



LUND
UNIVERSITY

Cognitive Semiotics

Autumn term 2017



Centre for Cognitive Semiotics
LUND UNIVERSITY

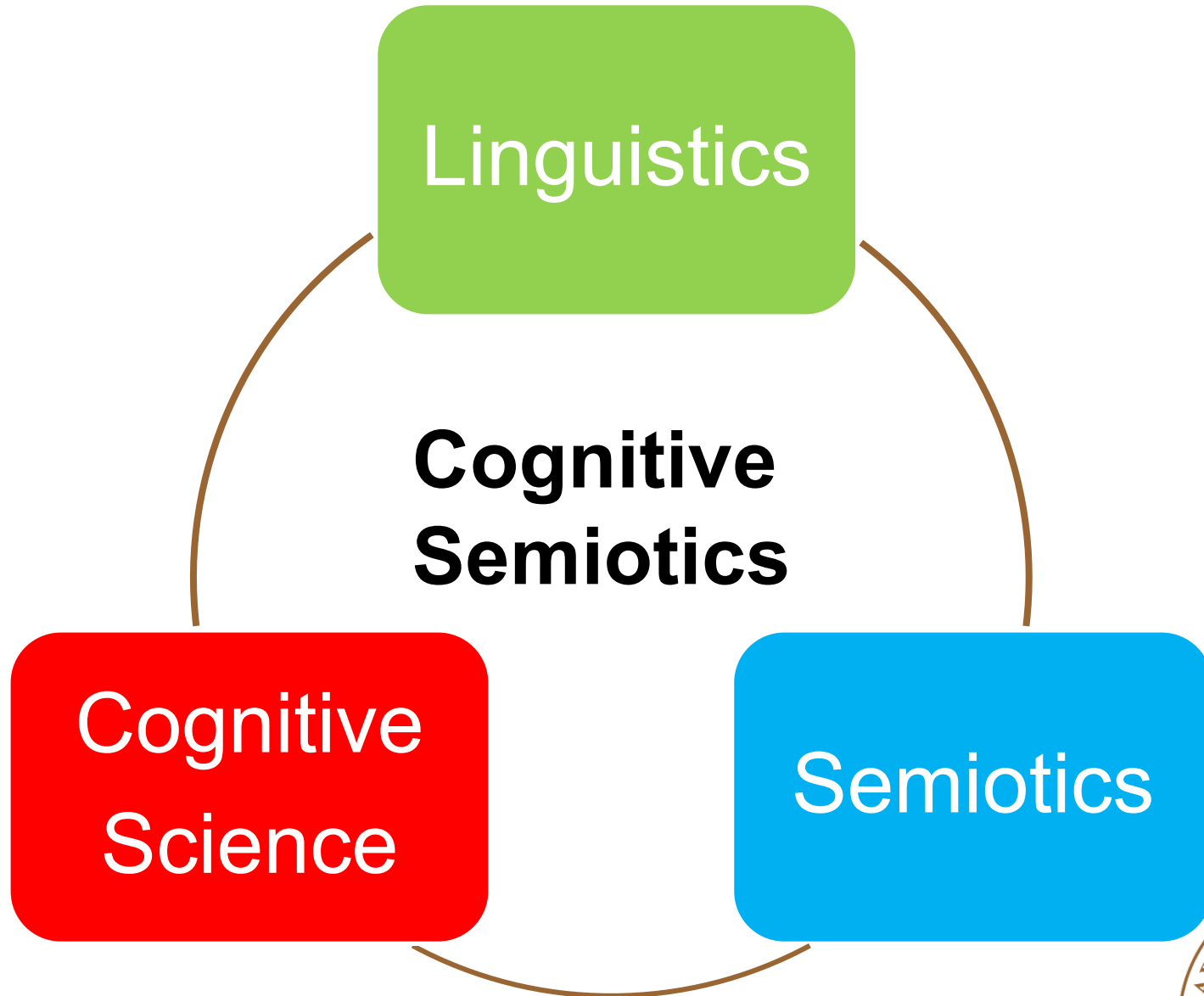
Basic Concepts in Cognitive Semiotics: Part II

Göran Sonesson

Division of Cognitive Semiotics

Centre for Languages and Literature

Lund University

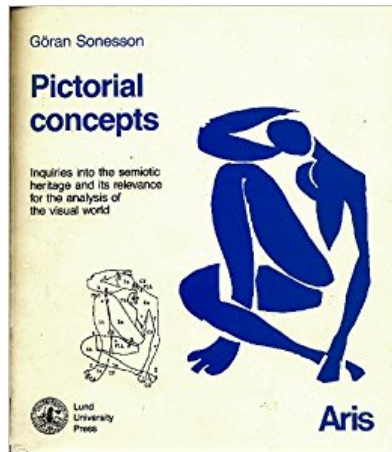


The specificity of semiotics

- Focus on meaning as such, which can fundamentally only be understood as experience (though not always recognized)
 - More specifically:
 - On the differences and similarities between various semiotic resources
 - And on the relations between different semiotic resources
 - In classical semiotics:
 - On “the text” and not the “context”
 - On synchrony



Semiotics: First of all a tradition of research



- “Semiotics consists of a series of entangled strands of problem areas making up a continuous discussion extending through the ages, which can only be grasped a posteriori by taking a retrospective view of (some restricted part of) this mesh, thus permitting semiotics to be defined and applied to new areas and issues.” (Sonesson 1989; 2010).



Semiotics: First of all a tradition of research

- In this sense, semiotics is a tradition, as this is conceived in philosophical hermeneutics (as all sciences are), within which the scholar first must be situated before he can undertake to rework it and extend it.
- Whether it becomes a discipline of its own is not “determined beforehand”, contrary to what Saussure claimed, since this depends much more on sociological than on scientific conditions.



