This is a political question which may or may not be relevant to us every day, but this is an example of how the mass media has hidden something while emphasising something else. Following this election, women in Turkmenistan now cannot wear special nails, have to dress in specific ways, all the beauty surgeries are prohibited, taken away. Basically, all of the particular Westernization efforts that people appreciated are ideologically gone in the new Turkmenistan. So here we go again: hyper-generalised politics play a very serious role in human lives.

⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/mar/15/turkmenistan-strongmans-son-wins-presidential-vote> The Guardian, 15.03.2022

EMT: *So in the future we would need to raise awareness and educate people to notice these mass media strategies?*

JV: Maybe the central way to educate is to propagate doubt. That is, every time when somebody makes a statement which is claimed to be very, very true and very, very important, use specific ways of doubting it. Rational dialogue through doubt. For example, you'll get a social media message of some kind. Instead of accepting 'Oh, that is it!', you say let us doubt what it is actually. Slow down the impact of this kind of social message, find out what is really behind it. So, this doubt may be the central way to overcome these kinds of impacts. Impacts are also oriented towards hyper generalised acceptance. The idea is "this must be right. Because it comes to me so quickly from that very important source." If a Hollywood film star sends a message that the particular as a film star is morally wrong. Why should I accept that? Even if I like that sender. I still don't need to accept it. You see in the present-day legal system, something that is changing in a very dangerous direction. In the old times, you were innocent until proven guilty. Nowadays, you are guilty until proven innocent, and you are guilty by the social media push. You're a sexual abuser in #metoo. You are politically wrong in any kind of political claim. You are corrupt. These messages may come at any time, and they are assumed to be true rather than to be proven. That reversal of this presumption of innocence is very dangerous in any society, because it basically makes it possible, not by governments, but actually by any special interest groups to say, 'Oh, this is wrong'. You have a number of examples of it in recent years, where this is happening. Corruption charges, sexuality charges. Doubt might be a central remedy to that problem. So how do you bring children in school to doubt the teacher? Or let's reverse it: a teacher who is oneself capable of saying to the pupils, you need to doubt what I'm saying to you. Sometimes in my lectures I tell the students directly, "Don't believe everything I'm saying". They find it difficult. I sometimes make statements which are absurd and they do not register that. In another sense, they are at the receivers' end, not co-constructing. If they co-construct with me, then they raise a question, 'Why do you say that? What is your base for it? I think differently. What do you think of my differences?'. That will be the negotiation about the doubt about the message. But this is extremely rare. That's one of the serious concerns about education. Where is it going? I repeat my, so many times heard story, about 'are we allowed to think this way?'. Who is the agent of allowing me to think the way I think? Very serious problem nowadays.

EMT: *Education was also a topic for one of the public lectures you gave here in Tartu⁵. Do you feel a mission with it?*

JV: No, it is not a mission. I am not a missionary, even though what I say in different topics may be interpreted as such. I'm really not a missionary, I am just contemplating how particular issues, for example, education, need change. The goal is not to criticise for the sake of criticism but to allow for possible alternatives. Of course, it might be utopian on my side, I recognise that, but maybe some aspect of it is doable. On a small scale I can do it with my students. On a macro scale, my nice little idea of the University of Antarctica⁶ is of course a utopia. The reason for this utopia is quite important: if our knowledge is reduced to the earning of certificates of (higher) education, then we are just certificate-holders, nothing more. The existing system of courses is in place, people take courses, get the certificates, people live happily ever after in some area of human society. If the focus is on young people to develop new knowledge, then the certificate is basically irrelevant. It is nice to have, but not necessary. People taking risks in developing knowledge beyond what is expected of them. The main question in the final exam for a master's thesis should be what have you contributed new to your own work? If this is an expected question, then people who are working on their master's thesis will start thinking about that early on. If this question comes as a surprise, then not. Quite a simple move, to ask the question what have you newly contributed.

EMT: *What have you newly contributed during your time here, and generally?*

JV: Starting from yesterday: unity of the director, actor and audience, that has developed in the last week more or less. Of course, the idea has been expressed before, but never elaborated. Secondly, what is new in my Tartu stay is exactly the effort to build beyond the cultural psychology that I had built before. All in all, if you look at what I have done, I think I have maybe two or three relevant ideas. Hyper-generalization is probably the most important one. The second one is the notion of a hierarchy of signs, and making it flexible and demolishable: not just a hierarchy in order to fix it. We build a hierarchy in order to unfix it. Nobody else thinks of hierarchy as demolishable. When social sciences talk about hierarchy, it is fixed, based on transitivity not intransitivity. Third, is the focus on the catalysis of causation in my psychological world. It's surprising to me that the notion of catalysis — that goes back to the 1830s and got special prominence in Tartu through Wilhelm Oswald who studied here and got the Nobel prize — this idea that has been dominant in chemistry, had not reached psychology until 2014 when we edited the very first volume on catalysis in psychology, and it still hasn't

⁵ <https://ut.ee/et/sisu/valiseesti-kulalisprofessori-jaan-valsineri-loengud-kevadsemestril>

⁶ Sustainable Futures for Higher Education: The Making of Knowledge Makers, Foreword: Utopia for Practice: The University of Antarctica Project, 2018

come very far. Psychology continues in these old mental models whereas chemistry has long gone beyond it. Biology, too. It's a chemical-biological model that I'm talking about.

