



August 15-18, 2017

SUMMER



Tartu

SCHOOL

of semiotics

GENERALISING GENTLY

Tartu
Summer School of
Semiotics
2017

GENERALISING
GENTLY

—

Book of Abstracts

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Thus the basic problem of a general semiotics splits into three different questions: (a) Can one approach many, and apparently different phenomena of signification and/or of communication? (b) Is there a unified approach able to account for all these semiotic phenomena as if they were based on the same system of rules (the notion of system not being a mere analogical one)? (c) Is this approach a 'scientific' one?

- Umberto Eco,
Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language

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FOREWORD

The topic of TSSS 2017 is “Generalising Gently”, which addresses the central and problematic nature of generalisations in semiotic and semiotic processes. In this summer school we will discuss the particularities of semiotic knowledge as a form of generalised knowledge and focus on the role and functioning of different types of signs, sign systems and languages of culture as means of generalisation.

Semiotics relies on generalisations both at the level of knowledge production and at the level of its research objects. As a metadiscipline, semiotics provides the tools of translation between different scientific languages, exemplifying the complementarity of different kinds of knowledge in our understanding of reality. Semiotics as a discipline provides specific conceptual generalisations while modelling the semiotic constitution of reality. Besides the production of generalised knowledge, the processes that semiotics studies are themselves built on generalisation, such as perceptual categorisation and schematisation, the formation of behaviour patterns, language based modelling, cultural rituals, and habits.

While trying to provide generalised knowledge of different semiotic phenomena, a tension between the semiotic existence of the objects of study and the semiotic attempts at knowledge production is revealed. All generalisations decontextualise knowledge and yet, the objects of semiotic research (from organisms to cultures) are in principle contextual phenomena.

Generalised knowledge also strives towards atemporality—a claim for applicability to the past (the capacity of reconstruction) just as much as to the future (the capacity of predictions). Yet the generalisations and predictions face the necessary unpredictability of semiotic systems.

Generalisation is indispensable to cognition, but too often are the particulars of experience eclipsed by bad totalities. Uncareful generalisations can harm studied subjects and communities. Hence the necessity to conduct scientific generalisations in a responsible and gentle manner.

Welcome to Tartu Summer School of Semiotics 2017!

The organisers

HISTORY OF THE SUMMER SCHOOLS

The Summer Schools of Semiotics were initiated by Juri Lotman who, inspired by the first symposium on Modelling Systems in 1962, invited Moscow scholars for cooperation. At the end of 1963 Lotman wrote to Vladimir Toporov: “A. M. Piatigorsky wants you to know that together with the rector we have decided to organise a 10-day symposium in Tartu (near Tartu, in the forest near a lake), where we could invite about 20 people (more, I think, are not necessary), for a real discussion “between ourselves”.

The first Summer School took place from 19–29 August 1964 at the University of Tartu Kääriku sports centre. A separate 110 page compilation of theses was published, comprising 30 presentations. Participants were mainly philologists and mathematicians from Moscow and Tartu.

The second Summer School was held, as planned, two years later, from 16–26 August 1966 and included as guests Krystyna Pomorska and Roman Jakobson. The organising committee presented the following topics for the programme: typology of culture, typology of texts, modelling of space and time in semiotic systems, person and collective.

The third Summer School shifted to spring and was somewhat shorter, from 10–18 May 1968. Yet there were almost as many presentations as before – the 255 page compilation of theses includes 43 presentations.

The fourth Summer School in 1970 (17–24 August) took place in Tartu. Cultural semiotics was the general topic, with 42 presentations in the compilation of theses. Thomas Sebeok was present as a foreign guest, giving a talk on types of signs. In 1970, the Soviet authorities exerted an increasing pressure on semiotics, and volumes of *Sign Systems Studies* were

increasingly difficult to publish.

After the first All-Union Symposium on Semiotics of the Humanities in Tartu in February 1974 (Winter School), this period of Summer Schools came to its end. There was an attempt to reanimate them in 1986, when a Summer School took place in Kääriku.

In 1995, the Summer School was organised in Saarjärve for the first time by the Department of Semiotics that was formed a few years earlier. It was an international conference with over 30 presentations and in keeping with the Summer School's tradition, included discussions on central questions in semiotics.

A new period of Tartu Semiotics Summer Schools began in 2011 when it was organised in Palmse. The topic of the Summer School was semiotic modelling. In 2013, the Summer School took place in Kääriku, the topic was autocommunication in semiotic systems. In 2015, the Summer School was in Tartu, and in 2017, we have it in Tartu again.

The aim of the revived Summer School, as of its predecessor, is to provide an environment to converse about core issues in semiotics that are of disciplinary as well as transdisciplinary relevance. It aspires to promote dialogue between scholars and synthesis between approaches.

TARTU SEMIOTICS SUMMER SCHOOLS

- I – 1964, Kääriku
- II – 1966, Kääriku
- III – 1968, Kääriku
- IV – 1970, Tartu
- V – 1974, Tartu
- VI – 1986, Kääriku
- VII – 1995, Saarjärve
- VIII – 2011, Palmse - *Semiotic Modelling*
- IX – 2013, Kääriku - *Autocommunication in Semiotic Systems*
- X – 2015, Tartu - *Semiotic (Un)predictability*
- XI – 2017, Tartu - *Generalising Gently*

Two tendencies are ascertainable in the development of semiotics over the past 15 years. One has been toward refinement of the initial concepts and definition of procedures of generation. The striving for precise modeling procedures has led to the creation of metasemiotics: the object of study becomes not texts as such, but models of texts, models of models, etc. The second tendency concentrates its attention on the semiotic functioning of a real text. Whereas in the first case contradiction, structural inconsistency, the accommodation of differently structured texts within single textual formation, and semantic indeterminacy are random and nonfunctional attributes that can be removed at the metalevel of text modeling, from the second standpoint they are the object of special attention.

- Juri Lotman,
“The Semiotics of culture and the concept of a text”

CONFERENCE PROGRAM



LOCATIONS

REGISTRATION

on Tuesday morning : Näituse 2
during summer school : Näituse 2

INFORMATION AND BOOK SALE

open during registration and coffee breaks : Näituse 2

PLENARY LECTURES AND PRESENTATIONS

when in Tartu : Näituse 2

RECEPTION

University of Tartu Botanical Garden, Lai 38

CULTURE EVENT

Näituse 2

BUS TO LEIGO

bus leaves from lower parking lot of Vanemuine theatre (Ülikooli str)

TUESDAY, AUGUST 15 – TARTU, Näituse 2

09:00-10:45	Registration	
10:45-11:00	Opening	
	SESSION A (moderator: Maarja Ojamaa)	
11:00-12:30	Peeter Torop	From intersemiotic translation to digital reading
	Alexandra Milyakina, Tatjana Pilipoveca	Literary tourism: augmenting the reality, deconstructing the literary text
	Tyler Bennett	Habitual overgeneralisations: Ideology as semiotic closure and the ultimate interpretant
12:30-14:00	Lunch	
14:00-15:00	PLENARY TALK Robert Innis - Paths of Abstraction between Feeling and Form (moderator: Timo Maran)	
15:00-15:30	Break	
	SESSION B (moderator: Andreas Ventsel)	
15:30-17:30	Alin Olteanu	Gently Generalising Learning
	Zdzisław Wąsik	Epistemology – a theory of general knowledge or specific knowledge production?: Towards a semio-mathetic cartography of human learning and knowing
	Sebastian Feil	Solidarity or Generality?
	Kyle Davidson	Does the Symbolic Language of Technology Generalise Culture?
19:00	RECEPTION (University of Tartu Botanical Garden, Lai 38)	

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 16 – TARTU, Näituse 2

SESSION C (moderator: Tyler Bennett)	
9:00-11:00	Massimo Leone The Semiotic Scale
	Ian Weatherseed Generally Useless No More
	Tiit Remm Local generalisations or spatiality in semiotic society-making
	Andreas Ventsel and Mari-Liis Madisson Semiotics of risk and Estonian e-threats
11:00-11:30	Break
PLENARY TALK	
11:30-12:30	Denis Bertrand - Semiotics in France: Post-Greimassian research (moderator: Ekaterina Velmezova)
12:30-14:00	Lunch break
SESSION D (moderator: Katre Pärn)	
14:00-16:00	Kristin Vaik Handling historical inconvenience in Estonian literary histories published in Soviet Estonia
	Elin Sütiste Translation seen through the prism of the Tartu-Moscow School of Semiotics
	Alexandra Milyakina, Maarja Ojamaa, Tatjana Pilipoveca, Merit Rickberg, Liina Sieberk Generalising cinematic adaptation for educational context: a case study
	Mihhail Lotman The problem of realism and nominalism in the semiotics of culture
16:00-16:30	Break
SESSION E (moderator: Elin Sütiste)	
16:30-18:00	Alexandr Fadeev, Galina Danilova, Peeter Torop Semiotic approach in cultural education
	Ekaterina Velmezova Generalising <i>semiology</i> : on early stages in the reception of one Saussurean concept
	Merit Rickberg Generalising the history: creating a relationship with the past in the Estonian schoolbooks for the 5 th grade
18:00	CULTURE EVENT: book presentation (Näituse 2)

THURSDAY, AUGUST 17 – LEIGO

9:00	Departure from Tartu to Leigo
10:00	Welcome coffee at Leigo
	SESSION F (moderator: Filip Jaroš)
10:30-12:30	Jensine I. Nedergaard Making Sense on the Border of the Body: Theory of Semiotic Skin
	Luca Tateo Imaginative and Affective Logic in Semiosis
	Giuseppina Marsico Semiosis of the In-between: Sign processes in social “membranes”
	Kalevi Kull On generalisations in biosemiotics
12:30-13:30	Lunch
13:30-14:30	PLENARY TALK Jaan Valsiner - Abductive Generalization in Science: Semiosis of emergent rationality (moderator: Riin Magnus)
14:30-15:00	Lunch break
	SESSION G (moderator: Tiit Remm)
15:00-16:30	Konstantinos Michos Scientific Knowledge as Generalisation of our Perception
	Katre Pärn The general, the plural and the predictable: the modelling and pragmatic capacity of semiotic modelling systems
	Gerald Ostdiek When signs go bad: the problem of sentiment in generalised interpretants
16:30-17:00	Break
17:00-18:00	DISCUSSION with the Aalborg university group
18:00-20:00	Dinner, sauna
20:00	Departure from Leigo to Tartu

