

THREE PROBLEMS FOR PEIRCE'S METAPHOR

TONY JAPPY

Abstract. In view of the extensive influence of imagery in all its forms and of the diverse digital realizations to which contemporary culture is exposed, not to further develop what Peirce referred to as a logic of the icon is potentially prejudicial to our full understanding of images, the media they are communicated through and the often obscure and not necessarily benevolent intentionalities that determine them. Such a situation surely renders the continuing development of a theoretically-grounded visual semiotics both a scientific and ethical necessity. Although in 1903 Peirce endowed picture analysis with a suite of analytical instruments in the three subclasses of the icon – metaphor in particular – there are at least three subsequent theoretical developments in his semiotics which might render a specifically Peircean investigation of imagery and image-making problematic: his later definitions of the subclasses of the icon; the absence of iconicity, and, consequently, of hypoiconicity, in the very process of sign-production, namely semiosis; and finally, his switch from a phenomenological framework in the classification of signs to one based upon a variety of ontology. Reviewing material from the later period of Peirce's thinking on signs, the paper aims to contribute to the continuing development of the rich conceptual battery he left behind, taking up and exploiting concepts and methodologies that Peirce did not attempt to develop. The study, then, is essentially diagnostic. Introducing the concept of mediatization, a second study suggests a method of conciliating hypoiconicity with these three problems within a general Peircean theory of visual semiotics, while both seek to maintain Peirce's theoretical status in a field of enquiry dominated by descriptive semiotics.

Keywords: metaphor; diagram; hypoicon; subclasses of the icon; semiosis; allegory; intentionality; mediatization.

INTRODUCTION

In 1903, in a Syllabus intended to accompany a course of lectures on logic (see EP2 267–299), Peirce defined the sign as the mediating element in a three-correlate relation, and established a taxonomy of ten classes from three divisions of signs. One of these was the universally-known icon-index-symbol trichotomy, a division much employed in the analysis of verbal and pictorial signs not only within Peircean semiotics

Tony Jappy ✉

University of Perpignan Via Domitia, France; e-mail: tony@univ-perp.fr

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but also in competing theories of the sign. In this division the icon constitutes the sign's purely qualitative mode of representation whereby a sign might resemble its object. By means of his phenomenological categories of Firstness, Secondness and Thirdness, Peirce further analyzed the icon into three hierarchically ordered modes of representation, these being three subclasses of the icon which he named "hypoicons". The hypoicons constituted in effect three different grades of resemblance, enabling more penetrating structural analyses of signs, pictorial and otherwise. Yet, by 1908 he had redefined the sign within a purposive, six-stage process, namely semiosis, from which the phenomenological categories, the icon-index-symbol division and, necessarily, the hypoicons, were all absent. Since, in view of the differing theoretical foundations distinguishing the three-correlate definition of 1903 from the hexadic definition of 1908, it might be thought that Peirce had introduced an unresolvable inconsistency into the two conceptions of the sign and a rejection of the analytical power of the hypoicons, the paper suggests one way in which Peircean semiotics can accommodate both the potential for structural analysis offered by metaphor as a hypoicon and the dynamic nature of semiosis.

First, the exemplification of the three hypoicons proposed below requires explanation. It is derived from the following definition of the sign from the Syllabus of 1903:

A Sign, or Representamen, is a First which stands in such a genuine triadic relation to a Second, called its Object, as to be capable of determining a Third, called its Interpretant, to assume the same triadic relation to its Object in which it stands itself to the same Object. (EP2 272–273)

Although Peirce was already working with two objects and three interpretants in 1903 (EP2 275), he chose here only to mention the sign and what in 1904 (SS 33–34) he identified as the dynamic object and the signified (final) interpretant in his construction of the three divisions yielding the ten classes. While the ten classes of signs from 1903 are a-temporal and static, the sign itself nevertheless operates in a three-correlate dynamic process, anticipating the semiosis of 1908. Summarizing the definition above, a sign is determined by its object to produce an effect, which is what Peirce means by an interpretant, upon an interpreter of that sign, and when the sign of 1903 actually functions as a sign, no less than that of 1908, it mediates in a determination "flow" from object to interpretant, where by "determine" Peirce means "to make a circumstance different from what it might have been otherwise" (W1 245, 1865).

Having defined the sign (also referred to at this time as a "representamen"), Peirce then introduces two relational divisions between the sign and the two correlates, followed later by a third concerning the sign on its own, by means of which he establishes the table of ten classes (EP2 294–296). This is how the relation holding between sign and object is defined in the Syllabus: "The first and most fundamental [division of signs] is that any Representamen is either an *Icon*, an *Index*, or a *Symbol*" (EP2 273), followed later by this definition of the icon: "An *Icon* is a sign which refers to the Object that it denotes merely by virtue of characters of its own, and which it possesses, just the same, whether any such Object actually exists or not. It is true that

unless there really is such an Object, the Icon does not act /as/ a sign" (EP2 291): to function as a sign, the icon must involve all three correlates, hence the specification of both object and interpretant in the Figures given below. This innovative approach to signs was further developed in the Syllabus when Peirce introduced the concept of the hypoicon, his term at the time for the subclasses of the icon:

