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12

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Towards semiotic theory  
of hegemony



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# INTRODUCTION

## I. THE STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

This dissertation consists of an introductory chapter and five papers (three of which have been published and two that have been accepted for publication within a year, cf. years of publications). The component papers comprise the main part of the author's research during his doctoral studies in 2005–2009. They are primarily focused on establishing political semiotics as a specific discipline, which would give researchers better means for analysing the field of politics. Thus, it has been necessary to reinterpret the key concepts that traditionally define political discourse – power relations, identity, choice, etc. – from a semiotic point of view and to complement them with semiotic terminology.

The primary material for analysis for this dissertation is the contemporary history of Estonia, mainly the phenomena that shaped the society's identity during the Soviet era before and after Estonia regained independence; there are also explanatory digressions into the earlier period (when analysing the tradition of the Song Festivals in article III). This is due to two complementary goals: first, to reflectively observe the processes that this author thinks have affected ongoing tendencies and trends in Estonian life, and second, to share with a wider foreign audience Estonia's contemporary history that offers very interesting and contrasting but at the same time tragic material (several occupying regimes with contradictory totalitarian ideologies). These presumptions have been the basis of my studies at the University of Tartu since 1998. In my bachelor's thesis (2002) I discussed the power shift in ideology and regime in 1940 from a pragmatic and influence-psychological aspect; in my master's thesis (2005) I analysed the way 'we', i.e. the category of the people, was constructed in the public communication space in 1940–1953 when, within a short period of time, Estonia was occupied by two ideologically opposite totalitarian occupying regimes (Stalin's Russia and Hitler's Germany).

Before briefly describing the structure of this dissertation, I would like to add one clarifying note on the object and the material of the analysis. The objective of this dissertation is first and foremost to improve the theoretical arsenal and research methods, which is the reason for focusing on a successful integration of the semiotics of culture of the Tartu-Moscow School (hereafter "TMS"), and the theory of hegemony of the Essex School. Thus, this dissertation is highly theoretical and its objective is, by presenting different analogies between concepts by way of their functional juxtaposition, to create a unified conceptual framework that would consider the positive contributions of both approaches and, at the same time, would pay attention to the theoretical deficiencies that have made this integration necessary in the first place. On the other hand, I have always been of the opinion that theoretical concepts should not remain in still life on paper, but that they should be put into practice for analysing empirical material. Therefore this integration has been supported with

analyses of various phenomena that should confirm the results. But as can be guessed from my objective, the emphasis is primarily on creating a theoretical framework that would help to conduct more specific and voluminous analyses in the future.

The main scientific objectives of this dissertation are as follows:

1. To outline a theoretical framework of political semiotics that would help to better understand and analyse the inner logic of the signifying processes.
2. To present an overview of previous research traditions and point out the deficiencies appearing in approaches that bypass the cultural factor when examining real political processes.
3. To bring a cultural-semiotic approach into the study of politics that would help to overcome the deficiencies indicated in the previous point and vice versa: to amend, through the theory of hegemony, the cultural-semiotic approach with the research arsenal of power relations.
4. To develop, in accordance with the conceptual framework, the means for analysing various signifying practices, both verbal and visual.
5. To test the suitability of these means of analysis on material drawn from the contemporary history of Estonia; this, at the same time, would help to reflectively interpret local social processes.
6. To present new possibilities and questions that may have risen during the writing of these papers.

The five papers that comprise this dissertation have been sorted according to the organisational logic of the subject itself and reflect the transition from the statement of the problem to the possible solutions. Thus the problematic situation of the analysis of power relations (although in a rather preliminary way) is drafted in paper I. This paper primarily focuses on applying one alternative approach to the research of political power relations by studying, through the analysis of the pronouns (deictics) used, the way power relations are expressed in political speeches. The papers that follow (II, III, IV and V) are focused on developing and enhancing the framework for the semiotic theory of hegemony. Papers II and III (co-written with Peeter Selg) elaborate the model of this theoretical approach, using the discourse of the Bronze Night and the Singing Revolution as the analysis material. Proceeding from the theoretical basis created in the previous papers, paper IV tries to distinguish some of the signification practices of the visualisation of power by examining the hegemonic signifying strategies that were used in creating “the people” in the public picture-producing regime during the Stalinist era. In addition to the aforementioned approaches, the paper also makes use of Barthes’ semiotic and visual rhetoric views on photography. Paper V tries to explicate, within the created framework, the phenomenon of totalitarian language of the Soviet era. All the papers are briefly described in subchapter 6 of this introduction. The papers that comprise this dissertation are presented in English and have been peer reviewed. Although one of these papers (paper IV) has been accepted for publication by an Estonian journal *Kunstiteaduslikke uurimusi (Studies on Art*

*and Architecture*), this dissertation includes an English-language version of this paper. This is done in order to provide the dissertation with a unitary language that would allow for a non-Estonian reviewer.

The five papers that comprise this dissertation analyse a relatively compact object, so this introductory chapter, a sort of “umbrella paper” for the rest, is substantially motivated by the deficiencies in the papers that comprise the dissertation, which, in turn, is caused by the estimated expectations of the readers and the limited volume of the published papers that did not allow to include all the necessary information for understanding their general background. The introduction itself is comprised of 7 subchapters. The main theoretical concepts of this dissertation are power, discourse and text. The second part of the introduction attempts to elaborate on how power has been conceptualised in the present dissertation. This is followed by a short overview of the problems accompanying the research tradition on the concepts of text and discourse that are relevant for this dissertation, and by an attempt to show the theoretical limitations of both traditions (part 3 and 4), which in my opinion allows us to proceed fruitfully towards further developments by fusing the conception of the hegemonic empty signifier of the Essex School with the notion of text of the TMS; the latter was replaced, however, during the development of Lotman’s ideas, with the concept of semiosphere (part 5). At the end of part 5 I will try to determine the interdisciplinary relations between semiotics of culture and the theory of hegemony for political semiotics. All five articles included in the thesis will be briefly summarised, and their main aims and results will be discussed in the sixth chapter of dissertation. The introductory chapter ends with a summary of conclusions and a brief draft for future work (part 7), which is not sufficiently reflected in the component papers but which the author still finds absolutely necessary.

## **2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND PRIMARY THEORETICAL CONCEPTS FOR APPROACHING POWER**

This introductory chapter provides an overview of some of the concepts that are relevant to the general framework of the dissertation. The first subchapter attempts to thematise the problems of power, politics, and discourse and to provide an overview of the relations between these concepts as understood in this dissertation.

### **2.1. Politics and power**

The primary purpose for attempting to develop a semiotic theory of hegemony is to acquire more diverse means of analysis for researching power relations in political discourse. This sort of goal already needs additional explanatory comments. What do we mean when we say “political discourse”? How do we understand power and how is it related to politics? How are discourse and hegemony connected? etc.

For the present approach, it is necessary to emphasize (which is also done in the component papers) that the narrow definition of politics has been abandoned – for example, this subject is not limited to classical political theory. Also, it does not refer only to the thematic field of what the politicians do in the parliaments, or in the rhetoric of the pre-election debates, or in other words, to all that we can see in the political sections of daily newspapers. Why? First, because in many cultural spaces the word “politics” has, for certain reasons, acquired a negative connotation and thus many discursive practices hide their true political character (identity). And second, because this dissertation primarily deals with analysing the logic of certain signification processes that do not only appear in political discourse, but also in other fields that constitute social life.

Thus, in this framework, politics can be conceptualised as a practice for creating, reproducing and transforming social relations that cannot themselves be located at the level of the social, “as the problem of the political is the problem of the institution of the social, that is, of the definition and articulation of social relations in a field criss-crossed with antagonism” (Laclau, Mouffe 1985: 153). It can thus always be understood as an expression of the power of discourses.

This brings us directly to the need to conceptualise the relations between power and politics. In searching for an answer, this approach consciously moves away from the essentialist approaches to power (the best-known of which would be liberalism and Marxism), that define power as a certain “thing” and see their biggest problem in the normative “justification” (liberalism) or “critique” (Marxism) of this “reification of power”. The basis for this work is instead the tradition that has developed through Antonio Gramsci’s theory of hegemony and Michel Foucault’s approach to “discourse” and “power”.

For Gramsci, hegemony is not something that could be described by the characteristics of power, coercion or domination (*dominio*). It is dependent, instead, on the spontaneous willingness of subjected subjects of agreeing with the ideas produced by the intellectuals (Gramsci 1975). It should be emphasized that Gramsci does not think of the legitimisation of hegemonic formations as a consequence of propaganda or brainwash, nor explainable merely as a calculation of rational interests, but rather that all these factors have a part in forming that unity.

As we know, Foucault does not consider power to be only an instrument of repression – rather, power is what makes things and talking about things possible. Power does not only say “no” but it produces things, induces pleasure, forms knowledge, and produces discourses (Foucault 1980: 37). For the most part, the mechanisms of the functioning of power are not based on justice, law and the threat of punishment, but rather on techniques, ideals that express normality and various mechanisms of control (Foucault 1990: 89–90).

“Power must be understood in the first instance as the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization; as the process, through ceaseless struggles and confrontations, transforms, strengthens, or reverses them; as the support which these force relations find in one another, thus forming a chain or a system, or on the contrary, the disjunctions and contradictions which isolate them from one another; and lastly, as the strategies in which they take effect, whose general design or institutional crystallization is embodied in the state apparatus, in the formulation of the law, in the various social hegemonies (Foucault 1990: 92–93)

In light of the above, the old questions, such as “Who has power?” or “Who are repressed by power?” lose their former acuity. The described approach draws attention to analysing hidden power relations, especially the power of discourse, as opposed to the previous object of analysis of the social scientists – the relations between the state and its administrative apparatus, and the people. Hegemony becomes the central concept for defining political discourse.

## **2.2. Discourse and power**

From an anti-essentialist perspective that this dissertation is based on, power relations are not something pre-given; instead, they are constructed through social and cultural meanings. This means that all power relations are discursive relations and “objectivity” as such is constructed specifically in discourse (Laclau 2005: 68). It is important that the field of application of the concept of discourse is not only limited to writing or speech, but that it refers to any complex of elements where relations play a constitutive role (Ibid.). For Laclau, the question of social and political reality thus boils down to the question of the constitution of discourse. According to Laclau, hegemony should be interpreted only on top of discourse: a hegemonic relationship is nothing other than an

articulation of meanings, a particular logic of the signification process. Since the component papers discuss this logic throughout, it will not be analysed here any further. However, some additional general remarks on the relations between discourse and power are in order.

The well-known discourse theoretician Norman Fairclough distinguishes analytically the following relation complexes for discursive power (Fairclough 1992: 64):

- 1) Power of discourse
- 2) Power in discourse
- 3) Power over discourse

Power of discourse: this refers to a meaning similar to Foucault's; discourses constitute reality and determine human existence. It is a power that produces that which exists; a power that systems of signification have over our thinking and acting, although we do not usually let ourselves know of it; a power that accounts for a large part of the stability and predictability of our actions. "As a rule, dominant discourses are institutionalised and their position is regarded as self-evident: they determine the things we consider normal, acceptable, self-explanatory, right and good." (Raik 2003: 25). The power of discourse is usually invisible and that is exactly what its success is based on.

Power in discourse: indicates the power of (dominant) discourses to determine the positions of subjects in social relations and thus constitute power relations. Systems of meaning authorise certain actors to speak and act on behalf of others and to create and represent shared values and truths, while others are left in passive, subjugated positions.

Power over discourse: the critique of the two previous notions has created a theoretical framework for including *this* concept. The problem is that both the power of discourse and the power in discourse primarily deal with reproduction and the way different signification systems manipulate with people. The problem is that the subject has been left with no freedom whatsoever – the reproduction of discourse dominates over change, contest, and subjectivity. This problem – the disappearance of the so-called subject as an agent – has been haunting both Foucault and the structuralists (Althusser). Instead of viewing reality as something determined by discourse, the notion of "power over discourse" leads us to ask *who* produces dominant discourses, and *who* tries to challenge and transform them. "As meanings are not fixed, the process of constructing and reproducing discourses is not automatic or inevitable, but involves choice. On the other hand, those placed in a subordinated position often develop counter discourses as forms of resistance in order to bring the dominant system of meaning into question and change it." (Raik 2003: 26). (Re)production of dominant meanings can take the form of the exercise of or struggle for power; "discourse is the power which is to be a sized" (Foucault 1981: 52–53).

From the purposes of this paper, it is important to clarify that hegemonic discourse does not only consider the discourses of those in power. Thus paper III discusses the discourse of the Singing Revolution which, back at the end of the

1980s, united people who were both politically and socioculturally without power. In *On Populist Reason* Laclau describes the construction of people and its populist origin. According to him, populism is one of the ways that hegemonic logic of signification may occur and is not at all a stranger to the democratic social organization and free media (Laclau 2005). This means that opposing discourses that are alternative to power could have the same logic of signification.

The same applies to totalitarianism – this dissertation does not define totalitarian or democratic logics of signification; this would presume that we already have a positive concept of totalitarianism or democracy beforehand, which could then be used for deductively deriving the relevant properties of the processes of signification. On the contrary, only the study of the logic of signification has been thematised. To study the reasons (e.g. technical, economical, cultural, social factors) why any logic of signification is prevalent in one or the other political regime, already presumes a different approach to political discourse. The axiology of the widespread political concepts – democracy (good) versus totalitarianism (evil) – should be de-demonised first, after which one could inquire whether the practices of signification of those regimes are essentially any different from each other, and if not, then what would be the effects of this understanding on contemporary political thought as a whole.