FRIDAY, AUGUST 18 – TARTU, Näituse 2

SESSION H (moderator: Riin Magnus)	
9:00-11:00	Mirko Cerrone Generalisation principles and the role of mother tongue in second language acquisition: a model for the Inter-specific Communication Experiments
	Filip Jaroš Social cognition of animals: a gently constructivist biosemiotic approach
	Elżbieta Magdalena Wašik Pattern as a gentle generalisation in the symmathesy of living systems: Bridging the ecology of mind with biosemiotics
	Timo Maran Generalising Strangely: Dark Umwelts, Semicide and Modelling with Imaginary Forests
SESSION I (parallel) (moderator: Merit Rickberg)	
9:00-11:00	Auli Kütt Constructing values in a decentralised organisation: the case of OuiShare
	Thierry Mortier $I=f(O)$
	Aynur Rahmanova Bakhtin vs. Bakhtin: re-evaluating carnival
	Aleksandar Feodorov Peirce's garden of forking metaphors
11:00-11:30	Break
11:30-12:30	PLENARY TALK Frederik Stjernfelt - Generalities in the sciences (moderator: Kalevi Kull)
12:30-14:00	Lunch break
SESSION J (moderator: Mari-Liis Madisson)	
14:00-15:30	Letícia Vitral and João Queiroz Artworks as models: a diagrammatic approach
	Krista Simson Interpreting Kandinsky's theory of art: the creation of visual art, and the digital era
	Tereza Arndt Generalising structures in secondary modeling systems
15:30-16:00	Break
16:00-17:30	DISCUSSION WITH PLENARY SPEAKERS (moderator: Kalevi Kull)

In order to transmit some experience or content of consciousness to another person, there is no other path than to ascribe the content to a known class, to a known group of phenomena, and as we know this necessarily involves *generalization*. Thus it turns out that *social interaction necessarily presupposes generalization and the development of word meaning*, i.e. generalization becomes possible in the presence of the development of social interaction. Thus higher, uniquely human forms of psychological human interaction are possible only because human thinking reflects reality in a general way.

[..] the basic distinguishing characteristic of the word is the generalized reflection of reality.

- Lev Vygotsky,
Izbrannie psikhologicheskie issledovani

PLENARY LECTURES

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SEMIOTICS IN FRANCE: POST-GREIMASSIAN RESEARCH

Denis Bertrand
University of Paris VIII

2017 is the year of the 100th anniversary of A. J. Greimas – a time to pay homage and to look into the future. The seminar will revisit the main concepts and methods of his Narrative and Discursive Semiotics and study the five main orientations in semiotic research since Greimas' death:

Tensive Semiotics,
Semiotics of enunciative instances,
Semiotics of interactions,
Semiotics of Practical Operations, and
Semiotics of Iconicity.

This will be done via studying examples, with more focus on complementary than opposing conceptions. In addition, the tools will be used to investigate the fascinating field of political discourses in France's election year.

PATHS OF ABSTRACTION BETWEEN FEELING AND FORM

Robert E. Innis

University of Massachusetts Lowell and Aalborg University

Abstraction is a semiotically important ‘border concept’ with a rich history, appearing in different contexts and disciplines: philosophical, psychological, linguistic, sociological, economic, and so forth. Abstraction is both an *action* and a *process* occurring in what Peirce called ‘the bottomless lake of consciousness.’ It occurs at the borders of our differentiated creation of the Jamesian worlds or universes of meaning or significance, what Ernst Cassirer called the ‘form worlds’ in which we live out our lives. Abstraction creates or recognises the significant joints in experience and the dynamic life-lines or intentional bonds that involve all levels of our lives as embodied, feeling, acting, and sign-using beings, carried in, or enfolded in, the flux of time. Understanding abstractive processes — and models of abstractive processes — involves reflecting especially on the complex interplay between perceptual and affective processes and their relationship to explicitly semiotic processes as defining the ultimate matrices of our lives. In her *Philosophy in a New Key*, following up hints from Gestalt psychology, Susanne Langer argued that “meaning accrues essentially to forms,” which emerge, with varying degrees of spontaneity and control, from processes of perception and the segregation of the experiential field. “The abstractions made by the ear and the eye — the form of direct perception — are our most primitive instruments of intelligence. They are genuine symbolic material, media of understanding, by whose office we apprehend a world of things, and of events that are the history of things.” Accordingly, for Langer, not only is a symbol “any device whereby we are enabled to make an abstraction” but abstraction is ‘pushed down’ to the fundamental levels of sentience

and affectivity and ‘pushed up’ to the whole realm of circulating symbolic forms that make up cultural life as intersecting webs of signification and communication. This lecture will chart from the point of view of a philosophically oriented semiotics the variety of and relations between pivotal ways we can thematise abstractive processes. Not only does a ‘big tent’ semiotic framework throw a powerful light on the complex problem of abstraction, but focusing on the problem of abstraction and how to model it also illuminates the scope and nature of the multiple forms —perceptual, affective, linguistic, aesthetic, cultural — semiosis both takes and gives rise to.

GENERALITIES IN THE SCIENCES



Frederik Stjernfelt

Aalborg University, Department of Communication and Psychology

My contention is that generality is a much more pervasive issue in the sciences than often assumed. Aristotle famously said that there are only sciences of the general, while some neo-Kantians thought there were sciences of the universal and the particular, respectively. But even “idiographic” descriptions of singular events strive for making such events understandable in terms of the use of general predicates, laws, patterns, tendencies, the specific variations of which are judged explanatory of the particular. This paper compares some classical accounts for generality in the sciences and particularly zooms in on the distinction between “regional ontological” (Husserl’s concept) general concepts on the one hand, and “empirical universals” on the other hand. Can they be distinguished, how can they be distinguished, and how are these aims connected to the relation between philosophy and the sciences?

ABDUCTIVE GENERALISATION IN SCIENCE: SEMIOSIS OF EMERGENT RATIONALITY

Jaan Valsiner

Aalborg University, Niels Bohr Professorship Centre of Cultural Psychology

Scientific knowledge entails generalisation that happens on the border of what is already known and what is not yet known. In contrast to the processes of *deduction* (based on what is believed to be known) and *induction* (what is partially known but impossible to generalise), the operation of *abduction* suggested by Charles Sanders Peirce in late 19th century offers a realistic alternative (generalising from inductive evidence to believable abstract explanation). Abduction would guarantee the investigation of emergent rationality for new generalisations in the sciences, yet it remains in principle incapable of proof of adequacy of the semiosis of generalisation since it operates backwards in irreversible time. Hence it provides gentle — rather than robust — solutions to the generalisation problem.

ABSTRACTS

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GENERALISM STRUCTURES IN SECONDARY MODELLING SYSTEMS

Tereza Arndt

Charles University in Prague

The main aim of the speech is to explore if there is a possible generalisation structure of value in the language of art. Is it possible to separate a form of the organising principle of artworks, which would bear out their essential mechanism? The transparency of the text is often determined by a sufficient amount of identification, for example their emotional or anthropological nature. They might be articulated through different positions of human study. This issue is based on the assumption that the process of generalisation (for example, basic human emotional responses) leads toward the understanding of artworks. In contradiction, Jan Mukařovský, Czech philosopher and linguist from the Prague linguistic circle, who was working with complex systems, refused generalisation as a danger which could reduce the text to banality or vague categories. In his work *Intentionality and Unintentionality in Art (Study 1)* he connects generalisation with semantic gesture. The function of semantic gesture is not limited only to a systematisation of all of the work's components, or to the organisation of external relations, but is extended to the birth and perception of the artwork. So the main question is, if the artwork is open to the reader through references to shared archetypes and values which are hidden inside of its structure, or if the artwork, as a unique ensemble of signs, stands in front of the spectator as an invitation for active participation which would enrich his aesthetic experience. Another task of the paper is the question of an artwork transformation determined by culture environment. If the text is transformed from one culture environment to another, is it possible to understand it, if we skip this ensemble of essential values? And

what happens if we change the medium? The reference in this sense might be understood as an intention, through which we should interpret the artwork, or as an impulse for the creation of a new piece. In this case we would be rather interested in the possible absence of components, which we share across cultures. By analysing cultural products, I would like to find out if the presence of the generalisation of values in artworks is only as communicational intention and narrative, or if it's a norm which secures understanding among different cultures.

HABITUAL OVERGENERALISATIONS: IDEOLOGY AS SEMIOTIC CLOSURE AND THE ULTIMATE INTERPRETANT

—

Tyler James Bennett

University of Tartu, Department of Semiotics

Generalisation implies a kind of closure. Overgeneralisations such as stereotypes are cases where ‘the particulars of experience are subsumed under bad totalities’. We must be careful not to “demonize the act of semiotic closure” (Eagleton 1991: 197), but at the same time ungentle generalisations should be exposed for what they are. Critique of ideology as a tool for destabilising bad totalities has lost favor for two reasons. From one perspective, the fall of the Soviet Union and rise of global capitalism was tantamount to the end of ideology. From another perspective, critique of ideology implies a too strong belief in absolute truth and metaphysical grounds. The former perspective is dismissed out of hand as facile. The latter perspective is of central interest.

Terry Eagleton gives a list of sixteen definitions of ideology (Ibid. 1). The final chapter of the book deals with the thirteenth definition, “semiotic closure”. In his portrayal, ideology-as-semiotic closure, as it is expressed in post-structuralist and post-Marxist critique, exhibits the faults of ‘moral relativism’ and the ‘inflation of discourse’. Absent a few exceptions, this claim is not challenged here. He then implies that these two faults result from the fact that post-structuralism and post-Marxism rely on semiotics as a theoretic coordinate (Ibid. 209). This association of semiotics with moral relativism and the inflation of discourse is here disputed. Peircean ‘semiotic realism’ provides an alternative, integrated theoretic framework sufficient to reconciling the variant approaches to the semiotics of ideology

(Nöth 2004), without imposing the kind of relativism that bothers critics like Eagleton so much.

