

National Research University “Higher School of Economics”

Institute of Scientific Information for Social Sciences  
of the Russian Academy of Sciences

Popular-science magazine “Znanie – Sila” (“Knowledge Is Power”)

**Evolution of Human Capacities to Know and to Act**  
**or**  
**How to convert knowledge into power?**

International Conference

Moscow, 28-30 October 2019

The conference motto is “*Scientia potentia est*”. We use it to refer to the original third maxim of the first book of *Novum Organum*. It runs, “*Scientia et Potentia humana in idem coincidunt, quia ignoratio causae destituit effectum. Natura enim non nisi parendo vincitur: Et quod in Contemplatione instar causas est; id in Operatione instar Regulae est*” (“Human knowledge and human power meet in one; for where the cause is not known the effect cannot be produced. Nature to be commanded must be obeyed; and that which in contemplation appears as the cause turns into the rule in operation”).

The conference is devoted to the study of cognitive and agentic capacities in transdisciplinary perspective. It is focused on the fundamental mechanisms of learning and knowing in the contexts of biological and cultural evolution, as well as in the methodological perspective of transdisciplinary research and education. The participants of the conference are invited to explore the limits and thresholds in the use of the concepts of agency, cognition and meaning. Findings from biological, social and political studies will be discussed in the context of evolutionary morphology, social semiotics and cognitive science.

A major track of the debate is problem of transdisciplinary interfaces of biological, social and semiotic research. It would focus on research outcomes of the INION RAN project “Knowledge Transfers and Convergence of Methodological Practices” (supported by Russian Science Foundation). The project investigates advancement of scientific methods by exploring how they can be reductively “purified” to elementary cognitive skills and, correspondingly, how primary cognitive abilities can be ‘saturated’ and advanced to scientific techniques of enquiry.

## Preliminary Program

### 28 October, Monday

15:00-15:30	Registration
15:30-17:30	<p>Opening session. Chair: Ivan Fomin</p> <p>Welcome addresses by Andrey Melville, dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences of NRU HSE, Alexei Kuznetsov, acting director of the Institute of Scientific Information on Social Sciences of RAS (INION RAS)</p> <p>Presenters: Mikhail Ilyin (RSF project “Knowledge transfer and convergence of methodological practices: cases of interdisciplinary integration of political, biological and linguistic research”), Suren Zolyan (RSF project “Mechanisms of meaning formation and textualization in social narrative and performative discourses and practices”)</p> <p>Discussants: Sergey Chebanov, Peter Torop</p>
18:10-19:30	Open lecture by Bob Hodge “Knowledge, power and complexity”
19:45	Dinner

### 29 October, Tuesday

10:00-12:00	<p>Session 1a. Fundamental Mechanisms of Learning and Knowing (I) Chair: Bob Hodge Discussant: Anton Sukhoverkhov Presenters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Machiel Keestra. Brittleness and bias: Benefits and risks of the social and individual co-evolution of cognition and action (by Skype)</li> <li>• Helena Knyazeva. Life sciences and social sciences: Conceptual innovations at their meeting point</li> <li>• Mark Pharoah. The known, the unknown, and the unknowable</li> <li>• Brian McLoone. The role of imagination in science</li> </ul>
12:00-12:30	Coffee break
12:30-14:00	<p>Session 1b. Fundamental Mechanisms of Knowing and Learning (II) Chair: Brian McLoone Discussant: Helena Knyazeva Presenters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mikhail Ilyin. Semiotic embodiment and disembodiment of information</li> <li>• Anton Sukhoverkhov. The origin of cognition, communication, and language: the pragmatic turn</li> <li>• Sergey Chebanov. Double standards of semantic studies in bio- and anthroposemiotics</li> </ul>
14:00-15:00	Lunch
15:00-17:00	<p>Session 2a. Meaning and Cognition in Transdisciplinary Perspective (I) Chair: Mark Pharoah Discussant: Ivan Fomin Presenters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suren Zolyan. Sign asymmetry and transfer / translation complexities in various semiotic and information domains (biological, lingual, sociocultural etc.)</li> <li>• Anti Randviir. Is there any knowledge for (virtual) semiosis needed anymore?</li> <li>• Peeter Torop. Divergence in convergence: transmediality and transdisciplinary knowledge management</li> <li>• Aleksandr Spirov. The complexity and hierarchy of languages for the hereditary information unfolding in development</li> </ul>
	Coffee break
17:30-18:30	<p>Roundtable 1. How to ascend and descend the stairs of thought and signification. Chair: Suren Zolyan Discussant: Mikhail Ilyin</p>

**30 October, Wednesday**

9:30-10:30	Round table 2. What are the origins, history and prospects of social semiotics? Chair: Ivan Fomin Discussants: Anti Randvir and Suren Zolyan
10:30-11:30	Keynote presentation by Bob Hodge “Multimodality and a new typology of signs”
11:30-12:00	Coffee break
12:00-13:00	Roundtable 2. How to Perform Actions with Signs? Chair: Mikhail Ilyin Discussant: Suren Zolyan
13:00-14:00	Lunch
14:00-16:00	Session 2b. Meaning and Cognition in Transdisciplinary Perspective (II) Chair: Peeter Torop Discussant: Bob Hodge Presenters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tyler James Bennett. The sense in which semiotics remains a part of linguistics</li><li>• Sergey Chebanov. Power without knowledge. Human and animal engineering</li><li>• Mikhail Sushchin. Embodied cognition and externalist approach to memory</li><li>• Lukas Zamecnik. Pitfalls of postdisciplinary science</li></ul>
16:00-16:30	Coffee break
16:30-18:00	Session 3a. Political Action, Collective Knowledge, Social Semiosis Chair: Anti Randviir Discussant: Brian McLoone Presenters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Kirill Fokin. The importance of supernatural agent for a theory of political authority</li><li>• Aleksandr Alekseev. Democracy under threat! Strategies of the populist radical right in manipulating the concept of democracy</li><li>• Ivan Fomin. Logonomic signs in evolutionary perspective</li></ul>
18:00-18:15	Closing of the conference Chair: Mikhail Ilyin