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Meaning and Meaning Fields

A Theory from Semiotics, Sociology, and Semantics through the Example of Power and Law

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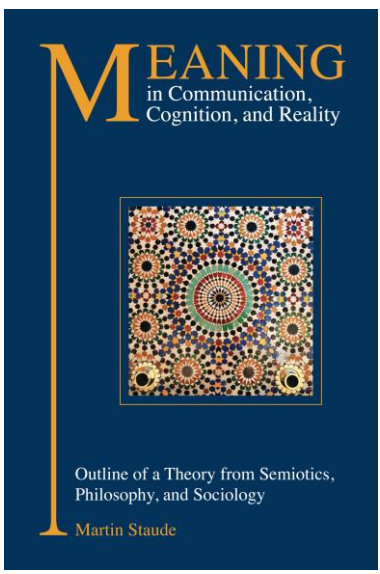

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0. Introduction

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The following are some of the *questions and puzzles* that this book will tackle: Are distinctions the basis for all meaning processes in cognition? Why is it a contradiction to speak of undescribed objects or an uninterpreted reality? Can an ontological inquiry lead to a linguistic monism? What is the role of signifiers in communicative systems? How can the semantic deep structure of social phenomena be portrayed? Why do paradigmatic and syntagmatic meaning conflicts have different consequences? Is a contract a prototypical element of the legal system, whereas a penguin is an atypical bird? How does the study of meanings lead to the study of meaning fields? What are the sociological implications if several meaning fields overlap? Why is the activation of meaning fields crucial for cognitive and communicative processes?

These questions will be answered in the framework of a *general, interdisciplinary, and formal theory of meaning in communication, cognition, and reality*. The elaboration of such a theory of meaning is the main objective of this book. That is, I do not primarily pursue a destructive or deconstructive goal by criticizing or dismantling existent theories, but a constructive goal by building a new theory, which selectively incorporates concepts and arguments from existent theories.[1] Consequently, there will be no systematic survey or appraisal of existent theories because this would risk remaining on a superficial level, would leave me little space to present my own theory, and would give rise to the suspicion that I merely point to the weaknesses of other theories as a means of drawing attention away from my own theory's weaknesses.

The key term of the theory presented in this book is *meaning*. Contrary to common usage in everyday life and scientific discussions, the term meaning is used here in a peculiar and broad sense. As a first approximation, meaning is »something« on the linguistic, symbolic, conceptual level: The term meaning not only comprises standard synonymous terms such as signification, sense, denotation, or signified, but I use meaning also in terms of concept, sign, word, code, symbol, description, indication, label, distinction, idea, interpretation, etc. Even though I could choose any of these terms as the key term, I opt for the term *meaning* because of its widespread use and high connectivity in the Social Sciences and Philosophy.

Despite its theoretical orientation, this book does discuss *empirical and methodological aspects* related to the theory of meaning. This has two purposes: I want to illustrate the theory by providing concrete examples from everyday life that render the theory more vivid and comprehensible. And I want to show how the theory can be applied to and tested in particular cases.

[1] I use the term *theory* in a technical and unpretentious sense without the usual connotations of »pomp«, »intricacy«, and »awe«. The structure of a theory is an integrated and consistent network of hypotheses about a particular research domain (where a hypothesis is an explicit and systematic relation between concepts). The function of a theory is to serve as a toolbox of concepts and hypotheses that may be useful in understanding, explaining, or solving particular things, problems, or puzzles.

One such example or case that I will frequently discuss is *power and law* in social and psychic systems, e.g. threats, guilt, court trials, punishment, norms, hierarchies, anticipation of orders, contracting, criminality, rights, etc.

As for the theory of meaning presented in this book, several questions need to be answered: What are the reasons for developing this theory? Where is the theory located within the current scientific landscape? What are the objectives of this theory? What are existing research gaps and shortcomings that the theory intends to tackle? Where is the starting point or foundation for the theory? In the remainder of this chapter, I will answer these questions.

Numerous theories of, or approaches to, meaning have been proposed in the relevant disciplines, especially in Semiotics, Linguistics, Sociology, Psychology, and Philosophy. Many of these theories or approaches have proven to be inspiring, fruitful, and innovative in their own respects. However, what is missing is a theory or approach that proposes a definition of meaning which is so *elementary, abstract, and general* that it is connectable to, or even partially incorporates, other theories of meaning and which therefore lays the common foundation for these other theories of meaning.

The present study seeks to tackle this research gap by bringing the focus of analysis down to a fundamental and universal level which offers a broad and abstract definition of meaning which can be applied to psychic and communicative systems, to language and so-called »non-linguistic« phenomena such as behavior, objects, pictures, or melodies, as well as to human and non-human actors. Such a definition of meaning does not entirely reject or exclude other definitions, but instead it proposes a common denominator that is more basic than, and hence compatible with, these other definitions. This opens up several possibilities of cross-disciplinary and cross-theoretical dialog and stimulus.

What is also missing in many of the relevant disciplines is a theory of meaning that begins at a deliberately *elementary, abstract, and general* level, as discussed in the previous paragraphs, and which then systematically leads to a more *complex, concrete, and specific* level where the theory becomes relevant and applicable to empirical research.

This research shortcoming is sought to be remedied in this study by proposing a theory of meaning that is constructed in analogy to the construction of a house: It starts on a fundamental and crude plane, which constitutes the base for assembling and erecting a more complex and developed structure. This theory of meaning unfolds in the course of the book's chapters in a way that each chapter is a complement and extension of a preceding chapter. For example, the definition of meaning as category will be refined in a later chapter by the definition of meaning as prototypical category, whilst the approach to meaning will be extended to the approach to meaning fields, and the structuralist focus on meaning fields will be complemented in a later chapter by a processual focus on the activation of meaning fields.

Due to such a structure and orientation of the theory of meaning as it is presented in this study, the theory can be classified as a *formal-abstract* theory and not as a substantive-concrete theory (in the sense of Bormann 2004: ch. B.III.5 and Glaser & Strauss 1967: 32f). That is, the theory refers to a formal,

conceptual, or general area of fundamental research that is relatively independent of particular historical or cultural contexts, so that it can be applied to a wide range of empirical cases, specific examples, and research domains.

Therefore, the theory of meaning developed combines Universalism with Relativism: On the one hand, the theory of meaning claims universal validity, i.e. it asserts that its concepts and hypotheses are valid for, and applicable to, all human systems, epochs, actors, situations, and cultures.[2] On the other hand, the theory of meaning accepts the uniqueness, variety, and complexity of particular human systems, epochs, actors, situations, and cultures. The relativistic and universalistic perspectives are combined in the claim that the theory of meaning can give valid and viable interpretations of, and explain the differences and similarities between, the most particular, idiosyncratic, and unique human systems, epochs, actors, situations, and cultures by means of general and universal concepts and hypotheses.

For example, the theory proposes formal, general, and universal concepts, e.g. the concept of meaning field. In empirical research, such a concept can be specified and operationalized, e.g. the meaning field of normativity. Then it may be adapted and applied to a particular culture, system, or epoch, e.g. contemporary Western societies or ancient Aztec civilization. In so doing, one may analyze, for instance, the structure and evolution of the contemporary Western meaning field of normativity, or one may compare it with the ancient Aztec meaning field of normativity.

A further shortcoming in existing research on meaning, especially in Sociology and Anthropology, is the lack of, or even aversion to, *formalized* theories of meaning. A theory is formalized if its main concepts and hypotheses are expressed in a *logico-mathematical notation*. The problem with non-formalized theories is that they are more likely to be semantically vague and internally inconsistent. In contrast, formalized theories have the following advantages: Firstly, formalization renders the meaning of the theory's concepts and hypotheses more precise, unequivocal, and standardized, which fosters their intelligibility. Secondly, formalization enables the analyst to avoid internal inconsistencies in the argumentation. For example, a theory argues at the beginning $A = B + \pi$ and at the end $B = A + \pi$, thus implying that both equations are simultaneously valid. However, if the second equation is inserted into the first equation, namely $A = (A + \pi) + \pi$, a logical contradiction results, i.e. the paradoxical claim that $0 = 2\pi = 6.28$.

The present study tackles the abovementioned research shortcoming by elaborating a semi-formalized theory that uses a logico-mathematical notation with symbols such as M, $M_S = \left| \ldots \right|$, $\rangle apple\langle$, $\neg\exists M^{ACTIVATED}$, $M(W) = \left| STARS \right|$, MF^2, $\overline{M} = \overline{\left| \ldots \right|}$, $U_{NON\text{-}DUALISM} = M_{(W\ vs\ M)}$, $\overline{\left| M_M \right|} \rightarrow \left| M_{M^I} \right| + \left| M_{M^{II}} \right|$, MF_S^{LOVE}, etc. This notation is introduced step by step so that readers with no logico-mathe-

[2] This does not imply that the theory of meaning is a universal theory, supertheory, or global theory (in Luhmann's terms 1984: 9, 19, 33) because it does not aim at universality in the sense of including and explaining *all* meaning-relevant phenomena, concepts, and topics; nor does it intend to synthesize or transcend *all* existent scholarly theories of meaning.

matical background knowledge can follow and understand the argumentation. Moreover, to facilitate the intelligibility of the notation, it is illustrated and complemented by figures, tables, and textual explanations.

Another shortcoming in existent research is that there are hardly any systematically *interdisciplinary and intertheoretical* approaches to meaning. Even though meaning – and neighboring terms such as signification, concept, sign, interpretation, symbol, etc – are key terms in many disciplines and theories, most of them remain within their confined area and constitute fairly isolated discourse worlds that often ignore or avoid terms, hypotheses, and methods of other disciplines or theories.[3]

The present study seeks to address this research inadequacy by proposing a theory of meaning that systematically combines approaches from different disciplines and theories. This emphasis on cross-disciplinarity and cross-theoreticity can be construed as a contribution to the Dialogical Turn (see Camic & Joas eds. 2004), with two major implications. Firstly, with regard to disciplinary combinations, the theory of meaning particularly connects the disciplines of Semiotics, Philosophy, and Sociology – a combination that has proven to be fruitful – but it also incorporates related disciplines such as Anthropology, Linguistics, and Psychology. Secondly, with regard to theoretical combinations, the theory of meaning aims at connecting Mitterer's Non-Dualism, Luhmann's Systems Theory, Prototype Theory, currents of Wilson's Interpretive Paradigm such as Symbolic Interactionism or Ethnomethodology, Structuralism, Semantic Field Theory, and Searle's Speech Act Theory, but also other theories such as Constructivism, Activation Theory, Fillmore's Frame Theory and Schank & Abelson's Script Theory, and Discourse Theory.

The objectives of this interdisciplinary and intertheoretical approach are manifold. It aims at demonstrating that different disciplines and theories dealing with meaning are often compatible and complementary, so they can be integrated into a novel, coherent, and more complex theory of meaning (for a similar argument, see Turner 2001: 20). Moreover, cross-disciplinary and cross-theoretical dialog may facilitate certain synergetic-emergent effects which result from the particular combination of concepts, hypotheses, and methods from different disciplines or theories. Much of originality and creativity is not new ideas, but new connections between old ideas (Glaser 1992: 29). For example, the concept of meaning field is well-known in structuralist Linguistics, and the concepts of medium and form are well-known in sociological Systems Theory, but these concepts have so far remained isolated and restricted to their own discipline or theory. This has prevented a potentially fruitful combination of both concepts that could produce theoretical synergetic-emergent effects. Therefore, I have tried to connect both concepts by conceiving a meaning field in terms of a medium that brings out forms.

[3] There are several approaches to meaning that do seek to transcend disciplinary boundaries, e.g. Socio-Semiotics, Semantic Anthropology, Cognitive Sociology, etc. However, in comparison to their »mother disciplines«, these »offspring approaches« have so far remained marginal (for a similar remark, see Alkemeyer 2003: 2820 for Semiotics and Sociology).

Another synergetic-emergent effect is that cross-disciplinary and cross-theoretical exchange may foster novel, unusual, or even irritating perspectives which shed new light on old topics or which stimulate further thoughts and communications such as criticism, tests, refinements, applications, etc. This may be achieved by applying a concept or hypothesis from one discipline or theory to another discipline or theory. For instance, I have applied linguistic Prototype Theory to the sociological discussion of power and law, and philosophical Non-Dualism to the semiotic triangle.

Also, in contrast to a mono-disciplinary and mono-theoretical approach to meaning, an interdisciplinary and intertheoretical approach is likely to attract a more diverse – and therefore also often a larger – audience that may include, for example, semioticians, philosophers, sociologists, linguists, anthropologists, psychologists, etc. The reason is that such an approach offers concepts, arguments, and topics which are similar or relevant to the concepts, arguments, and topics that readers from different disciplinary or theoretical backgrounds are interested in. For instance, philosophers may be interested in the theory of meaning because of its ontological discussions, sociologists may be attracted to the theory of meaning because the theory deals with social systems, and linguists may feel drawn to the theory because of its emphasis on language.

The theory of meaning presented in this book does not only intend to answer unanswered questions, but also to ask unasked questions. The latter point refers to a *programmatic-propositional* objective of the theory of meaning. That is, the concepts, hypotheses, and methods that will be elaborated in the course of this study are also supposed to function as a theoretical program and as methodological proposals that I advocate and encourage others to follow and apply in a concrete empirical study. This is why I often try to ask unasked questions that invite other researchers to answer them. For example, the theory of meaning proposes concepts such as meaning up to now, meaning field, or activation, which may be applied to a concrete empirical case, e.g. why is a particular type of meaning up to now so likely to be interpreted as a command and not as a request?, how is the modern Latin American meaning field of love structured?, when is the meaning of unlawfulness activated in doctor-patient-interactions?, etc. Such a programmatic-propositional construal of the theory of meaning may help to lay the basis and give guidelines for future research, because the theory seeks to provide concepts, hypotheses, and methods that wait to be applied to a particular empirical case, and it intends to point out unanswered questions and promising research avenues.

In order to show how this programmatic-propositional objective of the theory of meaning may be achieved and put into practice, I have chosen the example of *power and law* in the contemporary Western world. Even though this example will only be presented in a fairly concise and rudimentary form, its main purpose is to show one possible field of applying and testing the theory, which may stimulate further research in other fields of application or on other ways of trialing the theory. Moreover, illustrating the theory by means of

a concrete example such as power and law brings the abstract-formal theory more to life and makes it more intelligible.[4]

Finally, I will briefly outline the *content and organization of the chapters*. Chapter 1 (Meaning as category) proposes a formal and general definition of meaning in terms of a distinction-based category, which constitutes the basic building block of the theory of meaning. It will then be shown how such a definition can account for the role that meaning plays in cognitive and communicative processes. In chapter 2 (Non-dualistic meaning), I will lay the philosophical foundations for the theory by discussing the ontological status of meaning and its relation to objects and reality. Non-Dualism will be contrasted with Dualism, i.e. Realism and Constructivism, so as to argue for an ontological monism of meaning. Readers who are not interested in this philosophical topic may skip this chapter. Chapter 3 (Meaning in the semiotic triangle) discusses the cognitive and communicative processes that operate between the angles of the semiotic triangle, i.e. extension, onomasiology, classification, intension, semasiology, interpretation, and meaning divergence. In chapter 4 (Meaning as prototypical category), the definition of meaning in terms of category, originally presented in chapter 1, will be refined and replaced by the definition of meaning as prototypical category. The main source of this argument is Prototype Theory, an approach from Linguistics and Psychology, which will be modified and applied to sociological topics and examples. Chapter 5 (Meaning as field) will change the previous focus on meaning to a focus on meaning fields, i.e. to clusters of related meanings, such as semantic fields, conceptual spaces, lexical domains, or mental networks. Apart from semiotic and linguistic issues, e.g. meaning fields of signifiers or overlaps of meaning fields, I will also discuss sociological and methodological applications for the meaning field approach. In chapter 6 (Activation of meanings and meaning fields), I will adopt an explicitly processual and interactional approach by studying how meanings and fields of meanings are cognitively or communicatively activated by actors or systems. Activation will be linked to other concepts such as co-activation, non-activation, and medium vs forms from sociological Systems Theory. Finally, chapter 7 (Extroduction) will provide a retrospect and prospect of the theory of meaning developed in this book.

[4] Power and law are here understood in a broad and sociological sense. They are closely related to, and sometimes identical with, neighboring or derivative concepts. For example, the concept of power is similar to the concepts of domination, authority, coercion, control, influence, strength, causality, etc. And the concept of law is similar to the concepts of norms, legal systems, rules, morals, juridical procedures, normativity, rights, mores, deontics, normative expectations, etc.

1. Meaning as Category

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A short but crucial scene from Fairyland:

Seeing her approach the well,
the Frog Prince wondered:
»To kiss or not to kiss?«

The foundation of this study is the term *meaning*, which will function as the basic building block for constructing a theory of meaning. Consequently, the most important task now is to devise a suitable definition of the term meaning.

1.1 Distinction

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In accordance with the requirements of the projected theory of meaning, which were outlined in the introduction, the definition of the term meaning needs to be highly elementary, abstract, and general. In order to meet this requirement, I deliberately choose to create a new *stipulative definition* of the term meaning whose semantic scope covers, but is larger than, the semantic scope of the standard empirical definition of the term meaning.[1]

A definition that I consider well suited to grounding the theory may be summarized as follows: *A meaning is a distinction-based category*. Instead of an empirical, essentialist, or identity-based definition of meaning, this is a stipulative, structuralist, and distinction-theoretic definition inspired by Spencer Brown's approach (1969) and Jokisch's reconstruction thereof (1996). In order to better understand the sources and peculiarities of this definition, I will summarize the beginning of Spencer Brown's argument.

In the first step, a distinction or boundary is drawn in an unmarked space, which creates two separate sides that are *symmetrical*. In the second step, an indication or marking is made of only one side of the distinction, whereas the other side is left unmarked. Therefore, the two sides of the distinction become *asymmetrical*. These two steps are summarized by Spencer Brown's claim that »we cannot make an indication without drawing a distinction« (1969: 1). That is, an indication logically or temporally presupposes a distinction.[2]

[1] A stipulative definition is different from an empirical definition: An empirical definition *describes or identifies* the existing and standard meaning of a word as used in a particular language or group, e.g. in Anglophone countries the word ›*love*‹ typically means a strong feeling of caring about or liking someone or something. In contrast, a stipulative definition *prescribes or stipulates* a new and idiosyncratic meaning of a word to be used by a particular person for a special purpose, e.g. a sociologist may stipulate that she will use the word ›*love*‹ in the sense of a symbolical medium of communication in personal relationships.

[2] Based on Ceccato's Operational School, Benedetti (2010) proposes a similar approach, i.e. meanings or categories are made up of elementary operations, e.g. the operation of *attentional focalization* selects or highlights something with respect to all the rest.

For example, in the first step, one may draw a rectangle on a blank sheet of paper so that two spaces come into being, i.e. the inside and outside of the rectangle; in the second step, one may indicate or shade only the inside of the rectangle, while ignoring or not shading the outside of the rectangle. Similarly, in the scene at the opening of this chapter, the Frog Prince and the princess first have to know and draw the distinction between kissing vs non-kissing (i.e. between kissing vs non-kissing behavior such as hugging, talking, fleeing, etc) in order to subsequently indicate or think of kissing (instead of non-kissing).

From a system-theoretic perspective, Jokisch (1996: 87) argues that this *asymmetrization of the symmetry*, i.e. the indication of only one side of the distinction, is crucial as it guarantees the connectivity to, and continuity of, subsequent operations. The indicated side of the distinction is thus capable of hooking up further operations, such as succeeding utterances or thoughts.

Spencer Brown's approach has raised several questions and problems that have led to controversies and refinements.[3] Accordingly, I will base my definition of the term meaning on an aspect of his approach that is less controversial and complex but more consensual and elementary: the final outcome of the second step where a state of an asymmetrical distinction prevails, i.e. a state in which a category has been selected or created on the basis of a distinction.

This definition of a meaning as a distinction-based category can now be specified: *A meaning denotes »something particular«, which is marked or indicated, so that it is automatically distinguished from »something different« or from »all the rest«, which remains unmarked or ignored.* To render this distinction or relation clear, I notate the »something particular« by the symbol M and the »something different« as well as »all the rest« by the subscripted symbol M_{ELSE}. The indication of M logically presupposes the distinction between M vs M_{ELSE}. Consequently, Krämer (1998: ch. 3.2) argues that whenever a distinction is made, meaning is produced. In analogy to Jokisch's claim that without distinction there is no information (1996: 50), we may claim that without distinction there is no meaning. Accordingly, I define *meaning as a distinction-based category*, namely M, because a line, frame, or border is set up that separates M from M_{ELSE} and that unites M in itself with an identity of its own.[4]

[3] I do not go into these controversies and refinements, but two aspects are particularly important. (1) The *state preceding the first step*, i.e. the state before a distinction or boundary is drawn, e.g. the existence of an allegedly unmarked state or unobserved world (Weber 2005: 40-45), the infinite regress of the »beginning of the beginning« (Jokisch 1996: 70-80), etc. (2) The *process of the second step*, i.e. the making or creation of the distinction or marking, e.g. the role of the observer, elementary mental operations, symmetrical vs asymmetrical distinction, distinction and indication as one vs two operations, absence of operations, constitution as one vs two distinctions (Jokisch 1996, Benedetti 2010).

[4] Simmel (1903) argues that a *frame*, the recursive border of a painting, has two functions: to distinguish the painting from the world and to integrate the painting into a coherent entity. My definition of meaning resembles other approaches: The system-theoretic terms *observation* or *description* are defined as the simultaneous indication and distinction of something, so that a uniform space becomes a differentiated space (Fuchs 2004, Luhmann 1997: 882). In Structural Semantics, a meaning does not have an existence on its own as it can only exist, and be described, in relation to something different than itself (Greimas 1966: 103).

Figure 1.I: Meaning as a distinction-based category M vs MELSE

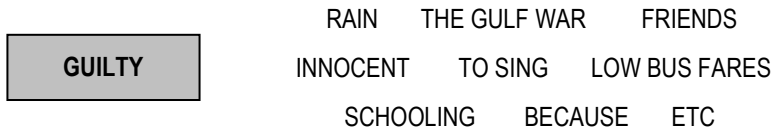
With regard to M in terms of »something particular«, the illustration depicts M as a clearly bounded and formed category that is indicated or marked in contrast to the non-indicated or unmarked MELSE. With regard to MELSE, there are two possibilities: Either MELSE appears as »something different« because it is a *single, specific, and bounded* category that stands in contrast to M, or MELSE appears as the residual »all the rest« because it consists of *numerous, boundless, or unspecific* categories that stand in contrast to M. The following two examples help to clarify this point.

