80.
Notes, May 2021 – in progress …

Pieter Wisse

These notes originate for the most part from my email correspondence.

80.1
I have just read **Semiotics Unbounded: Interpretive Routes though the Open Network of Signs** (Toronto University Press, 2005)[, a book you have co-authored with Augusto Ponzio]. While I am supposed to be retired, I cannot resist offering you some principled remarks regarding semiotics as a theory for open-ended practice. My contention is that the – what in **Semiosis & Sign Exchange: design for a subjective situationism** (2002) I have developed as – semiotic ennead may serve as the frame of reference for a genuinely general semiotics.
What Charles Peirce basically does is transferring a well-proven engineering solution to a conceptual problem. For when there are just two elements, keeping them mutually related necessarily limits possibilities for variety. Have you ever realized what makes you open and close a door with the surrounding wall – and the rest of the building, for that matter – remaining where it is? Right, hinges supply a third element mediating between wall and door (or window, et cetera). So, I find Peirce's real stroke of genius is to have added sign as a mediating concept between the concepts of object and interpretant respectively. Indeed, the so-called semiotic triad results.
However, I reject what Peirce suggests as typology of signs, categories of Firstness et cetera, existential logic, and so on. In my view, it all gets in the way of a most general semiotics. As practiced academically, regretfully semiotics has become a predominantly sterile discipline.
Yet, I do take a(nother) vital cue from Peirce for understanding differences and their cohesion (also read: variety, interdependence). I initially read his concept of ground in terms of Gestalt psychology, that is, as a background always appearing in concert with a foreground figure. Yes, I am aware that your concept(s) of ground as put forward in **Semiotics Unbounded** are quite … different. Still, please bear me out. It appeared odd to me that that Peirce doesn't seem to – continue to – bother much about what he names ground. I begged to differ, also because previously I had developed a formal method, Metapattern, for modelling behavioural variety based on recursion of – what I then called – context. I subsequently recognized how ground could productively be applied to all of Peirce's original triadic elements, that is, differentiated accordingly, thus raising the number of such irreducible elements from three for a triad to six for a hexad. But, then, I had already equipped the sign structure according to Metapattern with three – mutually relative because of recursion; I myself had added a mediating element for flexibility – elements. For arriving at (also read: engineering :-) necessary and sufficient structural correspondence, I extended – what in the hexad had already changed from elements to moments/dimensions with each two elements – both object and interpretant to three elements, too. See Enneadic Semiotics, axiomatic models.
Peirce emphasizes again and again that for an understanding of semiosis the

elements of his triadic schema should be taken as, I repeat, irreducibly related. Of course, this 'rule' also holds for the semiotic ennead. And compared with Peirce's triad plus ground, the ennead with its additional elements makes it easier to recognize how signs including (!) context mediate between motivated concepts and situated behaviours; context, situation and motive jointly act in dia-enneadic dynamics (also read: dialogism) as the triadically differentiated concepts as derived from what I understood as Peirce's as yet undifferentiated concept of ground.

Of course, the ennead presumes subjects, too. A subject is 'anyone' who can – at least try to – adapt to its changing environment (with the environment changing in the process, and so on). Therefore, a subject behaves situationally, from – its experience of – situation to situation, with behaviour attributable to both subject and situation. From the perspective of the subject, situation should more in general be considered as 'other.'

I fully realize I have only been able to provide you here with the briefest of outlines of the semiotic ennead. For some further introduction, I would like to refer especially you to my paper [Victoria Welby's significs meets the semiotic ennead](#) (2003). You may also be interested in a paper I have written the same year reviewing the work of Gerrit Mannoury on Significs.

I am looking forward to your reply.

[2021]

80.2
Yes, you've got the address right. It is nice to hear from you. On my part, I am still "think[ing] deeply," too, at least trying, :-) from wondering how … superficially conceptual modelling remains to be practiced. When people feel comfortable keeping their heads in the sand, however, it's no use pulling their legs. It seems I've just come up with an aphorism.

[2024]

80.3
On balance, only what actually wòrks is of course really simple. Albert Einstein famously remarked that "everything must be made as simple as possible, but not simpler." As an ongoing tragedy, nevertheless, many so-called decision makers fail to take all efforts into account. Their assumptions may appear "simple," at least to themselves, but then they run into often insurmountable difficulties. Or, worse, let other people suffer the consequences from ill-considered assumptions inevitably leading to poorly designed tools, et cetera. I consider it, therefore, an overriding matter of design ethics to emphasize equity.

