

Exploration of Rosen's Modelling Relation and Category Theory

Bruce McNaughton

Program Manager / System Architect

19-September-2025

An initial exploration. Any feedback or thoughts appreciated.

bruce.mcnaughton@change-aide.com

Source: [Rosen Modelling Relation and CT](#)

On <https://system.desc.systems>

Rosen's Modelling Relation (4 References).

Figure 2.3.1: Anticipatory Systems, Edition 1
Robert Rosen

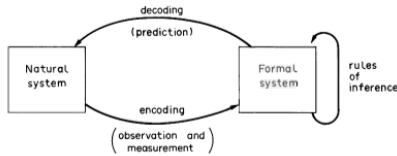
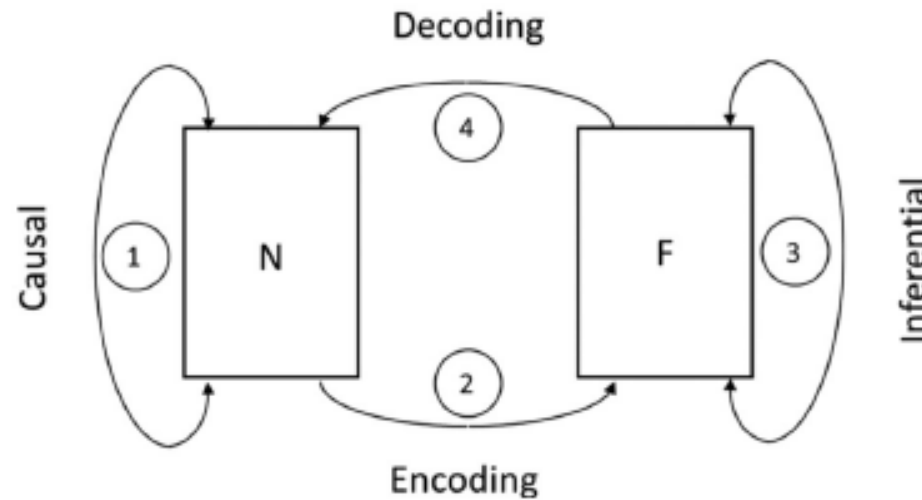


Fig. 2.3.1.

N = Natural System

Congruence
Prediction based on model or simulation



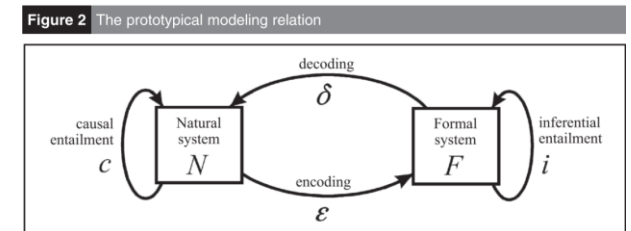
Category:
F = Formal System
Model of N

On Models and Modeling
Robert Rosen

Formal models were typically
Mathematical models. Ensuring
The results of the simulation matched
The observations confirmed validity of
The model conforming to the natural
System.

FIGURE 1 Rosen's modelling relation
From: Relational holon science and
Popper's 3 worlds in engineering practice
David Blockley | Gary Smith |
Patrick Godfrey | John J. Kineman
Blue Text Added.

FIGURE 2 Prototypical Modeling Relation
From: Robert Rosen's Anticipatory Systems
A. H. Louie, 2010



Using Rosen's model

- **F = Formal System Model**

- Formal system model is a conceptual model (or aligned mathematical model) of a Natural System.
- The Formal System Model has a Congruence with the Natural System
- The Formal System Model has elements and relationships that have a Congruence to the Entity, Thing or Object as a system-of-interest with type of traceability or mapping. The Congruence can be strong (as in Functor) or weak as in analogy or other mapping.
- Relates to Epistemology

- **N = Natural System**

- Natural System is an entity, thing, object as a system-of-interest in the natural world (Physical or Conceptual)
- Through observations and experiments there is a Congruence that establishes a relationship between the Natural System and the Formal System Model. This can be weak or strong.
- The observations and experiments can help create or improve a Formal Model.
- Relates to Ontology

- **One Category (F) and Two Congruences (Encoding, Decoding) related to a system-of-interest**

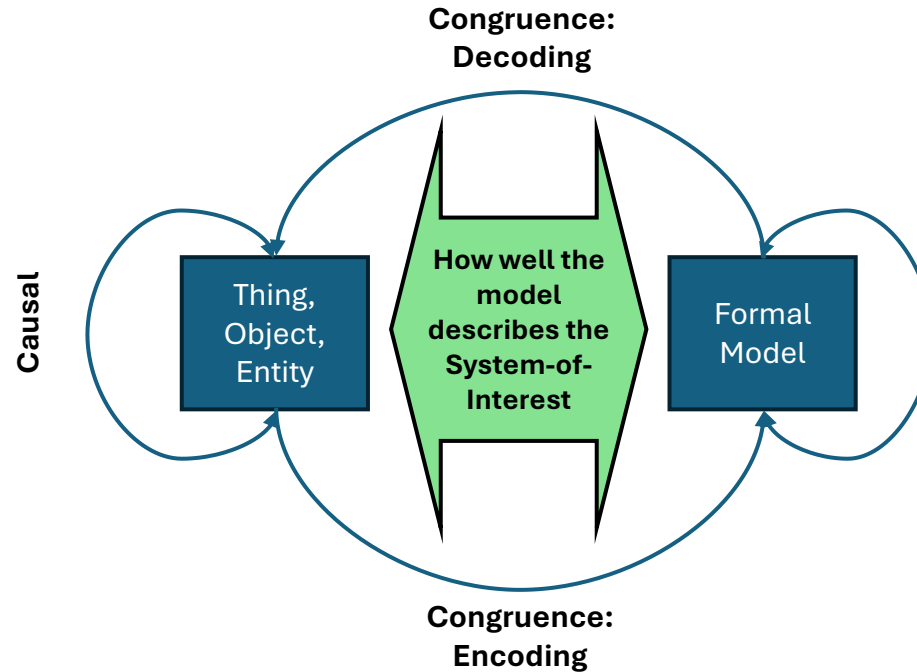
- This is described in Rosen's book "Anticipatory Systems", Edition 1 and the paper on models and modelling highlights the problems of misalignment of N as an entity, thing, object and the models F.

