Memory of the Future, Explosion, Panchronism: The Semiotics of Lotman and the Studies of Memory and Time in Juvenile Theatricalities / *Memória do futuro, explosão, pancronia: a semiótica de Lotman e os estudos da memória e do tempo nas teatralidades juvenis*

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ABSTRACT

This paper problematizes certain concepts and propositions of Iuri Lotman that portrayed his conceptions of memory and time, such as semiosphere, text, panchronism and explosion. In the context of juvenile theatricalities, mapping such a theoretical scope aims to understand the production of memories and the temporal codifications as communicative instances. Steampunk theatricalities experienced in face-to-face meetings are considered empirical objects. This analysis is conducted in urban areas of the Southeast of Brazil, counting on a bibliographic research focused on theories of memory, a field work following the *flânerie* methodology in events attended by these youth groups. It aims to demonstrate the dialogue between the semiotics developed by Lotman and the mnemonic and temporal representations present in these theatricalities.
KEYWORDS: Memory of the future; Panchronism; Juvenile theatricality; Steampunk

RESUMO

Este artigo problematiza certos conceitos e proposições da obra de Iuri Lotman que retratam concepções do autor sobre memória e tempo, tais como semiosfera, texto, pancronia e explosão. No âmbito das teatralidades juvenis, mapear tal escopo teórico tem por objetivo compreender a produção de memórias e as codificações temporais como instâncias comunicativas. Consideram-se objetos empíricos, as teatralidades steampunks*, experimentadas em encontros presenciais. Esta análise se faz nos espaços urbanos da região Sudeste do Brasil; vale-se de pesquisa bibliográfica voltada a teorias da memória; utiliza pesquisa de campo, seguindo a metodologia da* flânerie *em eventos frequentados por esses grupos de jovens. Espera-se demonstrar o diálogo entre a semiótica desenvolvida por Lotman e as representações mnésicas e temporais presentes nestas teatralidades.*
PALAVRAS CHAVE: Memória do Futuro; Pancronia; Teatralidade Juvenil; Steampunk

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Introduction

> …and memory turns, deflected swift as light...
> *William Gibson e Bruce Sterling*

The most complete volumes of Iuri Lotman[1] available in Spanish are the publications entitled *La Semiosfera I*: semiótica de la cultura y del texto; *La Semiosfera II*: semiótica de la cultura, del texto, de la conducta y del espacio; *La Semiosfera III*: semiótica de las artes y de la cultura, published by the Cátedra Universitat de Valencia, which gather important theoretical and general texts, according to Desiderio Navarro (1996), the translator of these volumes and a personal friend of the semioticist. The texts were published in several journals from the 1960s to the beginning of the 1990s, a short time before Lotman's death. Published in 1996, this collection of writings brings to researchers of culture and memory fundamental concepts, some of which are used here, as well as some others that are included in another important compendium named *Culture and Explosion* (LOTMAN, 2009).[2]

The purpose of this article is to problematize some of these concepts, such as semiosphere, explosion, creative memory, panchronism, and to analyze time and memory constructions expressed in juvenile theatricalities that we have been studying for some years. In previous articles (NUNES, 2015), we had investigated cosplays – the word derives from the contraction of costume play; in Portuguese it means something like play clothes – and includes attires, weapons, armors and a variety of accessories to represent characters coming from media narratives or even invented ones. Their practitioners, the cosplayers, get together in events to perform characters and narratives, thus forming social networks, identifications, sense of belonging, resistances and strategies of visibility. This research study shows other groups who do not consider themselves cosplayers, but wear costumes – to a great extent made by their own members – and create characters and narratives that represent other spaces and times (NUNES, 2017). They are the steamers, fans of the steampunk who reinvent the age of

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[1] We are using the Spanish spelling of Lotman's name.
[2] LOTMAN, J. *Culture and Explosion*. Edited by Marina Grishakova. Translated by Wilma Clark. Berlin: Gruyter Mouton, 2009.

185

steam – the reason why the word steam is adopted – by creating narratives (written and oral), fashions and objects; there are also the medievalists whose activities include field battles, among other events. Cosplay, steampunk and medievalism bring out theatricalities that reveal ways to produce memories, temporalities and spatialities structured to certain media and symbolic consumptions (NUNES, 2017).