Neither does this dissertation claim that discourses determine subjects, as is stated in Foucault's discourse theory. Above all, it asks what kind of logic of signification the community members use for their practices of signification. Societies are constituted by different discourses by way of which the members of the society coordinate their understanding of "reality". In the context of this dissertation, political struggle is to be understood as a "discursive struggle" where rivaling groups attempt to define the meaning of the central notions of the struggle. "The "winners" of the discursive fight formulate new signifying systems that are institutionalised and become dominant" (Raik 2003: 27). Nevertheless, this does not eliminate struggle and contingency: "hegemonic practices that try to conquer their opponents and to give a meaning to contingent elements, find fighting with antipathetic forces and the existence of contingent elements necessary" (Ibid.). Hegemonic signifying process can never completely converge to a single empty signifier, because this process itself is a temporary "balance" between the logic of equivalence/difference (Laclau) or continuous/discrete coding language (Lotman) (see also papers II and III). In other words, no discourse can ever have a total determining power over a subject, and to study the levels of influence that those discourses have on a subject, one needs different methodological devices. I have discussed this topic in some of my previous papers (Ventsel 2006a, 2006b) and in my master's thesis, where I approached the question through Émile Benveniste's approach to the pronoun "we" through the first-person pronoun "I", and the discourse theories of semiotics of culture and the Essex School. The circle of problems of the subject in this context surely needs more attention, but for now it will remain a topic for future research.

The next chapter will survey the development of the tradition of discourse analysis, the starting point of this dissertation.

### 3. DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

The word “discourse” is so overloaded semantically – its different translations from French (*discourse*) into English (*discourse*) and then in turn into Estonian (*diskursus*) do not take the original French meaning into account – so an explanatory introduction is in order. Here are some of the definitions of “discourse” as used in the humanities that help to understand and have an overview of this diversity of its meanings:

- 1) “Speech” in the sense of Ferdinand de Saussure, i.e. every specific parole (1966).
- 2) A unit higher than phrases, an utterance in a global sense. Understood as an object of study for the “grammar of the text”, it marks the succession and regularity of different utterances;
- 3) In speech act theory and pragmatics, discourse is defined as an effect of an utterance on the receiver, and the conditions of expressing this utterance. The best-known representative of this approach is Jürgen Habermas, who in his work *Theory of Communicative Action* (1981) considers mutual understanding and reaching a consensus as the main objectives of communicative action, which both in economy and politics takes place through rationalist-instrumental calculation. Thus Habermas does not attach rationality to subjects (as in the Kantian tradition) but uses it to characterise the structure of interpersonal linguistic communication.
- 4) A conversation, which is observed as a main speech situation.
- 5) Émile Benveniste (1996) refers to discourse as a speech ascribed to the speaker, as opposed to “story”, that proceeds without an explicit presence of the speaker in speech.
- 6) At times, language and speech/discourse are considered as opposites; on the one hand, as a system of virtual meanings which are relatively undifferentiated and stable, and on the other hand, as a deviation from it, caused by the diversity ways of using a unit of language. Thus studying an element in language and in speech are distinguished (Seriot 1999: 26).
- 7) Discourse is also used in a specifying sense, as a function for assembling an indeterminate amount of utterances into a totality, by way of which the diversity of utterances is gathered into the unity of a social or ideological discourse. Thus for example we can talk about feminist discourse as a whole, not just within the frame of a specific work that alone forms but a part of one whole feminist discourse. This is one of the most common definitions of discourse in ordinary and scientific language.
- 8) Utterance and discourse are distinguished. The former refers to the succession of phrases that are semantically bounded within a speech unit in communication. The latter is an utterance that is observed from the standpoint of discourse mechanism that determines the former (Guespin 1971: 10). From this point of view, discourse is not the first or the empirical object in an analysis. Rather, a theoretical (constructed) object is considered that refers to the relations between language and ideology, the real object of analysis.

The last two (7–8) definitions are still to be found in, and have affected Ernesto Laclau's approach to discourse. It is also easy to find in them an intersection with some of the semiotic approaches to text. As discourse analysis in general (see paper III) and the concept of discourse in the Essex School have both been adequately analysed in various component papers, they will not be discussed here any further. Nevertheless, a short overview is provided of the tradition that is relevant for Laclau's approach discourse theory.

### **3.1. The French tradition in discourse analysis**

The French tradition in discourse analysis emerged in the 1960s, primarily as an attempt to overcome the theoretical shortcomings inherited from content analysis, which, back then, was dominant in the humanities, especially in America. Content analysis mainly concentrated on analysing the external level of verbal expressions, with special attention paid to transformation operations that in the course of the analysis, makes it possible to infer, based on purely distributive features, the internal unity of syntactic structures that may initially seem different. This way, a literal view of text was superseded (Berelson 1952). Unlike in content analysis where verbal material is viewed simply as means for the transmission of information, discourse analysis refers to this material as *text* (Sériot 1999: 17). This incurs a significant shift: for the transmitter, text is no longer a message that presents his ideas transparently and has been constructed in consideration of the transmitter's objective; instead, the boundaries of the text fade and begin to function alongside other discourses that constitute it. Here we can see the biggest difference between content analysis and discourse analysis: the former attempted to establish second level methods of analysis for social sciences, whereas the latter strove to become the true discipline for textual analysis (Seriot: Ibid.).

For the French discourse theoreticians, the primary objects of analysis were texts that had a strong limiting effect on concrete speech acts and that determined their historical, cultural and intellectual orientation, i.e. texts that are important from the point of view of a group's self-determination. They were not observed in isolation, but rather as a body of texts that set the conditions for speech acts of a given social, economic, geographical, or linguistic region (Foucault 1990: 55–60). This unity of discourse was determined by the unity of function rather than formal criteria. The unity of political discourse is not secured by the fact that it is done in parliaments, but by the degree that different texts are connected for presenting a particular power relation. The primary issue is the position in the general discursive formation which, according to Foucault, could be filled with anybody or anything (Foucault 1990: 49–50). Thus, a constitution of political discourse may comprise both a legal act accepted by the Parliament and work regulations in a factory. Both construct power relations in different ways.

The most important approaches in the humanities that influenced French discourse analysis were linguistics, Marxist/historical materialism and the psychoanalytic tradition. Motivated by the works of Benveniste, Barthes and Genette, the traditional relations between text, intertext and the author as the subject of the utterance, were put into question. Discourse as a collection of quotes, repetition of someone else's speech and its novel meaning in new circumstances, both explicit and implicit argumentation strategies, the status of a subject as the utterer of an utterance, etc. – those are just some of the topics that cast doubt on the usage of a traditional linguistic methods for analysing speech activities.

Another important influence was Louis Althusser, especially his understanding of ideology as “‘constituting’ concrete individuals as subjects” (Althusser 1970). The common understanding of ideology until Marx and Engels’ *The German ideology* placed ideology into the field of consciousness as structures of conscious ideas. Althusser, however, turns this relationship around, claiming that “ideology has very little to do with “consciousness”, even supposing this notion to have an unambiguous meaning. It is profoundly unconscious, even when it presents itself in a reflected form (as in pre-Marxist “philosophy”) (Althusser 1969: 239). If ideology secures people’s imagined relation with their reality precisely by moulding them into subjects, then the belief that we master our speech is an ideological illusion. A researcher should consider the ideological structures that cause the speech to occur as much more important than direct speech. In his book *Les verités de la Palice* (1975) Pêcheux translates Althusser’s thoughts into discourse theoretical vocabulary and claims that discourse is always formed at the boundaries of previous discourses (interdiscursivity) and thus always precedes the speaking subject and is independent of its will. This distinction is based on Pêcheux’s separation of signification and value. The former belongs to the subject and characterises particular utterances in the Saussurean sense; the latter is a part of language and thus, as for Saussure, independent from the will of the subject. Taking into account that ideological formations consist of various discursive formations that determine what can and must said according to the position and the circumstances, then it can be said that Pêcheux complements Althusser’s mechanism of ideological reproduction by presenting various discursive formations with the constituting role of speech. Ideology appears as subconscious content, discourse as a subconscious form for expressing this content.

Here we can already see the connections with the third major flow that has influenced discourse analysis – psychoanalysis. To discover another text in a text – ideology or discourse, i.e. the thing we are actually looking for – one must put oneself into the role of a psychoanalyst and search the consciousness for subconscious causes. Whether we talk about the urges of subconscious desire or the interests of a certain group, the main object of research for the analyst is still the process by which the illusions are formed.

### 3.2. The problem

This approach raises several questions for a researcher methodologically. Thus, for example, it is necessary to reinterpret the ontological status of discourse as a bounded totality. Although distinguishing between separate discursive formations is the final result of analysis for Foucault, Pêcheux, Maldider, etc., what becomes even more relevant are not discursive formations as such but the analysis of the boundaries of this process of formation – the identification of a discursive formation does not take place by discovering an object and comparing it with other analogous objects (discourses); instead, its constitution itself is the result of constant limiting acts. Thus the identity of an utterance is not limited by the purposeful intention of an utterer, but rather by unstable social and historical conditions that secure this temporary unity and separate it from other discourses. Speech and discourse are not separate in the sense that there is a pre-existing ideal discourse that generates speech, but that speech also produces discourse – the influence is reciprocal. In consequence, this imaginary unit – discourse – is not to be perceived as an abiding and stable unit in the communicative space, but rather that this unity itself is always unstable and temporary, and bound by the fields of language and interdiscursivity.

The unity of discursive formations is established by the rules of formation that, rather than defining the identity of the object, style, conceptual system or topics, but instead makes possible these utterances that belong to the same discursive formation. In fact, it can be argued that what lies outside of discourse (interdiscursivity) has primacy over discourse itself, because one discursive formation is separated from the others through that what “cannot be said”, what cannot be delivered by an utterance. This kind of analysis does not try to find total meanings in order to study their inner structure: “it would not try to suspect and to reveal latent conflicts; it would study forms of division [...] instead of drawing up tables of differences (as the linguists do), it would describe systems of dispersion” (Foucault 2002: 41).

We cannot fail to look past the problems associated with the psychoanalytic method, either. For generating the real meaning of text, subconscious postulation may, rhetorically, cover up the difficulties that content analysis had, but this is hardly an analytical solution but instead nothing but a declarative postulation of an initial reason.

These methodological problems are relatively similar to theories of text. At times, both traditions even use the same vocabulary (desire, urge, the fluidity of text/discourse, unboundedness) and it may appear at first that the primary differences derive from the analysed material that formed the basis for producing theoretical concepts – theories of text dealt primarily with artistic (literary) texts, whereas discourse analysis focused on social-political material (newspapers, TV shows, everyday speech, school textbooks). The next chapter briefly describes the tradition that may be thought of as the semiotic approach to text.

## 4. DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO TEXT

The roots of the word “text” as it is used today date back to the Enlightenment and the rationalistic mentality. As a counterbalance to the view that the Holy Scripture is not a text among others but is a word of God, a new conception of an abstract text as such came into being, mainly from the early democratic understanding that was based on the rejection of all tradition-bound hierarchies and assumed everything to be on a level (Tool 1997: 265–266). From that time onward, the concept of text has, more and more, begun to excite interest in the humanities, which is why by now, but especially since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup>, a variety of different concepts and meta-languages have come into being that explicate the content of this concept. In different conceptions, we are not just dealing with different meanings of the same concept. Text can be understood best at the intersection of intra-textual and extra-textual relations, where all its fragments get their meaning according to their position in the structure of the text and in the dictionary of the particular language, and also by to their relationships with other texts, the era, and the author (Torop 2000: 27). For this reason the definition of text is supplemented by several analytic sub-concepts that broaden the concept of text: micro and macro text, subtext, architext, prototext, intext, intertext, etc. that, in turn, are nowhere near of being unambiguous. To avoid possible confusion arising from the overexploitation of the concept of text, I will try to organize the conceptual field relevant for the concept of text as used in this dissertation.

### 4.1. From text to intertext

From the perspective of classical linguistics, text could be defined as a manifestation of a system preceding the text, as a concrete expression of an abstract system of language – as fixed speech. This assumes that those who form the text and those whom it is potentially addressed to, share this common system and are thereby able to understand the text adequately. Another hidden assumption is added: text is a limited, isolated, a stable and small-scale unit of signification.

The first apologists of hermeneutics as the study of the principles of interpretation also proceeded from similar premises. By focusing on the problem of cultural competence instead of linguistic competence, they claimed that the primary task of textual analysis is to discover the truth uttered into it – for this purpose, one first needs to discover the “obscure” (*obscuritas*) places in the text and then clean them from false beliefs (caused by culture). What one had in mind by the truth hidden in the text was dependent on particular traditions. Thus the universal hermeneutists (Johann Martin Chladenius, Georg Friedrich Meier) of the Age of Enlightenment considered their primary task to be the discovery of human truths that are invisible to the ordinary eye but can be seen in the light

of the rationalist principles of reason (*ratio*). Thus, according to Chladenius, a speech or a piece of writing can only be understood completely if one thinks exactly the things that people's words can awaken in them in accordance with the rules of reason and their soul (Szondi 1988: 44–45). Since the truth of a text can be identified with ratio and is therefore universal, it may happen that the author itself was blinded by his "idols" and did not realise precisely what he was writing, and thus the truth was finally revealed by the ratio of the hermeneutist. It may be said that the hermeneutists of the Age of Enlightenment did not think of the work as the expression of the author's personality, but rather as the author's explanation of something third – the thing being discussed – which was presumed to have a specific place in the rational structure of the totality of being (Tool 1997: 273).

The works of the Romantic scholars of interpretation (Ast, Schleiermacher) were born of an entirely different pathos. Influenced by the aesthetics of Immanuel Kant and the historicist approach to history that was common to German mentality at the time, according to which reason evolves in time and thus changes constantly, in their approach to the hermeneutics of text they emphasized the primacy of the unity between the spirit of the creators and the spirit of their time. Primacy was accorded to understanding authors as creators in their particular individuality. The task of the hermeneutist is to understand the text, the work primarily as the author's total self-expression, instead of interpreting individual *obscuritas*'es. Thus with text Schleiermacher does not refer merely to the works already created, but also to speech as such, which the speaker uses to express his spirit to the listener (Schleiermacher 1997: 11–12). On the one hand, the speaker is just a location "in which a given language forms itself in an individual manner, on the other their discourse can only be understood via the totality of the language. But then the person is also a spirit which continually develops, and their discourse is only one act of this spirit of connection with the other acts" (Schleiermacher 1997: 13). For Georg Anton Ast, a contemporary of Schleiermacher, the texts of individual authors are to be interpreted, at the end, according to the spirit (*Geist*) of their own era, whereas Schleiermacher himself saw a hermeneutic circle forming from the author's texts and the totality of his life connections that the listener/reader could adequately and veraciously relate to and embrace psychologically, through intuition. What is important, though, is the fact that the starting point for both is a certain existent, static totality, which that Truth uses for manifesting itself through understanding.

