

Prof. Dr. Alfred Toth

The rupture of identification

1. R.W. Fassbinder said in an interview: “In manchen Filmen habe ich die Spiegel oft eingesetzt, um durch sie Distanz zu schaffen, etwa zu einer Figur, mit der man sich noch vor zwei, drei Minuten identifiziert hat. Durch die Spiegelung ist plötzlich die Identifikation weg. Wenn man sich selber sieht, dann kann man sich nicht weiter identifizieren” / “In several movies, I used mirrors in order to create distance, e.g. to a figure, with which the audience identified itself still two, three minutes ago. By mirroring, suddenly the identification goes away. If one sees oneself, then one cannot any further identify oneself” (R.W. Fassbinder, in: Limmer 1982, p. 93).



(Taken from Wikipedia; source unknown.)

Fassbinder's thesis of what I want to call "rupture of identification" has of course to be seen as an attack against "le stade du miroir", by which French psychiatrist Jacques Lacan tried to explain the emergence of consciousness in the early infant stadium. We know from another interview that Fassbinder was well acquainted with Lacan's work (cf. Fassbinder 2004, pp. 382 ss.). Most possibly, Fassbinder's statement was not without influence from the 1976 movie "Sybil" which shows a young woman with 16 personalities. In many shots, we see Sybil standing before a mirror and seeing one of her other personalities, in one shot even two of them together. In psychiatry, Dissociative-Identity-Disorder (DID), "involves extreme and repeated dissociation that interferes with a person's normal functioning and can result in memory gaps and identity confusion. By repeatedly dissociating and blocking out painful or unpleasant memories, a person with DID develops two or more distinctly different, often colorful or dramatic, identities. People with DID may have between 10 and 15 sub-personalities, and some people may even have more than 100. Often these sub-personalities can differ in gender, style, voice, and psychological make-up (...). Unlike people with schizophrenia, people with DID are in full control of their thoughts, although they may be unable to remember large portions of their life when their behavior is being controlled by a different sub-personality"¹.

Rudolf Kaehr, who has just published an important study about equality in polycontextural theory, speaks in this connection about compartmentalization: "Compartmentalization is a 'divide and conquer' process for separating thoughts that will conflict with one another. Divide and conquer is a strategy necessary if there is no mechanism of mediation available. Despite the safety of "multi-phrenic" cycles, there are some first intriguing detours to experience:

¹<http://www.humanillnesses.com/Behavioral-Health-Br-Fe/Dissociative-Identity-Disorder.html&h=191&w=150&sz=24&hl=de&start=8&um=1&tbnid=6a1dL7vOXDJsfM:&tbnh=103&tbnw=81&prev=/images%3Fq%3Dsybil%2Bsally%2Bfield%26um%3D1%26hl%3Dde%26lr%3D%26sa%3DN>

A simple cycle :

$$\neg_1 \left(\neg_3 \left(\neg_1 \left(\neg_3 \left(\text{Ego}^{(3)} \right) \right) \right) \right) = \text{Ego}^{(3)}$$

or the other way round :

$$\neg_3 \left(\neg_1 \left(\neg_3 \left(\neg_1 \left(\text{Ego}^{(3)} \right) \right) \right) \right) = \text{Ego}^{(3)}$$

two other clean cycle :

$$\neg_1 \left(\neg_2 \left(\neg_1 \left(\neg_2 \left(\neg_1 \left(\neg_2 \left(\text{Ego}^{(3)} \right) \right) \right) \right) \right) \right) = \text{Ego}^{(3)}$$

$$\neg_2 \left(\neg_3 \left(\neg_2 \left(\neg_3 \left(\neg_2 \left(\neg_3 \left(\text{Ego}^{(3)} \right) \right) \right) \right) \right) \right) = \text{Ego}^{(3)}$$

now, mixed paths are leading back to Ego :