These youth practices can be studied as symptoms of cultures of memory, a term coined by Andreas Huyssen (2000, 2003)[3] as they show appreciation of remembrance, dress themselves according to epochal styles and propose events like picnics, fairs, markets and feasts, typical of remote ages, such as the Victorian and Medieval eras. This playful exercise, symbolically experienced at a past time but using present signs – after all, everything they recreate is made of materials that are currently available – might respond to what François Hartog (2015)[4] characterized as presentism: today's intoxicating experience that idealizes the past, due to some fear of the future. However, semiotics, as developed by Lotman, offers other clues to think time and memory in these theatricalities, such as the studies carried out by Elie During (2013), a philosopher and professor of the Paris-Nanterre University. Although a hasty reading may lead people to consider these practices noncommitted, even as alienating leisure events, a careful investigation reveals that they can say a lot about the production of the cultural memory and the current social expectations.

To emphasize the complex codification of memory and time, this paper is structured through multimethodologies: the *flânerie,* a method to carry out interviews with youngsters and field work observation (MCLAREN, 2018);[5] the bibliographical research prepared according to the Tartu-Moscow's semiotics of culture theory, and data generation and processing in line with the theorists of the sociology memory. Before bringing the concepts of Lotman, it is necessary to describe and problematize a little more about the theatricality chosen as the empiric object of this study: the steampunk, and its temporal and mnesic configurations.

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[3] HUYSSEN, A. *Present Pasts*: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory (Cultural Memory in the Present). Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2003.
[4] HARTOG, F. *Regimes of Historicity*: Presentism and Experiences of Time. Translated by Saskia Brown. New York: Columbia University Press, 2015.
[5] MCLAREN, P. *Revolutionary Multiculturalism:* Pedagogies of Dissent for New Millennium. New York: Routledge, 2018.

1 Steampunk and Retrofuturism

Steampunk arises as a science fiction genre, inspired in the literature of Jules Verne (1828-1905), H.G. Wells (1866-1946), among others. They approached themes, such as travels and travelers in extraordinary adventures set in the steam era, passing through the past and the future, imagining technologies that would become real only many centuries later. Based on these fictions, the American author Kevin Wayne Jeter published two pioneer novels: *Morlock Night*, in 1979, and *Infernal Devices*, in 1987, the year when the term steampunk was used in a Jeter's statement for the science fiction magazine named *Loccus*.[6] James P. Blaylock, with *Homunculus* (1986) and Tim Powers, with *The Anubis Gates* (1983), are also mentioned as the first authors of this type of literature, according to Taddeo and Miller (2013). However, Elie During (2013), among other authors,[7] has attributed the milestone of this style to *The Difference Engine*, a book published in the United States in 1990 by William Gibson and Bruce Sterling. It is a story that takes place in the 19th-century London, surrounded by steam engines; however, it is scientifically advanced for that time as it has computers and other powerful gadgets as well.

The term *steam* is connected to the word punk – on the one hand, because steampunk converses with cyberpunk plots, a similar literature movement – popular then – that focuses on a near future and is dominated by man-machines in a devastated and dystopian society (AMARAL, 2006). However, we must remember that the future in the cyber universe is strongly marked by dystopias – differently from steam narratives. On the other hand, the word punk denotes rebelliousness or counter-hegemony profiles. According to one representative of the Steampunk Council of São Paulo,[8] Raul Cândido de Souza, steampunk indeed has a steam profile, but with an outcast sense:

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[6] Information available at: http://sp.steampunk.com.br/2008/10/10/seguindo-o-rastro-de-vapor-2%C2%B0-parte/. Last accessed on 01 July 2018.

[7] Information available at http://www.editoraaleph.com.br/a-maquina-diferencial/p. Last accessed on 01 July 2018.

[8] Councils are entities, linked to Steampunk Lodges, spread around several capitals of Brazil to gather fans. According to a study carried out by Everly Pegoraro (2016), the denomination Lodges may derive from those of the Masonic Lodges, representing mutual aid among steamers.

