**Lecture 2**. **Semiotics of culture. Anatomy of culture**

1. Structuralism and semiotics in cultural studies. Semiotic concepts of culture F. Saussure, [Charles Sanders Peirce](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/philosophy-and-religion/philosophy-biographies/charles-sanders-peirce), Charles Morris, [Lev Semenovich Vygotsky](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/medicine/psychology-and-psychiatry-biographies/lev-semenovich-vygotsky)

2. Textological concepts of culture R. Barth, O. Suleimenov

3. Three-dimensional model of culture.

**Semiotics of culture** is a research field within semiotics that attempts to define culture from semiotic perspective and as a type of human symbolic activity, creation of signs and a way of giving meaning to everything around.

**Anatomy of culture** studies issues of the internal structure of cultural systems (space of culture, dimensions of culture, forms of culture)

**Semiotic concepts of culture F. Saussure,** [**Charles Sanders Peirce**](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/philosophy-and-religion/philosophy-biographies/charles-sanders-peirce)**, Charles Morris,** [**Lev Semenovich Vygotsky**](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/medicine/psychology-and-psychiatry-biographies/lev-semenovich-vygotsky)

Linguistic and cultural semiotics investigates sign systems and the modes of representation that humans use to convey feelings, thoughts, ideas, and ideologies. Semiotic analysis is rarely considered a field of study in its own right, but is used in a broad range of disciplines, including art, literature, anthropology, sociology, and the mass media. Semiotic analysis looks for the cultural and psychological patterns that underlie language, art, and other cultural expressions. [Umberto Eco](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/literature-and-arts/italian-literature-biographies/umberto-eco) jokingly suggests that semiotics is a discipline for "studying everything which can be used in order to lie" (1976, p. 7 Eco, Umberto. (1976). *A Theory of Semiotics.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press).

There are two major traditions in modern semiotic theory. One branch is grounded in a European tradition and was led by the Swiss-French linguist [*Ferdinand de Saussure*](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/literature-and-arts/language-and-linguistics-biographies/ferdinand-de-saussure) (1857–1913). The other branch emerged out of American pragmatic philosophy through its primary founder, [*Charles Sanders Peirce*](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/philosophy-and-religion/philosophy-biographies/charles-sanders-peirce)(1839–1914). Saussure sought to explain how all elements of a language are taken as components of a larger system of language in use. This led to a formal discipline that he called *semiology.* Peirce's interest in logical reasoning led him to investigate different categories of signs and the manner by which humans extract meaning from them. Independently, Saussure and Peirce worked to better understand the triadic relationship.

Saussure laid the foundation for the structuralist school in linguistics and social theory. A structuralist looks at the units of a system and the rules of logic that are applied to the system, without regard to any specific content. The units of human language comprise a limited set of sounds called phonemes, and these comprise an unlimited set of words and sentences, which are put together according to a set of simple rules called grammar. From simple units humans derive more complex units that are applied to new rules to form more complex structures (such as themes, characters, stories, genres, and style).

To Peirce, the relationship of the sign to the object is made in the mind of the interpreter as a mental tool that Peirce called the *interpretant.*

As Peirce describes it, *semiosis* (the process of sign interpretation) is an iterative (repetitive) process involving multiple inferences. The signifier elicits in the mind an interpretant that is not the final signified object, but a mediating thought that promotes understanding. The interpretant itself becomes a sign that can elicit yet another interpretant, leading the way toward an infinite series of *unlimited semiosis*. By this analysis, Peirce shifts the focus of semiotics from a relational view of signs and the objects they represent to an understanding of semiosis as an iterative, mediational process.

*Charles Morris* (1901–1979) was a semiotician who adapted Peirce's work to a form of behaviorism. For Morris, semiotics involves "goal-seeking behavior in which signs exercise control" (Morris 1971 [1938], p. 85 Morris, Charles. (1971 [1938]). *Foundations of the Theory of Signs.* Chicago: [University of Chicago](https://www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences-and-law/education/colleges-us/university-chicago) Press. This classic monograph proposed three divisions of semiotic theory: syntactics, semantics, and pragmatics.).

Morris attempted to subdivide the field of semiotics into three subfields. *Semantics* studies the affiliations between the world of signs and the world of things. *Syntactics* observes how signs relate to other signs. *Pragmatics* explains the effects of signs on human behavior (Morris 1971).

[Lev Semenovich Vygotsky](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/medicine/psychology-and-psychiatry-biographies/lev-semenovich-vygotsky) (1896–1934), applied the instrumental notion of semiotics toward cognition and learning (the relationship suggested much earlier by Aristotle and Augustine). Vygotsky identified the pivotal role language plays during the exercise of complex mental functions. He observed the similarity between physical tools and verbal artifacts as instruments of human activity. From his extensive and detailed observations of child development, Vygotsky concluded that higher-order thinking transpires by means of what he called "inner speech," the internalized use of linguistic signs (Vygotsky 1986 Vygotsky, L. S. (1986). "The Genetic Roots of Thought and Speech." In *Thought and Language,* trans. and ed. Alex Kozulin. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. Russian edition originally published 1934, then translated in 1962 to become a classic foundational work in cognitive science. Vygotsky analyzed the role of speech in the development of human consciousness, and the relationship of language to complex thinking in humans.).