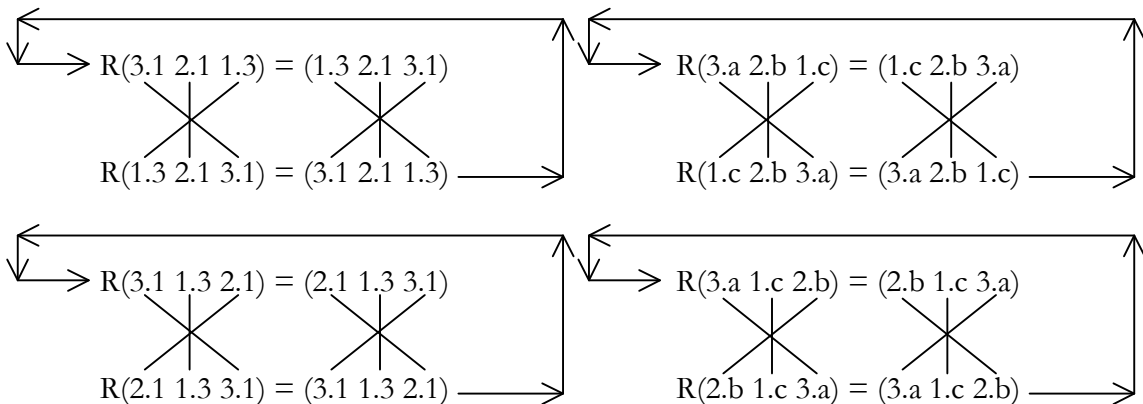
$$\neg_1 \left(\neg_2 \left(\neg_1 \left(\neg_2 \left(\neg_1 \left(\neg_3 \left(\neg_2 \left(\neg_3 \left(\neg_2 \left(\neg_3 \left(\text{Ego}^{(3)} \right) \right) \right) \right) \right) \right) \right) \right) \right) \right) = \text{Ego}^{(3)}$$

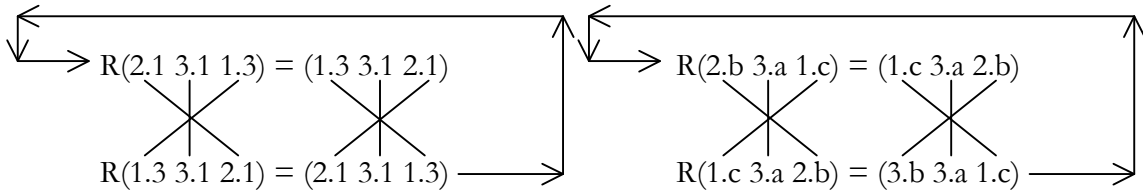
The Mandala of Negations, $m = 4$.

(Text and graphic taken from Kaehr 2008, p. 7.)