Steampunk is an 'outcast steam'; it has a Victorian charm, characteristic of the steam, but it has an outcast sense in the creative point of view, for when you think about steampunk you think about technological creation, you think about possibilities. (...) Outcast steam is indeed a great definition for it, because in steampunk you can observe people wearing safety glasses [the unfailing goggle], always modifying things for their use or creating things all the time. You may see female Victorian style clothes such as the corset, a symbol of female aesthetic oppression, a sexism symbol; however, when the corset is worn over clothes and a bit shorter skirt [it becomes] a symbol of female sexual liberation. Outcast steam is the best definition for this, of countless possibilities and shows thoughts concerning our own evolution (SOUZA, 2016).[9]

The outcastness or rebelliousness emphasized by the steamer is also pointed by researchers such as Rebecca Onion (2008), when reporting the inventive aspects of their practices as a highly liberating counterculture experience, marked by the DIY (do it yourself) culture that promotes customization, production of accessories for clothes made of recycled and/or obsolete objects, somehow subverting or tensioning the productions that are essentially industrialized. On the other hand and paradoxically, at least in the United States and Europe, the steampunk has witnessed, since the 1980s, a growth in the global community of fans that goes beyond the lovers of Victorian literature and has motivated the interest of cultural producers and entrepreneurs, as Ken Dvorak highlights when presenting his study entitled *Steaming into a Victorian Future*: a Steampunk Anthology (TADDEO; MILLER, 2013).

The steampunk has left the pages of books and expanded to become outstanding in films, such as *The Adventures of Baron Munchausen* (1988), *The City of Lost Children* (1995), *Wild Wild West* (1999), *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* (2003), *Hugo* (2011), among others; animes, such as *Howl's Moving Castle* (2004), *Steamboy* (2004); mangas, such as *Last Exile Sunadokei no Tabibito* (2003), *Tegami Bachi* (2006); videogames, such as *Final Fantasy VI* (1996), *Cogs* (2009), *Steam*

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[9] In the original: "Steampunk é um 'vapor marginal'; tem o charme vitoriano, característica do vapor, steam, mas ele é marginal do ponto de vista criativo, porque quando você pensa em steampunk, você pensa em criação tecnológica, você pensa em possibilidades. (...) Vapor marginal é uma ótima definição porque no steampunk você observa as pessoas com óculos de proteção [o indefectível goggle], elas estão sempre modificando coisas para uso próprio ou inventando coisas o tempo todo. Você vê a roupa vitoriana das mulheres onde tem o espartilho, que é um símbolo da opressão estética feminina, é um símbolo do sexismo, no entanto o espartilho do lado de fora da roupa e a saia um pouco mais curta [torna-se] um símbolo da liberação sexual feminina. Vapor marginal é a melhor definição para isso, as inúmeras possibilidades e o nosso pensamento em relação a nossa própria evolução."

Bandits: Outpost (2014);   K-Pop videoclips, such as the music video *Eternity* (2015), videos by the *VIXX, a* South Korean boy group; marketing narratives, such as *Ovaldo*,[10] the 2018 Easter campaign of Cacau Show, a Brazilian chocolate manufacturer; some pieces of design,[11] among other examples. Besides the print, aesthetic, audiovisual and digital languages that codify steampunk signs, this genre is experienced and consumed in body images, that is, in the aesthetical production of the bodymedia of its practitioners through their clothes that are customized and/or created by the steamers themselves, as mentioned before.

From literary genre to bodymedia, and sometimes incorporated to the mainstream culture, steampunk proceeds as a mediatic cultural text to be assimilated through a multiplicity of codes; among them is retrofuturism, whose conceptual references can be found in the studies of Elie During. *Le futur n´existe pas*: rétrotypes (2014), written by During and fine artist Alain Bublex, presents the genealogy of the concept and sets out considerations about *Angelus Novus* (1920), the famous art piece made by Paul Klee. It also has analyses carried out by Benjamin (1987), resulting in a book of the philosopher and art critic N. Bourriaud, *L´ange de la histoire* (2013), leading to the conclusion that every document or archive from the past melancholically announces its future collapse. However, this book elaborated by Bublex and During shows that the past persists in many ways, not only thanks to traces or sedimentations but, above all, to active lines of futurity that have lasted until now. And beyond the literal representations of the unachieved future, recognized in utopian or dystopian futurism, the power of retrofuturism faces the present as the future dreamed at a parallel time, or one that is perpendicular to ours, not very keen on melancholy.