Is there now any money to be made from such an attitude? When my experience counts, no.

On the contrary, you are right to point out in so many words that people who are both predominantly short-term and financial-profit oriented won't change their approach just on my modelling suggestion of recursive contextual differentiation for balancing differences. Huh, suggestion of whàt?! There you go … Who cares? However, perhaps someone who is indeed in a position to effect change will eventually give it a go. I'm still hoping …

You rightfully scorn an approach "totally avoiding any complexity." I protest to even the slightest avoidance. Can I afford to do so? It has certainly earned me some reputation, here, but not income. And with my increasing age, the reputation is fading

fast. :-) But I categorically continue to find that a responsible designer should especially guard independence of judgment oriented at – promoting – interests of all stakeholders, not just – strictly her/his own and to some extent what s/he takes for – her/his paymaster's interests.

Could it be that you think of me as a software engineer? Please note, I am not. I do have the greatest respect for programmers, that is, for the ones who master their craft. But design of an encompassing – system of – system(s) should in my view not be left to programmers. Why not? Software 'only' covers an aspect.

In my opinion, overall design is first and foremost a conceptual task. Again in my experience, it is not what programmers excel at. Early on, priority rests with designing – often confused with analysing – a system of concepts which, following Einstein's advice and I repeat, "must be made as simple as possible, but not simpler." What might be subject to programming, and what not, can only properly be derived from an adequately outlined conceptual model covering the, indeed, totality of relevant concepts, relationships between them included. There are admittedly even less modelers who really master their craft. It wouldn't make a difference, though, as long as decision makers hold the mistaken belief that software engineers are also the designers they need.

Anyway, what I propose for a modelling method, Metapattern, that is, should help designers of models express conceptual variety at whatever relevant scope. It is not at all meant as a software engineering method. An introduction provides the paper [The pattern of Metapattern: ontological formalization of context and time for open interconnection](), taken from my book **Metapattern: context and time in information models** (Addison-Wesley, 2001). Shortly after, I changed Metapattern's notation, but its succinct modelling principle of recursive contextual differentiation has remained unchanged. Written after the book about Metapattern, as part of the subtitle of **Semiosis & Sign Exchange** indicates, I've attempted to supply the modelling method in its turn with "conceptual grounds." As mainly a work in philosophy, it is even further removed from aiming at tips & tricks for software engineering. In **Semiosis & Sign Exchange** I introduce the semiotic ennead. The name ennead refers to the Greek word for nine. It does consist of nine elements. Not six. The illustration showing six elements pertains to the step in the development of such a basic scheme from counting three to nine elements. The scheme I took my departure from is Charles Peirce's. I have maintained his 'original' three elements as what I subsequently call dimensions, or moments, with each dimension now counting three elements (making nine element all together, aka ennead).

You now mention me suggesting "a six-dimensional model of the world." I don't know which model you might mean. In **Semiosis & Sign Exchange**, there is the hexad (Greek: six) with Peirce's three elements already appearing as dimensions, but consequently only three. And there's the ennead as the final grounding scheme. Again, three, not six dimensions, and nine, not six elements.

What the ennead allows, and I find Peirce has to be applauded for inspiring such connections, is comprehensively ordering – scientific – disciplines. For you may recognize that efforts according to traditional disciplines are habitually concentrated each on one of the three enneadic dimensions. Then, the ennead lets you hypothesize how such different disciplines may be related, too. Meanwhile, pursuing any such discipline more or less on its own, the enneadic dimension which it may be assumed that underlies it, suggests a set of three, say, metaconcepts. For anything

to do with data, information, or whatever it is called, the obvious orientation follows the sign dimension, containing the related elements of context, signature and intext. The scope they cover is open, because they are assumed to be relative. For example, bank. Take the word 'bank' as a signature. By itself, it is not clear what it means. As, formally called, sufficient and necessary 'information' must be added for disambiguation. That is covered by what according to the ennead's sign dimension is the element called context. Is it a bank as a financial establishment? Or the side of a river? With everything considered relative, in turn – the word – financial establishment may require to be taken as a signature, et cetera. The metaconcept intext covers what completes the unambiguous overall sign as a pertinent description (with parts of intext, when considered necessary, taken as signatures, et cetera). You are again right. No, such a threefold, relative at that, modelling principle is not what is "expected." Catering to, and even promoting, evidently false expectations may be what makes businesses financially especially successful.

