

Editor's foreword

Last time we have received many questions about the meaning of ethnosemiotics. Yet there are many people who think that ethnosemiotics is something additional to such disciplines as history/ethnography and so on. That's why I should clarify some ABCs and explain that ethnosemiotics is backbone of any disciplines about cultures and languages as far as everything we see is actually semiotic system.

We all well know that language can be represented as ordered pair of the following view: $\langle A; \Omega \rangle$ where A is a set of certain phonemes/morphemes/concepts, and Ω is a set of distributions determined upon A. Culture also can be represented as $\langle A; \Omega \rangle$ pair where A is set of concepts/memes and Ω is a set of distributions. Then it is possible to say that culture is nothing else, but pragmatic level of language: when we learn pragmatic level of a language we actually learn culture and when we learn about certain culture we learn pragmatics of corresponding language.

Ethnography and ethnology are descriptions and interpretations of cultures so these disciplines are nothing else, but description and interpretation of semiotic systems.

History is first of all history of certain culture i.e.: history of changes of certain semiotic system.

Component ethno means that this semiotics mostly tends to consider some specific semiotic systems that are usually created by certain ethnicities or are ethnically determined.

Ethnosemiotics and cultural anthropology are rather synonymous terms, but there are by the way some slight differences: ethnosemiotics mostly studies symbolic systems (languages, mythologies) while cultural anthropology can pay more attention to issues of material cultures.