

Call For Papers

**The 7th Annual Lotman Conference at Tallinn University  
Tallinn, 5–7 June 2015**

**SEMIOTICS OF POWER: VIOLENCE AND AUTONOMY**

The Estonian Semiotics Repository Foundation is inviting submissions for the 7th Lotman conference at Tallinn University, 5–7 June 2015. It is the tradition of our conferences to take inspiration from the scholarly legacy of Juri Lotman. Lotman worked on various aspects of the problematics of power. In 1960-1970s he considered the power of language as a "source of structure" and an instrument of a culture's self-description, as a result of which the "metasystem becomes so hard that it almost ceases to intersect with the real semiotic systems, it claims to describe" ("The Dynamic Model of a Semiotic System"). The concept of power was also used by Lotman to establish archetypes of sociocultural behavior and their historical transformations (e.g. "‘Agreement’ and ‘Self-Giving’ as Archetypal Models of Culture"), to identify strategies of everyday behavior in the autocratic Russia of XVIII-XIX centuries, and to describe the dynamics of "symbolic language of the XVIII century", which reflected the gap between culture and statehood ("Between the Emblem and Symbol"). Lotman's reflections on the differences between binary and ternary social structures (e.g. in *Culture and Explosion*: "a ternary system tends to adapt the ideal to reality, whereas a binary one attempts to realise an unrealisable ideal") feed into his journalistic responses to the political events of the period of perestroika. In his later works Lotman also raises the question of the historical and moral responsibility of an individual towards history. Lotman's ideas about the semiotics of power developed in parallel to the ideas of other important theorists of power in the 20th century, first of all Michel Foucault; the presence or absence of dialogue with them requires further study.

Prof. Aage A. Hansen-Loewe's (Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich) presentation "The Aesthetics of Violence from Symbolism to Avant-Garde" has been confirmed as one of the keynotes.

The possible topics to be discussed at the conference include, but are not limited to:

- the power of language as a "source of structure"
- intellectuals and power: the problem of dialogue
- power and canon
- power and the problem of choice in literature and history
- social commission and the specificity of dogmatic art
- the motif of the relationship between authority and individual in literary texts
- power and art, power and science: forms of interaction
- literary text: rhetoric or social action
- authority and the individual: adaptation, internalisation, self-censorship
- power and the mythologisation of history
- discourses of power and culture's self-description

## **Submissions:**

The conference invites submissions from a variety of fields, such as semiotics, history, cultural theory, politics, studies of arts, etc., as well as inter- and multidisciplinary contributions. We welcome submissions in English and in Russian, the two working languages of the conference. The submissions should be sent via e-mail no later than 16 March 2015 and include:

- The title and a short abstract of the proposed presentation (up to 2000 characters with spaces)
- A short CV (name, surname, institutional affiliation, scholarly degree, description of scholarly interests — up to 1000 characters with spaces).

The organising committee will choose the presenters based on scholarly merit and thematic relevance for the conference. The results will be announced via e-mail no later than 5 April 2015.

The submissions in English should be sent to Piret Peiker: [piretpeiker@hotmail.com](mailto:piretpeiker@hotmail.com)

The submissions in Russian should be sent to Tatjana Kuzovkina: [tatjana.kuzovkina@gmail.com](mailto:tatjana.kuzovkina@gmail.com)

Speakers shall be allocated 30 minutes in total: 20 minutes to deliver the presentation and 10 minutes for discussion.

## **Useful information:**

The conference will take place in the Mare building of Tallinn University, 5 Uus-Sadama Street, 10120 Tallinn, Estonia.

There is no conference fee. All conference events are free of charge for the presenters. The conference cannot offer any grants for travel or accommodation. However, please do not hesitate to turn to us, if you need advice making your arrangements.

If you need our help with obtaining the Estonian visa, please let us know.

Organising committee of the 7<sup>th</sup> Lotman conference at Tallinn University:  
Rein Raud (chair),  
Marina Akimova, Boris Egorov, Tatjana Kuzovkina,  
Mihhail Lotman, Vadim Parsamov, Piret Peiker