First example: In a court trial, the prosecutor claims at a particular moment that the defendant Mrs. Miller is guilty of murder. The legal discussion that the lawyers, the judge, the witnesses, and other participants in the court trial entertain is highly structured because it revolves around the primary semantic code of guilty vs innocent. In the claim of the prosecutor, the »something particular« M that is indicated and marked is *guilty*, whereas the »something different« MELSE that is not indicated but left implicit is the antonym *innocent*. In this case, MELSE is a single, specific, and bounded category.

Figure 1.II: Example of MELSE as »something different«

Second example: In small talk among neighbors waiting at a bus stop, several topics are discussed such as education, the weather, foreign politics, bus fares, etc. The participants unsystematically shift from one topic to another. At some point, Mary mentions that a distant relative was found guilty of stealing some of his company's calculators, but his boss did not fire him because they were friends. In Mary's statement, the »something particular« M that is marked and foregrounded is, among other things, *guilty*. However, since there are multiple or only vague semantic codes that structure the conversation, MELSE appears here as the residual »all the rest« that comprises numerous or unspecific categories such as *rain*, *the Gulf War*, *innocent*, *low bus fares*, *schooling*, *friends*, *to sing*, etc.

Figure 1.III: Example of M_{ELSE} as »all the rest«



When speaking about the concrete content of a particular M, I use the notation M = │...│. The vertical lines are shorthand symbols for the rectangle, and the three dots stand for a particular semantic-informational content depicted in upper case letters. The equal sign is used in a specific sense as it indicates that the semantic-informational content has the ontological status of a meaning M.[5]

In the above examples, the »something particular« that was communicatively marked was M = │GUILTY│, whereas what was excluded and left unmarked was the specific »something different« of M_{ELSE} = │INNOCENT│ or the unspecific »all the rest« of M_{ELSE} = │RAIN│, │THE GULF WAR│, │INNOCENT│, │SCHOOLING│, │BECAUSE│, etc.

An objection to figures 1.I to 1.III may be that they suggest a realist perspective: Meanings M are »out there« in the world like pre-existent, observer-independent, and ready-made parcels of information that can be discovered and transmitted. However, Foerster argues that »the world contains no information« (Foerster & Pörksen 1998: 97f) because »information does not occur in the environment, but only in the system itself« (Luhmann 1990: 99). Based on this constructivist perspective, the definition of M that I proposed allows observers or systems to »create« and »construct« M, e.g. by drawing the distinction or boundary at different places, by inventing or changing a single M's content, by combining several M in a syntagm, etc. However, despite this constructivist perspective, it is inevitable that observers use or produce M, and most M are communicatively or cognitively standardized and intersubjective due to sedimentation in language and other sign structures (see chapter 5.2.2 for a discussion of Realism vs Constructivism).[6]

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[5] The equal sign is not used in the sense of an »equivalence of ontological *content*«, i.e. the ontological content of that which lies within the vertical lines is not equal to, or identical with, the ontological content of a meaning M. Instead, I use the equal sign in the sense of an »equivalence of ontological *status*«, i.e. the ontological status of that which lies within the vertical lines is equal to, or identical with, the ontological status of a meaning M. For example, M = │TABLE│ does not mean that the table is ontologically identical with a meaning M (as if »2 equals 9« were valid), but that the table has the ontological status of a meaning M, i.e. it exists on the same ontological level as meaning (similar to »2 is a number«).

[6] I deliberately neglect the following topic that I consider less relevant to my approach and that has already been discussed in other approaches: the question of the *origins and sources* of meanings, i.e. whether meanings are embodied concepts deriving from perceptual-corporeal operations, hereditary structures transmitted through genetic-evolutionary processes, categories created by mental or emotional operations, representations or reflections based on external objects, concepts deriving from cultural processes, etc.

In methodological terms, the Spencer Brown-inspired definition of meaning M vs M_{ELSE} that I proposed above is not a *unity- or essence-based* definition, but a *distinction- or relation-based* definition.

In the first type of definition, one defines or identifies the permanent essence of some meaning M as it exists independently of other meanings. The meaning of *love* may be identified in a simplified way as M = ⎪LOVE, i.e. A STRONG FEELING OF CARING ABOUT OR LIKING SOMEONE OR SOMETHING⎪. This type of definition captures a part of a meaning's semantic-informational core and is therefore a useful starting point. However, it often turns out to be only a halfway approach because it ignores the role of other meanings and of the situation in which this meaning is used. Consequently, this definition needs to be complemented by a more comprehensive definition, e.g. a distinction- or relation-based definition.

In the second type of definition, one defines or identifies the situational or pragmatic content of a meaning M in relation to another, temporarily unmarked meaning M_{ELSE}. It is the distinction M vs M_{ELSE} used in a particular situation that determines and changes the content of its two sides, i.e. of M and M_{ELSE}. Hence, M and M_{ELSE} are co-constitutive because in linking them by means of a distinction each influences the scope and boundary of the other.

For example, a group of friends has been talking about people they *like*, when Maria exclaims »But I *love* him!«. In Maria's utterance, *love* and *like* are juxtaposed in terms of M vs M_{ELSE}, so that it is this distinction that frames the content of its two sides: The momentarily backgrounded *like* from the previous conversational context acquires the meaning M_{ELSE} = ⎪LIKE, i.e. A FEELING OF…⎪, whereas Maria's foregrounded *love* acquires the meaning M = ⎪LOVE, i.e. A STRONG FEELING OF…⎪. The meanings *like* and *love* are here portrayed in a comparative form because *love* is seen as an increase in amount or quality in relation to *like*.

If the previous conversational context of Maria's utterance changed because the friends had been talking about people they *hate*, the meaning of Maria's utterance »But I *love* him!« would change accordingly. Now, it would be the distinction *love* vs *hate* which determines and changes the meaning of Maria's utterance: Whereas the temporarily unmarked *hate* is framed in terms of M_{ELSE} = ⎪HATE, i.e. A STRONG NEGATIVE FEELING…⎪, Maria's marked *love* acquires the meaning M = ⎪LOVE, i.e. A STRONG POSITIVE FEELING…⎪. The meanings *love* and *hate* are portrayed as evaluative opposites on a spectrum of strong feelings.

And if the friends had been talking about their *indifference* with regard to certain people, Maria's utterance »But I *love* him!« would acquire still another meaning. Based on the distinction *love* vs *indifference*, the meaning of *indifference* is now M_{ELSE} = ⎪INDIFFERENCE, i.e. ABSENCE OF A STRONG FEELING OF CONNECTION BETWEEN SUBJECT AND OBJECT…⎪ and *love* would mean M = ⎪LOVE, i.e. PRESENCE OF A STRONG FEELING OF CONNECTION BETWEEN SUBJECT AND OBJECT…⎪.

As Christis summarizes, the nature of some concept X is determined by the nature of the distinction, such as X vs Y or alternatively X vs Z, which is used to indicate the concept X of the distinction (2001: 336).[7]

Structural Semiotics adopts a similar approach. It is argued that meaning is based on relations and distinctions: In order to fully understand and clearly delimit a particular M, actors either *feel the need to* relate it to, and distinguish it from, other and neighboring M_{ELSE}, or they *automatically or unconsciously* relate it to, and distinguish it from, other and neighboring M_{ELSE}. Consequently, an important part of the informational-propositional content of an M depends on its structural relation to other M_{ELSE}.

Let us look at an example from the educational system. In the figure below, I have juxtaposed two different grading scales common in German universities and added their official interpretation.

Figure 1.IV: Grading scales in German universities[8]

Official grades		**Official interpretation of the grades**
Master's degree	**PhD degree**	
–	summa cum laude	with distinction
1.0 1.3	magna cum laude	very good
1.7 2.0 2.3	cum laude	good
2.7 3.0 3.3	–	satisfactory
3.7 4.0	rite	sufficient
5.0	[no grade, thesis formally rejected]	failure

[7] If analyzed closely, the example shows that the content of a meaning M only *partially* (but not completely) changes with the backgrounded or juxtaposed meaning M_{ELSE}. From a structural perspective, a meaning M is composed of more elementary meaning components M^{I}, M^{II}, M^{III}, etc (see chapter 3.4.2). If M is contrasted with M_{ELSE} = │LIKE│, as in the example above, M's content slightly changes because the meaning component M^{I} = │STRONG│ is foregrounded or added. If M is contrasted with M_{ELSE} = │HATE│, M's content again changes because the meaning component M^{II} = │POSITIVE│ is highlighted or included. And so on with other M_{ELSE}. However, even though M's content changes with different M_{ELSE}, there is a semantic core that does not change. For example, irrespective of different M_{ELSE}, M always contains the meaning component M^{III} = │FEELING│. In conclusion, *if an* M *is contrasted with different* M_{ELSE}, M*'s semantic core does not change, but only* M*'s semantic periphery*.

[8] In their study regulations, universities only show one grading system at a time, but they do not show or compare both grading systems at the same time. Consequently, the *form* of the table is my invention, but the *content* is part of universities' study regulations.

The point I want to make can be illustrated by using and modifying arguments from Saussure (1906/11) and Hjelmslev (1943). In so doing, I will use the example of the abovementioned grading scales which I find more suitable for my purposes than the well-known example from Saussure (e.g. the English words *sheep* and *mutton* compared to the French word *mouton*) and from Hjelmslev (e.g. the English words *tree*, *wood*, and *forest* with their lexical equivalents in different languages).

The overall sense of a particular M hinges on two aspects, namely *signification* and *value*. Whereas signification is the *intra*-sign relation between signifier and signified of a particular sign, value is the *inter*-sign relation between a sign and other signs. In the table above, signification refers to the *horizontal* level, e.g. the number *1.0* indicates an evaluation that is *very good*, whereas value refers to the *vertical* level, e.g. the number *1.0* ranks highest with regard to the other numbers such as *1.3* or *2.7*.

The difference between signification and value becomes clear when comparing grades from different grading scales: Put in formal notation, the grade M = │1.0│ has the same signification as the grade M = │MAGNA CUM LAUDE│ because both indicate a very good evaluation. However, M = │1.0│ does not have the same value as M = │MAGNA CUM LAUDE│ because each grade has a different relation to the other grades M_{ELSE} within its respective grading scale. That is, M = │1.0│ is the best grade in a Master's degree because all the other grades M_{ELSE} = │1.3│, │2.0│, │3.7│, etc rank lower. In contrast, M = │MAGNA CUM LAUDE│ is only the second best grade in a PhD degree because some grades such as M_{ELSE} = │CUM LAUDE│ and │RITE│ rank lower, but one grade, namely M_{ELSE} = │SUMMA CUM LAUDE│, ranks higher.

Let us look at an everyday example where the difference between signification and value becomes relevant. A student tells her father that she got the grade *magna cum laude* for her PhD degree and she explains to him that this grade means *very good*. Strictly speaking, the father can only fully understand the sense and value of the grade *magna cum laude* by knowing or considering the other possible grades, and in particular, the position of the grade *magna cum laude* in the whole grading scale. This is particularly valid in the case of grades where the *absolute* measure of evaluation, e.g. she got the grade *very good*, is often less informative or important than the *relative* measure of evaluation, e.g. she got the *best* grade. But in order for the father to infer the relative measure of evaluation, he must know the other grades in the whole grading scale. Consequently, if the father does not know the grading scale at all or only knows the grading scale for a Master's degree, he is likely to interpret *magna cum laude* as the best grade because it means *very good*, which semantically suggests that there is no better grade and which actually is the best grade for a Master's degree. However, if the father knows the whole grading scale for a PhD degree, he also knows that *magna cum laude* is only the second best grade because the best grade is *summa cum laude*. Put formally, in order to fully understand the sense and value of the grade M = │MAGNA CUM LAUDE│, one must know and consider the other possible grades M_{ELSE} = │SUMMA CUM LAUDE│, │CUM LAUDE│, and │RITE│. If one continues this example or sets it in another

social context, it becomes clear that it not only has cognitive consequences, but may also have behavioral consequences, e.g. a scholarship application is rejected, the father treats his daughter differently, someone is invited to a job interview, etc.

The structural-relational approach to meaning is particularly applicable to binary terms, especially when they stand in an asymmetrical-hierarchical relationship, such as │ILLEGAL│ vs │LEGAL│. Chandler (2002: 112f) argues that one term is logically and structurally dependent on the other term to lend it substance, so that neither of the terms makes sense without the other. He adds that this corresponds to Derrida's logic of supplementarity, i.e. even though the secondary term, such as │ILLEGAL│, is represented as marginal and external, it is in fact constitutive of and essential to the primary term, such as │LEGAL│. In my terminology, the included and marked term M is defined by what it excludes or leaves unmarked, namely M$_{ELSE}$.

The above discussion has tried to promote a distinction- or relation-based type of definition of meaning M vs M$_{ELSE}$. I hope to have shown that such an approach is not only fruitful and sensible from a theoretical-methodological perspective, but also from a practical-everyday perspective. To summarize the main arguments: an M is defined in relation to some M$_{ELSE}$; if M$_{ELSE}$ changes M changes too; and the distinction between M vs M$_{ELSE}$ determines M.

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1.2 Rudimentary vs Complex Meanings

The definition of a meaning as a distinction-based category can now be differentiated by constructing a continuum with two ideal-typical poles, i.e. rudimentary meanings vs complex meanings.

Rudimentary meanings: At one pole, there are M that are extremely rudimentary, simple, and elementary. Consequently, these M tend to be socially, culturally, and historically widespread, e.g. they are learned by children at an early stage, they may even be stored and transmitted genetically, they appear in many cultures around the globe, they are pervasive in different social milieus and groups, they have been used unchangingly in many historical periods, and they may even be used by non-human actors such as animals or plants.

This type of M is nicely captured by Wierzbicka's notion of *semantic primitives* or *semantic universals* (see Wierzbicka 1996, Goddard & Wierzbicka eds. 2002, Goddard 1998). These are highly simple and elementary categories that constitute the shared semantic-conceptual core of all natural human languages and that form a kind of universal lexicon of human thoughts. According to Wierzbicka, there are about sixty of these cross-cultural categories that are semantically indefinable because they are so simple that they cannot be decomposed into even simpler categories.

This set of rudimentary categories comprises, for instance, nouns such as │I│, │YOU│, or │SOMETHING│, determiners such as │THIS│ or │OTHER│, the evaluators │GOOD│ or │BAD│, mental predicates such as │THINK│, │FEEL│, │WANT│, or │KNOW│, speech categories such as │SAY│ or │TRUE│, the action and event categories │DO│ or │HAPPEN│, location-existence categories

such as │BE│ or │THERE IS│, time and space categories such as │BEFORE│ or │HERE│, logical concepts such as │NOT│ or │BECAUSE│, etc. These rudimentary categories are considered to be lexically universal in that they can be exactly translated into every natural human language. For instance, the rudimentary meaning M = │BAD│ has its lexical counterpart in the English word ›*bad*‹, the French word ›*mauvais*‹, the Malay word ›*buruk*‹, etc.[9]

Apart from these highly rudimentary and universal meanings, there are other, more or less rudimentary and universal meanings that are used in everyday sign manipulation in different cultures or epochs. These comprise, among others, Mitterer's (1992) notions of *rudimentary description* or *object indication* such as M = │TABLE│ or M = │TRIANGLE│.

From the first-order perspective of the actor or experiencer in the everyday lifeworld, many of these rudimentary, intuitive, and simple M are not, or cannot be easily, lexicalized into words or sentences. For example, when Pavlov's bell-conditioned dog hears the bell ring, it instinctively actualizes the rudimentary meaning M = │FOOD│; when a car driver on a highway suddenly sees smoke, she automatically activates the intuitive category M = │ATTENTION!│; when a Buddhist monk sits in meditation, he may realize the emotional state of M = │WELLBEING│; when a bacterium moves within a substance it may come to an area with a different and harmful pH-value so it may activate the rudimentary category M = │TOXIC│ or M = │IT FEELS BAD│; and in terms of Gestalt Psychology, when an infant looks at its surroundings, it may make out a particular figure against a ground such as a M = │CIRCLE│.

This raises the question: Are M, and in particular rudimentary M, always linguistic, i.e. based on language? Based on a definition of language as a set of signs or tokens (e.g. words, concepts, images, symbols, etc) and a set of rules for combining these signs or tokens (e.g. syntax, syntagmatic conventions, grammar, etc), which are used in psychic or communicative operations, then the answer to the question is affirmative.

For many readers, this is certainly a radical and counterintuitive answer, especially when considering dogs, monks, bacteria, and infants. However, here I will not deal with possible objections or criticism (e.g. a gestalt is not a word, a sensation is distinct from the description of this sensation, there are non-linguistic objects, the percept is prior to any concept, etc) because these topics will be discussed at length in chapter 2 where I will present philosophical Non-Dualism whose radical argument is that »Everything« (including gestalts, sensations, percepts, objects, etc) is composed of language-based categories M (see also Mitterer 1992: 56-62 and Weber 2005: 18, 252, 324).

Even if one disregards Non-Dualism's arguments, there are other arguments that emphasize the priority and unavoidability of language. Many so-called »non-linguistic« signs such as a gift of flowers, traffic signs or gestures

[9] In order to clearly mark a meaning as linguistic, i.e. a word or sentence in a particular language, in contrast to other types of meaning, e.g. a gesture, sound, image, etc, I will often use the ›‹ brackets between which the word or sentence is put in italics, e.g. the French word ›*pouvoir*‹ or the English sentence ›*She sued me for libel*‹.

presuppose a prior or simultaneous verbal description or linguistic knowledge in order to be understood. Similarly, Saeed criticizes supposedly non-linguistic conceptualizations of objects based on gestures (ostensive definitions, i.e. definitions by example or demonstration). For instance, if you want to teach a child the meaning M = ⎪RABBIT⎪ simply by pointing to a real-world exemplar with your finger, you cannot even tell what exactly you are pointing to without some linguistic support: Is it the whole rabbit, its tail, the way it is running, or the number of exemplars? In order to understand the meaning M = ⎪RABBIT⎪, the child already has to know and use other and previous linguistic meanings (Saeed 2003: 40, see also Lyons 1995: 83f).[10]

This category-based approach to meaning M is compatible with Chomsky's Universal Grammar-hypothesis, Fodor's Mentalese-hypothesis, and Wierzbicka's *lingua mentalis*-hypothesis. In simplified terms, these authors argue that despite the superficial differences between the numerous human languages there is a deep, unique, and innate mental language composed of a universal lexicon and grammar. Even though this mental language is rudimentary, it constitutes a symbolic system of representational tokens or semantic primitives such as ⎪X BELIEVES Y⎪ or ⎪I WANT THIS⎪ that are independent of any human language.

Empirical support for such an innate mental language is based on cross-cultural studies and research on language acquisition in children. This mental language is the basis for cognition or communication in human and many non-human actors. Lévi-Strauss takes a similar stance: »Language is the system of meaning par excellence; it cannot not mean, and all of its existence is in meaning« (1945: 58). Consequently, the prototypical and primary source for M in communicative or psychic operations is language.

Complex meanings: At the other pole of the continuum there are M that are highly elaborate and conceptually complex. These M tend to require developed cognitive capacities or they are more restricted to a particular social, cultural, or historical context. In the following, I will distinguish between two subtypes of these complex meanings.

Firstly, the rudimentary categories or semantic primitives M, which have been discussed above, may be combined syntagmatically and syntactically so as to create a compound M. For example, the seven disconnected rudimentary meanings M = ⎪SOMETHING⎪, M = ⎪WANT⎪, M = ⎪YOU⎪, M = ⎪DO⎪, M = ⎪I⎪, M = ⎪KNOW⎪, and M = ⎪BAD⎪, may be combined so as to form the connected complex meaning M = ⎪I KNOW YOU WANT TO DO SOMETHING BAD⎪. In terms of Speech Act Theory, these complex M can be constative, interrogative, direc-

[10] Moreover, many scholars claim that words often fail us in representing certain experiences, e.g. smell, touch, feelings, vision, etc (Chandler 2002: 3). However, this is a contradiction because *by asserting this*, words succeed in expressing the idea that words often fail us in representing certain experiences. Besides, rudimentary categories are always activated, e.g. someone intuitively knows »something particular« such as M = ⎪I SEE SOMETHING⎪ instead of »something different« such as M_{ELSE} = ⎪I HEAR SOMETHING⎪.

tive, commissive, interpretive, expressive, performative, etc. The rudimentary meanings are thus combined by using the syntax of *lingua mentalis*.[11]

Secondly, there may be categories such as particular words or pictures that exhibit a complex internal structure and are closely linked to a particular social or historical context. Saeed (2003: 33f) notes that complex meanings often involve whole theories or cultural complexes, such as M = │MARRIAGE│ or M = │RETIREMENT│. The same goes for power and law which tend to be complex and abstract meanings, i.e. M = │POWER│ and M = │LAW│. In order to better convey the complex internal structure of such categories, I will sometimes use the abbreviation or supplement ›*i.e.*...‹ in the notations, e.g. M = │POWER, i.e....│ and M = │LAW, i.e....│. As already argued in chapter 1.1, the three dots symbolize a deliberately omitted but integral and complex semantic description of the categories. To give a simplified example: The category M = │BIRD, i.e....│ may be spelled out by the semantic description M = │BIRD, i.e. AN ANIMAL WITH WINGS, FEATHERS, AND A BEAK THAT LAYS EGGS, THAT CAN USUALLY FLY, AND THAT CAN SOMETIMES SING│. Depending on the type of category and the depth of detail, this semantic description can be more or less complex and comprehensive, ranging from only a couple of words to hundreds of sentences. Even though most complex meanings are lexicalized in particular words, there are numerous meanings that are not lexicalized. For instance, the meaning M = │TO BE NO LONGER HUNGRY│ is lexicalized in the German word ›*satt*‹, but M = │TO BE NO LONGER THIRSTY│ is not lexicalized in any German word so that a lexical gap occurs (Schwarz & Chur 2004: ch. 2.3). However, it is still possible to use other words to convey the same meaning.[12]

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1.3 Conclusion

Having reviewed the continuum of meanings with the two ideal-typical poles of rudimentary vs complex meanings, an important inference can be drawn. Meanings in terms of distinction-based categories are necessary for, and omnipresent in, all social and psychic systems. Operations such as wanting, communicating, perceiving, thinking, signaling, deciding, or remembering are all based on distinction-based categories. And this applies not only to healthy and adult humans, but also to autists, babies, ants, and bacteria. For example, in order to function properly or to survive, babies need to be able to distinguish between M = │WARM│ and M_{ELSE} = │COLD│, ants must be capable of differentiating other ants in terms of M = │MALE│ and M_{ELSE} = │FEMALE│, and bacteria need to distinguish between substances which are M = │TOXIC│ and M_{ELSE} = │NUTRITIOUS│. Moreover, on a fundamental basis, all actors – be they humans, bacteria, ants, babies, or plants – must be able to draw the existential

[11] This approach has been systematically developed by Wierzbicka's Natural Semantic Metalanguage (see chapter 3.4.2). A similar syntagmatic approach is Correlational Theory of Thought inspired by Ceccato's Italian Operational School (Benedetti 2010).