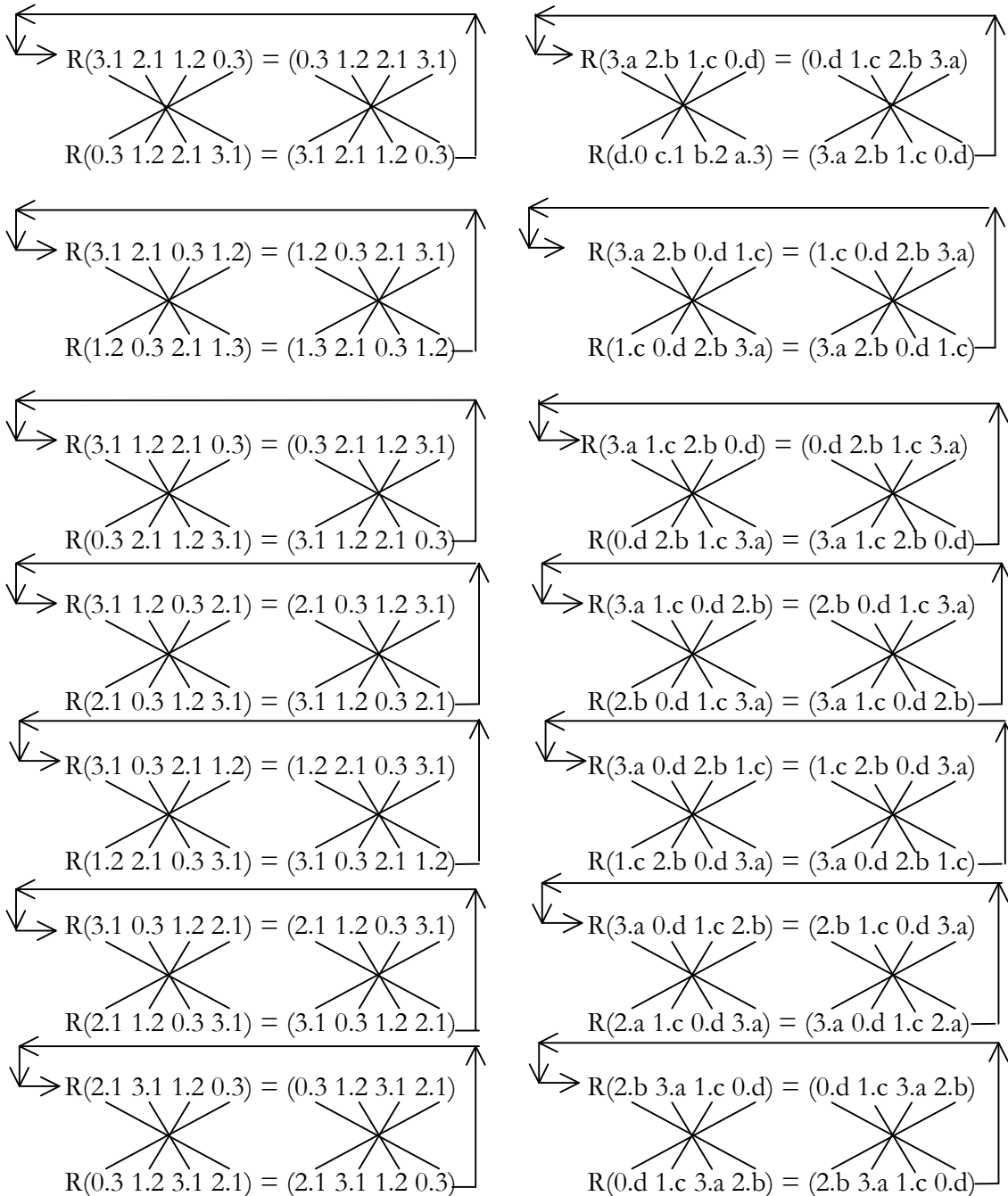
In the present study, I intend to show the mathematical-semiotic mechanisms of rupture of identification via compartmentalization through semiotic mirroring functions by semiotic reflection operators. I will show both the sign connections between reflected sign classes and their permutations (cf. Toth 2008a, pp. 159 ss.; Toth 2008b, pp. 28 ss.) as well as the cycles of reflection both in triadic-trichotomic semiotics and in pre-semiotics (cf. Toth 2008c,d).