Rosen Model: Adapted for conversation

Rather than use the term “Natural System”,
The focus shifts to a physical or abstract:
System-of-Interest representing a
thing, object or entity.

Has named properties
or characteristics

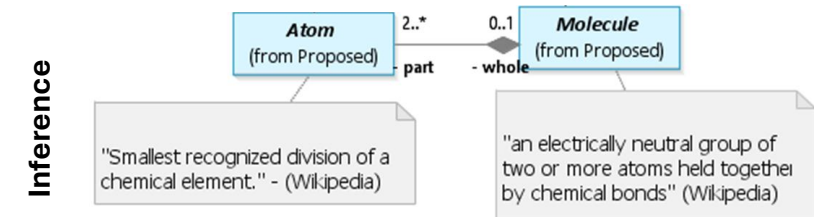
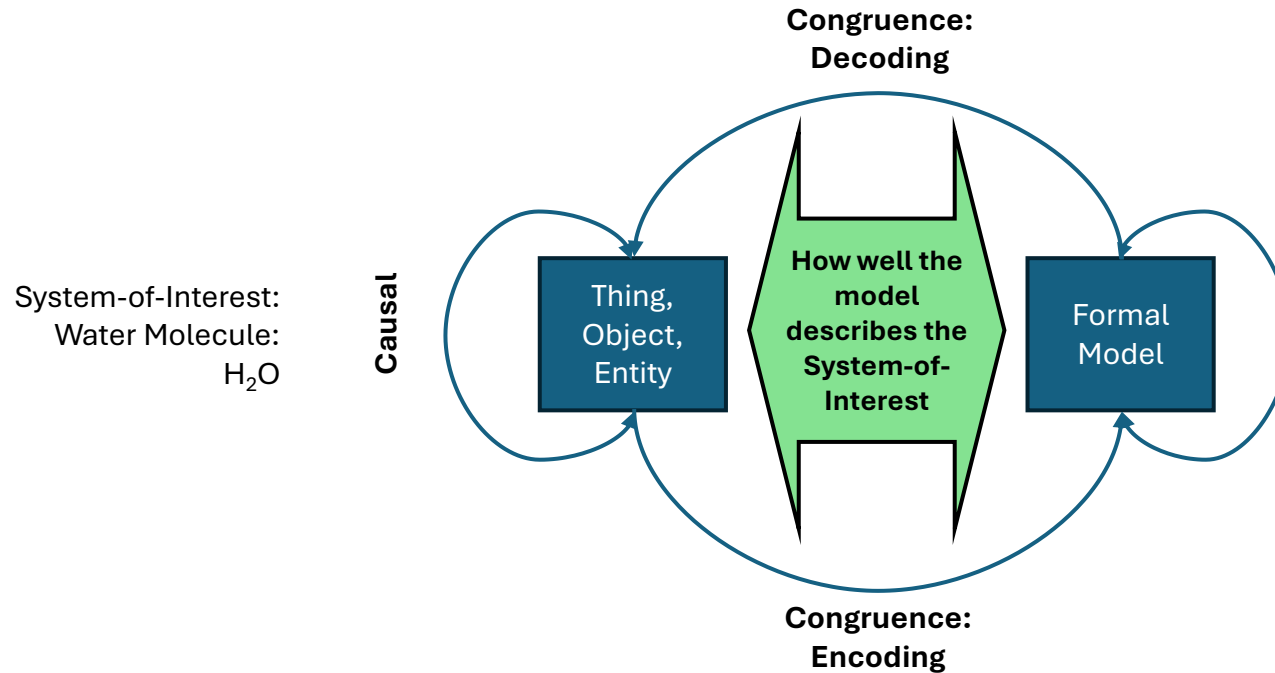
A focus on Ontology