[12] Here, I will not discuss the *nature vs nurture*-question of which meanings are genetically transmitted via heredity and evolution and which are communicatively learned via interaction and socialization.

Hamletian distinction between M = │TO BE│ or M_{ELSE} = │NOT TO BE│, e.g. M = │THERE IS SOMETHING│ or M_{ELSE} = │THERE IS NOTHING│, whatever this something may be, such as an object, another actor, an event, etc.

With regard to human systems, Linguistics and Cognitive Sciences have emphasized the key role of categories. Schmidt argues that only by means of categories and distinctions can something be thought, perceived, and described as something (2003: 31f, 95). Lakoff holds that »there is nothing more basic than categorization to our thought, perception, action, and speech. Every time we see something as a *kind* of thing, for example, a tree, we are categorizing. Whenever we reason about *kinds* of things – chairs, nations, illnesses, emotions, any kind of thing at all – we are employing categories. Whenever we intentionally perform any *kind* of action, say something as mundane as writing with a pencil, hammering with a hammer, or ironing clothes, we are using categories« (1987: 5f).

Also in Sociology, categories are considered to be a pervasive feature in cognitive and communicative processes. Ethnomethodology and the Sociology of Knowledge maintain that actors apprehend situations, behavior, and other actors by putting them into typifying categories, e.g. M = │HE IS AN ENGLISHMAN│ or M = │THAT WAS A JOKE│, so as to grasp their meaning, to understand them, and to normalize them. This normalization by means of categorization especially occurs when such situations, behaviors, or actors seem to be abnormal, strange, or incomprehensible – such as those provoked in ethnomethodological breaching experiments (Joas & Knöbl 2004: 233f, Berger & Luckmann 1966: ch. I.2). And for Systems Theory, meaning – or in my terminology M – is the universal medium in which both psychic and communicative systems operate (Luhmann 1984: ch. 2).

Meanings – both rudimentary meanings such as M = │I│ and complex meanings such as M = │I WANT YOU TO GO TO CHURCH ON EASTER SUNDAY│ – are the basic building blocks for all communicative and cognitive processes and structures. It is in this sense that Constructivism's terms ›*construction*‹ and ›*to construct*‹ may be used: Meanings are the building blocks out of which complex structures and operations are constructed. For example, by using and combining meanings, a large variety of »things« are consciously or unconsciously constructed, e.g. discourses, societies, metaphors, texts, decisions, recollections, and even objects and reality (see chapter 2) as well as meaning fields (see chapter 5).

The definition of meaning in terms of a distinction-based category M vs M_{ELSE} is deliberately *elementary, abstract, and general*. What is the purpose or advantage of such a definition? I propose five answers.

(1) The definition of meaning is to cover the typical and conventional semantic space of the lexeme ›*meaning*‹ in terms of signification, sense, denotation, or signified. In everyday language and scientific discussions, the noun ›*meaning*‹ and the verb ›*to mean*‹ are used in various but overlapping senses. For example, they appear in sentences such as ›*The red flag means danger*‹, ›*He did not understand the meaning of her look*‹, ›*Smoke means fire*‹, or ›*The*

meaning of the word 'soporific' is 'to make you feel ready to sleep'‹ (Lyons 1995: 3ff, see also Ogden & Richards 1923: ch. IX).

(2) However, the definition of meaning proposed in this book is also to cover the semantic space of derivative or neighboring terms such as ›*concept*‹, ›*sign*‹, ›*word*‹, ›*symbol*‹, ›*description*‹, ›*indication*‹, ›*label*‹, ›*representation*‹, ›*idea*‹, ›*sentence*‹, ›*interpretation*‹, etc. These terms are – just like the term meaning – seen to pertain to the linguistic, symbolic, or conceptual level in contrast to the »real« or »factual« level of objects, people, behavior, things, events, etc. Some examples: ›*She gave a description of the table*‹, ›*The concept of infinite space*‹, ›*That was my interpretation of the event*‹, ›*She attached the label 'dance' to these body movements*‹, etc. Consequently, the term meaning and its derivative or neighboring terms are deliberately, but only temporarily, lumped together in one homogeneous soup so that for the moment there are no relevant differences between them. This is why I will treat them quasi-synonymously (a differentiation of these terms is proposed in chapters 2.5.2 and 3).[13]

(3) The advantage of an elementary, abstract, and general definition of meaning in terms of a distinction-based category M vs M_{ELSE} is that it is both referential-transitive and nonreferential-intransitive (in the »language-internal« sense of syntax and grammar).

On the one hand, meaning (and its derivative or neighboring terms) is typically seen as referential and transitive because it is based on, oriented towards, or refers to other meanings within a sentence or syntagm. Put in linguistic terms, meaning requires a direct object, just like the verbs ›*to invite*‹ or ›*to raise*‹, and so cannot stand alone or refer to itself. The example sentences from the previous points (1) and (2) contain words or expressions (put in small capitals) that are referential and transitive (often indicated by the little words ›*of*‹ or ›*as*‹), namely ›*She gave A DESCRIPTION OF the table*‹, ›*I don't know THE MEANING OF a red flag*‹, ›*He INTERPRETED her look AS disapproval*‹, ›*Her behavior was LABELED AS 'pathological'*‹, ›*Smoke MEANS fire*‹, etc. The highlighted words or expressions refer to, or are based on, other words or expressions such as ›*the table*‹, ›*the red flag*‹, ›*her look*‹, ›*her behavior*‹, or ›*fire*‹.

On the other hand, the definition of meaning in terms of M vs M_{ELSE} can also be nonreferential and intransitive because it may not be based on, or may not symbolize, other meanings within a sentence or syntagm. Consequently, a meaning M can simply be a self-sufficient, reflexive, or autonomous category. For example, the following words (put in small capitals) are nonreferential-intransitive: ›*I SLEEP well*‹, ›*THE DOG chased the cat*‹, ›*SILENCE!*‹, ›*God EXISTS*‹, ›*The table ARRIVED from the warehouse yesterday*‹, ›*I like THIS*‹, etc.

The theoretical benefit of including a nonreferential-intransitive aspect in the definition is that the term meaning is largely freed from a purely referential-transitive definition because, and this is primary, meaning is a distinction-based category M that may be, and this is secondary, referential-transitive in

[13] Even though I could have chosen any of the abovementioned derivative or neighboring terms as the key term for the theory to be elaborated in this book, I opted for the term meaning because of its widespread use and high connectivity in the Social Sciences.

some instances and nonreferential-intransitive in other instances. Accordingly, by enlarging the semantic scope of the term meaning, its theoretical scope, abstractness, and universality are equally enlarged.

(4) Moreover, and this follows from the previous points (1), (2), and (3), the definition of meaning in terms of M vs M_{ELSE} is deliberately elementary, abstract, and general so as to make it connectable to, and compatible with, other disciplines and theories whose focus also lies on the linguistic, symbolic, or conceptual level of language, signs, interpretation, discourses, symbols, communication, concepts, texts, etc (in contrast to the »real« or »factual« level of objects, people, actions, things, events, etc). This is to stimulate interdisciplinary and intertheoretical cross-fertilization or cross-irritation: On the one hand, it enables me to draw on concepts and arguments from other disciplines and theories so as to enrich or irritate my theory of meaning, and on the other hand, my theory of meaning may enrich or irritate these other disciplines and theories.

(5) Finally and most importantly, the elementary, abstract, and general definition of meaning as M vs M_{ELSE} runs in accordance with the requirements of the proposed theory of meaning outlined in the introduction. This definition of meaning ensures that my analysis begins at a very simple and fundamental level with as few logical, ontological, and cultural premises and presuppositions as possible, or at least, with as many explicitly stated ones as possible. Metaphorically speaking, the term meaning can therefore be used as the basic building block for erecting the more complex construction of a middle-range theory, which may subsequently be applied to a variety of empirical cases.[14]

[14] The definition of meaning as *category*, which was proposed in this chapter, will be refined in chapter 4 by the definition of meaning as *prototypical category*.

2. Non-Dualistic Meaning

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A non-dualistic version of Marx's well-known 11th Feuerbach thesis and of St. John's famous Gospel opening would read as follows:

The philosophers have interpreted the world differently
and therefore changed it.[1]

In the beginning was the Description Up To Now and From Now On,
and the Description was with God and the Description was God.
The same was in the beginning with God.
All things were made by the Description Up To Now,
and without the Description Up To Now
was not any thing being described from now on
that had been described up to now.
In the Description Up To Now and From Now On was life,
and the life was the light of men.[2]

In the previous chapter, I have argued that meanings, in terms of distinction-based categories M vs M_{ELSE}, are the fundamental elements of all *communication* and *cognition*. As such, this argument may be neither new nor radical. However, in the present chapter, I will go a step further by extending this argument: I will claim that meanings are also, in the strict sense of the term, the fundamental and constituent elements of the *world* or *reality* with all its objects, structures, entities, processes, states, and phenomena such as stones, lightning, trees, space, earthquakes, sperm cells, stars, etc. In short, I want to show that meanings are the fundamental elements of »Everything«, which can be – as the title of this book indicates – communication, cognition, or reality. This argumentational strategy will give the theory of meaning a broad scope, which will go far beyond the usual scope of theories of meaning.

The basis for this argument is the definition of meaning M vs M_{ELSE} that I presented in the previous chapter. In order to justify and defend this definition against competing definitions of meaning, I will draw on philosophical *Non-Dualism*, which is a countercurrent to philosophical *Dualism* (see Mitterer 1992, 2001, see also Weber 2005, Constructivist Foundations 2008 and its German translation into Riegler & Weber eds. 2010). In the following, I will therefore extend, modify, and formalize Dualism's and Non-Dualism's main arguments (for an earlier version, see Staude 2008).

[1] Marx's original statement was: »The philosophers have only interpreted the world differently; the point is to change it.«

[2] This is a slight modification of Strasser's (2008: 271) non-dualistic adaptation of St. John's Gospel, whose original text in the Bible goes as follows: »In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.«

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2.1 Dualism of Meaning vs World

Dualism is not only the classical and dominant paradigm in the scientific world, both in Realism and Constructivism, but it is also and primarily the standard and common sense reasoning in the everyday lifeworld. Dualism seems so natural, self-evident, and intuitive to most people, that it is extremely widespread and unquestioned.

Mitterer (1992) argues that Dualism presupposes or produces a *dualistic distinction*, which I notate as DDUALISM, *with two sides that are ontologically distinct because they lie on different ontological levels*.[3]

The first side of DDUALISM is the *world*, which is the real or factual level of objects, events, reality, things, behavior, matter, or phenomena. They are typically considered to be material, permanent, real, external, resistant, constraining, observable by sensory perception or measuring instruments, difficult or impossible to modify or avoid, intersubjective or objective. I will notate this ontological level of the world by the symbol W. For example, a table that stands in my kitchen is a W = table. So as to clearly indicate this ontological level of the world, I will use lower case letters in the notations.

The second side of DDUALISM is the *meaning of the world*, which is the linguistic, symbolic, or conceptual level of descriptions, indications, words, interpretations, sense, discourses, concepts, or statements about objects, events, reality, things, behavior, matter, phenomena, or the world. They are typically considered to be immaterial, mental, unobservable, linguistic, easily and quickly changeable, dependent on and temporally subsequent to W, and referential or transitive with regard to W. In chapter 1, I already introduced the symbol M to notate the ontological level of meaning, for instance the English word M = ⎪TABLE⎪ or its Spanish translation M = ⎪MESA⎪, the linguistic description and sentence M = ⎪THE TABLE IS ROUND⎪, or the mental concept of M = ⎪TABLE, i.e. A PIECE OF FURNITURE WITH A FLAT TOP AND SUPPORTED BY LEGS THAT IS USED BY PEOPLE TO PUT THINGS ON IT IN ORDER TO EAT OR WORK⎪. As mentioned in chapter 1, I use upper case letters to indicate this ontological level of meaning. Moreover, M does not only include so-called *constative* speech acts or »thought acts« such as M = ⎪THE TABLE IS ROUND⎪, but all types of speech acts such as *interrogative*, *directive*, *commissive*, *interpretive*, *expressive*, *performative*, etc speech acts or »thought acts«, e.g. M = ⎪IS THE TABLE ROUND?⎪, M = ⎪A TABLE IS A SYMBOL FOR COOPERATION⎪, M = ⎪PUT THE TABLE HERE!⎪, M = ⎪GOSH, I LOVE THIS TABLE⎪, etc.[4]

Dualism's »deep structure« DDUALISM = W vs M has numerous terminological »surface structures« depending on the theory and discipline, e.g. the object of

[3] The term *ontological* will be used here in the sense of the distinction between *being vs non-being* (e.g. there is a table, unicorns don't exist, I had an idea), and in the case of being, it is used in the sense of the *nature of being* (e.g. a table is a material-external object, an anaphora is a logical-linguistic structure, an idea is an immaterial-mental representation).

[4] This broad conceptualization of M prevents the semantic and connotational problems associated with the term ›*description*‹ which usually only refers to constative speech acts and excludes or backgrounds other types of speech acts (see Janich 2010: 36-42).

the description vs the description of the object (Mitterer 1992), reality vs definition of reality (as in the Thomas Theorem »If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences«, see Thomas & Thomas 1928: 572), behavior vs interpretation of behavior (as in Action Theory or Behaviorism), social structure vs societal semantics (as in sociological Systems Theory, see Luhmann ed. 1980 and 1997: ch. 5), thing vs meaning of the thing (as in Symbolic Interactionism's premise that »human beings act toward things on the basis of the meaning that these things have for them«, see Blumer 1969: 2), reality vs discourse about reality (as in Discourse Theory, see Keller 2004: 28), sensory perception vs interpretation of the sensory perception (as in Psychology), etc.[5]

Within the dualistic distinction $D_{DUALISM}$ = W vs M, the relation between the meaning-description M and the world-object W is, as I will show in the next paragraphs, one of dependency and chronology. The little words ›*of*‹, ›*about*‹, and ›*as*‹ are revealing in this sense because they show this relation, e.g. a description *of* an object, reality interpreted *as* something particular, words *about* the world, the meaning *of* a thing, a phenomenon described *as* something specific, etc. In order to clearly indicate this relation of dependency and chronology, I will sometimes use a notational specification, i.e. instead of simply writing M, I will follow the mathematical convention and write M(W).[6]

Firstly, meaning-description is *referential, dependent, and transitive* with regard to the world-object in that the meaning-description is always based on, or refers to, the world-object. For example, the Spanish word M(W) = │MESA│ refers to a real W = table in the world. The reason for this is that the world-object is prioritized and apriorized with respect to the meaning-description because the world-object is seen as autonomous, intransitive, and independent of the meaning-description. For example, a W = table as such always remains a W = table, independent of whether you give the description M(W) = │THIS IS A TABLE│, whether my aunt writes M(W) = │THIS IS FIREWOOD│, whether a tall Maasai warrior from Kenya says M(W) = │THIS IS A CHAIR│, whether a child interprets it as M(W) = │THIS IS A CAVE│, or whether a termite views it as M(W) = │THIS IS FOOD│. In a similar vein, objects cannot be »talked away« or modified by using language, discourse about reality cannot change reality itself, and behavior is resistant to different interpretations of that behavior. In short, the world-object is robust, unchangeable, and immune to meaning-descriptions.

Secondly, meaning-description is *belated, posterior, and subsequent* to the world-object because the world-object constitutes the fixed starting point for, and exists before there are any, meaning-descriptions. Before the world-object is described, interpreted, or indicated, it is undescribed, uninterpreted, or unindicated. For example, first there is a W = table and only afterwards can it be indicated by the German noun M(W) = │TISCH│ or described as M(W) = │THIS

[5] This list can be continued: referent vs representation of the referent, actions vs texts about actions, world vs words about the world, experience vs narrative of the experience, etc (see Mitterer 1992, 2001 and Weber 2005: 271).

[6] This notation is an analogy to mathematical notations. The notation *f(x)*, for example *f(x) = 3x + 4*, symbolizes a function or variable *f* that is causally or functionally dependent on the variable *x*, for example, if *x* rises, *f* rises too, and if *x* falls, *f* falls too.

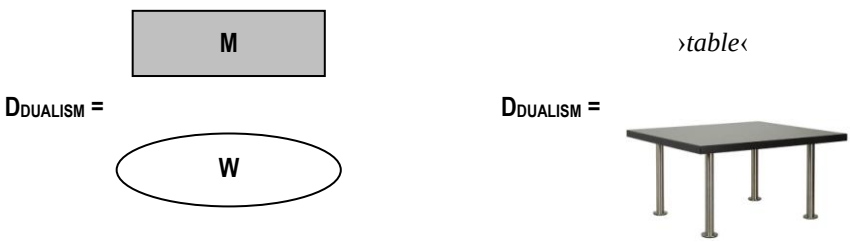
TABLE IS WHITE⎪. Accordingly, other observers or the same observer at different moments may produce different or contradictory meaning-descriptions of the same world-object. To resume the example: Depending on the observer, a W = table may be described or interpreted differently as M(W) = ⎪TABLE⎪, M(W) = ⎪FIREWOOD⎪, M(W) = ⎪CHAIR⎪, M(W) = ⎪CAVE⎪, M(W) = ⎪FOOD⎪, etc.

Within the dualistic distinction $D_{DUALISM}$ = W vs M, both sides are considered to be ontologically distinct and mutually exclusive. That is, there is an *ontological heterogeneity* in the sense that there are world-objects W and there are meaning-descriptions M, but *they have different ontological statuses because they lie on different ontological levels*. That is, the »nature« of the world is not identical with the »nature« of the meaning of the world, a thing is distinct from the word for the thing, the »substance« of reality is not the same as the »substance« of the representation of reality, or as Mitterer puts it, the object of the description is distinct from the description of the object (1992: 39). That is why you cannot put a glass of water on the word M = ⎪TABLE⎪, but only on the object W = table. And, to reformulate Weber's argument (2010: 16), that is why dualists speak of a W = table as a M = ⎪TABLE⎪.

Due to their distinct ontological statuses, M can never be W, even if M approximates W. Consequently, even though W and M can influence each other, W as such is M-free and M-distinct (e.g. W is undescribed, uninterpreted, and unindicated), and vice versa, M as such is W-free and W-distinct (e.g. M is immaterial, referential, and changeable).

The figure below depicts the dualistic distinction $D_{DUALISM}$, i.e. the ontological difference and heterogeneity between W and M. So as to clearly distinguish them, the level of meaning is depicted, as already proposed in the previous figures 1.I to 1.III, as a shaded rectangle, whereas the level of world is depicted as a white ellipse. On the right side, you see an example of $D_{DUALISM}$.

Figure 2.I: Dualistic distinction $D_{DUALISM}$ = W vs M[7]



Dualism's typical, but usually implicit argumentational procedure may be reconstructed and summarized by the following three steps A, B, and C (based on Mitterer 1992).

[7] A similar illustration can be found in Weber (2005: 274), where the description (in my terminology: the meaning) is situated above the object (in my terminology: the world).

Step A: There is an *undescribed object*, e.g. a W = stone, or on a more elementary and general level, an W = undescribed object or simply W = it. As already explained, this object W is independent of, distinct from, and prior to description and meaning M. Step A is one of Dualism's most central tenets upon which the whole dualistic argumentation is built because it is the necessary condition in order to carry out the following steps B and C. In step A, the object must not be described in any way so as to keep the object undescribed and thus meet Dualism's requirement of a strict sequence of steps A, B, and C.

Step B: Now, there is a *rudimentary description* or *object indication* that is based on, and refers to, the undescribed object, e.g. the English noun M(W) = │STONE│ or the equivalent French word M(W) = │PIERRE│. There can also be object indications that are not true or not viable, e.g. when a child thinks of the W = stone in terms of M(W) = │THIS IS A NUT│. In other, more elementary and general cases, the rudimentary description may consist of the words M(W) = │UNDESCRIBED OBJECT│ or M(W) = │IT│. This rudimentary description is necessary in order to introduce the undescribed object from step A into cognition or communication in step B, i.e. in order to think or speak about it. The rudimentary description is made in linguistic or non-linguistic signs (e.g. pictures, melodies, touches, etc; see Magritte's painting in figure 2.IX).

Step C: Finally, a more *complex description* or *object interpretation* is given on the basis of the rudimentary description or object indication, e.g. the English sentence M(M(W)) = │THE STONE WEIGHS 400 GRAMS│ or the equivalent French expression M(M(W)) = │LA PIERRE PÈSE 400 GRAMMES│.[8] Even more complex object descriptions or interpretations may be given that comprise several sentences or a whole text.

The figure below visualizes steps A, B, C. As in the previous figure 2.I, the level of the undescribed object is depicted in white, whereas the level of the descriptions, indications, meanings, or interpretations is depicted in gray.

Figure 2.II: Visualization of the dualistic examples from steps A, B, and C

step A undescribed object	**step B** rudimentary description	**step C** complex description
W=undescribed object	M(W)=│UNDESCRIBED OBJECT│	M(M(W))=│THE UNDESCRIBED OBJECT IS RED│
	M(W)=│STONE│	M(M(W))=│THE STONE WEIGHS 400 GRAMS│
	M(W)=│PIERRE│	M(M(W))=│LA PIERRE PÈSE 400 GRAMMES│
	M(W)=│THIS IS A NUT│	M(M(W))=│THIS IS A BIG AND HEAVY NUT│
W=it	M(W)=│IT│	M(M(W))=│IT HAS TWO LEGS AND A BEAK│

[8] This notation can be read in the following way (based on the explanation of mathematical notations of the type M(W) in footnote 6). The complex description M(M(W)) *is dependent on and subsequent to* the rudimentary description M(W). For example, M(M(W) = │THE STONE WEIGHS 400 GRAMS│ is based on and subsequent to M(W) = │THE STONE│.

According to Mitterer, Dualism comes in two versions, namely *Realism* (or its different denominations or neighbors as Objectivism, Essentialism, Rationalism, etc) and *Constructivism* (or its different denominations or neighbors such as Idealism, Constructionism, Relativism, etc).[9] Surprisingly enough, both versions presuppose or use the dualistic distinction $D_{DUALISM}$ = W vs M. In the case of Constructivism, $D_{DUALISM}$ appears in several guises, e.g. first-order vs second-order reality, substratum vs constructions, world-1 vs worlds-2, real vs constructed reality, brute facts vs institutional facts, etc (where W is usually seen as unobservable, inaccessible, passive, or indescribable).