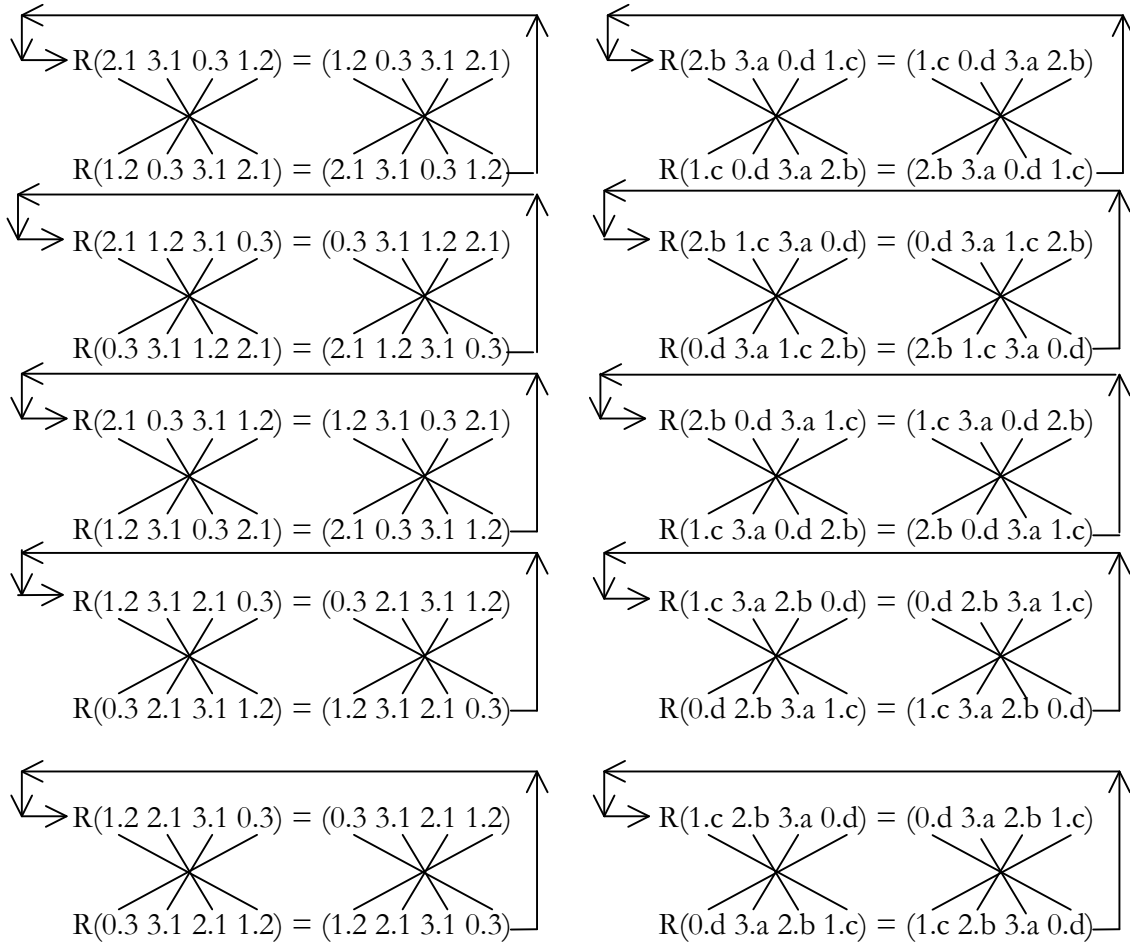
2. Classical triadic-trichotomic semiotics, based on the sign-relation $SR_{3,3}$, is a system of 10 sign classes together with $3! = 6$ permutations per sign class. In the following, I will show that these 6 permutations can be taken together to 3 pairs of 2 permutations which are related in a reflection cycle. The left column shows the sign class (3.1 2.1 1.3), the right column shows the general sign class schema (3.a 2.b 1.c) as the basis for all 10 sign classes:





3. Tetradic-trichotomic pre-semiotics, based on the sign-relation $SR_{4,3}$, is a system of 15 sign classes together with $4! = 24$ permutations per sign class. The following list is structured in the same way as the one for triadic-trichotomic semiotics:

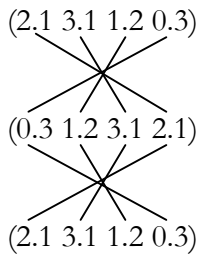




4. In another study, I have already shown the cyclic groups of triadic-trichotomic permutations (Toth 2008e). In the following, I will show the 3 possible cycles of the pre-semiotic sign classes and their permutations. As an example, we take the pre-semiotic sign class (3.1 2.1 1.2 0.3). Since it shows that each of the three cycles has one structure of sign connection each, we restrict displaying the behavior of 4 permutations each.

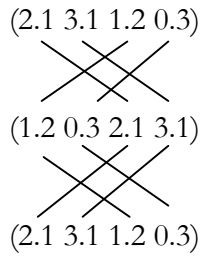
1. Cycle: Total Inversion

$$(2.1\ 3.1\ 1.2\ 0.3) \rightarrow (0.3\ 1.2\ 3.1\ 2.1) \rightarrow (2.1\ 3.1\ 1.2\ 0.3).$$

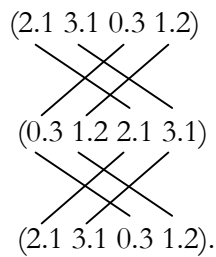


2. Cycle: Inversion of the last two and the first sub-signs

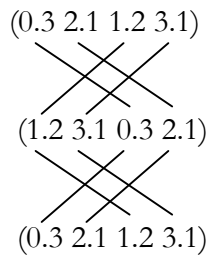
$(2.1\ 3.1\ 1.2\ 0.3) \rightarrow (1.2\ 0.3\ 2.1\ 3.1) \rightarrow (2.1\ 3.1\ 1.2\ 0.3).$



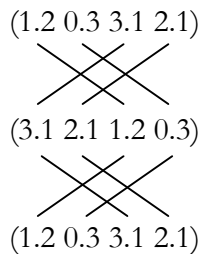
$(2.1\ 3.1\ 0.3\ 1.2) \rightarrow (0.3\ 1.2\ 2.1\ 3.1) \rightarrow (2.1\ 3.1\ 0.3\ 1.2).$