Retrofuturism is a portmanteau word attributed to Lloyd-Dunn, a musician practitioner of sound collages, co-founder of the Tape-Batles and editor of the experimental magazine named Retrofuturism (1983). The purpose of this magazine was to make use of a visual and graphic code evoking the 1950s, with a great technological exultation. According to Bublex and During (2014), Kraftwerk, the German electronic pop group, explored the image of the constructivist *avant-garde* of

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[10] Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XWjWRt05p70. Last accessed on 01 July 2018.
[11] Information available at https://blogdaarquitetura.com/decoracao-e-design-inspirados-no-steam-punk/. Last accessed on 01 July 2018.

the 1920s to play their music through machines. The term flourished from this scenario and can represent, in many cultural activities, different things that come from a temporal assemblage that involves the past, present and future. "Retrofuturism represents the crossing of technologies or 'futurist' forms of life with others that we consider obsolete or outdated" (BUBLEX; DURING, 2014, p.30).[12] These technologies and forms of life are dislocated to other temporal contexts. The same movement is used by the steampunk, when imagining travelers wearing top hats, goggles and *nerf* copper weapons on a steam spaceship, leaving a vapor trail while leading to the moon.

In another study, when explaining retrofuturism, During (2013) emphasized two trends: one refers to a retrofuturism with dated images of the future despite that continuous fascination; the other, a retrofuturized trend, refers to a uchronic imagination of past worlds, that is, something that allows achieving an alternative universe based on a point that is known in history but is modified. The first reveals an impulse of retrospective anticipation, a retrocipation, in the words of During (2013, p.212): "it is to consider the future by the past point of view, to restage, reproduce, reactivate the future such as we could have imagined it to be, if seen from the past."[13] In general, as carried out by young medievalists when restaging feasts at their parties, or by cosplayers when wearing their anime cosplay outfits or yet by vintage videogames or revivalists in their picnics (NUNES, 2017), it is a future seen from the past to be performed today. However, the other trend of retrofuturism, related to uchronia, does not construe a perspective from the past to the future, but from the future to the past. Here the past is presumed, based on the interpolation of the future in the past.

Although many of the juvenile theatricalities analyzed have the characteristics of the first trend, that is, retrofuturism as medieval and revivalist practices (NUNES, 2017), steampunk is closer to the retrofuturized trend, suggesting a retrojection to times far from technological elements of the present or an envisioned future. The city of London, back in the 19th century, might have computers, brought up from the

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[12] In the original: "'Retro-futurisme' indique le croisement de technologies ou de formes de vie 'futuristes' avec d´ autres qu´on juge caduques ou dépassées."

[13] In the original: "trata-se de considerar o futuro do ponto de vista do passado, de reencenar, de reproduzir, de reativar o futuro tal como o passado podia imaginá-lo."

power of steam and logical machines, as in *The Difference Engine*, the novel written by Gibson and Sterling (2011),[14] as previously mentioned.

However, if frills, leather parts, top hats and metal goggles, typically worn by aviators in the 19th century, form the style or looks of the steamers, either in print, pixel, or as real people, to meet the fashion trends of that time, the misery and insalubrity, found in many urban areas like London as a scenario that has influenced the movement, as well as some Victorian moral aspects, have been suppressed. Many youngsters who were part of the research studies admitted to using pink-color lens to read the past and to enjoying the Victorian charm, the elegance of clothes, the fashionism, the adventures of a century of discoveries as the *Novecento*. Social constraints are disregarded.

Lita Ferreira, a young girl interviewed at SteamCon III, explained that everything is possible in the steampunk universe, in retrofuturistic recreations, because the repression to subjects that was typical in the 19th century is not reproduced here. The world seems somehow evolved as a parallel universe, with "low technology, handmade, lots of leather and steam,"[15] clarifies her boyfriend, Max Silva (2015), who was also interviewed. Lita reacted to our comment[16] about the lack of freedom imposed to women back then and replied: "you can be everything you want: a pirate of an aircraft, for instance" (FERREIRA, 2015).[17] The uchronic imaginary allows modifying a historic fact; thus, visions of the past can be imbricated to visions of the future. Therefore, female repression may not exist in this parallel world.

If the technological evolution had occurred based on steam, our future would be quite different and so would be our technical objects. Consequently, steampunk weaves another 19th-century type of world, retrojecting contemporary technologies and, concomitantly, idealizing a more pleasant and liberating context, compared to the original one. To explain this parallel future, During insists that retrofuturism uses the ambiguity of a double movement: from the past to the future; from the future to the past. This phenomenon disturbs the linearity of temporal plans as past, present, future.

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[14] For reference, see footnote 1.
[15] In the original: "low technology, handmade, muito couro e vapor."
[16] Interview by Mônica Nunes, Marco Bin, Gilson Pedroza and Lucas Teixeira. III SteamCon. Paranapiacaba/Santo André, SP.
[17] In the original: "você pode ser tudo o que você quiser: um pirata de uma nave aérea, por exemplo."

