

Semiocide in Cascadia: Multimodal Field Artefacts Using ESRI Field Maps

Marion Benkaiouche
SFU GIS Day 2024

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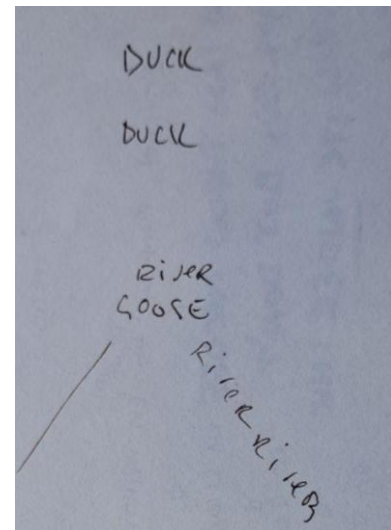
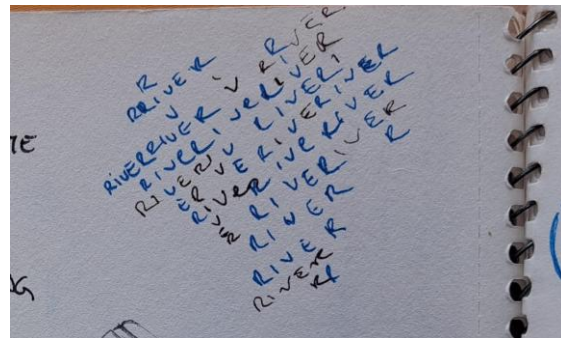
Dr Cary Campbell - not presenting

How the project started

This project started due to a lack of acknowledgment of the value of our **inter**relations, and what we perceive as small or getting in the way of “progress”.

It started on Boyne St, on the Queensborough peninsula, the overlapping and traditional territories of the Halkomelem speaking peoples.



[illegible]

Semiocide

Our biosemiotic thesis: All creatures (microbes, plants, animals) use and interpret signs to communicate, learn and adapt to the environments they inhabit.

“[T]he diversity of nature is overwhelming. Every living creature, being part of a greater whole, carries in itself memories of billions of years of evolution and embodies its own long and largely still unknown story of origin.”

- Ivar Puura, *Nature in our memory*, 2013. p. 152.

Semiocide is

- cartographic in nature
 - Šakaja (2008) in Croatia
 - Alınışık Özyer & Çavuş Peksöz (2023) in Turkey
- a sensitizing heuristic for place-based reflective practice/qualitative research

What did we aim to do, and how?

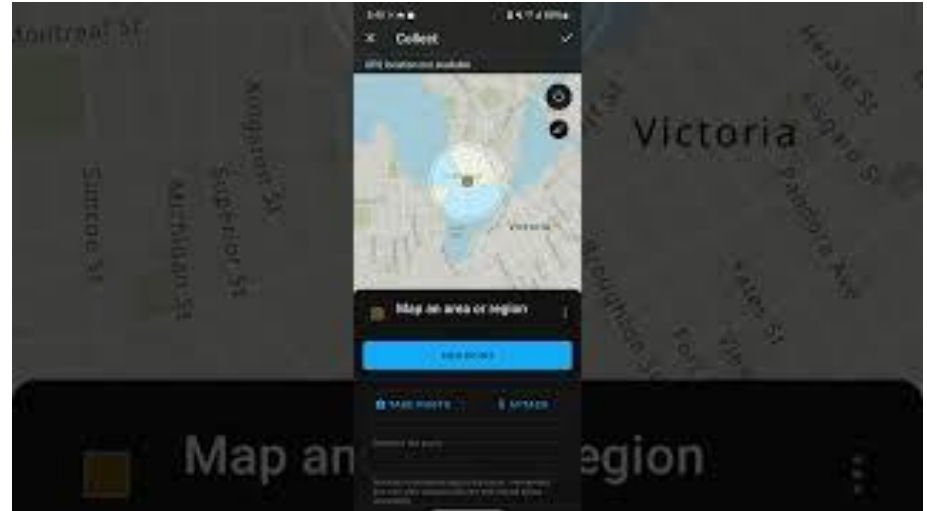
- Identify patterns in the ways people conceive of and perceive semiocide
- Build empathy and humility within the general population towards the ineffable, the non-human and the more-than-human through:
 - a. Designing the map in Field Map Designer and testing the Field Maps app
 - b. Introductory workshops on semiocide (Jan, Feb, Jun, Jul, Oct)
 - c. Field work & reflective practice exercises
 - d. Follow-ups throughout the semesters

Encountering semiocide through 'living inquiry'

- Semiocide as auto- & duo-ethnographic heuristic for place-based education.
- Mapping the self (and stories) onto places

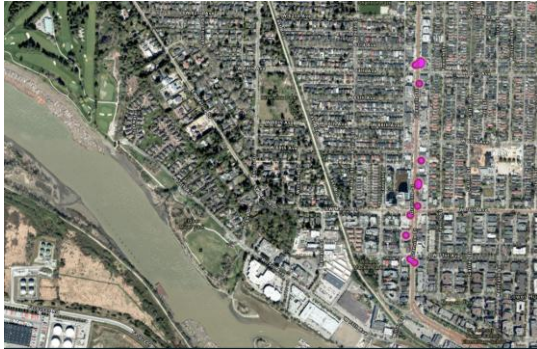
“An implication of the unproblematic privileging of the auto in autoethnography is that it can reinforce a binary divide between self and culture, thus risking the elision of more complex socio-material arrangements and circumstances that produce both the self and the practice being represented.”

(Denshire & Lee, 2013, p. 222).



Some findings

- We initially workshopped semiocide and Field Maps to undergraduate students in Education; through word of mouth, we had some graduate students join us.
 - **Surprise finding:** the pilot group shied away from using the app, preferring offline/non-digital reflective tools.
 - **Urban Policy Implications:** [Mapping vacant commercial spaces in Marpole](#), and the impacts this has on feeling at home and in-community



Want to know more?

- We wrote a paper exploring some of these insights and concepts further for [Interdisciplinary Digital Engagement in Arts & Humanities \(IDEAH\)](#) - happy to share the manuscript!
- Want to contribute to our map? Email me!
- Want to learn more about semiocide?
 - A curated semiocide bibliography | [bibliography](#) & [readings](#)
 - Solastalgies Créatrices | <https://solastalgiescreatrices.uqam.ca/>
 - Feral Atlas | <https://feralatlas.org/>
 - [StoryMaps: The Great Dismal Swamp - A Region Defined with Boundedness Defied](#)
 - [StoryMaps: The Great Dismal Swamp - A Safe Haven for Centuries](#)

About us: the New Curriculum Group

United by the (Pinarian) understanding of curriculum ([currerre](#)) as an ongoing and 'complicated conversation' between the self and the self's capacity to act in the public sphere, we curate programs to support each others' art and research creation, including running a multimodal webzine called [philosophasters.org](#) since 2017, and starting a community sound and music studio called Terrestrial Sound Studios in late 2023.
Come visit us at [newcurriculumgroup.org](#) !

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Appendix: Guiding Questions

In our student workshops, we discussed the following:

1. Is it possible to map a philosophical concept such as semiocide?
2. How does centering on a watershed, or a bioregion, help us come back down to earth and be rooted in the land?
3. How can this expanded, more empathetic approach to mapping advance reconciliation? how can it help us reduce alienation in our community?
4. Does an app detract from the experience of being with and on the land?
5. Do you prefer to avoid technology when out and about?