



The International Association for Cognitive Semiotics



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Epistemology as a semiotic cartography of human cognition

This paper will depart from the famous *dictum*: “The map is not the territory” expressed by Alfred Korzybski in *Science and Sanity* (1933)—on the basis of Ernst Mach’s *Beiträge zur Analyse der Empfindungen* (1886) and Richard Avenarius’ *Kritik der reinen Erfahrung* (1888)— known thanks to Gregory Bateson’s anthology *Steps to an Ecology of Mind* (1972) and subsequently his book *Mind and Nature* (1979) in a human-centered epistemology as the science of the ways of acquiring knowledge about reality by cognizing organisms as (non)human selves. With reference to the modelling abilities of animals and humans in their extraorganismic perception and intraorganismic apprehension of reality, the author will ponder the approaches of Jakob von Uexküll, *Umwelt und Innenwelt der Tiere* (1921/1909/), Ernst Cassirer, *An Essay on Man* (1944), Juri Lotman, “The place of art among other modelling systems”, ([2011[1967], and Thomas A. Sebeok, “In what sense is language a ‘primary modelling system’?” (1988). The point of arrival for the sake of a detailed presentation will constitute a metascientific understanding of epistemology specified as a set of investigative perspectives by Zdzisław Wąsik in his *Epistemological Perspectives on Linguistic Semiotics* (2003) and *Lectures on the Epistemology of Semiotics* (2014). In detaching investigative “perspectives” of cognizing subjects from cognized “properties” of investigated objects, epistemology is seen there as a branch of the philosophy of science studying the nature of human knowledge principally accumulated in the body of theories and praxis which result from research activities of scientists who address respective questions connected with the ontological and gnoseological status of scientific objects and the methodology of scientific fields in particular. The examination of the epistemological positions, represented by a given discipline, is based on the conviction that the choice of a given investigative approach stipulates a scientist’s outlook upon the nature of his/her investigated object. In consequence, this outlook usually coincides with the choice of conceptual and operational investigative tools providing thus a basis for the formulation of investigative postulates. Bearing in mind the co-occurrence of different approaches to the object of scientific study and to the investigative domain of a scientific field, and concentrating on consequences resultant from a specific epistemological position assumed by a subject of science in accordance with a chosen investigative goal, the aim of epistemology is therefore seen in answering how far the commitments of scientists to their attendant views on their object of study correspond to its investigative approachability.