The difference between Realism and Constructivism resides in the way they conceptualize the relation between W and M: Whereas Realism focuses on W and analyzes W's role in the creation and modification of M, Constructivism focuses on M and studies M's role in the constitution and portrayal of W (Mitterer 1992: 11f, 49). Since Realism and Constructivism are thus both versions of Dualism, two important conclusions follow: Firstly, Non-Dualism is opposed to both Realism and Constructivism. Secondly, given that Realism and Constructivism are not only widespread, but rather quasi-monopolistic within the Social Sciences, Non-Dualism directly concerns the Social Sciences. It is precisely in these two points, among others, that Non-Dualism's relevance and radicalism lies.

A definition of meaning that is based on Dualism is *dualistic* or *non-monistic* because it comprises and opposes elements from two distinct ontological levels, namely meaning-description vs world-object: M vs W (see figure 2.I). In contrast, the definition of meaning that I proposed in chapter 1 is *non-dualistic* or *monistic* because it comprises and opposes elements from only one and the same ontological level, namely meaning-description: M vs M_{ELSE} (see figure 1.I). In the following chapter 2.2, I will defend this non-dualistic or monistic definition of meaning against the dualistic and non-monistic definition.

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2.2 Non-Dualism of Meaning

Non-Dualism is a radical and counterintuitive approach that upsets the usual everyday and scientific reasoning. It represents an alternative to both Realism and Constructivism. As will be shown in the following, Non-Dualism's core arguments primarily do not concern epistemological questions, but ontological questions. Mitterer (1992, 2001) considers Dualism, with its dualistic distinction $D_{DUALISM}$ = W vs M, to be optional and avoidable, and not a necessary and inevitable prerequisite for everyday or scientific reasoning. Instead of presupposing or using $D_{DUALISM}$, Mitterer not only circumvents $D_{DUALISM}$, but he also succeeds in deconstructing and unifying $D_{DUALISM}$. The way in which he achieves this is by exposing Dualism's blind spot, contradiction, and infinite regress. Mitterer, so to speak, non-dualizes Dualism.

[9] I will not justify this argument in detail because this has already been done by Mitterer (1992, 1999, 2001), Weber (2002, 2005, 2008), and Constructivist Foundations (2008).

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2.2.1 Psycho-communicative silence vs reflection on $D_{DUALISM}$: In order to begin Non-Dualism's criticism of Dualism, I will distinguish two situations: Does the dualist think or say something about the ontological relation between W and M, or does he not?

In the first situation, the dualist temporarily *does not think or say* anything about the ontological relation between W and M.[10] For example, this afternoon Mr. Huang does not claim that there is an M-distinct W such as an undescribed object or uninterpreted reality. Accordingly, there is only psychic and communicative silence on the topic of the relation between W and M. Even though such a situation is difficult to imagine – because Dualism is so deeply rooted and unconsciously used in scientific reasoning and everyday life that we hardly notice it and can hardly avoid it – let us nevertheless imagine that this first situation is possible. In such a situation, the dualist does not think or talk about the ontological status of and difference between trees, words, light, planets, feelings, gestures, governments, melodies, thoughts, clouds, signs, markets, tables, and sentences. However, as soon as the dualist does think or say something about the ontological relation between W and M, he is automatically in the second situation. And this occurs also in the more subtle case when the dualist claims that there is an M-distinct W *even if he or someone does not think or say that* there is an M-distinct W (see chapter 2.2.3 on variations of Dualism's contradiction). For example, a realist might claim that there are undescribed rocks on planet Mars even if nobody has yet thought or spoken of them because they are still unknown and undiscovered (the example is inspired by Krausz 2000: 47). Since these claims *do* say something about the ontological relation between W and M, they fall into the second situation.

In the first situation, it is (tautologically true that it is) impossible to make any claims about, or to deal with, the ontological status of W and M. And if nothing is thought or said about the status of W and M, then there is no claim that can be tested or evaluated. Without a claim, however, Realism's and Constructivism's most important testing or evaluation criteria, namely truth and viability, cannot be applied. In this first situation, there can consequently be no Dualism and, in turn, no Non-Dualism either. It may seem too self-evident or trivial to mention this first situation, but it leads to two important conclusions: Firstly, even though dualists may be tempted to do so, they cannot use this first situation as a means for supporting or proving their arguments. Secondly, Dualism can only operate in the second situation.

In the second situation, which is the unavoidable beginning and prerequisite for Dualism, the dualist *thinks or says* something about the ontological relation between W and M. For instance, Mr. Huang argues that there is an M-distinct W such as an uninterpreted object or undescribed reality. The dualist may not necessarily make explicit claims and formulate elaborate arguments in order to support or defend Dualism as a scientific theory, but in his daily life-

[10] If the dualist *never* thought or said anything about W or M, he would (probably or per definition) not be a dualist. That is why I specified that the dualist only *temporarily* does not think or say anything about W or M.

world he may simply presuppose Dualism as background knowledge or apply dualistic ideas in dealing with practical matters.

Since the dualist thinks or speaks about the ontological status of W and M, and since all thinking and speaking (just as all wanting, hearing, writing, remembering, feeling, seeing, etc.) uses M in terms of distinction-based categories as outlined in chapter 1, the syllogistic conclusion follows: The dualist cannot avoid using and thus must use M. This conclusion has, as we will see below, drastic consequences for Dualism.

In the following, I will focus on this second situation in which the dualist thinks or says something about the ontological relation between W and M. In so doing, I will discuss Dualism's main problems and present Non-Dualism's main solutions to them (based on Mitterer 1992, 2001). As will be seen, Dualism's problems concern particularly argumentational steps A and B (see the previous chapter 2.1), namely the assumption that there is first an undescribed object or uninterpreted reality (step A), which is subsequently indicated or described by an object indication or a rudimentary description (step B).[11]

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2.2.2 Dualism's contradiction: In the following, I will show that Dualism is self-contradictory. The starting point is the following short dialog:

(1)	**Dualist:**	There is an undescribed object.
(2)	**Non-dualist:**	But that is a contradiction because by uttering your sentence you are describing the object, i.e. you are describing the object as undescribed. Consequently, the object is not undescribed but described, i.e. described by you as undescribed. Put differently, there is no undescribed object, but a described object.

The dualist's perspective: Line 1 corresponds to the argumentational step A (see the previous chapter 2.1) because it makes the ontological claim that there is an *undescribed object*. In this step A, the object is not yet described because it is only in the subsequent step B that it will be rudimentarily described by means of a word, an indication, a distinction, a representation, etc. Accordingly, in step A the dualist must not describe the object in any way so as to meet the requirement of the existence of an undescribed object. If, however, he does somehow describe the object, he is no longer in step A but in step B where the object is already rudimentarily described.

The non-dualist's perspective: The dualist is contradictory because *by saying* that the *object is not described*, the *object is described* by the dualist as an object that is not described. More precisely, on the one hand, the dualist's sentence in line 1 says that *the object is not described*, but on the other hand, *by saying his sentence in line 1* the dualist is actually describing the object as an object that is not described, so after all *the object is described* by the dualist. For example, the last two words in the dualist's sentence in line 1 are a de-

[11] As argued in chapters 1.3 and 2.1, I will use the following terms quasi-synonymously because they are all forms of M: meaning, description, indication, interpretation, representation, concept, etc. Furthermore, these M can be constative, interrogative, commissive, performative, directive, expressive, etc. Likewise, different forms of W will also be treated quasi-synonymously: world, object, reality, thing, phenomenon, etc.

scription of the object, namely a rudimentary description in the form of the English-language expression ›*undescribed object*‹. The dualist says that there is an *undescribed object*, but *as he says his words* he is at the same time describing the object as undescribed, which means that there is no supposedly undescribed object but a *described object*. Hence, the dualist is not in step A, as he believes himself to be, but in step B.

The dualist's and non-dualist's arguments can also be formalized by couching them in logico-mathematical notations. Below is a dialog that is structurally similar to the dialog above, but expressed more formally:

(3) Dualist: There is an W = undescribed object.

(4) Non-dualist: But that is a contradiction because by uttering your sentence you are describing the object, i.e. you are describing the object as an M = │UNDESCRIBED OBJECT│. Consequently, the object is not undescribed but described, i.e. described by you as undescribed. Put differently, there is no W = undescribed object, but a described object, namely M = │UNDESCRIBED OBJECT│.

The contradiction is that the dualist claims that an W = undescribed object is *undescribed*, but the non-dualist shows that the dualist's purportedly W = undescribed object is *described*, i.e. described as undescribed, described as an object that is not described, or synonymously, described by the linguistic and rudimentary description M = │UNDESCRIBED OBJECT│. Put differently, the contradiction is that the dualist claims that an W = undescribed object *is not* a description, whereas the non-dualist demonstrates that the dualist's purportedly W = undescribed object *is* a description, namely the linguistic and rudimentary description M = │UNDESCRIBED OBJECT│.

Let us analyze more closely the *type of contradiction* that the dualist commits. Before I come to this analysis, however, some preliminary remarks are helpful. From a semiotic perspective, every communication or cognition simultaneously and necessarily comprises or conveys messages on *several* levels (Weissmahr 2006, Schulz von Thun 1981, see also chapter 3.5 in this book). On the one hand, there is the *logical-propositional* level that concerns the logical or propositional content of a communication or cognition linguistically expressed in words or sentences. For example, the logical-propositional message of the English-language utterance ›*I am in the kitchen*‹ is: The person speaking is at this moment in the room where usually food is prepared or eaten. On the other hand, there is the *performative-contextual* level that concerns the performative or contextual aspects which embed a communication or cognition, or which enable a communication or cognition to occur. These aspects refer to the act of communicating or thinking, to the characteristics of the communicator or thinker, to the situation in which the communication or thinking takes place, etc. For example, the performative-contextual message of the abovementioned utterance ›*I am in the kitchen*‹ could be: The act of speaking implies that the speaker does not suffer from mutism, the voice reveals that the speaker is male, the situation indicates that the speaker and hearer are friends, etc (for more details on context and use, see chapter 3.6). In comparing

messages of the logical-propositional and performative-contextual level, an *asymmetry* can be observed, especially in rational discourse or information exchange. That is, messages of the logical-propositional level are usually foregrounded and intended, whereas messages of the performative-contextual level remain backgrounded and implicit.[12]

In general, two types of contradiction can occur. Firstly, there are *logical contradictions* which occur *within* the logical-propositional level. For instance, utterances like ›*All bachelors are married*‹, ›*boiling ice*‹ or ›*He will come late to the party. He died last week.*‹ are contradictory because their constituent words or sentences are at odds.[13]

Secondly, there are *logical-vs-performative contradictions* (also called performative contradictions, Jay 1992, Weissmahr 2006: ch. VI, Schulz von Thun 1981: 33-38). These contradictions occur *between* the logical-propositional level *and* the performative-contextual level. For example, if Natasha says ›*I am not saying anything right now*‹, if a man writes ›*I am a woman*‹, or if I say ›*I was on the boat that was shipwrecked with no survivors*‹, the logical-propositional message is at odds with the performative-contextual message. In the example of Natasha saying ›*I am not saying anything right now*‹, the logical-propositional message, i.e. Natasha does not pronounce words at this moment, contradicts the performative-contextual message, i.e. Natasha is at this moment performing a speech act by pronouncing the words ›*I am not saying anything*‹. The result is that the logical-propositional message is canceled out by the performative-contextual message.

The dualist's contradiction is a logical-vs-performative contradiction. The starting point is the dualist's claim: There is an undescribed object (see line 1 above). The logical-propositional message can be expressed in a simplified way as: *The object is not described*. The performative-contextual message may be expressed in different forms which all share the same core message: (a) *The object is described* because the dualist describes the object as not described. (b) *The object is described* by the dualist who describes the object by means of the description ›*The object is not described*‹. (c) *The object is described* as the dualist performs a descriptive speech act about the properties of the object.

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[12] In distinguishing the performative-contextual level from the logical-propositional level, I am not pre-supposing or re-introducing the dualistic distinction W vs M. In accordance with Non-Dualism, both levels lie on the same ontological level, namely the level of M in the form of descriptions, sentences, interpretations, representations, indications, etc. The only difference is that the logical-propositional level is a first-order M, e.g. M = │I'M IN THE KITCHEN│, whereas the performative-contextual level is a second-order M about the first-order M, e.g. M = │THE VOICE OF THE PERSON WHO SAYS ›I'M IN THE KITCHEN‹ REVEALS THAT THE SPEAKER IS MALE│. Even though Weissmahr (2006: ch. VI.1) does not adopt a non-dualistic perspective, he too explicitly argues that both levels are *linguistic* levels even if messages of the performative-contextual level are usually not as precise as messages of the logical-propositional level.

[13] As explained in footnote 9 in chapter 1.2, in order to clearly mark a meaning as linguistic, i.e. a word or sentence in a particular language, in contrast to other types of meaning, e.g. a gesture, sound, image, etc, I will often use the ›‹ brackets between which the word or sentence is put in italics.

The contradiction between the logical-propositional and the performative-contextual message of the dualist's claim is clearly visible. And this contradiction is inevitable for the dualist has no other choice: In order to think or say that the object is not described, he *must* describe the object, i.e. as undescribed, but as soon as he thinks or says this, the object is described. Logical-vs-performative contradictions occur if someone »makes performative use of something he expressly denies« (Habermas 1983: 90ff). In the dualist's case, this »something« is a description that he performatively makes but linguistically denies making. The dualist performs a description but says he does not perform a description. The logical-vs-performative contradiction is a contradiction between the description of the speaker, i.e. the dualist's first-order auto-description, and the description of the observer of the speaker, i.e. the non-dualist's second-order allo-description of the dualist's first-order auto-description.[14]

The outcome of the contradiction is that the logical-propositional message of the dualist's claim, i.e. there is an undescribed object or the object is not described, is canceled out by the performative-contextual message, i.e. there is a described object or the object is described. The dualist's logical-propositional message is thus invalid, but the performative-contextual message is valid.

The non-dualist's conclusion, as in line 4 above, goes like this: *The dualist's supposedly* W = undescribed object *is a described object because the object is described by the dualist as an* M = ⎸UNDESCRIBED OBJECT⎹. *In short, the* W = undescribed object *turns out to be an* M = ⎸UNDESCRIBED OBJECT⎹. What changes between Dualism and Non-Dualism is the ontological status of the »undescribed object«: For the dualist, it is on the level of W, whereas for the non-dualist, it is on the level of M. Expressed in the terminology of chapter 1, the »undescribed object« is one side of a distinction, namely the marked and activated category M = ⎸UNDESCRIBED OBJECT⎹, that stands in contrast to the other side of the distinction, namely the unmarked and residual category M_{ELSE} = ⎸DESCRIBED OBJECT⎹. Likewise, M = ⎸AN UNINTERPRETED APPLE⎹ is a distinction-based category that is juxtaposed with one or several other categories such as M_{ELSE} = ⎸AN INTERPRETED APPLE⎹, M_{ELSE} = ⎸A NON-APPLE⎹, M_{ELSE} = ⎸EVERYTHING⎹, M_{ELSE} = ⎸AN ORANGE⎹, M_{ELSE} = ⎸NOTHING⎹, etc.

The previous discussion leads to the conclusion that the dualist is not in step A where an allegedly W = undescribed object exists, but in step B where a described object exists in the form of the rudimentary description or object indication M = ⎸UNDESCRIBED OBJECT⎹. Consequently, the dualist's step A dissolves into step B. Whereas Dualism's starting point is step A, Non-Dualism's starting point is step B without any purportedly prior step A.[15]

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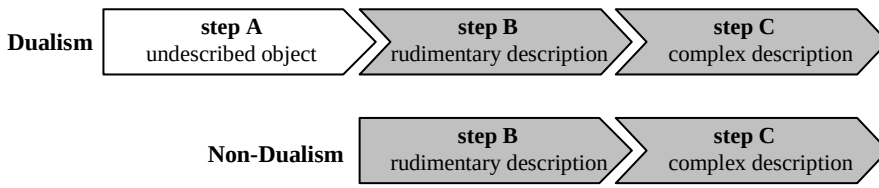
[14] See also footnote 12. For more on different types of descriptions, see chapter 5.6.1.

[15] A dilemma in naming the steps: (1) Saying that Non-Dualism's starting point is *step B* has the disadvantage that it implies the existence of a prior step A that Non-Dualism skips, but has the advantage that the reference to Dualism's steps A, B, C is visible because of the similar naming. (2) Instead of saying that Non-Dualism's starting point is step B, I could say that it is *step 1*, which has the advantage that it does not imply the existence of a prior step, but has the disadvantage that the reference to Dualism's steps A, B, C is invisible. The argument that Non-Dualism's starting point is step B will be detailed in chapter 2.4.2.

The following figure contrasts Dualism's and Non-Dualism's argumentational steps. As in the previous figure 2.II, the level of the undescribed object or uninterpreted world is depicted in white, whereas the level of the descriptions, indications, meanings, or interpretations is depicted in gray.

Figure 2.III: Dualism's and Non-Dualism's argumentational steps



In order to further formalize the dualist's and the non-dualist's arguments by means of a logico-mathematical notation, let us look at the same dialog as in lines 3 and 4, but in an even more formal and reduced way. In so doing, I will shorten the notation W = undescribed object to the notation W. Verbal expressions of the dualist's W may be: objects as such, an it, pure reality, a table in itself, the planet Mars, a thing, etc.

(5) Dualist: There is W.

(6) Non-dualist: But that is a contradiction because by uttering your sentence you are indicating the alleged W, i.e. you are indicating the alleged W as |W|, or more precisely, as M = |W|. Consequently, the alleged W is an M, namely M = |W|. Put differently, there is no W, but M.

Again, the dualist commits a contradiction because in his act of uttering the sentence in line 5 he indicates the allegedly unindicated W by means of a mathematical indication or rudimentary description in the form of the 23rd letter of the English alphabet, namely |W| or more precisely M = |W|.

The notation M = |W| may seem strange or paradoxical, and thus needs some clarification: As explained in chapter 1.1 (especially in footnote 5), the equal sign in notations of the form M = |...| is not used in the sense that |...| has the same ontological *content* as an M, but the same ontological *status* as an M. For example, M = |W| does not mean that |W| has the same content or substance as an M, as if the equation »2 equals 3« were mathematically valid, but it means that |W| has the same status or level as an M, in a similar way to the classification »2 is a number«. Spelled out, the notation M = |W| means that |W| is a form or manifestation of M in the sense that the object or world |W| has the same ontological status as a description or meaning M.

Instead of identifying forms of W in an affirmative manner, e.g. an object or the world, the dualist may also (based on the law of excluded middle) identify forms of W in a negative or oppositional manner, e.g. a non-description, a beyond of language, the extralinguistic, a non-indication, the outside of inter-

pretation, an a-meaning, etc. Put formally, they are non-M. However, for the non-dualist, these are forms of M, namely M = |NON-M| because in order to claim that there is a non-M there must be an M, namely M = |NON-M|.[16]

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2.2.3 Variations of Dualism's contradiction: So far, I have discussed the dualistic claim that there is an undescribed object. However, there are numerous neighboring or derivative claims that commit the abovementioned logical-vs-performative contradiction too. These claims tend to be structurally similar to, or semantically overlapping with, the original dualistic claim that there is an undescribed object. However, for the sake of comprehensiveness and variety, I will present the most important of these neighboring or derivative claims along with their formalization in semi-mathematical notation.

Moreover, since in the current scientific literature certain, more or less implicit or explicit, non-dualistic tendencies or examples can be found, I will occasionally refer to these and integrate them into my discussion. This is not only to make Non-Dualism's arguments more intelligible and colorful, but also to link them to existing theories and disciplines so as to facilitate their connectivity and dialog.

The following list enumerates slight variations of the dualist's claim that there is an undescribed object, formalized by the notation M-free W.

(7)	**Dualism's claims (variations of the claims in lines 1 and 3)**	**formalization**
	• An uninterpreted reality exists. • This is an unindicated entity. • Meaning-free things exist. • The world as such is not described. • There are non-signified referents. • This is interpretation-independent behavior. • Something exists that is free from interpretation. • There are non-linguistic phenomena.	• M-free W

From the dualist's perspective, these are all forms of W, such as W = uninterpreted reality, but since these claims commit the logical-vs-performative contradiction, as shown above, their logical-propositional message is canceled out by their performative-contextual message.

For example, the logical-propositional message that an uninterpreted reality exists is nullified by the performative-contextual message that an interpreted reality exists, namely in the form of the interpretation of reality as uninterpreted. Consequently, the alleged forms of W are, from the non-dualist's perspective, all forms of M, such as M = |UNINTERPRETED REALITY|. The dualist's W = uninterpreted reality is the interpretation M = |UNINTERPRETED

[16] An analogy can be found in Jokisch (1996: 19ff, 51, 65f, 114). He convincingly shows that the negation, absence, or non-occurrence of an operation is itself an operation. That is, if an operation does not occur, an operation still occurs, namely the operation of negation, absence, or non-occurrence of the operation.

REALITY | . Put in more formal terms, the dualist's M-free W is the interpretation M = | M-FREE W | .[17]

There is an interesting analogy between non-dualistic meaning and linguistic negation. The starting point is an object W such as an apple. In Linguistics, in order to carry out the operation of negation N, i.e. negating or denying the existence of an object W, for example, the sentence N(W) = ›*This is not an apple*‹ or N(W) = ›*He has no apple*‹, W must necessarily be indicated by an affirmation A, for example A(W) = ›*apple*‹. Hence, negation N is only possible by using a previous affirmation A. Consequently, *a negated object* N(W) *presupposes an affirmed object* A(W). In Non-Dualism's critique of Dualism, in order to be able to talk or think about some supposed W, for example, where is W = the apple? or W = the apple is red, W must necessarily be indicated by a description M, for example M = | THE APPLE | . Hence, W is only possible by using a previous M. Consequently, *an object* W *presupposes a description* M. Summarizing the linguistic and the non-dualistic approach, it may be said that *for an object* W *to exist or to be negated, it must necessarily be indicated by a description* M. I conjecture that this parallel between the non-dualistic approach to the existence of objects and the linguistic approach to the negation of objects is not accidental but structurally related.