Yes, it is difficult, if not impossible, to get people to even consider what they don't expect. Most people are lacking any curiosity. But they are wrong to … expect their problems may be solved by what causes them. Yes, Einstein said something along that line, too.

In terms of the ennead, Metapattern is not "a language that describes context," but includes context in descriptions. What context is supposed to describe or, rather as Peirce productively assumes and what the ennead helps to make more explicit, mediates are situation along one of the other two dimensions and motive along the other of the other two dimensions. For an overview, see Enneadic Semiotics, axiomatic models. And being a relative concept, too, in an absolute sense I don't consider context, too, having an "identity."

I fully realize that hereby I've only strengthened your idea that my methodological proposal for conceptual modelling, though interesting, is highly impractical. As with "simple," however, what is really practical? I'm sure you appreciate that I don't want to waste my time on what, as I have come to understand, evidently doesn't work.

[2024]

80.4

subject: on reading **Cambridge Pragmatism**, suggestions for promoting a path toward a sophisticated pragmatism

I am fully aware of taking a chance addressing you, especially with you having once been president of the Charles S. Peirce Society. :-) Please bear me out, however (and realize that whatever practice can never turn English into my mother tongue). Approximately a decade earlier than your presidency, in fact, for a somewhat belated doctoral dissertation as an academic outsider I developed what so-called Peirce scholars I approached at the time were quick to reject as a departure from his ideas. I'd rather like to consider the enneadic framework an useful, even long overdue, extension of Peirce's triadic one of semiosis.

I came up with the idea while pondering on his qualification, a qualification Aristotle, among others, already suggested as necessary to account for relevant variety, for that matter, with Peirce emphasizing that "a sign is something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity." That is, in his words, too, "a sign stands for [an] object, not in all respects, but in reference to a sort of idea, which I have sometimes called the **ground** of the [sign]." Uncertain of where to place

"ground," though, I took a trusted engineer's approach and supplied each and every one of Peirce's three elements with 'its' ground, thus arriving at six elements. When you don't want to miss, just hit everything. The result might be surprisingly effective, which in this case I certainly found, and continue to find, it to be. For Peirce's original three elements had become three, say, dimensions with each dimension counting two elements. Next, as an engineer I had also recognized the exponential advantages from what Peirce introduces as a third element, i.e., sign explicitly mediating (also read: acting as hinge) between elements of, and thereby overcoming limitations from lack of flexibility, a merely dualistic framework. Indeed, another decade earlier I had developed a formal method for conceptual modelling, Metapattern, based on what from subsequently studying Peirce's semiotics I could place as the mediating element on the sign dimension. More or less repeating the procedure, I continued to supply both other 'dimensions' each with such a mediating element, too. From Peirce's triad and including – as a fourth element? – his reference to ground, a framework consisting of nine irreducible – the term, as you know, of course, is also Peirce's – originated, hence called an ennead. For an illustration, see [Enneadic Semiotics, axiomatic models](). No doubt, you'll readily recognize Peirce's triad 'at the centre.'

One of my claims is that the ennead facilitates interdisciplinary explanations. If so, I venture to add that it should be of some philosophical interest, and from there support many practical interests becoming more realistically integrated. If pragmatics is not about … practice, what is?

You are interested anyway, I dare to assume, in why I am trying to arouse your curiosity. Recently, I read somewhere that Wittgenstein's change of, say, paradigm should be largely attributed to his designing a house for one of his sisters, and supervising its building. The author, Francesco Amendolagine, mentions in passing, that is, as unrelated, that Ramsey had meanwhile stayed in touch with Wittgenstein. Although I hadn't heard of Ramsey before, right away it seemed much more likely to me that his was the stronger influence, to say the least. I should add that, here in the Netherlands, Brouwer is favoured as having led Wittgenstein to take up academic practice, again, but from a changed perspective (a view on language which in so many words, indeed, Brouwer had expressed even more radically much earlier). However, I now thought the case for Ramsey might be stronger. Searching for relevant literature, your book **Cambridge Pragmatism, From Peirce and James to Ramsey and Wittgenstein**, originally published in 2016, seemed the obvious choice. Ordering – and paying for – a copy (Oxford University Press, reprint 2018) took just a few well-aimed clicks, and the next day I started reading. With only Ramsey's work unknown to me, I am happy for your comparative introduction. And it really must have been Ramsey, mustn't it, who 'helped' Wittgenstein decisively to change perspective?! Thank you.