1900

2000



Saussure



Peirce

Bachtin circle
Russian Formalism
Prague school
Jakobson
Tartu school

Prieto

Empirical semiotics

Buysens
Hjelmslev
French structuralism

Cognitive semiotics

Husserl
Cassirer
Bühler
Greimas school

Ecological semiotics

Piaget
Vygotsky
Eco

Biosemitotics

Orthodox Peirceanism

Augustine
Stoics
Hippocrates
Aristotle
Scholastics
Locke
Leibniz

Ideologues
Herder
Lessing
Humboldt



1900

2000



Bachtin circle
Russian Formalism
Prague school
Jakobson
Mukarovsky

Tartu school



Saussure

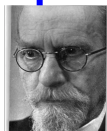
Buysens
Hjelmslev
Prieto



French Structuralism



Augustine
Stoics
Hippocrates
Aristotle

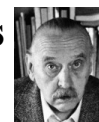


Husserl
Cassirer
Bühler



Piaget
Vygotsky

Greimas school
Eco



Orthodox Peirceanism

Cognitive semiotics

Biosemiotics

Ideologues
Herder
Lessing
Humboldt

Scholastics
Locke
Leibniz

Peirce



1900

Many Treatises of signs



Augustine
Boethius
Porphyry



Scotus
Ockham
The
Conimbricenses
Fonseca
Poinsot

Hippocrates
Plato
Aristotle



Stoics

Scholastics
Anselm
Abelard
Lombard



Albert
Aquinas



Saussure
Ideologues
Herder
Lessing
Humboldt
Locke
Leibniz
Husserl
Cassirer
Bühler

Peirce



1900

Many treatises of signs

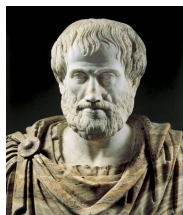


Augustine
Boethius



Scotus
Ockham
The
Conimbricenses
Fonseca
Poinsot

Hippocrates
Plato
Aristotle



Stoics

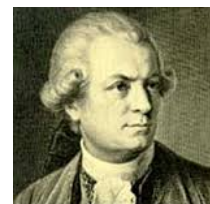
Scholastics
Anselm
Abelard
Lombard



Albert
Aquinas



Descartes
Arnault
Pascal



Saussure

Herder
Lessing
Humboldt



Condillac

Locke
Leibniz



Husserl
Cassirer
Bühler

Ideologues
Cabanis
Destut de
Tracy
Degérando
Biran

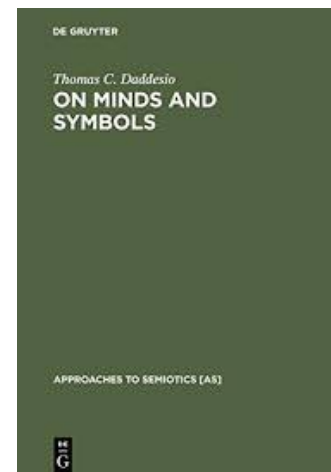
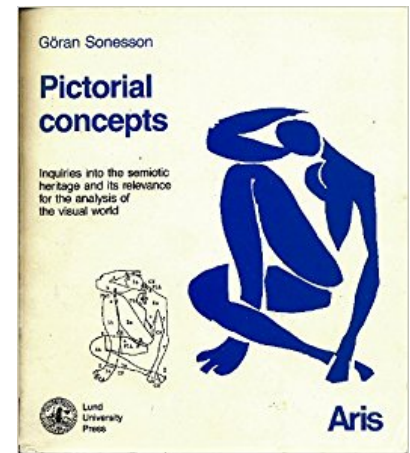


Peirce



How does semiotics become cognitive?

- Beyond “autonomous/pure semiotics”: account for results from psychology, sociology, and other disciplines
- Make your own experiments, defined in semiotic terms
- Relate semiotic structures and abilities to other psychic and social structures and abilities
- Study evolution and development



**Convergence to
cognitive
science**

1950

2000

**Computer
science**

Simon
Nevell
Minsky

Rumelhart
Schank

Arbib

Psychology

Premack

Tomasello

Pylyshyn
Kosslyn
Paivio

Goldman
Gopnik
Gordon

Gardner

Donald

**Cognitive
semiotics**

Neurology

Damasio
Edelman

Deacon

Linguistics

Chomsky

Langacker
Talmy

Lakoff

Fauconnier
Turner

Philosophy

Fodor
Dennett

Sperber

Gallagher
Hutto



Methods: Modes of access squared with phenomena accessed

| | | Phenomena accessed | | |
|-----------------|---------------|--------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| | | First person | Second person | Third person |
| Modes of access | First person | Introspection | (Regulated) empathy | Phenomenology |
| | Second person | "Subjective" description | Dialogue | "Objective" description |
| | Third person | (External observation) | (External observation) | Experimentation |



The sign function

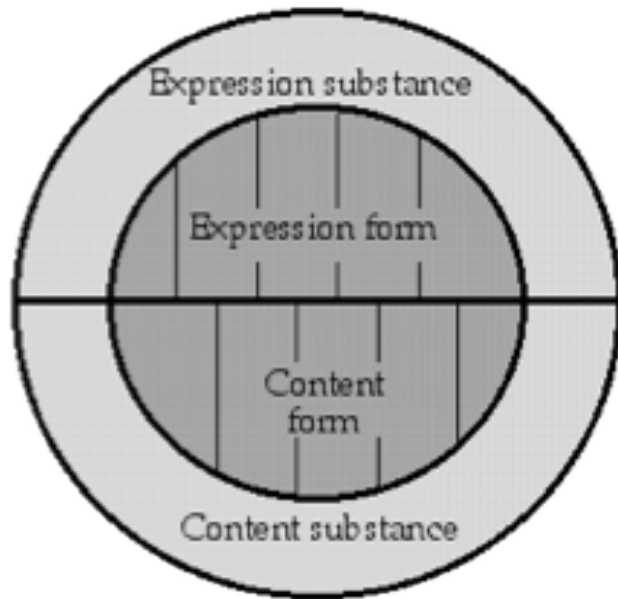


Sign versus meaning:

- “something which, on being perceived, brings into awareness another besides itself” (Augustine, quoted by Deely 1994).
 - The definition amplified by Husserl
- anything which serves to bring into awareness something different from itself, whether the sign (in the sense of the signifier) itself becomes subject to awareness in the process or not (Fonseca, referred to by Deely 1994)
 - The “intentionality” of phenomenology; “direct perception” according to Gibson



Sign



Piaget's criterion:

**the expression is
subjectively
differentiated from
the content
(Not going over into
it continuously – not
from the same
category)**



The expression is subjectively *differentiated* from the content

Not going over into the
other continuously



The expression is subjectively *differentiated* from the content

Not going over into the
other continuously



The expression is subjectively *differentiated* from the content

Not going over into the other continuously



Not from the same category

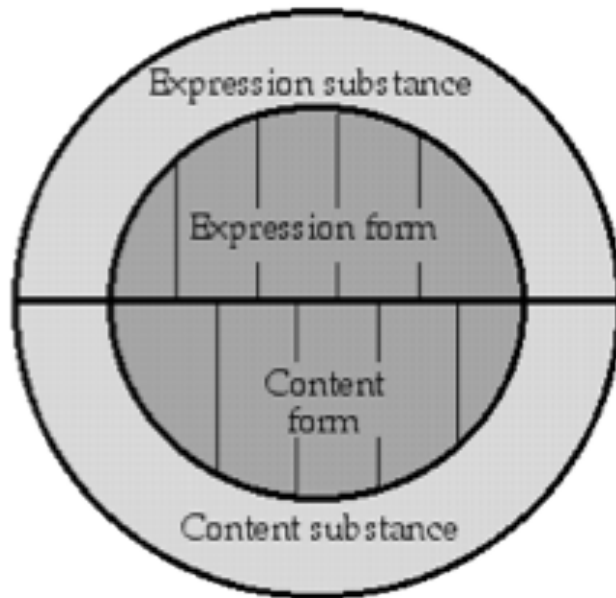


Objective and subjective differentiation

- If we look at Piaget's examples, it seems that he attributes the semiotic function only to those expressions and contents which are not only *subjectively*, but *objectively, different* (Sonesson 1992):
 - the pebble in relation to a piece of candy, but not the feather in relation to the bird or the bull's head over the market stand



Sign



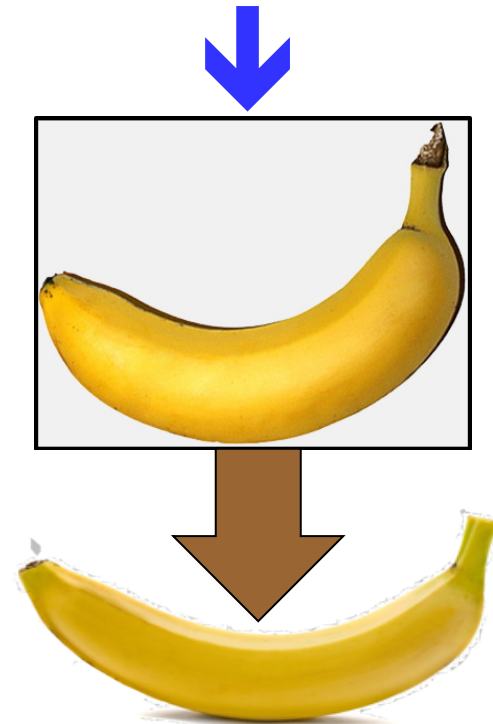
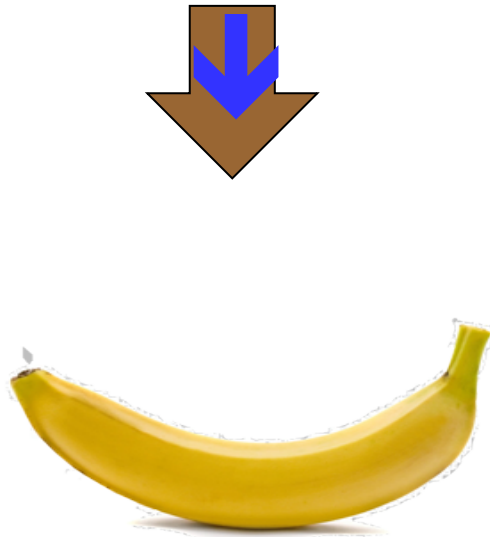
Husserl's criteria:

**the expression is directly given but not in focus,
and the content is indirectly given but in focus**



Husserl' criterion

the expression is directly given but not in focus, and the content is indirectly given but in focus