But a sign may be iconic, that is, may represent its object mainly by its similarity, no matter what its mode of being. If a substantive be wanted, an iconic [sign] may be termed a hypoicon. Any material image, as a painting, is largely conventional in its mode of representation; but in itself, without legend or label it may be called a *hypoicon*. (EP2 273–274)

Thus, after having derived the icon subdivision through a form of categorial analysis, Peirce derives the three subclasses by recursively applying these categorial distinctions to the icon itself, a process recorded in the statement establishing three degrees of structural complexity, namely the hypoicons. These constitute, in effect, three increasingly complex grades of resemblance assimilating both pictorial and verbal signs to their objects. The trichotomy resulting from this category-based analysis is the terse definition describing the three subclasses—image, diagram and metaphor—in order of increasing complexity:

Hypoicons may roughly [be] divided according to the mode of Firstness which they partake. Those which partake the simple qualities, or First Firstnesses, are *images*; those which represent the relations, mainly dyadic, or so regarded, of the parts of one thing by analogous relations in their own parts, are *diagrams*; those which represent the representative character of a representamen by representing a parallelism in something else, are *metaphors*. (EP2 274, 1903)

Since this analysis of the icon yields image, diagram and metaphor, and since Peirce later maintained that an index involved a sort of icon, and a symbol a sort of index (EP2 291–292), it follows by transitivity that indices and symbols can involve any or all of the three subclasses of the icon. This means that any or all of the three subclasses/hypoicons, can inform not only nonverbal signs such as paintings and photographs, but verbal signs, too, as we see below.

The interpretant, the effect or reaction produced in any signifying process, is mediately determined by the dynamic object. On the following schemata, therefore, the three correlates represent stages in this determination sequence from the object to the interpretant via the sign, in which the “arrows” represent the process of determination, which involves the passage of the process through an inescapably “sensible”—in other words, existential and perceivable—medium such as a piece of painted canvas, oils on a wood panel, the inked page of a book, the old-fashioned school chalk and blackboard or the pixelated glass on a smartphone screen. However, in order to illustrate structural differences distinguishing the three subclasses, the correlates involved in this determination process will be represented, as on Figure 1, as “ellipses” in order to bring out their increasingly complex structures.

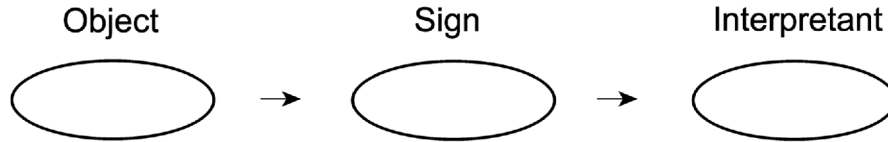


Figure 1: The correlates in the action of the sign represented as ellipses.

1. THE HYPOICONIC STRUCTURES CHARACTERIZING IMAGE, DIAGRAM AND METAPHOR

The three fundamental ways in which the icon can resemble its object by virtue of Peirce's categorial distinctions are represented below as Figures 2, 3 and 4, rudimentary graphic representations of the structure of, respectively, Peirce's image, diagram and metaphor. In all such cases the sign is necessarily a sinsign or the replica of a legisign, as it has to be perceivable—were it a legisign, it would be of the nature of thought or habit and would therefore be physically unperceivable. Note, too, that it is the sign alone which has hypoiconic structure since it mediates as the “representing” correlate in the process, but, note, a structure only intelligible in relation to the other two correlates.

Figure 2 is a very basic representation of some of the qualities (lines, shapes, colours) presumed to be inhering in the represented object which correspond to qualities, namely the First Firstnesses of the definition, in a portrait painting, for example, which is an iconic sinsign but is also technically, without a caption, an *image* of the model at its hypoiconic level.

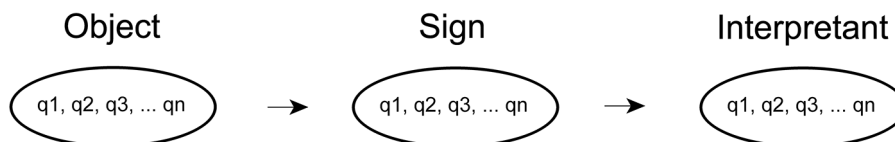


Figure 2: The generic structure of a sign with image hypoiconicity.

Since the qualities—First Firstnesses in Peirce's category-based terminology—thus represented are phenomenologically less complex than the Secondness of the existential medium—the material canvas and oils of a painting, for example, or the airwaves in oral discourse—the intended representation of the qualities in the object is in no way inhibited by potential differences in complexity between the sign and its two correlates. In other words, since the qualities represented in this, the simplest phenomenological conception of resemblance, are less complex than the medium representing them, the intended representation of the qualities in the object is in no way inhibited. Onomatopoeia provides a fine verbal example of this type of resemblance, as in the following well-known line from the *Aeneid* with its dactyl-like meter in which the

rhythm informing the spoken sequence of verbal elements composing the verse suggests the sound of horses galloping over a plain (long syllables in bold):

(1) *quadrupedante putrem sonitu quatit ungula campum* (Virgil, *Aeneid* VIII, 596)

which translates roughly as “the four-hoofed sound (of the horses) shakes the dusty plain”.

Figure 3 represents the structure of a very basic diagram, an icon composed essentially of the Second Firstnesses of the definition, namely one or more dyadic relations shared by object and sign, but represented on Figure 3 as the single relation **a—b** holding between the two partial objects **a** and **b** in the entity, fact or event represented by the sign.