Semiotic realism simultaneously accepts a world exterior to discourse, that we can gain access to it, and the claim that all knowledge of that world is mediated by signs. Knowledge of the dynamic object is gained through collateral observation of a series of immediate objects, but this does not imply that the dynamic object is reducible to that series (Short 2007: 192-195). Every observation entails a generalisation in the form of a dynamic interpretant, which retroactively modifies the previous one. However, there are cases in which collateral observation and deliberation are reduced to a minimum (Short 2007: 201). There are even cases where inquiry into the dynamic object and production of new generalisations about it terminate completely into a concrete habit of action, called the ultimate interpretant. Some read this ultimate interpretant as the source of all meaning and condition of the success or failure of the sign (Short 2007; Rosenthal 1990). Others read Peirce's writings on this topic more ambiguously. If the ultimate interpretant is in fact the habit of habit change, rather than a "habit that would change no more" (Nöth 2016: 60), how is it that the ultimate interpretant is not then translated into a new sign? If, on the other hand, it is indeed a habit that changes no more, can that concrete habit of action be based on an incorrect observation of the dynamic object? That is, can an ultimate interpretant be out of alignment with the final interpretant of the same dynamic object (Lalor 1997: 38)? What are the ways in which an ultimate interpretant can come to be out of alignment with the final interpretant? The Peircean articulation of the types of ideology-as-semiotic closure can be found somewhere here.

These and other Peircean distinctions help to reformulate persistent questions in the critique of ideology, such as whether ideology is value-neutral or pejorative, the difference between 'false consciousness' and 'enlightened false consciousness', the place of discourse-independent reality in the formation of ideologies, the status of ideology as either conceptual or as affective 'lived experience', and the possible conditions for estimating the truth or falsity of value-based generalisations.

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GENERALISATION PRINCIPLES AND THE ROLE
OF MOTHER TONGUE IN SECOND LANGUAGE
ACQUISITION:
A MODEL FOR THE INTERSPECIFIC
COMMUNICATION EXPERIMENTS

Mirko Cerrone

University of Tartu, Department of Semiotics

Second Language Acquisition (SLA) plays a central role in the contemporary world, due to the growing need to communicate with people of other nationalities and cultural backgrounds.

This presentation has two distinct, yet interconnected aims. On the one hand, we aim to discuss recent developments in Second Language Education, and on the other hand, our objective is to connect these with the methodologies utilised in the Interspecific Communication Experiments (ICE). Current treatments of the ICE lack a deeper understanding of the role of generalisation principles in SLA and err in underestimating the function of mother tongue in the acquisition of a foreign language. With this presentation, we aim to contribute to the field of interspecific communication by discussing the importance of the generalisation principles in the SLA, simultaneously uncovering the significance of mother tongue in foreign language learning.

Recent work by Rappoport and Sheinman has shown that students of foreign languages are driven by the desire to form generalisation over the input. The authors have designed an SLA scheme that is based on incremental learning: each example causes an upgrade to the previous model. Examples are given to the students, who in return form generalised knowledge based

on similarities between the examples provided. In their methodological approach, language learning does not rely on the traditional teaching of grammar and syntax but builds on a generative approach and is achieved through corpora selection.

Similar approaches can be found in the field of artificial intelligence (AI). Recent work in the field, such as that of the DeepMind technology (<https://deepmind.com/>), focuses on the supervised reading comprehension data set, which consists in the insertion of paraphrased sentences and summaries of articles with their related content, that can be converted upon request by the machine and used to answer given questions. This idea moves away from the traditional approaches that were based on the coding of vocabularies and preprogrammed grammars and instead focuses on the text as a whole, from which the computer will extract information. This process is strongly based on generalisation principles. An advantage of such approach is that computers can generalise information at a higher degree; additionally, it provides the computer with concrete texts and, more importantly, environmental information which was neglected in previous approaches.

The generalisation principles that seem so important in contemporary machine learning are, however, missing in the ICE research programmes. The experiments maintain a traditional approach and refuse to take into account the more recent understanding of the mechanisms behind language acquisition. In this context, we theorise that the research paradigms behind the ICE could benefit from the latest developments of AI and SLA, in particular, because the AI paradigm brings forward the necessity of environmental information and the already mentioned generalisation principles underlying language acquisition. We believe that these can enrich the ICE paradigms by distancing the teaching practices used in the ICE from the highly artificial experimental settings in which they are still absorbed and could bring the language taught to animals closer to real life situations. Finally, by discussing the role of mother tongue in SLA, we will shed light on the possible implications of its absence in the process of language acquisition in other animal species.

DOES THE SYMBOLIC LANGUAGE OF TECHNOLOGY GENERALISE CULTURE?

Kyle J. Davidson

University of Tartu, Department of Semiotics

It is one of the characteristics of our modern technology that one can travel to any country in the world, pick up a laptop or mobile phone and immediately, without too much struggle, perform a variety of simply tasks – sending an SMS text or email for example. Our ability to decode the native language and follow the instructions on the screen is of no importance when performing these tasks. This is because there are certain symbolic icons that exist in all technological interfaces that do not vary between cultures and don't rely on traditional language.

However, with most of these iconic signposts originating from America and to a lesser extent, Western Europe, is this new language of the web starting to flatten and corrupt the online identity of the smaller, less developed cultures? Are we at risk of allowing signs generalising the cultural identity of the online sphere into an extension of America?

Is this a problem though? It is unique that something as complex as the internet can be made accessible to all ages and cultures, across a multitude of technological interfaces, and it's because of the familiarity of these icons and the introduction of a few key English phrases that the opportunities afforded by the internet become universally comprehensible.

The problem with such a process of generalisation of course is that not all cultures are the same. There are differences between people and these differences originate with language and aesthetics, but can affect politics and morality. Taking a culture as its own complete unit means you understand it as a separate entity to your own and apply your own interpretations upon it without judgement, except from within its own identity. Flattening

these cultures online starts a new process of colonisation that could risk the unique identities of millions.

Would the exclusion of all foreign origin symbols and language lead to the sectionalisation of the internet, where each country operates a small, inwardly focused and culturally specific internet, or would it allow the individual cultural identity of each country to be maintained, inviting foreign users to understand and think like a native rather than expect the world to be uniformly Western?

Of concern is how the next generation develops, with their constant exposure to new Westernised technology from birth. The ubiquity of this generalised language means these children will be the first to grow up with such a wide exposure to Western ideals. However, this global outlook may very well prevent the dangers that are associated with inwardly focused cultures.

Using Charles S. Peirce, this presentation aims to look at these questions via a deep semiotic analysis. The triadic nature of Peirce's sign system is appropriate indeed for such problems as the relationship of culture, meaning and symbol. Through this analysis, I hope to demonstrate if there is a generalisation occurring online, how widespread it is and what the possible ramifications of it are. In addition, are the semiotic relationships actively propagating this generalisation of the internet? Is it an inevitable consequence of the triadic relationship of Peirce when applied to the iconic language of the web?

Key takeaways:

- 1) Is there an ongoing generalisation of cultural identity via the symbolic language of the internet?
- 2) Using Asian websites and a Peircean semiotic analysis, can we demonstrate the depth of any such generalisation?
- 3) Is this generalisation being encouraged using semiotic analysis methodologies such as Peirce's triads?
- 4) Is there any justification to halt such a generalisation? Would preventing such iconic accessibility lead to an internet that some cultures can access while others cannot?

THE SEMIOTIC APPROACH IN CULTURAL EDUCATION

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The research of the current thesis aims to show and analyse how musical language, being a special sign system, influences human development. It is of interest not only from the semiotic point of view, but also can be used for solving practical problems in pedagogy and expanding capabilities of education using the development of musical taste, feeling the language of music, and creating one's own meanings in the perception of music. Studying the role of musical language in developing consciousness is important for understanding peculiar properties of the perception of semiotic texts. We conducted the research based on the author's educational course "The language of music in the modern world", at the 225th school (ГБОУ СОШ No 225) in St. Petersburg, where 27 pupils of the 8th form took part. The results of the research showed that reading and interpretation of musical texts can be used in pedagogy as a special instrument of developing semiotic consciousness. Using the proper pedagogical approach, we can induce cognitive interest in reading different musical texts that can help to develop not only semiotic consciousness but also sensory-associative connections.

SOLIDARITY OR GENERALITY?



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When Richard Rorty, from 1983 onwards, set out to confront ‘solidarity’ with ‘objectivity’, he joined an ensemble of thinkers such as Paul Feyerabend and, some time later, Bruno Latour, all of whom championed some sort of critique of ‘expertism’ in the name of democracy. Inherent in all of their arguments is a disregard for objectivity, which is said to lead to one form or another of (scientific and even political) totalitarianism. This is a framework in which semioticians of culture have to situate themselves today when they claim generality for any findings, semiotic or otherwise, and especially so in the field of cultural studies, where the desideratum of old ‘generality’, under the pressure of a variety of criticisms, has been replaced by the idea of ‘contextualisation’, the intentional and hierarchically flat determination of one’s object of study with the support of collateral observations of other objects. Doing so will help in dealing with the supposedly totalising force of ‘generality’. The inevitable problem accompanying this method is that while the quest for generality has far too often led to unauthorised claims for universality, contextualisation is inevitably bound to generate vagueness (undecidability deriving from fuzzy boundaries) and consequently, arbitrariness. Peirce’s semiotics, on the other hand, holds that there cannot be any fundamental discrepancy between solidarity and objectivity, for it is precisely generality that makes even the most basic forms of understanding possible in the first place. Perception is perfused with generality and is continuously held together by abduction, and the corresponding theory of the embodiment of schemata and diagrams in perception has been and is still thoroughly investigated by all sorts of cognitive approaches to meaning and communication, while the role habit plays, not only in Peirce’s thought but in cognition in general, is neglected. But the understanding of habit,

characterised by Peirce as the ‘ultimate logical interpretant’ of any semiotic process brought to its conclusion, provides that vital link between past and present, presence and absence, thought and action and generality and contextuality, thereby aiding in the determination of the various degrees of plasticity in generality when attempts at abstract ahistorical generalisation may appear as merely another form of domineering expertism that has little to say about the practical integration of its research. Understanding the actual habits in perception and cognition that surround, prefigure and determine any given object of study helps in understanding the formation of discourse and meaning by showing how present action is related to past action and by explaining how objects which appear to the investigator as given autonomous entities are in fact the product of necessity and training, as well as desire and fashion. Only if the operations that create supposed fundamental disparities between objects of study and fields of inquiry are laid bare can interdisciplinarity become actually meaningful.

