

ACADEMIC COMPONENT – CONFERENCES

CONFERENCE 2 – REPORT OF PARTICIPATION AT GATHERINGS IN BIOSEMIOTICS 2023

CONTEXT

The presentation of results in this conference includes results obtained between May 2022 and May 2023. They are based on Deliverables 6 to 22 and are a partial conclusion of the project.

CONFERENCE

PRESENTATION OF THE CONFERENCE

The Annual Gatherings of the ISBS, or Gatherings in Biosemiotics, is the major event for scholars in biosemiotics and related fields. The conference gathers researchers from various countries or academic fields and with various research subjects or academic cultures. More information about the Annual Gatherings can be found online (see link in References).

THEME, PLACE, MAINS SUBJECTS

The conference takes place at the University of Copenhagen's Social Sciences Faculty, Copenhagen, Denmark, from July 31st to August 4th, 2023.

The main subjects for the call for communication were:

- Biosemiotic approaches to biology; Experimental biosemiotics; Zoosemiotics; Semiotic approaches in theoretical biology; Biosemiotics and ethology
- The implications of biosemiotics to philosophy and the humanities; History and epistemology of biosemiotics; Umwelt studies and phenomenology; Philosophy of biosemiotics
- Cultural implications of biosemiotics; Biosemiotic education; Biosemiotic background of linguistics
- Evolution and ontogeny of semiotic mechanisms; Endosemiotics; Cognitive Semiotics; Evolution of semiosis; Biosemiotics of health and disease
- Modelling of semiosis and semiotic networks; Interspecies semiosis; Ecosemiotics
- Quantitative approaches to biosemiotics

PARTICIPATION

COMMUNICATION

ABSTRACT SUBMITTED

In this communication, I will present different steps of diagnosing and modelling a shared urban semiosphere in order to solve interspecies cohabitation issues. Mainly, this presentation will introduce key concepts needed for this work and methods used – what elements should be included in a basic corpus? In a more detailed one? What methodology should be preferred depending on the context and circumstances and what are its potential flaws? How to encourage a good and relevant interdisciplinary dialogue? All these questions will be addressed by presenting and comparing two projects in Paris (Delahaye 2021) and Tartu, the last one being used as a case study.

In this presentation, we will use the concept of semiosphere as defined by Hoffmeyer (1997) as “a sphere just like the atmosphere, the hydrosphere and the biosphere”, incorporating all kinds of “signs of life”. In this sense it could also be called in different ways like “semiotic ecosystem” or “ecosemiosphere” (Maran 2021), to use a specific term with a separate meaning. This question of terminology, as well as others that could lead to confusion, will be briefly discussed.

All the results and methodologies introduced in this communication are from a just-completed project in Tartu, aiming to study relationships and interactions between humans and liminal species, using the urban corvids as a case study – *Corvus cornix*, *Corvus frugilegus*, *Coloeus monedula* and, to a lesser extent, *Corvus corone* as comparative observations with the city of Paris.

Results obtained will include elements of ethology or biology, elements of anthropology and literary elements, in order to present an exhaustive overview of this fundamentally interdisciplinary methodology. Methodological tools will be given in order to make these different and various components interact in an efficient way and to allow a potential investigator to interpret them in a relevant manner, no matter their academic speciality or background.

PROMOTION OF THE RESULTS

The presentation was used to promote the final results of the project, but also (and mostly) the current state of the model, explain its use, its way of functioning and its possible applications.

FORMAL AND INFORMAL EXCHANGES

The formal exchange time saw three questions or suggestions:

- the possibility to include a space-related modelling aspect (informal exchanges regarding this aspect are still ongoing)
- the difficulty to talk about other species Umwelt: this comment was addressed by explicating that, if the model can't indeed tell how other species see the world and why they are acting in the way they do, its consistency and its ability to make accurate predictions still make it a correct and usable tool, even if it remains an imprecise model of reality
- the suggestion regarding the inclusion of more species in the modelling: this comment was addressed by stating that it is completely possible, we just need to move the focus of the model from one target species (or group of species) to another

Informally, at least three participants showed their interest in the model and requested previous publications to understand it better.

FEEDBACKS

PERSONAL FEEDBACK

The presentation helps to organize results clearly and elegantly. One of the figures created for the presentation could be included in paper P3.

OTHER PARTICIPANTS' FEEDBACK

The general presentation was appreciated for its clarity and its general interesting topic.

The methodology and the model were considered relevant, useful and well-designed.

The subject was seen as a major and sensible and can interest at least one other conference and two journals.

GENERAL PROJECT – CURRENT STATE OF PLAY

IMPLICATIONS OF THE CURRENT STEP

The presentation and its reception were important steps to obtaining a first form of peer review for the final results. The different comments and feedback are major ways of improvement for the last paper (see Document P3) ongoing.

PROPOSITIONS FOR OTHER ASPECTS OF THE PROJECT

RESEARCH ASPECTS

The methodology was appealing to many colleagues, and possible cooperation (especially regarding the inclusion of a space-modelling aspect) could lead to an improved version of the model.

POPULARIZATION ASPECTS

Different aspects introduced in the presentation were focused on popularization, its necessity and its different formats. Future academic communication will continue to encourage strong popularization aspects of similar problems.

NEXT STEPS

The results presented during this conference will now be published in the last paper of the project (see Document P3).

ANNEXES

REFERENCES AND LINKS

REFERENCES

- Delahaye, Pauline. 2021. « Rats, Mice and Humans ». *Linguistic Frontiers* 4 (1): 44-52. <https://doi.org/10.2478/lf-2021-0004>.
- Hoffmeyer, Jesper. 1997. *Signs of Meaning in the Universe*. Indiana University Press.
- Maran, Timo. 2021. « The Ecosemiosphere Is a Grounded Semiosphere. A Lotmanian Conceptualization of Cultural-Ecological Systems ». *Biosemiotics* 14 (2): 519-30. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12304-021-09428-w>.

LINKS

Annual Gatherings presentation: <https://www.biosemiotics.org/annual-gathering/>

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DOCUMENTS

Presentation “Diagnosing, Modelling and Solving Interspecies Cohabitation Issues: Anatomy of the Shared Semiosphere” at the Gatherings in Biosemiotics 2023 – Copenhagen (PDF version – 22/06/23)