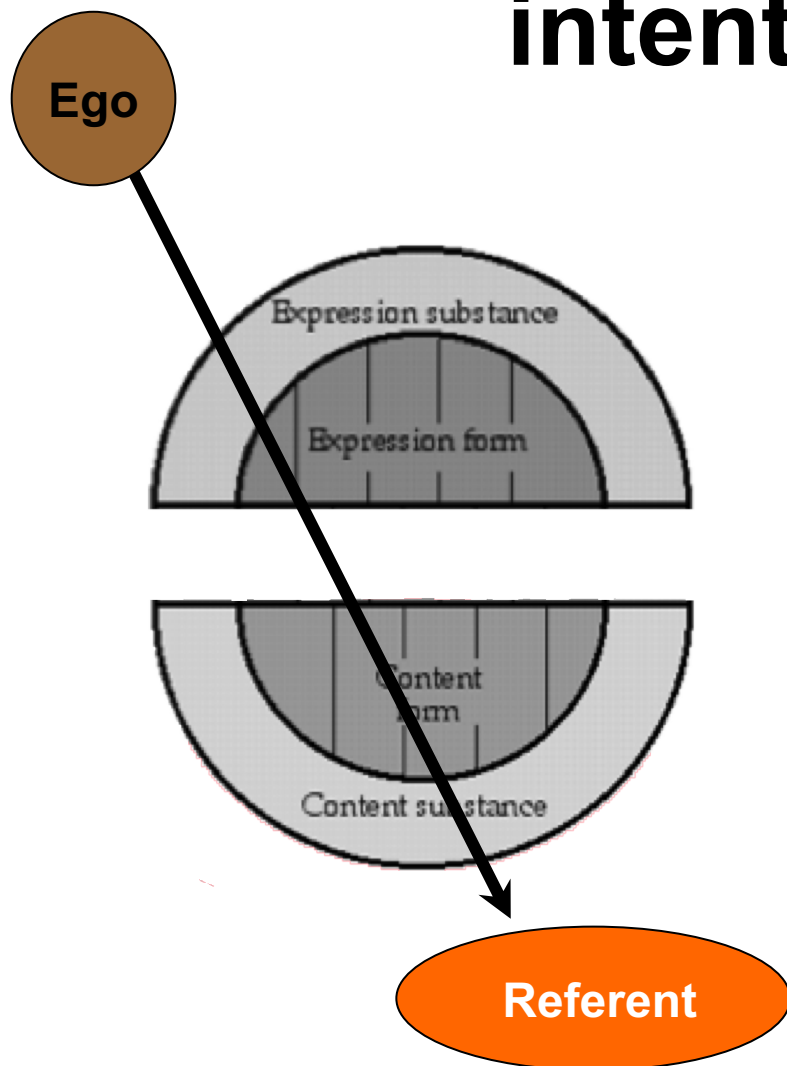


Sign function (or Representation)

- A stands for B for S, in such a way that:
 - (a) The relation between A and B is *asymmetrical*, in the sense that A is *more directly experienced* than B by S,
 - (b) The relation between A and B is *asymmetrical*, in the sense that B is *more in focus* for S than A
 - (c) There is a *differentiation* between A and B: A is qualitatively and or/ numerically different from B for S
 - (d) A could be seen as the point of view (intention) with which S regards B – not just “stand for/count as”
 - (e) all this applies whether A is taken to be the expression and B the content, or whether A is the sign and B the referent

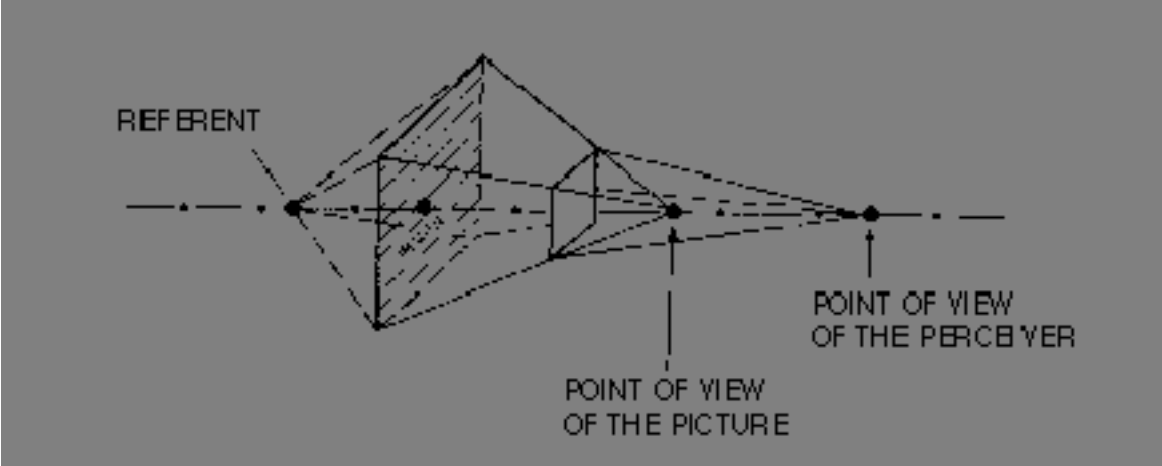


The sign as a hierarchy of intentionality

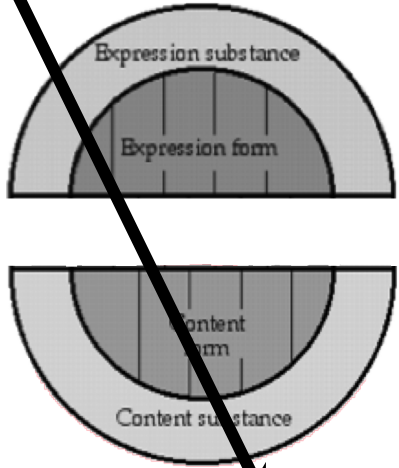


- Not "intention", in the sense of purpose (all the time confused by Searle, and thus by Tomasello).
- Intentionality is directedness
- But it is directness manifesting a certain point of view
- You always look at an object in a particular perspective (noema)





Ego



American or British pronunciation

“Morning star” or “Evening Star”

Referent

“Venus”



Sign versus meaning:

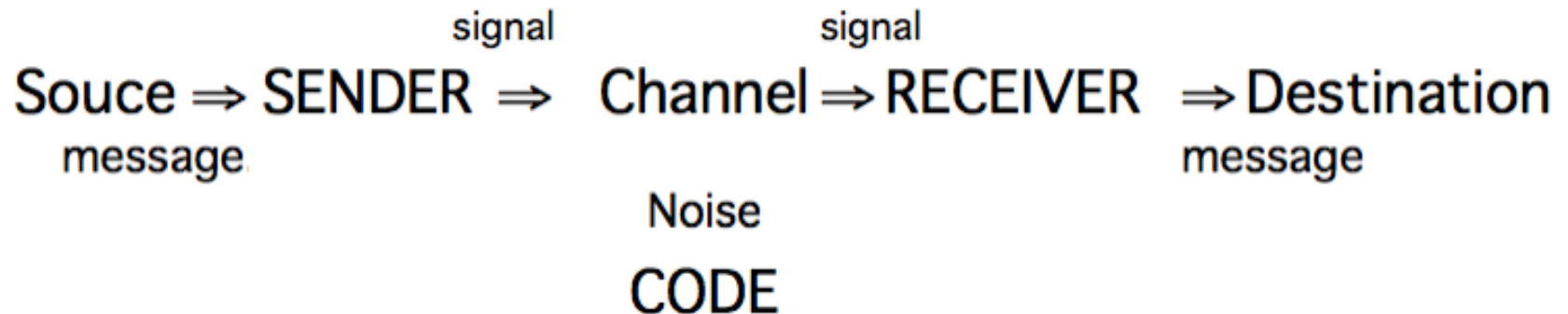
- “something which, on being perceived, brings into awareness another besides itself” (Augustine, quoted by Deely 1994).
 - The definition amplified by Husserl
- anything which serves to bring into awareness something different from itself, whether the sign (in the sense of the signifier) itself becomes subject to awareness in the process or not (Fonseca, referred to by Deely 1994)
 - The “intentionality” of phenomenology; “direct perception” according to Gibson



