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Title: Making Sense of Making Meaning, the Semiotic Way: Emotional Journey of a Novice Learner

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Abstract: I write this auto-ethnography as homage to my teachers and peers, both in the classroom and in scholarly realms, who inspired me to soar beyond the horizons of self and find meaning within the cosmic consciousness that surrounds us. As a novice learner in an introductory semiotics course, I learned about the process of meaning making. This paper is a product of my learning and understanding of a semiotic worldview. Encouraged by my professor, I delved deeply into the "thinkings" of two semiotic masterminds: Charles Sanders Peirce and Jakob von Uexküll, whose philosophies, ideologies and beliefs helped make sense of events in my own life as I saw it unfolding in new ways within my stream of consciousness. While indulging in the flavors of my autoethnographic inquiry, I was also privileged to have my fellow classmates share their experiences with me, through one on one-thought exchanges, captured via participation in class discussions and observations, as well as interviews and a survey, bringing my investigation into the realm of ethnography. The findings indicate that curiosity, fulfillment and hope are the critical bookends of the novice learners' learning process. Based on the findings, I developed a new Curiosity Fulfillment Loop Model that may help explain how novice learners continue on their learning path to becoming seasoned learners, and yet always staying novice for some knowledge.

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