EMT: *To go back to talking about the past, I was wondering, how did you first encounter semiotics?*

JV: Historically it goes back to the 1970s and my listening to one of Lotman's seminars. I was sitting in and not understanding anything. I saw Lotman walking around in Tartu. I was not personally acquainted, it was nice to see him walking around. I knew semiotics but I did not know much more. The actual move into the need to look semiotically maybe came somewhere in the end of the 1980s, definitely the 1990s, and it came together with the understanding that the centrality of human psychological functioning is in the construction of meanings. That led me to looking at semiotics in different forms, then gradually starting to integrate it into my own thinking, but not very quickly. I think that generally the focus on culture came in the 1990s, but it at first simply started on the anthropological side, looking at how different societies organise different functions of human development. This was the central focus of my quasi-textbook published in 1989, and then later 2000 (the so-called orange book⁷, which became the yellow book). I used it in my own teachings in the 1990s and also the 2000s when I left Clarke and would be increasingly dissatisfied with it [the "orange" book] so I am happy that I'm not using it anymore. That is more or less where the culture entered. Semiotics came with it, but theoretically actually only by 1998, I think. The Guided Mind [The Guided Mind: A Sociogenetic Approach to Personality] is filled with semiotics, and also of course the 2007 book "Culture in minds and societies". So, somewhere around that time, mid-1990s to mid-2000s, I became very much embedded in semiotics, and from there came the synthesis of irreversible time and the semiotic side. I still think that the 2007 "Culture in minds and societies"⁸ is probably the best I have written so far. The 2014 "Invitation to Cultural Psychology" which is now translated into Estonian⁹ is a strange book. It makes some nice presentations of the ideas, but it is not theoretically coherent. It is more of an effort to be as popular as I possibly can, which is not very much. It's readable, sometimes I even find it quite amusing if I look at it again, but the 2007 text is theoretically more concise. That means that the book that should now come out of the nine months in Tartu should be

⁷ Human Development and Culture: The Social Nature of Personality and Its Study, Lexington Books, 1989

⁸ <https://sk.sagepub.com/books/culture-in-minds-and-societies>

⁹ <https://kultuur.err.ee/1608338204/eesti-keeles-ilmus-jaan-valsineri-teos-teejuht-kultuuripsuhhologiasse> Eesti keeles ilmus Jaan Valsineri teos "Teejuht kultuuripsuhhologiasse", ERR 14.09.2021

even more concise, because it will be elaborating my own theoretical stance as of this year. That's a hope.

EMT: *Any collaboration plans with Tartu semioticians?*

JV: Some very concrete plans with you [the book of chapters by Tartu semiotics' students, "Explorations in Dynamic Semiosis"], also with Andreas Ventsel and Mari-Liis Madisson. They want me to join in an article, which I am happy to do, assuming I know something about the topic. Then, with Kalevi a number of possible joint writings. He is busy, and so am I, but hopefully the topics are worth it. I also have a number of plans with Tallinn people, my former students whom I am pushing all the time to do something new. They are busy teaching but they will try to do it. There are many Estonian possibilities and I would be happy to promote them as much as I can. Probably the best contribution I can make to the new generation in Estonian is exactly that push and guidance. And how to doubt the Estonian academic system. No plans with Tartu psychologists at all, somehow the contact is lost. I had quite active contact in the 1990s when I came back to the Department of Psychology a number of times for short courses. From the early 2000s this has not happened, I have been going to Tallinn instead. Depends on where the particular department is heading. At the department of semiotics I feel much more at home. I feel openness, and at the same time many confusions. Openness and confusion go hand in hand. Better than closedness and no confusions.

EMT: *It's in the move, dynamic. While being here and observing the department to some extent, do you have any recommendations or proposals?*

JV: I don't understand very well how it works. I understand there is an effort to integrate the department through method—semiotics. From my point of view, this is a very difficult task. The same has happened in psychology with qualitative methods. It is developing to be increasingly popular, they are becoming almost equal to quantitative methods worldwide. Mixed methods. When we start looking at it, there are two problems. One is that the method becomes specified as categories: you use phenomenological method, you use a dialogical method, narrative method and so on. A more general issue of what these methods can access at all is lost. This is why I have been insisting on my methodology cycle¹⁰ for 25 years now. Second problem is that the method is very much empirical, but the value of semiotics could actually be in developing the theoretical side.