Yet, working my way through your book, I was sort of expecting for you to include, and subsequently switch over to, semiotics. But then, I suppose, you didn't want to confuse your history of ideas. So, I understand why you saved articulating – something of – your "own sympathies" to the final pages (with me here quoting you from page 286). Perhaps you have since changed your mind about what "path" may lead to "a sophisticated pragmatism," but I gladly take your remark that "[t]he reader might disagree that this is the best direction for pragmatism, and philosophy as a whole to take" as an invitation that is still outstanding.

I don't so much disagree as argue for extension. Of course I fully agree, as I should have made abundantly clear, above, with referring to and applauding Peirce. While you suggest looking in the direction for "pragmatism [a]s a kind of amalgam of Peirce and Ramsey," an additional suggestion I'd first of all like to offer is that you give more consideration to contributions made by Victoria Welby. I did so in what has remained sort of an informal paper, see [Victoria Welby's significs meets the semiotic ennead](#) (2003).

For now, I refrain from offering other references. When you are interested in following a "path" that Peirce, as I see it, most certainly pointed at, but then for whatever reasons did not bother to cover with an appropriate logic, I can supply more references, enter discussion, et cetera.

To conclude, please note that at the age of 71, I am not at all pursuing a career, but would still like to help out developing pragmatism further. You have convincingly argued for the need for development in your conclusion of **Cambridge Pragmatism**. I suggest taking a semiotic turn by … returning to a direction that Peirce started, but prematurely abandoned. I have already taken it what I find some promising distance further.

I am looking forward to hearing from you, yours sincerely.

[2024]

80.5

There's nothing wrong with my timing, it seems. :-) First of all, however, thank you for your instant reply! And I do hope, in fact, I'd be surprised should it fail to do so, that what I've written on Welby helps you "right now writing a paper on Welby." You'll see as one of the points I'm making that, from their correspondence, I gather that Peirce kept more or less deaf to Welby's proposal for her semiotics-called-significs, falling back as it were on, and limiting himself to, explaining his take on logic (which I find isn't even triadic, let alone enneadic as grounding a logic of interdependence, with the latter a direction I find – and in my paper I argue so – Welby anticipated but Peirce missed). Do you agree that assuming interdependence makes truth an increasingly elusive concept? Why, from a more radically developed pragmatic-inspired-by-semiotics perspective, still bother? :-) Anyway, I'd highly appreciate any comments, criticism not excluded, of course, on my Welby paper you might care to share.

I suppose you know that especially in the Netherlands, Welby did succeed to establish significs. Members of a small group, calling themselves The Signific Circle including Brouwer, met regularly during the twenties of the previous century (indeed, doing so well before Wittgenstein attended a lecture given by Brouwer in Vienna). Gerrit Mannoury, Brouwer's senior as a professor of mathematics at the University of Amsterdam, was a member, too, and in 1947-48, delayed by the German occupation 1940-45, I guess, Mannoury published the two volumes of **Handboek der Analytische Signifika** (only published in Dutch; the title translates in English as **Handbook of Analytical Significs**). Therefore, after my paper on Welby I wrote a paper on Mannoury, see [Mannoury's significs, or a philosophy of communal individualism](#) (2003) in which Welby figures prominently, too, of course. It could also be of interest to you.

[2024]

80.6
subject: on spirit of inquiry, a cue from **Truth and the End of Inquiry**

Based on my reading **Cambridge Pragmatism**, and you should only continue to read this email message when you'll forgive me for being somewhat blunt, :-) I find you have missed what, I have found earlier that, Peirce has missed in proposing semiotics. Yes, you can also stop reading this when you hold everything that Peirce theorized on semiotics beyond extension.

While recognizing that, at least in **Cambridge Pragmatism**, you could have skipped semiotics on purpose, I thought you might, let me continue to be blunt and rephrase, I thought you should anyway be interested in what I designed, please note, critically inspired by Peirce's sign concept, as a more both useful and consistent logic. So, I roughly sketched the so-called enneadic framework for semiosis and, for some initial further introduction, referred you to comments I've written from such an enneadic perspective on Victoria Welby's work.

