Reconsidering the Concept of Culture via Semiotic Analysis

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On February 22, 2017, astronomers announced the discovery of potentially habitable Earth-like exoplanets in the TRAPPIST-1 System [NASA 2017]. In May 2016, the scientists from Cambridge University managed to sustain human embryos *in vitro* for 13 days, and then ought to have implanted it in the mother's body because of the 14-day rule that limits *in vitro* human embryo research [DPDN 2016]. In June 2016, a neural network Benjamin wrote a screenplay for a short science fiction film 'Sunspring', which turned out to be rather dynamic and heartfelt. However, Benjamin does not own the copyright, as it/he is just an artificial intelligence, deprived of emotionality, intentionality and creativity [Newitz 2016].

The face of culture is being invaded and challenged by the figures of the Other. Although we may argue that they do not reason, feel and un-

derstand, their actions *look* intentional and have an indelible imprint on human life. Nevertheless, the status of the alien remains marginal and is excluded from the legitimate realm of culture. Genderqueers are just stepping out

object — sign — subject | co-subject

from the shadows of cultural disdain, and it is high time for the non-human beings to express themselves, too.

In developing the project of the posthumanist expansion of culture, I will use the premise of the semiotics of culture ('culture is a sign system') and methodology of analytic philosophy of language. To prove the Other (AI, an alien, an animal) may be included in the scope of culture means to prove that it belongs to the semiotic sphere – i.e. is related to semiosis. While the Other can be a sign itself and use signs to 'communicate' at the syntactic level, its capability of producing and understanding meaning is still doubted. John Searle propounds the view that computers 'have only a syntax but no semantics' because 'the formal symbol manipulations by themselves don't have any intentionality; they are quite meaningless' [Searle 1980, p. 422]. The majority of theories either treat meaning as some external, non-private metaphysical entity or require mind as an internal bearer of ideas and intentions to satisfy the conditions of meaningfulness – it is a luxury we cannot afford and assume in case of the Other.

The alien appears spontaneously, provoking us to answer its presence, which is not there. It arises from elsewhere, oscillating on the threshold and calling us to account. Yet the appeal of the Other is unvoiced because the alien is the place where I am not present, a form of some atopia [Waldenfels 2007, p. 9]. Muteness and invisibility are its only possible modes of being given, as it does not have a signifier in terms of de Saussure's sound-image. The Other is never uttered - like many meaningful sentences are; however, it is a silence which is a transcendental condition of possibility of any meaning. The Other by implication holds the variety of all possible worlds. Meaning appears in a situation of a multitude, doubling or even tripling (for a reason, to mean is a ditransitive verb: something, means something, to somebody,) – Wittgenstein's private language argument seems to derive from this assumption. Consequently, there is no need to convey meaning and use language if things are immediately and directly introduced to every single mind. In this respect, an empty signifier in postmodernism, which does not depend on a particular interpretation, fails to recognise the very origin of meaning that is born in the in-between interaction between me and the Other, the signifier and the signified.

Karl-Otto Apel offers a transcendental re-interpretation of the Morris triadic schema of sign relations (object – sign – subject). Adding the extra subject to the scheme, he claims that communication between two subjects provides the interpretation of the sign: 'the linguistic signs... become themselves themes of reference in the context of communicative understanding' [Apel 1994, p. 246].

The Other, which infringes the usual cultural continuity, rupturing its syntagmatic chain, is the ultimate co-subject in Apel's terms. It lays the foundation of the culture by asking questions about its meaningfulness. Culture as a sign system exists only for the sake of the Other, and in being responsible/response-able to its calls the culture perpetuates its own sense. Therefore, not only the Other is a transcendental condition of the culture, but also its all-intrusive reference is a pure meaning of the culture. Thus, the most important task of the culture as a sign system is to establish a meaningful connection with everything it sees on its way, allowing for the cavities where the Other can unfold as the Other, and legalising its inevitable right to speak to us and to ask questions. Works Cited

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Роль висловлюваного в концепції символічного інтеракціонізму

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Ідеї Джорджа Міда історично утворили каркас концепції символічного інтеракціонізму. Сама назва теоретичного підходу відображає головний предмет дослідницької уваги – вивчення інтеракцій, опосередкованих символічним простором. Поняття інтеракції, на відміну від зазвичай синонімічно вживаного поняття взаємодії, увиразнює інтерсуб'єктивний характер людських взаємин, засадничої включеності індивідуальних дій у наперед задану тканину соціального світу. Дана концепція, продовжуючи успад-