The communication model

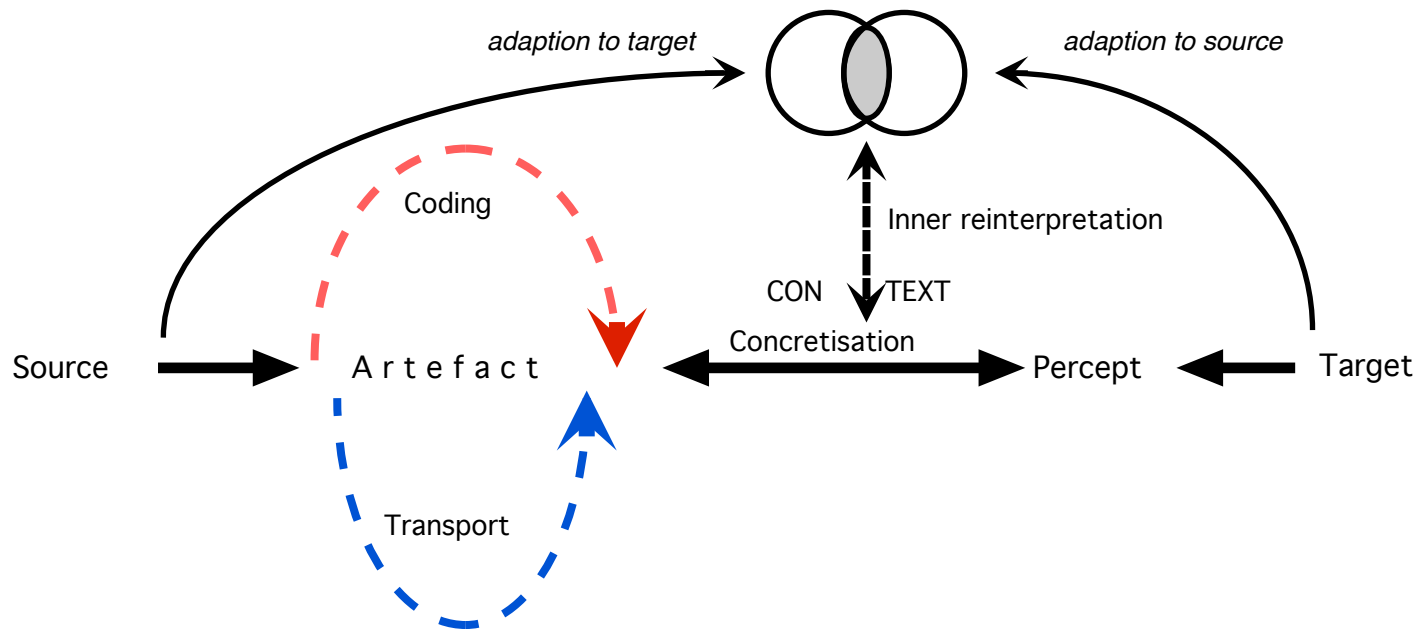


The heritage of Shannon & Weaver, Jakobson, and Eco



General Model of Communication

pool of knowledge:
abductions, norms, sign systems



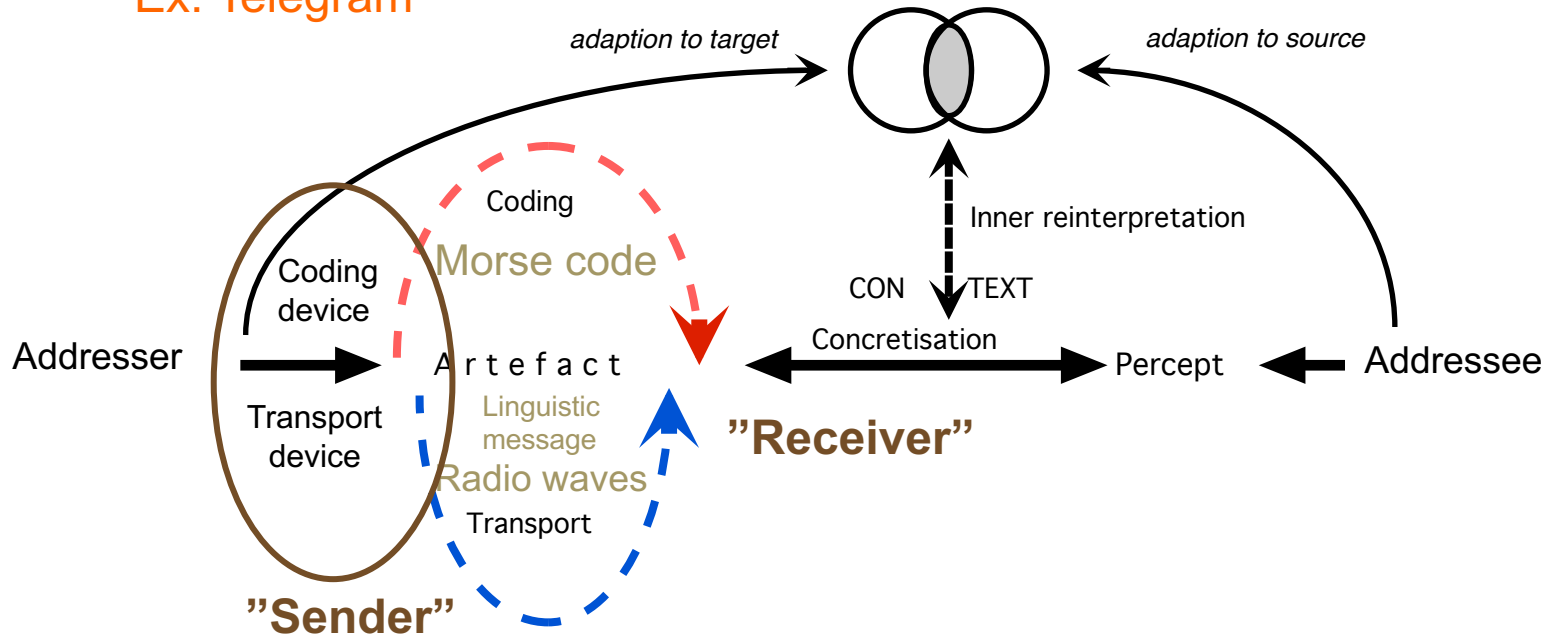
Somebody creating an artefact that somebody else has to make sense of – offering up an object as a task of interpretation