I repeat being very grateful for your immediate reply, kindly calling my "email […] interesting."

And I am glad to hear that you are yourself "right now writing a paper on Welby, who I agree is excellent." From just that remark alone of yours, though, of course I cannot make out what it actually is we (dis)agree on.

You confirmed my impression that you left semiotics out of **Cambridge Pragmatism**, explaining "as it wasn't on Wittgenstein and Ramsey's radar," adding that "in my first book on Peirce's theory of truth (**Truth and the End of Inquiry**), the theory of signs takes center stage." In the spirit of … inquiry, I purchased of copy of that book (expanded paperback edition, 2004) and have studied it, too. Does my … belief that you've missed out on what Peirce semiotically missed stand the test of my further inquiry? It does.

I most certainly want to avoid that you are feeling being harassed. When you have enough of me addressing you, please let me know, straight and clear. However, I would like you to still (re)consider that, on page 66 of **Truth and the End of Inquiry: A Peircean Account of Truth**, (Oxford University Press, 2004, original edition 1991), you

> [r]ecall [w]hat Peirce takes the most important philosophical maxim to be: do not block the path of inquiry. If we are not to impede inquiry, then experience, criticism, and points of view must be considered. If they are not, then inquiry ceases.

Now, why would Peirce demand such an attitude of openness? I believe it has to do with his position as an academic outsider, frustrations and all. Wasn't he continuously offering ideas et cetera for serious consideration, but finding them academically neglected?
Similarly, you may just ignore what I bring up. If not, I sincerely apologize for writing you this email message starting from my apparently completely wrong impression.

For the moment, with my apology still hanging in the balance, I don't want to elaborate on what I believe you've missed that Peirce missed. It has to do with what led me to extend Peirce's semiotic triad to an ennead.
I do already, however, want to remark that I find your argument of **Truth and the End of Inquiry** aptly summarized in its title. There's a play with meanings of the

word "end." In one direction of what you call the "biconditional" I read "end" as the goal requiring means, in the other as the promise of a result. I once learned from philosopher John Haynes the procedure of what he coins contragram. It helps express interdependence. Also read: bi- or, rather, multiconditional? Anyway, take … truth and inquiry. Then, the contragram reads: the truth of inquiry is the inquiry of truth. Do you agree it sums up dynamics of "Peirce's account of truth"?

I hope to continue to hear from you. Why wait getting interested until after someone has died? I am looking forward, for example, to explaining from my enneadic account of sign why "Peirce's account of truth" related to inquiry could especially get, after all, traction among academics. :-)

[2024]

80.7

About a decade ago I read, in German, **Der Einzige und sein Eigentum**. Now I have just finished reading **All Things are Nothing to Me** (Zero books, 2018) with great interest. I highly appreciate your explanation of and commentary on, quoting your subtitle, **The Unique Philosophy of Max Stirner**. Upon trying to make your views my 'property,' :-) too, I hereby would like to suggest an additional approach for making sense of, and indeed also largely agreeing with, Stirner's work. Perhaps in return you see fit to 'own' it for some of your further work. Please, do.

Take what you may believe to be an object. You'll find that what you may believe to be its behaviours differ between what you may believe to be situations in which the object in question takes part one situation after another. Actually, particular behaviour, also say, a phenomenon, results from such participating of object in situation, both changing as a … result, and so on. So, as the object contributes to behaviour, borrowing Stirner's terminology, it 'owns' the situation, while for its contribution in turn the situation 'owns' the object.

What an object contributes always depends on both how it has accumulated effects of earlier situational confrontations and the situation it now meets. And, of course, the other way around goes for how an actual situation provides for its contribution upon meeting with an object.

In so many words, this was the view of Niels Bohr: complementarity. In fact, Aristotle already stated, that "the most certain of all […] principle[s] […] is, that the same attribute cannot at the same time belong and not belong to the same [o]bject and in the same respect; we must presuppose […] any further qualifications which might be added."

There is no – use for assuming a – so-called essence of an object, on the contrary. Yet, situationally different behavioural contributions may seem to 'originate' from some continuing object. It has led me to assume the nil-identity for an object. It serves to allow for joining an object's different situational behavioural contributions (in Stirner's terms form your explanation: its uniquely different situational appropriations).

