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Cybersemiotics as a bridge between the formal, the empirical as well as the experiential and embodied enacted social meaning

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Abstract.

My main thesis is that system thinking – including Luhmann's - lacks a theoretical foundation in the phenomenological and hermeneutical aspects of communication, because it is often based on statistical concepts of information, abstract cybernetic autopoiesis and views communication as information transfer and treat expectations as a probability model. Thereby analysis of the aspects of signification and interpretation is left to common sense basis leaving out the relation between rationality, logic, feeling and meaning. But C.S. Peirce, who was the father of an American pragmatism, based his view on a logic based on semiotic relations. Interaction as such is not a relation in itself; relation is what arises from and continues after such interaction has ceased. Even after my uncle has died I am still his Godson. 'Son' is a sign for a human relation. Only irreducibly triadic relation uniting three distinct terms (representamen, object, interpretant) constitutes a "sign" formally in Peirce's semiotic paradigm. Peirce's basic semiotic triads: qualisign-sinsign-legisign; icon-index-symbol, and rheme-dicisign-argument are meant to refer to aspects of empirical signs, and most empirical signs include several of those aspects, because to Peirce the main phenomenon of semiotics is *reasoning*. Thus the whole of the semiotic machinery is developed to understand the essence of reasoning processes as chains of sign-arguments in perception, thinking and communication integrated with an aesthetical as well as an ethic perspective. The Sign, that 'irreducible triad' is a syllogism. The major premise is the Representamen relation; the minor premise is the Object relation; Conclusion is the Interpretant. This is a dynamic process, a transformative process. It's not just a conveyor belt; the information is acted upon and 'thought about' (interpreted) from input sensation to result. C.S. Peirce's pragmatist, triadic semiotic theory is the only paradigm that can match – and therefore integrate with - system science in transdisciplinary scope as well as process dynamics. Semiotics (unlike mathematics) is a positive science dealing with real relations. One of the most important lessons to take from Peirce's semiotics in the vast reorientation of the whole domain of sensation, perception, logic, reasoning, thought, language, images etc. towards the chain of reasoning as its primitive phenomenon. The point of this pragmatism is that it may be formally

described, independently of the materials in which it may be implemented. This implies that propositions are not entities of language, nor do they presuppose any conscious "propositional stance". Consciousness and language should rather be seen as being selected for scaffolding, serving and increasing reasoning during evolution. Thus, language, images, perception etc. should be re-conceptualized for the roles they may play in the chain of propositions of the reasoning process. The consequence is of course that the reasoning processes exist across the boundaries of nature, biology, mind, culture and social processes. Thus it delivers a transdisciplinary paradigm that encompasses a theory of meaning integrated with logical as well as an empirical fallibilist foundation and this ties it in with the new interactive theory of mind: Embedded, embodied, enacted, extended. It is a process-based vision of the mind as a complex semiotic set of activities distributed across brain, body, language, culture and world. As such it complements systems theories of self-organization. The integration of cybernetic-systems and semiotic transdisciplinary thinking I call Cybersemiotics. Here it is the semiotic foundation that integrates the various meaning producing autopoietic systems at the biological, psychological and socio-communicative levels of Luhmann's autopoietic system theory. This changes our ontology and epistemology to a semiotic and system process view integrated with a phenomenological and fallibilist view of knowing.

Some recent writings on the subject

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