

# Prof. Dr. Alfred Toth

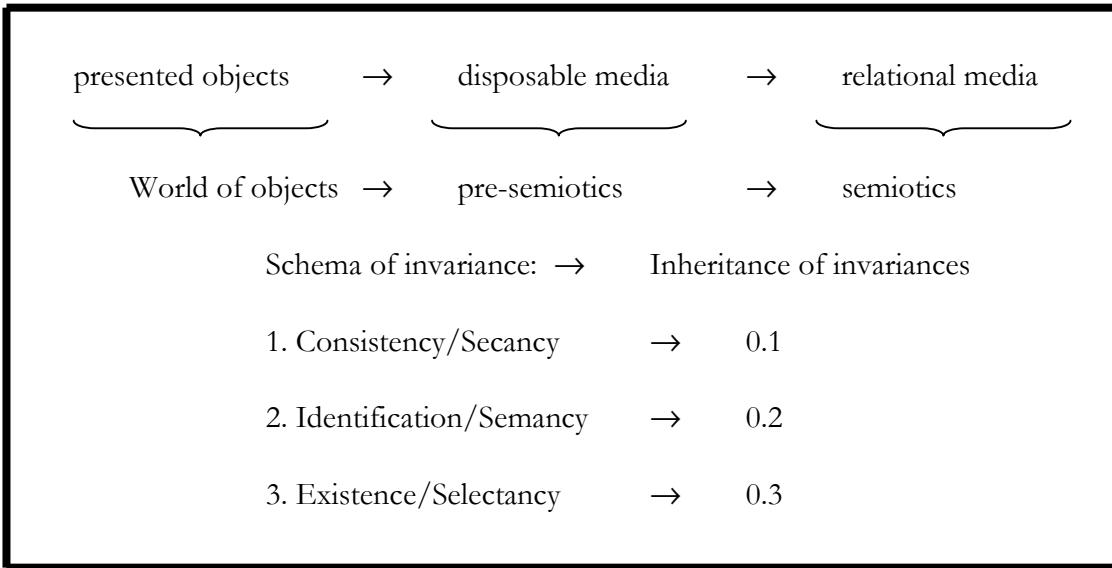
## Pre-semiotic-semiotic inheritance

1. In Toth (2008, pp. 166 ss.), a model for the genesis of semiosis had been introduced. It starts with Bense's (1975), Stiebings' (1981) und Götz' (1982) assumption that there is a level of Zeroness below Firstness and that therefore triadic semiotics is not the deepest level of representation. However, what is under the sign with its semiotic space, is the ontological level of the object. Now, Bense's assumption consists in positioning an in-between-level of pre-semiotics between the space of the objects and the space of the signs. On this pre-semiotic level, we have to deal with "disposable media" which developed out of "presented objects", but are not yet declared "relational media". The connection between the ontological and the semiotic space works qua a system of three invariances:

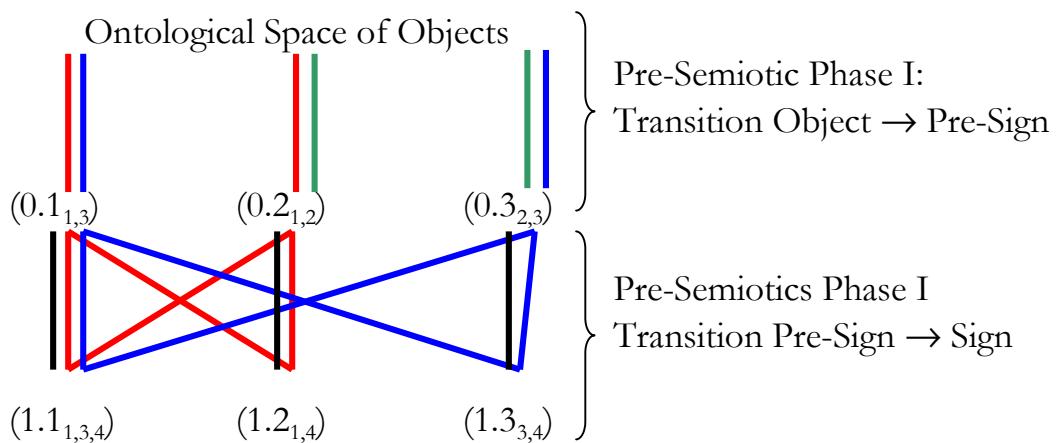
- (O°) ⇒ (1.1): Invariance of material connection;
- (O°) ⇒ (1.2): Invariance of material identification;
- (O°) ⇒ (1.3): Invariance of material existence" (Bense 1975, p. 41).

As I have pointed out (2008, p. 167a), this is a scheme of inheritance which is only then valid, if the assumption holds that already the categorial objects inhere some pre-semiotic features. It is obviously so that already at the moment when we perceive an object, we look at this object through the eyeglasses of a pre-semiotic classification scheme like "form – function – gestalt" (Wiesenfarth 1979). However, this means, on our way of classifying this object by aid of the pre-semiotic trichotomy, we have already transformed it into a "disposable" medium: f. ex., according to its form as a hammer, according to its function as a boomerang, or according to its gestalt as an icon of an animal, etc. After an object has really been declared a sign, i.e. turned from a disposable into a relational media, the pre-semiotic inheritance schema is inherited into the trichotomies of the semiotic systems.