Thus we could say that earlier definitions of text emphasized the unitary nature of texts as signs, the inseparable unity of its functions in a cultural context, or other characteristics of text, and what was meant, either explicitly or implicitly, was that text is an expression in a *single* language (Lotman 2002: 158). The situation is profoundly changed when we consider that text itself is part of the totality of human culture, which itself is comprised of different languages – mythology, ideology, art, etc. as secondary modelling systems based on natural languages, which are not presumed to be paradigmatically

unified and related to each other. All texts – whether they be something that goes down in art history as a “classic” or a conversational remark –

“reflects a unique intersection of circumstances in the course of which and in relation to which it was created and accepted: the communicative intentions of the author (often ambivalent and contradictory and never completely clear even to himself); the relations between the author and the addressee (or several different potential addressees); various “conditions”, large or small, inescapably important or random, univocal or intimate, which appear in the given text, one way or another; the general ideological characteristics and the stylistic “climate” of an era as a whole, including the particular group whom the text is directed to; categorical and stylistic characteristics of the text itself, and of the communicative environment which the text connects to; and finally – a variety of associations with other texts...” (Gasparov 1994: 275)

As may be concluded from this long quote, a text is never identical to itself, because the conditions in which it was created and received never recur and are always unique, even if only because of the fact that after its first appearance, a text falls among the conditions that determine the conditions for its meaning (Lotman 2002: 161), this even for the author, who, according to Barthes, becomes a part of the text, “a paper author” (Barthes 1980: 161).

As text turned primarily into a process, a textual creation, it made it necessary for the humanities to coin the notions of intertext/intertextuality. This approach contrasted with the immanent textual analysis described above and posed a question about the relations between extra-textual and intertextual spheres. The extra-textual sphere itself becomes an object of theoretical attention.

In an attempt to break the general understanding of a monolithic signifier that was prevalent at the time, in the *Séméiōtiké* (1969) the Bulgarian-French theoretician Julia Kristeva draws a distinction between phenotext and genotext. According to Kristeva, we have to proceed further from the structural analysis of a language to the pre- and non-structural levels of a language, from meanings to the process of signification; in short, from consciousness to the subconscious. Phenotext refers to the text as a material form, its manifestation, and this presents the text in a communicative function, whereas genotext is the primary level of any process of signification. This is the abstract level of the text’s linguistic functioning that precedes phrasal structures and definitions of all kinds, and makes a stand against finished structure. Genotext absorbs all semiotic processes, distributed impulses, those interruptions that they cause in the continuity of the social system. Genotext is the hidden cause for both the totality of meaning and its collapse because it is the only carrier of the impulses of physical energy in which the subject has still not lost its unity. Although it can be identified in language, genotext remains unattainable for linguistics. For this purpose, Kristeva adapted the concept of semioanalysis that consists of linguistics, semiotics and psychoanalysis.

Genotext has diffused boundaries and no structure; phenotext follows the communicative norms set out in a culture and the valid restrictions set to the sender-receiver relation. Various restrictions and rules (primarily social and political) stop the unified flow of the genotext at places, block it and force it into a particular structure, fixing an endless process into a stable symbolic form. This results in a ready-made semiotic signified that has been constructed in accordance with era-specific cultural and ideological codes. Every text is a connection of these two aspects and is essentially equivocal (Kristeva 1974: 248)<sup>1</sup>. Unfortunately, Kristeva lacks the relevant methodology for analysing the relations between these two levels (Torop 1999: 30).

Kristeva's works have greatly influenced Barthes' distinction of text and work, which he presented in his paper *From Work to Text* (1971). Whereas the latter is something tangible, a material fragment, such as a book in the reader's hand, the former refers to a methodological field in which whatever has been written in the book allows itself to be perceived as meaningful (Barthes 1980: 156–157). On the other hand, the category of work also includes unilingually coded systems where the signification of a work boils down to a single signified: from a linguistic point of view this would be a transparent relation between the signifier and the signified; for hermeneutics (at the age of Romanticism, Dilthey) the discovery of the hidden, single, true meaning. According to Barthes, text is characterised by a principled dissimilarity – reading a text is always one-time and interlaced with various quotations, references, echoes: “These are cultural languages (and what language is not?), past or present, that traverse the text from one end to the other in a vast stereophony” (Barthes 1980: 159). All texts are intertexts for another text, but this intertextuality should not be confused with the origin of the text, as this would again lead to an attempt to re-establish the original meaning of the text, to the so-called genealogical myth. We can see that in principle, Barthes repeats Kristeva. Both try to avoid source-critical connotations when talking about text. For Kristeva, the concept of genotext refers to an unparsed and unstructured intertextuality as a text's principal directedness to other texts, while Barthes considers it necessary to emphasize this difference explicitly. Intertextuality, for him, is the anonymous space comprised of texts, quotations, paragraphs, names, etc. in which the origin of the elements that comprise it can no longer be identified. Thus we can no longer say that a text is comprised of an enumerable amount of intertexts for which the act of “the first christening”, as it were, can be identified. Text is a network that extends itself by a combinatory systematic; no organic totality should be presumed (Barthes 1980: 161). This claim also opposes the understanding of the hermeneutic circle as a movement from the whole to the singular and vice versa that would generate such an organic totality.

These examples present a significant theoretical shift – in the analysis of the creation of texts that is based on other texts, the internal meaning of the text and

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<sup>1</sup> Equivocalness is important, especially if we consider how Lotman uses the concepts ‘discrete’ and ‘continuous’ to understand equivocalness, or rather bilingualism.

its new reader become more important than stating the usage of other texts and their influences (something which also presumes and claims to identify the “correct” original signification of a foreign text) (Torop 1999: 30). In both Kristeva’s and Barthes’ approaches it is necessary to emphasize that those significations of intertexts still remain (although the status of the origin of the original significations has become problematic) but the emphasis is put on the new text and its signification, coded through them in the eyes of the new reader. This means that the signification of intertexts is not quite up to the reader. The text is combined in the field of intertextuality, but how, according to the text itself, the meaning of the extra-textual is retrospectively constructed both for the intertext and the text, has remained undertheoretised. The approach to text in Barthes’ *From Work to Text* turns out to be difficult to use as a means for analysis, what is described here is primarily the process of reading.

The myth of a particular original meaning of a previous text is definitively demolished at the beginning and in the middle of the 1970s. In his *Conflit des interpretations. Essais d’herméneutique (The Conflict of Interpretations: Essays in Hermeneutics)* (1969) and the compilation of his earlier essays, *Du texte à l’action. Essais d’herméneutique (From Text to Action: Essays in Hermeneutics)* (1986), Paul Ricoeur continues the hermeneutic tradition and includes increasingly more complicated and multi-layered extra-textual material into the conceptual structure of the text, thereby increasingly emphasizing the importance of the reader, the understander of the text as someone being-in-the-world in creating the meaning of the text. According to Ricoeur, the task of philosophical hermeneutics is to open up discourse to life, thus distinguishing him from linguistics and the previous language-centric structuralist approaches to text. The latter, according to Ricoeur, close off meaning into the mutual relations of dependence that will, according to Ricoeur, exclude understanding that has its root in the author and the reader as inhabiting the same world. But the latter is just one – explanatory – aspect in the approach to text. For Ricoeur, it is important to emphasize that language has – unlike the structuralist view of a language as a closed system – an ability to reveal the world outside language. Language as a system of meanings is essentially inseparable from its usage in the form of parole. Language appearing as parole always takes place with someone in a certain time and space, which is thus always an event preceding language, an extra-linguistic situation. The task of hermeneutics would be to interpret; that is, to explain the way of being in the world that was open *before* the text (Ricoeur 1986: 127). The world of text (*monde du texte*) consists of a totality of non-ostensive references, based on the work, placed between the objective relations characterising the structure of the text, and the readers, and which invites the reader to discover and bring out the world that is fictive yet connects to the readers’ previous experiences (Kalmo 2009: 443).

At this stage, we cannot look past the reception of Bakhtin’s notion of dialogicality in the West. Bakhtin was discovered and re-read in the post-structuralist situation that understood dialogicality not as a mechanism for describing the relations between intertextual structures, but primarily as a

mechanism for explaining extra-textual connections (Torop 1999: 29; Gasparov 1993: 282). The end of the 1970s and the early 1980s mark the imaginary boundary when, in reference to text, researchers declaratively started to make use of that negative strategy that may, in a nutshell, be called deconstructionism: the main task of the humanities, especially literary studies, was to demonstrate the interruptions in the tissue of text, the devices and inconsistencies that break its presumed totality. (Gasparov 1993: Ibid; Itkonen 1987).

## **5. TEXT/DISCOURSE FROM POINT OF VIEW OF SEMIOTICS OF CULTURE BY “TMS” AND THEORY OF HEGEMONY BY ESSEX SCHOOL**

In the conception of text outlined above – which naturally does not cover the entire extent of theoretical thinking in this direction – the development of theoretical thinking proceeds by including increasingly diverse, open and unstructured information in textual analyses – until this process abolishes all definitions of text as a concept for a phenomenon, or is purposefully reduced to all-inclusive principles of unification and interference that constantly permeate the entire culture. “The “structure of the text”, which includes the “context”, is washed away or demolished by the various factors functioning in the mental environment that surrounds the text” (Gasparov 1993: 282).

Such a development will eventually exceed the critical limit of analyzability – with the final collapse of all boundaries, the object itself will crumble to dust. The tradition of discourse analysis that preceded Laclau was, in principle, faced with the very problem that characterized textual analysis before the TMS semiotics of culture. In both cases, the description cast aside the primary surface of the text and focused on the phenomena that exist before the text and outside of it; text is perceived not as a primary phenomenon that consists of qualities peculiar only to itself, but instead as a secondary product of certain general mechanisms – cultural codes, discourse formation, psychological mechanisms – in other words, of the work under analysis. In addition, many of the authors who were part of the aforementioned lines of development in the humanities associated their patterns of thought in the final instance with sub-conscious energies and impulses that are familiar from psychoanalysis. This may be suitable for analyses of literary texts, but is difficult to reconcile with contemporary thought in social sciences and with conducting credible and practicable empirical analyses.

### **5.1. Text/discourse as a bounded totality**

In order to rectify this situation, one needs to approach text/discourse as a paradoxical phenomenon. It is, on the one hand, a unity, a closed totality with a clear outline – otherwise it would not even be perceptible as a text/discourse – but it is also a totality that is born out of an open, uncountable multitude of heterogeneous and multi-faceted components. Possibilities for its interpretation cannot be forced into pre-given structures because of the inexhaustible potentialities of the interactions between the components and sources that comprise it.

Such an approach to text and discourse is indeed provided by the treatment of text by the TMS and Laclau’s hegemonic empty signifier, both of which consider text/discourse as a certain kind of unity, a bounded and closed totality.

According to semiotics of culture, “text is a carrier of total meaning and total function (if we distinguish between the viewpoints of the researcher and the bearer of culture, the text is the bearer of total function for the former and the bearer of total meaning for the latter). Regarded in this manner, it can be treated as the basic element (unit) of culture” (Theses on the semiotic study of cultures (as applied to the Slavic texts) 1998: 3.0.0). In his later works, Lotman replaces the concept of text with that of the semiosphere, which better highlights the dynamic aspects of culture – every semiosphere can be studied as a separate totality, but now there is an explicit methodological principle that every totality in culture that can be analysed is simultaneously part of a larger totality (Torop 2003: 335–336). This results in a seamless dialogue between parts and wholes, and in the dynamics of the total dimension. Nevertheless, for the semiotics of culture text has remained the central concept, since as a concept it can refer to both a concrete artefact and an invisible abstract totality (as a mental text in the consciousness or sub-consciousness) (Torop 2009: 35).

Similarly to the treatment of text in the semiotics of culture, Laclau and the Essex school approach discourse as a delineated, significant totality. This closing up into a significant totality should be understood as a temporary equilibrium between the logic of difference and equivalence in the process of signification (Laclau and Mouffe 1985: 112). This closing off, albeit temporary, is nevertheless inevitable, since otherwise there would be no process of signification and thus no meaning (Laclau 1996). In addition to several functional similarities between Lotman’s and Laclau’s theoretical positions – between the equivalent logic of signification and continuous coding, text and discourse, asymmetry and heterogeneity, but also the treatment of the concept of boundary – the present author feels that Laclau’s theory of hegemony pays undue tribute to the psychoanalytic tradition, especially to its Lacanian version. Falling into the convolutions of psychoanalysis may be considered as the primary weakness of Laclau’s theory of hegemony, as it bars off concrete empirical analyses of political discourse.

Another issue lies in the fact that, according to Laclau, any movement from one hegemonic formation to another is always though a radical break, as a creation *ex nihilo*. Not that all the elements of the discourse will be entirely new ones, but that the name of the discourse, the “empty signifier” around which the new formation is reconstructed, does not derive its central role from any logic that was already in operation in the previous situation (Laclau 2005: 228). As a result, no theoretical attention is paid to the fact that the space outside of text is itself hierarchical and participates actively in the process of textual generation, revealed especially in the fact that certain ideological systems can connect the germ that generates the culture precisely to something external, the non-organized sphere, opposing to it the internal, ordered field as a culturally lifeless one (Theses on the semiotic study of cultures (as applied to the Slavic texts) 1998: 1.3.0). I do not mean to claim that translation from one formation to the other is determined by some pre-given structural transformation, but neverthe-

less some relations of equivalence and some names of discourse are more probable than others.