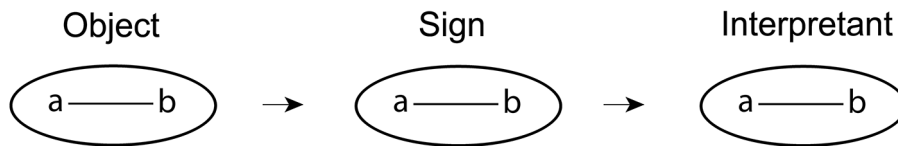


Figure 3: The generic structure of a sign with diagram hypoiconicity.

Such relations are a step up the phenomenological scale from the simpler Firstnesses composing the image: the latter are interpreted to conform to an object, the portrait-painter's model, for example, or horses galloping over a battlefield, but there is no necessary correspondence between the image and the model. The diagram, by contrast, is an icon composed of properties—lines and shapes—organized by at least one dyadic relation inherited from the object that it represents (CP 4.418, 1903), and, in more complex combinations of objects, informs not only the illustrations from geometry manuals and the graphic instructions on how to assemble furniture, but also governs cartography, architectural drawings and such informative exosomatic organs as thermometers, wind socks and barometers. A simple verbal example is provided by the “contraries” in this extract from William Blake's *Proverbs from Hell*:

(2) The tygers of wrath are wiser than the horses of instruction.

Here the contrasting nominal expressions “tygers of wrath” and “horses of instruction” correspond respectively to the participants, **a** and **b**, in the schema on Figure 3, while the predicative expression “wiser than” corresponds to the “—” relation associating them. Such a structure, with its point to point correspondence between the elements of the utterance and those of the schema, is clearly a step up the phenomenological scale from the onomatopoeia in utterance (1). In such cases, the diagrammatic complexity (Second Firstness) informing the sign is compatible with the Secondness of the medium, which is why the representation of the structure “inherited” from the object is, as in the case of the image, in no way inhibited by the medium through which it is communicated.

Finally, as indicated on Figure 4, metaphor is the hypoiconic structure presenting Third Firstness, a phenomenological complexity which requires the experience of the

interpreter in the interpreting process in order to construe the nature of the association or comparison concerning two (or more) generally disparate domains of experience being communicated. According to Peirce's concise and innovative definition given earlier, the metaphor subclass informs a sign whose object—the “something else” of the definition—is structured by a parallelism and is thus significantly more complex than the sign itself. Figure 4 is one way of representing this third grade of resemblance.

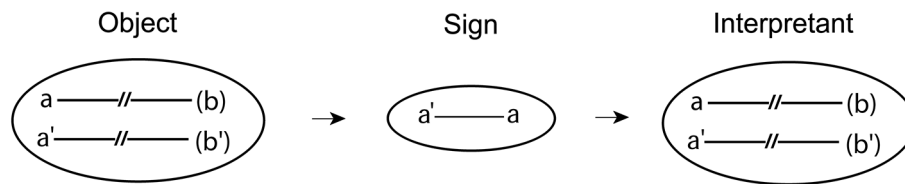


Figure 4: The generic structure of a sign with metaphor hypoiconicity.

The resemblance is established in this, the most complex case, by associating in a single sign selected elements inherited from the parallelism exhibiting two “tiers” of participants in the object. As represented on the schema, the object ellipse is composed of two parallel lines indicated by //. In this way, the relation **a—b** on the top line in the object constitutes the basis of the comparison, a relation holding between individuals, events or states of affairs in some domain of experience assumed to be common knowledge. On the other hand, the **a'—b'** relation on the lower line represents the controversial, contentious, or sometimes yet to be defined relation holding between individuals, events or states of affairs in the domain of experience targeted by the metaphor. The parallel relations can be identified, following the conceptual metaphor tradition, as the “source” and “target” domains respectively. Within the object ellipse, **a** and **a'** and **b** and **b'** are respectively pairs of counterparts identifying the elements in each domain to be associated in the metaphor: **a** maps to **a'**, and **b** to **b'**. Note that domains, counterparts and mappings are not Peircean concepts, as Peirce apparently never took the 1903 conception of metaphor any further, and never developed a specific terminology for it. It was nevertheless to his immense credit that he was able to conceive and theorize the structure of signs less complex than the objects determining them, signs which synthesize in the guise of a judgement elements from two quite distinct relations.

Consider, as an example, one of Blake's contraries from example (2), *horses of instruction*. Referring to Figure 5, the parallel Blake is drawing, in what he clearly considers to be a universally admitted feature of the source domain, assimilates the stultifying effects of domestication, (**do**), on the natural impulses of the horse, **ho**, to the cramping of the natural impulses of the human, (**hu'**), by the dulling formatting imposed by institutional instruction, **in'**, in the target domain. However, as in Figure 4, the participants “bracketed” out of the original parallel structure by the constraints of an unavoidably unidimensional medium appear in Figure 5 in parentheses, leaving in the sign ellipse, as in the nominal expression it represents, a single element from each domain.

