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The Notion of Dialogue as a Form of Writing in Semiotics of Culture and Philosophical Studies of the Antiquity

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The notion of dialogue is an object of discussion for a number of disciplines in the field of Humanities, especially concerning Culture Studies. Although, there's not much attention to dialogue as a form of writing, a literary genre. Unexpectedly, there is even no definition of the term "autocommunication" in Encyclopedia of Semiotics. The dictionaries and encyclopedia mentioned in the references mostly depict the notion of a dialogue as a social or cultural event. In addition to that, there is no general agreement upon classification of dialogues in Cultural Semiotics [8]. In this paper we'll try to compare the notion of dialogue as a form of writing in Semiotics of Culture and Philosophical Studies of Antiquity. Dialogue here can also be defined as a literary and philosophical device.

For Philosophical Studies, dialogue as a form of writing and as a genre in classical form, dates back to Plato. Dialogue as a form of writing was also used by different writers and philosophers in Antiquity, Middle Ages, Modern Times and Contemporary History. Philosophy considers communicating to self to be the basic interpretation of a dialogue; it serves to reflect speaker's consciousness, which is not always equal to the outspoken, stated thought.

Dialogue is a special type of philosophical work, the author of which presents his ideas in the form of a dialogue with his opponents or students. This kind of form is used for work with such philosophical problems which are familiar to ordinary people and their sense and meaning is rather clear. This is not a way to figure out the truth but a method to transfer knowledge from one person to another.

For Cultural Semiotics dialogue is a structured exchange of messages, both verbal and nonverbal. Dialogue structures and processes are not necessarily linguistic, though they are always semiotic. They provide the central organizing concepts in the infant's joint construction with others of the social system, and they afford the fundamental semiotic resource in all forms of learning and instruction. Learning can only occur through situational specific dialogues involving implicit structures and rules regarding exchange and cooperation [13].

Dialogue is a text (or discourse) which consists of a sequence of phrases, sentences, or texts of a language, reported or imagined to have been uttered with speaker/hearer alternation by two different speakers [8].

As for Cultural Semiotics, Lotman coins the term of "autocommunication", a form of communication limited by one subject, which is at the same time both a creator the receiver of the message. In this case the most important feature is the change of the information, reached by the addition of a new code leading to the change in the information carrier [2]. The receiver is equal to a third person; the information transfers in "I — I" —in time. The meaning carrier stays the same, but the message itself in the process of communication is reformulated and get a new sense. This happens because of the appearance of a new second

code. In the system "I - I" it is transformed; and it leads to the change in "I". the system "I - I" is not immanent; it exists due to the invasion of additional codes from outerspace and the presence of external shocks, shifting the certain situation. Notably, system "I - I" is more clearly present in moral and religious texts [3].

Lotman's concept of autocommunication allows to interpret the culture of the antiquity as a culture with dominant autocommunication.

Foucault notes that one of his aims is to analyze the forms in which the subject understands himself in the philosophy of Antiquity; it is important that he emphasizes the role of need to express the truth about yourself and, secondly, the role of a mentor and his speech [10]. Philosophers of the antiquity appeal to the problem of "techniques of living" and this notion gradually changes to "techniques of self" till the end of the Roman state.

"Techniques of self" are connected with the formulation of the imperative of taking care of self in Plato's dialogues. The aim of this care actually to rule yourself in order to rule the others. In the Hellenistic and Roman periods the aim of this care is only the subject and its own status. This subject is closely connected with his mentor. The model of communication of a mentor and his student in Plato's dialogues suggests the leading role of the mentor who transfers the knowledge of taking care of self. The mentor emphasizes the student's lack of knowledge and on the fact that he is not conscious of it. In contrast, the mentor of Hellenistic and Roman periods aims to change the student and to form his personality [10].

Therefore, there is a strong need for a student, especially if we speak about a mentor. In that case a student helps him to formulate his ideas by his presence and need to be taught and therefore causes the mentor's dialogue to himself, autocommunication, in Lotman's terms.

For Plato and Cicero dialogue carries a function of teaching morals. Their method is to present a dialogue as dialectics of searching for the sole, the meaning through the analysis of diversity [1]. In his works it is an argumentative conversation; he is not describing characters. Their dialogue is already very close to a form of a treatise.

Dialogue as a form of writing in many cases can be interpreted as autocommunication. From the point of view of Philosophy dialogue is a way of autocommunication, communication with self. Both Plato and Cicero showed that for a teaching subject there is a need for a listener, another subjectivity to perceive. In case of Cicero, it can also be assumed that his dialogue acquires the form of autocommunication for culture since in his works he reformulates Greek cultural values under the influence of the political events of Late Roman Republic.

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