¹⁰ See for example: Needed for cultural psychology: Methodology in a new key. Culture & Psychology 20(1): 3-30, 2014, full text available here: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270599204_Needed_for_cultural_psychology_Met hodology_in_a_new_key

Whichever version you take—Peircian version, Saussurean version, Lotman version. These are all—especially Lotman—a quintessence of integration of different ideas from different sources. Literary scholarship, chemistry, Prigogine and cybernetics. Over the decades of his [Juri Lotman's] work he has consistently worked on literature but at the same time putting, theoretically, together all the different impacts from different areas. That is in itself an extremely important synthesis. Some of the results may be difficult to elaborate, some of them are easy to develop. But it's clearly an open possibility for further development, and this is right here, revered in the semiotics department as we took pictures with Lotman and me on the third-floor corridor [see photo below]. Especially this year there is a very strong Lotman following¹¹. Beyond the following should be the Lotman developing—developing some of Lotman's ideas further. Semiosphere is one of them which could be developed, and of course, explosion. And in what area? It can be literature, it can be something else. It is nice to see that Lotman is not dead. It is open for questions whether he is developed yet, that I don't know. Everything depends on the working conditions, whether and how the university supports semiotics.

¹¹ 2022 marks the centenary of the birth of Juri Lotman (1922-1993). <https://jurilotman.ee/en/>



Jaan Valsiner with Juri Lotman's statue at Jakobi 2, Tartu. Photo: Andres Tennus

EMT: *If you would have to explain to the students, why do we need semiotics or what's the value of it, how would you do it?*

JV: I've been actually trying to send some of my students here to master's studies. The only limit has been that if they want to study psychology afterwards, is it opening or closing doors for them? And I don't have an answer to that and neither do they. What semiotics would do, ideally, is to keep the mind open in the direction of interdisciplinary real applications of ideas to phenomena, whatever they are. That is something that you don't get almost anywhere else. In this sense, semiotics is really a mind-opening possibility. But the mind-opening has to be taken, not just expected to be given. I looked at the course list that was sent around recently. In the first-year curriculum I see introduction to this, introduction to this, introduction to this... almost everything is introduction. I wondered whether so many introductions might actually be holding back the whole education rather than developing it. Yes, you need an introduction, but you can do that introduction as a part of the development of a core idea. Let's say, instead of introduction to the semiosphere, you do a kind of extensions of the semiosphere course or seminar very early in the programme. There you have an introduction to the semiosphere and then extension of the semiosphere. Imagine that all of the labeled introductions would be replaced by extensions of

the same topic. Extension of this, extension of that. Already the label change would communicate to the students that we are doing something serious here, we are building something. We are not being taught 'this is what it is'. Of course we are being taught at the beginning what it is, but then we go beyond that. But this is the Bologna system actually for the bachelor level where everywhere the beginning is introductions to everything. Even worse, at the doctoral level, which I'm now as of next week starting to teach in Vienna. Doctoral first year is also filled with introductions there. So my part of the course is considered to be an introduction to the sustainability of higher introduction. I don't know what that is. I invent something new every time I do it, which is on the topic, but it goes far beyond it so to say. But others do it, there is a particular learning seminar of three days for the doctoral students that are there. And a grant writing seminar. Yes, grant writing skills are good, but when you spend the first year of doctoral studies building a grant proposal, which is simultaneously your dissertation proposal, and there is nowhere to ask the grant from, there is a question whether this is the best way of using doctoral students' time the first year. They are there for three years, only two years left to publish four articles. Unrealistic. That means everybody starts to be delayed-delayed-delayed, the system itself starts to find out that it cannot sustain itself. This is the reality even at the doctoral level, not to speak of introductions on bachelor level.

EMT: *I would now finish up and ask what would be the last sentence of the writing about your time in Tartu for now?*

JV: The last sentence will have to be projected to tomorrow, and the last sentence is: I am happy to leave in order to come back. That was easy

VESTLUS PEETER TOROPIGA

intervjueerinud

Maarja Ojamaa

Peeter Torop on Tartu Ülikooli semiootika osakonna kultuurisemiootika professor. Antud usutlus on ainulaadne sissevaade sellele, kuidas ta leidis oma tee semiootikasse, milliseid takistusi pidi ületama ja mis teda sellel teekonnal kõnetanud on. Peeter Torop jutustab, millist mõju on avaldanud talle Lotman, mis on tema jaoks semiootika olemus ja universaal, kuidas teda on paelunud tõlkimise (kõige laiemas semiootilises mõttes) küsimus, kuidas viia semiootikat ka teiste erialade tudengiteni, mis talle semiootikas rõõmu pakub, selgitab vajadust mitmekesisuse ja sünteesivõimekuse järele ja annab nõu noortele semiootikutele. Paeluv lugemine paeluvalt inimeselt.