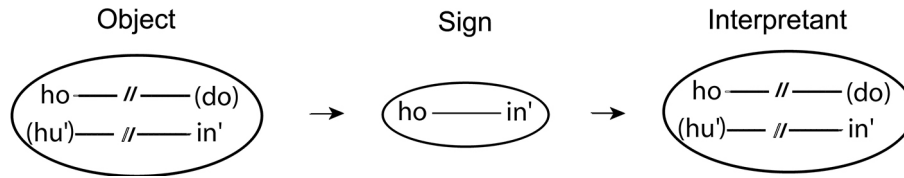


Figure 5: The metaphorical structure of the expression “horses of instruction”.

The structure of metaphor proposed in Figures 4 and 5 calls for two remarks. First, all three hypoicons are subclasses of the icon, a subdivision contributing to the identification of the ten classes of *signs*. By definition, the sign of 1903 is a representamen that determines a *mental* interpretant (EP2 273), hence the additional interest, particularly in the case of metaphor, of including the structure of the interpretant in the schemata. Any interpretation of metaphor is fully dependent upon the experience of the interpreter, experience being that “cognitive resultant of our past lives” (CP 2.84, 1902) including an ability to interpret signs. Second, although Peirce never used such schemata, what Figures 4 and 5 are intended to show, too, is that while the necessarily perceivable medium—the airwaves in a spoken utterance, any page on which the utterance is written or the canvas and paint marks in the case of a painting—partakes necessarily of Secondness within Peirce’s theory of hypoiconicity, the parallelism in the structure of the object constitutes a Third Firstness and is therefore phenomenologically more complex than the audible, written or pictorial sign representing it. In short, Peirce’s theory of metaphoric form shows how the form emanating from the object can be more complex than the medium through which it has to be communicated. This is why the elements enclosed in parentheses in the object and interpretant ellipses stand for participants that are as though “filtered out” in the communicative process.

We see that in this interpretation of the metaphor of 1903 the representation of the full structure of the object is inhibited, with the consequence that when viewed within Peircean semiotics all metaphorically informed signs are both *underspecified*—not all the elements of the original parallelism in the object are represented by the sign—and characteristically *incongruous*, as such signs perforce represent elements drawn from distinct and generally dissimilar domains reflecting to varying degrees the intensity of the judgements or commentary involved. Unfortunately, however, developments in Peirce’s conception of signs and the process in which they function led to a sweeping revision of the theoretical status of the subclasses of the icon, with Peirce discarding the term “hypoicon” and dropping his highly original concept of metaphor.

2. CHANGING VERSIONS OF THE SUBCLASSES OF THE ICON

Although described in detail in the manuscript Syllabus, the trichotomization of the icon had already been suggested in one of the Harvard Lectures on Pragmatism delivered earlier that year: “Now the Icon may undoubtedly be divided according to the

categories; but the mere completeness of the notion of the icon does not imperatively call for any such division” (EP2 163). The following definition from the Syllabus is the earliest of at least four different formulations of such a division of the icon into three subclasses, Peirce offering the *example* as the most complex subclass:

Icons may be distinguished, though only roughly, into those which are icons in respect to the qualities of sense, being *images*, those which are icons in respect to the dyadic relations of their parts to one another, being *diagrams* or dyadic analogues, and those which are icons in respect to their intellectual characters, being *examples*. (R478 209, 1903)

Later in the Syllabus came the standard definition of the explicitly termed hypoicons quoted in the Introduction and described and schematized in Section One. There these three subclasses of the icon were identified in increasing phenomenological complexity as image, diagram and, replacing the earlier *examples*, metaphor. Section One also included a discussion of their relation to the medium through which they are communicated, which showed how this highly original concept of metaphor represented cases where the structure of the object signified was more complex than the medium signifying it.

However, this formulation of the subclasses of the icon and the earlier one given above subsequently underwent significant redefinition. The following extract is from Peirce’s Logic Notebook, dated 12 October, 1905, where the *examples* and *metaphors* constituting the most complex subclasses of the icon from 1903 have now been reformulated as *diagrams*, with the phenomenologically less complex earlier *diagrams* redefined as *analogues*, Peirce here reverting to two terms, “likeness” and “analogue”, first introduced in the 1860s:

A sign may represent its dynamical object simply by virtue of its own abstract quality. It thus represents whatever else has that quality. Such a sign is termed an Icon. Icons either represent unanalyzed qualities, when they are simple *likenesses* or they have structures like the structure of the object, when, [...] they are *analogues*, or if made for the purpose are *diagrams*. (R339 257r, 1905)

The expression “if made for the purpose” is significant as it intimates some form of intention. Similarly, in the following extract from manuscript R284, one of several draft attempts at a “Basis of Pragmaticism” from 1905, the subclass of the earlier *diagrams* in the 1903 definitions is now simply described as bearing “brute Secundan relations of parts”, whereas *diagrams*, here again redefined as the most complex of the three subclasses, “partake of a symbolic flavor”:

Icons are subdivided according to the nature of their significant likeness to their Objects which may be 1st in Priman characters or qualities of feeling; these alone have the iconic character in its purity; or 2nd in brute Secundan relations of parts; or 3rd in intellectual relations of parts. The last which are the most important may be called *Diagrams*. These partake of a symbolic flavor. (R284 61v–63, 1905)

Such fundamental modifications suggest that Peirce was promoting this more complex concept of the diagram as the theoretical foundation of the diagrammatic system

of the Existential Graphs with which he was seeking to prove his pragmatism at the time. The redefinitions of the subclasses proposed between the years 1903 and 1905, now no longer referred to as the “hypoicons”, are displayed on Table 1, and clearly show how Peirce had finally come to generalize the all-important concept of the diagram.