A kind of retrofuturism of the present takes place, allowing the present to carry a retrofuturistic image of itself as the future, but also as the past. In the author's words: "[...] thanks to a curious torsion movement over itself concerning the present, consciousness relies on the past to project a spectrum or phantasm of the future in the present. Consciousness has, therefore, a circuit that is parallel to the historical time" (DURING, 2013, p.219)[18]. Retrofuturism constructs a hybrid, "a historical chimera of a new type: parallel or virtual futures" (DURING, 2013, p.221).[19]

Consequently, for the philosopher and professor of the Paris-Nanterre University, retrofuturism should not be seen only as a symptom of presenteeism – in case we follow the ideas of François Hartog (2015).[20] The plot of these parallel futures escapes from the naïve adhesion to the myth of progress, of the great modernity report, and from the dystopia that always rises from the fear of the future immersed in the risk of major social and psychic catastrophes. In turn, it is possible to understand the ways of approaching time, perceived by retrofuturism, enacting steampunk creations as coding modes that are also focused on the construction and codification of the memory produced by this theatricality/style/language and, eventually, by this cultural text. We should always be aware that the dynamics of memories and time are apprehended as problems of the cultures (GOUREVITCH, 1983); thus, they are communicational issues and, consequently, semiotic signs.

In this regard, a first approach to articulate some suppositions of the Tartu-Moscow semiotic school to steampunk codes seems to be valid. Irene Machado, in her *Escola de semiótica* (2003), when paraphrasing the notorious postulation made by Lotman that "culture is the long lasting memory of a community,"[21] explains that, when interpreted like that, culture and memory are reported to the past, but culture is also a modeling system that acts in behaviors and, "in this case, it is a program that aims at the future" (MACHADO, 2003, p.163).[22] A dialogue between the mode of coding time in steampunk productions and some evidences found in Lotman's work

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[18] In the original: "graças a um curioso movimento de torção sobre si do presente, a consciência se apoia no passado para projetar no presente um espectro ou fantasma do futuro. Ela dispõe assim de um circuito paralelo ao tempo histórico."

[19] In the original: "uma quimera histórica de um novo tipo: os futuros paralelos ou virtuais."

[20] For reference, see footnote 5.

[21] In the original: "cultura é a memória longeva de uma comunidade."

[22] In the original: "neste caso, é um programa que visa ao futuro."

about the modes to codify memory and time, might be also recognized. In the long run, to what extent can retrofuturism and steampunk be interpreted based on the concepts of Iuri Lotman? The next section aims to outline some reflections on it.

2 Lotman's Semiotics and Retrofuturism

The aim of this work is not to exhaustively investigate the key assumptions for the understanding Tartu-Moscow semiotics. Several authors have already carried this out with excellence (SCHNAIDERMAN, 1979; FERREIRA, 2003; MACHADO, 2003, 2007). However, it is important to bring up some of the theoretical principles to demonstrate the dialogue between semiotics, as developed by Iuri Lotman, and the temporal and mnesic representations, found in the steampunk theatricality, codified by retrofuturism and, then, ascribe a communicational nature to these representations. For now, we will consider the concepts of semiosphere, the steampunk itself as a cultural text that works in it, the small levels of representations concerning the panchronic memory and time mentioned by Lotman. The objective is to observe them gradually.

According to Lotman, culture needs to be translated as a system of signs that can codify it. This process generates texts, culture or cultural texts, that is, the information codified in a certain way that is introduced to the collective memory (PIRES-FERREIRA, 2003). For this semioticist, the signic actions of the culture occur in the semiosphere, out of which the existence of semiosis is impossible – precisely, the action of signs, the production of communication and the generation of meanings.

Understanding the semiosphere as a space of cultural signs and a semiotic continuum – to reflect about the temporal aspect of Lotman's concepts – where the codification and decodification processes take place, leads us to think about the mechanisms of translation, permanence, transmission and exclusion of signs, codes and texts. These processes are essential to study the memory of culture and steampunk itself, originated right from the translation of several systems of signs: of the 19th-century fiction literature, as written by Jules Verne, with that of the 20th century, such as the cyberpunk, and including some contemporary media narratives. In these plays of translation, steampunk appears as a recent language system, in which certain signs and

codes continue, some are resignified, others are the excluded, and new ones are created, constituting a new cultural text, a new semiotic life.