PEIRCE'S GARDEN OF FORKING METAPHORS



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The architectonic philosophic system of the founder of pragmatism Charles Sanders Peirce (1839 – 1914) is rarely grasped from the point of view of its metaphoric usage. Yet, some of his most original ideas such as those of *matter as effete mind and the play of musement* are metaphoric representations of, in his own words, “visual images and muscular imaginations”. In the present paper I am offering a new path for discussing the role of metaphors in Peirce’s philosophy by taking a twofold approach to the problem. On the one hand, metaphor itself becomes an object of inquiry. I will show the appearances of metaphoric thinking at the level of his classes of signs and metaphor’s relation to abductive inference. Those appearances are to be traced in the process of their becoming from the spontaneity of Firstness towards the actuality of Secondness via the mediating effects of Thirdness. By proving the validity of this path, I will propose a flexible graphic model of metaphor that is parallel to Peirce’s inherent evolutionism. My next step would be to apply this model as a ‘gentle’ methodological tool for deriving meaning. If the model succeeds, it would become applicable to yet different areas of research such as literature and philosophy. To practically test my theoretical achievements I will apply their enormous heuristic potential to literary works by Jorge Luis Borges (1899 – 1986). The surprising outcomes convincingly show that Peirce’s hard logical thought and the aesthetic beauty of Borges’s narratives complement each other.

SOCIAL COGNITION OF ANIMALS: A GENTLY CONSTRUCTIVIST BIOSEMIOTIC APPROACH

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It was decisively formulated in the bi-constructivist approach of Lestel (2011) that social and cognitive abilities of particular animals can only be revealed in direct interactions with a human researcher. If animals are studied in captivity (households, ZOOs, laboratories), the influence of particular humans on their life-histories is significant. We argue that studies of a given species in captivity are cases of interspecific cohabitation (e.g. chimpanzee-man, cat-man) by their very nature. As a consequence, traditional theoretical frameworks (comparative psychology, cognitive ethology) shall be widened to reflect multilevel interactions between individual animals' – keepers and researchers – environmental settings. For analysing such interactions, sign and communication oriented methodologies, such as eco-field analysis (Farina & Belgrano 2006), biosemiotic criticism (Maran 2014) and analysis of Umwelt transformations (Tønnessen 2009) could provide good results.

Lestel's crucial insight is enhanced into a tri-constructivist approach that was recently developed in the context of the social structure of cats (Jaroš 2016). The connection drawn here is multi-directional: interpretation of a cognitive world of a given species is influenced by the ontological commitments of a particular ethologist, and his scientific report reflects the behaviour of individual animals living in environmental settings constituted by the same researcher. In this presentation, we wish to reconstruct a framework of mutual dependency between social structures of given animals, their environment, relations to the researcher, and his ontological

commitments. Findings of individual researchers can be properly understood only in these spatio-temporal and cultural-scientific coordinates.

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ON GENERALISATIONS IN BIOSEMIOTICS



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Are there semiotic laws? Since there exist law-like generalisations in linguistics, economics and sociology, it seems obvious that these should exist also in biosemiotics and in semiotics in general. However, the generalisations in Σ -sciences are ontologically different from the generalisations in Φ -sciences (R. Vihalemm's term), because the object of Σ -sciences is itself of the type of knowledge – it is the modelling of modelling. Using examples of 'laws' formulated in biology, we analyse whether some of these can be seen as (bio)semiotic 'laws'.

In particular, we analyse the following statements:

(a) in ontogeny, the change in complexity of meaning-making is related to the types of semiosis available;

(b) growth in the complexity of umwelt is parallel to and a result of the development from iconic to indexical to emonic to symbolic semiosis (as related to the development of mechanisms of learning, from imprinting to conditioning to imitating to conventioning);

(c) semiosis occurs in the internal present;

(d) growth in the complexity of semiosis (and of umwelt) is taking place in connection with the expansion of internal present.

CONSTRUCTING VALUES IN A DECENTRALISED ORGANISATION: THE CASE OF OUISHARE

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In a world where horizontal governance and flattened hierarchies are an increasing trend, OuisShare – a network-community exploring collaboration in society – could be viewed as a great example of a distributed, non-hierarchical organisation. However, what does this really mean? As a largely experimental structure, borrowing its layout and governance models from several sources and collectively adapting those by the need, OuisShare lacks many traditional categories that might otherwise help with meaning distillation. Therefore, it is necessary for the organisation to continuously redefine itself and make explicit the results via successful autocommunication. OuisShare is often interpreted via its values, a set of principles created and maintained by the community. How are these values seen in the organisation's everyday activities, and are they being perceived as they were intended to? Whence do intentions originate, and who is the intended receiver? Based on the data gathered via a community survey and published self-reflections by community members, I will explore the process of constructing and redefining values in the OuisShare community, in an attempt to see where the organisation could be positioned in the context of contemporary organisation and culture theories, and whether there is anything this example could give back to the theories.

THE SEMIOTIC SCALE



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The scales of fish (in French, *écailles*), the scales of justice, the scale of a map, the Italian ‘scala’ (meaning ‘ladder’, ‘stair’) all derive from a common proto-Germanic root meaning ‘to divide, to segment’. The external body of the fish is divided into scales; the scales of justice present two plates that look like the divided halves of a shell; a cartographic scale looks for proportionality between an object and its representation in relation to a segmented parameter; a ladder is a tool to climb a vertical distance by dividing it into surmountable steps; etc.

In both natural sciences and humanities, knowledge is often a matter of scale, exactly in reference to the old etymology of the word: language and its technical discursive varieties must be adapted to a supposed ontology so as to segment it, articulate it, and represent it into a system of commensurability.

Two major questions, though, face the semiotician wishing to develop a meta-epistemology of academic disciplines: first, whereas natural sciences seem to agree on the continuity of the specific scales that they adopt so as to investigate the various levels of reality (physics transmogrifies into chemistry, chemistry into biology, etc.), humanities struggle with the possibility that a transversal discourse might be developed across the various specialised fields: it is not evident, for instance, that psychology can be subsumed into sociology, and this into cultural theory. Kneaded out of language, humanities seem each to aspire to epistemological independence and primacy. Second, humanities even more than natural sciences uneasily come to terms with the possibility of the monster, the uncanny, the singular, but also the novelty

that, emerging from the evolution of nature and culture, defies a consolidated scale of knowledge and representation.

The paper will seek to reflect on the concept of ‘gentle generalisation’ by pondering on the central semiotic notion of scale. This notion is not directly developed in the founding texts of the discipline but is implicitly present in several acceptances and theories of signification. In Peirce, for instance, iconicity implies a certain diagrammatic scale between the interpretant and the object; at the same time, indexicality might be seen as a relation between two forces or agencies whose power is in a mutual relation of scale (besides being in logical and temporal sequential relation); in Saussure, motivation also refers to scale, which is somehow hinted at also in the way the signifier and the signified are conceived as being like the recto and the verso of the same sheet (but here the notion of scale conflates with that of identity). Crucially, in Lotman too, the hypothesis of the methodological fruitfulness of adopting space as meta-language introduces a Borgesian dilemma concerning the relation of scale between the mapping space and the mapped one, the semiosphere as diagram and the semiosphere as cultural dynamics.

THE PROBLEM OF REALISM AND NOMINALISM IN THE SEMIOTICS OF CULTURE

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Generalisation is one of the most important problems in the theory of culture. Are we dealing with unrelated single phenomena, which constitute an integer or a narrative only in an interpretation of a researcher, or can we make certain generalisations and base a typology on these? For instance, when we operate with such terms as the Middle Ages or the Renaissance, when according to the nominalist approach we are dealing only with a researcher's construction, even fiction. We denote completely different phenomena with these terms in Northern and Southern Europe. Even more problematic is to speak of the Middle Ages and Renaissance in the cultures of Central Asia and the Far East. The realist approach, on the other hand, assumes that we are dealing with real phenomena, with certain common features in their ontology. Interestingly, it may happen that the researcher, who approaches, for example, the Renaissance from the nominalist point of view, is realist while approaching the Middle Ages. For instance, according to Johan Huizinga, the Renaissance does not exist as a phenomenon, everything that is treated as the Renaissance is just a name, while the Middle Ages is a true reality and in Europe, the 'long Middle Ages' lasted until the 18th century. In my paper, I will make an attempt to approach this problem from the semiotic perspective, which is beyond nominalism and realism. Here I am going to indulge in polemics with both Saussure's nominalist and Peirce's realist understanding of semiotics.

THE SEMIOTICS OF RISK AND ESTONIAN E-THREATS

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Our presentation focuses on the semiotics of risk. Specifically we are interested in conceptualising the construction of cyber threats or e-threats in the Estonian online sphere. Contemporary security risks are becoming more and more interconnected with cyber security – ICT-related threats (data security, hacking, the vulnerability of digital infrastructures and personal smart-technology, biased strategic communication, alarming sociocultural outcomes of fake news and information overload, etc.).

Risk-building and securitisation are rhetorical acts by which political issues can be articulated as existential threats (Barnard-Willis, Ashenden 2012: 114). In contemporary society, threats and risks are not usually seen as a result of a single factor (e.g. the possible outcome of hacking), usually they are understood to be complex and also influenced by technological developments (Beck 2005). If the act of certain hacking is perceived as a violation of the private sphere, military action, cyber terrorism, etc., it is always the result of semiotic mapping and generalisation.

Juri Lotman (2007: 108–110) has claimed that ambiguous or poorly explained social situations are normally accompanied by a sharp growth of the mythology of threats. The perception of risk and danger is not a reaction to a threatening object/event itself, but it is rather based on interpreting several omens as threatening and dangerous (Lotman, M 2009).

The semiotic approach enables us to explicate: how the discourses of cyber threat are connected with wider cultural values and socio-cultural fears that are related with cultural memory, and 2) how cyber threats are

articulated by means of hypermedia communication, which is characterised by the creolisation of various genres and semiotic languages, the convergence of communicational contexts, and the viral spreading of text.

