

ACADEMIC COMPONENT – CONFERENCES

CONFERENCE 1 – REPORT OF PARTICIPATION AT GATHERINGS IN BIOSEMIOTICS 2022

CONTEXT

Presentation of results in this conference includes results obtained between October 2021 and May 2022. They are based on Deliverables 1 to 5, and are a partial introduction to what was obtained during Work package 1. Visuals used in the conference were obtained from Work package 3, and are only used here on an illustration purpose.

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 Palacký University, Olomouc, Czechia, from June 27th to July 1st, 2022.

Main subjects for 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

The concept of semiosphere is particularly interesting when one tries to understand complex relationship and communication. This is especially true when studying semiosis events and patters between different species. In this presentation, we will use the concept of semiosphere as defined by Hoffmeyer (1997) “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 “ecosemiosphere” (Maran 2021), to use a specific term with a separated meaning. This question of terminology will be briefly discussed.

The understanding of different aspects and layers of these interactions can be seen as a map, which includes, in one object, different elements of an environment, different ways to see, explore or exploit it. To map a semiosphere, a lot of academic fields must work together: biology and ethology, anthropology and sociology, but also literature studies or linguistics.

In this communication, I will present different steps of mapping a semiosphere. Mainly, this presentation will introduce key-concepts needed for this work and methods used – what elements should be included? What methodology should be preferred and what are its potential flaws? How to encourage a good and relevant interdisciplinary dialogue? – before giving some examples of results. Results obtained through these steps will include elements of ethology or biology, elements of anthropology and literary elements, in order to present an exhaustive overview.

All the results and methodologies introduced in this communication are from an ongoing 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 a part of this project includes comparative observations with the city of Paris, this communication will also briefly talk about key-points of vigilance when comparing semiospheres.

This communication will also address the question of why would anyone want to do something as complicated as mapping a semiosphere and how this kind of work is a valuable tool to understand biodiversity, human-animal interactions and species-environment interactions. I will also briefly explain how, without a tool of this kind, projects of sustainable urbanism, species reintroduction or biodiversity enhancement may fail to take into account subtle aspects of the semiosphere that are vital to carry out the project successfully.

PROMOTION OF THE RESULTS

The presentation was used to promote three different aspects of the results:

- The methodology (in direct link with the future article P2)
- Some of the cohabitation issues that could be found by using the methodology as a mapping of semiosphere as a diagnosis tool (in direct link with the future article P1)
- The importance of the scientific communication, between different scientific fields, between scientists and general audience and between volunteers in citizen science programs and final users of the collected data.

FORMAL AND INFORMAL EXCHANGES

Due to delay in the schedule, it was not possible to have a formal exchange after the presentation.

On an informal way, at least three other participants showed interest in the presentation. Their interest was mostly about the methodological part, and how the methodology presented could be applied to their own fields.

FEEDBACKS

PERSONAL FEEDBACK

The presentation helps to organize results in a clear and elegant way. Figures created for presentation should be included in papers P1 and P2.

OTHER PARTICIPANTS' FEEDBACK

The figures were appreciated for their clarity and their elegance.

The methodology was considered as promising, and is appealing for different colleagues for their own fieldwork.

The subject was seen as rich, interesting and sensible. Several other conferences and journals can be interested by this subject.

GENERAL PROJECT – CURRENT STATE OF PLAY

IMPLICATIONS OF THE CURRENT STEP

The presentation and its reception were important steps to obtain a first form of peer-review for the results. The different comments and feedback are major ways of improvement for the two papers (see Documents P1 & P2) that are ongoing.

PROPOSITIONS FOR OTHER ASPECTS OF THE PROJECT

RESEARCH ASPECTS

The methodology appeared appealing to many colleagues. Following the announced steps of improvement in Workpackages 2 and 3 should lead to solid results that could find echoes in the scientific community.

POPULARIZATION ASPECTS

Part of the figures, considered as “clear and elegant” will be reused for communication with general audience, especially in the forthcoming seminar with the French Society of Zoosemiotics (see in the Links section).

NEXT STEPS

A journey in Paris is scheduled in July 2022. It will be the opportunity to do both field observations for corvids behaviour in summer (see Deliverable 16) and introduction of the projects and results to an international partner (see Document I1) by presenting a general audience seminar for the French Society of Zoosemiotics in Sorbonne University.

ANNEXES

REFERENCES AND LINKS

REFERENCES

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/>

French Society of Zoosemiotics announcement: <https://societefrancaisedezoosemiotique.fr/seminaires/>

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DOCUMENTS

Presentation “Mapping the Semiosphere – Case-study of corvids in Tartu, Estonia” at the Gatherings in Biosemiotics 2022 – Olomouc (PDF version – 06/07/2022)