Other authors and theories have expressed, maybe unwittingly, arguments close to Non-Dualism, although in a less clear and systematic way. For example, criticizing the classical distinction between (a) language and (b) that which the language is describing, Kaminsky (1969: 94) argues that in judging what (b) contains, we are already using (a). Likewise, Putnam (1990: 329) holds that »elements of what we call ›language‹ or ›mind‹ penetrate so deeply into what we call ›reality‹ that the very project of representing ourselves as ›mappers‹ of something ›language-independent‹ is fatally compromised from the very start.« Lenk's slogan for his Interpretationism is *interpretari necesse est* (1991) and he convincingly shows that actions or behavior only exist as interpretations or descriptions (1978, 1993). In Semiotics, it is assumed that »the world as we know it is merely its current representation« (Chandler 2002: 205), and for shamans, »reality, or the world we all know, is only a description« (Castaneda

[17] In discussing Dualism's contradiction, the description or meaning M has been a word or a sentence. However, M can also take the form of a *picture* (e.g. a photo, a drawing, a painting, etc). From a dualistic perspective, words and pictures share some similarities: both refer to or represent an object that already exists previously, both can often be used interchangeably to perform certain functions, and both are ontologically distinct from the object itself. Accordingly, words and pictures are forms of M. That is why the logical-vs-performative contradiction is already evident in figures 2.I and 2.II (in chapter 2.1), where I tried to illustrate the dualistic distinction between W and M by contrasting the picture of a table or stone (supposed to symbolize W) with the word ›*table*‹ or ›*stone*‹ (supposed to symbolize M). However, since the picture is a form of M and the word is also a form of M, but neither pictures nor words are forms of W, what I showed in figure 2.I and 2.II was not the *dualistic* distinction between W and M, but a *non-dualistic* distinction between one form of M and another form of M, namely between a picture and a word. For a more detailed and formalized treatment of pictures in Dualism and Non-Dualism, see the discussion of Magritte's painting in chapter 2.3.3 and figure 2.IX.

1972: 8). Non-dualistic tendencies can also be made out in certain scientific slogans or publication titles bearing expressions such as *World as Text* (Garz & Kraimer ed. 1994) or *Objects as Meaning* (Pearce 1990).

Let's suppose the dualist has agreed that he commits a logical-vs-performative contradiction by uttering his original claim that there is an undescribed object in lines 1, 3, and 7. However, in order to avoid committing this contradiction and thus defend Dualism, the dualist might come up with new claims which are supplements or refinements of his original claim.

(8)	**Dualism's claims (supplements or refinements of the claims in line 7)**	**formalization**
	There is an undescribed object … • even if I don't think of there being an undescribed object. • although people don't say anything about it. • despite the fact that nobody knows of its existence. • if I don't describe the object. • even if I don't believe that there is an undescribed object.	• M-independent W

The dualist's simple claim in line 7 that there is an undescribed object is transformed into the more complex claim in line 8 that there is an undescribed object that is *independent* of people's mental or linguistic operations. For example, an undescribed stone as such exists independently of whether and how I think of it, describe it, perceive it, say something of it, or believe that it exists.

By using the claims in line 8, the dualist may believe himself to be in the *first situation* in which he temporarily *does not think or say* anything about the relation between objects and descriptions (see chapter 2.2.1 on psycho-communicative silence vs reflection on $D_{DUALISM}$). However, as argued above, since in line 8 the dualist *does think or say* something about the relation between objects and descriptions, namely that undescribed objects exist even if he does not think or say anything about them, he is in the *second situation*.

The dualist thus claims that there is an undescribed object even if he does not think or say that there is an undescribed object.[18] This claim commits the logical-vs-performative contradiction not only once, but *twice*. Firstly, it commits the same contradiction as the original claim in lines 1, 3, and 7 that there is an undescribed object. Secondly, it commits an additional contradiction by supplementing or refining the original claim by the more complex claim that there is an undescribed object *even if the dualist does not think or say that there is an undescribed object*. Typically, this supplement is introduced by words like ›*even if*‹, ›*although*‹, ›*despite*‹, or ›*independent of*‹. The supplement is a kind of repetition or reinforcement of the original claim that there is an object that is not described, not thought of, or not spoken about. The contradic-

[18] This claim is structurally similar to the claim that if a tree falls on the ground, but no one is there to hear the noise, the tree still makes a noise. In this case, the argumentational structure is: There is no observer, but there is still a sound. And in the dualist's case, the argumentational structure is: There is no description, but there is still the object. Put formally: There is no M, but there is still W.

tion of the dualist's claim lies here: The logical-propositional message of the *subordinate clause* (i.e. the supplement) is: The dualist *does not think or say* that there is an undescribed object. But the performative-contextual message of the *main and subordinate clause* (i.e. the supplement and the original claim in line 7) is: The dualist *does think or say* that there is an undescribed object.

Krausz (2000: 47) provides a typical, but more complex example of these logical-vs-performative contradictions: »The realist might observe that all that […] is *said* is inevitably nested in some symbol system. That does not show that there is nothing that is not nested in some symbol system. The realist might affirm that it is possible that there are objects in the world that nobody has thought of, despite the fact that that assertion is presently made in some symbol system, and despite the fact that it is made by using the concept of ›object‹. The realist could hold that despite our conceiving of them in the present thought experiment, there are specific rocks in the Himalayan Mountains that may yet come to be discovered. And their being there is a matter quite separate from anyone's conceiving of them or from their representations being nested in some symbol system deploying the concept ›rocks‹. […] The rocks (or something, however described) are *there* […] independent of any representations of them.«

Several non-dualistic tendencies in philosophical approaches can be made out. For instance, in order to refute the claim that things with certain properties really exist regardless of whether any specific thing is designated, Kaminsky (1969: 101) proposes the following argument: »We are unable to move from a language to its referent without using language [… because] when we talk of what is extralinguistic we are required to use […] language. Thus we cannot ask whether what is extralinguistic really has such and such characteristics for we cannot move to what is extralinguistic without prior commitment to what is linguistic.«

Hazelrigg (1989: 155) presents a collage-like and invented dialog between himself and the realist Williams: The latter writes that even though »we cannot think about the world without describing it in some way«, we can still think that »there is an independent world« which »can control the success of our descriptions«. In quite a non-dualistic way, Hazelrigg quotes Williams and adds that »'we *cannot* think about the world without describing it in *some* way', and one of the ways in which we *can* 'think about', i.e. describe, the world is as 'independent world that controls the success of our descriptions'«.

Hacking provides another example (1975: 182f). One of his students claimed that something is real only insofar as it is communicated, whereas Hacking protested that there are polar bears on Baffin Land that no one has ever spoken about. The student's reply was that Hacking is speaking about these polar bears right now, and any counter-example Hacking may have will have to be communicated too, so the student's claim remained valid.

Another set of claims that the dualist may propose in order to avoid the contradiction of his claim in line 7 consists of the following supplements or refinements which relate to temporal aspects.

(9)	**Dualism's claims (supplements or refinements of the claims in line 7)**	**formalization**
	There is an undescribed object … • before I describe or indicate it. • before people think of it. • before anybody says anything about it. • before I know it exists.	• M-prior W • W before M

These claims reflect the sequence of the dualist's argumentational steps A and B (see chapter 2.1). *First*, in step A, there is the undescribed object, and *afterwards*, in step B, a description is made such as the rudimentary description or object indication. In short, the undescribed object is temporally *prior to* (or exists *before*) our mental or linguistic operations. Put formally, M-prior W (or alternatively, W before M).

Non-Dualism's counterarguments against the claims in line 9 are similar to the counterarguments against the claims in line 8. Both commit the logical-vs-performative contradiction not only once, but twice. The first contradiction of the claims in line 9 lies in the incompatibility of the logical-propositional message that there is an undescribed object and the performative-contextual message that there is a described object because the dualist describes the object as undescribed before he or anybody describes it.

The second contradiction is more difficult to discern and tricky to explain. The logical-propositional message of the dualist's claim is: *first* there is an undescribed object and *afterwards* there are descriptions such as a rudimentary description or an object indication. In contrast, the performative-contextual message is: *first* there is a description, i.e. a rudimentary description or object indication, and *afterwards* there is another, more complex description, i.e. the dualist's claim that first there is an undescribed object and afterwards there are descriptions such as a rudimentary description or an object indication.

These arguments can also be expressed more formally. The logical-propositional message of the dualist's claim is: *First*, there is an W = undescribed object, and *afterwards*, there is an M such as M = ⎸THE OBJECT IS RED⎸ or M = ⎸THE OBJECT IS A FIVE-TON ROCK⎸. In contrast, the performative-contextual message is: *First*, there is an M, namely the rudimentary description or object indication M = ⎸UNDESCRIBED OBJECT⎸ or M = ⎸THERE IS AN W = UNDESCRIBED OBJECT⎸, and *afterwards*, there is another and more complex M, namely the dualist's claim that M = ⎸FIRST, THERE IS AN W = UNDESCRIBED OBJECT, AND AFTERWARDS, THERE IS AN M SUCH AS M = ⎸THE OBJECT IS RED⎸ OR M = ⎸THE OBJECT IS A FIVE-TON ROCK⎸⎸.

Put differently, the logical-propositional message is: *First* there is the object and *afterwards* comes the object indication. But the performative-contextual message is: *First* there is the object indication and *afterwards* comes the claim that first there is the object and afterwards comes the object indication. The same argument expressed in an even more reduced and formal way goes like this. The logical-propositional message is: W before M. But the performative-contextual message is: M before (W before M). To render the

contradiction even clearer, we can further reduce the argument. The logical-propositional message is: First there is W. But the performative-contextual message is: First there is M.

As with all logical-vs-performative contradictions, the logical-propositional message is canceled out by the performative-contextual message which is the only one that survives. Accordingly, the dualist's argumentational procedure involving steps A and B (see chapter 2.1 and figure 2.II) needs a non-dualistic revision (see figure 2.III above). That is, the dualist's argumentational step A disappears or dissolves into step B, which is the non-dualist's starting point, without there being any purportedly prior step of undescribed objects or an uninterpreted world.[19]

Figure 2.IV: Non-Dualism's argumentational steps

Textual explanation

rudimentary description of the object	complex description such as the claim that first there is an undescribed object and afterwards a rudimentary description
object indication	assertion that the object is prior to the object indication

Formalized explanation

M = ⎪UNDESCRIBED OBJECT⎪	M = ⎪FIRST, THERE IS AN W = UNDESCRIBED OBJECT, AND AFTERWARDS, THERE IS AN M SUCH AS M = ⎪THE OBJECT IS RED⎪ OR M = ⎪THE OBJECT IS A FIVE-TON ROCK⎪ ⎪
M	W before M

Examples

M = ⎪THE APPLE SITS ON THE TABLE⎪	M = ⎪EVEN BEFORE MY DESCRIPTION ›THE APPLE SITS ON THE TABLE‹ THE APPLE SAT ON THE TABLE⎪
M = ⎪THERE IS AN UNINTERPRETED REALITY⎪	M = ⎪THERE IS AN UNINTERPRETED REALITY BEFORE I MAKE ANY INTERPRETATIONS OF IT⎪
M = ⎪ATOMS EXIST⎪	M = ⎪ATOMS EXISTED BEFORE SCIENTISTS KNEW THAT ATOMS EXIST⎪
M = ⎪THE EARTH IS ROUND⎪	M = ⎪THE CLAIM ›THE EARTH IS ROUND‹ WAS ALREADY TRUE WHEN PEOPLE THOUGHT THE EARTH WAS FLAT⎪
M = ⎪I HAVE A BODY⎪	M = ⎪BEFORE I THINK THAT I HAVE A BODY, I HAD A BODY⎪

Analogy

(It's 8:00 a.m.) The train's arrival in Vienna.	(It's 8:10 a.m.) Before the train's arrival in Vienna, the train was elsewhere.

[19] Non-Dualism's argument that the starting point is step B will be extended in chapter 2.4.2.

There is thus a clear sequence from step B to step C. The temporal and pragmatic prerequisite for claiming that the object is prior to the object indication is to have already made the object indication. Likewise, the prerequisite for saying ›*Even before my description* 'The apple sits on the table' *the apple sat on the table*‹ is that I already said ›*The apple sits on the table*‹. Mitterer uses an analogy: The prerequisite for asserting that ›*Before the train's arrival in Vienna, the train was elsewhere*‹ is to have asserted ›*The train's arrival in Vienna*‹ (1992: 98, see also Weber's useful illustration in 2010: 21).

The dualist's claim, i.e. there is an undescribed object before I describe it or if I don't describe it, *presupposes* but does not *prove* the existence of the undescribed object. Consequently, the dualist's claim can only be made in a second step (step C), if and after it is taken for granted in the first step (step B) that an undescribed object exists so that its existence does not need to be proven. The dualist's claim is invalid because it has skipped the first step (step B), namely to prove the existence of the undescribed object. The first step (step B) must therefore inevitably be the indication of the object, e.g. you may think or say the words or sentences ›*There is an undescribed object*‹ or ›*The object that is not described*‹.

Several conclusions can be drawn from these arguments. Mitterer argues: »If the priority of the object over the object indication can only be claimed after the object indication, it is no longer possible to justify that the object is distinct from language by referring to the priority of the object over the object indication.« (1992: 98) Accordingly, before a particular M, there is no pre-M or M-free stage where Dualism's uninterpreted W prevails, but another previous M. The beginning hence consists in the making of an object indication or rudimentary description, e.g. M = │THE OBJECT│ or M = │THERE IS AN UNINTERPRETED REALITY│, and only afterwards can we formulate more complex claims or questions such as M = │THE OBJECT EXISTED ALREADY BEFORE I SAID ›OBJECT‹│, M = │PRIOR TO THE DESCRIPTION THAT THERE IS AN UNINTERPRETED REALITY, THERE HAS ALWAYS BEEN AN UNINTERPRETED REALITY│, or M = │WHY DO NON-DUALISTS THINK THAT THE OBJECT IS A DESCRIPTION?│.[20]

In short, before the dualist can claim the precedence, difference, priority, or independence of the object-world with regard to meaning-description, he necessarily must claim the existence of the object-world by means of a rudimentary description-meaning. This is also why St. John's Gospel, mentioned at the opening of chapter 2, fits into Non-Dualism: »In the beginning was the Word…« or a formalized version of it such as »In the beginning was the M…«.

Butler (1993) makes an argument similar to Non-Dualism's temporal argument. She challenges the assumption of the human body as a given, natural, and prelinguistic object: »The body posited as prior to the sign, is always

[20] The same argumentational structure applies to the dualist's claims in line 8: There is an undescribed object even if…, although…, despite…, etc. It also applies to the dualistic claims that will be presented below in lines 10, 11, and 12, such as M refers to W, W vs M, the perception of W vs the description of the perception of W, etc.

posited or *signified* as *prior*. This signification produces as an *effect* of its own procedure the very body that it nevertheless and simultaneously claims to discover as that which *precedes* its own action. If the body signified as prior to signification is an effect of signification, then the mimetic or representational status of language, which claims that signs follow bodies as their necessary mirrors, is not mimetic at all. On the contrary, it is productive, constitutive, one might even argue *performative*, inasmuch as this signifying act delimits and contours the body that it then claims to find prior to any and all signification.« (1993: 30). Commenting on this argument, Sandford (1999: 23) summarizes: »That which is posited as prediscursive, *precisely because it is posited*, in fact belongs to the order of discourse, and cannot be said to exist prior to or outside it.« Likewise, Kaminsky argues that »we might believe that prior to any linguistic account, things […] are intuitively evident as the elements with which a language must deal. But there is no way of determining whether the acceptance of these elements is not the *result* of the very linguistic forms employed in every description.« (1969: 100, my emphasis) Pears says that »facts may be brute […], but what exactly it is about them which is brute […] can be specified only by reference to the sentences which were the *unacknowledged starting points*.« (quoted in Kaminsky 1969: 99, my emphasis)

Similarly, a reading of Systems Theory's distinction between social structure and societal semantics that is close to Non-Dualism leads to the conclusion that social structure is not always prior to, and constitutive of, societal semantics, but that societal semantics also may be prior to, and constitutive of, social structure (Luhmann 1997: 289, 539f, Stäheli 1998, Stichweh 2000).[21]

Criticizing the idea that words or sentences are caused by prior extralinguistic referents, Kaminsky (1969: 102) holds: »A verbalization of causality between a language and its referent cannot be given without circularity. In order to know that a datum causes the appearance of certain structural devices in a language, we would be required to know that the datum itself has a certain kind of division. For example, we would have to be able to say: 'D (the datum) contains properties and things having these properties'. But no sooner do we make this statement then we are already ascribing to D that which we are trying to prove it causes.«

There is still another set of claims that the dualist may propose so as to try to circumvent the logical-vs-performative contradiction.

(10)	**Dualism's claims**	**formalization**
	• The description *refers to* an undescribed object. • This is an interpretation *of* the uninterpreted reality. • My words are *about* the world as such. • The thing is indicated *by* a rudimentary description. • I am describing that which my description *refers to*.	• M of W • M refers to W

[21] However, even though the temporal sequence of social structure and societal semantics is seen as flexible and bidirectional, the ontological distinction between both remains clear and unbridgeable, and therefore dualistic, within sociological Systems Theory.

The dualist may agree that the claim that there is an undescribed object is a rudimentary description, but he stresses that this rudimentary description *refers to* and *is about* the undescribed object. From the dualist's perspective, verbs like ›*refer to*‹ or ›*denote*‹ as well as prepositions like ›*about*‹ or ›*of*‹ are supposed to function as bridges, pointers, or proxies that link the linguistic domain M and the extralinguistic domain W. In short, the rudimentary description M is distinct from the object W because M *refers to* and *is about* W.[22]

However, the non-dualist again detects a logical-vs-performative contradiction: From a performative-contextual perspective, the dualist's undescribed object is a described object because it is described as an undescribed object that the rudimentary description refers to and is about. If the dualist argues that the German rudimentary descriptions M = ⎸DER TISCH⎹ or M = ⎸DER TISCH IST RUND⎹ *refer to and are about* W = the table, the non-dualist counters that the dualist's W = the table is a rudimentary description, i.e. M = ⎸THE TABLE⎹.[23]

The following list presents additional claims proposed by the dualist.

(11) Dualism's claims **formalization**

- Objects have a *different* ontological status than descriptions. — $D_{DUALISM}$
- The words are *not* the world. — W vs M
- The thing is *distinct from* the interpretation of the thing. — M-distinct W
- There are phenomena that are *external to* language.
- One must *not confuse* reality with the description of reality.
- This is something *separate from* the linguistic domain.

[22] Krausz makes a similar argument by juxtaposing a constructivist and a realist. The constructivist argues that the realist is contradictory in making the assertion A that there is something that is *outside* of a symbol system because this assertion A itself is inevitably made *inside* a symbol system. The realist counters that his assertion A does not require that A cannot itself be made inside a symbol system because A »shows« not »says« the outside of a symbol system, so we can hypothesize that there is an *outside* of a symbol system from *inside* a symbol system (2000: 48).

[23] Gadenne argues that it is possible to *refer to* objects not only by *speaking about* them, but by *pointing to* them (2008: 155). This argument has two flaws. Firstly, the act of pointing to something is itself a sign or symbol, i.e. a distinction-based category M, just like other gestures such as shaking one's head or shrugging one's shoulders. The concept of M = ⎸POINTING TO SOMETHING⎹ exists only in language and can only be distinguished from other concepts like M_{ELSE} = ⎸SPEAKING ABOUT SOMETHING⎹ in language. In accordance with Non-Dualism's critique of Dualism's claims in line 9, there is first the rudimentary meaning M = ⎸POINTING TO SOMETHING⎹ and only afterwards can come more complex claims like M = ⎸POINTING TO SOMETHING IS DISTINCT FROM SPEAKING ABOUT SOMETHING⎹. Consequently, both pointing and speaking have the same ontological status of M. Secondly, Gadenne suggests that the act of pointing to something in order to refer to it is possible without any (prior) linguistic support. However, Saeed shows that ostension, i.e. defining by example or demonstration, requires the use of prior linguistic knowledge of meanings, words, concepts, etc. For example, if you want to teach a child the meaning M = ⎸RABBIT⎹ simply by silently pointing to a real-world exemplar with your finger, you cannot even tell what you are pointing to without some linguistic support: is it the whole rabbit, the tail, the way it is running, or the number of exemplars? This also suggests that gestures, e.g. the act of pointing to something, tend to be much less unequivocal and precise than words or sentences (Saeed 2003: 40, see also Lyons 1995: 83f).

These claims resume one of Dualism's key arguments, namely the dualistic distinction $D_{DUALISM}$ in the sense of there being an *ontological heterogeneity* of object vs description, world vs meaning, W vs M (see chapter 2.1). Its logical-propositional message is: The object has a *different* ontological status than its description. Its performative-contextual message is longer to explain and goes like this: The object has the *same* ontological status as its description because – as already demonstrated by the previous performative-contextual messages in lines 1 to 10 – the object is a (rudimentary) description, namely the (rudimentary) description in the form of the English noun ›*object*‹ or the sentence ›*The object has a different ontological status than its description*‹. Consequently, the logical-propositional message is nullified by the performative-contextual message. In conclusion, the object and its description have the *same* ontological status.[24]

In a similar vein, Kaminsky concludes that »language and its referents cannot be treated as two distinct domains« because »we cannot consider a domain to be free of linguistic commitments« (1969: 98). Likewise, McDowell concludes that there is no »ontological gap« between world and thought, or synonymously between reality and concepts, which leads him to argue for an »unboundedness of the conceptual« (1994: 24-28).

These arguments can be formalized. The dualistic claim's logical-propositional message is the ontological distinction:

W vs M

However, the dualistic claim's performative-contextual message goes like this: In lines 5 and 6, it was already shown that the dualist's W is an $M = \lceil W \rceil$. Accordingly, if $M = \lceil W \rceil$ is inserted into the dualist's distinction W vs M by replacing W with $M = \lceil W \rceil$, the result is:

$(M = \lceil W \rceil)$ vs M

The left side of this distinction is an M, namely $M = \lceil W \rceil$, and the right side is also an M. That is, both sides of the distinction have the same ontological status of meaning-description M. Now we are no longer dealing with a *dualistic* distinction, i.e. object W vs rudimentary description M, but with a *non-dualistic* distinction, i.e. rudimentary description $M = \lceil W \rceil$ vs complex description M.[25]

Instead of writing $(M = \lceil W \rceil)$ vs M, one can also use the synonymous notation $\lceil W \rceil$ vs M because the vertical lines symbolize the ontological status of an M. Furthermore, this distinction $\lceil W \rceil$ vs M is, and can only be expressed by, still another description, namely $M = (\lceil W \rceil$ vs M), or synonymously:

[24] This phrasing has a dualistic bias as it semantically implies that there are *several distinct* ontological statuses that »somethings« like rocks, words, tables, thoughts, sentences, etc could possibly take. However, from a non-dualistic perspective there is only *one and the same* ontological status that these »somethings« can take, i.e. the status of M.

[25] A similar claim has been made by Maker: »Every attempt to compare a description of the object [e.g. $M = \lceil$ THE TABLE IS ROUND $\rceil$] with the object 'itself' [e.g. the dualist's W] necessitates that we compare a description [i.e. $M = \lceil$ THE TABLE IS ROUND $\rceil$] with another description [i.e. $M = \lceil W \rceil$]« (Maker 1994: 280).

$M = \left| W \text{ vs } M \right|$

That is, the only way to claim an ontological distinction between an object and its description is by making a description. This formula $M = \left| W \text{ vs } M \right|$ will be resumed in the following chapter 2.3 where it plays an important role in the formal reconstruction of Non-Dualism by means of a re-entry.