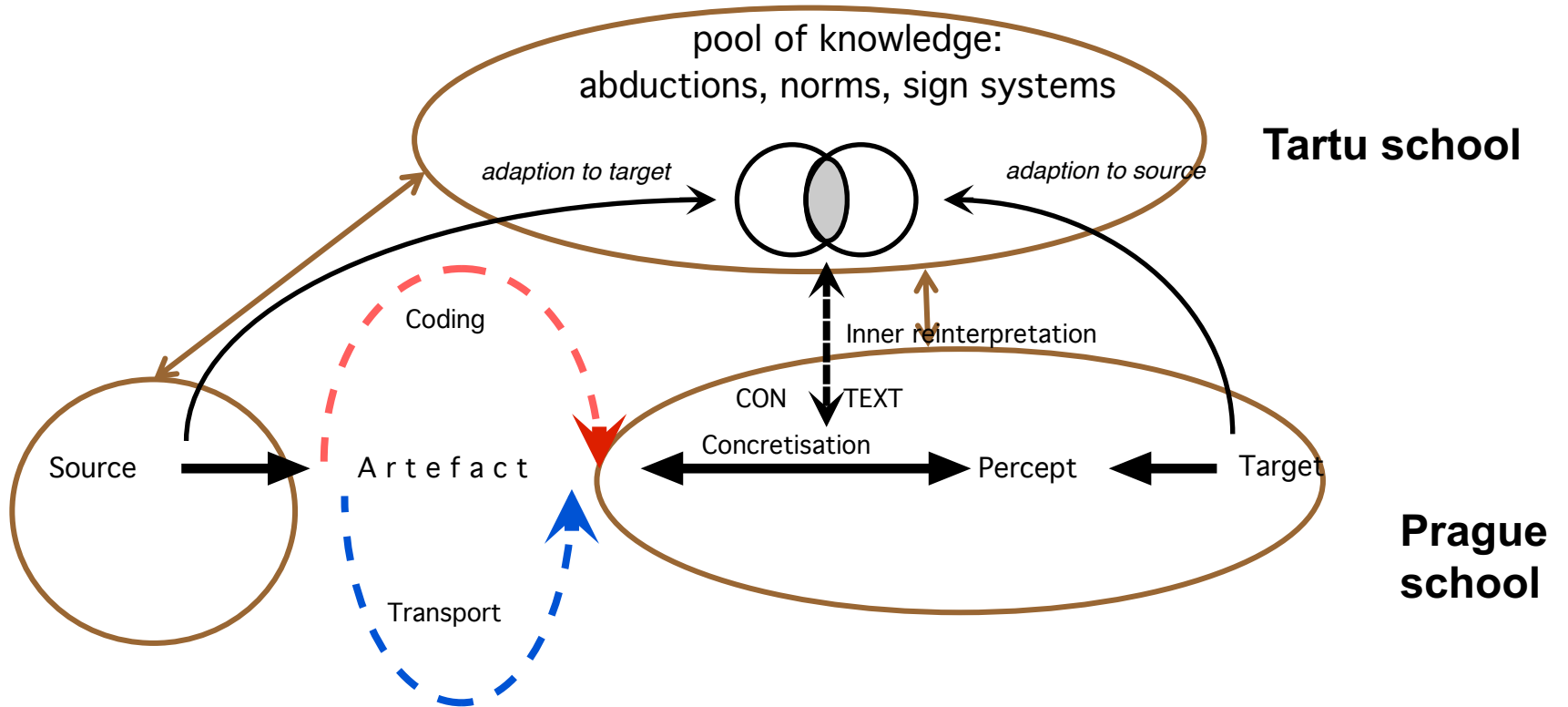
General Model of Communication

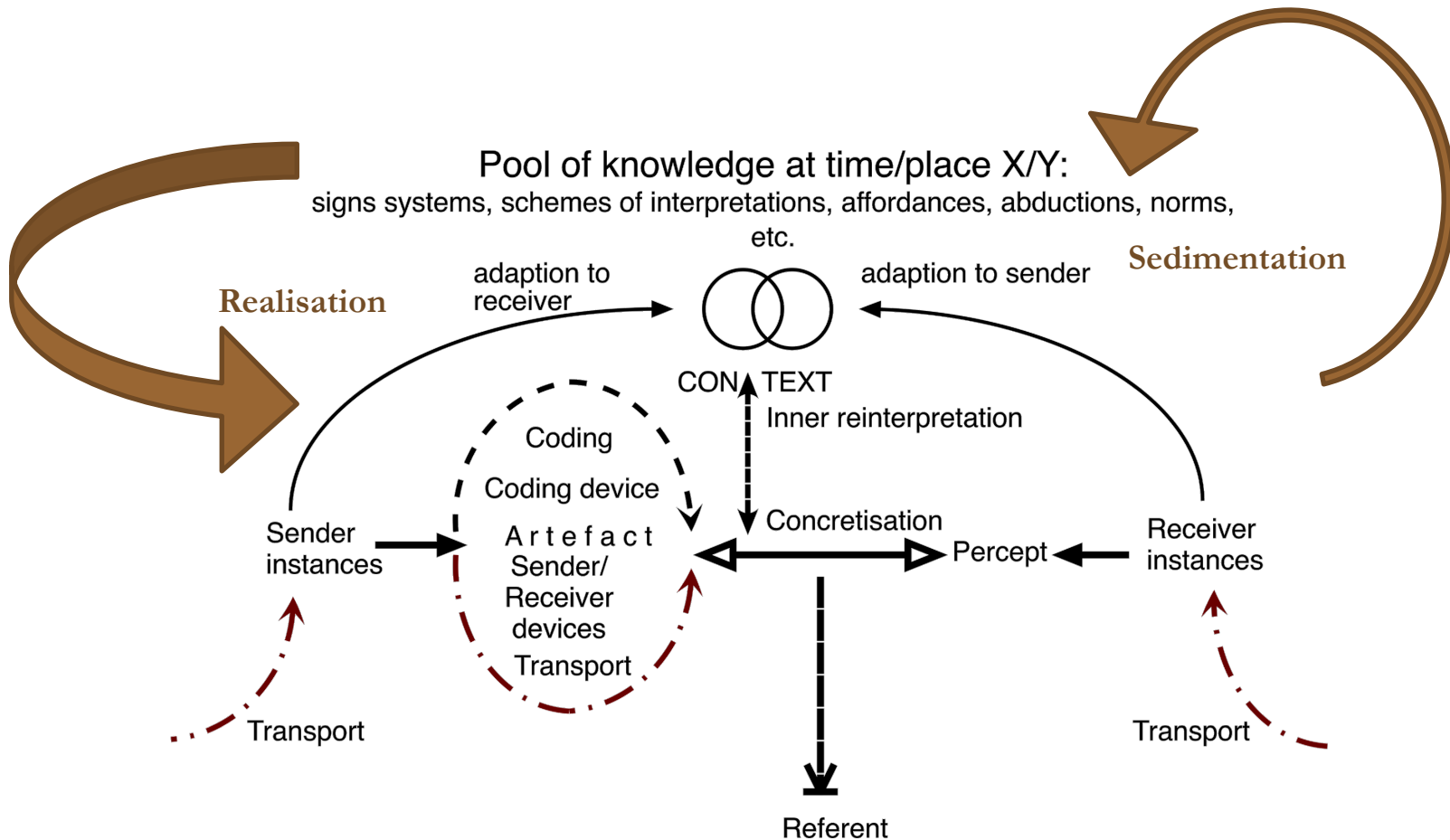
pool of knowledge:
abductions, norms, sign systems

Ex. Telegram



General Model of Communication





Communication as collaboration

According to Tomasello (2009)

- apes are good at helping others (which involves interpreting affordances, but not creating them),
- but not at sharing resources
- and particularly not at sharing information
- This corresponds to the Prague model, according to which communication is a kind of collaboration
- Another aspects of the Prague model, however, is that communication is defined from the point of view of the receiver



Meaning beyond signs



Uexküll: the same room for human beings, dogs and flies



Not only colours but affordances



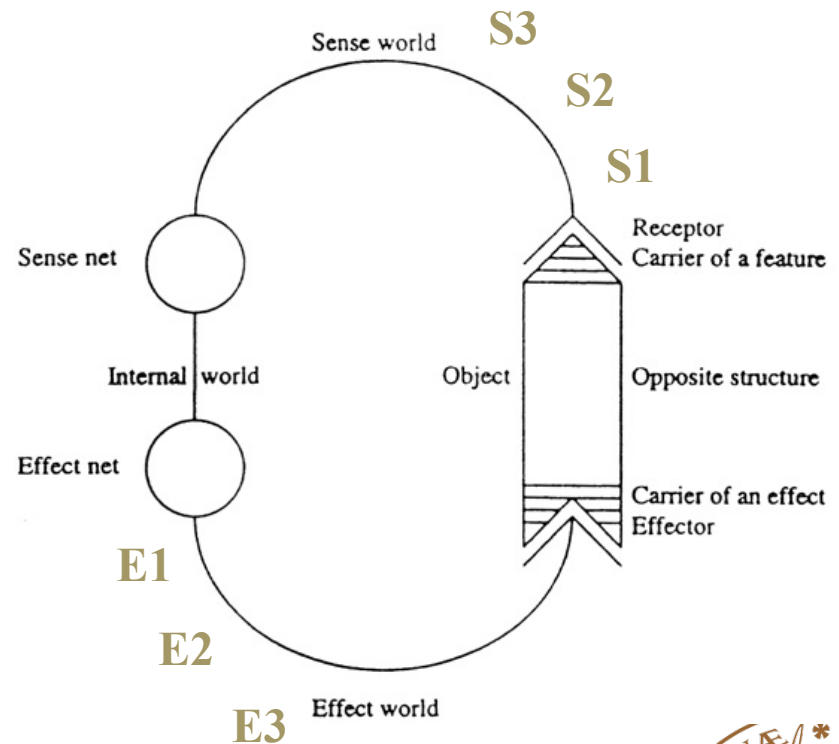
From natural to cultural affordances

- **Gibson's affordances are the basic visual meanings**
- **To children and many animals, they may be that which is experienced instead of "substances"**
- **You "see" what the objects can be used for, eating, grasping, going through, etc.**
- **This is relative to a world as it exists for an animal – the *Umwelt***
-



Uexküll's functional cycle: Adventures of a tick

- The odour of butyric acid (S1) causes the tick to abandon her post on top of the blade of grass/bush and (E1) fall blindly downward toward her prey.
- If she is fortunate enough to fall on something warm (S2) then she has attained her prey, the warm-blooded animal, and thereafter needs only the help of her sense of touch to find (E2)
- the least hairy spot possible (S3) and embed herself up to her head in the cutaneous tissue of her prey (E3). She can now slowly suck up a stream of warm blood.