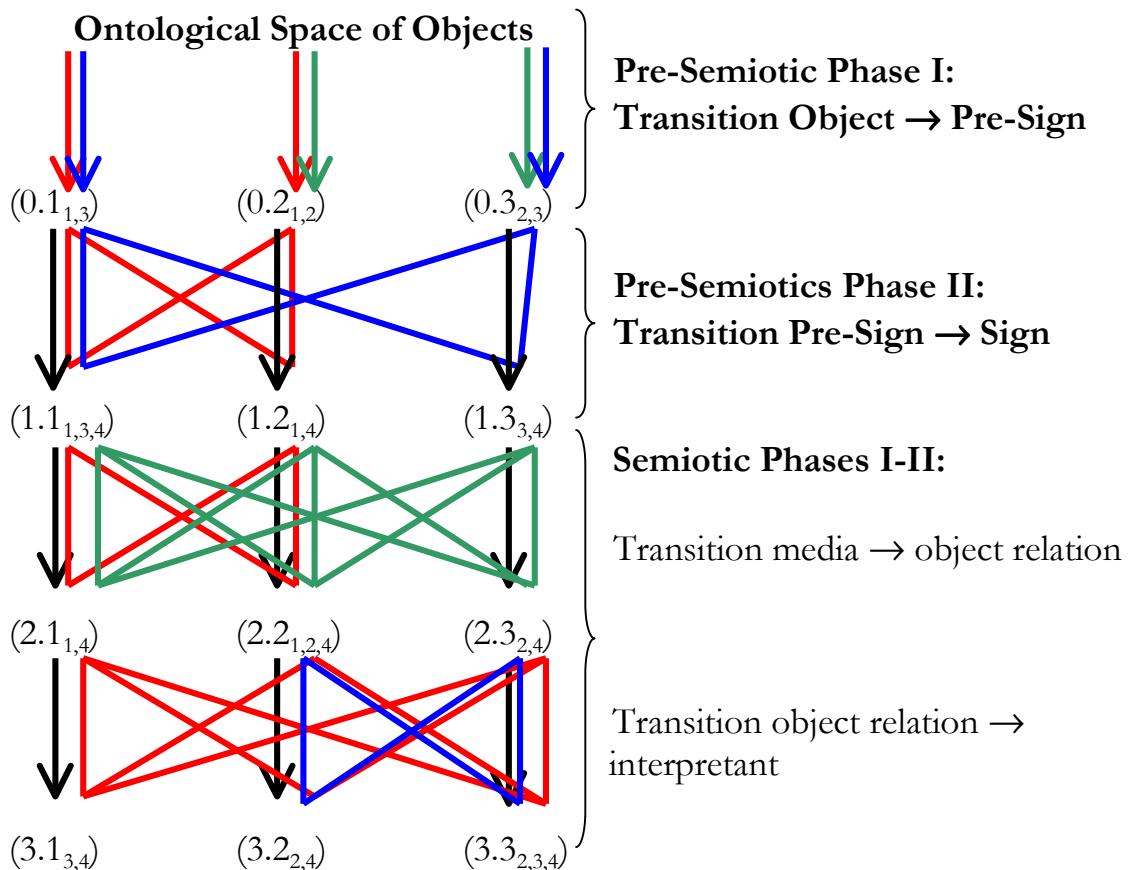
We are thus able to sketch the process of semiosis between the object and the sign as follows:



2. But where is the level of the kenograms? If we assume, roughly speaking, that semiosis comprises the phases between object and sign, then kenogrammatics must work somewhere between ontology, pre-semiotics and semiotics. Now, one of the greatest advantages of Kaehr's introduction of polycontextural semiotics consists in just ascribing the sub-signs of a sign relation their inner semiotic environments. Therefore, such polycontextural sign relations must be considered inheritance schemata, too, insofar as they are taking with them the inner environments as traces from the kenogrammatic up to the semiotic level. Therefore, the transitions between ontology and pre-semiotics on the one side and pre-semiotics and semiotics on the other side form a complex semiotic system of two inheritance schemata:



The complete complex scheme of inheritances of trichotomie and inner environments in the semiosis from object to sign thus presents as follows:



The black lines denote the inheritance of the trichotomies, the colored lines the inheritance of the contextual environments.

## Bibliography

- Bense, Max, Semiotische Prozesse und Systeme. Baden-Baden 1975  
 Götz, Matthias, Schein Design. PhD dissertation, Univ. of Stuttgart, 1982  
 Stiebing, Hans Michael, Die Semiose von der Natur zur Kunst. In: Semiosis 23, 1981, pp. 21-31  
 Toth, Alfred, Semiotics and Pre-Semiotics 2 vols. Klagenfurt 2008  
 Wiesenfarth, Gerhard, Untersuchungen zur Kennzeichnung von Gestalt mit informationstheoretischen Methoden. PhD dissertation, Univ. of Stuttgart, 1979  
 11.4.2009