	Manuscript and date			
	R478a 1903	R478b 1903	R339 1905	R284 1905
Discriminant:				
First Firstness	image	image	likeness	Priman quality of feeling
Second Firstness	diagram	diagram	analogue	Secundan relation of parts
Third Firstness	example	metaphor	diagram	(Tertian) diagram

Table 1: Four versions of the subclasses of the icon.

Thus, the replacement of the *example* and *metaphor* of 1903 by the *diagram* as the most complex subclass of the icon, and with it the discarding of the concept of the hypoicon, led to the apparent loss of the originality and analytical power of Peirce's definition of metaphor. Just why he should have modified so fundamentally the subclasses of the icons is difficult to establish, but it was surely a consequence of the intense activity of the years 1905–1906. By 1905 his phenomenology had been replaced by his theory of phaneroscopy. He published three papers on pragmatism in *The Monist* in this two-year period. Between October 10, 1905, and August 31, 1906, he established six ten-division typologies in his Logic Notebook. Finally, he wrote numerous drafts for an intended “Basis of Pragmatism”, with work on pragmatism and the Graphs culminating in the Prolegomena paper of 1906. It is not inconceivable, therefore, that it was renewed reflection on pragmatism and the importance of the Graphs which led to the diagram being defined as the most complex subclass.

3. SEMIOSIS

A second theoretical development in the semiotics with the potential to undermine the 1903 hypoicon-based innovative approach to metaphor in particular and iconicity in general came in 1908 with the description of semiosis as a six-correlate signifying system from which the icon-index-symbol division was absent. This trichotomy figures in the ten-division typologies Peirce developed in drafts to Lady Welby (EP2 483–491), but being relational in nature it cannot participate in a dynamic process such as semiosis. Semiosis involves the correlates themselves, not relations between them and the sign, and Peirce's conception of it developed in several stages between 1906 and 1908.

In the following extract from manuscript RL463, a draft letter to Lady Welby dated 9 March 1906, Peirce proposed a more functional definition of the sign, specifically as a

medium, this medium seemingly becoming a sign as soon as it is “informed” by the immediate object:

I use the word “*Sign*” in the widest sense for any medium for the communication or extension of a Form (or feature). Being medium, it is determined by something, called its Object, and determines something, called its Interpretant [. . .] In order that a Form may be extended or communicated, it is necessary that it should have been really embodied in a Subject independently of the communication; and it is necessary that there should be another subject in which the same form is embodied only as a consequence of the communication. (EP2 477, 1906)

The form in question originates in the dynamic object and terminates in the final interpretant, the two “subjects” involved in the communication. Later in the draft he introduced the three interpretants and attributed specific values to them, the intentional (immediate) and the effectual (dynamic), for example, being described respectively as a determination of the mind of the utterer, the agency in which the sign originates, and a determination of the mind of the interpreter (SS 196–197, 1906).

He also introduced the concept of the quasi-mind at this time, enabling him to describe the general context of the communication of meaning from one mind to another in manuscript R283, a version of the “Basis of Pragmatism” (LI 280, 1905–1906). Clearly, signs are the determination of the dynamic object, but for a logician like Peirce, just how that dynamic object initiates a process of determination requires explanation. Although in this same draft he cites ordinary conversation as a perfect example of communication, he eschews any form of appeal to the fallible human element in his theorizing, and adopts the far more abstract concept of two quasi-minds, between which, he suggests, the sign is the medium of communication (LI 278–280). This introduction of a theoretical context for the exchange of representations by signs anticipates the later concept of semiosis.

In the manuscript “Pragmatism” of 1907, Peirce announces the need for future research into the identification in logic of all varieties, not simply of signs, but of possible semiosis, thereby associating classes of signs with the types of semiosis producing them (R318 119). Semiosis he defines as “an action, or influence, which is, or involves, a coöperation of *three* subjects, such as a sign, its object, and its interpretant, this tri-relative influence not being in any way resolvable into actions between pairs” (EP2 411, 1907). By this time, too, the dynamic object was shown to be the locus of purpose and intentionality in the example of the “will” of an officer giving commands to soldiers (R318 373–379, 1907; cf., too, EP2 493, 1909.)

4. UNIVERSES REPLACE CATEGORIES

Finally, posing further problems to the category-based definitions of the hypoicons, another significant development in Peirce’s late conception of the sign and the way it functions occurs in 1908. True to his principle of supplying the theoretical

framework to his classifications as was the case with phenomenology in the Syllabus (EP2 267–272) and the letter to Lady Welby of 12 October 1904 (SS 23–32), Peirce associates his definition of the signifying process with an introduction to the new theoretical background that underwrites it by presenting three modal universes in place of the earlier phenomenological categories:

I define a Sign as anything which is so determined by something else, called its Object, and so determines an effect upon a person, which effect I call its Interpretant, that the latter is thereby mediately determined by the former... I recognize three Universes, which are distinguished by three Modalities of Being. One of these Universes embraces whatever has its Being in itself alone... I denominate the objects of this Universe *Ideas*, or *Possibles*, although the latter designation does not imply capability of actualization... Another Universe is that of, 1st, Objects whose Being consists in their Brute reactions, and of, 2nd, the Facts.... I call the Objects, Things, or more unambiguously, *Existents*, and the facts about them I call Facts... The third Universe consists of the co-being of whatever is in its Nature *necessitant*, that is, is a Habit, a law, or something expressible in a universal proposition. Especially continua are of this nature. I call objects of this universe *Necessitants*. (SS 80–82, 1908)