**2) Textological concepts of culture R. Barth, O. Suleimenov**

[*Roland Barthes*](https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/literature-and-arts/french-literature-biographies/roland-barthes)(1915–1980) is probably the most significant semiologist to assume the mantle of Saussure. Barthes developed a sophisticated structuralist analysis to deconstruct the excessive rhetorical maneuvers within popular culture that engulfed Europe after [World War II](https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/modern-europe/wars-and-battles/world-war-ii). Anything was fair game for Barthes's structuralist critique including literature, media, art, photography, architecture, and even fashion. Barthes's most influential work, *Mythologies* (1972 [1957] Barthes, Roland. (1972). *Mythologies,* trans. Annette Lavers. [New York](https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/united-states-and-canada/us-political-geography/new-york): Hill and Wang. Originally published 1957. Fifty-four short critical reflections on mass culture in France during early 1950s. A classic work using semiotics to reveal the practices and artifacts of society as signifiers of the surface meanings and deep structures of contemporary life.) continues to have an influence on critical theory in the early twenty-first century.

Myths are signs that carry with them larger cultural meanings. In *Mythologies,* Barthes describes myth as a well-formed, sophisticated system of communication that serves the ideological aims of a dominant class. Barthes conceived of myth as a socially constructed reality that is passed off as natural. Myth is a mode of signification in which the signifier is stripped of its history, and the form is stripped of its substance and then adorned with a substance that is artificial but appears entirely natural. Through mythologies, deeply partisan meanings are made to seem well established and self-evident. The role of the mythologist is to identify the artificiality of those signs that disguise their historical and social origins.

Olzhas Omarovich Suleimenov in a programmatic article of 1962 states: "I now boldly declare that many obscure aspects of the history of literate peoples can not be explained without some knowledge of the history of the Turks. I am convinced that at some point there will appear a genuine, realistic book, 'the True History,' and that we too will be complicit in its birth. Only poets can explain the meaning of words, created by the ancient forgers of language. Knowing one's native history is the essential condition for the development of an internationalist consciousness".

Despite its subtitle -"the book of a well-intentioned reader" - AZ i IA was immediately perceived as a provocation. The book's first half is devoted to rereading a celebrated literary artifact of medieval Russia, The Song of Igor's Campaign. By claiming to have uncovered Turkic lexical and narrative elements in the most revered of early Russian texts, Suleimenov seeks to rewrite the early history of the Russo-Turkic encounter from a Turkic perspective that is partisan but by no means culturally exclusivist.

The book's reliance on the phonic properties of language is evident from its title: AZ i IA. Corresponding to the English place-name Asia, the Russian title AZ i IA is split by Suleimenov into its three constituent syllables Az-i-ia. Thus broken down, the title becomes a pun, a folk-etymology that derives the geographical term Asia from three Slavic words, az, the Old Slavic word for the first person pronoun "I," i, the conjunction and, and ia, the modern Russian word for the same first person pronoun "I": the title might thus also be translated "I and I." The book's title suggests the juxtaposition (сопоставление), through the power of language, of old and new, as well as diverse "I's" or selves whose identities-geographical, ethnonational, as well as disciplinary-are first differentiated and then brought together as one. Suleimenov glosses his title as follows: "The Igor Tale needs to be read not by a collective of WE's (Slavist, Turkologist, Historian, Poet), but by a collective of I's [kollektivom ia]. The same persons, but united within one individual [Te zhe personazhi, no ob'"dinennye v odnoi lichnosti] ." Suleimenov, AZ i IA, 8. Clearly, the title's pun seeks to reconfigure the disciplinary and human boundaries that have separated fields of knowledge, fusing them into a singular but composite self. The location and nature of Asia, then, is no longer just a matter of geography: not only do these questions determine the book's cultural orientation, they also define Suleimenov's understanding of scholarship and authorship. We see this equally in the division of the book into its two sections, each corresponding to the two syllables, az and ia. AZ chiefly addresses the Russian epic, and hence constitutes the "Slavic" half of the book, while the second half, IA, is nothing less than a general attack on Indo-European historical linguistics, a polemic that allows Suleimenov to imagine a new past for the Turkic linguistic family. AZ i IA, then, textually situates Slav and Turk, in order to restage their historical encounter in a hybrid discursive space that could be called Eura- sia.

**3) Three-dimensional model of culture**.

Cultural space is a space formed by many of cultural phenomena that interact with each other.

There are three dimensions in cultural space in accordance with the main types of meanings contained in social information.

Types of meaning:

1) knowledge,

2) values,

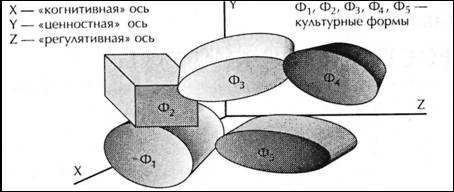
3) regulatives.

They correspond to three intersecting "coordinate axes":

1) "cognitive",

2) "value",

3) "regulatory".



X-Y spiritual culture,

X-Z technological culture

Y-Z social culture