By replacing psychoanalysis as the final authority with the concepts of text as bilingual and of translation (transference) derived from Lotman's and the TMS's semiotics of culture, and by supplementing the theory of hegemony with different typologies of strategies for translating (recoding, transferring<sup>2</sup>) the relations both within and without text, also derived from the semiotics of culture, we may be able to provide more diverse research tools for empirical analyses, and to provide new and fruitful perspectives for both approaches.

## 5.2. The semiotic theory of hegemony as an interdisciplinary approach

An interdisciplinary connection between discourse theory and semiotics of culture raises itself some general issues, primarily associated with the mutual relations between different disciplines, their hierarchy, and the identity of the object of research. Here I would like to highlight two primary questions, 1) in what way does the object of research correlate with the method of research, i.e. to what extent do research methods not only explain, but also constitute and construct the object being studied, and 2) in the situation where the boundaries between different disciplines have become indistinct, to what degree does the identity of the disciplines themselves persist? Especially if we consider the fact that the primary source of interdisciplinary approaches is the powerlessness of older scientific languages in coming to grips with explaining the diversity of the world, rather than a mere unification of different disciplines (Barthes 1980).

The present approach is well aware of these difficulties and acknowledges that in essence this is an *ad hoc* approach, a creation of a synthesized research language. Both discourse theory and semiotics of culture have acknowledged programmatically that both are involved in creating an *ad hoc* research method (Wodak; Meyer 2001; Theses on the semiotic study of cultures (as applied to the Slavic texts) 1998). This means that the researcher is aware of the correlation between cultural diversity and the diversity of the disciplinary and hybrid meta-languages that attempt to describe it.

On the other hand, the present work is not by far the first interdisciplinary attempt to associate semiotics with other disciplines and to treat "reality" as a text. The American anthropologist Clifford Geertz laid the foundation to the interpretive or symbolic school of anthropology with his seminal 1973 work *The Interpretation of Culture*, according to which cultural phenomena should be considered as systems of signification, as texts, with the help of which people communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge of and regard towards life. And it is the goal of anthropology to read and interpret these texts. This approach also drew attention to the interpretive and dialogical processes going

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<sup>2</sup> For the concepts of translation and recoding in Lotman's oeuvre, cf Salupere 2008.

on both in social activity and in ethnographic fieldwork and writing, which can thus be analysed with methods that are similar to those used for textual analysis in literary studies.

Richard H. Brown has made use of the metaphor of experience and knowledge as language and text – the entire human experience, as well as social reality that he describes, is a rhetorical enterprise (Brown 1987). In his later works he uses the metaphor of textuality, which according to Brown has two sources: structural semiotics and the hermeneutics of meaning. The first would specialize on the syntax and grammar of knowledge and society, the rules and limitations of those communicative practices that constitute society, whereas the latter would concentrate on semantics and pragmatics, on meanings that are manifested through activities on a particular background. Politics, institutions and identities are constructed, negotiated or altered by acts of persuasion, which can be understood in rhetorical terms (Brown 1994: 44–45). The present approach does not share the widespread conception of semiotic text as an aggregate of self-contained codes. Let Lotman’s definition of new information stand as an affirmation of this position: he calls such messages new messages that are not generated as a result of unambiguous transformations and which thus cannot result *automatically* from a particular original text based on pre-given rules of transformation (Lotman 2004a: 568). Thus novelty consists of “non-regular” texts that are “incorrect” according to already existing rules.

For the interdisciplinary approach that is developed in the present dissertation, it is relevant that both semiotics of culture and the theory of hegemony of the Essex school are derived, to a certain extent, from the linguistic tradition of Saussure, and thus view signification as a system of differences. Semiotics of culture has developed from the semiotics of language by way of the semiotics of text into today’s semiotics of the semiosphere (Portis-Winner 1999; Torop 2003, 2009). Similarly, many discourse theorists have acknowledged the linguistic origin of their theoretic conceptions, primarily by way of the tradition stemming from the linguistic theories of Benveniste and Saussure that has later developed into different approaches in discourse analysis (Wodak; Meyer 2001; Seriot 1999; Laclau 1985).

Both approaches view signification on the basis of a total system. Nevertheless, while being aware of the inevitable closure of this imaginary totality, both TMK semiotics of culture and the Essex discourse theory are simultaneously aware that this significant totality is never closed off entirely, but only represents the researcher’s temporary operational construction in an endless semiosis. This means that for the semiotics of culture as well as for the theory of hegemony, untranslatability is a constitutive condition of meaning and thus of social communication. Laclau approaches this point with the concepts of antagonism and the logic of difference/equivalence, for Lotman it is the result of the inevitable dichotomy between continuous and discrete coding systems (cf. paper III). For this reason, politics is not, for the purposes of the approach developed in this work, some regional category in cultural processes, but is in some sense present (even if only latently) in every structure of signification in

the form of an antagonism. In the same manner, “culture” does not refer only forms of art – to so-called high culture. From the perspective of the semiotics of culture, restricting culture in such a manner would be meaningless, since (minimally) two semiotic mechanisms (languages) is the principle of construction for any semiotic phenomenon; similarly, for a non-administrative model of politics, reducing politics to that region of society that consists of governmental activities would be limiting to the extreme.

The difficulties that have been referred to here – the failure to consider cultural factors in identity creation, the inappropriateness of psychoanalysis for an *empirical* social scientific paradigm, the lack of interest in semiotics for theoretically interpreting power relations – are precisely the reasons that justify the interdisciplinary approach, since they help to better understand the contemporary society that surrounds us all. Hopefully I have managed to demonstrate in my papers the functional similarity between the basic concepts of the theory of hegemony and the semiotics of culture (cf. Papers II and III) and thereby offered a fruitful integration for further analyses.

## 6. SUMMARIES OF PAPERS

The dissertation consists of 5 papers, published between 2007 and 2009. The first and second papers have been published in a semiotics-based journal *Sign Systems Studies* 35.½ (2007) and *Sign Systems Studies* 36.1 (2008). The third paper is due to be published in *Semiotica* (2010). The fourth paper is due to be published in the journal *Kunstiteaduslikke Uurimusi (Studies in Art and Architecture)*. The last paper, analysing the reasons for the formation of the Soviet totalitarian language, has been published in *Russian Journal of Communication* Vol. II, No. ½ (2009) – a journal that primarily deals with the study of Russian communicative space and which is published by the Washington University in association with the Russian Academy of Sciences. All papers have been peer-reviewed. Papers II and III have been co-written by Peeter Selg from the University of Tallinn.

The format of a dissertation that is based on a collection of papers is different from a monograph. Due to the diversity of the readers, some papers required summaries of the general framework of the semiotic theory of hegemony, and as a result there may be small repetitions between the papers. Limitations on the length of submissions set by the journals also restricted the writing of these papers, for which reason only the very central topics were addressed and in several cases I was forced to omit some of the context that would have introduced the topics more fully. I have attempted to remedy this shortcoming in the introduction, where I have added chapters dealing with the tradition of theories of text and discourse analysis relevant for the present work, which should explain the reasons for relying on these particular authors in this work. Of course, one could have focussed on different authors, or dwelt on the chosen authors more fully. But choices had to be made and everything not directly relevant or anything that is even briefly dealt with in the component papers was left out of the introduction.

The examples presented in the dissertation about the strategies of signification processes have been derived from contemporary Estonian history. This is justified by the author's better grasp of local material, as well as by the desire to interpret important societal processes in contemporary Estonian history based on the theoretical framework outlined here.

In what follows I will provide a brief overview of the papers that form the dissertation: I will present the problem that the paper deals with, add the theoretical framework used for solving the problem and provide the conclusions that were reached. In cases where there are certain repetitions in the papers, I will note them here, but will not add them again to the summary.

## 6.1. Paper I

Ventsel, Andreas (2007). The construction of the 'we'-category: Political rhetoric in Soviet Estonia from June 1940 to July 1941. *Sign System Studies* 35. ½, 249–267

The occupation of the Republic of Estonia by the Soviet Union in June 1940 became as a shock to the people. Prior meanings that had constituted the society and were relevant for the people's mentality were turned into negatives and were replaced with the Soviet ideological world-view. This paper analyses the ways in which the ideology that supported the events of 1940 was expressed in the speeches of the new people in power. What makes the analysis interesting is the aspect that the ideological construction of political reality is also one of the factors that specifies a person's identity. The material for the analysis consisted of past issues of the then-largest daily newspapers *Päevaleht* (1938, 1939 and 1940 publications), and the issues of *Rahva Hääl* published from 1940 to 1941. Material was drawn primarily from the politicians' speeches published in these papers, and from the editorial columns. The reasons for choosing journalistic publications for the analysis can be justified in several ways: the press (especially the publications that deal with daily issues) reflect the world-view, ideology and value orientations of the collective body (Lauk, Maimik 1998: 80).

The specific target of this study was the construction of the category 'we' in political discourse. In the framework of this paper, several semantically parallel key expressions, to be found in political rhetoric, were also used, such as *the will of the people, the people*, etc., or in other words those in whose name politics speaks. The concept of 'discourse' "as developed in some contemporary approaches to political analysis, has its distant roots in what can be called the transcendental turn in modern philosophy – i.e. a type of analysis primarily addressed not to *facts* but to their *conditions of possibility*" (Laclau 1993: 431). One such condition of possibility by which power relations are constructed is the use of deixis. This paper primarily drew on the analysis of deixis by Émile Benveniste and Karl Bühler.

Primary conclusions:

1. The first Soviet occupation of Estonia (1940–1941) may be divided into two periods. The first period can be dated from 21 June to the "June elections" of 1940. Political rhetoric attempted to create a monolithic subject. The unity between the powers that be and the people were described in speeches in the categories of activity, creativity and freedom.
2. From the "acceptance" of the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic into the Soviet Union on 6 August 1940 onward, there was an important shift in the self-description as 'we' by the ones in power. The local "people" were relegated to the role of passive recipients who were subjected to the Marxist-Leninist ideology, to the dictate and will of Stalin and his Party. Different

rhetorical means were used for this purpose (use of deixis, passive forms of verbs, etc.).

3. Soviet ideology is close to the type of culture (if we were to treat ideology as a synonym for culture in the present context) that Lotman characterizes as a collection of texts and which is opposed to the type of culture that creates collections of texts (Lotman, Uspenski 1994: 245). In this type of culture, with respect to the self-understanding of culture, the content of culture is given in advance; it consists of a complex of normalized “correct” texts: for Soviet ideology, these were the works of the classics of Marxism-Leninism, and during the Stalinist period Stalin’s own works. In this type of culture, subject of speech as the generator of reality (content) through utterances only has relative value. Everything novel is in fact predictable and known for those in the know – to the real subjects (Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin).

## 6.2. Paper II

Ventsel, Andreas; Selg, Peeter (2008). Towards a semiotic theory of hegemony: Naming as hegemonic operation in Lotman and Laclau. *Sign System Studies* 36.1, 167–183

Among social scientists, the concept of “political semiotics” has become increasingly prevalent in recent years. Admittedly, its application is usually limited to the description of signs, symbols and images that circulate in political discourse, without asking whether semiotics would have something fruitful to offer for understanding the logic of the construction of political processes themselves. This paper takes a modest step towards political semiotics as a discipline, based on the theory of hegemony by one of the more recognized political theoreticians Ernesto Laclau, and Yuri Lotman’s semiotics of culture. Despite some differences in terminology, there is a deep affinity in the content between the two authors, both being part of the Saussurean tradition.

The fundamental question of political theory is how to conceptualize political power. The present approach proceeds from the tradition that has been developed from Carl Schmitt’s concept of “the Political”, Antonio Gramsci’s theory of hegemony and Michel Foucault’s treatment of “discourse” and “power”.

In our understanding, Ernesto Laclau represents one of the most promising and the most theoretically accomplished perspectives in this tradition, especially with his conception of the “empty signifier” as a central category for defining hegemonic relationships. Laclau’s ontological background is, as already mentioned, Saussurean, and one of the central theses of this tradition is that any system of signifiers (discourse) is a system of *differences*. According to Laclau, hegemony – as a particular kind of power relation – should be considered only at the level of discourse: a hegemonic relationship is nothing but an articulation of meanings. This articulation presumes that a particular difference will lose its

particularity and will become the universal embodiment of the system of signifiers as a whole, providing the system with inevitably necessary closure and completion. This particular signifier – the ‘empty signifier’ in Laclau’s terminology – will thereby acquire a dominant position in the system of signifiers, or discourse, subordinating to a greater or lesser extent all other members of the discourse by letting them appear as *equivalent* and by undermining their mutual differences. Paradoxically, this process of undermining results in a certain unity or transparency (systematicity). But since this unity does not result from a metaphysical foundation, but is an effect of *naming*. As Laclau indicates in his later works, the *name* becomes the basis for the thing, i.e. for discourse. Thus a question arises: what are the *forces* behind these activities that allow naming to lay the foundation of discourse? Laclau derives his answer from psychoanalysis, especially from its Lacanian version. This paper makes an attempt to replace it with the conceptions of bilinguality and translation (transference) derived from Lotman’s semiotics of culture, which in the opinion of the present author may open up new and fruitful perspectives for both approaches.

According to Lotman, the basic condition for meaning to be born is bilingual, i.e. discrete and continuous coding. These two languages, however, are mutually completely untranslatable. First and foremost, this incapacity of translating texts from discrete languages to non-discrete/continuous languages determined by their fundamentally different make-up: in discrete linguistic systems, the text takes a secondary role with respect to the sign, i.e. it is clearly separable into signs; thus there is no difficulty in distinguishing the sign as a particular kind of elementary unit. Here a sign is associated with other signs; texts of this kind are characterised by sequences, causes, chronological and logical relationships, typical of narrative texts and experimental sciences. In continuous languages, primacy falls on the text, which cannot be decomposed into signs, but is itself a sign. Thus a question arises: how is it even possible for some sort of a unitary meaning to arise from this opposed yet necessary structure? For Lotman, such a minimal system contains a third component: a block of contingent metaphoric equivalences that makes operations of translation possible in conditions of untranslatability. Let us recall that Laclau’s “empty signifier” finds itself performing the same function – it collects the differences of the signifiers into a chain of equivalence. To put it in Lotman’s terms: in political discourse-text, the non-discrete translation strategy is in operation, i.e. discrete and clearly distinguishable signs are translated into a non-discrete totality. This strategy of equating allows the perception of a *Singular* phenomenon within the different phenomena of the real world, and a *Unitary Object* in the diversity of a class of objects.