Thus, by 1908, with the definition of the sign as a medium and semiosis as a “cooperation”, the three universes supplied the system with the entities—possible, existent and necessitant entities—that could function as signs, interpretants and objects. If Peirce was maintaining his classification of the sciences, then logic was still dependent upon phaneroscopy. There is, therefore, a potentially traceable filiation from the categories to the universes, but the relation is tenuous—a category is purely phenomenal in scope, it is not a receptacle and has no “members” that can trigger the action of the sign, physically or otherwise. That these universes should have been derived from the categories, there is no doubt; they are nevertheless very different, being employed in concrete communicative contexts. Since metaphor and the two other hypoicons were defined within the phenomenology of 1903, they are irrelevant to the universe-based system as defined in 1908. This problem was further compounded in the same letter to Lady Welby, when Peirce also expanded the triadic “cooperation” involved in semiosis as defined in 1907 into a dynamic process involving the sign and its five correlates in the following formulation:

It is evident that a possible can determine nothing but a Possible, it is equally so that a Necessitant can be determined by nothing but a Necessitant. Hence it follows from the Definition of a Sign that since the Dynamoid Object determines the Immediate Object,
 which determines the Sign itself,
 which determines the Destinate Interpretant,
 which determines the Effective Interpretant,
 which determines the Explicit Interpretant,
 the six trichotomies, instead of determining 729 classes of signs, as they would if they were independent, only yield twenty-eight classes. (EP2 481)

For convenience in discussions of the determination process to follow, the interpretants have been standardized respectively from destinate, effective and explicit to immediate, dynamic and final. Now, some authors inverse this order, identifying the explicit as the immediate, and the destinate as the final. However, such an order would produce the illogical situation where the final reaction (the final interpretant) to the sign is held to have occurred before the sign has been interpreted; indeed, a situation where the immediate interpretant is placed at several removes from the sign in which, being immediate, it has always been defined to be “present”. For Peirce, immediacy meant “presence in”: “to say that A is immediate to B means that it is present in B” (R339 243Av, 1905), from which we infer that the immediate must follow the sign in the sequence (Figure 6).

Od → Oi → S → li → Id → If

Figure 6: Semiosis as described to Lady Welby in 1908.

Figure 6 displays in simple form the series of six correlates composing the hexadic structure of semiosis as Peirce described it in the letter quoted above, in which the arrow “→” indicates the process of determination over the successive stages in the sequence. For convenience, the abbreviations **Od**, **Oi**, **S**, **Ii**, **Id** and **If** in Figure 6 represent, respectively, the dynamic and immediate objects, the sign, followed by the immediate, dynamic and final interpretants. Note, however, that Peirce never developed the 28-class system, that he never set out his numerous typologies in the horizontal format displayed on Figure 6 and Table 2 below and that in his various typologies he never abbreviated the names of the correlates composing the trichotomies as on Figure 6 and Table 2.

	Trichotomy					
	Od	Oi	S	Ii	Id	If
Universe						
Necessitant	collective	copulant	type	relative	usual	to produce self-control
Existent	concretive	designative	token	categorical	percussive	to produce action
Possible	abstractive	descriptive	mark	hypothetical	sympathetic	gratific

Table 2: A table of Peirce’s twenty-eight classes of signs displayed in horizontal format.

The trichotomies in Table 2 display the subclasses of signs obtained according to the complexity of the correlate occupying a particular place in the typology. For example, when the dynamic object, (**Od**), is a necessitant, the sign is a collective; when the dynamic object is a possible, then the sign is an abstractive. The names of the various

subclasses of signs have been drawn from the ten-division typologies that Peirce established in drafts in the days following the 23 December letter (EP2 483–490). In this way, for example, the three subdivisions of signs defined by the universe status of the immediate interpretant, **(Ii)**, are, in order of increasing complexity, hypothetical, categorical and relative. Significantly, since the six trichotomies uniquely involve the six correlates of semiosis, there is no provision for the relational icon-index-symbol division, and consequently there is no provision for the icon's three subclasses. In short, iconicity as defined in 1903 is not incorporated in semiosis and, consequently, the powerful theory of metaphor described above has become, in this conception of the sign too, irrelevant.

For Peirce's theory of signs to be a viable scientific proposition we have to be able to account for every stage in the process of semiosis, and such an ability will require at some point that signs be examined with respect to the nature of their immediate objects. The rest of the paper explores the particular stages in semiosis from the dynamic object to the sign via the immediate object, since any persuasive or influential activity requires the way it is represented to be composed in such a way that it is perceivable and understandable: there can be no communication without representation, irrespective of the nature of the "agents", human or otherwise, initiating semiosis. While not all representations are purpose-driven—those with an existent dynamic object are causal rather than intentional—the paper presents one possible strategy for the preservation of iconicity, and metaphor with it, in exploring the role of the immediate object in cases of conspicuous intentionality.