Non-Dualism's temporal argument (see the explanation of line 9 and figure 2.IV) also applies to this case: Before the dualist can claim that the object and the object indication have different ontological statuses, he must first make an object indication. For example, before the dualist can claim that the $W =$ apple and the German noun $M = \left| \text{APFEL} \right|$ have different ontological statuses, he must first use the English noun $M = \left| \text{APPLE} \right|$. As Mitterer puts it, the distinction between object and indication of the object is only possible after the indication of the object (1992: 97f, see also Weber 2008: 144). Consequently, first we make an object indication such as $M = \left| W \right|$ and afterwards we make more complex claims such as $M = \left| W \text{ vs } M \right|$.

The distinction between object vs description is similar to the distinction between silence vs communication. In this regard, Systems Theory makes an argument that resembles the non-dualistic approach. Luhmann argues that society is made of communications, whereas society's environment is not made of communications but of silence. But he immediately recognizes that even the characterization of society's environment as silence is a communication because silence is not an operation that takes place in society's environment, but within society, which projects silence to its environment (1989: 16f).

Another claim made by the dualist is a supplement or refinement of the claims in lines 8, 9, 10, and 11 and concerns sensory perception, i.e. sight, hearing, smell, taste, or touch. Sensory perception is usually seen as a relation, instrument, or medium between the subject-actor and object-world (be it an external or internal object-world). The following table lists the dualist's claims.

(12) Dualism's claims (supplements or refinements of claims in lines 8, 9, 10, 11)	**formalization**
• The perception of the object is ontologically distinct from the interpretation of the perception of the object. • The visual experience comes first and afterwards comes the description of this visual experience. • The sound I heard is different from the words I use to describe the sound I heard. • My interpretation of the burning sensation is based on and refers to the burning sensation. • The sensory perception of reality has a different ontological status than its portrayal in language. • One must distinguish the percept from the concept.	• perception of W vs M of perception of W • perception of W before M of perception of W • M of perception of W refers to perception of W

Instead of claiming an ontological difference between object and description, the dualist claims an ontological difference between the *perception of an object* and the *description of the perception of an object* (Mitterer 2001: 35 and

Weber 2005: 33ff, 259f, 317-332). Formally, the dualistic distinction: W vs M, is transformed into the dualistic distinction: perception of W vs M of perception of W. For example, my visual perception of a black object is distinct from my linguistic description ›*my visual perception of a black object*‹ or my mental interpretation that I just saw a thing that was black. Apart from this claim, there are several similar claims that concern sensory perception, e.g. first comes the perception of W and afterwards comes the M of the perception of W, the M of the perception of W refers to the perception of W, there is a W even if we don't perceive it or before we perceive it, etc.

It is obvious that the argumentational structure of these claims is identical to the argumentational structure of the dualist's claims in lines 8, 9, 10, and 11. Consequently, the claims in line 12 also commit a logical-vs-performative contradiction. As expected, the non-dualistic results are: the perception of the object is a (rudimentary) description; the perception of the object has the same ontological status as a description; the (rudimentary) description comes first and afterwards come more complex descriptions such as the claim that the perception of the object comes first and afterwards comes the description of the perception of the object; etc.

Since I have already discussed claims with this argumentational structure at length (see the explanations for lines 8, 9, 10, and 11), I will not go into detail here, but only refer to some authors who had similar non-dualistic ideas with regard to sensory perception.

For example, Goodman seems to detect a contradiction when he argues that anyone who raises a question about the original given or raw perceptual experience »is covertly demanding […] that I describe what I saw without describing it« (Goodman 1972: 9). Kaminsky's conclusion is similar to Non-Dualism's conclusion that perception (or in his terminology: experience) is a form of description. He writes: »But what, in any specific instance, is 'experience'? To say 'The chair is brown' refers to experience, can only mean that if someone observes, he will encounter something describable, with the usual descriptive predicates, as 'There is a chair (here) and it is brown' or he will encounter something describable as an evidential sentence for 'The chair is brown'. 'Experience' becomes a significant expression if and only if it serves as a synonym for a specific descriptive sentence« (1969: 99). More recently, McDowell (1994) criticizes the notion of non-conceptual perception and argues for a fusion of perception and concepts, i.e. perception is always conceptual in the sense that the content of sensory perception is completely permeated by mental concepts.

The dualist may finally attempt to avoid committing the logical-vs-performative contradiction by resorting to the first situation presented in chapter 2.2.1, namely by maintaining communicative silence, i.e. by not speaking of undescribed objects, by not referring to some uninterpreted reality, by not claiming that non-linguistic perceptions exist, etc. Consider the following dialog (based on line 10 and inspired by Weber 2008: 142) to see whether the dualist succeeds.

(13)	**Non-dualist:**	So, what does your description M = │THE TABLE│ refer to?
(14)	**Dualist:**	Well, the description M = │THE TABLE│ refers to …
(15)	**Dualist:**	…
(16)	**Non-Dualist:**	Yes, dear dualist, I am listening and waiting. What does it refer to?
(17)	**Dualist:**	…
(18)	**Dualist:**	Heck, silence doesn't work either! In order to prove that I refer to some undescribed object, I must do two contradicting things at the same time: I *must not say anything* because otherwise there would instantly be a described object or a rudimentary description, but at the same time I *must say something* because otherwise the act of referring would be incomplete, the entire argument would remain unfinished, and my interlocutor would not know what I am referring to.

The dualist is torn between two conflicting impulses or requirements (and thus risks engaging in Lorenz' displacement activities such as rubbing his ear lobe). Even though the dualist succeeds in avoiding the logical-vs-performative contradiction, he fails to perform a felicitous speech of referring because his utterance in line 14 is incomplete so that he fails to refer to his supposedly undescribed object. Hence, he cannot use silence as a means for proving his stance. As Weber shows (2010: 18), the same criticism applies to related dualistic attempts, e.g. trying to silently imagine a table without producing a rudimentary description, trying to eat an apple without using a prior object indication, etc.

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2.2.4 Dualism's infinite regress: Whereas the contradiction argument presented in the previous sections was the *beginning and foundation*, the infinite regress argument presented in this section will be the *continuation and termination* of Non-Dualism's critique of Dualism. The infinite regress argument can be applied to each of the dualistic claims from lines 1 to 12 in the previous sections. As argued above, these claims all have a similar argumentational structure and are semantically overlapping. Consequently, in this section, I will not demonstrate the infinite regresses of all these dualistic claims, but only of the most important ones, which can, however, be considered proxies for the other claims. The infinite regress argument was originally presented by Mitterer (1992: 89ff, see also Weber 2010: 17ff), but since his presentation is rather short, textual, and leaves many points implicit, I will extend, formalize, and make explicit his arguments.

An infinite regress is a sequence of statements that derives from a particular claim and continues backwards endlessly thus revealing the absurdity, inconsistency, or unacceptability of the claim (see Gratton 2010). *In the case of Dualism, the infinite regress argument is a continuation of the contradiction argument because the former results from the repeated application of the latter*. That is, the dualist has accepted that he commits logical-vs-performative contradictions by making the claims in lines 1 to 12 and now tries to escape these contradictions by continually attempting to distinguish, re-distinguish, re-re-distinguish, etc the rudimentary description from the allegedly undescribed object, which continually results in logical-vs-performative contradictions. What the dualist does is nothing but a reissue of the arguments he has been using all the time, or to use Watzlawick's expression, the dualist only does »more of the same« (1983: 27ff).

Here is an example in the form of a dialog which resumes the dualist's claims in line 10 that the description refers to an uninterpreted thing or that the object indication is about the object.

(19) Dualist: The German-language description M = │DER TISCH IST RUND│ refers to W = the table.

(20) Non-dualist: But M = │THE TABLE│ is a description too, namely a kind of rudimentary description.

(21) Dualist: Yes, but what I mean is that M = │DER TISCH IST RUND│ refers to W = an object.

(22) Non-dualist: But M = │AN OBJECT│ is also a rudimentary description. So you mean that the description M = │DER TISCH IST RUND│ refers to another description, namely M = │AN OBJECT│?

(23) Dualist: No, M = │DER TISCH IST RUND│ does not refer to another description, but to W = something that is not a description.

(24) Non-dualist: But again, M = │SOMETHING THAT IS NOT A DESCRIPTION│ is a description too, namely the description that something is not a description.

(25) Dualist: I agree, but my claim is that M = │DER TISCH IST RUND│ is about W = the extralinguistic.

(26) Non-dualist: Here we go again, M = │THE EXTRALINGUISTIC│ is the linguistic.

(27) Dualist: Ok, let's forget M = │DER TISCH IST RUND│ and instead focus on M = │THE EXTRALINGUISTIC│. Put in elementary terms, M = │THE EXTRALINGUISTIC│ refers to W.

(28) Non-dualist: But, M = │W│ is again a rudimentary description, even though a highly rudimentary and mathematical description in the form of the 23rd letter of the English alphabet. So, what does M = │W│ refer to?

(29) Dualist: M = │W│ refers to W.

(30) Non-dualist: I can apply the same objection as in line 28, so we get into an argumentational loop. Besides, arguing that M = │W│ refers to W is equivalent to arguing that M = │SOMETHING THAT IS NOT A DESCRIPTION│ refers to W = something that is not a description. Both claims are tautological and don't add any new information.
I could keep asking you what your description refers to and demonstrate that your description always refers to another description M but never to some purportedly undescribed object W.

(31) Dualist: Heck, I am trapped in descriptions!

(32) Non-dualist: Exactly… but wait a minute! Saying that you are trapped in descriptions implies that there is a kind of M = │DESCRIPTION-TRAP│ that you can in principle escape from to get to some alleged W = world outside the description-trap. However, a M = │WORLD OUTSIDE THE DESCRIPTION-TRAP│ is also a description and is therefore inside the M = │DESCRIPTION-TRAP│.

The initial lines 19 and 20 are a replication of the usual logical-vs-performative contradiction presented in the previous chapter 2.2.3. In the following lines, however, the dualist keeps trying to refer to the allegedly undescribed object W by attempting to distinguish it from the rudimentary description M. In lines 21 and 23, the dualist may think that he gets »closer« to W, but since the non-dualist demonstrates each time that the dualist fails to refer to W and commits a contradiction, in lines 25 and 27 the dualist begins to sense the difficulty or impossibility of referring to W and of avoiding the contradiction. In line 27, he therefore changes his argumentational strategy: Whereas up to

line 25 the dualist had always taken the *same* description as his starting point for trying to refer to W, namely M = ⎸DER TISCH IST RUND⎹, from line 27 onwards he takes *different and successive* descriptions as his starting points, beginning with M = ⎸THE EXTRALINGUISTIC⎹ and afterwards M = ⎸W⎹.[26]

In line 31, the dualist understands that both of his »methods« have failed in that he has not succeeded in avoiding the logical-vs-performative contradiction and in referring to W. *Dualism's infinite regress is this: The dualist continually attempts to demonstrate that his* M *refer to* W*, but each time he commits a logical-vs-performative contradiction as he ends up referring to other* M*. This creates an endless sequence of* M*: Either a sequence in which the same* M^1 *first refers to* M^2*, then to* M^3*, then to* M^4*, etc ad infinitum, or a sequence in which an* M^1 *refers to* M^2*, then* M^2 *refers to* M^3*,* M^3 *refers to* M^4*, etc ad infinitum*.

Another, more formalized example of an infinite regress is a continuation of the dualist's claims in line 11 from the previous section.

W vs M

In lines 5 and 6, I demonstrated that the dualist's W is a rudimentary description or object indication, namely M = ⎸W⎹. Hence, if M = ⎸W⎹ is inserted into the dualist's distinction W vs M by replacing W with M = ⎸W⎹, the result is:

(M = ⎸W⎹) vs M

As explained in the discussion of line 11, the left side of this distinction is an M, namely M = ⎸W⎹, and the right side is also an M. Both sides have the same ontological status of M, so we are no longer dealing with a *dualistic* distinction, i.e. undescribed object W vs rudimentary description M, but with a *non-dualistic* distinction, i.e. rudimentary description M = ⎸W⎹ vs more complex description M. The dualist may agree but argue that it is possible to *distinguish this non-dualistic distinction from the* W *that has not (yet) been indicated*:

W vs ((M = ⎸W⎹) vs M)

But again, the non-dualist shows, as in lines 5 and 6, that the dualist's W that has purportedly not (yet) been indicated or described is a new rudimentary description, namely M^1 = ⎸W⎹. If we insert M^1 = ⎸W⎹ into the dualist's distinction W vs ((M = ⎸W⎹) vs M) by replacing W with M^1 = ⎸W⎹, the result is:

(M^1 = ⎸W⎹) vs ((M = ⎸W⎹) vs M)

At this point, the dualist's and the non-dualist's arguments can be repeated *ad infinitum*, with the result that the dualist never succeeds in realizing a *dualistic* distinction, but endless *non-dualistic* distinctions:

(M^∞ = ⎸W⎹) vs […] vs ((M^2 = ⎸W⎹) vs ((M^1 = ⎸W⎹) vs ((M = ⎸W⎹) vs M)))

The infinite regress leads to ever new rudimentary descriptions M^1 = ⎸W⎹, M^9 = ⎸W⎹, M^{3251} = ⎸W⎹, etc, but never to some allegedly undescribed object W. In

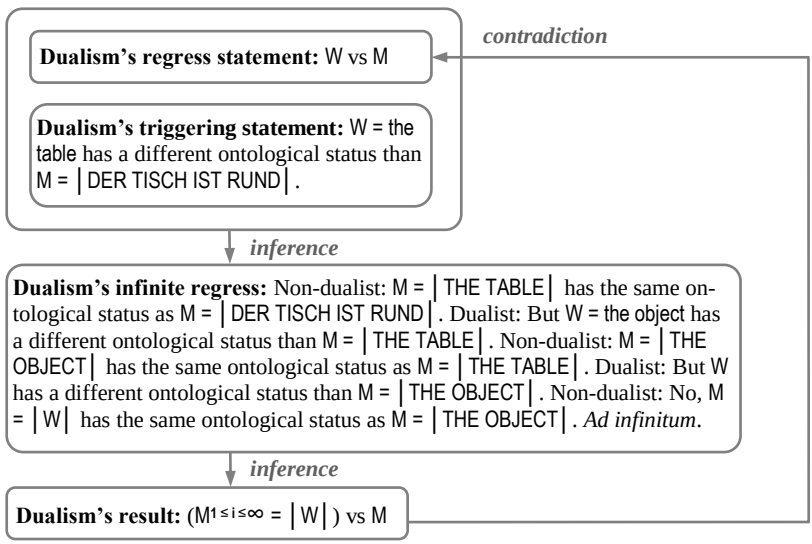
[26] For details on the formula M = ⎸W⎹, see the discussion after lines 5 and 6 in chapter 2.2.2.

the infinite regress, the dualist's goal is to continually *go back* to W (Weber 2010: 18), but the dualist's result is to continually *go forward* to new M.

Since there is no pre-M stage or M-distinct layer where Dualism's uninterpreted W prevails, going back to previous stages or digging deeper into the world, Wittgenstein never reaches W's bedrock where his »spade is turned« (1953: § 217) but continually reaches new M. Just as Communication Theory argues for the impossibility of not communicating (Watzlawick, Beavin Bavelas & Jackson 1967: ch. 2.2) and the Theory of Interpretive Constructs for the impossibility of not interpreting (Lenk 1993: 350), Non-Dualism argues for the impossibility of not describing (or not making M). An analogy: The search for an outside of description is equally as doomed to failure as the search for an outside of space. It is not the case that the more you search, the closer you get to some purported outside of meaning or outside of space, because you will only encounter more meaning and more space. Your search will be infinite.

Non-Dualism's infinite regress argument has a peculiar structure that differs from that of classical infinite regress arguments. We can still use Gratton's model (2010: ch. 1.1) for presenting the structure of classical infinite regress arguments by modifying its elements so as to adapt it to Non-Dualism's case.

Figure 2.V: Structure of Non-Dualism's infinite regress argument[27]



[27] A *regress statement* is a statement that entails an infinite regress, e.g. every intelligent act is preceded by an intelligent act. A *triggering statement* is a statement that triggers the infinite instantiation of the regress statement, e.g. Jay's act 1 is intelligent. Both the regress statement and the triggering statement lead to the *infinite regress* itself, e.g. Jay's intelligent act 1 is preceded by Jay's intelligent act 2; Jay's intelligent act 2 is preceded by Jay's intelligent act 3, etc. The *result* is the inference drawn from the infinite regress, e.g. Jay has performed infinitely many intelligent acts (Gratton 2010).

The figure shows that Dualism's regress statement and triggering statement lead to Dualism's result which then contradicts Dualism's regress statement. This logical-vs-performative contradiction is a more elaborate, complex, and complete version of the logical-vs-performative contradiction presented in the previous chapter 2.2.3. The occurrence of such a contradiction is a clear sign that Dualism is self-contradictory and hence unacceptable.

There are a few other authors who have, even though less explicitly and systematically, made similar infinite regress arguments. For example, Goodman (1972: 9) writes about a claim similar to the dualistic claim in line 12 about the ontological distinction between the perception (of the object) and the description of the perception (of the object). Goodman says that the search for the original given in visual perception is usually viewed as an interrogation in which I am first asked what I just saw. My answer could be ›*I saw the worst criminal*‹. But since my interlocutor complains that I am making too many judgments, I answer ›*I saw a man*‹ or ›*I saw a human looking animal*‹. But my interlocutor is still not satisfied, as he wants to know what I merely saw, i.e. what my raw and direct perception was, so I answer ›*I saw a moving object*‹, ›*I saw such-and-such a configuration of color patches*‹, etc. However, if my interlocutor is consistent and persistent, none of these answers or any other answer will satisfy him. The reason, as Goodman argues, is that all my answers describe my experience in words and so impose on it some interpretation: »All my answers may be true descriptions of what I saw, but no description can be a satisfactory answer to the question what I *merely* saw, for the question is a bogus one« (ibid.). In discussing Goodman's world versions, Krausz concludes that »we might as well let the idea of an uninterpreted world or objects as such drop out of all accounts. Any attempt to say what a version is a version of will issue in yet another version« (2000: 46). Bernard Williams holds that Rorty reaches the drastic conclusion that »all we can ever do is compare one description with another« (quoted in Hazelrigg 1989: 156). Kaminsky takes a similar line of reasoning when he argues that – in asking for confirmations of sentences in terms of their truth – »we simply produce more sentences« and »if these latter sentences are to be confirmed, we produce still more sentences until we may finally reach one such as 'This is it' or 'That is what I meant'« (1969: 100f).[28]

Some authors imply that such infinite regress arguments lead to the classical *onion metaphor*. The search for the undescribed object is like the peeling of an onion. In trying to reach or refer to the object-world W supposed to be the hard core of the onion, the dualist removes the onion's layers of meaning-

[28] Kaminsky proposes an infinite regress argument different from, but relevant to, Non-Dualism's infinite regress argument. The difference is that his infinite regress is not located on the W-side, but on the M-side of the dualistic distinction W vs M. Instead of using a language L_1 in order to describe the language-external world W, one might use a different language L_2, such as a meta-language, to describe L_1 and check whether W really has what L_1 attributes to W. But, the previous argument can be applied to L_2 too, which leads to the positing of another new language L_3 and so on. In consequence, this leads to positing an infinite number of languages L_4, L_5, L_6,…, L_∞ (1969: 94f).

descriptions M, but never reaches the hard core of the object-world W but only an empty core without an intrinsic essence or inherent substance. For instance, Goodman criticizes the idea of a neutral fact or thing by arguing: »When we strip off as layers of convention all differences among ways of describing *it*, what is left? The onion is peeled down to its empty core« (1978: 118, Kaminsky 1969: 100). However, if emptiness is seen in line with Nihilism or Solipsism, Non-Dualism would not agree as it does not argue that there is nothing or that objects or reality do not exist. In contrast, if emptiness is viewed in line with Buddhism, Non-Dualism would agree: Objects and reality are ontologically empty in that they have no inherent nature or independent existence; instead, objects and reality are dependently designated in that they exist as and by designations, names, imputations, or labels (Dalai Lama in Varela ed. 1997: 112f, 116; Geshe Tashi Tsering 2009: 116-127, see also Philosophy East & West 2001 for Indian non-dualistic philosophies). Emptiness is thus understood as empty of undescribed objects W, but full of (or not empty of) described objects M = ⎸W⎹ because these objects are described as undescribed.

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2.2.5 Ontology and language in Non-Dualism: *How do we*, regardless of whether we view ourselves as dualists or non-dualists, *prove the existence or non-existence of an object*, regardless of whether we view the object's original status as described or undescribed?[29]

In previous sections, Non-Dualism showed that an object is not an undescribed object W, but a described object or rudimentary description M = ⎸W⎹, and Non-Dualism consequently showed that the beginning is not an undescribed object W in step A, but a rudimentary description M = ⎸W⎹ in step B.

This argumentation leads to Non-Dualism's conclusion that the *ontological* question of whether or not an object exists is dependent on the *linguistic* question of whether or not a description is made. This is the basis for answering the abovementioned question: *We*, regardless of whether we are dualists or non-dualists, *prove the existence or non-existence of an object*, regardless of whether we view its original status as described or undescribed, *by making a description*, e.g. by means of a rudimentary description about the existence or non-existence of an object. The dualist tries to prove that W = undescribed objects exist by making the rudimentary description M = ⎸UNDESCRIBED OBJECTS⎹ or the more complex description M = ⎸THERE ARE OBJECTS THAT ARE NOT DESCRIBED BECAUSE…⎹. Likewise, the non-dualist tries to prove that M = ⎸UNDESCRIBED OBJECTS DO NOT EXIST⎹ by making the complex description M = ⎸THERE ARE NO OBJECTS THAT ARE NOT DESCRIBED BECAUSE OF THE CONTRADICTION ARGUMENT WHICH SHOWS THAT…⎹.

[29] This ontological how-question is different from the epistemological why-question: Why do we, regardless of whether we view ourselves as dualists or non-dualists, know of or believe in the existence or non-existence of an object, regardless of whether we view the object's original status as described or undescribed? This question may have different answers, e.g. we experience that an object is resistant, we can perceive an object by our sensory organs, we recognize that an object is temporally permanent, etc. However, I will not discuss answers to this epistemological why-question here but focus instead on the ontological how-question.