Drawing on the poststructuralist theory of hegemony of the Essex school, Dahlberg (2007, 2011) and Dyer-Witheford (2007) have stressed the significant role of pluricentral contestation in the context of rethinking the online sphere as a new radical public (see also Dowey, Fenston 2003). This contestation is expressed via both accepted and unaccepted (trolling, slacktivism, fake-news, rumors etc.) actions (Dahlgren 2006, 2007; Amoore 2005). We will elaborate this idea with the added framework of semiosphere (Lotman 2001, 2005), and approach the online and media spheres as a hybrid space of meaning making in which the major part of cyber threats are articulated. It allows us to study every semiotic unit (e.g. posting) separately (e.g. its internal structure) as well as to explicate their relations (translation and dialogue) with other semiotic units (e.g. commentarium, links) within online and media spheres and culture.

We will map how official and alternative media texts (e.g. postings made in newspaper comment fields, social networking sites, blogs, etc.) articulate e-threats. Proceeding from the concrete research questions we will concentrate on the following categories: key-topics, dominant signifiers, attribution of agency, networking patterns, visual representations etc., that reveal how the topic of e-threats are perceived and created from different cultural-political perspectives and platforms.

- 1) What kind of structural elements (visual, textual, etc.) are used to articulate particular topics of e-threat?
- 2) What kind of semiotic processes are involved in the shaping of hierarchies, inclusion/exclusion of meanings, foregrounding and hiding of certain agendas, personalisation, etc., in the sub-discourses of e-threat?
- 3) What kind of socio-cultural domains are usually connected with e-threats (economics, politics, culture, law, etc.)?

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GENERALISING STRANGELY: DARK UMWELTS, SEMIOCIDE AND MODELLING WITH IMAGINARY FORESTS

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A number of problems in nature conservation are related to anthropocentrism. Human-centred environmental discourses tend to become self-sufficient and lose their contact with semiotic processes in the wild. Anthropocentric views have also been shown to overemphasise the conservation of species more similar to us at the expense of stranger organisms (Heise 2016). There is a great number of invertebrate, fish, reptile and amphibian species that live and go extinct without reaching human awareness, forming what may be called ‘dark umwelts’. Further, the web of interrelations between umwelts of different species in ecological systems has a complexity far beyond the grasp of our reasoning.

Human negative effects on other species are physical (competition over habitats, hunting and other means of population regulation), but they also have a semiotic aspect that can be called ‘semiocide’ (Puura 2013) – a hindrance to or destruction of communication channels, sign systems and significant places that other species use. Semiotic destruction appears to be related to the lack of normal semiotic relations, that is, to humans’ inability to perceive other species as communicating subjects or to communicate with other animals. The crucial question here appears to be the availability of cultural models (Maran 2014) that would allow understand umwelts that are different and strange for us.

To overcome the indifference towards more distant species we would need modelling strategies that would put the criteria of comparison

outside of the human realm. Some examples of such modelling are critical anthropomorphism (Rivas, Burghardt 2002), multispecies ethnography (Kohn 2013) and experiential ontologies of animal species (Rattasepp 2016). Here I would like to provide an additional approach by taking the metaphor of forest for the basis of modelling. In an ecological sense, a forest is characterised by the extensive presence of decomposers, detritus food chains and organic matter in different stages of decay. As a semiotic system, forest is unlimited, de-centralised, regenerative, and self-organising. Being a complex and open system, a forest resists formal reasoning and provides space for imagination.

Using forest as a cultural model in nature conservation may help to shed more light on dark umwelts as rational knowledge becomes here accompanied with imaginary powers. As paradoxical as it may seem, nature conservation would benefit from the support of artistic and literary practices as these have tools to work with the possibility of life forms beyond our reason and facts.

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SEMIOSIS OF THE IN-BETWEEN: SIGN PROCESSES IN SOCIAL 'MEMBRANES'

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The notion of Borders went through a profound change in the last two decades: from Border, to Bordering, from Borderland to Borderscape. This contribution aims at discussing the heuristic power of the notion of Social Membrane that is able to open up the development of different and more holistic approaches to border from epistemological and methodological points of view. The notion of Social Membrane illuminates the complexity of the *semiosis in-between*. The construction of individual and collective identity on the border is the human arena for exploring sign processes in social 'membranes'. Some empirical data on European and non-European Borderzones (where the borders on the map do not really coincide with the 'cultural' border) will be discussed in order to see how the social membrane provides the content for new forms of belonging and becoming and for understanding the process of sign making and sign negotiation.

SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE AS GENERALISATION OF OUR PERCEPTION

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The process through which the theorems in science are derived – the scientific method – is well documented: experiment, observation, formulation, assessment. Upon reaching a conclusion, a generalisation follows, stating that the new theory also holds true for other similar systems that were not observed. But are these generalisations safe to assume? Newton’s quite famous “Hypotheses non fingo” (I do not feign hypotheses) reminds us that any kind of assumption is faced with skepticism in science unless thoroughly supported with logical arguments. The goal of this study is to exhibit some of the mechanisms employed in science with the sole purpose of ruling out logical fallacies and arbitrary generalisations. At times, critical mistakes had to be made before corrective actions were taken (like the space shuttle Challenger disaster), or whole new branches of thought emerged in the form of new theories (statistics, quantum mechanics, etc.). As scientific knowledge evolved, it became apparent that the problem of generalisation and uncertainty would need input from other sciences dealing with human perception and the functions of the human brain (philosophy, neuropsychology, linguistics). In all attempts to study it, a link to measurable quantities was always sought. This becomes critical when focus is shifted from theory to practical matters, as in the erection of a building. In such cases, generalisations are driven not by our quest for the truth but by our quest to lower financial costs. The fact that generalisation is inherent in human thought means that it takes place in every aspect of human culture, not only natural sciences. With this in mind, it is interesting to study in which ways findings from these disciplines relate to other areas

of culture. The idea of unpredictability appearing while generalisations take place will also be taken into account (as defined in semiotic systems).

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GENERALISING CINEMATIC ADAPTATION FOR THE
EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT:
A CASE STUDY

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The paper discusses an attempt at developing a digital course for addressing the process and structure of cinematic adaptation of a literary text. The project was motivated by an observation that despite being a constitutive – if not ubiquitous – phenomenon of contemporary cultural space, screen adaptations are rarely addressed in any complex manner in the Estonian school system. The digital course aimed at secondary school students (ages 15-18) balances between a thorough treatment of a single empirical example and a universal framework for discussing any cinematic adaptation of a literary narrative.

The course is built up of three parts, titled Film in Literature, Literature in Film, and Film and Literature in Culture. The first chapter approaches the implicit audiovisuality of verbal narrative texts compared to the explicit audiovisuality of films. A discussion and tasks relating to the creation of mental images developed in the process of reading is followed by an outline of cultural semiotic understanding of film language. The second chapter is focused on what has arguably been the central mutual feature of literature and film – the narrative. Attention is thus paid to the question: what happens to a story and its constitutive elements when it is translated from literary to film language? The final chapter discusses the life of cinematic adaptation in terms of its relations to the multiplicity of prototexts and to marketing materials on the one hand, and to the multilevelled process of reception on the other.

The course combines accessibly written theoretical discussions, verbal, visual and audible material from the film *November* (by Rainer Sarnet, 2017) and behind its scenes, excerpts from Andrus Kivirähk's (2000) novel *Old Barny or November* with analytical tasks, and assignments for implementing individual creativity in multimodal forms. The key concepts that the course is built on include: cultural language, text, (intersemiotic) translation (1st part); narrative, timespace/chronotope, dominant (2nd part); proto-, meta- and intertext, reception in the context of participation culture, transmediality, and finally cultural autocommunication that frames the whole (3rd part).

LITERARY TOURISM: AUGMENTING THE REALITY, DECONSTRUCTING THE LITERARY TEXT

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The rise of literary tourism is considered to be a product of the 18th century (Watson 2006). Since that time, maps and guides have served to augment a physical reality with a literary layer and, on the contrary, to make fictional places more tangible. The development of digital technology paved the way for new tools, including projects in augmented reality and mobile applications which are sensitive to the user's physical location. Literary tourism serves as a tool for merging artistic spaces with their real-world prototypes.

As highlighted by Juri Lotman, artistic space could never be reduced to a mere replication of the reality (1993: 413). On the one hand, literary models of physical spaces are individualised due to the peculiarities of the author's style; on the other hand, they imply an inevitable generalisation. For instance, a very specific historical fortress could provide a basis for a concrete fairytale venue, and further become the sign of the whole 'Far-Far Away land'. However, this sign may be retranslated back to the concrete location and concrete text by readers, researchers, or tour operators. Through the process of the reversed translation, 'space' as a physical location is transformed into 'place' as a psychological, social and cultural phenomenon (Løvlie 2009). Literary tourism reinforces the further accumulation of place-bound narratives, as the visitors contribute their own experience to the cultural memory.

The aim of the research is to analyse the latest technological tendencies in literary tourism. We will try to show how literary tourism can affect the

existence of the text in the culture. From the one side, literary tourism augments the artistic reality; from the other, deconstructs it. The resulting mental map reconciles the past and the present; the literature and the geography; private and common interpretations; the world of the character and the world of the author; as well as the world of the author and the world of the reader.

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$$I=F(O)$$



Thierry Mortier

Ghent

Do not go gently into that good generalisation.

C.S. Peirce taught us that man himself is a sign – which, depending on the perspective taken, can be seen either as a generalisation or an abstraction. F. Stjernfelt furthermore taught us that Peirce saw the *dicisign* – or proposition – as the most quintessential of signs. Building on the work of Peirce, Stjernfelt and Deely, the object of this paper is an attempt to uncover the general proposition of man – and beyond. Through the posited formula $I=f(O)$ – *I* identity is a *f* unction of *O* therness (alterity) – the paper takes us to the deep beauty structure of semiosis. By formalising the propositional sign of man, an abduction can be reached which allows a *universal generalisation of form and relation*.

1) The formula $I=f(O)$ is constructed by investigating the individual terms *Identity*, *Otherness* and *function* – including positional differentiation between self-identity and identification, pure otherness, i.e. not-self, as well as the (self-)otherness as put forward poetically by Rimbaud's *Je est un autre* as well as C.S. Peirce explaining the impossibility of 'introspection'.

2) $I=f(O)$ is shown to be another formulation of Representamen, Object, interpretant, allowing the substitution '*identity is a function of Otherness*' with '*representation is a species specific interpretation of an object* – or better, of a *form*'.