Maarja Ojamaa: *Astusite Tartu (Riiklikku) Ülikooli õppima vene filoloogiat, keskendusite kirjanduse ja tõlkeprobleemide uurimisele. Kas mäletate, millal ja mille ajal hakkasite ennast pidama semiootikuks?*

Peeter Torop: (Naerdes) Negatiivsete kogemuste ajal. Lõpetasin ülikooli 1974. ja mu diplomitööks olid luuletõlke kriitika teoreetilised probleemid. Teooria ja praktika olid seal enam-vähem tasakaalus, näited tõin Marie Underi ja August Sanga tõlgetest ja ka oma tõlkeprotsessi mudeli pakkusin juba välja. Töö sai Eestis üliõpilaste teadustööde konkursil I preemia ja oli ka Nõukogude Liidu konkursi pretendent, aga jäi II kohale. Hiljem tutvustati mulle protokoll, mille järgi oli tekstis liiga palju viiteid emigrantidele. Pärast lõpetamist pakuti mulle aspirantuuri kohta, aga ülikooli nõukogu otsusega ma seda siiski ei saanud. Vastu oli professor Aristes sõnul rektor isiklikult, sest Lotman pidanuks olema juhendaja ja semiootikal oli juhtivorganite juures siis juba negatiivne maine. See oligi see hetk, kus sain aru, et ma ei ole mitte lihtsalt tõlketeadlane või vene filoloog, vaid ka semiootik.

Pärast läks eriti lõbusaks. Lotman tahtis mind ikkagi ülikooli jätta, aga muud võimalust ei olnud kui vanemlaborandi koht. 1976. sain kohe otse ka vanemõpetajaks. Sinna vahele jäi vahejuhtum KGB-ga. Tollane Tartu büroo juht kutsus mind peahoone taha kuninga juurde vestlema ja informeeris, et Lotmani

ümber on palju halbu inimesi. Kui ma aga soovin oma akadeemilist karjääri jätkata ja ka korteriprobleemi lahendada, siis võiksin aidata inimesi Lotmani halbade mõjude eest kaitsta ning KGB-le tema kohta informatsiooni anda. Lubasin järele mõelda. Rääkisin sellest ka Lotmanile, kes hakkas naerma ja arvas, et äkki teeks ära – oleks oma inimene süsteemis. Teaduskonna tasandil öeldi otse, et aspirantuuri aitaks astumine komparteisse.

Järk-järgult hakkasin ka sisuliselt aru saama, et see, millega tegelen, on semiootika. Minu diplomitöö juhendaja oli Igor Černov, kes viis mind kokku Jakobsoni töödega. Tema puhul oli selge, et ta on filoloog ja semiootik lahutamatuks koos. Mõistsin ka, et Tartu semiootika seisneb teatud mõtlemise viisis ja see, millest mõtled – olgu vene kirjandus või ajalugu või miski muu – see polegi nii tähtis, vaid mõtlemise viis ise on oluline. Mu meelest ongi Lotmani käe alt läbikäinute suurim tugevus n-ö õigesti häälestatud aparaat. Semiootika teadvustamine tuli seega mõtlemisviisi teadvustamisena ja tunduvalt vähem teooria kaudu. Teooria tugineski mu jaoks esmalt Lotmani esimese raamatu (“Loengud strukturaalpoetikast”) põhjalikule lugemisele. Selle konspekti nõudis Zara Mints juba esimesel kursusel. Mulle tuli see väga kasuks, sest vene keelt ma siis veel eriti ei osanud. Üldise või rahvusvahelise teooriani jõudsin hoopis hiljem läbi Jakobsoni ja Hjeltslevi.