However, the strategic function of equating remains unclear until we determine what does this closing off of meaningful discourse – that is, metaphoric translation – take place though? This act is naming. Although by its nature names are discrete, metaphoric naming functions as the name of the totality, and it would be more appropriate to say that only naming will generate

it as a meaningful totality. Paradoxically, in political discourse this is rather similar to mythological acts of naming, which grow out of the lack of distinction between things and names. In order to substantiate the above claims, we present an example from the events of April 2007 in Tallinn. The prevalent (hegemonic) name for these events is the “bronze night” (which by itself is absurd, as it lacks an object). Nevertheless, this name assembles into a chain of equivalence, that is, into a meaningful totality originally completely discrete (separate) events: in addition to the riots, it includes the topic of integration, Russian internal policies, historical memories of the events in June 1940 and the attack of Toompea by the Intermovement in the spring of 1991, etc. They all comprise *one* articulated total discourse-text. If we were to call the events that took place in these April nights “Tallinn Spring” or “public unrest in April”, we would get a chain of equivalence that would consist of entirely different value judgements and events.

The following preliminary conclusions were drawn:

1. Continuous translation strategy dominates the construction of hegemonic political discourse;
2. The primary constitutive act in this case is naming;
3. Political struggle takes place in order to secure meanings to these names;
4. The psychoanalytic concept of *affect* that is presumed to lie behind naming may be replaced with Lotman’s conception of translation without contradicting the theoretical framework.

### 6.3. Paper III

Selg, Peeter; Ventsel, Andreas (2009). An outline for a semiotic theory of hegemony. *Semiotica*, xx–xx. [forthcoming]

This paper represents an attempt to further develop the dialogue between two theoretical approaches – the theory of hegemony by Ernesto Laclau, one of the leading figures of contemporary political theory, and Yuri Lotman’s semiotics of culture – the more distant purpose of which is to develop a conceptual toolkit for better analysing the relationships between social reality and power. Despite their terminological differences, there are important substantial and functional similarities between these authors – the concept of boundary, antagonism, naming, etc. This paper focuses on different strategies for constructing political reality. We offer to replace some of Laclau’s principal theoretical categories with categories drawn from Lotman’s semiotics of culture, in particular with his concept of translation or re-coding. In the previous paper, we demonstrated possibly fruitful analogies in the concept of naming, and provided a brief overview of the coincidence between continuous/discrete coding and the logic of difference/equivalence in the works of these two authors. This paper moves on from there and provides a more in-depth analysis of other theoretical similarities between the two approaches: parallels are drawn between their

treatment of boundaries that close discourse or text (semiosphere) into an imaginary significant totality, the antagonism of excluding boundaries, etc.

We have already drawn attention to the main limitation of Laclau's approach: the inclusion of psychoanalysis. Another weakness is a lack of specific analytical tools, and the under-theorization of everything external to discourse, which allows him to claim that the name underlying discourse is a pure coincidence. By complementing Laclau's approach with different strategies of translation drawn from Lotman's semiotics of culture, it allowed us to conduct a better empirical study of the construction of social reality. The discourse of the *Singing Revolution* is taken as an example.

Primary conclusions:

1. The *Singing Revolution* as the name of a discourse is not pure coincidence;
2. The capacity of this name to assemble the discourse into a totality and to fix itself in the consciousness of the people as the name of this totality has certain explanations in the framework of the semiotics of culture;
3. The reasons for the above can be analysed through various strategies of translation – internal re-coding, external re-coding, multiple external re-coding, etc.;
4. The political falls decisively within culture and is in no way isolated from it.

## 6.4. Paper IV

Ventsel, Andreas (2009). Hegemooniline tähistamisprotsess fotograafias [Hegemonic process of signification in photograph]. *Kunstiteaduslikke uurimusi*. XX–XX [forthcoming]

This paper tackles the questions that can be briefly formulated as follows: 1) how to visualise power? and 2) does semiotics have anything to offer to research on the visualisation processes of power? One of the means by which power relations are established and reproduced in societies is photographs.

The first part of the paper provides a brief outline of the theoretical framework of political semiotics, primarily based on the ideas of Lotman and Laclau. Then the following question is analysed: how is the hegemonic process of signification expressed in photographs? The analysis provides a typology of distinctions between different representations of “the people” as a homogenous imaginary totality. Examples are provided by photographs published by the press (daily newspapers and magazines) in the Stalinist-era Soviet Estonia. The second part of the paper attempts to complement this brief theoretical outline with other theoretical positions that have been developed especially for analysing visual representations (Barthes's *punctum*, the *iconic photograph* of visual rhetoric, etc.).

Primary conclusions:

1. Certain hegemonic coding strategies were prevalent in the public communicative space (e.g. photographs in newspapers) of the Stalinist era that determined how “the people” should be represented in photography;
2. On the one hand, these were photographs that had acquired the status of an icon in the public space; on the other, there were also internal principles for constructing these very “iconic” photographs, of which the following were distinguished:
  - a. Dominant text as the dominant element of the process of signification depicted in the photograph;
  - b. Code-text as the principle for organizing the elements represented in the photograph and
  - c. Dominant language as the coding system that subordinates all other possible coding languages;
3. Here, too, we may come to the conclusion (cf. Paper I) that the Soviet public *scopic* regime is characteristic of the type of culture that Lotman characterises as a collection of texts, as opposed to the type of culture that creates the collection of texts.

## 6.5. Paper V

Ventsel, Andreas (2009). The role of political rhetoric in the development of Soviet totalitarian language. *Russian Journal of Communication*, Vol. II, No. 1/2 (Winter/Spring 2009), 9–26

This paper analyses the political discourse of the Stalinist era, based on the phenomenon of totalitarian language that was used for the indoctrination of the identity and world-view of Soviet citizens. The issues analysed in this paper are also derived from the phenomenon of totalitarian language. As is well known, the Soviet Marxist-Leninist ideology defined itself as a strictly objective, scientific world-view. Scientific discourse is characterised by attempts to minimise the ambiguity of the lexicon, which should ideally halt the drift of signifiers in relation to the signified. One would thus assume that the scientific nature of the reconstruction of society would have an impact on communication and natural language. The characteristics developed by the Russian scientist Nina Kupina, who has dealt extensively with the Soviet totalitarian language, reveal, however, that it is not in fact describable by a rigid connection between the signifiers and the signified, and that the semantic distinctiveness of words in the communicative function is compensated by the precise determination of their location in the axiological good – bad axis.

According to my initial hypothesis, the reasons for this are to be found in the politico-rhetorical origin of totalitarian language, in light of which totalitarian language is to be perceived as a manifestation of power in a rhetorical form.

From this it follows that the function and significance of political rhetoric in the general communicative space of the society has a considerable impact on the normative nature of natural language, especially on the semantic level. In order to demonstrate this, I proceeded from the theoretical framework outlined above, to which I added the view on symbol in the semiotics of culture, according to which symbols can be thought of as a particular type of empty signifier. This allows one to consider the functioning of different types of sign that would especially characterise the practice of signification in political discourse.

1. In political discourse, symbols carry a hegemonizing function;
2. The greater the impact of political rhetoric on constructing the society in general, the greater the impact of the nature of the construction of political discourse on language (including normative, e.g. dictionaries) as a whole;
3. The more totalitarian the society, the greater the role played by ambivalent linguistic elements in the construction of its socio-political reality;
4. The transparency and clarity of verbal contents might have undermined, on the linguistic-discursive level, the most important thesis of a totalitarian society: the Party is always right!

## 7. CONCLUSIONS AND PERSPECTIVES FOR FUTURE SCIENTIFIC WORK

In the component papers of my dissertation, I tried to fulfil those objectives that I had set to myself when commencing this work, as well as those that inevitably arose over the course of writing. Together with this introductory chapter, the dissertation outlines a framework for a semiotic theory of hegemony, and I also demonstrate its applicability for analysing certain social processes. Alas, the logical consequence of this work was to reaffirm the old truism that “the more I know, the less I know”, meaning that as the theoretical framework became ever clearer, the domain of which this dissertation is a part kept on widening. To put it in Lotmanian terms: my semiosphere is part of an ever larger semiosphere and their mutual dialogical relationships need further elaboration.

In what follows I will summarise briefly and point by point all the major conclusions that the dissertation presents, after which I will sketch those further developments that these conclusions point toward for future work.

### 7.1. Conclusions

It is my hope that I managed to demonstrate in my papers that the interdisciplinary approach through the theory of hegemony by the Essex school and the Tartu-Moscow semiotics of culture allows for a more complex analysis of power relations. The source of both can be found in Saussure’s theory of language, in which meaning is seen as resulting from a system of differences. Accordingly, discourse/text, special case of speech, lies in between language and speech. Unlike classical structuralism, however, it is no mere reflection of the absolute world of language, since such a viewpoint has here been abandoned. The value of the structural elements of discourse/text is determined by their function in the totality, and the generation of discourse/text is not an automatic realization of the possibilities of language as it is thought of in structuralism, but a *translation (coding)*.

Perceiving similarities and analogies between these two theories, and the translation of one theory’s lexicon into that of the other is no mere terminological glass bead game, however. Seeing functional similarities between the primary concepts that form the theories allows these theories to engage in mutually complementary dialogue. The following are some of the more important conclusions that were reached in this dissertation:

1. The contribution of semiotics of culture to the theory of hegemony is to provide better methods in the form of different ways of translating and coding. Within the Essex school, discussions on the constitution of discourse are limited only to the general explication of the logic of equivalence and difference within processes of signification. Semiotics of culture supplements this with a number of other relationships of equivalence that are

- relevant for the generation of discourse/text as a significant and delineated totality.
2. Mapping different relationships of equivalence form the basis for a typology of various hegemonic signification processes.
  3. Semiotics of culture avoids introducing psychoanalysis as a final arbiter of its theories and as a “guarantee of truth”, since it remains entirely on the level of signifiers and treats communication as a pre-existing given. Thus semiotics of culture necessarily avoids falling into speculative metaphysics that accompanies any attempt to seek foundational reasons to when and why did (human) communication originate and why does it still function. Nevertheless, the logic of signification of Laclau’s theory of hegemony does not lose its scientific value by letting go of psychoanalysis.
  4. The theory of hegemony brings semiotics of culture into the field of power relations and politics, something which has unjustifiably gone unstudied within this field up until now. This may be due to the subject-matter (art, literature, etc.) on the basis of which the ideas of the semiotics of culture were initially developed.
  5. The theory of hegemony contributes theoretically the question of naming.
  6. By combining semiotics of culture with the theory of hegemony, it is possible to study the constitution of various hegemonic practices of signification in more specific domains, e.g. to analyse only visual discourse (paper IV) and to distinguish different hegemonic means of coding the process of signification.

## **7.2. Problems and possible future developments**

There are plans for developing the component papers of this dissertation into a full-length monograph (co-authored by Peeter Selg), where the ideas presented here are further developed and placed into a wider theoretical context. The present work intersects disciplinarily with semiotics, discourse analysis, but more widely with social and political theories, necessitating a closer dialogue with these disciplines.

My own contribution in this field would be to undermine the positivist attitude still prevalent in social theories today. Positivism as applied to social sciences searches lawlike (probable) explanations in terms of causes and effects. It is clear that this sort of a quantitative method, founded on empirical and statistical measurement of reality, allows for precise mapping and description of many social processes. But by disregarding history and tradition, it addresses socio-political “problems” in light of a technologic-instrumental paradigm and presumes that for every problem there is a “solution” (Bledstein 1976: 34). Apparently, such an approach can sustain itself only on a couple of fundamental premises: 1) rigid causes and effects are the only explanatory relationship between phenomena; 2) there are unambiguously definable phenomena between which this relationship can hold; 3) these phenomena, these facts are something

permanent and stable; 4) such an explanatory framework alone is deemed sufficient for understanding social processes. All of these points consider the influence of language, values, memory, or more generally all cultural factors as irrelevant for studying these processes. It is for these reasons that questions such as: what is meaning? How does it arise in communication? What are its consequences for the general constitution of society? etc. are even today – with few exceptions – undertheorized in the context of social theories.

Once we proceed from the framework presented in here, however, we must approach facts as meaningful units from an entirely different perspective. It does not suffice to say that every fact is always loaded with theory – this would only touch upon the relationship between scientific meta-language and object-language. The watershed is more fundamental – no meaning can ever become completely stabilised due to its bilingual constitution.

My further academic vision would be to integrate Lotman's and Laclau's characteristics of culture and discourse, such as asymmetry and entropy; explosion; the unsolvable tension between organization and non-organization, regularity and non-regularity; antagonism, etc., into a wider social sciences paradigm. By and large, for the social sciences these characteristics describe random and peripheral events and phenomena that are not thought of as substantial parts of social structure. For Lotman and Laclau, however, it is precisely these characteristics that are the primary conditions for cultural development and dynamics. Brought over to social sciences, they would necessitate the rethinking of norm and deviation from the norm; they would also begin to undermine social determinism as a central category in social sciences. In social theoretical thought, they would better highlight political, cultural and other interest group conflicts and antagonisms that play a decisive role in the meaningful constitution of society. This has to do with the relations between the present work and the more general theoretical background.