3) A tentative attempt is put forward to define the *function* in the formula. In mathematics a function expresses a formal relation; once that formal relation is defined it can actually be used in calculations such as in integrals and differentials.

4) Some preliminary results are shown applying the formula in the physical world, as well as some preliminary questions raised by such a generalised application of the formula.

Etymologically speaking, 'formula' stands for 'small forms', which becomes apparent the further along the investigation of the formula at hand takes us. Abstracting and generalising Identity and Otherness as form allows us to draw out the interactions between different forms, gradually uncovering the different relations between them; both inter- and intra-species.

MAKING SENSE ON THE BORDER OF THE BODY: THEORY OF SEMIOTIC SKIN



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Human skin is the definite limit between human body and environment. Hence it is crucial as a boundary in which both the biological relations with the work and the ability to make meaning is located. I will elaborate the newly developed Semiotic Skin Theory (TSS).

As an abstract membrane, The Semiotic Skin (TSS) is to be understood as a socio-somatic-semiotic dynamic (Neuman, 2003) from where humans' ability to make meaning emerges. This abstract membrane provides the understanding of a uniting as well as a separating device (Marsico et al., 2013). A constant interpretation as a reflection between a self-reflecting system and an unending spiral of semiosis is the ground from where TSS will be described as holding the reflections of a symbolic protection of identity and creating a semipermeable barrier holding and regulating specific aspects of communication between human and world. This regulation registers and controls the hierarchy of signs as to make meaning and interpretation of experiences within the human itself and the environment via complex processes.

In this seminar we will discuss these complex and multifaceted processes as to work beyond a metaphorical expression of TSS in order to develop new advancements in the communication through the skin.

GENTLY GENERALISING LEARNING



Alin Olteanu

Kaunas Technological University

I argue that from a biosemiotic perspective the concepts of adaptation and learning are seen as one phenomenon. Learning in the cultural and educational sense is a specialised form of semiotic scaffolding. Education, practiced by humans or, arguably, by other animals, is a sub-case of adaptation, inheriting the semiotic structure of adaptation generally. At the same time, adaptation itself is a sub-case of learning in the most general sense: organisms, at multiple timescales learn to adapt by reinterpreting real possibilities.

On a biosemiotic account, learning is continuous with adaptation. It has been typical of dualist modern philosophy to understand adaptation as a crudely biological process, belonging only to non-human animals, while learning is construed as a human specific process. Biosemiotics challenges this adaptation/learning dichotomy by seeing both of these as belonging to the same continuum of semiosis. From this perspective, learning in the cultural and educational sense is a stage in the evolution of semiosis and a particular embodiment of adaptation. Our understanding of learning is intimately linked to the way in which we relate to our environment. The environment which we populate simultaneously makes learning possible and imposes thresholds on our learning, because learning is a semiotic competence which organisms acquired as evolution itself adapted to recognise structures of signification. The modern belief that, through its learning capabilities, humankind can control nature is deeply damaging for our environment. The ecological crisis is proof that our mental life is not detached from the life of the environment. Construing human specific ways of learning, such as scientific inquiry, as transcending biological evolution

justifies humankind's exploitation of natural resources to the detriment of other species and, consequently, to its own. From a semiotic perspective, learning is a matter of adaptation to structures of signification. In the biosemiotic view that semiosis proceeds at multiple timescales, our current cultural learning is understood as an Interpretant of natural evolution. I conclude by explaining the implications for education and ecology that this semiotic account of learning brings.



WHEN SIGNS GO BAD: THE PROBLEM OF SENTIMENT IN GENERALISED INTERPRETANTS

Gerald Ostdiek

Charles University in Prague

The production of knowledge (here understood as self-reflected conceptualisation of some specified phenomena – which is ‘true’ *to the extent* that it is useful) necessarily involves (at minimum) 4 factors. These are: (1) A living thing that has (2) read – interpreted, ‘made sense’ out of (3) some specifiable interaction, situation or other actual phenomena, via (4) the processes of legisign function. The consequences of knowledge production necessarily involve a reconstruction of at least three of these factors; *knowing things* both *functions as* semiotic scaffolding in the realisation of biological mechanisms, *and is* the realisation of post biological life (i.e., all ‘things’ *symbolic*). All knowing is a kind of generalising – a ‘ruling’ of a specific interaction as mediated by some set of living symbols, which reproduce with variation, and suffer selection. ‘Knowing’ is standing one thing for another thing, not merely as a physical referent to a direct object, but in relation to an independently evolving society of signs. Herein lies the problem of sentiment. It is by uncountable individual actions of interpretation (remarkably few of which necessitate any kind of skeptical analysis) that ‘knowledge’ (in the sense of a whole of a speciated population of generalised interpretants and the pressure exerted by that whole) evolves – or comes to be what it is (or what it purports to be).

Peirce left us a threefold argument: 1: that ‘living’ belief is, in part, dependent on the presence of sentiment, that is, a general(ising) feeling that is unsupported by reason; 2: that logic demands recognition that self-

reflected thinking is of necessity sentimental – a fact which fosters deep mistrust of reason in issues of self-reflection, and which is entailed by the ‘lives’ that comprise the symbolic ecosystem we experience as our own self; and 3: that while logic is useful in parsing a truth value, it is the confluence of two irrational, naturally derived systems: biology (instinct), and sentiment (symbols) that generates the possibility for life’s great thirdness: self-aware reflection (knowledge and all that it entails: e.g., logic, but also art, science, church and etc.).

What humans know, they also believe (as knowing is a kind of believing); and their behaviour is thusly directed: the ground of knowing – that field of generalisations of individual transactions, however well tended, remains an issue of Animal Faith. While we can, to some degree, influence (develop as well as hinder) our ability to construct useful (true) knowledge, we have little direct control over the beliefs that constitute our propensity for action, the lurid varieties of upshot constituted by the post biotic ecology that we experience as sentiment (or *faith*, as it is commonly called) of which knowledge is constructed. A person is no more able to choose what they believe than an interpretant to select its interpretation. And reason is but a leaky dinghy tossed about the rough seas of sentiment. By applying Peirce’s analysis of sentiment to biosemiotic theory, this essay seeks to clarify problems inherent in knowing so as to alleviate a dysfunction inherent to self-knowing beings, and thereby gentle the rough edges of generalisation.

THE GENERAL, THE PLURAL AND THE PREDICTABLE: THE MODELLING AND PRAGMATIC CAPACITY OF SEMIOTIC MODELLING SYSTEMS

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Vyacheslav Ivanov argued in his programmatic article “The Science of Semiotics” (1962) that the fundamental role of semiotic methods for all the related humanities can be compared to that of mathematics for the natural sciences. Thus semiotics (or, rather, a certain branch of semiotics) is characterised by the development and use of models that, in order to fulfill this fundamental role, must have a high degree of abstractness and generality, or low modelling capacity – like mathematical models. The use of these metasemiotic modelling systems with low modelling capacity might be an effective means for obtaining general knowledge, yet it also brings about the question of the status and value of the knowledge obtained through them from the perspective of the object of study. More so, if one takes into account that these metasemiotic models are themselves often modelled after or borrowed from mathematics or other related fields. Another issue concerns the plurality of the methods, models and modelling systems in semiotics, or perhaps only seeming plurality, as the nature of generalisation seems to be, from the semiotic perspective, a one way street of abstraction. Or can generalisation be semiotically plural vis-à-vis the plural nature of semiotic phenomena? In my presentation, I will investigate the relations between general method, general knowledge and particular object from the perspective of Tartu-Moscow school’s concepts of modelling systems and their modelling and pragmatic capacity. More specifically, I will inquire into the relationship between modelling and pragmatic capacity, and (un)predictability.

BAKHTIN VS. BAKHTIN: RE-EVALUATING CARNIVAL



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In his essays on the novel, Mikhail Bakhtin linked them with his concept of heteroglossia, claiming that the novel contains various discourses including not only linguistic dialects, but also socio-ideological groups. Among this multitude of discourses, there is no single authoritative language, only dialects separated by fluid boundaries. Therefore, Bakhtin characterises the novel as an intentional hybrid. Yet in his writings on carnival, Bakhtin reflects upon hybrid forms in a different context. During the Feast of Fools in the Middle Ages, people from different social classes switched daily roles while leaving the social order intact. The king switched places with the fool, but someone still had to be the king, and someone still had to be the fool. Thus, Umberto Eco's main critique of carnival is that it leaves boundaries between classes very much intact. In this sense, in spite of the role-switching, carnival cannot be a place of true heterogeneity, because it keeps socio-ideological boundaries rigid and unchanged. In that sense, one of Bakhtin's major concepts contradicts the other; the social groups in a novel do not have boundaries to transgress, but the socio-ideological transgressions during the Feast of Fools re-emphasises the many violated boundaries of an authoritarian culture.

LOCAL GENERALISATIONS OR SPATIALITY IN SEMIOTIC SOCIETY-MAKING



Tiit Remm

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The presentation focuses on the role of spatiality in the semiotic making of society. Society functions in and by interaction. It is created, maintained and designed in and by meaningful interaction, especially communication. These interactions involve generalisations that ground the society as an entity of common knowledge and of tangible functioning. At the same time, interactions are spatial and involve spatial semiotic systems. A sociosemiotic perspective helps to outline levels and processes of generalisation of the uses of spatiality in community-making through participative policy and engagement.

GENERALISING THE HISTORY:
CREATING A RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PAST IN
THE ESTONIAN SCHOOLBOOKS
FOR THE 5TH GRADE

Merit Rickberg

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Although the first encounters with history happen outside the school walls, it is in history class where the students consciously learn to give meaning to the past. Schoolbooks used for teaching history play an important role in forming a coherent picture of the previous times. Achieving this coherency inevitably calls for the process of generalisation in which the past is structured and compressed into narratives. However, this generalisation can follow a variety of patterns that lead to very different types of historical thinking.

The problem of generalisation is especially acute in the 5th grade when history as a separate subject is first introduced. According to the curriculum the main aim of this first year is to create interest towards studying the past and at the same time give a general overview of what history is. There are no compulsory topics that must be covered, since there is no common understanding on how and where to start. This has led to quite a variety of history books for the 5th grade from which to choose, with different approaches of presenting the first understanding of history.