MO: *Kas taipasite juba ülikooliõpingute alguses, et akadeemia on Teie tee, või olete kunagi mõelnud ka mõnele muule rajale astuda?*

PT: Oojaa, oleksin tahtnud arhitektiks saada. Joonestamisega sain hakkama, aga ma ei olnud joonistaja, kuigi armastasin seda lapsepõlves. Lisaks oleks arhitektuur nõudnud ka täppisteaduslikku mõtlemist. Minu humanitaariahuvi oli aga keskkooli lõpuks juba välja kujunenud. Samuti oli mul väga hea vene keele õpetaja, kes proovis mind ükskord ka Lotmaniga kokku viia, aga Lotmanit ei olnud sel päeval kateedris kohal. Teine suund oli seesama tõlkimine. Kui olin I kursusel, pakkus Kirjanike Liit vahetusprogrammi, mille raames oleksin saanud Kiievi Ülikooli minna tõlkijaks ning süvendatult ukraina keelt ja kirjandust õppima. Tegingi avalduse, aga tollane vene keele kateedri juhataja Savvati Smirnov pani mulle veto peale ja ütles, et pean enne minemist siin korraliku hariduse saama. Ütles ka seda, et Kiiev ei ole koht, kus õppida ukraina keelt. Kiiev oli venestunud linn. Tõlkija puhul on aga oluline kultuurihuvi. Ta peaks ennast lisaks keeleõppele igakülgsest arendama. Oma tollase ukrainlannast vene keele õpetaja Niina Storoženkoga oli meil näiteks juttu, et tõlkija peaks tundma ka maitseid, sh alkoholsete jookide maitseid, eristama veini- ja konjakisorte jne. Ta andis mulle väga hea koolituse, rõhutades kultuurispetsiifika olulisust keele mõistmisel. Ka see on ju implitsiitselt semiootika.

MO: *Ennast peate Te ilmselt eelkõige kultuurisemiootikuks. Kuidas aga määratleksite semiootikat tervikuna?*

PT: Olen selle peale palju mõelnud. Osalt ka Lotmani mõjul, kes oma artiklis “Kultuurisemiootika ja teksti mõiste” eristab nn metasemiootikat, mis tegeleb teooriaga, ja kultuurisemiootikat, ehk otse kultuuritekstiga tegelevat semiootikat, mis rakendab *ad hoc* teooriaid. Nüüd hiljem olen leidnud sellele Lotmani käsitlusele tuge. Näiteks Jaan Valsiner eristab kaasaegses kultuuripsühholoogias kahte suundumust, mida tähistab mõistetega “complex-like” ja “concept-like”. Esimene on holistiline lähenemine, mis tähendab, et terminid ei ole nii täpselt defineeritud, fookuses on terviku tajumine, analüüsivuse tekitamine ja ka intuitsiooni kasutamine. Teine, mõistekeskne suundumus seab esikohale täpsed definitsioonid ja allutab materjali metakeelele. Sel juhul näeb uurija materjalis vaid seda, mida antud metakeel võimaldab. Semiootikas kohtab sellist suundumust praegu paljudes Peirce’i-kesksetes töödes, milles teooria või teoreetiline kompleks surutakse materjalile peale. Leidub muidugi ka teistsuguseid lähenemisi ja see ei tähenda loomulikult, et Peirce’il midagi viga oleks.

Minu enda jaoks on semiootika justnimelt see “complex-like” lähenemine, ehk fookuses on analüüsivuse tekitamine. Selle hoomamine tuli läbi 1960ndate lõpu – 1970ndate aastate kogemuse. Semiootikas – eriti NL-s, aga ka Lääne-Euroopas ja Ameerikas – oli sel ajal väga palju mikroanalüüsi – ühe luuletuse, ühe romaani käsitlusi. Võtke kasvõi Barthes ja Balzac, Greimas ja Maupassant, Lotman ja Puškin. Palju oli analüüse, milles otsiti erinevaid struktuure – mõni lähtus keele-, mõni stilistilistest tasanditest, eristati ruumilisi, ajalisi, sžžee-faabula struktuure jne. Struktureeritavuse tohutu variatiivsus teeb aga võimalikuks ka analüüsi uuenduslikkuse. Seda võib teha nii ainult skeemist lähtuvalt, mõnest konkreetsest aksiomaatilisest semiootikast lähtuvalt, kui ka materjalist lähtuvalt. See on heuristilise väärtusega, aga ka põnev. Minu esimene suurem rõõm uurijana oli avastus, et Dostojevski on teinud “vea”. “Kuritöös ja karistuses” asub politseijaoskond esimesel nimetamisel 4. ja teisel korral 3. korrusel. Ei ole justkui eriti tähtis element, aga pärast selgub, et numeroloogiliselt on romaan niimoodi organiseeritud, et see osutub tähenduslikuks. Selline süvalugemine ei tohiks aga lihtsalt detailide otsimisele keskenduda, vaid eesmärk peaks olema jõuda tervikuni. See ongi see semiootika, millest mina kõige enam unistasin. Teine pool on seotud mudeliga. Kui tahad mõista keerulisemaid objekte, eriti kui need on seotud protsessiga – näiteks kultuuri- või minu puhul tõlkeprotsessiga – tuleb leida viis, kuidas luua heuristilise väärtusega mudel, mis aitab paremini mõista vaadeldavat “musta kasti”. Näiteks seda, mis toimub tõlkija peas. Kuidas originaali ja tõlke võrdlemisel aru saada, mil viisil on jõutud olemasoleva tulemuseni? Millised on üldse selle protsessi kirjeldamise võimalused? Siin oli minu eeskujuks kindlasti Isaak Revzin. Ta oli üks Tartu-Moskva koolkonna alusepanijaid, aga vähe tuntud, sest suri väga vara. Oma retsensioonis Jiří Levý võtmeteosele “Tõlkekunst” (1963) rõhutas ta sellise mudeli tasakaalustatuse ja struktuursuse