Focus on any type of model
About a system-of-interest

A focus on Epistemology

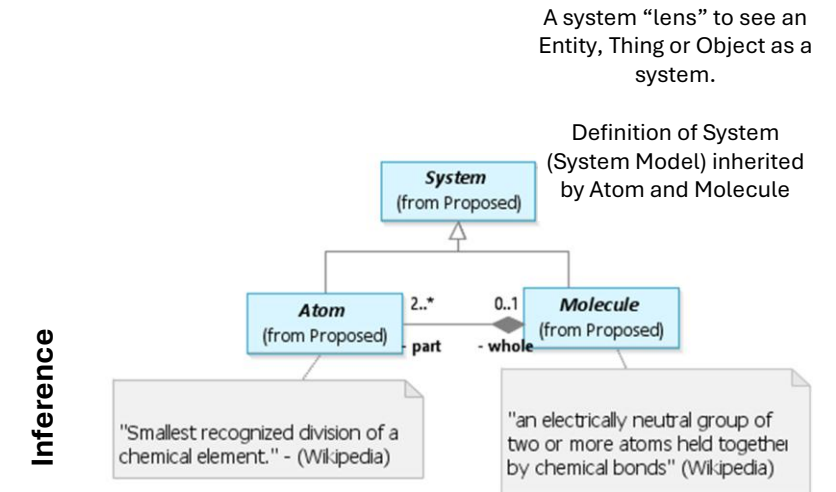
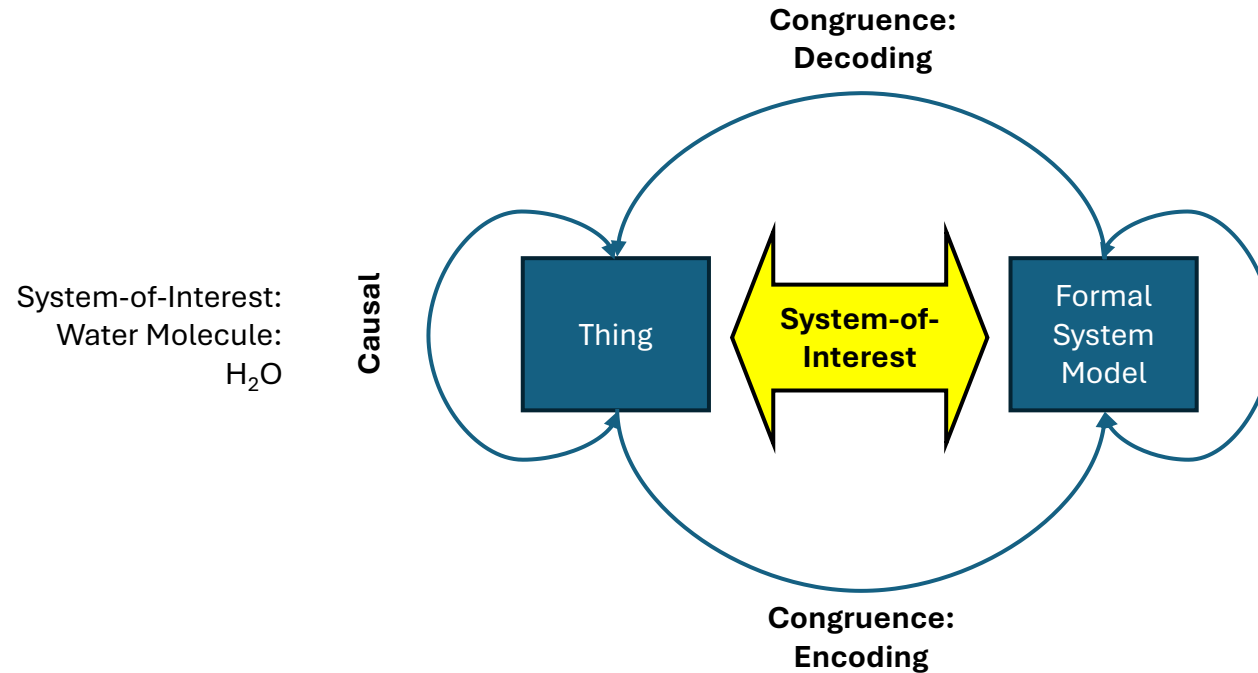
Rosen Model: Water Molecule Example



Tom Marzolf Model of a Molecule

H₂O can be modelled as a Molecule using the above model.