Through time, every confluence of object and situation, that is, every phenomenon, is unique.

Yes, in some situation objects, too, may be discerned. You are quite right, I find, to refer to the ideas of Spinoza with their implications of – additionally assuming – both relativity and recursiveness.

Some objects can take an active part in behaviour on account of 'possessing' cognitive power et cetera. I call such an object a subject. As any object, though, a subject doesn't 'have an essence. Therefore, I assign a nil-identity to a subject, too. It all makes sense from the perspectives of both physical and cognitive sciences, not to forget evolutionary theory. Actually, what I propose as a logic of interdependence points at establishing coherence between so-called disciplines still being predominantly pursued separately (at risk of mutual neglect of necessary and sufficient 'ownership,' i.e., responsibility).

With your book you've confirmed my earlier judgment that Stirner adheres to a paradigm that with some added logical consistency I developed as subjective situationism, see Semiosis & Sign Exchange, Design for a subjective situationism (2002). I find especially the axiom of nil-identity most productive for unambiguously ordering further concepts (comparable to null for the number system, and extending it for/with arbitrary concepts).

I felt obliged to limit myself to a sketch of the barest of outlines of subjective situationism. However, I do hope to have raised at least sufficient interest for you to consider it for emphasizing the relevance of Stirner's work, and more.

When you refrain from replying because I am, for example, already well over seventy years old, not an established academic, and so on, you'll leave me guessing about the extent of your appreciation of uniqueness. :-) Really, instead of "nothing," among "all things" a serious discussion about appropriate assumptions and subsequent hypotheses would certainly mean something "to me."

I am sincerely looking forward to hearing from you, best regards.

[2024]

80.8
As a method, Metapattern starts from qualifying 'something' as a behaviour. As such, it is next assumed to have two, no more and no less, constituents. It is Metapattern's principle of relativity. One constituent (also read: participant) is an object (when equipped with cognition: a subject), the other a situation with the object 'in' it. Then, every such constituent may also be qualified as a more encompassing behaviour, in turn each bi-relationally constituted. And so on, until more generalization seems unnecessary. At that … point, 'something' is taken as totally encompassing both object and situation, i.e., constituting the horizon of the conceptual model in question. And in the, say, opposite direction, any behaviour can be taken as either an object (and/)or a situation in order to constitute less encompassing behaviour, and so on, until additional detailing seems unwarranted. Building on relativity, this is Metapattern's principle of recursion.

[2024]

80.9
Thank you very much for so kindly and promptly commenting on my earlier message. I'd like – very much, too – to continue our correspondence/discussion. Again, I'm trying to be brief, but some length seems regretfully unavoidable, even when merely sketching a proposal for adjusting basic principles (also read: an axiomatic system).
I want to argue, please note, as you have made convincingly clear to me in **All**

Things are Nothing to Me, that in so many words Stirner himself already comes up with what you now aptly call "a stirnerist theory of interdependence." You start your book with a section titled **Reading Max Stirner** for summing up what you consider several misreadings of his work. I would say that Stirner himself makes it easy being misunderstood and subsequently neglected, both then and now, by readers otherwise preoccupied. On purpose? Is it his unique sense of humour? For he aims at – what certainly at the time, that is, his 'own,' must have appeared as a – contrast. Immediately emphasizing the Einzige, he does seem overly successful at upsetting readers, rubbing them the(ir) wrong way from which they were unable to recover. You are quite right, they fail – or is it, refuse? – to recognize how further on in his book, through Verkehr, he introduces reciprocity, indeed, interdependence.

I refer to Stirner's original terminology, that is, in German, for those words are easily translated into Dutch, my mother tongue (Einzige: enige; Verkehr: verkeer). I was not only helped, though, by such similarities across our languages.

Around 1990 I was led to find a practical (!) method for ordering any variety of arbitrary meanings. If you are wondering, and I believe we all should do so, why citizens et cetera continue to suffer from large-scale digital information systems, it is because meaningful differences are suppressed with the short-sighted, indeed, owner of some so-called system effectively, that is, one-sidedly, 'ruling out' interdependence. Spooky, as Stirner would no doubt say.