Proceeding from the framework that has been outlined here, research in the near future could proceed towards more concrete development of the methods of analysis. The further course of empirical research could be thematized as follows:

1) What is the relationship between hegemonic practices of signification and political regimes? For example, how do the totalitarian, authoritarian and democratic hegemonic logic of signification differ? In paper III, this preliminary distinction has been formulated, but it would require a more detailed framework. In the papers that comprise this dissertation, I have for the most part analysed phenomena that are part of the discourse of either totalitarian societies or transition periods, and this makes it possible to claim that in such societies there is a tendency in public communicative space towards the prevalence continuous/equivalent hegemonic practices of signification. Although it may appear that the opposing democratic practice ought to be constituted by a discrete coding system, where the demands of each interest group are perceived separately in their differences from other similar groups and demands, and that these interests should be rationally transparent and communicable towards an

unanimous consensus in the habermasian sense, this nevertheless cannot be taken at face value and as deducible simply from the idea of democracy itself. Such a presumption would hinder any analysis of signification practices in actual social processes. Hegemonic practices of signification should precisely be perceived as lacking any connotations that are born by our current concepts, such as democracy, totalitarianism, authoritarianism, etc. Failing which we will confuse the normative and the epistemological level when establishing the purposes of our research and the choice of method.

2) A second line of further research could focus on that inevitable opposing number of the construction of the identity of “we” – the construction of “the other”. According to semiotics of culture, there is a corresponding “chaos” type for every type of culture, which is not primordial, uniform and always equal to itself, but represents equally active creativity of human beings, i.e. to each historically present type of culture there corresponds a unique type of non-culture (Kultuurisemiootika teesid 1973). Thus the following questions are of interest: a) how is the image of the enemy constructed in politics, and b) what is the logic of signification that characterises exclusion as legitimating pre-existing discourse.

There is more material for further analysis to be found in the current history of Estonia, with which to develop this conceptual framework further and to make it empirically more “waterproof”, than was recounted in the component papers. Contemporary Estonian history provides excellent material for analysis of the transformation of totalitarian power into an authoritarian one (starting from the Khrushchev thaw of the late 1950s), until the final collapse of the Soviet regime in the late 1980s. It was not just the violent suppression of alternative counter-discourses by the Soviet repressive and ideological state apparatuses that ceased, but socio-cultural value judgments were also replaced – the liberal ideology with its cult of the individual became opposed to collectivist ideology more in accordance with Soviet ideology. The times that followed the Singing revolution as a period of transition would allow one to analyse the rise and crystallization of democratic institutions, which should hypothetically be reflected in the transformation of the logic of signification processes.

In conclusion, the primary goals would be: 1) to integrate the present approach to the empirical social sciences paradigm, and 2) to study public communication more generally and to provide a typology of political forms of communication, based on the distinction between discrete and continuous coding strategies, and to study their rhetorical expressions.

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## SUMMARY IN ESTONIAN

### Semiootilise hegemooniateooria suunas

Käesolev dissertatsioon koosneb sissejuhatavast peatükist ja viiest artiklist (3 on publiceeritud, kaks on aktsepteeritud ja ilmuvad lähima aasta jooksul, vt ilmumisandmeid). Lisatud artiklid moodustavad põhiosa teadustööst, mida olen teinud doktoriõppe käigus aastatel 2005–2009. Need keskenduvad peamiselt poliitilise semiootika kui spetsiifilise teadusdistsipliini välja töötamisele, mis annaks uurijale paremad vahendid poliitika valdkonna analüüsimiseks. Selle raames osutus vajalikuks traditsiooniliselt poliitilist diskursust määratlevate võtmemõistete – võimusuhe, identiteet, valik jne – ümbermõtestamine semiootilisest vaatevinklist ja täiendamine semiootikast pärit mõistetega. Teoreetilises plaanis püüdsin antud ülesandele läheneda ennekõike Tartu-Moskva kultuuri-semiootika ja Essexi koolkonna hegemooniateooria vaatepunktist.

Käsitledes semiootikat ja poliitikateadust laiemalt sotsiaalteaduslikku paradigmasse kuuluvatena, näeksin dissertatsiooni ühe kaugema eesmärgina tänaseni veel sotsiaalteooriates laialt levinud positivistliku arusaama õõnestamist. Posivistlik lähenemine rakendatuna sotsiaalteadustele otsib seaduspäraseid (tõenäolisi) seletusi põhjus-tagajärje mõistetes. On selge, et niisugune, paljuski empiirilisel ja statistiliselt mõõdetavale reaalsuse käsitlusele ülesehitatud kvantitatiivne meetod lubab paljusid ühiskonna protsesse üpris täpselt kaardistada ja kirjeldada. Eirates ajalugu ja traditsiooni, käsitleb ta sotsiaalpoliitilisi “probleeme” tehnilis-instrumentaalse paradigma valguses ja eeldab et igale probleemile on ka “lahendus” (Bledstein 1976: 34). Kuid tundub, et niisugune lähenemine saab ise püsida paaril-kolmel fundamentaalsel eeldusel: 1) jäik põhjus-tagajärg on ainuke seletav suhe nähtuste vahel; 2) on olemas üheselt määratletud nähtused, faktid, millede vahel see suhe saaks toimida; 3) need nähtused, faktid on midagi püsivat ja stabiilset; 4) niisugune seletuskeem arvatakse olevat piisav mõistmaks ühiskonnas toimuvaid protsesse. Need loetletud eeldused peavad ebaoluliseks keele, väärtuste, mälu ehk üldisemalt kultuuriliste tegurite mõju nende protsesside uurimisel. Seetõttu on küsimused, nagu: mis on tähendus?; kuidas see tekib kommunikatsioonis?; mis on selle tagajärg ühiskonna üldises konstitutsioonis? jne., senini – väljaarvatud mõni üksik erand – sotsiaalteooriate kontekstis alateoretiseeritud. Kui lähtume siin töös esitatud raamistikust, siis peame näiteks fakte kui tähenduslikule ühikule lähenema hoopis teistsugusest vaatenurgast. Ei piisa, kui öelda, et iga fakt on alati teooriast koormatud – see puudutaks peamiselt teadusliku metakeele ja objektkeele suhet. Veelahe on siin fundamentaalsem – ükski tähendus ei saagi lõplikult stabiliseeruda oma (minimaalselt) kakskeelse konstitutsiooni tõttu.

Käesolevas dissertatsioonis (ja ka oma edasistes akadeemilistes uurimistes) olen püüdnud integreerida Lotmani ja Laclau kultuuri ja diskursusekarakteristikuid nagu asümmeetria ja entroopia; plahvatus; ületamatu pinge organiseerituse ja mitte-organiseerituse, regulaarsuste ja ebaregulaarsuste vahel; anta-

gonism jne laiemasse sotsiaalteaduste paradigmasse. Enamasti iseloomustatakse sotsiaalteadustes äsjanimetatud tunnustega juhuslikke ja perifeerseid sündmusi ning nähtusi, mis sotsiaalsesse struktuuri olemuslikult ei kuulu. Lotmanil ja Laclaul on need aga justnimelt kultuuri enese konstitutsioonis – on kultuurilise arengu ja dünaamika esmasteks tingimusteks. Sotsiaalteadustesse ülekantuna vajaks sellisel juhul uues valguses ümbermõtestamist normi ja normist hälbimise vahet. Samuti eeldab see sotsiaalse determinismi kui sotsiaalteaduste keskse kategooria õõnestamist ehk kõige selle küsitavaks seadmist, mida ülal sai silmas peetud sotsiaalteaduste positivistliku lähenemise all. Siis saavad sotsiaalteoreetilises mõtlemises enam kaardile toodud ka poliitilised, kultuurilised ja muud huvide konfliktid ja antagonismid, mis etendavad otsustavat rolli ühiskonna tähenduslikus konstitutsioonis.

Peamise analüüsimaterjalina olen oma uurimustöös kasutatud Eesti lähiajalugu, peamiselt Nõukogude perioodil ja Eesti taasiseseisvumise eelsel ja järgsel ajal ühiskonna identiteeti kujundanud fenomene käsitledes, kuid tehes selgitavaid vahepeikeid ka varasemas perioodi (nt. Laulupidude traditsiooni analüüsimisel artiklis III). See on kantud kahest üksteist täiendavast soovist: esiteks, reflekteerivalt vaadata neid protsesse, mis peaksid olema siinkirjutaja arvates mõju avaldanud ka käimasolevatele suundumustele Eesti ühiskondlikus elus; teiseks, pakub eesti lähiajalugu sedavõrd huvitavat ja kontrastset, paraku ka traagilist materjali, mis peaks olema kindlasti huvipakkuvad ka laiemale publikule võõrsil. Olen nendest eeldustest lähtunud juba oma Tartu Ülikooli studiumi käigus alates 1998 aastast. Nii olen bakalaureusetöös (2002) käsitlenud 1940 aastal toimunud ideoloogilist ja režiimilist võimuvahetust pragmaatilisest ja mõjutuspühholoogilisest aspektist, magistrیتöös (2005) analüüsin, kuidas konstrueeriti avalikus kommunikatsiooniruumis “meie” ehk rahva kategooria 1940–1953. aastatel ehk perioodil, mil lühikese aja jooksul okupeeris Eestit kaks üksteisele ideoloogiliselt vastanduvat totalitaarset okupatsioonirežiimi – stalinistlik Venemaa ja hitlerlik Saksamaa.

Enne kui kirjeldan lühidalt, milline on käesoleva töö struktuur, üks täpsustav märkus analüüsi objekti ja analüüsi materjali kohta. Töö eesmärk, nagu juba öeldud, on ennekõike teoreetiline, kus erinevate kultuurisemiootiliste ja hegemooniateoreetiliste mõistetevaheliste analoogiate välja toomisega, nende funktsionaalse kõrvutamise kaudu, tahetakse luua ühtne kontseptuaalne raamistik, mis arvestaks mõlema lähenemise positiivsete panustega ning samas osutaks ka teoreetilistele puudujääkidele, mis selle integreerumise on üldse vajalikud teinud. Teisalt olen olnud alati seda meelt, et teoreetilised kontseptsioonid ei tohi jääda vaikiollu paberile, vaid et need leiaksid ka reaalsel rakedust empiirilise materjali analüüsid. Sestap on seda integreerivat tegevust toetatud erinevate fenomenide analüüsides, mis neid tulemusi peaks kinnitama. Kuid nagu eesmärgist võib arvata, on rõhuasetus siiski ennekõike teoreetilise raamistiku loomisel, millega saaks edaspidi konkreetsemaid ja mahukamaid analüüse ette võtta.

Käesoleva dissertatsiooni 5 komponentartiklit on reastatud teema arengu enda loogikast lähtuvalt ning peegeldavad probleemipüstitusest üleminekut

võimalikele lahendustele. Nii visandatakse I artiklis võimusuhete analüüsi (tõsi, veel suhteliselt implitsiitsel kujul) probleemsituatsioon. Ennekõike piirduakse siin ühe alternatiivse lähenemise rakendamisega poliitiliste võimusuhete uurimisel, uurides võimusuhete väljendumist poliitilistes kõnedes kasutatud asendade (deiktikute) analüüsimise kaudu. Järgnevad artiklid (II, III, IV ja V) keskenduvad aga juba nimetatud semiootilise hegemooniateooria raamistiku välja töötamisele ja edasiarendustele. Artiklites II ja III (kaasautor Peeter Selg) visandatakse üksikasjalikult selle teoreetilise lähenemise mudel, kasutades analüüsimaterjalina Pronksiöö ja Laulva revolutsiooni diskursust. Artiklis IV püütakse eelnevates artiklites loodud teoreetilisest baasist lähtudes eristada mõningaid võimu visualiseerimise tähistamispraktikaid, uurides milliste hegemooniliste tähistamisstrateegiatega kaudu loodi Stalini-ajastu avalikus pilditootmisrežiimis fotodel “rahvas”. Siin on lisaks eelpool nimetatud lähenemistele kasutatud veel Roland Barthes’i fotograafiaalaseid semiootilisi ja visuaalretoorika seisukohti. Artiklis V aga püüan nõukogude totalitaarsele fenomeni seletada ülalnimetatud artiklites loodud raamistikust. Kõik need viis artiklid saavad sissejuhatavas osas (alapeatükk 5) ka lühidalt kirjeldatud. Artiklid on esitatud dissertatsioonis inglise keelsetena ja on läbinud pime-eelretsenseeringu. Kuigi üks nendest (artikkel IV) on avaldamiseks vastu võetud eesti keelses ajakirjas *Kunstiteaduslikke uurimusi*, on autor dissertatsiooni lisanud artikli inglise keelse versiooni. See on põhjendatav dissetratsiooni ükskeelsuse taotlusega, mis annaks võimaluse kasutada eesti keelt mitte oskavat oponenti.

Dissertatsiooni kuuluvad viis artiklit käsitlevad suhteliselt kompaktsed objektid, mistõttu minu sissejuhatav peatükk ehk nende artiklite nõ. katusartikkel, on ennekõike oma sisus motiveeritud dissertatsiooni moodustavate artiklite puudujääkidest. Viimane on omakorda enamjaolt põhjustatud avaldatud artiklite auditoriumi eeldavatest ootustest ja artiklite mahulistest piirangutest, mis ei lubanud kõike, mis üldise tausta mõistmiseks vajalik oleks olnud, artiklitesse sisse kirjutada. Sissejuhatuse koosneb ise 7 erinevast alapeatükist. Käesoleva töö peamisteks teoreetilisteks mõisteteks on võim, diskursus ja tekst. Sissejuhatuse teises osas püüan täpsustada seisukohta, kuidas antud töö võimu kontseptualiseeritakse. Seejärel annan lühikese ülevaate antud töö kontekstis relevantse teksti ja diskursuse uurimise traditsiooni ja nende mõistetega kaasnenud problemaatikasse ning püüan näidata mõlema traditsiooni teoreetilisi piire (osa 3 ja 4), millelt viljakat edasi mõtlemist võimaldavad siinkirjutaja arvates Essexi koolkonna kontseptsioon hegemoonilisest tühjast tähistajast ja TMK teksti (semiosfääri) käsitus (osa 5). Viienda osa lõpus püüan lühidalt positsioneerida kultuurisemiootika ja hegemooniateooria omavahelise interdistsiplinaarse suhte poliitilise semiootika vaatevinklist lähtudes. Kuuendas osas teen lühikesed kokkuvõtted dissertatsiooni kuuluvatest komponentartiklitest. Sissejuhatava peatüki lõpetavad kokkuvõtvad järeldused ja ennekõike teatud visand eelseisvaks tööks (7 osa), mis küll siin artiklites pole piisavalt kajastust leidnud, kuid mille vajalikkuses ei kahtle autor mitte.