The argument that follows assumes three principles. First, the sign is taken in the process of semiosis to be a medium informed in two successive stages by the objects of which it is a determination. Second, as art historians have known for centuries, traces of the creative impulse determining the sign can be identified in the form of the sign, in its composition, which logically precedes any interpretation. Finally, the influence of the intentionality determining the action of the sign in the six-stage sequence as described above in the letter to Lady Welby cannot be immediate. It follows, then, that in order to function, any intentionality initiating semiosis has to be in some way perceivable in some medium, and that to achieve the purpose of the agency it emanates from, this intentionality has to be composed and mediatized. The following sections hypothesize the way this mediatization is achieved and how this may accommodate iconicity. This involves examination of the function of the immediate object, the object "present in" the sign.

5. THE IMMEDIATE OBJECT

In 1908 Peirce offered following definition of the two objects: "The Mediate Object is the Object outside of the Sign; I call it the Dynamoid Object. The Sign must indicate it by a hint; and this hint, or its substance, is the Immediate Object" (SS 83). One way to determine the nature of the immediate object, the object logically inside the sign, and to show how it communicates to the sign form from the dynamic object is by

adopting the definition from 1906 quoted in section 3 above and treating the sign strictly as a *medium*—airwaves, a page in a book, a piece of canvas or an oak panel, a computer or cinema screen, even human skin... This is the strategy adopted here: *any sign determining its series of interpretants is the fusion of the form-communicating immediate object and a medium*. The semiotic nature of the “hint or its substance” constituting the immediate object mentioned in the quotation can be exemplified in (3), the written version of a spoken utterance (4), its phonetic transcription.

(3) What are those blue remembered hills

(4) [ˈwɒtəˈðəʊzˈbluːrɪˈmɛmbədˈhɪlz]

Utterances (3) and (4) constitute a trivial case of diamesic variation: here, an interrogative utterance expressed in two different media. In (3), it is the paper and the series of ink marks on it forming the written page that constitute the medium. In the spoken variant (4), it is the air which transmits its particular form as the sequence of troughs and peaks of the airwaves conveying the spoken message. However, the utterance could just as easily be communicated in other media: a computer screen, for example, or a classroom blackboard and chalk. In each case, the intentionality of the dynamic object is the same, but the two distinct media in the examples will have been informed by equally distinct immediate objects.

Now, diamesic variation is a specifically linguistic problem—language variation as determined by the media in which discourse is communicated. What we have in examples (3) and (4) becomes a specifically semiotic problem when seen as the relation between the immediate object and the medium through which the initial intentionality is to be communicated. Although not a term Peirce used, this is mediatization, the process by which the object intentionality is rendered perceivable in some medium. In the 1903 phenomenology-based system both variants would be classified as replicas of a dicent symbol. The ten classes of this period are a-temporal, and intentionality is not only untraceable in them but also theoretically irrelevant, since the dynamic object, although a correlate in the triadic sign-relation, does not participate as an independent division in the derived typology. The hexad of 1908, on the other hand, specifically involves both a dynamic and an immediate object, the latter communicating to the sign—in this case, a line of English poetry—form inherited from the dynamic, a property which makes Peircean semiosis a model of purposive, intention-based representation. With this in mind we return to the problem of iconicity, to metaphor in particular in view of the instability of the icon subclasses, and, in spite of its apparent theoretical irrelevance, examine the possibility of preserving iconicity in semiosis.

6. PRESERVING ICONICITY

Consider Figure 7, Botticelli’s *Adoration of the Magi*, commissioned by Gaspare di Zanobi del Lama, a banker linked to the Medici family, for his private chapel in

Santa Maria Novella in Florence, but now in the Uffizi Gallery.¹ At first sight, this would seem to be a conventional Renaissance representation of the adoration of the Magi: the biblical scene of Christ visited by the three wise men and witnessed by a gathering of Florentine notables and the artist himself, caught as he stares out at us. There is reason to believe, however, in view of the attested presence of members of the Medici family in the painting, that the painting was also intended to display the importance of the Medici: in addition to its undoubted religious significance it had a “propagandist” purpose.



Figure 7: Sandro Botticelli, *Adoration of the Magi*, 1476
(Wikimedia Commons {{PD-1996}}).

Irrespective of any possible mythographic contract for the painting, hypoiconically, the setting is significant, as the stable is placed in a context of crumbling classical architecture, and we understand the image to represent the way the world of the Ancient Greeks and Romans and their pagan beliefs have been reduced to ruins and replaced by the birth of Christianity. Just as there is no church in the image, neither is there any member of the ancient Greek and Roman pantheons, only the crumbling vestiges of their world, the shattered temples, surviving testimony to these lost beliefs. The metaphorical structure of the image can be represented by Figure 8, in which the base relation, **((pag)—//—tem)**, stands for the domain containing the (necessarily absent) pagan

¹ See, for example, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adoration_of_the_Magi_\(Botticelli,_1475\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adoration_of_the_Magi_(Botticelli,_1475)) (retrieved December 2021).

holders of the ancient beliefs and their very present places of worship, the temples, while the target relation, **(chr'—//—(ch'))**, represents a domain associating anachronistically representatives of the new religion with their future places of worship, namely the churches, these being necessarily absent at the time of the Nativity. As in the cases of Figures 4 and 5, the sign in Figure 8, **(chr'—tem)**, presents the incongruous association of counterparts from two totally disparate domains, here the Florentines and the ruined pagan temples.