Anyway, while Metapattern as modelling method for promoting emancipation is still waiting to be applied – you see how I can sympathize with Stirner :-) – I set out to fit it with – more explicit – axioms. I have already mentioned my belated (2002) dissertation **Semiosis & Sign Exchange**, with sign exchange as an admittedly poor translation of – in Dutch – informatieverkeer. In German, with Zeichen as synonym of Information, it says Zeichenverkehr.

So, upon later reading **Der Einzige und sein Eigentum**, I wasn't misled by Stirner's initial emphasis. It is just that I favour introducing concepts in the reverse order. There is Verkehr. There are instances of Verkehr. An instance is when and where subjects are participants, each participant making a uniquely (!) 'instantaneous' behavioural contribution.

Such an instance, from one to the next, and so on, should be qualified as Verkehr because participants mutually affect each other's behaviour. They do so with one participant exhibiting behaviour for the other to take as a sign, vice versa: sign exchange. Actually, as I radically suggest in my dissertation, every sign is a request for compliance. No exceptions! But what about, for example, assertions? Well, why make a so-called assertion? You tell me about some state of affairs because (!) you want me to behave accordingly, period. Please note that the idea of sign as a means for coordinating participants' behaviours includes all organisms (also read: subjects). In fact, how a subject reacts to/acts upon an environment (also read: situation) without another subject 'in sight,' follows the same principle of Verkehr. Well, that is how I 'see' it. If you need convincing, please consider how you communicate with, well, anybody, including any pets you may 'have,' not forgetting to consider how they communicate with you, among each other, and so on. And how do you orient yourself getting from A to B? You are expected to comply with traffic signs all the … way.

What about the origin of language? It coincides with the origin of life. No, I don't have any further ideas on that.

There is nonetheless much and much more to be said about such a concept of sign (also read, in the most general sense: language). Here, I would like to emphasize how it reflects Stirner's idea of Verkehr between Einzigen. Each Einzige is a participant. The one who addresses his/her sign to the other(s) aims at 'owning' a particular behavioural contribution from the other(s). And (each one of) the other(s), by interpreting what s/he experiences as a sign against his/her (previously) 'own(ed)' motives et cetera, tries in turn to 'own' what the one contributes. From such reciprocity, I would call it dialectic in a dialogic sense.

More suited for making sense of, and somehow trying to cope with, an accelerating information age, whatever that may be, recognizing every, repeat, every sign as a request for compliance amounts to rephrasing Stirner's 'assertion' about "the unique and its property." It is only (dia)logical, I find, that Stirner's Verkehrstheorie, indeed, "a stirnerist theory of interdependence," should both include and be derived from a theory of – the aspect of – Zeichenverkehr. And it is not, I find, too, that "perhaps we need" such a theory. We certainly do, ever more importantly. Now equipped with the artificial concept of nil-identity it comes ready with an encompassing method (also read: logic) for continuing to make sense et cetera of – developments of, including ill-directed designs for – the so-called information society.

Is there any research you are conducting, or planning, where in addition to "a stirnerist theory" you think "a stirnerist [method/logic] of interdependence" might help getting the argument across? Talking about requests for compliance, :-) I'd be most happy to try to contribute.

Regarding some of your other comments, when starting from Verkehr, of course, a theory can only be "a relational theory of reality." What I have taken from Charles S. Peirce is an augmented view. He offers an escape from choosing between either realism or idealism by having sign mediate between object and interpretant, thereby allowing for triadic … interdependence. It follows that ontology, rather than excluding, includes from such principles both epistemology and semiotics, as epistemology includes both …, and so on. As far as I have been able to establish, however, Pierce himself has not followed up on what I consider to be his paradigm-shifting proposal. In **Semiosis & Sign Exchange**, while maintaining Peirce's basic threefold division (replacing the twofold opposition), I extended each of his elements into three elements, thus arriving at an enneadic rather than a triadic scheme for semiosis. The 'middle' element of what enneadically are now three moments/dimensions with each three elements, provides for a corresponding nil-identity holding, so to speak, dynamics together. For a separate illustration, more or less summarizing **Semiosis & Sign Exchange**, see [Enneadic Semiotics, axiomatic models](#).

Perhaps :-) Niels Bohr is somewhat comparable to Peirce. From what I've read by and about Bohr, he himself did consider wider applications of – his idea of – complementarity. I haven't been able to find any specific … sign of it, though. You are probably right about what preoccupied him. Nevertheless, I do honour him for what I recognize as a paradigm-shifting proposal, too.

