

# Learning as a cultural process

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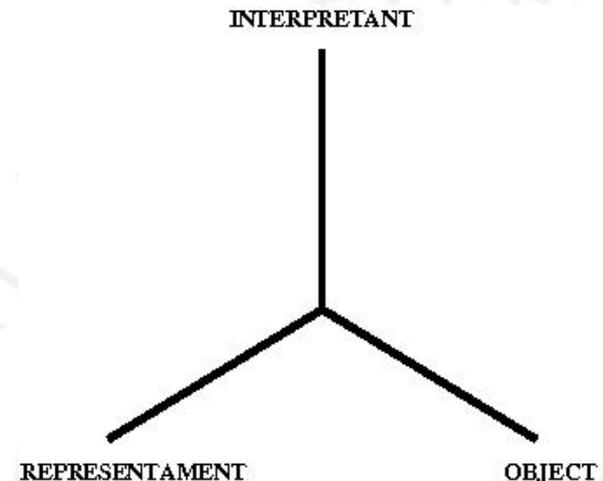


# Culture as semiosis

- For to understand learning as a cultural process, it is crucial to define the concept of culture
- For me, culture is basically a process of interaction, semiosis
- Different material and non-material elements are changing, varying, emerging and disappearing in culture / semiosis
- In the process of culture people learn and create new non-material and material things whole the time
- People also identify themselves to their physical and social environment
  - Identification allows them different kinds of environments for learning processes

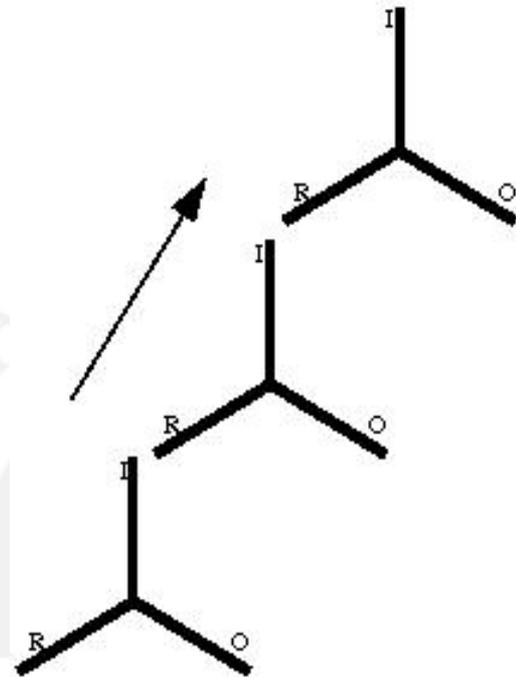
# The basis of culture: Perceptions organized as signs

- In every single situation, where a human being perceives and interprets the perception, (s)he uses a sign
- A sign is a whole of three elements
  - According to Charles S. Peirce a sign is “something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity” (CP: 2.228)
  - In human context *interpretant* is a sign in human mind, to which (s)he combines a *representament* (a physic or psychic sign-vehicle) and the *object* of the sign



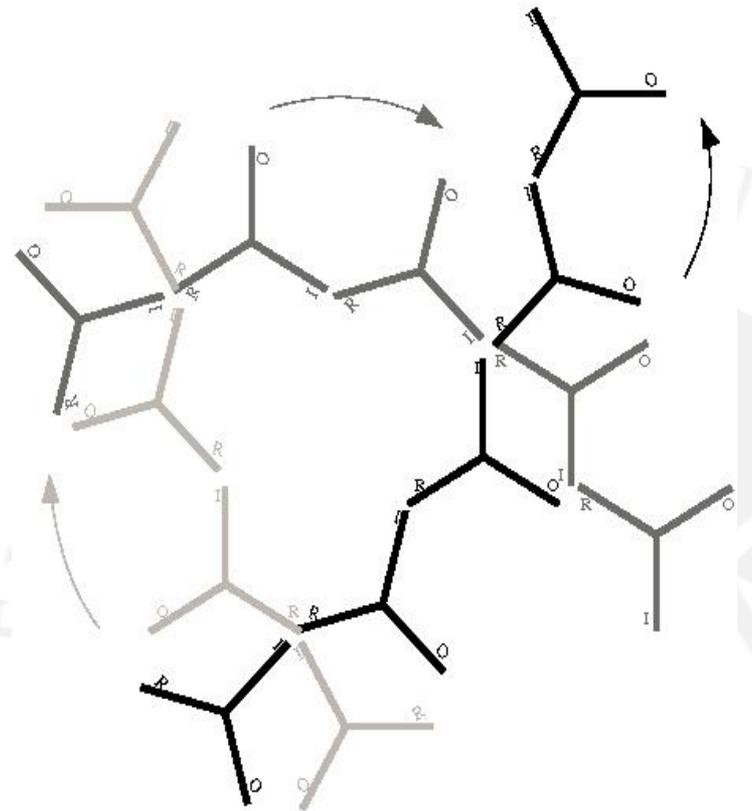
# The flow of signs: *semiosis*

- A sign with its three elements becomes a part of a next sign (as a representment) and produces its own new immediate interpretant in relationship to its object
- In the process of semiosis a constantly completing interpretant is growing
- In every situation people use many interpretants for organizing the richness of perceptions, and they have many chains of interpretants growing