Loodetavasti suutsin artiklites veenvalt näidata, et Essexi koolkonna hegemooniateooria ja Tartu-Moskva kultuurisemiootika interdistsiplinaarne

käsitlus võimaldab komplekssemalt uurida võimusuhteid. Mõlema lähenemise alglatteid võib leida Saussure'i keeleteoorias, kus tähendust vaadeldakse pelgalt erinevuste süsteemi tagajärjena. Diskursus/tekst kuulub selle järgi keele ja kõne vahepeale kui kõne erijuht. Erinevalt klassikalisest strukturalismist ei ole see lihtne peegeldus keele absoluutsest maailmast, sest sellisest eeldusest on siin loobutud. Diskursuse/teksti struktuuri elementide väärtuse määrab ära nende funktsioon tervikus ja diskursuse/teksti genereerimine pole antud keelevõimaluste automaatne realiseerimine nagu strukturalismis, vaid *tõlge (kodeerimine)*.

Seejuures pole nende kahe teoriavaheliste sarnasuste ja analoogiate nägemine ja ühe teooria sõnavara tõlkimine teise teooria keelde pelk terminitevaheline klaaspärlimäng. Peamiste teooriat moodustavate mõistete vahel funktsionaalsete sarnasuste nägemine võimaldab astuda neil teooriatel omavahel üksteist täiendavasse dialoogi. Järgnevalt loetlengi mõned olulisemad järeldused, milleni dissertatsioonis jõuti:

1. Kultuurisemiootika panus hegemooniateooriale oleks erinevate tõlke ehk kodeerimisviiside näol parema metodoloogia võimaldamine. Essexi koolkonnas on piirdutud diskursuse konstitutsioonist rääkides üksnes samaväärsus(ekvivalentsus)loogika ja erinevusloogika üldise toimimise esitamisega tähistamisprotsessides. Kultuurisemiootika lisab siia rea teisi ekvivalentsusuhteid, mis on diskursuse/teksti kui tähendusliku ja piiritletud terviku moodustamisel relevantset.
2. Erinevate ekvivalentsussuhete kaardistamine on aluseks erinevate hegemooniliste tähistamisprotsesside tüpoloogiale.
3. Kultuurisemiootika väldib psühhoanalüüsi sissetoomist oma teooria lõppinstantsiks ja "tõegarandiks", kuna jääb üksnes tähistajate tasandile ja võtab kommunikatsiooni kui olemasolevat antust. Sellega väldib kultuurisemiootika paratamatult spekulatiivsesse metafüüsikasse kaldumist, mis kaasneb, kui otsitakse algpõhjusti kuna ja miks (inim)kommunikatsioon ja ühes sellega tähendus tekkis ning miks see ikkagi veel toimib. Seejuures ei kaota Laclau hegemooniateooria tähistamisprotsessi loogika psühhoanalüüsist loobumisel oma teadusliku väärtust.
4. Hegemooniateooria toob kultuurisemiootika võimusuhte ja poliitika uurimise väljale, kus ta varem õigustamatult on tähelepanuta jäänud. Viimane asjaolu võib olla tingitud materjalist (kunst, kirjandus jne), mille peal kultuurisemiootilised ideed on välja arendatud.
5. Hegemooniateooria lisab teoreetilise panuse nimetamise problemaatikale.
6. Ühendades kultuurisemiootika hegemooniateooriaga, võimaldab see uurida erinevate hegemooniliste tähistuspraktikate konstitutsiooni spetsiifilisemate objektvaldkondade peal, nt analüüsida üksnes visuaalset diskursust (artikkel IV) ja eristada seal tähistusprotsessi erinevad hegemoonilised kodeerimisviisid.

Alljärgnevalt refereerin lühidalt dissertatsiooni komponentartiklite sisu ja tulemusi.

## Artikkel I

Ventsel, Andreas (2007). The construction of the 'we'- category: Political rhetoric in Soviet Estonia from June 1940 to July 1941 [‘Meie’- kategooria konstrueerimine Nõukogude Eesti poliitilises retoorikas juunist 1940.a. – juuli 1941. A. ]. *Sign System Studies* 35. ½, 249–267

Eesti Vabariigi okupeerimine Nõukogude Liidu poolt 1940. aasta juunis mõjus inimestele šokina. Endised ühiskonda konstrueerivad ja inimeste mõttemaailma jaoks olulised tähendused muudeti miinismärgiliseks ja asendati nõukogude ideoloogilise maailmapildiga. Käesolev artikkel analüüsiski, kuidas 1940. aastal aset leidnud sündmusi toetav ideoloogia leidis väljenduse uute võimumeeste kõnedes. Huviväärseks muutis analüüsi asjaolu, et poliitilise reaalsuse ideoloogiline konstrueerimine on ühtlasi üheks inimese identiteeti määratlevaks faktoriks. Analüüsi materjaliks oli tollaste suurimate päevalehtede *Päevalehe* 1938., 1939. ja 1940. aastakäigu ning 1940.–1941. aastal ilmunud *Rahva Hääle* numbrid. Põhilise osa allikatest moodustasid ajakirjanduses ilmunud poliitikute sõnavõttud ja päevalehtede juhtkirjad. Ajakirjanduse valimine empiirilise uurimise objektiks oli põhjendatav mitmeti: ajakirjanduses (eriti päevasündmusi kajastavates väljaannetes) peegelduvad sootsiumi maailmapilt, ideoloogia ja väärtusorientatsioonid (Lauk, Maimik 1998 : 80).

Käesoleva uurimuse konkreetseks objektiks oli valitud *meie*-kategooria konstrueerimine poliitilises diskursuses. Semantiliselt paralleelselt oli siinse artikli raames kasutusel poliitilises retoorikas käibivad võtmesõnad nagu *rahva tahe*, *rahvas* jne, ehk see, kelle nimel poliitikas räägitakse. “Diskursuse” mõiste, nagu seda on arendanud mõned “kaasaegsed lähenemised poliitilisele analüüsile, evib kaugeid juuri nn moodsa filosoofia transtsendentaalses pöördes – see tähendab, analüüsitüübis, mille põhitähelepanu pole suunatud mitte *faktidele*, vaid nende *võimalikkuse tingimustele*” (Laclau 1993: 431). Üks neid võimalikkuse tingimusi, mille kaudu võimu suhe konstrueerub, on deiktiku kasutamine. Siin töös lähtuti ennekõike Emile Benveniste ja Karl Bühleri deiktikute käsitlustest.

Peamised järeldused:

1. Esimest nõukogude võimu aega (1940–1941) Eestis võib jagada kaheks perioodiks. Esimest perioodi võiks tinglikult dateerida 21 juunist kuni “juulivalimisteni” 1940 aastal. Poliitilises retoorikas üritati luua ühtne monoliitne subjekt. Ühtsust võimu ja rahva vahel kirjeldati kõnedes aktiivsuse, loovuse ja vabaduse kategooriates.
2. Alates Eesti Nõukogude Vabariigi “vastuvõtmisest” Nõukogude Liitu 6. augustil 1940. aastal toimus võimudepoolses “meie” enesekirjelduses oluline nihe. Kohalik “rahvas” oli taandatud passiivse vastuvõtja rolli, kus ta allutati marksistlik-leninlik ideoloogiale, Stalin ja tema Partei diktaadile ja tahtele. Selleks kasutati erinevaid retoorilisi vahendeid (deiktikute kasutamine, tegusõnade passiivsed vormid jne).
3. Nõukogude ideoloogia sarnaneb kultuuritüübiga (kui käsitleme ideoloogiat siin kontekstis kultuuri sünonüümina), mida Lotman iseloomustab kui

tekstide kogumikku ja mis vastandub kultuuritüübile, mis tekstikogumit loob (Lotman, Uspenski 1994: 245). Kultuuri sisu on kultuuri enesemõistmise seisukohast selles kultuuritüübis etteantud, see koosneb normeeritud «õigete» tekstide summast: nõukogude ideoloogias olid nendeks marksism-leninismi klassikute teosed, Stalini-ajastul aga eelkõige Stalini enda teosed. Sellises kultuuritüübis on kõne subjektidel kui lausungis tegelikkuse (sisu) loojal suhteline väärtus. Kõik uus on tegelikult etteennustatav ja teadjatele – tõelistele subjektidele (Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin) – teada.

## Artikkel II

Ventsel, Andreas; Selg, Peeter (2008). Towards a semiotic theory of hegemony: Naming as hegemonic operation in Lotman and Laclau [Semiootilise hegemooniateooria suunas: nimetamine kui hegemooniline operatsioon Lotmanil ja Laclaul]. *Sign System Studies* 36.1, 167–183

Sotsiaalteadlaste hulgas on termin „poliitiline semiootika” viimastel aastatel üha enam kõlanud. Tõsi, enamjaolt piirdub see poliitilises diskursuses ringlevate märkide, sümbolite, kujundite kirjeldamisega, esitamata küsimust, kas semiootikal oleks midagi panustada ka poliitiliste protsesside konstrueerimise loogika enese uurimisse. Alljärgnev artikkel oli poliitilise semiootika kui distsipliini suunas tehtud tagasihoidlik samm, mis lähtus kaasaja ühe tunnustatuma poliitikateoreetiku Ernesto Laclau hegemooniateooriast ja Juri Lotmani kultuurisemiootilistest ideedest. Hoolimata metakeelte terminoloogilisest erinevusest, näeme nende autorite käsitlustes olulisi sisulisi ja funktsionaalseid lõikumispunkte – piiri mõiste, antagonism, nimetamine jne. Pealegi kuuluvad mõlemad, loomulikult teatud reservatsioonidega, saussure'likku traditsiooni.

Poliitilise teooria fundamentaalne küsimus on, kuidas kontseptualiseerida poliitilist võimu. Siinne lähenemine lähtub traditsioonist, mis on kujunenud läbi Carl Schmitti „poliitilisuse” mõiste, Antonio Gramsci hegemooniateooria ja Michel Foucault' „diskursuse” ja „võimu” käsitluse.

Meie arusaamise kohaselt esindab Ernesto Laclau üht kõige paljulubavamat perspektiivi selles teoreetilises traditsioonis, iseäranis oma kontseptsiooniga „tühjast tähistajast”, kui hegemoonse suhte määratlemise kesksest kategooriast. Laclau ontoloogiline taust on, nagu öeldud, saussure'lik: viimase üks kesksemaid teese on, et mis tahes tähistussüsteem (diskursus) on *erinevuste* süsteem. Laclau järgi tuleks hegemooniat mõtestada üksnes diskursuse pinnal: hegemoonne suhe pole midagi muud kui tähenduste liigendus. See liigendus eeldab, et mingi partikulaarne erinevus kaotab oma partikulaarsuse ning saab tähistamissüsteemi kui terviku universaalseks kehastajaks, pakkudes süsteemile vältimatult vajalikku suletust ja terviklikkust. See partikulaarne tähistaja – Laclau terminoloogias „tühi tähistaja”, – omandab sel viisil tähistamissüsteemis ehk diskursuses domineeriva positsiooni, allutades enesele rohkemal või vähemal määral kõik muud diskursuse liikmed, lastes neil paista *samaväärsetena* ning õõnestades nende omavahelist erinevust. Paradoksaalsel moel

saavutatakse sellise õõnestamise kaudu teatud ühtsus või läbipaistvus (süsteemsus). Kuid see ühtsus ei tulene mingisugusest metafüüsilisest alusest, vaid on *nimetamise* efekt. Nagu Laclau osutab oma hilisemates töödes, *nimi* saab aluseks asjale, st diskursusele. Ning siin kerkib üles küsimus: mis on need *jõud* nende toimingute taga, mis võimaldavad nimetamisel olla diskursuse aluseks. Laclau ammutab oma vastuse psühhoanalüüsist, eriti selle lacanlikust varian-dist. Käesolev artikkel püüdis seda asendada Lotmani kultuurisemiootikast pärit teksti kakskeelsuse ja tõlke (siirde) kontseptsiooniga, mis autorite arvates võib avada mõlema lähenemise jaoks uusi ja viljakaid perspektiive.

Lotmani järgi on mis tahes tähendustekke elementaartingimuseks kakskeelne, s.o diskreetne ja kontinuaalne kodeerimine. Seejuures on need keeled vastastikku täielikult tõlkimatud. Ennekõike on võimatus täpselt tõlkida tekste diskreetsetest keeltest mittediskreetsetesse-kontinuaalsetesse ja tagasi tingitud nende põhimõtteliselt erinevast ehitusest: diskreetsetes keelelistes süsteemides on tekst märgi suhtes sekundaarne, s.t jaguneb selgelt märkideks. Ei ole raske eristada märki kui teatud algset elementaarset ühikut. Märk seostub siin märgiga ning seda tüüpi tekste iseloomustavad järjestused, kausaalsed, kronoloogilised ja loogilised seosed, mis on iseloomulikud jutustavatele tekstidele ja eksperimentaalteadustele. Kontinuaalsetes keeltes on esmane tekst, mis ei lagune märkideks, vaid on ise märk. Tekib küsimus: kuidas on sellises vastandlikus, kuid paratamatus struktuuris mingi tervikliku tähenduse tekkimine üldse võimalik? Lotmani järgi kätkeb selline minimaalne struktuur ka kolmandat osist: tinglike metafoorsete ekvivalentsuste plokki, mis võimaldab tõlkeoperatsioone tõlkimatuse tingimustes. Meenutagem, et samas funktsioonis asub Laclau „tühi tähistaja” – ta koondab tähistajate erinevused – samaväärsusahelasse. Kasutades Lotmani terminoloogiat: poliitilises diskursuses-tekstis prevaleerib mitte-diskreetne tõlkimisstrateegia, s.t diskreetset ja üksteisest selgesti eristuvad märgid tõlgitakse mitte-diskreetseks tervikuks. See samastamise strateegia laseb reaalse maailma erinevates nähtustes näha *Ühe* nähtuse märke ja ühe klassi objektide mitmekesisuses *Ühtset Objekti*.