Already a long time ago, I've read books with collections of Werner Heisenberg's more popular essays. I remember being mostly in agreement.

Thank you for mentioning Carlo Rovelli. For a first impression I usually consult Wikipedia. Yes, with "relative information" Rovelli's work is also about interdependence, but seems limited to behavioural contributions 'by' objects rather

than including – what I suppose to be – subjects, too. But then, for example, I find Albert Einstein's theory of special relativity already predominantly – perfectly understandable as – yet another theory of sign exchange. For knowledge of one object always requires compensating for what it takes for some sign 'of' it to reach another object (where 'the' observer is supposed to reside). Doesn't every child learn to count between when it sees lightning and hears thunder for computing an estimate of how far, or close, the storm is? Then again, I am also not much of a physicist.

Like Stirner, and Peirce, Bohr, and so on, for that matter, I am missing the qualification of academic affiliation in philosophy. However, it didn't stop them from proposing sound principles, on the contrary. Perhaps closer proximity to praxis served frustration, prompting their efforts to design a more suitable, relevant explanatory basis. In that spirit, I am having a go, too, with an ennead combining and then attempting to go beyond their basic principles.

I am curious to learn whether or not you recognize it as a useful tool for your 'own' work. Please don't hesitate to inform me of any critical remarks and/or urgent questions you may have. I am most happy to respond.

[2024]

80.10

Thank you for trusting me with your request. I am afraid, however, my reply can only disappoint you. For I am way out of my depth with category theory.

On such occasions of utter lack of knowledge, I often turn to Wikipedia for getting at least some idea. On category theory it says there that

> many constructions of new mathematical objects from previous ones that appear similarly in several contexts are conveniently expressed and unified in terms of categories. […] A category is formed by two sorts of objects: the objects of the category, and the morphisms, which relate two objects called the **source** and the **target** of the morphism.

Indeed, context is mentioned. My impression, though, is that in terms of category theory you want to consider context – mainly – as morphism as, and I continue to quote from Wikipedia, "morphisms can be composed if the target of the first morphism equals the source of the second one." Do you?

Metapattern is all about necessary and sufficient differentiation. So, you won't be surprised that I find you are completely right to argue that "an object can have […] modes [of] behavior based on its caller or situation of use."

I would like to point out, though, that we might have … different :-) ideas about what we call object. For your purpose, do you refer to an object as, say, a piece of software? With Metapattern as a method for conceptual modelling, not digital processing, yet, what I take as an object is, say, a piece of reality.

I am also not an expert on software development. Therefore, regarding objects-in-software I also simply lack the expertise to understand what concept :-) of context you are assuming to, apparently through category theory, allow for "orthogonal contexts" from which "a union, or a transformation" yields yet another context.

I guess our concepts of contexts differ, too. Please note that the idea behind Metapattern is that every 'real' object differentiates behaviour according to situation. Such differences can then be unambiguously modelled (also read: described) with, for every different behaviour of some object, context as explicit description of

situation. Adding recursion, whatever reality at whatever scope may be 'covered.' Through such recursion and starting from some node, then, its particular context is composed as the inverted tree of the nodes from there extending to, and including, the model's so-called horizon. What you call "polymodality" is conceptually arrived at considering the set of nodes that all refer to the same contextless node (suggesting a nil-identity connecting the different object's situational identities). Metapattern doesn't entail whatever logic for 'calculating' additional contexts, et cetera. What you see is what you get. :-) The modeller (also read: human designer) does the modelling.

Again referring to Wikipedia, as far as I understand what is meant by "constructions[, too,] appear[ing] similarly in several contexts," I might hold even doubly opposing opinions. A construction being different from what it is constructed from, my idea is that it will also behave (also read: making its appearance) differently. And differentiating between contexts, I find, only makes sense when differences in behaviour are in order.

Should you want to arrive at rules for logically/mathematically 'computing' relevant 'real' differences from differences, category theory, or not, I don't believe it is possible. However, while for now I actually don't know what – kind of – control of variety you are aiming at, and how you plan to achieve it, my answer to your question "What do you think?" is at the minimum that I strongly agree that any both practical and responsible approach should at least be, here gladly taking my cue from your terminology, polymodal.

[2024]