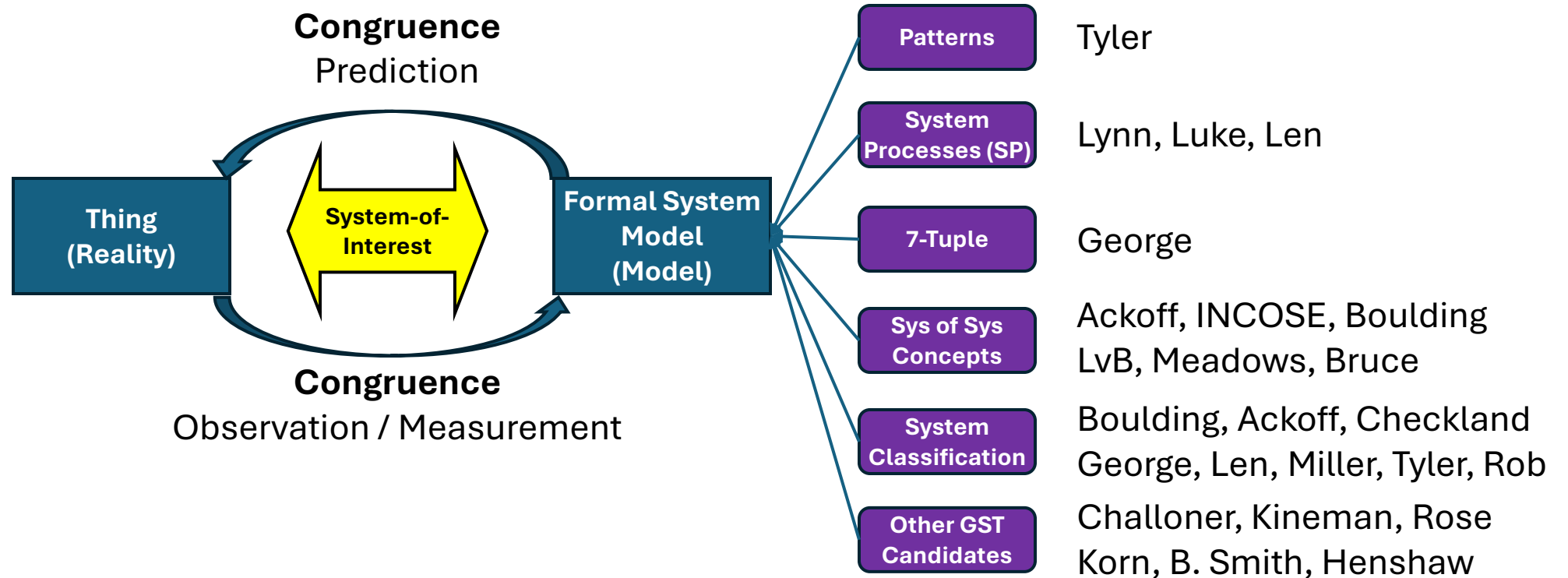
Rosen Model: Water Molecule as a System



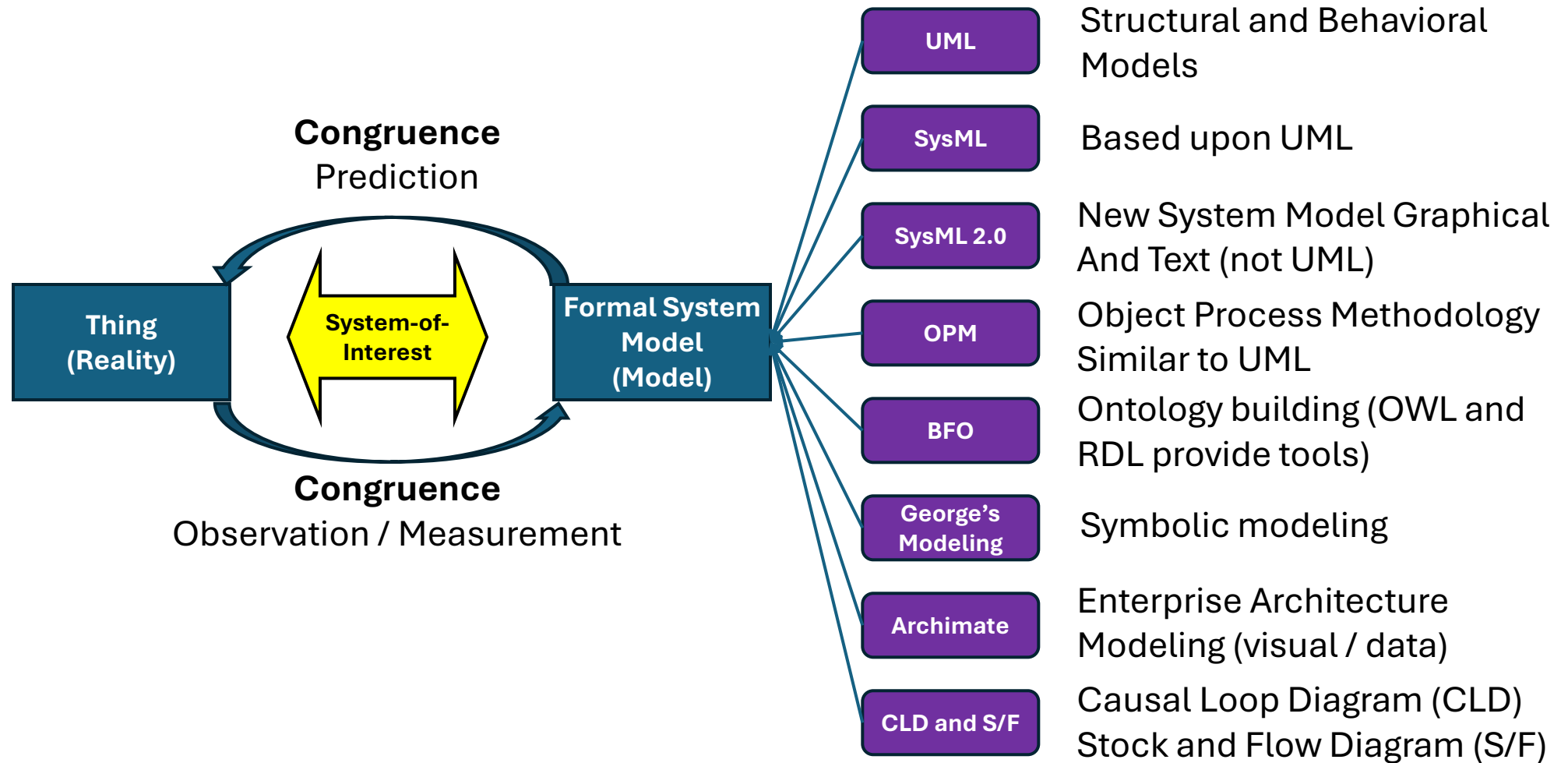
Tom Marzolf Model of a Molecule as a system

H₂O can be modelled using the Molecule Model as a System.