olulisust. Ta tõi välja, et see peaks olema terminoloogiaga varustatud, ehk mudelis peaks sisalduma 8–10 täpset mõistet, millel põhinevad peamised eristused. Ülejäänud võib aga olla juba metafoorsem, millega võib vabamalt ringi käia ja mis võimaldab oma loovust mängu tuua. See arusaam algmõistete tähtsusest on mulle osutunud väga kasulikuks. Kui rääkida semiootika kirevusest tänapäeval, siis mulle tundub, et palju on situatsioone, kus oleks õige tagasi minna algete juurde ning kasutada mõistet “semioos” ja semioosi mõõtmel (semantika, süntaktika, pragmaatika). Kui lisada süntagmaatika ja paradigmaatika eristus, siis ongi olemas elementaarne mudel, mis võimaldab aru saada, mis toimub tähenduse loomisel, kuidas tähendus muutub ja tähenduse tasandite suhtelisusest. See ongi minu jaoks universaal, mida olen kasutanud erinevate materjalidel analüüsimisel, olgu film või kirjandus või teater.

MO: *Milline semiootiline idee või küsimus on Teid kõige enam paelunud?*

PT: See ei ole kerge küsimus, sest olen teadvustanud ennast kultuurisemiootikuna ka läbi selle, et mõtlen just materjalis, mitte teoorias. Ja see on aastatega süvenenud, sest meie osakonna ajaloos on mul tulnud olla ka juhataja rollis. See tähendab muuhulgas ka seda, et olen pidanud lugema kursuseid, mida keegi teine ei taha lugeda. Metodoloogiat näiteks. Sellest tekkis mul mingil hetkel lausa mürgitus. Kui võtta kitsam aspekt või kontseptuaalne kese, siis ma arvan, et see on ikkagi tõlkimine. Tõlkimine avaras tähenduses. Kõigepealt nii nagu Roman Jakobson seda mõtestas – korruga rekodeerimine ja transponeerimine. See on protsess, mis seisneb ühelt poolt koodide muutmises ja teisalt sisu üle kandmises või tähenduse mõistetavaks tegemises mingis teises kultuuriruumis või teisele vastuvõtjale. Just nende protsesside universaalsus on mind köitnud.

Meil oli koos Lea Pildiga grupp vene tudengeid, keda valmistasime ette tõlkideks Eesti parlamendile. Kuna nende tudengite eesti keele oskus oli tol hetkel väga vilets veel, siis õpetasime neid nende emakeeles tekstidega manipuleerimise kaudu. Näiteks lasime muuta teksti žanri või tõlkida peast pärast teksti läbilugemist. See viimane ülesanne aitab toetada tõlke sujuvust – mõtled sisust, mitte grammatikast jne. See oli väga hea kool, mis kinnitas, et on võimalik õppida tõlkimist emakeeles ja alles hiljem minna järk-järgult üle võõrkeelele. See on samuti semiootika minu jaoks – näha sisu ja vormi vahekorda ja seda, kuidas nende seotus mõlemat muudab ja mõjutab. Ühesõnaga tõlkimine avaras semiootilises tähenduses ja intersemiootilise tõlke aspekt ka loomuliku tõlke juures on see idee. Järk-järgult kujunes kindlaks veendumuseks arusaam, et see, mida Jakobson eristab kui kolme erinevat tõlget, on tegelikult ühe tõlkeprotsessi kolm erinevat aspekti. Need on alati koos mingisuguses vahekorras ja üks on lihtsalt dominant.