Put negatively, proving the existence or non-existence of something is impossible without making a description, and put affirmatively, proving the existence or non-existence of something necessarily entails making a description. The reason is that an *object exists only by and as a description* (see the previous chapters 2.2.2 to 2.2.4). Put in the terminology of chapter 1, an object exists only by and as a distinction-based category M that is marked in contrast to one or several residual and unmarked M_{ELSE}. For example, a stone exists by and as the distinction-based category M = ⌈STONE⌋ in contrast to other things in the form of inactivated categories such as M = ⌈NON-STONE⌋, M = ⌈LIVING BEING⌋, M = ⌈EVERYTHING⌋, M = ⌈APPLE⌋, M = ⌈NOTHING⌋, etc. The making of a description, be it communicatively or psychically, for the purpose of proving the existence or non-existence of something may take different forms, e.g. rudimentarily describing an object such as M = ⌈THIS IS A STONE⌋, giving an object indication such as M = ⌈THE MOON⌋, positing the absence of an entity such as M = ⌈YETIS DON'T EXIST⌋, or making the interpretation M = ⌈THERE ARE SUB-ATOMIC PARTICLES⌋.

What are the preconditions for making a description? The most fundamental precondition is that there must be a pool of potential (rudimentary) descriptions out of which actors can make a selection (e.g. a lexicon, sign system, conceptual network, or a meaning medium – see chapters 1.2 and 2.4.2). This pool may be small and elementary, e.g. in infants and certain animals, containing only few and elementary descriptions such as M = ⌈I⌋ and M_{ELSE} = ⌈YOU⌋, M = ⌈IT FEELS GOOD⌋ and M_{ELSE} = ⌈IT FEELS BAD⌋, etc. Moreover, in the case of more complex descriptions, there must be rules for combining the selected (rudimentary) descriptions into more complex or textual descriptions (e.g. a grammar, combinatory principles, syntax). For example, in order for the dualist to make the description M = ⌈UNDESCRIBED OBJECTS EXIST⌋, he must tap into the English lexicon by using the noun M = ⌈OBJECT⌋, the verb M = ⌈EXIST⌋, and the adjective M = ⌈UNDESCRIBED⌋, and he must adapt and combine these words in accordance with English grammar so as to construct the complete sentence M = ⌈UNDESCRIBED OBJECTS EXIST⌋.

Without a lexicon and grammar, the dualist would be unable to formulate any argument and would therefore cease to be a dualist. The existence of Dualism is therefore dependent on a lexicon and grammar. For example, there are certain words for affirming or negating something, e.g. M = ⌈NO⌋, M = ⌈DOES NOT⌋, or M = ⌈NEVER⌋. Also, the lexicon and grammar provide, sometimes in conjunction with affirmative or negating words, ontological markers or existential quantifiers such as M = ⌈THERE IS⌋ vs M_{ELSE} = ⌈THERE IS NO⌋, M = ⌈EXIST⌋ vs M_{ELSE} = ⌈DOES NOT EXIST⌋, M = ⌈FACTUAL⌋ vs M_{ELSE} = ⌈FICTIONAL⌋, M = ⌈SOMETHING⌋ vs M_{ELSE} = ⌈NOTHING⌋, M = ⌈PRESENCE⌋ vs M_{ELSE} = ⌈ABSENCE⌋, etc.

Analyzing the lexicon and grammar of languages more closely reveals a dualistic »bias«. Non-Dualism might even be tempted to say that Dualism is entrenched and encoded in the lexicon and grammar. For example, the lexicon provides dualistic concepts such as M = ⌈OBJECT, i.e. A TANGIBLE OR VISIBLE THING IN THE OUTSIDE WORLD THAT YOU CAN TOUCH, HOLD, OR SEE BUT

WHICH IS NOT ALIVE AND WHICH IS DISTINCT FROM DESCRIPTIONS⎪. Wierzbicka claims that the concept of »thing«, equivalent to M = ⎪OBJECT⎪, is universal in that it exists in all natural human languages and is one of the most established semantic primes in the theory of Natural Semantic Metalanguage (1996: 38f). Other words also reinforce or attest to the dualistic tendency of the lexicon, e.g. M = ⎪UNDESCRIBED⎪, M = ⎪TRUTH, i.e. THE MATCHING OF WORDS AND WORLD⎪, M = ⎪REALITY, i.e. THE STATE OF THINGS AS THEY ACTUALLY ARE RATHER THAN AS THEY ARE THOUGHT OR SAID TO BE⎪, etc. There are also grammatical constructions that support Dualism, e.g. M = ⎪...REFERS TO...⎪, M = ⎪...IS AN INTERPRETATION OF...⎪, M = ⎪...SPEAK ABOUT...⎪, or M = ⎪...THINK OF...⎪, where the first syntactic slot is usually occupied by a description or describer and the last syntactic slot by the supposedly undescribed object. Furthermore, there are certain standardized semantic distinctions that have a strong dualistic imprint, e.g. M = ⎪THE OBJECT OF THE DESCRIPTION⎪ vs M_{ELSE} = ⎪THE DESCRIPTION OF THE OBJECT⎪, M = ⎪THE OBJECT OF THE PERCEPTION⎪ vs M_{ELSE} = ⎪THE PERCEPTION OF THE OBJECT⎪, M = ⎪OBJECT⎪ vs M_{ELSE} = ⎪SUBJECT⎪ or M_{ELSE} = ⎪I⎪, M = ⎪LANGUAGE⎪ vs M_{ELSE} = ⎪NON-LANGUAGE⎪, M = ⎪WORD⎪ vs M_{ELSE} = ⎪PICTURE⎪ vs M_{ELSE} = ⎪THING⎪ vs M_{ELSE} = ⎪SOUND⎪, M = ⎪PERCEPT⎪ vs M_{ELSE} = ⎪CONCEPT⎪, etc. These concepts, distinctions, and grammatical rules »readily suggest or offer themselves« to be adopted by the dualist because of their built-in dualistic orientation which makes it easy and natural to think and talk dualistically. That is why Dualism seems self-evident and intuitive to most people.

Without these concepts, distinctions, and grammatical rules (independent of the question of which of these are culturally learned or genetically encoded), the dualist would be unable to think or assert any of his dualistic arguments, and it would not even occur to someone to formulate dualistic arguments or to become a dualist. For instance, without the abovementioned concepts, distinctions, and grammatical rules, you would not even have the idea of undescribed objects; nobody would make a distinction between the perception of the object and the object of the perception; it could not occur to someone that there are objects at all; no one would argue that descriptions are ontologically distinct from reality; it would not cross your mind that truth exists or is possible; nobody would claim that their words refer to some word-distinct world; actors would not make a difference between themselves as subjects and objects; etc. To sum up, it is only in language that the dualist can formulate his claims, e.g. there is something ontologically different from language such as pictures, objects, perception, reality, smells, etc.

Since objects exist only by and as descriptions, as argued previously, the conclusion is: *If there is no description, there is no object either. More precisely, if the abovementioned descriptions (i.e. concepts, distinctions, and grammatical rules) do not exist, the respective objects (i.e. phenomena, things, and entities) do not exist either*. This does not only apply to so-called institutional, social, or conventional things: There is no marriage without the actors having the concept of marriage, and there is no murder without the actors knowing the meaning of a murder (Pharo 2004: 259). But it also applies to so-called brute,

physical, or material things: There is no uninterpreted world without the actors having the concept of uninterpreted and world, there are no brute facts without the actors having the concepts of brute and fact, and there is no sensory perception without the actors having the concepts of sensory and perception. For instance, if nobody thinks or says M = ⎪X-RAYS EXIST⎪ or M = ⎪THERE ARE TECTONIC PLATE MOVEMENTS⎪, then M = ⎪X-RAYS DON'T EXIST⎪ and M = ⎪THERE ARE NO TECTONIC PLATE MOVEMENTS⎪. It is not necessary to use particular technical terms such as the English words M = ⎪THERE ARE TECTONIC PLATE MOVEMENTS⎪, but one can use other and more ordinary words to make the same description such as M = ⎪THERE ARE VERY LARGE SHEETS OF ROCK THAT FORM THE SURFACE OF THE EARTH AND THAT MOVE VERY SLOWLY⎪. The same ontological conditions hold for objects and phenomena like M = ⎪ELECTRONS⎪, M = ⎪GOD⎪, M = ⎪BLACK FLOWERS⎪, M = ⎪DRAGONS⎪, M = ⎪SPERM CELLS⎪, or M = ⎪PARALLEL UNIVERSES⎪.[30]

The complementary view to this is: *If there is a particular description, there is a particular object too. More precisely, if the abovementioned descriptions (i.e. concepts, distinctions, and grammatical rules) exist, the respective objects (i.e. phenomena, things, and entities) exist too*. For example, if everyone makes the cognitive description M = ⎪GHOSTS EXIST⎪, then M = ⎪GHOSTS EXIST⎪. Likewise, Kaminsky holds that »we can judge of [... the world or reality] that there are causes because we already have the term *cause* as a means of describing what is observed« (1969: 94).

Summarizing the previous discussion, it can be argued that *the existence or non-existence of objects is dependent on the existence or non-existence of particular descriptions*. This argument needs now to be refined by taking into account different historical epochs (e.g. Middle Ages, modern times), different social systems (e.g. Japanese culture, European Astronomical Society), and different psychic systems (e.g. Dr. Smith's mind, infants' cognition) in which descriptions are made: *Particular objects may not exist universally, but only in particular epochs or systems*. For instance, there are tectonic plate movements in modern Europe because the vast majority of contemporary Europeans make the description M = ⎪THERE ARE VERY LARGE SHEETS OF ROCK THAT FORM THE SURFACE OF THE EARTH AND THAT MOVE VERY SLOWLY⎪, whereas there were no tectonic plate movements in ancient Egypt because nobody made the description M = ⎪THERE ARE VERY LARGE SHEETS OF ROCK THAT FORM THE SURFACE OF THE EARTH AND THAT MOVE VERY SLOWLY⎪. In the inverse case, Hell does not exist for atheists because they don't make the description M = ⎪THERE IS A PLACE WHERE THE SOULS OF BAD PEOPLE ARE PUNISHED AFTER DEATH⎪, whereas Hell does exist for Christians because they make the description M = ⎪THERE IS A PLACE WHERE THE SOULS OF BAD PEOPLE ARE PUNISHED AFTER DEATH⎪. The same argument can be made for other things

[30] If, however, the dualist counters that tectonic plate movements exist even if nobody thinks or says that tectonic plate movements exist, or that tectonic plate movements existed even before people thought or said that tectonic plate movements existed, he commits a logical-vs-performative contradiction (see lines 8 and 9 in chapter 2.2.3).

like black holes, Yetis, quarks, dragons, sperm cells, black polar bears, extra-terrestrials, and the Himalayas.

Accordingly, *the existence or non-existence of objects depends on the descriptions made in particular epochs and systems, i.e. in particular temporal, social, and psychic ontologies.* Since the concept of world or reality is usually understood as the sum of all objects, *the world's or reality's structure depends on the descriptions made in particular epochs and systems*. This is why Mitterer argues that the content of reality is determined by the course of the descriptions (1992: 110). Accordingly, *the world's or reality's structure is likely to change with changing epochs and systems*. For example, the world of ancient Egyptians did not comprise objects like tectonic plate movements, electrons, or X-rays, whereas the world of modern Europeans does comprise these objects. Similar to constructivist and relativist terminology, it may therefore be more sensible not to speak of *one world or reality* (*universe*), but of *multiple worlds or realities* (*multiverses*). Despite the differences between these worlds or realities, many are very similar because the descriptions made in these worlds or realities are identical, e.g. Neanderthals, Western bureaucrats, and members of the Yanomamö tribe all make descriptions about the existence of rocks, blood, the sun, pain, or trees. These multiple worlds or realities therefore tend to overlap to a certain degree thus forming a shared *intertemporal, intercultural, and interpersonal world or reality* (similar to what Constructivism calls the intersubjective or objectivated reality).

How can these multiple worlds in principle be structured? Since a world is composed of particular descriptions and since descriptions partially depend on the lexicon and grammar, the world partially depends on the lexicon and grammar too. *The structure of the world depends on the structure of language. Thus the world can only be structured dependent on what the lexicon and grammar allows or requires, i.e. dependent on what language renders impossible, improbable, possible, probable, or necessary*. Even though languages' lexicons and grammars exhibit numerous and flexible possibilities and inventions, there are some descriptions that are impossible or improbable, that sound unnatural, that are self-contradictory, that sound nonsensical, or that are ungrammatical. Hence, if the lexicon or grammar renders these descriptions impossible or improbable, the world cannot be, or is less likely to be, structured in this way. Wittgenstein said that the limits of my language mean the limits of my world (1922: § 5.6). Non-Dualism would go a step further by arguing that *the limits of language are the limits of the world* (for a similar argument about the identity of grammatical space and existential space, see Rentsch 2003: 450f).[31]

2.2.6 Dualism's options after Non-Dualism's criticism: If the dualist, partially or entirely, accepts the non-dualist's criticism but does not want to become a declared non-dualist, what can he do instead? I will present some of the dualist's options. My objective is not to discuss them in detail, present the non-dualist's objections, or reach final conclusions. I merely want to highlight intriguing or problematic issues and provide stimulus to further inquiry.

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[31] The topic of this chapter, i.e. ontology and language, will be continued in chapter 2.4.3.

The dualist may opt to become a *skeptic* by criticizing the non-dualist's logical or epistemological approach. The skeptic may assert that the non-dualist himself commits a logical-vs-performative contradiction (see chapter 2.2.2) because the non-dualist *says* he uses an *evidence of absence*-argument, but he *uses* an *absence of evidence*-argument.[32] That is, the non-dualist says he has evidence of the absence of undescribed objects W, whereas he actually has no evidence of the absence of undescribed objects W.

According to the skeptic, the reason for the non-dualist's lack of evidence of the absence of undescribed objects W is the following. The skeptic holds that it is possible to prove a *particular* negative, i.e. to prove the absence of something at a particular time and place, e.g. there are no dragons in my 9 m^2 attic today at 5 p.m., because exhaustive and simultaneous inspection of all places in the attic is possible. However, it is impossible to prove a *universal* negative, i.e. to prove the absence of something at all times and in all places, e.g. there are no, and never have been, any dragons in the entire universe, because exhaustive and simultaneous inspection of all places is impossible. The skeptic may continue to argue that the non-dualist – by means of the contradiction argument and the infinite regress argument (see the previous chapters 2.2.2 to 2.2.4) – tries to prove a universal negative, i.e. to prove the absence of undescribed objects W at all times and in all places. More precisely, the skeptic argues that even though the non-dualist showed that the dualist could not prove the existence or presence of undescribed objects W, this does not mean that nobody can prove the existence or presence of W. And even if nobody can prove it, this does not mean that W does not exist somewhere, sometime, and somehow. Consequently, the non-dualist's allegedly valid proof is invalid.[33]

The skeptic thus maintains that the non-dualist uses an absence of evidence-argument. The skeptic may further argue that the non-dualist's implicit argumentational structure is faulty as he makes the invalid inference that

[32] Arguments about *evidence of absence* are based on the presence of evidence so that I can undoubtedly infer the absence of some X. For example, examining my mailbox and seeing only two letters and a newspaper constitutes evidence of the absence of mice in my mailbox. Such arguments presuppose that, in hypothetical reasoning, the presence of X would invariably allow me to find evidence of the presence of X. For instance, if there were mice in my mailbox I would undoubtedly see them while examining my mailbox. Arguments about *absence of evidence* are based on the absence of evidence so that I cannot undoubtedly infer the absence of some X, i.e. in some cases I can and in other cases I cannot infer the absence of X. An example of the latter case: Examining my mailbox, my house, my country, many places on earth and the moon without seeing any extraterrestrials constitutes absence of evidence of the absence of extraterrestrials in the universe because there may be extraterrestrials in places that my examination method has failed to detect, e.g. on a distant planet or hidden in my dog's liver.

[33] The non-dualist may counter this on two levels. Firstly, he may disagree and argue that it *is possible* to prove a universal negative because of such-and-such reasons. Secondly, he may agree but argue that the skeptic's claim that it is impossible to prove a universal negative *is itself* a universal negative and therefore impossible to be proved.

absence of evidence is evidence of absence, i.e. the absence of evidence of the absence of W is evidence of the absence of W.[34]

The dualist or skeptic may also become an *agnostic*. This is particularly the case if the dualist admits that he cannot prove the existence of W but argues that the non-dualist cannot prove the non-existence of W either. The agnostic takes an epistemologically safe position by declaring that he simply does not know or that he does not know anything about (the ontological status of) objects or reality. These statements are compatible with Non-Dualism because they allow for the possibility that there are objects and reality but that they can have the ontological status of descriptions or meanings. In contrast, there are also agnostics who declare that they do not know anything about undescribed objects or the uninterpreted reality, e.g. Glasersfeld's Radical Constructivism (see Johnson 2010) or Saussure's Orthodox Structuralism (see Nöth 2000: ch. 1.3.1). Mitterer quotes Maturana (1988: 80) who writes about Dualism's W in terms of the transcendental substratum-reality and shows an agnostic tendency in remarking that »we cannot say anything about it, not even to refer to it as an it, because as soon as we do so we are in language«. Since such statements presuppose the existence of some *terra incognita* in the form of undescribed objects or an uninterpreted reality, this type of agnostic is a dualist and therefore holds a view incompatible with Non-Dualism (for a similar position in Non-Dualism, see Weber 2005: 61, 282, 308).

Another option that the dualist has is to become an *indifferent onlooker* shrugging his shoulders and pointing out that Non-Dualism may be right, but is irrelevant to practical and scientific concerns. Since all that changes is the ontological status of objects and reality, namely from Dualism's W to Non-Dualism's $M = |W|$, there are hardly any relevant consequences or applications of Non-Dualism. The difference between Non-Dualism and Dualism may make no difference after all, and since William James' maxim argues that »a difference which makes no difference is no difference«, it is irrelevant if one chooses Dualism or Non-Dualism.[35]

The dualist may also become an *ignorer* by overtly and deliberately disregarding the entire topic of objects and their ontological status, instead focusing on other topics such as Swahili syntactic structures, early childhood memories, or attempts at squaring the circle. However, since Dualism is used so pervasively and unconsciously in all domains of scientific and practical life, remnants of Dualism are likely to remain present in the ignorer's evasive strategy: Even though he explicitly thinks and talks about other topics, the ignorer may

[34] Here too, the non-dualist may reply on two levels. Firstly, even if the non-dualist agreed that he commits the abovementioned logical-vs-performative fallacy, he argues that it is sometimes a valid inference that *absence of evidence is evidence of absence* (see McGrew 2011: 64f). Secondly, even if the non-dualist agreed that he cannot prove the *absence or non-existence* of W, he points out that the dualist cannot prove the *presence or existence* of W either, so the non-dualist's and dualist's debate ends in stalemate.

[35] The non-dualist may reply that even though the changing ontological status of objects may seem to be of minor importance, it does have major consequences, e.g. for methodological issues (see chapter 2.5), and for truth and conflicts (see Mitterer 1992, 1999, 2001).

implicitly or unintentionally presuppose the existence of undescribed objects W. Some authors in Linguistics and Semiotics maintain such a position by proposing to purposely ignore any supposedly reality-external questions and instead concentrate on language-internal questions. For example, Saussure's semiological model focuses on the signifier and the signified, largely excluding the level of the external referent or object (in contrast to Peirce's semiotic model). Likewise, instead of studying the relation between the linguistic meaning *dog* and the purportedly real dogs running around in the world, Saeed (2003: 45f, 50) recommends studying the relation between the linguistic meaning *dog* and other linguistic meanings such as *bitch* or *animal*.

A final option open to the dualist is the first situation presented in chapter 2.2.1 and its application in lines 13 to 18 in chapter 2.2.3, namely maintaining *psycho-communicative silence* on the topic of the ontological status of objects and descriptions. As shown above, not to think or speak of this topic is a way for the dualist to avoid committing the logical-vs-performative contradiction, but by so doing and per definition the dualist (temporarily) ceases to be a dualist because he does not psychically or communicatively assert his core argument. Even though it is difficult for most people not to think or speak about a particular topic in a permanent and complete way, in particular about such a fundamental and important topic as the ontological status of objects and descriptions, it may be possible to achieve this »speechlessness« or »thoughtlessness« in a temporary and partial way. This option of not thinking or saying anything about a particular topic, and thus also about dualistic arguments, has been widely discussed in Western and Eastern philosophy and mysticism.[36]

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2.2.7 Non-Dualism's characterization: Having presented Non-Dualism's key arguments, I will now retrospectively and briefly characterize Non-Dualism in terms of its orientation and evidence.

Ontological vs epistemological orientation[37]: Grappling with Butler's claim that the body is always already linguistically constructed, Vasterling asks »Is it an ontological or an epistemological claim? Does the claim entail

[36] Wittgenstein's dictum was that »whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent« (1922: § 7). Likewise, Buddhism has a long history of »communications about silence«. Here is an anecdote: A group of Buddhists discuss different ways of entering into non-duality. After each has voiced his opinion, the crown prince Manjusri gives his opinion. He says »Good sirs, you have all spoken well. Nevertheless, all your explanations are themselves dualistic. To know no one teaching, to express nothing, to say nothing, to explain nothing, to announce nothing, to indicate nothing, to designate nothing – that is the entrance into non-duality«. Finally, Vimalakirti is asked to give his opinion. But he remains silent, saying nothing. The crown prince Manjusri applauds and exclaims »Excellent! Excellent, noble sir! This is indeed the entrance into the non-duality of the bodhisattvas. Here, there is no use for syllables, sounds, and ideas.« (Vimalakirti 500 B.C.: ch. 9)

[37] *Ontological* questions concern the existence or non-existence of things (e.g. marble exists, there are no unicorns, this thought), and in the case of existence, they concern the nature of existence (e.g. marble is material-physical, thoughts are immaterial-mental). In contrast, *epistemological* questions concern the methods and limits of obtaining knowledge about something (e.g. ways of determining the color of marble) as well as the conditions and nature of knowledge (e.g. knowledge as a mirror of reality).

that the body is ontologically coextensive with its linguistic constructions, in other words, the body is nothing but a collection of linguistic constructions? Or does it imply that the body is only epistemologically accessible as a linguistically constructed body?« (1999: 165). This example can serve as an analogy to characterize Non-Dualism: Grappling with the non-dualist's claim that objects are always already described, the dualist (alias the constructivist or realist) may ask: Is it an ontological or an epistemological claim? The non-dualist firmly asserts that the claim is ontological and not epistemological: It is a claim about the existence and nature of objects, e.g. objects are descriptions in the form of M = ⌈W⌋. It is not a claim about the nature of knowledge or methods of acquiring knowledge about objects, e.g. objects are epistemologically accessible only via descriptions, knowledge never maps or matches reality, objects can be known by means of sensory perception, etc. Since epistemological questions, e.g. ways of getting to know the Tasmanian devil's courtship behavior, usually presuppose ontological questions, e.g. the Tasmanian devil exists, ontological questions tend to be prior to, and more fundamental than, epistemological questions.[38]

Empirical vs logical evidence[39]: The following characterization of Non-Dualism is deliberately made from Dualism's perspective. Based on the dualistic distinction between empirical vs logical evidence, Dualism retrospectively acknowledges that Non-Dualism does not use empirical evidence from W – such as neurobiological processes, material objects, perceptual stimuli, physical phenomena, etc – to support and prove its arguments. However, if Non-Dualism used W to support and prove its argument that W does not exist and that only M = ⌈W⌋ exists, Non-Dualism would commit a logical-vs-performative contradiction: It would implicitly presuppose and explicitly reject the existence of W. Instead, Dualism acknowledges that Non-Dualism only uses logical evidence in the form of M – in particular the contradiction argument and the infinite regress argument – to support and prove its arguments. From this perspective, Non-Dualism has maintained an internally consistent argumentation. This is also supported by the self-application test, i.e. the application of a theory to itself. The self-application of some theories has problematic results as it reveals contradictions or restricting aspects of the theory, e.g. Constructivism is itself a construction and contradictory as »it presupposes Realism at the beginning and rejects it in the end« (Gadenne 2008: ch. 6), Marginal

[38] The dualist alias the constructivist may counter that *ontological* questions of whether (and how) described or undescribed objects *exist* must be discussed together with *epistemological* questions of whether (and how) we *know* whether (and how) described or undescribed objects exist. The constructivist infers that this approach requires a discussion of the *knower* or *observer* of objects. The non-dualist points out that the constructivist begins with an ontological question by presupposing that first a knower or observer exists who then tries to collect or construct information about objects. According to the non-dualist, the knower or observer, e.g. I, the woman, a dog, are rudimentary descriptions, e.g. M = ⌈THE KNOWER⌋, M = ⌈THE OBSERVER⌋, M = ⌈I⌋, M = ⌈THE WOMAN⌋, M = ⌈A DOG⌋.