From natural to cultural affordances

- But it is not clear affordances are entirely “natural”, contrary to what Gibson supposes: even “edibility” has a cultural aspect
- Some “affordances” only exist in a specific culture – the “writability” of the computer keyboard
- Even Gibson talks about the post box, but, like Donald Norman and Klaus Krippendorff, he never thematises the hiatus



Affordances – from Nature to Culture

- You “see” what the objects can be used for, eating, grasping, going through, etc.
- This is relative to a world as it exists for an animal – the *Umwelt*
- Some “affordances” only exist in a specific culture – from the “sendability” of the post box (mentioned by Gibson) to the “writability” of the computer keyboard



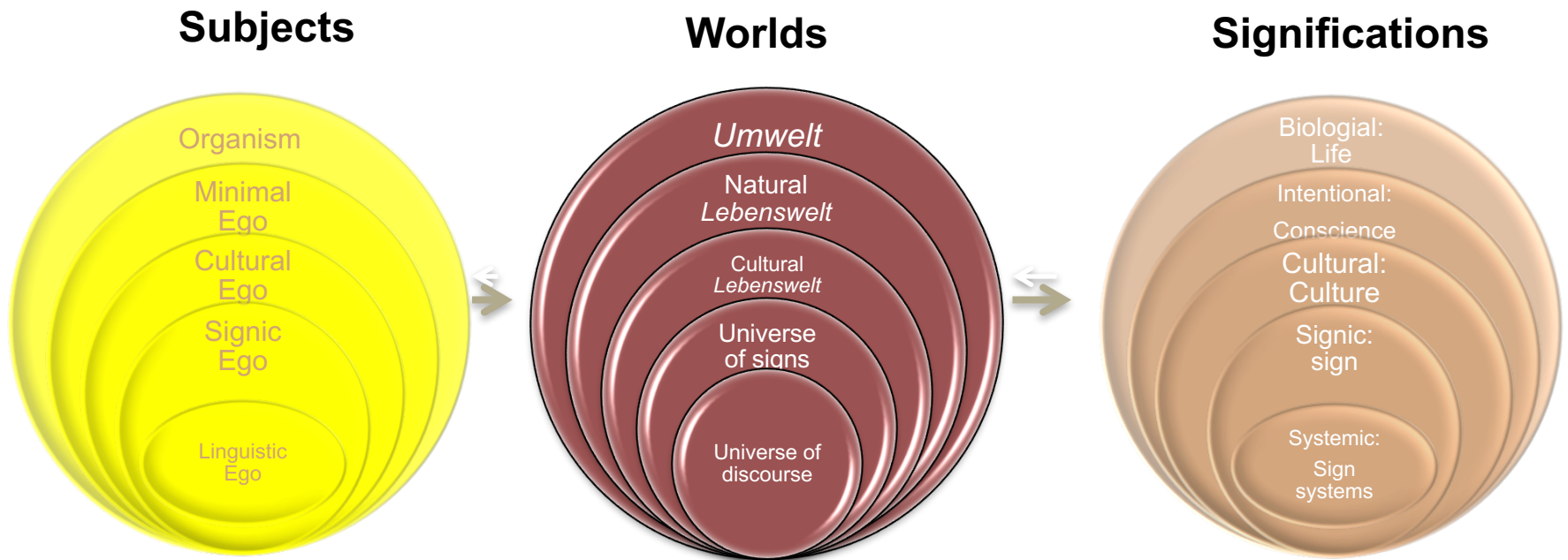
The post box



Theoretical conclusion



Hierarchies of significations

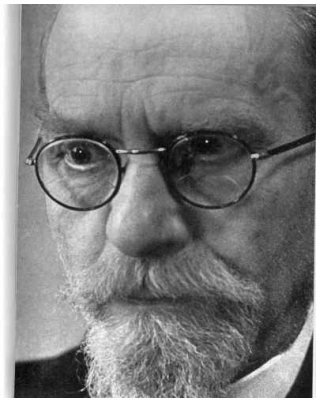


Five types of selves, worlds and significations (Zlatev 2009), with the added distinction between the natural and the cultural Lifeworld and the corresponding significations (Sonesson 2015b)

Methodological conclusion



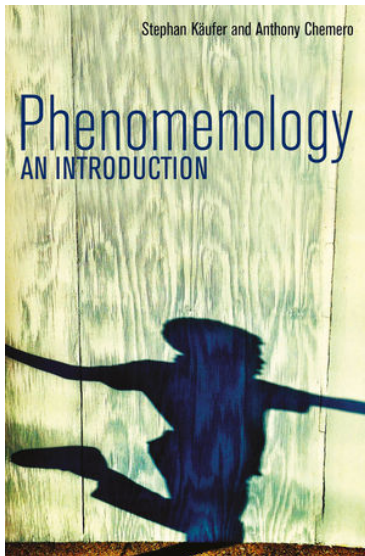
What is phenomenology?



- “the study of human experience and of **the ways things present themselves to us** in and through such experience” (Sokolowski 2000: 2).
- “the careful description of what appears to consciousness precisely in the manner of its appearing.” (Moran 2005: 1)
- “Phenomenology studies structures of conscious experience as experienced from **the first-person point of view**, along with relevant conditions of experience. The central structure of an experience is its **intentionality, the way it is directed through its content or meaning toward a certain object in the world.**” (David Woodruff Smith 2013)



Gibsonian phenomenology



- Gibson, like Merleau-Ponty worked on an “argument to the effect that what is *out there* - what we respond to - is a function, to an important degree, of *us*. /---/ For each, attempts to reduce perception to passive sensation – where sensation was understood as (or as the result of) a linear causal relation between specific external causes and specific local neural effects – were rejected. /---/ Perception, in short, was *behaviour*: more powerfully, perception was an *activity*” (Sanders 1993).
- In fact, this parallel could be made already with Husserl.
- Lombroso on Gibson quoting Husserl. Chemero on Gibson as a phenomenologist.



Homepage of the **Division of Cognitive Semiotics** at Lund University

<http://www.sol.lu.se/semiotik/>



Centre for Cognitive Semiotics
LUND UNIVERSITY

Homepage of the **Centre for Cognitive Semiotics**

<http://project.sol.lu.se/ccs>