# An anthroposemiotic network

- The chains of interpretants of different people are linked to each other, and they build a semiotic network or process
- Interpretants produced inside human minds are in every signification event connected to tangible and intangible representaments and objects, and they all have an impact to each other
- In the chain of signs, one sign following the other is never identical to the previous one
- Interpretants, representaments and objects are unavoidably changing in the semiotic network



# Semiosis is a creative and global process

- From the global process of semiosis it is possible in some manner to discern knowledge, memories, experiences and life work of one individual
- It is also in some manner possible to discern knowledge, memories, experiences and life works of mankind, to which everyone's individual processes are connected to
- Interaction fields of human beings are not limited by any clear borders in social structures, space or time
- It is difficult to distinguish any human group (national, ethnic, local, idealistic, organizational... ) to an own whole in the semiotic network
- It is impossible to make the semiotic process static

# Basically culture exists as anthroposemiosis

- The basis of culture is an individual human being
- In every single signification event culture is shared between different individuals and between individuals and their environment
  - Cultural learning – enculturation
- External and internal cultural elements of human mind are changing and varying in the interactive process of anthroposemiosis
- In the cultural process there is both creativity and continuity
  - Everyone both creates new cultural elements and learn from other people and from their environment (material and non-material)
- Culture is a global process, where tangible and intangible elements (tradition, cultural heritage) live
- A homogeneous cultural whole with clear borders doesn't exist
- Individual human beings can not be outside of the global cultural semiotic process

# Signs organize perceptions

- Sensory impressions are in *firstness*
  - *Iconic signs*: sensory elements, similarity
- Causal relationships are in *secondness*
  - *Indexical signs*: cause and effect, (unconscious) habits
- Symbols are in *thirdness*
  - *Symbolic signs*: argumented cultural rules
- All these are parts of the global cultural process

# Cultural rules/symbols as habits in the process of semiosis

- In the chains of signs and interpretants
  - a sign is connected to following signs, that is to the future and change
  - a sign is connected to previous signs, that is to past time, habits, memories, experiences and traditions
- One sign following an other can differ from it by smaller or greater amount
  - it can not be totally separate from it
  - It can not be exactly similar with it
- There is faster or slower change in the process of semiosis
- In every signification there is both continuity (learning) and creativity

# Silent knowledge and skills

- A symbolic habit is not argued consciously in thirdness as symbols
  - Culturally learned concrete skills
  - Silent habits of human societies
  - Enculturation with imitation and experimentation
- It is possible to partly raise silent knowledge to the level of thirdness and make it visible with conscious argumentation
- Habits vary or change slowly
- Art is playing with habits and makes them visible
- But also everyday routines, for instance cooking of home meals, is imaginative combining of food ingredients, which creates new and fresh elements to the life

# A homogeneous condensation in the process of semiosis

- Every human being produces her/his own process of anthroposemiosis in interaction with her/his surroundings
- An interacting human group creates a relatively homogeneous condensation in the process of semiosis, i.e., in some respect shared and constantly varying culture
  - Interactions can take place in a place, in an organisation, on Internet or through common interests, media, international companies, international trade...
  - People can be a part of several cultures simultaneously and after each other
- Common habits inside this relatively homogeneous condensation are not necessarily conscious, although they exist

# Learning is a part of global antroposemiosis

- In the global process of antroposemiosis there doesn't exist clear borders between different, relatively homogeneous cultural condensations
- In the mutual interaction process people give influences and they adapt them, and the process of antroposemiosis develops with relative homogeneity
- Learning and creativity are basic phenomena in this process
- People create different cultural material and non-material elements
- On the same time, these cultures have an impact to every human being as a learning environments

# Symbolic cultural wholes

- Cultures seen as original wholes exist as consciously argued, and partly also commonly accepted symbols
  - Flags, national songs, cultural tangible and intangible heritage, stories about originality
- Organizational powers support symbolic cultural originality
  - Nations, regions, ethnic groups, ideological groups, organisations e.g. have their own supporters, who create and uphold their own spirit
- Symbolic originality lives also in everyday life
- Symbolic originally presented in stories can differ from the homogeneous condensation of cultural traits of the same group of people, but they can not be totally separate from each other

# Symbolic originality as a learning environment

- On the one hand clearly defined and widely accepted symbols expressing essence and borders of certain cultures
  - e.g. flags, national songs
- On the other hand diffuse and changing cultural elements representing essence and borders of certain cultures
  - cultural tangible and intangible heritage, stories about originality
- “Imagined communities”, which can give their character to different learning environments
- Like symbols always do, also symbolic originality of different cultures are changing, varying, and becoming unconscious habits in the global process of anthroposemiosis

# Cultural identities in Southwest Finland archipelago

- Identification to Southwest Finland archipelago consists of signs describing nature and practices in communities in firstness and secondness
- They function as silent knowledge, which is sometimes difficult to reach and describe with words
- In some contexts these signs rise up to thirdness as conscious symbols, these kinds of symbols are
  - on the same time beautiful and violent archipelago nature;
  - shores of islands as borders and freedom to work and define own manner of life inside of these borders;
  - skills and knowledge learned on islands, which beat administrative and literal knowledge defined outside of them

# Identities as learning environments

- Culture and identities are in constantly movement, also in archipelago
- Very prevalent element of these identities is anyhow the will to define changes by archipelago people them selves inside the shores of islands
- Nature is an acceptable and strong definer of actions and identities
- Administrational and literal knowledge defined outside of archipelago is not an acceptable definer of actions and identities
- Impacts are anyhow given and received in many ways from local until global interaction networks
- What are definers of actions and identities in different (learning) environments?