$(0.3\ 2.1\ 1.2\ 3.1) \rightarrow (1.2\ 3.1\ 0.3\ 2.1) \rightarrow (0.3\ 2.1\ 1.2\ 3.1).$

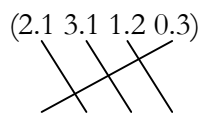


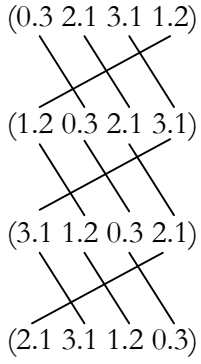
$(1.2\ 0.3\ 3.1\ 2.1) \rightarrow (3.1\ 2.1\ 1.2\ 0.3) \rightarrow (1.2\ 0.3\ 3.1\ 2.1).$



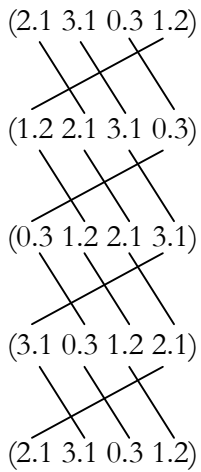
3. Cycle: Inversion of the last one and the first two sub-signs

$(2.1\ 3.1\ 1.2\ 0.3) \rightarrow (0.3\ 2.1\ 3.1\ 1.2) \rightarrow (1.2\ 0.3\ 2.1\ 3.1) \rightarrow (3.1\ 1.2\ 0.3\ 2.1) \rightarrow (2.1\ 3.1\ 1.2\ 0.3).$



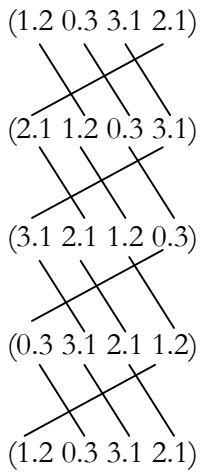


(2.1 3.1 0.3 1.2) → (1.2 2.1 3.1 0.3) → (0.3 1.2 2.1 3.1) → (3.1 0.3 1.2 2.1) → (2.1 3.1 0.3 1.2).

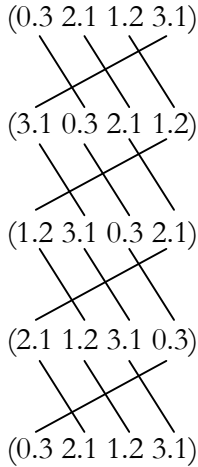


(2.1 3.1 0.3 1.2) → (1.2 2.1 3.1 0.3) → (0.3 1.2 2.1 3.1) → (3.1 0.3 1.2 2.1) → (2.1 3.1 0.3 1.2).