Nevertheless, the overall tendency among history teachers has been towards preferring to begin with the general course of Estonian history, as it is thought to be the most easily comprehensible for the students (Möttus 2005). The co-founder of EUROCLIO (The European Association of History

Educators) Joke van der Leeuw-Roord has expressed concern for this trend of starting history education with national narrative saying that “if young people in school receive narratives from a simple, single and national perspective, it will be at a later stage very hard to open their minds for other interpretations or perspectives” (Leeuw-Roord 2009).

In my paper I will examine history schoolbooks for the 5th grade currently used in Estonia as a part of the Historical Culture of the society. The concept of Historical Culture, developed by Jörn Rüsen (1994), can be understood as a specific way in which a society relates to its past. I am going to follow how different patterns of generalisation used in textbooks can lead to a different kind of relationship with history and sketch out what kind of influence this may have on the rigidity or, on the contrary, openness of the structures of cultural self-description.

INTERPRETING KANDINSKY'S THEORY OF ART: THE CREATION OF VISUAL ART, AND THE DIGITAL ERA

Krista Simson

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The legacy of Wassily Kandinsky, a great painter and art theoretician, includes two timeless books – *On the Spiritual in Art* (*Über das Geistige in der Kunst*) published in 1911, and *Point and Line to Plane* (*Punkt und Linie zu Fläche*) published in 1926. In the first book Kandinsky explores the nature of creativity, whilst in the second he analyses visual art, not so much through a lens of historical discourse, but through an investigation of the details and nuances of works of art. A collection of details and nuances combine and recombine to create a series of successive creative ‘explosions’. These explosions reanimate the means of expression of visual art – the point, the line and the plane – while endowing them with meaningful signs and symbolic value.

According to Kandinsky, the inner necessity to create is a defining characteristic not only of the artist, but of any given era. Seeking to uncover conventional signs in painting, Kandinsky presents ‘the grammar of fine arts’. This is his highly ambitious attempt to create a theory of art encompassing thousands of years of artistic creation and taking into account the present and the future of visual arts. His analysis has largely stood the test of time.

Kandinsky argues that the point is the primary element in art. It is the shortest statement possible, but it nonetheless also symbolises the application of force to a surface or material. Kandinsky’s thinking can be applied to contemporary new media’s approach to art. It is also worthy of study in semiotics and the theoretics of art. This presentation will argue that

Kandinsky's texts can still be effectively used to analyse the development of trends in new media visual arts over recent decades. For example, the creation of digital pixels, which can be viewed as making a mark in both real and unreal space, also involves the creation of points.

TRANSLATION SEEN THROUGH THE PRISM OF THE TARTU-MOSCOW SCHOOL OF SEMIOTICS



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The paper aims to explicate how translation has been conceptualised and theorised in the Tartu-Moscow semiotic school. While the topic of translation is not a visibly central topic for example in the main channel of the Tartu-Moscow semiotic school, the journal *Sign Systems Studies* (*Trudy po znakovym sistemam*), on a closer look it appears that it is nevertheless of fundamental importance for several leading members of the school such as J. Lotman, I. Revzin, I. Ivanov a.o. The paper brings forth the main sources of inspiration for the conceptualisation of translation in the works of the Tartu-Moscow semiotic school, as well as what are the main characteristics of the concept of translation in the Tartu-Moscow semiotic school and what role has the concept of translation had in the semiotic theories of the Tartu-Moscow semiotic school.

IMAGINATIVE AND AFFECTIVE LOGIC IN SEMIOSIS



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I will try to explore a specific form of affective relation to the world that some call ‘affective logic’ (Ciompi, 1997; Lennon, 2010). Semiotic processes are related to imaginative processes, that is to link something ‘X’ (non-imaginative) that stands for something absent ‘Y’ (imaginative) in function of a third ‘Z’ (a future-oriented goal, not-yet existing and then imaginative). From this very simple stem process a number of human phenomena emerge: a) we pre-adapt by anticipating changes before becoming actually required by the environment (e.g. choose an education for a future, make simulations and estimates, save money); b) we create abstract models in science (e.g. the notions of frictionless surfaces in physics, ideal gases in chemistry, the common ancestor in paleontology, economic man in economy or ideal types in sociology); c) we create powerful non-existing objects that drive collective action (e.g. fatherland, heaven and hell, freedom), or; d) we create fictional objects that personify abstract concepts (e.g. a divinity, Fróði, Hamlet). My hypothesis is that imagination is the higher mental function (Tateo, 2015a), entitled to this fundamental process that characterises human beings: the homo imaginans (Lapoujade, 2014).

Cultural context provides some social suggestions (rituals, practices, dress-codes etc.) that promote some affects and conducts that the person is expected to experience while inhibiting others. On the other hand, individual experiencing is a personal trajectory that unfolds within such social suggestions while being nevertheless a unique trajectory. Yet this negotiation is full of ambivalences, resistances and turns, rather than a linear process of meaning making. Selectively internalising some aspects

of the social suggestions about how we ‘ought’ to experience is a way of actively establishing a relationship with the cultural context. In turn, expressing some selective form of conduct (e.g. dressing and making up in specific ways) affects the personal experience.

These processes follow a specific ‘affective logic’, which can manage the inherent ambivalences of experience (Tateo, 2015b). For instance, in terms of affective logic, the two statements ‘I am in grief THEREFORE I wear black’ and ‘I wear black THEREFORE I am in grief’ are equally valid. Affective logic is based on imaginative processes, and the loss acquires value in relation to the person’s continuous striving for ‘what’s next’. I hypothesise that imaginative elaboration plays a fundamental role in the co-construction of past and future in relation to meaning making, to the extent that imaginative play with past unrealised possibilities (‘What is X will be not X but could have been X’) and future uncertainty (‘What is not X but will be X’), can have an important part in the elaboration of meaning. Social suggestions contribute to co-construct personal trajectories, by promoting or inhibiting a window of possibilities (what can be, what ought to be, what is not allowed to be, etc.). On the other hand, the increasing multiplication and variety of social suggestions due to the multicultural nature of contemporary societies enlarges the window of possibilities, but also weakens the specific social suggestions of a given community, introducing a further element of complexity in the negotiation between the individual and her context in the elaboration of personal meaning.

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FROM INTERSEMIOTIC TRANSLATION TO DIGITAL READING



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For better understanding literary texts in a culture, J. Lotman consciously replaced the notion of decoding with the term of intercourse, and thus insisted upon the dialogic activity of text. At the meeting of a text with the addressee there can appear several levels of intercourse simultaneously or separately: text as a message means intercourse between the addressee and the addressant, text as a bearer of the collective cultural memory means intercourse between the cultural tradition and the audience, text as a mediator influencing the shaping of personality means intercourse of the reader with him/herself, text as an independent intellectual conglomeration and an autonomous dialogue partner means intercourse of the reader with the text, and text as a full-value partner in a communication act means intercourse between the text and cultural context (Lotman 1981: 6). The literary text exists in contemporary culture as a meta- and intercommunicational whole and is interpretable as a multiple collection of intersemiotic translations. In early semiotics of culture this multiple ontology of text was formulated as a research program by R. Jakobson: “a parallel investigation of verbal, musical, pictorial, choreographic, theatrical, and filmic arts belongs to the most imperative and fruitful duties of the semiotic science“ (Jakobson 1967: 661-662). The Tartu-Moscow semiotic school used this ontology as basis for a methodology of cultural semiotics: „The relationship of the text with the whole of culture and with its systems of codes is shown by the fact, that on different levels the same message may appear as a text, part of a text, or an entire set of texts“ (*Theses* 1973: 38). Semiotics of culture gives methodological tools for understanding the ontology of the literary text in

a new media environment. It makes possible gently generalising about new cultural experience, movement from text to digital text and from reading to digital reading. Cultural semiotics gives a new understanding of the dialogic activity of the literary text.

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HANDLING HISTORICAL INCONVENIENCE IN ESTONIAN LITERARY HISTORIES PUBLISHED IN SOVIET ESTONIA

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Literary histories are cultural metatexts, which deal with the literary past. These metatexts can have many different functions, starting with organising the past and ending with the aim to arrange the contemporary literary canon support the identity of a community and dominant ideology.

Construction of a literary history is a process which starts with selection and categorisation of events, books, authors etc., and ends with creating a story that binds them all together into a more or less coherent narrative. Thus in every history the past is narrated and constructed in some special way. There is something missing from every history; some books, events, situations and writers are not mentioned and are thus pushed out of the system; and there is always something emphasised in every history; some books, writers and events get more attention and are brought into the spotlight. From this point of view, literary histories are only models of the real literary practice and its development over time. These literary history models always also consist of different generalisations. These generalisations, like initial selections and categorisations, are very interesting and important as they can reflect the cultural situations in which the histories are constructed and perhaps reveal what kind of intentions they were meant to fulfil.

In my presentation I will discuss and try to open up some uses and roles of generalisations in Estonian literary histories published in Soviet Estonia during 1944 - 1991. Stemming from my interest in Estonian exile literature, my focus will be on generalisations concerning exile literature and writers

and books published in exile. The content of the presentation is grounded in examples and observations of histories, but some speculative theory will be offered and surely some generalisations will be made, hopefully gently enough.

GENERALISING SEMIOLOGY: ON EARLY STAGES IN THE RECEPTION OF ONE SAUSSUREAN CONCEPT

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In the first decade which followed the publication of Ferdinand de Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics* in 1916, several reviews of this book were published in different countries. They were written, in particular, by well-known linguists such as Antoine Meillet (1916), Hugo Schuchardt (1917), Leonard Bloomfield (1923), etc. The general tone of these reviews was positive; at the same time, some concepts and/or notions introduced by Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye were not immediately appreciated by the linguistic community as they certainly deserved it.

On the other hand, despite the important political and social changes which took place in Russia after the revolution of 1917, the *Course* was also known by Russian linguists at that time. Although the first translation of this book into Russian (by Aleksej Suxotin) was published only in 1933, the content of the *Course* was actively discussed in Russia (first of all, in Moscow and in Petrograd-Leningrad) beginning in the early 1920s. At that time, Alexander Romm was preparing a translation of this book (which would remain unpublished) and some linguists – among whom there were Mixail Peterson and Maksim Kenigsberg – wrote about the *Course*. Published in 1923, their two texts could be considered as the very first reviews of the *Course* in Russia.