The concept of explosion seems proper here, not in the meaning of destruction but as a novelty: "the birth of a new living creature or any other creative transformation of the structure of life" (LOTMAN, 2009, p.10).[23] The explosive processes, according to him, refer to the way that new messages are originated in the communicational process. Therefore, we can observe another indication of temporal representations in the work of this Tartu semioticist: explosion as an indication of birth. Certainly, the birth of a temporality expressed in the duration of a certain semiotic system.

Thus, steampunk and the languages it brings are perceived in an explosive manner. The unprecedented and unpredictable productions of costumes worn by steamers or the narratives and characters they create are examples. As an illustration, we could observe one costume designed by a young engineer who called himself Alexander Leader Boss, interviewed at SteamCon III.[24] He was wearing a crossover of steampunk Darth Vader; that is, he combined the famous character of the classic film Star Wars with some steampunk items. Or as he puts it: "I chose to finish it [his helmet], making it look like copper. I had a bunch of electronic parts so I glued them onto it. This, for example, [pointing to his head] is a remote control of a toy car. You find something, look at it and think: where can I put it?" (LEADER BOSS, 2015).[25]

Considering the aspect of steampunk as a cultural text, the result and propellant of explosive processes, we can understand it in connection with other texts, as some media narratives from the mainstream cinematographic productions, such as Star Wars, that vivify, in the oral narrative, the steampunk character conceived by the imagination of steamers. These dialogic meetings and translation processes are possible initially due to the comprehension of the semiosphere as dynamic and to its mechanism of boundary. According to the Tartu-Moscow semioticist: "the boundary is a bilingual mechanism that translates the external messages into the internal language of the semiosphere and

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[23] For reference, see footnote 3.
[24] SteamCon III took place in Paranapiacaba/Santo André, SP in 2015.
[25] In the original: "dei um acabamento para ele [seu capacete] parecer cobre, peguei um monte de peças de eletrônica e fui colando, isso aqui [apontando para sua cabeça] é de controle remoto de carrinho. Você pega o material, olha pra ele e diz: onde eu poderia encaixar isso aqui?"

vice versa" (LOTMAN, 1996, p.26).[26] This seems to be the communicational mechanism allowing the steampunk to expand to languages such as cinema, comic books, animation, oral narratives (when available), and costumes. In each expansion we can observe a textual life embryo subjected to temporal conditions to remain in the culture and memory, given the longevity of texts and codes. Time and memory are combined.

In view of the functioning of the semiosphere, Lotman admits that culture is memory. "From the semiotic point of view, culture is a collective intelligence and a collective memory, that is, a supraindividual mechanism of conservation and transmission of certain communications (texts) and the elaboration of new ones" (LOTMAN, 1996, p.157).[27] Some consequences result from these assertions, for a common memory can be recognized there. In another study, Lotman and Uspenskii (1981) pointed to certain characteristics or required circumstances for culture to organize and preserve information. One of them is the longevity of texts and codes.

Longevity corresponds to a temporal extension, to the continuity of the culture itself; it is responsible for a hierarchy of values: "the texts considered as the most valid are those showing more longevity, from a point of view of a certain culture and according to its criteria" (LOTMAN; USPENSKII, 1981, p.43).[28] However, the longevity of the code is perceived by its capacity of changing while preserving the memory of precedent conditions. In turn, for culture to be a long life memory as well, the authors mention: a) the increase in the volume of texts composing different parts of the culture's hierarchical system; b) the redistribution of memorable facts and, therefore, its hierarchical valorization and uninterrupted reorganization of the codifying system, making it possible to increase the volume of memory by creating unactualized reserves although potentially actualizable; and finally, they mention oblivion as an element of memory, selecting elements to transform into texts and abandoning others.

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[26] In Spanish: "La frontera es un mecanismo bilingüe que traduce los mensajes externos al lenguaje interno de la semiosfera y a la inversa."

[27] In Spanish: "Desde el punto de vista de la semiótica, la cultura es una inteligencia colectiva y una memoria colectiva, esto es, un mecanismo supraindividual de conservación y transmisión de ciertos comunicados (textos) y de elaboración de otros nuevos."

[28] In Portuguese: "os textos que podem considerar-se mais válidos são os de maior longevidade, do ponto de vista e segundo os critérios de determinada cultura."