Samastamise strateegiline funktsioon jääb aga ebaselgeks, kuni on vastamata, mille läbi saab teoks see tähendusliku diskursuse sulgemine ehk siis metafoorne tõlge. See toiminguaht on nimetamine. Kuigi oma loomult on nimi diskreetne, funktsioneerib metafoorne nimetamine kogu tähendusliku terviku nimena ning õigem oleks öelda, et alles loob selle kui tähendusliku terviku. Poliitilises diskursuses sarnaneb see paradoksaalsel kombel mütoloogilise nimetamisega, mis kasvab välja asja ja nime eristamatusest. Laclau sõnul poleks siin tegemist mitte nime ja objekti ekvivalentsusega, vaid identsusega. Toome eelneva kinnituseks näite 2007. aasta aprillisündmustest Tallinnas. Prevaleeriv (hegemoonne) nimi nendele sündmustele on „pronksiöö” (mis iseenesest on absurdne, kuna puudub objekt). Ometigi koondab see nimi samaväärsusahelasse ehk tähenduslikku tervikusse algupäraselt täiesti diskreetset (eraldi seisvad) sündmused: lisaks märulile veel ka integratsiooni-temaatika, Venemaa sisepoliitika, ajaloomälust lisaks 1940. aasta juunisündmused ning Interrinde rünnaku Toompeale 1991. aasta kevadel jne. Nad kõik

moodustavad *Ühe* liigendatud tervikliku diskursuse-teksti. Kui nüüd nimetada neid aprilliööde sündmusi näiteks „Tallinna Kevadeks” või „aprilli rahvarahustusteks”, saaksime hoopis teistsugustest hinnangutest ja sündmustest moodustunud samaväärsusahela.

Kokkuvõttes võime teha esialgsed järeldused:

1. hegemoonse poliitilise diskursuse konstrueerimises valitseb kontinuaalne tähistamisstrateegia.
2. Peamine konstitutiivne toiming on siin nimetamine.
3. Poliitiline võitlus käib nende nimede tähenduste loomise eest.
4. Nimetamise tagaasetseva psühhoanalüütilise *affekti* mõiste võime teoreetilise raamistikuga vastuollu sattumata asendada Lotmani tõlkimise kontseptsiooniga.

### **Artikkel III**

Selg, Peeter; Ventsel, Andreas (2009). An outline for a semiotic theory of hegemony [Visandusi semiootilisele hegemooniateooriale]. *Semiotica*, xx–xx. [ilmumas]

Käesolev artikkel oli katse edasi arendada dialoogi kahe teoreetilise käsitluse vahel – need on nüüdisaegse poliitilise teooria ühe juhtfiguuri Ernesto Laclau hegemooniateooria ning Juri Lotmani kultuurisemiootiline lähenemine – mille kaugem eesmärk oleks välja töötada kontseptuaalsed vahendid, hõlmamaks selgemini sotsiaalse reaalsuse ja võimu vahekordi. Siinses artiklis keskendutakse erinevatele strateegiatele poliitilise reaalsuse konstrueerimisel. Me pakume välja võimaluse asendada mõned Laclau peamised teoreetilised kategooriad Lotmani kultuurisemiootika kategooriatega, eriti tema tõlke ehk ümberkodeerimise mõistega. Eelmises artiklis näitasime võimalikke viljakaid analoogiaid nimetamise mõistega ja esitasime põgusalt kontinuaalse/diskreetse kodeerimise ja samaväärsusloogika/erinevusloogika funktsionaalsetele kokkulangevustele nende autorite teooriates. Käesolev artikkel liigub siit edasi ja toob süvendatult esile teised teoreetilised sarnasused nende kahe lähenemise vahel: analüüsivalt kõrvutatakse mõlema autori piiri käsitlust, mis sulgeb diskursuse või teksti (semiosfääri) mõtteliseks tähenduslikuks tervikuks, välistavate piiride anatagonismi jne.

Laclau lähenemise puudustena oleme maininud juba psühhoanalüütilise käsitluse sissetoomist. Teiseks nõrkuseks on konkreetsete analüüsivahendite puudumine ja diskursusevälise alateoretiseeritus, mis lubab tal väita, et diskursuse aluseks olev nimi on puhas sattumuslikkus. Täiendades Laclau lähenemist Lotmani kultuurisemiootikast pärit erinevate tõlkestrateegiatega võimaldas see paremini uurida empiirilisel sotsiaalse reaalsuse konstrueerimist. Näiteks oli valitud *Laulva revolutsiooni* diskursus.

Peamised järeldused:

1. *Laulev revolutsioon* diskursuse nimena ei ole puhas sattumuslikkus.
2. Selle nime võime koondada diskursus ühtsusse ja kinnitada rahva teadvuses kui selle totaalsuse nimi evib teatud kultuurisemiootilisi seletusi.
3. Nende põhjusi saab analüüsida erinevate tõlkestrateegiatega – sisemine ümberkodeering, väline ümberkodeering, mitmene väline ümberkodeering jne – kaudu.
4. Poliitilisus on otsustaval moel kultuuri osa ja ei asetse kuidagi sellest isoleerituna.

#### **Artikkel IV**

Ventsel, Andreas (2009). Hegemooniline tähistamisprotsess fotograafias. Kunstiteaduslikke uurimusi. XX–XX

Käesolev artikkel tegeles küsimustega, mida võib lühidalt sõnastada järgnevalt: 1) kuidas visualiseerida võimu? ja 2) kas semiootikal oleks midagi pakkuda võimu visualiseerimisprotsesside uurimisele? Üks neid vahendeid, mille kaudu ühiskonnas võimusuhet kehtestatakse ja taastoodetakse, on fotod

Artikli esimeses osas visandatakse lühidalt poliitika semiootika teoreetiline raamistik, mis tugineb peamiselt Lotmani ja Laclau ideedele. Ning seejärel tematiseeritakse küsimus: kuidas hegemooniline tähistamisprotsess võiks väljenduda fotodel. Analüüsi objektiks oli valitud “rahva” kui homogeense mõttelise terviku kujutamise tüpoloogiate eristus. Näite materjalina kasutati Stalini-aegses Nõukogude Eesti ajakirjanduses (päevalehed ja ajakirjad) avaldatud fotosid. Töö teises osas püüdsin visandatud teoreetilist baasi täiendada teiste spetsiaalselt visuaalsetele representatsioonidele analüüsidele keskendunud teoreetiliste seisukohtadega (Barthes'i punctum, visuaalretoorika *iconic photograph* jne).

Peamised järeldused:

1. Stalini-ajastu avalikus kommunikatsiooniruumis (fotod ajalehtedes) prevaleerisid teatud hegemoonilised kodeerimisstrateegiad, mis määrasid kuidas fotodel kujutada „rahvast“.
2. Nendeks olid üheltpoolt fotod, mis olid avalikus ruumis saanud niiõelda ikooni staatuse; teisalt aga nende samade „ikooniliste“ fotode enda sisemised konstrueerimise printsiibid, milles sai eristatud järgnevad kodeerimisvõtted:
  - a) dominanttekst kui fotol kujutatud tähistamisprotsessi dominantne element;
  - b) koodtekst kui fotol kujutatud elementide omavaheliste suhete organiseerimise printsiip ning
  - c) dominantkeel kui kodeeriv süsteem, mis allutab tähistamisprotsessis teised võimalikud kodeerivad keeled.
3. Ka siin võis teha järelduse (vt artikkel I), et nõukogude avalik *skoopiline* režiim on iseloomulik kultuuritüübile, mida Lotman iseloomustab kui tekstide kogumikku ja mis vastandub kultuuritüübile, mis tekstikogumit loob

## Artikkel V

Ventsel, Andreas. (2009). The role of political rhetoric in the development of Soviet totalitarian language [Poliitilise retoorika ja nõukogude totalitaarkeel]. Russian Journal of Communication, x–x. [ilmumas]

Artiklis analüüsisin Stalini-ajastu poliitilist diskursust läbi totalitaarkeele fenomeni, mille vahendusel indoktrineeriti nõukogude inimese identiteet ja maailmavaade. Totalitaarkeele fenomenist tõukus ka artikli probleemipüstitus. Teadupärast määratles nõukogude marksistlik-leninistlik ideoloogia ennast rangelt objektiivse teadusliku maailmavaatena. Teaduskeelt iseloomustab püüdlus minimiseerida sõnavara mitmetimõistetavus ning ideaalis peaks see peatama tähistajate triivi tähistatavate suhtes. Võiks arvata, et ühiskonna ümberehitamise teaduslikkus avaldab mõju ka kommunikatsioonile ja loomulikule keelele. Nõukogude totalitaarkeelega põhjalikumalt tegelenud vene teadlase Nina Kupina välja töötud karakteristikutest selgub aga, et seda ei iseloomusta kaugeltki tähistajate ja tähistavate jäik side ning sõnade semantilist distinktiivsust kommunikatiivses funktsioonis kompenseerib nende asukoha täpne määratlemine aksioloogilisel hea – halb teljel.

Minu algse hüpoteesi järgi tuli selle põhjusi otsida totalitaarkeele poliitilis-retoorilisest algupärast, mille valguses võib totalitaarkeelt näha võimu avaldumise retoorilise vormina. See tähendab aga, et poliitilise retoorika funktsioon ja tähtsus ühiskonna üldises kommunikatsiooniruumis mõjutab oluliselt loomuliku keele normatiivsust, eriti semantikat. Selle näitamiseks lähtusin eelpool visandatud teoreetilisest raamistikust, millele lisasin kultuurisemiootilise sümboli käsitluse, mille valguses võib sümbolit pidada eri liiki tühjaks tähistajaks. Siit edasi võiks mõelda eri märgiliikide funktsioneerimisele, mis iseloomustaks ennekõike poliitilise diskursuse tähistuspraktikat.

1. Sümbol esineb poliitilises diskursuses hegemoniseerivas funktsioonis
2. Mida suurem on poliitilise retoorika mõju ühiskondlikkuse konstrueerimisel tervikuna, seda suuremat mõju avaldab poliitilise diskursuse konstrueerimise eripära keelele (ka normatiivsele, nt sõnaraamatud) tervikuna.
3. Mida totalitaarsem on ühiskond, seda suuremat rolli mängivad selle sotsio-poliitilise reaalsuse konstrueerimisel sisult ambivalentseid keele elemendid.
4. Sõnade sisuline läbipaistvus ja selgus oleks keelelis-diskursiivsel tasandil võinud õnnestada totalitaarse ühiskonna tähtsaimat teesi: Parteil on alati õigus!

## **PUBLICATIONS**

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### Education

1994 Tartumaa General Equivalency School  
2003 University of Tartu, Bacalaureus Artium in Semiotics and  
Culturology, “Ideological transformations in Estonian  
political propaganda 1940” (pragmatical and persuasive  
psychological aspects). Supervisor Silvi Salupere  
2005 University of Tartu, Magister Artium in Semiotics and  
Culturology. (Constructing of “We” concept in estonian  
political rhetoric 1940–1953). Supervisor Ülle Pärli  
2005–2009 University of Tartu, postgraduate student in Semiotics and  
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### Employment

2004–2008 reasearcher team member at Estonian Science Foundation  
grant No GSOSE 6484 “Nomination and Anonymity in the  
Culture”  
2007–2007 University of Tartu, Faculty of Philosophy, Institute of  
Philosophy and Semiotics, Department of Semiotics.  
Lecture of course “sociocultural practises” (0.10)  
2007–2008 University of Tartu, Faculty of Philosophy, Institute of  
Philosophy and Semiotics, Department of Semiotics;  
Extraordinary Researcher (0.40)  
2007 autumn Estonia University of Life Sciences, lecturer of philosophy  
2008–2009 reasearcher team member at Estonian Science Foundation  
grant No 7704 “Photography in Estonian Society and  
Cultural History”  
2008 summer Tallinn University, lecturer of cultural semiotics  
2008–... University of Tartu, Faculty of Philosophy, Institute of  
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2009–2012 reasearcher team member at Estonian Science Foundation  
grant No 7988 “The Power of the Nomination in the  
Society and in the Culture”  
2009–... Tartu Art College, lecturer of semiotics

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1994 Tartumaa Öhtukeskkool  
2003 Tartu Ülikool, semiootika ja kulturoloogia, bacalaureus artium. (Ideoloogia keele muutumine Eestis 1940. aastal (pragmaatiline ja mõjutamispsühholoogiline aspekt nõukogude ideoloogia kajastamisel propagandas) (Juhendaja Silvi Salupere)  
2005 Tartu Ülikool, semiootika ja kulturoloogia, magister artium. („Meie” konstrueerimine Eesti poliitilises retoorikas 1940.–1953. a.) (Juhendaja Ülle Pärl)  
2005–2009 Tartu Ülikool, semiootika ja kulturoloogia, doktorantuur (juhendaja Ülle Pärl)

### Teenistuskäik

2004–2008 granditaitja, ETF grant GSOSE 6484 “Nimetamine ja anonüümsus kultuuris”  
2007–2007 Tartu Ülikool, Filosoofiateaduskond, Filosoofia ja semiootika instituut, Semiootika osakond, Semiootika õppetool; õppejõud. loeng: „sotsiokultuuriline praktika” (0.10)  
2007–2008 Tartu Ülikool; Erakorraline teadur (0.40)  
2007 sügis Eesti Maaülikool, filosoofia loengukursus  
2008–2009 granditaitja, ETF 7704 „Fotograafia Eesti ühiskonnas ja kultuuriajaloo”  
2008 suvi Tallinna Ülikool, kultuurisemiootika loengukursus  
2008– ... Tartu Ülikool, Filosoofiateaduskond, Filosoofia ja semiootika instituut, Semiootika osakond; Erakorraline teadur (1.00)  
2009–2012 granditaitja, ETF 7988 „Nimetamise võim ühiskonnas ja kultuuris”  
2009–... Tartu Kõrgem Kunstikool, sissejuhatus semiootikasse loengukursus

## DISSERTATIONES SEMIOTICAE UNIVERSITATIS TARTUENSIS

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