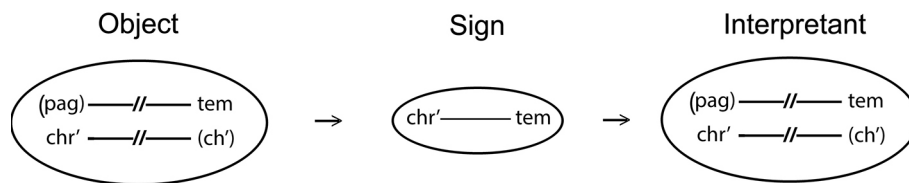


Figure 8: The metaphorical structure of Botticelli's Uffizi *Adoration of the Magi*.

Clearly, in the determination process the immediate object controls the organization of the painting in the course of the mediatization of the intentionality “behind” it. The painting cannot be an *immediate* realization of Gaspare's purpose in commissioning the painting or of Botticelli's executing it: it was conceived over time, and there is no way that an intention can immediately present itself to perception. That intention has to be mediatized. Thus, what the analyses above are meant to illustrate is the role that the immediate object—the dynamic object as “hinted at” in the sign—plays in semiosis: the medium, in this case coloured pigments and egg yolk binder (*tempera*) on a wood panel, is only operational as a sign by displaying the form communicated when the immediate object functions as the relay of the influence of the object “outside” the sign, here realized in the presence of living and deceased members of the Medici family in the image. And, irrespective of whether Peirce identified the most complex subclass of the icon as metaphor or diagram, we see that the form imparted to the medium by the immediate object can adopt any of the three formalisms represented by Figures 2, 3 and 4. Thus, while the hypoiconic analysis of the painting shows how metaphor *informs*, in an older sense of the term, this pictorial representation, the 1908 conception of semiosis allows us additionally to relate such structures to the intentionality determining the painting's complex religious, “political” and propagandist significance, a strategy unavailable in any of the ten classes of the three-division system of 1903.

7. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

There are two theoretical issues to be addressed regarding the analyses given above. The first is specific to theoretical decisions adopted by Peirce, the second to decisions made in the paper. To begin with, the change of name from metaphor to diagram has no radical consequences for the original model of metaphor for at least two

reasons. The subsequent descriptions of the diagram in no way exclude a parallelism as a formal structure and examination of Figures 4, 5 and 8, for example, shows almost paradoxically that metaphor structure, owing to the constraints of necessarily existential media, has to be *diagrammed* in a two-dimensional medium such as the page of a book. To be “metaphorized”, i.e. to represent itself by means of its own complex structure, metaphor would require an extra dimension.

The second problem concerns the schemata employed in this paper to represent the three subclasses. Figures 1 to 5 represented the determination flow as it would involve the correlates of the 1903 definition of the sign, identified explicitly in 1904 as the “external”, i.e. dynamic, object and the “external”, i.e. final, interpretant. By 1908 this triad had been expanded to a hexad, and the schema for Figure 8 was offered as the structure of the mediatization of the intentionality originating in the dynamic object. In this case, the object and interpretant indicated on the schema must be immediate: both are “present in” the sign, with the interpretability of the immediate interpretant somehow mirroring the import of the immediate object: what happens when an interpreter actually reacts to a metaphorical sign is irrelevant to the structure it has inherited from the dynamic object.

With respect to this second point, Table 2 showed that while the sign with its diagrammatic structure is unavoidably existent in order to be perceived by potential interpreters, the two objects can both be necessitant: both can be more complex than the sign representing them. If the schemata system is valid, this is the most probable arrangement for complex mediatizations such as that displayed by Botticelli's Florentine Nativity scene. The greater complexity of both dynamic and immediate objects exempts them from the existential constraints inhibiting the sign, necessarily a token, thereby allowing the immediate object to communicate unconstrained the complex structure of a full parallelism in the case of metaphor—a parallelism also constituting a “Form (or feature)” extended to the medium in the 1906 definition of the sign—independently of the unavoidable underspecification to follow in the sign, where some of the original elements of the parallelism are as though bracketed by the constraints of a perceivable medium. In short, it is the structure of the parallelism that counts, not the label “metaphor”, and there is no reason not to consider the parallelism as a diagram partaking of a “symbolic flavor”. This tends to show that Peirce's remarkable conception of metaphor in 1903 is not in any way invalidated by the redefinition of the icon's subclasses or their irrelevance to the process of semiosis, nor is iconicity in general. On the contrary, the phenomenological distinctions defined in the 1903 version of the semiotics can be clearly seen to inform the incomplete parallel structure of the token on Figure 8, while the immediate object in the dynamic process of semiosis, which is necessarily inscribed in time, constitutes the informing agency of such structure in actual communicative processes.

The paper has shown, too, by implication, that since necessitant entities are not perceivable, with the nature of intentionality only inferable from the structure and content imposed on and informing necessarily existent media via the immediate object,

potential universe disjunctions between the two objects and the sign discussed in Section 4 are not only consciously exploited by poets, painters and photographers, but also form the blueprint for lying and dissimulation, although the mediatizations of such real world intentionalities as publicists, propagandists and the adepts of nudge theory, for example, are obviously far more complex than the image on Figure 7. But the principle is the same—from their complex and sometimes devious mediatizations we hypothesize their purpose by reasoning on the way they are composed.

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