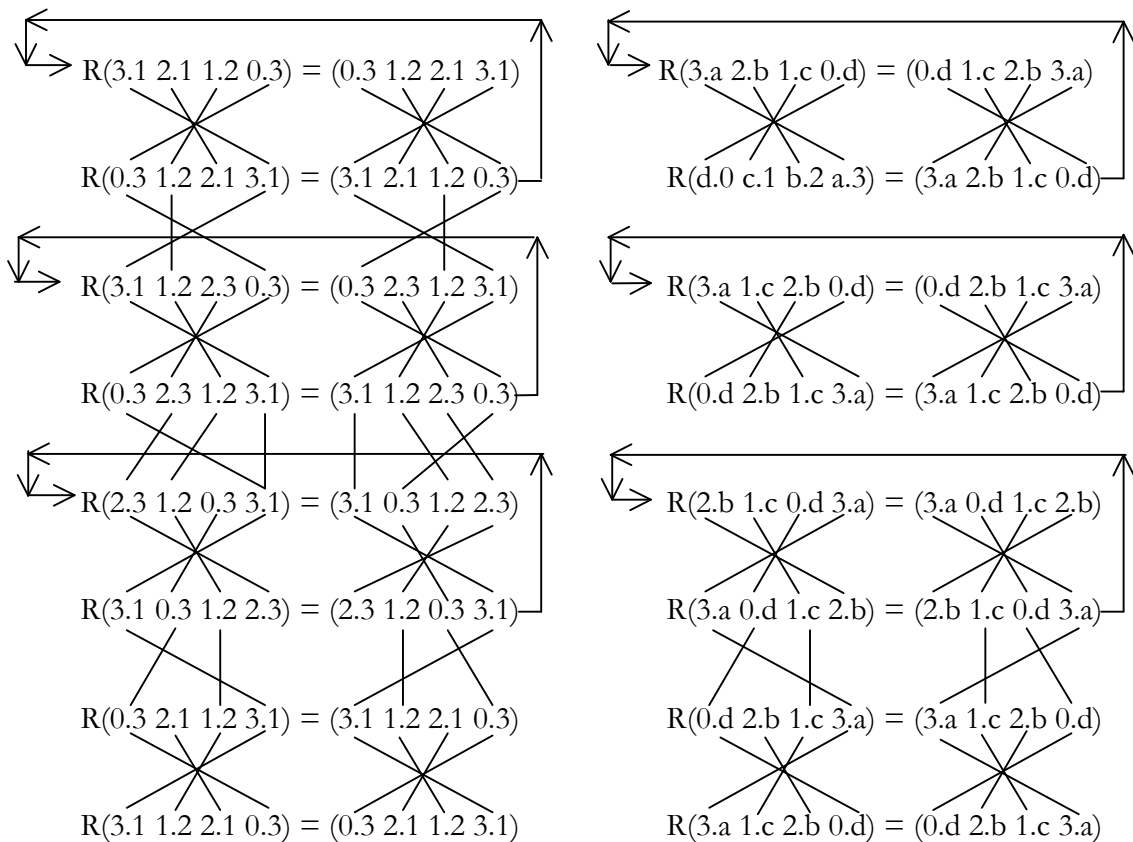
(1.2 0.3 3.1 2.1) → (2.1 1.2 0.3 3.1) → (3.1 2.1 1.2 0.3) → (0.3 3.1 2.1 1.2) → (1.2 0.3 3.1 2.1).



(0.3 2.1 1.2 3.1) → (3.1 0.3 2.1 1.2) → (1.2 3.1 0.3 2.1) → (2.1 1.2 3.1 0.3) → (0.3 2.1 1.2 3.1).



5. In the following, I present a complex example of the sign connections and permutation cycles between the pre-semiotic sign classes (3.1 2.1 1.2 0.3) and (3.1 2.3 1.2 0.3). It can be interpreted, e.g., as a semiotic basis for the simultaneous presence of multiple personalities, for example a person watching two compartmentalized personalities of it in the mirror:



It is easy to recognize that a structure like this one can be infinitely enlarged, as long as two sign classes share at least one sub-sign with one another. Therefore, the rupture or even dis-rupture of identification can be reconstructed on semiotic and even pre-semiotic level. However, this is easier to achieve in semiotics than in pre-semiotics, since in semiotics, all sign-classes hang together by at least one sub-sign with the dual-identical sign class (3.1 2.2

1.3) (Walther 1982), while in pre-semiotics, there is no dual-identical sign class and no sign class that shares any sub-signs with all other sign-classes.

Bibliography

- Fassbinder, Rainer Werner, Die ungekürzten Interviews. Ed. by Robert Fischer. Frankfurt am Main 2004
- Kaehr, Rudolf, <http://www.thinkartlab.com/pkl/media/Equality/Equality.html>
- Limmer, Wolfgang, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Filmemacher. 2nd ed. Reinbek 1982
- Toth, Alfred, Semiotische Strukturen und Prozesse. Klagenfurt 2008 (2008a)
- Toth, Alfred, Semiotic Ghost Trains. Klagenfurt 2008 (2008b)
- Toth, Alfred, Tetradic, triadic, and dyadic sign classes. Ch. 44 (2008c)
- Toth, Alfred, Towards a reality theory of pre-semiotics. Ch. 42 (2008d)
- Toth, Alfred, Cyclic groups of semiotic transpositions. Ch. 8 (vol. I) (2008e)
- Walther, Elisabeth, Nachtrag zu Trichotomischen Triaden. In: Semiosis 27, 1982, pp. 15-20

©2008, Prof. Dr. Alfred Toth