Mobility and dynamism, specific to the semiosphere, contribute in such a way that texts, albeit heterogenous and dialogic in themselves, can reach different hierarchies and be uninterruptedly redistributed, updated, reaching stability during a certain period as a reaction of what is elected as memory in a specific culture.

It is equally interesting that he points to differences between informative memory and creative memory. The informative memory refers to a conservative aspect of the memory related to texts, in which mechanisms for maintaining the results of a certain cognoscitive activity are included. This type of memory has the nature of a plan, arranged in only one temporal activity and subordinated to a chronologic order. On the other hand, the creative memory potentially makes not only the whole text but also its final results active. An example is the memory of art.

The updating of artistic texts in the semiosphere is related to sophisticated laws of motion referring to culture in general. Besides, the idea that only a recently produced text is more valuable should not be considered, because archaic texts may be activated and become memorable sign articulations at a certain time. If we agree with Lotman that oblivion and memory draw a sinusoidal pattern in culture, we should understand that certain texts are illuminated by memory, while others, submersed in the semiosphere, live in a state of potentiality, but do not disappear. This fluctuation of texts, some activated and others as potential texts, characterizes the semiotic continuum. That is how Lotman imagines the panchronic memory, especially the creative memory operations that "have a panchronic and spatially continuous nature" (LOTMAN, 1996, p.159).[29] These memory and time conceptions are very close to retrofuturism, as proposed by the steampunk.

As discussed in the previous section, retrofuturism does not create a future ahead of time, but a parallel one. According to During (2013), they are floating futures, full of reserved power, even when deactivated. It is impossible not to think here about the perspectives of Iuri Lotman, his interpretation of semiosphere, of the cultural texts operating in it, of the panchronic memory and, consequently, the temporal relations there involved. In retrofuturism, parallel worlds work like the present. During (2013) refers to William Gibson (2011) when assuming the proposition that the "future is already here; it is only not homogeneously distributed [...] and if the future is already

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[29] In Spanish: "tiene un carácter pancrónico, espacial-continuo."

here, it means it is 'still' here as a swarm of futures, propelled by the old times" (DURING, 2013, p.225).[30] This apparently paradoxical statement can be interpreted in the light of Lotman's concepts of time and memory. The cultural memory, especially the creative and panchronic memory, keeps the past as something that is here. "From the point of view of memory as a mechanism that operates in full volume, the past is not over" (LOTMAN, 1996, p.159).[31] He confers on memory an active role for the generation of new texts in the semiosphere continuum. For this reason, he supports that texts are not only originated in the present: they are equally engendered from the past of the culture in its most remote and hidden places.

Lotman's semiotics allows the understanding of the complexity of the phenomena concerning juvenile theatricalities – taking steampunk into consideration – because, thanks to the dynamism of culture and memory, the cultural texts are not understood as storages, but as generators. Lotman assures it assertively: "Senses in the memory of the culture are not stored – they grow. The texts that form the common memory of a cultural collectivity serve as means not only to decipher texts that circulate in the contemporary synchronic section of the culture, but also to create new texts" (LOTMAN, 1996, p.160).[32]

Consequently, we agree that from the past, which is always here, the future can be promoted to be always here, too. Thus, hybrid texts, the so-called "historical chimeras," emerge as described by During (2013). Stemming from the texts of the Victorian past, they can be imagined thanks to the interpolation of the future – produced by the materialities of the present. Through retrofuturism we can contemplate not a temporal syntagmatic structure, but also a semiotic continuum in which times do not follow a linearly codified time, but a generational procedure of meanings that create texts out of texts: embryonic, pulsing texts, the origins of multiple temporalities.

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[30] In Portuguese: "o futuro já está aí, apenas não está distribuído de forma homogênea (...) e se o futuro já está aí, é porque ele 'ainda' está aí, sob a forma de um enxame de futuros propulsados pelas épocas passadas."
[31] In Spanish: "Desde el punto de vista de la memoria como mecanismo que trabaja con todo su grueso, el pretérito no ha pasado."
[32] In Spanish: "Los sentidos en la memoria de la cultura no 'se conservan', sino que crecen. Los textos que forman la 'memoria común' de una colectividad cultural, no sólo sirven de medio de desciframiento de los textos que circulan en el corte sincrónico contemporáneo de la cultura, sino que también generan nuevos textos."

