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Towards a semiotic axiology

1. Under semiotic axiology we do **not** understand a formal contribution to ethics or another pseudo-“science”. Rather, this little contribution wants to show a formal device to establish the notion of semiotic value, in addition to the notion of logical value, for the system of triadic semiotics. As it is well known, according to de Saussure (1916), the sign gets its value from the paradigmatic system whose part it is, while the meaning of the sign is part of its syntagmatic structure.

2. We will thus introduce the Saussurean differentiation of syntagm and paradigm into theoretical semiotics. We assign the 6 types of transpositions of each sign class or reality thematic (cf. Toth 2008a, pp. 223 ss.) to the syntagmatic dimension and the 6 possible positions of each transposition to the paradigmatic dimension of “semiology” or semiotics (and not reverse). We may visualize this by the following general scheme:

$\longrightarrow$ positions of transpositions (paradigm)

$\downarrow$

types of transpositions (syntagm)

We will further agree, that in their unmarked state, the 6 transpositions of a sign class are mapped onto the 6 possible positions from the left to the right in the following diagram, whereby the transpositions themselves are ordered according to degenerative semiosis both from left to right and from top to bottom, i.e. (3. > 2. > 1. and .3 > .2 > .1):

1	2	3	4	5	6
3.1	3.1	2.1	2.1	1.3	1.3
2.1	1.3	3.1	1.3	3.1	2.1
1.3	2.1	1.3	3.1	2.1	3.1

3. Totally, there are 25 possible combinations of the 6 transpositions of each sign class and reality thematic. Since the combinations are rather tricky, we will briefly sketch them. In the 1st place, all 6 transpositions are possible. In order to achieve a thorough semiotic connection for all of them, we will agree that transposition no. (n+1) must start with the same sub-sign by which the precedent transposition no. (n) has ended. Since the 6 transpositions can be grouped in each 2 beginning with (3.a), with (2.b,) and with (1.c), there are then 2 possibilities in the 2nd place. For example, if (3.1 2.1 1.3) is chosen for the 1st place, then the 2nd place can be assigned with either (1.3 3.1 2.1) or (1.3 2.1 3.1). If the second transposition ends with a sub-sign that has already been used as beginning of a precedent transposition, then there will be only 1 choice left for the 3rd position; otherwise 2 choices, and so on. From the following oversight, we will thus see that there are two main groups of

transpositions: such which allow the full cycle of 6 transpositions and such in which the cycle cannot be completed because a new transposition would begin with the third instance of the same sub-sign that had already been used for the beginning of two precedent transpositions, which is impossible.

1. Combinations of (3.1 2.1 1.3)

1	2	3	4	5	6
3.1 2.1 1.3	1.3 3.1 2.1	2.1 3.1 1.3	1.3 2.1 3.1	3.1 1.3 2.1	2.1 1.3 3.1

1	2	3	4	5	6
3.1 2.1 1.3	1.3 3.1 2.1	2.1 1.3 3.1	3.1 1.3 2.1	2.1 3.1 1.3	1.3 2.1 3.1

1	2	3	4	5	6
3.1 2.1 1.3	1.3 2.1 3.1	3.1 2.1 1.3	1.3 3.1 2.1	2.1 3.1 1.3 #	

1	2	3	4	5	6
3.1 2.1 1.3	1.3 2.1 3.1	3.1 2.1 1.3	1.3 3.1 2.1	2.1 1.3 3.1 #	

2. Combinations of (3.1 1.3 2.1)

1	2	3	4	5	6
3.1 1.3 2.1	2.1 3.1 1.3	1.3 3.1 2.1	2.1 1.3 3.1	3.1 2.1 1.3	1.3 2.1 3.1

1	2	3	4	5	6
3.1 1.3 2.1	2.1 3.1 1.3	1.3 2.1 3.1	3.1 2.1 1.3	1.3 3.1 2.1	2.1 1.3 3.1

1	2	3	4	5	6
3.1 1.3 2.1	2.1 1.3 3.1	3.1 2.1 1.3	1.3 3.1 2.1	2.1 3.1 1.3	1.3 2.1 3.1

1	2	3	4	5	6
3.1 1.3 2.1	2.1 1.3 3.1	3.1 2.1 1.3	1.3 2.1 3.1 #		

3. Combinations of (2.1 3.1 1.3)

1	2	3	4	5	6
2.1 3.1 1.3	1.3 3.1 2.1	2.1 1.3 3.1	3.1 2.1 1.3	1.3 2.1 3.1	3.1 1.3 2.1

1	2	3	4	5	6
2.1 3.1 1.3	1.3 3.1 2.1	2.1 1.3 3.1	3.1 1.3 2.1 #		

1	2	3	4	5	6
2.1 3.1 1.3	1.3 2.1 3.1	3.1 2.1 1.3	1.3 3.1 2.1	2.1 1.3 3.1	3.1 1.3 2.1