Comparing the reception of the Saussurean concept of semiology in Russia and in the West during the earliest period of discussions around the *Course*, we shall try to answer the question whether there were, in this

regard, any essential differences between the two corresponding intellectual traditions. In its turn, it will allow us to discuss the problem of historical and epistemological premises which explain different interpretations of the *Course* in general, and which also shed light on the posterior evolution of semiological studies in the corresponding traditions.

ARTWORKS AS MODELS: A DIAGRAMMATIC APPROACH

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In this research, we intend to highlight and discuss the epistemic potential of artworks. Our analysis of artworks as models will be based on their *iconic-diagrammatic* characteristics, specifically their *autonomy**. Iconic-diagrammatic signs typically work as models (Giere 2004; Frigg & Hartmann 2005; Knuuttila 2005a). Autonomous artifacts provide us the basis for a wide-range of decision-making situations (Morgan & Morrison 1999). We describe artworks as iconic-diagrammatic and autonomous, in order to account for how they enable us to create questions, hypotheses and claims. This epistemic potential of artworks is directly related to the possibilities of manipulation they afford. Manipulation of artworks can be understood as an experimental practice of reasoning known as *diagrammatic reasoning*, and encompasses both sensorial manipulation and manipulation ‘in the mind’s eye’. According to the epistemic approach of models (Knuuttila 2005a; Knuuttila 2005b), it is not the intention of the modeler that provides models an epistemic value, but the model’s own qualities and experimental potentialities.

We will present how the process of manipulation of artworks by the interpreter allows her to extract information, by means of *abstraction* and *synthesis*, about their own semiotic systems, as well as about the object they are modeling. By ‘abstraction’, we understand the process of selection in which the person who is manipulating the artwork discards both non-relevant, and unnecessary properties and information, in order to detect its core elements (Týlen et. al 2014). By ‘synthesis’, we understand a process

of generalisation, that helps the person who is manipulating the artwork to get in contact with several possible relations between elements of them that did not seem to have a clear necessary connection (Hoffmann 2005).

In order to discuss and analyse this hypothesis, we will present two photographic works as examples of artworks as models: (i) the photographic exhibitions of the *Fachwerkhäuser des Siegener Industriegebietes*, by Bernd and Hilla Becher (1977 – onwards); and (ii) the photobook *Every Building on the Sunset Strip*, by Ed Ruscha (1966).

Notes

* This notion of iconic-diagrammatic autonomy does not refer to the notion of the aesthetic autonomy of artworks discussed by Kant, Hegel and Adorno

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PATTERN AS A GENTLE GENERALISATION IN THE SYMMATHESY OF LIVING SYSTEMS: BRIDGING THE ECOLOGY OF MIND WITH BIOSEMIOTICS

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Taking into account the notion of pattern as a subject matter of study, understood in biology as a recurring, observable regularity in the appearance, anatomy, behaviour, or organismic functions of animals or plants, their physiological organs or constitutive parts, this paper ponders upon possible stages in the cognitive processes of generalisation, inherent to living systems due to some of their assumed mental and/or perceptual capacities. It departs from theoretical achievements of Gregory Bateson, who conducted extensive research in the investigative domain of such academic disciplines as anthropology, psychiatry and cybernetics, aiming at the exploration of the nature of the human mind as a set of ecologically determined faculties responsible for cognition and communication. His *Steps to an Ecology of Mind* (1972), alluding to the ecology of ideas, which come from his own observations and discoveries, being expounded in his published conference presentations and lectures, have been summarised in *Mind and Nature* (1979). The discussion of environmental conditionings of the development of consciousness in the realm of life will show the consequences of the Batesonian treatment of the mind as a systemic device which allows the transmission of information, the creation of ideas, and, exactly saying, the gathering of knowledge. Thus, the specific meaning of the concept of pattern adjusted by Bateson for the purposes of his cybernetic view of mind, which connects every cognisable object with a learning subject in a contextual structure, will be exposed. Moreover, the author will familiarise the prospective hearers with the term *symmathesy*,

introduced lately by Nora Bateson (the daughter of Gregory) for denoting organismic processes of mutual learning together with the environment. As will be shown, this neologism is grounded on a clear distinction between living and non-living systems. It has been coined as a response to the need for a word that would stand for contextual learning by organisms through living together. With reference to ecology-of-mind-related notions, the mechanisms of learning will be considered in terms of order and symmetry, that is, regularities which result, using Gregory Bateson's words, from the 'pattern that connects' biological, social or cultural levels of (human) perception and experiencing. Since symmathetic processes — as environmentally conditioned through mutual learning — are principally identical with the processes described by semioticians of nature, this paper will point to commonalities of investigative domains of the ecology of mind and biosemiotics. Appropriately, the role of generalising processes as necessary conditions of selective perception, being seemingly characteristic of higher order animals, will be thoroughly discussed. The ability of forming classes of similar items, as a process being complementary to abstraction, will be equalised with the ability to select features of objects upon which to focus attention. Thinking in terms of pattern as a generalised learning of life and creation, allows to formulate some statements pertaining to symmathesy occurring at different organisational levels of organic subjects. In reality, all living systems make simple binary generalisations, if they are able to subsume particular tokens of perceived objects to a similar class. However, only *homo significans* makes generalisations which lead to naming the objects, classifying them into groups, drawing inferences, etc. Finally, it will be concluded that life is equal to learning, acquiring knowledge. Organisms that stay in mutual relations in environmental contexts, 'learn' from one another while acquainting with and adjusting to one another. Generalisations, which take place according to discernable patterns, arise in the minds of particular living beings in dependence on the levels of their individual development. Learning is thus possible thanks to generalised patterns. In this sense, embodied knowledge is conceptually shared by living systems, while learning-together-through-sign processes in nature are processes of the so-called biotranslation.

EPISTEMOLOGY –
A THEORY OF GENERAL KNOWLEDGE OR
SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION?:
TOWARDS A SEMIO-MATHETIC CARTOGRAPHY
OF HUMAN LEARNING AND KNOWING

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The subject matter of this paper constitutes the question whether epistemology as a theory of knowledge should focus on static or rather on dynamic consequences of cognising and learning activities of human subjects, which take place through the mediation of signs, defined henceforth as semio-mathesis. Accordingly, it will be essential to expose the difference between knowledge in the materialist (objective realist) and knowledge in the immaterialist (subjective idealist) sense. In recalling their classical cradles, it should be noticed that theories of human ‘wisdom’ have relied either on scientific searches for knowledge about physical appearances of accessible reality, or on metaphysical reasoning about its inaccessible illusive existence. So far, scientific epistemology, held as anti-metaphysical, has been associated with systematising endeavours of scholars to achieve exhaustive knowledge about reality through sensorial observations and intellectual inquiries. The metaphysical epistemology, in turn, has been specified as a subject-oriented theory of knowledge about the cognised things and states of affair based on the criterion of absolute truth or falsity. As follows, with reference to the main topic of the 2017 Tartu Summer School of Semiotics, we will confront epistemology, in a general sense, as a theory of knowledge acquired through cognition, with the epistemology,

in a specific sense, as a theory of knowledge production realised through cognising and learning activities. In the first frame of reference, epistemology will be considered from a metascientific perspective as an ordered set of investigative perspectives, which the practicing researchers have at their disposal when they are interested to attain a specific state of knowledge, or to support their beliefs about the nature of investigative domains with regard to the existence forms and accessibility of investigated objects. And, in the second model, the topic of a more detailed presentation will comprise a psychophysiological understanding of epistemology, pertaining to the human organism preoccupied with sensorial and mental activities as a cognising subject who aims at achieving a certain kind of information about reality. Common for both approaches to the status of epistemology is the attainment of experiential knowledge. However, in the case of a metascientific epistemology, the interest sphere is focused on the assumed knowledge of both how things exist (ontology) and how they can be approached in cognition (gnoseology), and, in the case of a psychophysiological epistemology, attention is paid to a corporeal-mental capacity of cognising organisms acquiring their knowledge through individual experiences. Within such a framework, a rationalist epistemology of the critique of pure reason will be counterpoised to an empiricist epistemology of the critique of pure experience. In consequence, the conviction about one real world, existing objectively, will be replaced by the statement that there might exist a multiplicity of virtual or fictitious worlds, cognised or constructed subjectively. Having in mind the assessment of epistemology, related either to *ergon* (generalised fact) or *energeia* (individualised process) with regard to two kinds of objective or subjective knowledge, we will distinguish between: (1) a 'dispositional-perspectivistic epistemology', relating to the general ways of how the investigated reality exists and what are the possibilities of its cognition, and (2) a 'cognitive-constructivist epistemology', understood as a specific approximation to reality through the acquisition of knowledge about its domain of objects available through sensorial perception and mental reception. To sum up, a metaphorical conclusion will be put forward that both the metascientific epistemology and the psychophysiological epistemology may be appreciated as a semio-mathetic cartography of the products of human learning and knowing processes.

GENERALLY USELESS NO MORE



Ian Weatherseed

University of Tartu, Department of Semiotics

In this era of echo chambers, post-truth and fake news, modes of semiotic thinking have a unique opportunity to extend their utility to the public psychosocial domain by providing the individual with a means to challenge their sense of potentially skewed relational coherence through semiotic dehabitation – if they so dare. For semiotics can be dangerously double-sided when wielded by the individual as an instrument of personal change. This appears unavoidable given that Peirce's interpretant posits semiosis as a necessarily subjective phenomenon (a position shared by biosemioticians like Hoffmeyer), while Lotman's concept of untranslatability heralds the importance of dissonance within (and without) an individual being intent on change through dialogic means, auto-communicative or otherwise. Paths apparent to such reformulation require generalisation in terms of the identification of an individual's default style of semiosis. Post-Jungian cognitive functions provide an interesting set of eight relational (and therefore dialogic) categorisations that could be used to classify individual styles of semiosis – the starting point for any movement towards reformulation of personal semiotic relations. In this presentation, we will explore how such a mapping can be approached, justifications for its relevancy and, briefly, problems that can be encountered in active pursuit of semiotic dehabitation. For the voice that implores 'sleep no more' should be heeded – long-confined to the ivory tower, unknown if not generally useless to most, it is time to wake the world to the incredible possibilities of semiotics, gently.

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NOTES



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