Rosen's Modeling Relation: GST Candidates



Rosen's Modeling Relation: Modeling Language



Category Theory: Category Conceptual Model

NOTE: The underlying definitions for this model are from the book: "Seven Sketches in Compositionality: An Invitation to Applied Category Theory, Brendan Fong, David I. Spivak"

Category of Categories

<<CT Element>> is used to identify Key Category Theory Elements and form the set of Ontology Elements for Category Theory.

The Sets in the Categories are to be used in System Models with other System Classes. Category Theory is a "Designed Abstract System" within the area of Mathematics.

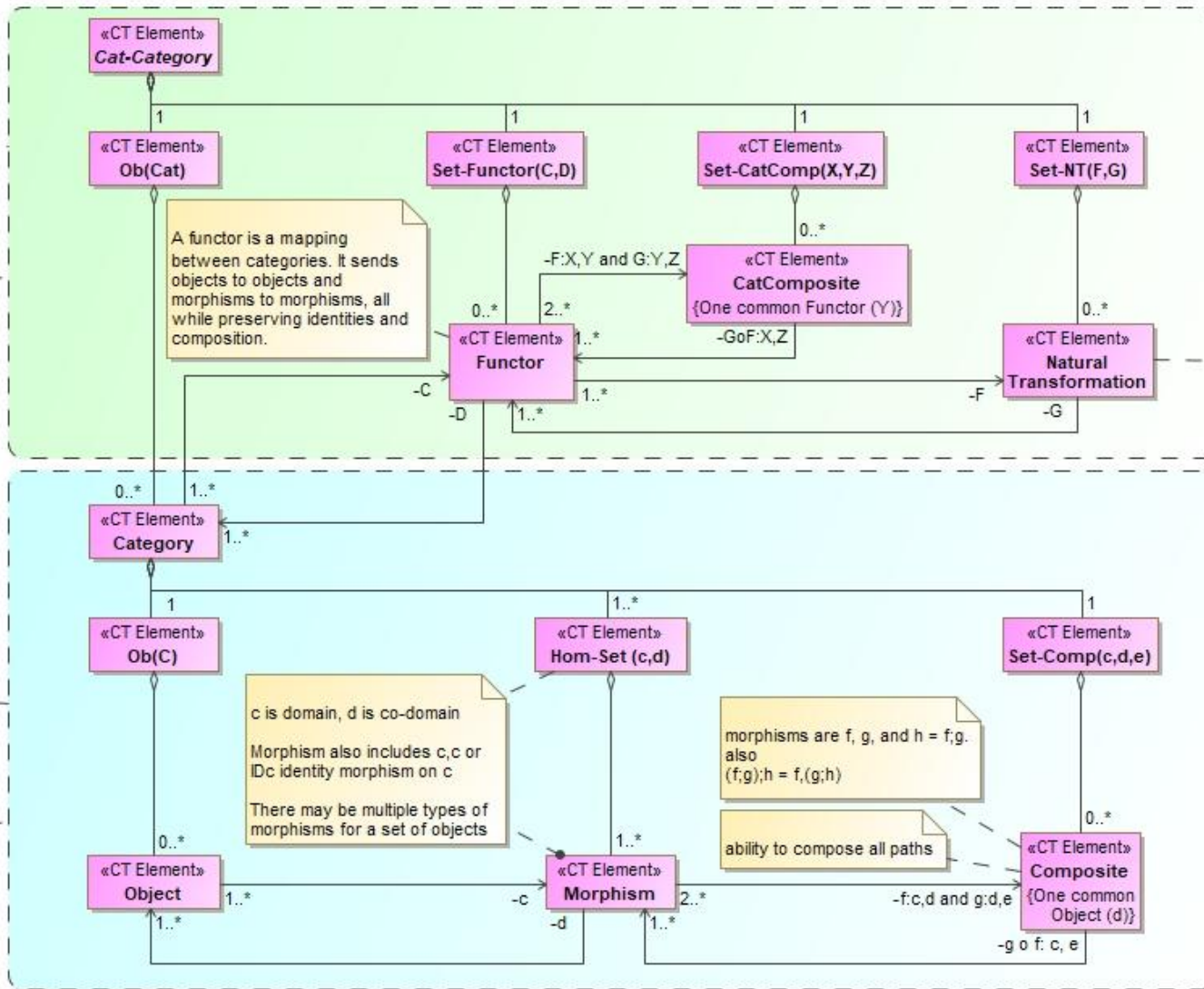
System Classes

- Concrete Class
- Abstract Class
- System-of-Interest
- System element
- CT Element

Category

Unitality:

for any morphism $f: c \rightarrow d$,
 composing with the identities at c or d does nothing:
 $id_c \circ f = f$ and
 $f \circ id_d = f$



A functor is a mapping between categories. It sends objects to objects and morphisms to morphisms, all while preserving identities and composition.