1	2	3	4	5	6
2.1 3.1 1.3	1.3 2.1 3.1	3.1 1.3 2.1	2.1 1.3 3.1	3.1 2.1 1.3	1.3 3.1 2.1

4. Combinations of (2.1 1.3 3.1)

1	2	3	4	5	6
2.1 1.3 3.1	3.1 2.1 1.3	1.3 3.1 2.1	2.1 3.1 1.3	1.3 2.1 3.1	3.1 1.3 2.1

1	2	3	4	5	6
2.1	3.1	1.3	3.1	2.1	1.3
1.3	2.1	2.1	1.3	3.1	3.1
3.1	1.3	3.1	2.1	1.3	2.1

1	2	3	4	5	6
2.1	3.1	2.1	1.3		
1.3	1.3	3.1	3.1		
3.1	2.1	1.3	2.1 #		

1	2	3	4	5	6
2.1	3.1	2.1	1.3	3.1	1.3
1.3	1.3	3.1	2.1	2.1	3.1
3.1	2.1	1.3	3.1	1.3	2.1

5. Combinations of (1.3 3.1 2.1)

1	2	3	4	5	6
1.3	2.1	1.3	3.1		
3.1	3.1	2.1	2.1		
2.1	1.3	3.1	1.3 #		

1	2	3	4	5	6
1.3	2.1	1.3	3.1	2.1	3.1
3.1	3.1	2.1	1.3	1.3	2.1
2.1	1.3	3.1	2.1	3.1	1.3

1	2	3	4	5	6
1.3	2.1	3.1	1.3	3.1	2.1
3.1	1.3	2.1	2.1	1.3	3.1
2.1	3.1	1.3	3.1	2.1	1.3

1	2	3	4	5	6
1.3	2.1	3.1	2.1	1.3	3.1
3.1	1.3	1.3	3.1	2.1	2.1
2.1	3.1	2.1	1.3	3.1	1.3

6. Combinations of (1.3 2.1 3.1)

1	2	3	4	5	6
1.3	3.1	1.3	2.1		
2.1	2.1	3.1	3.1		
3.1	1.3	2.1	1.3 #		

1	2	3	4	5	6
1.3	3.1	1.3	3.1	2.1	
2.1	2.1	2.1	1.3	3.1	
3.1	1.3	3.1	2.1	1.3 #	

1	2	3	4	5	6
1.3	3.1	1.3	3.1	2.1	
2.1	2.1	2.1	1.3	1.3	
3.1	1.3	3.1	2.1	3.1 #	

1	2	3	4	5	6
1.3	3.1	2.1	1.3	2.1	3.1
2.1	1.3	3.1	3.1	1.3	2.1
3.1	2.1	1.3	2.1	3.1	1.3

1	2	3	4	5	6
1.3	3.1	2.1	3.1	1.3	2.1
2.1	1.3	1.3	2.1	3.1	3.1
3.1	2.1	3.1	1.3	2.1	1.3

Herewith all possibilities for the sign class (3.1 2.1 1.3) are exhausted.

4. The only hitherto known semiotic value is the "representation value" that had been introduced into semiotics by Bense (1979). To each sub-sign and sign class or reality thematic a semiotic value is ascribed that is won by addition of the numeric values of the prime-signs. Therefore, in the system of the 10 sign classes, (3.1 2.1 1.1) has a representation value (Rpv) of Rpv = 9, (3.1 2.2 1.3) and (3.2 2.2 1.2) have the same representation value Rpv = 12, and (3.3 2.3 1.3) has Rpv = 15. Therefore, the 10 sign classes can be ordered according to increasing or decreasing Rpv, whereby (3.1 2.1 1.1) has the lowest and (3.3 2.3 1.3) the highest Rpv of the 10 sign classes. Since Bense, already in 1976, had introduced the sign function depending on the two intervals of "semioticity" and "onticity" (Bense 1976, p. 16), we can also say that the sign class with the lowest Rpv has the highest onticity and therefore the lowest semioticity, and the sign class with the highest Rpv has the highest semioticity and thus the lowest onticity.

It is clear, that all 6 transpositions of a sign class and its dual reality thematic have the same representation value. Therefore, the positional semiotic axiology presented in this paper gives a model to further differentiate between the representation values of sign classes by investigating their transpositions. One possible interpretation that we had already introduced in Toth (2008b) is the assignment of semiotic priority to the structural realities presented by the transpostional reality thematics. Since each sign class has only one reality thematic, but 6 different transpositional reality thematics, and since these reality thematics can be ordered by semiotic priority, the semiotic values introduced in this paper can be assigned to them, so that the semiotic values turn out to be positional semiotic measures for semiotic priority.

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