

The 11th Annual Lotman Conference at Tallinn University

TIME, HISTORY, BIOGRAPHY: LOTMAN IN CONTEXT

The organizers are inviting submissions for the 11th Lotman conference at Tallinn University, 31 May – 2 June 2019.

Juri Lotman had an enduring interest in (auto)biographical genres as a semiotic and historical phenomenon, notably starting with his biographies of Russian cultural figures, through his historical semiotic analyses in the 1970s (“The Poetics of Everyday Behaviour in Eighteenth-Century Russian Culture“, “The Decembrist in Daily Life: Everyday Behaviour as a Historical-Psychological Category”, etc.), to his late strongly autobiographically inflected cultural philosophical thought in the 1980s–1990s (*Culture and Explosion*, *The Unpredictable Workings of Culture*).

The 6th Lotman Conference *Biographia Sub Specie Semioticae* engaged with Lotman in the framework of present day scholarly study of biographies and egodocuments (memoirs, diaries, letters, etc). The 2019 conference, announced here, aims to connect this line in Lotman’s work more potently and diversely to his ideas on history and time: the dynamics of historical change, the (un)predictability of the workings of culture, the role of individual historical actors. Autobiographical texts, according to Lotman, can allow a special cognition – “intimate and historical at the same time” (preface to “Conversations on Russian Culture”). They can offer insight into large historical processes, and the currents in the general cultural context, including that of art and literature. Here might be included not only specifically autobiographical works, but also other genres (for example fiction, journalism, philosophical texts) that reflect the author’s life experience.

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

- How are historical contexts involved in the development of biographical narratives?
- Egodocuments, collective identity and collective memory
- Egodocuments and everyday life
- Functions of (auto)biography in culture
- Issues of genre poetics of (auto)biography and other egodocuments
- (Auto)biography and art – reality and fiction?
- The function of “zones of silence“ in egodocuments and biographies
- Autobiography and trauma
- Historical thought across Juri Lotman’s work
- The intellectual context of Juri Lotman’s historical thought

- Juri Lotman's historical vision in comparison: Lotman and other philosophers of history, their cultural-political contexts
- History and (auto)biography in the Tartu-Moscow school's work
- Autobiographical motifs in the work of Juri Lotman and Zara Mints

The conference takes place in the framework of two research projects at Tallinn University: the project "After the Explosion: Autobiography, Subjectivity and Utterance in Juri Lotman's Late Works", supported by the Estonian Research Council grant 1366, and the project "Between the Times, Embattled Temporalities and Political Imagination in Interwar Europe", supported by the European Research Council grant TAU17149. The conference is organised jointly with the academic journal *AvtobiografiЯ: Journal on Life Writing and the Representation of the Self in Russian Culture* (editors Claudia Criveller and Andrea Gulotta, <http://www.avtobiografija.com>). It is planned to publish a special edition of *AvtobiografiЯ*, drawing upon the contributions to the conference.

Submission guidelines:

The conference accepts submissions in English and in Russian, the two working languages of the conference. Speakers shall be allocated 30 minutes in total: 20 minutes to deliver the presentation and 10 minutes for discussion.

The submissions should be sent via e-mail no later than **15 February 2019** and include:

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

The organising committee will choose the presenters based on scholarly merit and thematic relevance for the conference. The results will be announced via email no later than **15 March 2019**.

The submissions in English should be sent to Piret Peiker: peiker@tlu.ee

The submissions in Russian should be sent to Tatjana

Kuzovkina: tatjana.kuzovkina@gmail.com

Useful information:

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

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

Organising committee: Rein Raud (chair), Claudia Criveller, Andrea Gullotta, Tatjana Kuzovkina, Mihhail Lotman, Daniele Monticelli, Vadim Parsamov, Piret Peiker, Jelena Pogosjan.