For a Memory of the Future – Final Remarks

Lotman's teachings are amazing and invite us to interpret them in a quite unconventional way. That is the reason for examining the concept of memory as a property of the semiosphere and the text as well as its panchronic texture. The objective of this study is to read the temporal and mnesic representations, expressed in the steampunk, through a dialogue with the studies of the Tartu-Moscow's semioticist. Not only are learnings acquired, but some suggestions are also put forward.

Although memory tends to be related to anteriority, a temporal mark of the remembered thing, as Paul Ricoeur (2004),[33] based on the *Parva Naturalia* of Aristoteles, so well emphasizes, in Lotman memory may be related to the future. And here, his ideas dialogue with those of historian Marry Caruthers (2003)[34] and of Paolo Jedlowski (2016), the sociologist of memory, which are valuable to retrofuturism. We will start with Lotman's point of view.

The principle that "memory is not a passive storage for culture, but a part of its mechanism for text production" (LOTMAN, 1996, p.161)[35] already offers some clues to understand memory based on a processual and generative dynamism. That is, it is a driving memory for that which is expected: the coming text. Further on, we can refer to Lotman when he states that culture, and consequently its texts, are originated by explosive or gradual processes. The explosive process, especially the artistic one, "stokes up the emaciated forecasts of technical progress in the sea of unpredictability" (LOTMAN, 2009, p.122).[36] Nothing seems so adequate as to think of steampunk as a cultural text: computers emitting smoke, flying steam trains... Lotman (2009)[37] adds that artistic texts expand the space of unpredictability. And, if memory is the genesis, when creating an explosive text, it produces the future: unknown, expected in dreams and in the imagination – unpredictable.

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[33] RICOEUR, P. *Memory, History, Forgetting.* Translated by Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004.
[34] CARRUTHERS, M. *The Craft of Thought:* Meditation, Rhetoric, and the Making of Images, 400-1200. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
[35] In Spanish: "La memoria no es para la cultura un depósito pasivo, sino que constituye una parte de su mecanismo formador de textos."
[36] For reference, see footnote 3.
[37] For reference, see footnote 3

The idea of memory of the future circulates in several fields of knowledge. Marry Carruthers (2003),[38] as mentioned before (NUNES; BIN, 2018, p.15), resorts to the art of medieval memory to bring the memory machine, *machina memorialis*, which is all it takes to produce something new. Linked to rhetoric, the art of memory presents the principle of reminiscent cogitation; that is, it shuffles "'things' stored in a random-access memory scheme, or set of schemes" (CARRUTHERS, 2003, p.4).[39] Here, the English historian refers to the use of tools as tropes and figures, with the intention of inventive use. In the monastic communities, to remember is to generate a mental vision, to see invisible things through materials produced by memory. An interesting example is the trope Remember Heaven, fundamental for Augustine's *City of God*. As Carruthers (2003)[40] states, the trope is a call for action from the present to the future as heaven was real for those medieval monks. In her proposition to understand the cognitive path of composition as rememorative, which involves remembering acts, mnemonic operations and apprehensions of other memories, she adds that human cognition can be understood in terms of routes and paths. Finally, she explains that the mnemonic technique, elaborated as a compositional art, is close to what we call imagination, creativity and even visionary experiences.

Inventive memory, one of memory's typologies in the scope of consumption, identified in research about juvenile theatricalities (NUNES, 2017), reveals this compositional memory produced by steampunk groups: it is visionary and made of bricolage, either through narrative actions or the use of second hand, obsolete, recycled material – and even changed on purpose to look old. Steampunk productions are also memories of the future. The semiotic *continuum* that makes worlds or parallel semiospheres possible, guiding us to retrofuturism, allows thinking about memories that are less committed to the past as it really was and more similar to potential texts, right before they are produced.

These are memories that emerge with a fabular tone: the tone of planning and assembling things that are not found in the world of facts. Although the memory of the future in mediatic cultural texts is still under investigation (NUNES, BIN, 2018;

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[38] For reference, see footnote 35.
[39] For reference, see footnote 35.
[40] For reference, see footnote 35.

NUNES, BIN, LOBATO, 2018), it seems valid to add Paolo Jedlowski's perspective to these inconclusive reflections. He believes that "the past does not exist as a not-anymore; but as a not-yet" (GRANDE, 2017).[41] This assumption is similar to Lotman's (1996) proposition that the pasts in course in the semiosphere can also be imagined. They are hopeful, panchronic or uchronic pasts that somehow communicate with other futures.

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[41] In Portuguese: "o passado não existe como um não-mais, mas como ainda-não."

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