MO: *Teid veel semiootika juures kinni on hoidnud?*

PT: Arvan, et ikkagi see, mida nimetan semiootiku võimeks tajuda tervikut ja luua analüüsitavust. Olen teinud enda kui õppejõu jaoks ohtlikke eksperimente Tallinna filmitudengitega. Nad tahtsid kõik kaamerat, mitte raamatut käes hoida. Saan sellest täiesti aru, aga minul oli siiski vaja neile ka semiootika analüütilist väärtust näidata. Palusin neil kaasa võtta endi tööd, mida ma ise polnud varem näinud, ja mida pärast auditooriumis vaatamist üheskoos analüüsima hakkasime. Ja tekkisidki heureka-momendid. Filmitudengid nägid selle mõtlemisviisi olulisust ja seda eriti semiootika kõige lihtsamal tasandil – näiteks esimese kaadri tähtsus, alguse ja lõpu seos, kuidas üldse tekib tähendus filmis näiteks leitmotiivide kaudu, kuidas rakurss võib olla tähenduslik jne. Mul vedas muidugi ka, sest sattusid head filmid ja autorid olid valmis tunnistama, et ohhoo, jah, ma tõesti mõtlesin vist nii, aga ei osanud seda sõnastada. Sarnaselt on ka mitmed filmirežissöörid mu arvustustele reageerinud. Samuti innustas näiteks see, kui sain kõige elementaarsema Kressi ja Van Leeuweni kujutise grammatikal põhineva fotoanalüüsi kaudu päästa ajalehe Äripäev kohtuprotsessist. Taolised juhtumid annavad tunnet, et semiootika mõtlemisviisiga võib jõuda sügavale ja isegi kui tähendust ei tea, võib aimata mehhanismi, mis tähendust tekitab.

MO: *Teie tagasihoidlikkust teades ei küsi ma, mida Te peate oma kõige olulisemaks panuseks semiootikasse, aga läheneksin sellele rõõmu vaatepunktist, mille ise juba sisse tõite. Mis Teile enda töös kõige enam rõõmu on valmistanud?*

PT: Need kaks langevad minu arvates kokku ja võin mõlemale küsimusele korraga vastata. Ahvin seejuures natuke Lotmanit. Juba haige olles võttis ta ühel oma viimasel vene kirjanduse kateedri koosolekul otsi kokku ja rääkis sellest, et talle pole üldse tähtis, et kindlasti jätkaksime *Sign Systems Studies* ajakirja või slavistika tööde väljaandmist. Tähtis olevat hoopis see, et igaüks leiaks oma tee. Et talle oleks kõige suurem rõõm, kui noored – kes tol hetkel ei olnudki enam nii väga noored – kõik läheks oma ja seejuures erinevat teed. Ja mul on tunne, et minu suurim rõõm semiootikas on samuti olnud näha, kuidas tudengid, kellega olen saanud koos töötada, on läinud oma teed ja nende teemad on kujunenud mitte minu poolt antuna, vaid edasiste otsingute ja ka eituste käigus. Et olen saanud olla dialoogipartner uurimissuundade ja ka teiste eluliste suundade kujundamisel.

MO: *Nüüd Te vastasite ainult enda kui õppejõu ja juhendaja vaatepunktist. Kuidas vastaksite teadlasena?*

PT: Arvan, et mul on mõned tööd tõkelisest lähenemisest semiootikale, milles on innovatsioon. Erinevates ülikoolides on tehtud omajagu jätkutöid mu tõlkeprotsessi mudelite põhjal, mida olen kohandanud nii tekstisest kui intersemiootiliste protsesside ja ka tavatõlke jaoks. Kui vaatan seda retseptsiooni, siis näen, et on samas suunas kaasamõtlejaid ja neid ühendab soov mõelda süsteemselt ja protsessuaalselt ning luua mingisugune tervikarusaam. See, et nemad on mind üles leidnud ja nende retseptsioon on olnud mulle hinnaline ja andnud turgutust. Teine on teatav eetiline aspekt, mida rõhutas ka Thomas Winner, kui Tartus käis. Tema hinnangul jaguneb semiootika kaheks: on semiootikaga läbilööjad, natuke manipuleeriva hoiakuga inimesed, ja on eetilise positsiooniga uurijad, kes on orienteeritud analüüsile, otsivad uurimis- ja mõistmiskogemust ja -rõõmu. Nad teevad seda sõltumatult ega lähe moodsaid teooriaid ja mõisteid mööda, vaid tegelevad kõige tähtsamaga – analüüsiga. Winner eristas neid kaht suunda Ameerika semiootikas väga selgesti. Muidugi võib sellist asja näha igas valdkonnas, kus on mingisugune ühiskondlik vastuolu või pinge. See, mida Lotman kartis kõige rohkem ja mida minagi pelgan, on semiootika imiteerimine. Seda on palju, natuke liiga palju ja kahjuks semiootika kui terviku areng ei ole hetkel mitte kontseptuaalses, vaid pigem hajumise suunas. Kui vaadata viimast neljakõitelist kogumikku Bloomsburylt, siis on sealt näha semiootikat siin ja semiootikat seal, aga puudub see miski, mis oleks distsiplinaarne või kompleksne.