The functors F and G are ways of viewing the category C as lying inside the category D . The natural transformation α , then, is a way of relating these two views using the morphisms in D .

c is domain, d is co-domain
 Morphism also includes c, c or id_c identity morphism on c
 There may be multiple types of morphisms for a set of objects

morphisms are f, g , and $h = f \circ g$.
 also $(f \circ g) \circ h = f \circ (g \circ h)$

ability to compose all paths

associativity:
 for any three morphisms
 $f: c_0 \rightarrow c_1$,
 $g: c_1 \rightarrow c_2$,
 $h: c_2 \rightarrow c_3$
 The following are equal
 $(f \circ g) \circ h = f \circ (g \circ h)$.
 or written as a composite
 $f \circ g \circ h$

General System Model: System (Abstract)

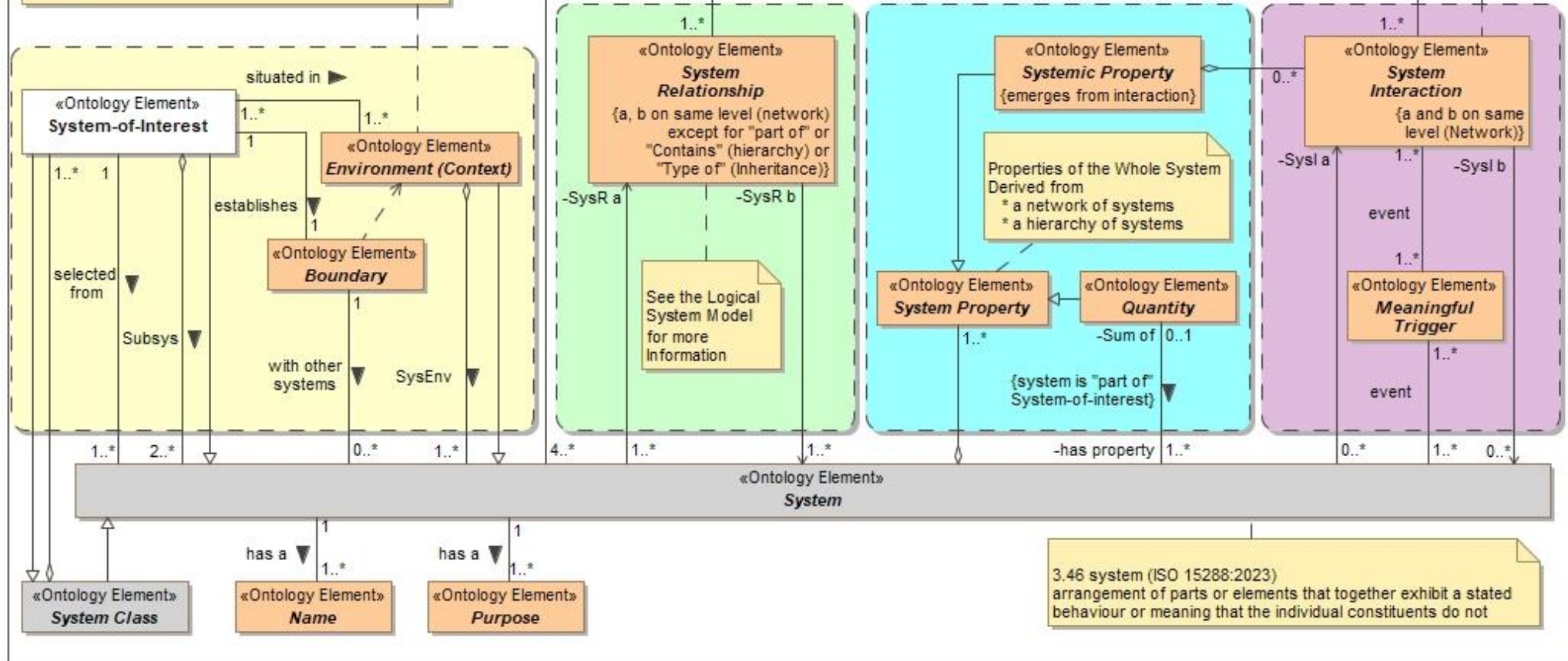
A system of system concepts

System Classes		Diagram Areas	
	Concrete Class		Relationships
	Abstract Class		Properties
	System-of-Interest		Interactions
	System element		Environment
	CT Element		

The Set of Systems $Ob(\text{System})$ is related to the system-of-interest situated in its environment

