

Daniel IRRGANG

***Diagrammatics as a Mode between Gedankenexperiment
and Thinking Medium***

Diagrams are ‘epistemic things‘ (Hans-Jörg Rheinberger) in particular: they show the structure and relation behind the phenomenal surface of the referred object or, more precisely, they constitute a hypothesis on the structure through displaying the reasoning processes that led to the structure in its specific form. Charles Sanders Peirce describes these reasoning processes through diagrams as diagrammatic reasoning. According to him, an icon (including the subclass ‘diagrams’) does not only represent its object but configures it in a specific way. This statement is especially true for diagrams, because their represented structures are hypothetical ones. Through the reconfiguration of diagrams, as mental operations or as sketches on a piece of paper, new hypotheses about the object can be tested and modulated, and at the same time new knowledge generated. In this sense, diagrammatic operations and Diagrammatology (Frederik Stjernfelt) can be described as vital dimensions of a theory of gedankenexperiment (thought experiment) in general. The aim of the presentation is to present diagrams as (re-)thinking mediums in sciences and arts by discussing diagrammatic sketches of Charles Darwin, Jean-François Lyotard and George Maciunas.

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