MO: *Minu järgmine küsimus puudutabki Teie nägemust semiootika tulevikust. Üks Teie vestlus Lotmaniga algas selle publitseeritud kujul natuke mureliku pärimisega Tartu koolkonna tuleviku kohta. Kuidas Teile asi nüüd, 30 aastat hiljem tundub?*

PT: Tol hetkel, 90ndate aastate algul, oli see seotud sellega, et Nõukogude Liidus hakkasid ilmuma suured paksud köited Lotmani, Ivanovi ja Uspenski kogutud teostega. Need olid tõelised telliskivid, mida oli poes hästi saada, aga mida eriti ei loetud, sest dissidentlik oreool oli kadunud ja buum oli möödas. Populaarsust kogusid aga poststrukturealism ja postmodernism, näiteks ilmus esimeste seas “Jacques Derrida Moskvast: teekonna dekonstruktsioon” (Derrida enda tekst moodustab venekeelsest raamatust üle poole ja kannab ingliskeelset pealkirja „Back from Moscow, in the USSR“ ja vene keelde hakati tõlkima muidki moodsaid asju. Nüüd aga hakatakse tagasi tulema ja klassikalisi asju uuesti lugema. Poststrukturealism hakkab ammenduma ja pigem ongi juba ammendunud. See on loomulik protsess, aga kokkuvõttes tähendab metodoloogia hajumist. Metodoloogilist mõtlemist on vähe, palju on metodoloogilist mängu. Ka “Kultuurisemiootika ja teksti mõiste” näitab minu arvates Lotmani väsimust sellisest teooriatega manipuleerimisest. Selles on tunne, et tahaks teoreetiliselt

mõelda, aga mõelda materjalis ja näidata selle kaudu midagi uut. Praegu on olukord sarnane. Näiteks Lotmani toomine digikultuuri mõistmisesse on siin hea näide. Saame tugevdada analüütilist võimekust läbi selle, et näitame, kuidas vana asi osutub innovatsiooni allikaks. Eco väitis kunagi, et semiootika on nagu meditsiin, mis ühendab endas tohutult erinevaid allvaldkondi psühhiaatriast laboratoorse vereanalüüsini. Semiootikas on lugu sarnane ja küsimus on selles, kuidas me erinevaid identiteete teadvustame ja omavahel miksume. Olengi viimasel ajal kasutanud transdistsiplinaarsuse mõistet. See on selline interdistsiplinaarsus, mis säilitab distsiplinaarsust ja samal ajal toetab uue terviku tekkimist. Siin saab selgeks, kuidas dialoog ei ole mitte keele kasutus, vaid keele loome — tuleb leida mingi universaalne, mitte liiga keeruline keel, mida eri distsipliinide esindajad mõistavad. Kogemuse tõlgitavus peab võimalikuks saama. Ühesõnaga pihustumine ja mitmekesisus on ühelt poolt teadusele ja loovusele väga hea, aga teiselt poolt on vaja ka sünteesivõimekust, ühise keele loomise võimekust. See on transdistsiplinaarse lähenemise eelis

MO: *Kas teil on lõpetuseks mõni soovitus noorele inimesele, kes on otsustanud alustada semiootika õpinguid?*

PT: Minu peamine soovitus on ikkagi tekitada võimalikult kiiresti teadlikkus metakeelest ja sellest, kuidas see huvipakkuvat objekti mõjutab. Metakeel on see prisma, mis objekti kujundab ja heuristilised võimalused loob. Silmas tuleks pidada esiteks seda, et ei hajuks liiga ära eri koolkondade vahel ega tekitaks n-ö. puder-ja-kapsad olukorda, mis semiootikas ikka kummitab. Teiseks tuleks jälgida, et terminid oleks süsteemis. Üht terminit võib kasutada singulaarsena, aga võib ka binaarse või ternaarsena või ka suuremal terminiväljal. Näiteks “teksti” mõiste võib olla autonoomne, aga ka osa suuremast tervikust kõrvuti nt “interteksti” või “subteksti” või “hüperteksti” mõistega. Sellisel väljal algmõiste transformeerub. See kõik on algajale raske, aga kohustuslik tee, et mõista, kuidas ennast huvitavale objektile kõige paremini ligi pääseb. Seejuures väljendub optimaalne tasakaal materjali ja metakeele vahel intuiitiivses mugavustundes. See on tunne, et ei pea ponnistama ega materjali vägisi mingisse raami suruma, aga säilivad analüütiline süsteemsus ja eristamisvõime. Kui tegeleda abstraktse teooriaga, tuleb näidata selle loogilist analüütilist väärtust, kui aga empiirilise analüüsiga, siis luua mõistetavust võimalikult suure empaatiaga. See viibki nii uurimiströömuni kui analüüsivõimekusest tuleneva rahuloluni.



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