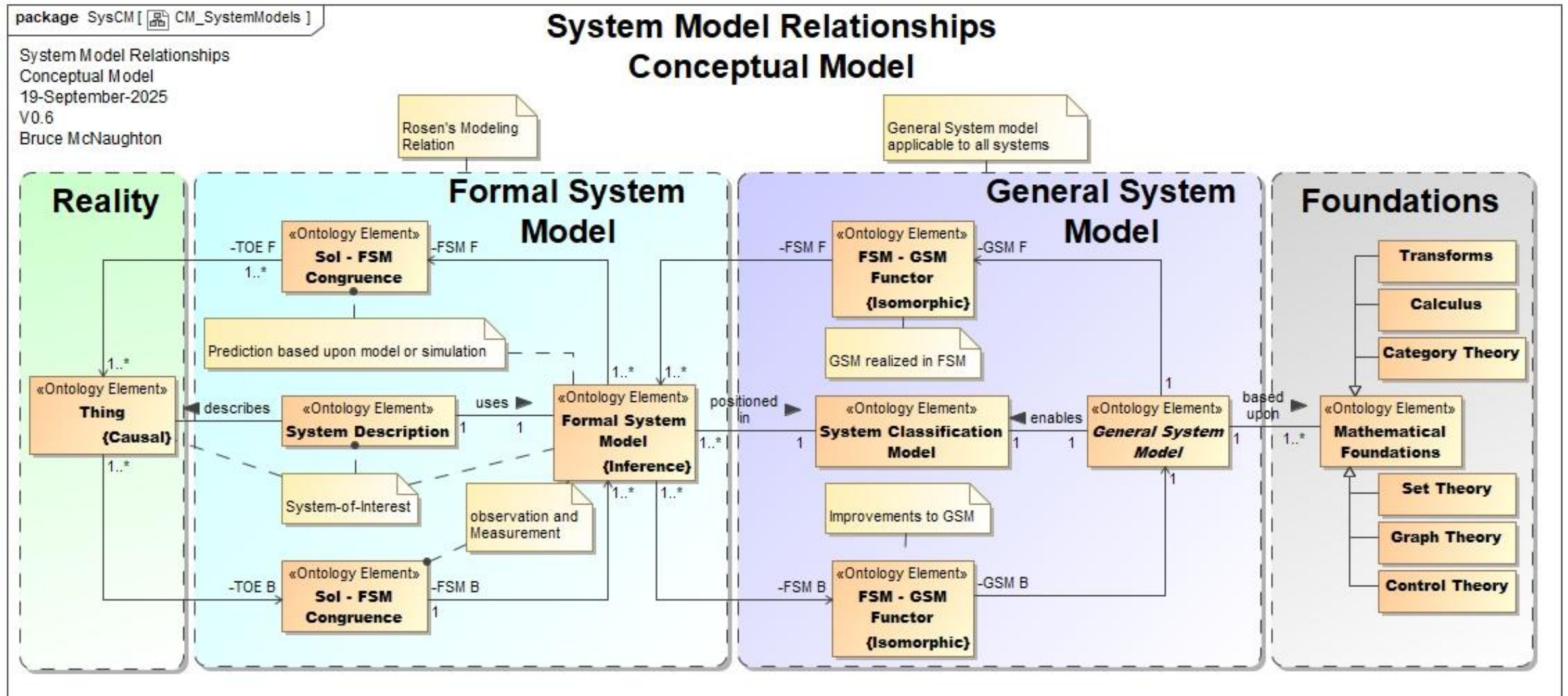
The Environment is considered a Containing System for a set of systems (SysEnv) also called suprasystem. Multiple environments are multiple containing systems in $Ob(\text{System})$

See the Physical System Model for more information

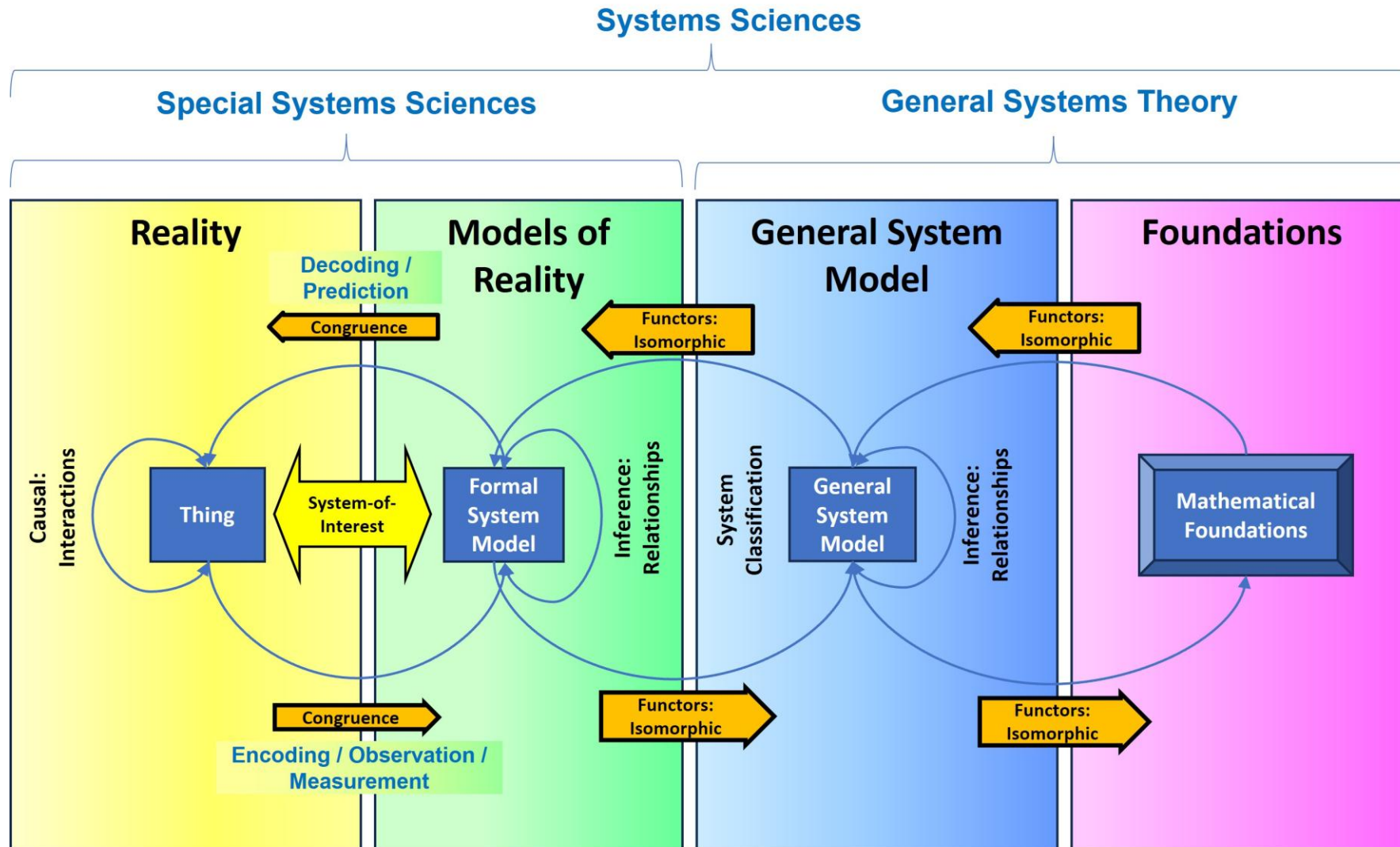


3.46 system (ISO 15288:2023)
 arrangement of parts or elements that together exhibit a stated behaviour or meaning that the individual constituents do not

Foundations to Reality using Category Theory



Foundations to Reality



UML and Modeling Relation

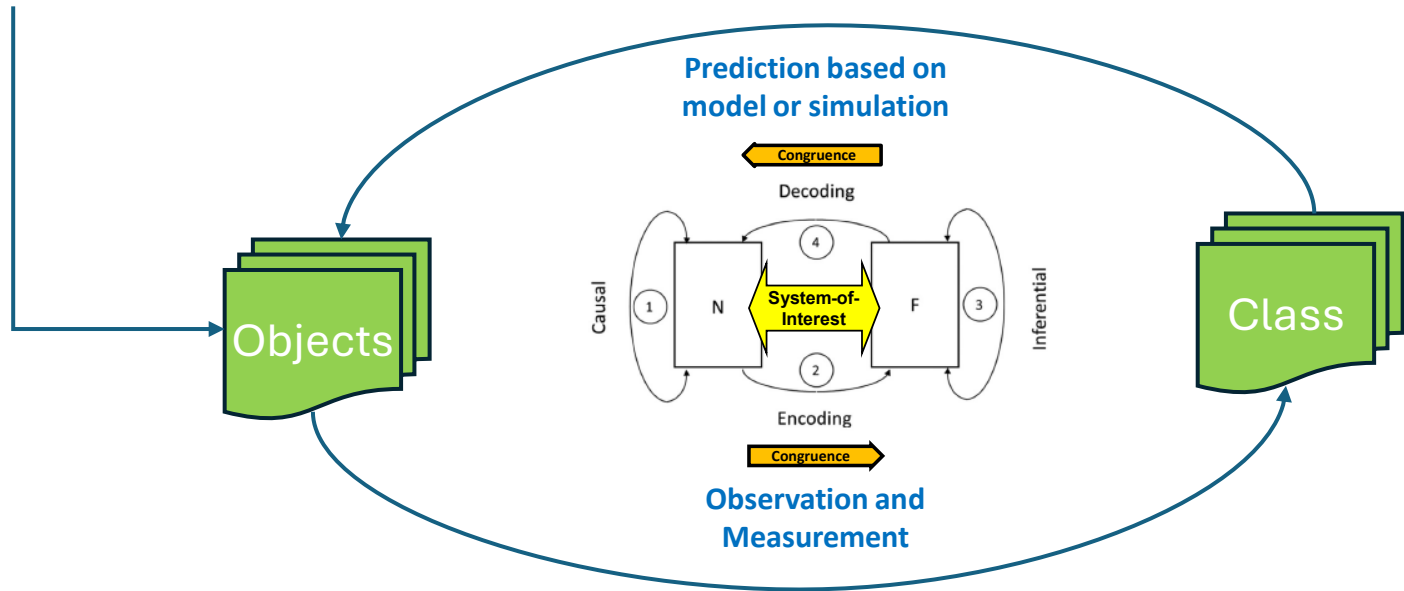
Matlab, Simulink, open Modelica capabilities:
 Simulate Behavioural diagrams based in UML
 (activity, sequence, state machine)
 Provide discrete, stochastic and continuous simulation.

Behavioral Models (Activity, Sequence, etc) connected with Matlab or Simulink provide a means to check / predict the behavior of the objects

Behaviorial Diagrams (Activity, state machines or Sequence Diagrams) are used to model performance. These models can be connected with MATLAB or SIMULINK to carry out performance models.

Object Diagrams are Structural Models used for instantiation of a class model
 Atom may be an Abstract Class while an Oxygen Atom is an Instance of the Atom Class with typical numbers of protons, neutrons, and electrons.

Class Diagrams are Structural Models
 To identify attribute and function names (ontology)
 Classes may be Abstract or Concrete
 Abstract Classes require object re-definition to form an instance



Classes formed through observation and measurement of objects to define Attributes and Functions

Conclusions: So far .. More to come.

- **Entity, Thing, Object as a System-of-Interest**
 - The focus for scientific understanding and learning is an Entity, Thing, Object as a system-of-interest.
 - An Entity, Thing or object has characteristics / properties that can be observed / named.
 - These characteristics / properties may not be described in system terms (e.g. may not have inherent named system concepts).
- **Models are used to understand an Entity, Thing, Object as a system-of-interest**
 - Models reflect our understanding (Knowledge) of an Entity, Thing, Object as a system-of-interest
 - Models can be improved (we now have a Subatomic way to understand Molecules and Atoms)
 - In most cases, models are not the Entity, Thing, Object. The Map is not the Territory.
 - Classifications of Entities, Things, Objects as a system-of-interest is another type of model.
- **System Models are used to understand an Entity, Thing, Object as a System-of-Interest**
 - Using a common language and representation
 - Definition of System and an associated General System Model are key.
 - Isomorphic to a General System Model based upon Math Foundations
 - Using a formal set of tools and techniques (math, modelling, etc).
 - Along with a system classification model.