[39] In Dualism's sense, *empirical* evidence stems from the domain of undescribed objects and the uninterpreted world W, whereas *logical* evidence stems from the domain of linguistic descriptions and conceptual interpretations M.

Utility Theory has decreasing marginal utility when applied to an increasing number of research topics, and Relativism's claim that everything is relative is itself a universal claim and therefore contradictory. In contrast, if Non-Dualism is applied to itself, no problematic consequences or contradictory aspects occur: Non-Dualism itself is a bundle of descriptions, namely M = │NON-DUALISM, i.e. A PHILOSOPHICAL THEORY THAT…│, the key term meaning is also a meaning, namely M = │MEANING│ or M = │M│, a distinction is itself an interpretation, namely M = │DISTINCTION│ in contrast to M_{ELSE} = │UNITY│, etc.

In conclusion, Non-Dualism' claim is ontological (not epistemological) and, from Dualism's view, it is supported by logical (not empirical) evidence.

2.3 Dualism's Re-entry Creates Non-Dualism

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Even though Mitterer (1992, 2001) has given an argumentational-philosophical explanation of Non-Dualism, a *formal-logical reconstruction and extension* still need to be developed. In this chapter, I seek to fill this research gap (for an earlier version, see Staude 2008). A methodological advantage of formalizing Non-Dualism by using logico-mathematical notation is that this makes explicit main arguments and implicit assumptions. This in turn makes it possible to assess Non-Dualism's internal consistency and integration.

The starting point for this chapter is the discussion of line 11 in chapter 2.2.3 where the dualistic distinction W vs M was shown to be, and transformed into, the non-dualistic description M = │W vs M│. The latter formula means that the whole dualistic distinction W vs M is an M because it can only be made by means of M, namely M = │W vs M│. That is, the only way to claim an ontological distinction between object and description (or between world and word, referent and meaning, etc) is by using a description (or word, meaning, etc).[40]

This argumentational move and notational change from Dualism's W vs M to Non-Dualism's M = │W vs M│ corresponds to, and is made possible by, the formal transformation operation of a *re-entry*.[41]

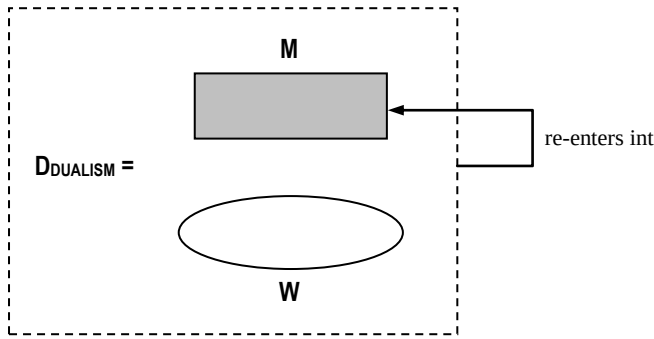
Dualism	→	**operation**	→	**Non-Dualism**
W vs M		re-entry of W vs M into M		M = │W vs M│

[40] As argued in chapter 1.3, I will use the following terms quasi-synonymously as they are all forms of M: meaning, description, indication, interpretation, representation, concept, etc. A specification and differentiation of these terms will be proposed in chapters 2.5.2 and 3.

[41] A re-entry is an operation proposed by Spencer Brown (1969) and employed in Constructivism, Cybernetics, and Systems Theory. An example (modified from Luhmann 1993a: ch. II): Firstly, there is an *entry* in the sense of drawing a distinction in an unmarked space, e.g. the moral distinction between good and bad, formally D = good vs bad, which may be interpreted as ›*it is good or it is bad*‹. Secondly, there is a *re-entry* in the sense of re-introducing the original entry with its two sides into itself, namely into only one of its sides, e.g. into good. The original entry D = good vs bad re-enters into good, so that the new post-re-entry entry is D = good (good vs bad), which can be interpreted as ›*it is good to say 'it is good or it is bad'*‹ or alternatively ›*it is good to distinguish between good and bad*‹.

The operation of a re-entry consists in introducing (re-entering) the entire distinction with its two sides into only one of its sides, and in the case of Dualism, it consists in introducing (re-entering) the entire dualistic distinction with its two sides W vs M into only one of its sides, namely into the side of M, which results in the non-dualistic description M = ⎢W vs M⎢.[42]

Figure 2.VI: Re-entry of $D_{DUALISM}$ = W vs M into M



There are two results of this re-entry operation: the non-dualistic unity and the non-dualistic distinction. Both results will be discussed in the following.

2.3.1 Non-dualistic unity: The first result of the re-entry operation of $D_{DUALISM}$ = W vs M into M can be called the non-dualistic unity.

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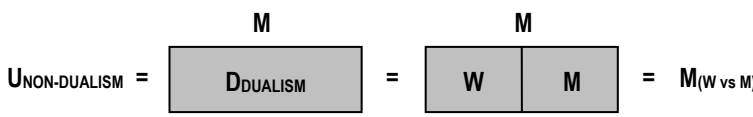
Figure 2.VII: The non-dualistic unity $U_{NON\text{-}DUALISM} = M_{(W\ vs\ M)}$



[42] The operation of re-entry can be divided into the following sub-operations. Firstly, there is the distinction: W vs M. Secondly, the entire distinction is indicated: [W vs M]. Thirdly, within the indicated distinction, one side is indicated: [W vs [M]]. Fourthly, the entire distinction is prepared to be introduced into the indicated side: [W vs [M]⇦] and then [M⇦[W vs M]]. Fifthly, the indicated side is introduced into the entire distinction yielding: $M_{(W\ vs\ M)}$ or M = ⎢W vs M⎢.
Weber (2005: 210ff) uses a similar re-entry (and re-exit) operation. He does not, however, apply it to the dualism of W vs M, but to the dualism of W vs me-subject. Hence, he arrives at different results, i.e. at the dualism of matter vs mind (re-entry into the me-subject) and at the dualism of nature vs culture (re-entry into the W).

The illustration shows that Dualism's distinction $D_{DUALISM}$ between W vs M is itself a meaning M, namely M = │$D_{DUALISM}$│ or M = │W vs M│, which can be further transformed into the equivalent notation $M_{(W\ vs\ M)}$. Consequently, during the re-entry process, *a distinction has been transformed into a unity*: The dualistic *distinction* $D_{DUALISM}$ = W vs M has been transformed into the non-dualistic *unity* $U_{NON\text{-}DUALISM} = M_{(W\ vs\ M)}$.

The non-dualistic unity specifies that Dualism's W and M are on the *same ontological level*, namely on the level of M. Accordingly, Dualism's ontological *heterogeneity* of W vs M is transformed into Non-Dualism's ontological *homogeneity* of M as expressed in the non-dualistic unity $U_{NON\text{-}DUALISM} = M_{(W\ vs\ M)}$. This is why Mitterer (1992: 56) argues that the object of the description and the description of the object form a unity because both are descriptions. There is now a monism of meanings M, or a Meaning Monism (or, similarly, a Semantic, Discursive, or Linguistic Monism).

On the one hand, the monism of meanings prevails because the first side of the dualistic distinction $D_{DUALISM}$ = W vs M, namely W, is theoretically ignored, left unused, or deconstructed. Please note that Dualism's W, depicted in figure 2.I as a white ellipse, no longer appears in figure 2.VII, so that the last remnants of Dualism have disappeared.

On the other hand, the monism of meanings prevails because the second side of the dualistic distinction $D_{DUALISM}$ = W vs M, namely M, is exclusively emphasized and existent. Within the formula $M_{(W\ vs\ M)}$, the M is dominant and monistic because its structural-hierarchical position in the formula shows that, in ontological terms, it entirely determines and governs its subscript $_{(W\ vs\ M)}$.

Monism in its ontological sense stands in contrast both to Pluralism (of which Dualism is one version) and to Nihilism. Monism denotes a state in which a distinction or symmetry is intentionally de-distinctionized and de-symmetrized to only one side of the original distinction or symmetry so that a »oneness« prevails (Weber 2005: 237, Schaffer 2007, see also Bächli & Petrus eds. 2003). From the perspective of Monism in its ontological sense, there is only one kind of basic »stuff« or »substance« that everything is made of. However, there are different monisms: For Idealism's Monism, everything is mental (or mind). For Materialism's Monism, everything is material (or matter). For Neutral Monism, everything is made of a third substance neutral to mental and material phenomena (or mind and matter). For Non-Dualism's Monism, everything is meaning or description M.[43]

Non-Dualism, and its advocated Meaning Monism, is highly compatible with Luhmann's *medium-form theory of meaning* (Luhmann 1984: ch. 2, 1997: ch. 1.III; see also chapter 6.1.1 in this book). On the one hand, meaning as such, i.e. as a general *medium*, is universal, inevitable, and non-negatable for

[43] Linguistic Monism is often criticized and labeled, even by many constructivists, as Solipsism and Idealism because – as Butler (1993: 192) argues – it supposedly claims that »language [i.e. M] effectively brings into being that which it names [i.e. W]«. This phrasing is dualistic because it presupposes the ontological distinction between W vs M. In contrast, Non-Dualism's Monism would re-phrase this claim: »That which is named (i.e. Dualism's W) is language (i.e. M)«, for example, M = │THAT WHICH IS NAMED (i.e. DUALISM'S W)│.

all communicative and psychic operations, so that it is impossible to reject it or not to use it. Even the sentence M = ⎪IT IS SENSELESS⎪, the term M = ⎪NONSENSE⎪, the invented word M = ⎪CHAWLERESS⎪, Chomsky's allegedly meaningless M = ⎪COLORLESS GREEN IDEAS SLEEP FURIOUSLY⎪, or M = ⎪IT HAS NO MEANING⎪ are meaning-»full« because they are and use categories. For example, the category M = ⎪MEANINGLESS⎪ is distinguished from the antonym category M_{ELSE} = ⎪MEANINGFUL⎪, so that this distinction itself M = ⎪MEANINGLESS vs MEANINGFUL⎪ is a meaning and hence meaning-»full«. On the other hand, meaning as a particular *form* in the sense of a concrete thought or a particular utterance is avoidable and negatable, so that it can be rejected or left unused. However, a concrete meaning can only be rejected and left unused in exchange for accepting and using another concrete meaning. For example, a speaker in a conversation may choose not to talk about the meaning M = ⎪DISOBEDIENT⎪, but instead to activate the meaning M = ⎪CREATIVE⎪. Or she may not talk at all, but then she still uses a meaning by activating M = ⎪SILENCE⎪.

Non-Dualism's Monism has similarities with Peirce's Pansemiotism which denies a non-semiotic sphere and argues that the whole world qua ontological sphere is a semiotic sphere perfused with and entirely composed of signs (Nöth 2000: ch. 1.3.1). Similar stances can be found in interpretive approaches: Shusterman says that »everything is in fact constituted by interpretation« (1991: 103) and Hermeneutic Universalism assumes that meaning is universal because »interpretation is the only game in town« (Fish 1980: 350ff). Likewise, Distinction Theory claims that the world is homogeneous in that it consists exclusively of cognitive distinctions (Jokisch 1996: 95).

Since philosophical Non-Dualism lies at the base of the theory of meaning developed in this book, and since M in terms of meaning and description was shown to be monistic, a fundamental and universal role is granted to the concept of meaning and description as well as their derivative or neighboring terms such as language, symbol, indication, concept, signification, discourse, text, sign, interpretation, etc.

Hence, Non-Dualism may be seen as a prolongation and radicalization of the Linguistic Turn (Rorty ed. 1967), the Semantic Turn (Imada 2008: ch. 3.1, Krippendorff 2006), the Cognitive Turn (Fuller 1989), or the Interpretive Turn (Rabinow & Sullivan eds. 1987, Hiley, Bohman & Shusterman eds. 1991), and more generally, of all theories and disciplines whose main focus is on meaning or description and their just mentioned derivative and neighboring terms. The same goes for Constructivism: Even though Non-Dualism considers itself a countercurrent to both Constructivism and Realism, it bears more resemblances to Constructivism and may even be seen as a radicalization and continuation of Constructivism.

2.3.2 Non-dualistic distinction: The second result of the re-entry operation of $D_{DUALISM}$ = W vs M into M is the non-dualistic distinction. This is accomplished by spelling out the first result of the re-entry operation – namely the non-dualistic unity $M_{(W\ vs\ M)}$ shown in the above figure 2.VII – into the non-dualistic distinction M_W vs M_M shown in the following figure.

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Figure 2.VIII: The non-dualistic distinction $D_{NON\text{-}DUALISM} = M_W$ vs M_M

The illustration shows that a *distinction as such* is maintained, but the *dualistic* distinction $D_{DUALISM} = W$ vs M is transformed into the *non-dualistic* distinction $D_{NON\text{-}DUALISM} = M_W$ vs M_M. The general distinction between world vs meaning (or between object vs description, reality vs interpretation, etc) is not completely abandoned nor does it remain on a primary level, but instead, becomes integrated and subscripted into the larger non-dualistic unity within which it figures as a secondary level. Meaning M is dominant and monistic, but differentiated into the subscripted distinction $_W$ vs $_M$, i.e. M_W vs M_M. Put differently, on the ontologically »highest« level, a monism of meaning M prevails, but this monism is split up on an ontologically »lower« level into a dualism of M_W vs M_M.

This non-dualistic distinction between M_W vs M_M may be given a more empirical and concrete content by linking it to the linguistic terms portrayal or representation (see Saeed 2003: ch. 5 and 6), to the system-theoretic terms auto-description vs allo-description (Luhmann 1997: ch. 5, Kieserling ed. 2003), and to the cybernetic terms first-order vs second-order description (Foerster ed. 1981, Luhmann 1993b).[44]

[44] The concept of *portrayal or representation* means that a word or sentence semantically presents itself in a particular way to the hearer. The verb clause ›*The president will expel any member who breaks the club's rules*‹ portrays itself as an *action* because a person does something to another person, whereas a nominalization of this phrase yields the noun clause ›*Breaking the club's rules will result in expulsion*‹, which portrays itself as an *event* because there are no named people but only impersonal forces (Ng & Bradac 1993: 161).
The system-theoretic concept of *auto-description* (*Selbstbeschreibung*) is quasi-synonymous as auto-descriptions are internal descriptions that a system produces to present its own unity, operations, and intentions, e.g. Henry may describe himself by saying ›*I am a kind and just man*‹. Auto-descriptions are always part of the system they are describing, so the describing system and the described system are identical. In contrast, *allo-descriptions* (*Fremdbeschreibungen*) are external descriptions that a system produces about another system to present that system's operations and intentions, e.g. Maria may describe Henry by saying ›*Henry is a kind but unjust man*‹. Allo-descriptions are not part of the described system, so the describing system and the described system are distinct. As can be seen, auto-descriptions and allo-descriptions usually diverge.
The cybernetic concept of *first-order description* denotes a realist description that is made by an observer describing a presumed external object, e.g. ›*The table is gray*‹. In contrast, *second-order descriptions* are more constructivist because they are made by an observer describing another observer and her first-order descriptions such as blind spots, social characteristics of the observer, semantic codes, etc, e.g. ›*The description 'The table is gray' uses the semantic code of color but not the semantic code of law and it is given by a color-blind woman who could consequently not give the description 'The table is red'*‹. For a discussion of these different types of descriptions, see chapter 5.6.1 in this book.

M_W *is a meaning-description* M *that semantically auto-describes or portrays itself as world-object* W, *whereas* M_M *is a meaning-description* M *that semantically auto-describes or portrays itself as meaning-description* M. *This is a second-order description* – from a distant observer such as a non-dualistic philosopher – *that allo-describes* M_W *and* M_M *as first-order descriptions that auto-describe them(selves) either as object* W *or as description* M.

To illustrate this argument, let us look at some examples. M_W = │TABLE│ or M_W = │BLACK THING│ are descriptions M that auto-describe them(selves) as objects W but not as descriptions M, because in everyday semantics tables and black things are considered to be material, permanent, external, resistant, or observable entities, so they are seen to belong to the ontological level of objects W but not to the ontological level of descriptions M. In contrast, M_M = │THE TABLE IS RED│ or M_M = │THE BLACK THING MEANS DANGER│ are descriptions M that auto-describe them(selves) as descriptions M but not as objects W because in everyday semantics they are considered to be linguistic and changeable sentences or immaterial and mental interpretations, so they are seen to belong to the ontological level of descriptions M but not to the level of objects W.

This implies two technical-notational changes. Firstly, Dualism's W is substituted by Non-Dualism's M_W. For example, in Dualism, a scientist sees an undescribed object such as a W = table, but in Non-Dualism, the scientist gives the rudimentary description M_W = │TABLE│ in contrast to »something different« or »all the rest« such as M_{ELSE} = │CHAIR│, │MELODIC│, │TO SWIM│, etc. In Dualism, the scientist visually perceives an uninterpreted thing such as a W = table and a child interprets it as a M(W) = │CAVE│, but in Non-Dualism the scientist gives the interpretation M_W = │TABLE│ and the child gives the interpretation M_W = │CAVE│.[45]

Secondly, Dualism's M(W) is substituted by Non-Dualism's M_M. For example, in Dualism, Henry sees W = a black thing and interprets it as a symbol of M(W) = │DANGER│. In Non-Dualism, Henry gives the interpretation M_W = │A BLACK THING│ and interprets this interpretation as M_M = │DANGER│. In Dualism, people speak of a W = table as a M(W) = │TABLE│, whereas in Non-Dualism, people speak of a M_W = │TABLE│ as, for example, a M_M = │SYMBOL OF COOPERATION AND COMMUNITY│. In Dualism, I eat the W = apple and not the word M(W) = │APPLE│, but in Non-Dualism I eat the M_W = │APPLE│ and not the word M_M = │APPLE│.[46]

The status of a particular M either as M_W or as M_M is not always *a priori* fixed or predetermined because it depends on the perspective adopted by the observer, namely whether she portrays the M as world W or as meaning M. The

[45] The descriptions of the scientist and the child are *unequal* in that they may be connectable, viable, appropriate, robust, etc to differing degrees, but they are *equal* in that they have the same ontological status as meaning-descriptions.

[46] Due to the re-entry, the word ›*meaning*‹ is used in this study in two ways: meaning in the sense of a *distinction-based category*, notated as M, and meaning in the sense of a distinction-based category that auto-describes it(self) as *meaning* (i.e. as signified, concept, idea), notated as M_M. I seek to remedy this terminological ambiguity of the word ›*meaning*‹ by often using symbols such as M, M_M, M_W, etc which allow for notational clarity.

status of an M either as M_W or as M_M is not constant and unalterable because an observer may change the status of an M within an utterance or a conversation. For example, on a shopping tour, Maria may give the description M_W = │THE ROUND OBJECT│ and then interpret this description as M_M = │AN APPLE│, but Henry may give the description M_W = │AN APPLE│ and then interpret this description as a symbol of M_M = │SEXUAL SEDUCTION│. Depending on the observer, │AN APPLE│ is categorized as meaning-description M_M by Maria because she considers the apple to be the interpretation of a prior object-world, whereas │AN APPLE│ is categorized as object-world M_W by Henry because he considers the apple to be the object-world of a subsequent meaning-description.[47]

In chapter 1.3, I argued that meaning M as such may be either referential-transitive or nonreferential-intransitive (in a »language-internal« sense of syntax and grammar). This argument needs to be qualified and modified now.

Firstly, M_W in terms of a meaning that auto-describes it(self) as world or object may be referential-transitive or nonreferential-intransitive. For example, M_W = │THIS ISLAND│ is typically seen as nonreferential-intransitive because, as a natural and non-humanly made object, it does not refer to other meanings M_M. In contrast, M_W = │THIS ISLAND│ is seen by Robinson Crusoe as referential-transitive because for him this island is a symbol of M_M = │PUNISHMENT AND PRISON│ that he believes God has imposed on him (Defoe 1719: 71). This argument will be extended in chapters 2.5.2 and 3 on the semiotic triangle.

Secondly, M_M is always referential-transitive because it necessarily refers to, or is based upon, some other or previous M_W. For example, the interpretation M_M = │DANGER│ is based upon, or refers to, some object or referent such as M_W = │THIS BLACK OBJECT│. This argument will be extended in chapter 2.4 on the time and process dimension of Non-Dualism.

In chapter 1.1, I proposed a definition of meaning as a distinction-based category M vs M_{ELSE}, and in this chapter, I proposed the definition of the non-dualistic distinction M_W vs M_M. Comparing both definitions, it is clear that they are not only compatible, but also that M_W vs M_M *is a special and deduced case of* M vs M_{ELSE}. Hence, the argumentation has been consistent so far.[48]

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[47] In chapter 4, I will extend this argument by means of Prototype Theory. I will show that the two sides of the non-dualistic distinction M_W vs M_M are only the most prototypical poles of a continuous spectrum comprising M that lie between these poles and that are more or less atypical of M_W and M_M, e.g. movements, structures, pictograms chiseled into stone, etc.

[48] So far, the starting point was Dualism with its distinction W vs M and the end point was Non-Dualism with its distinction M = │W vs M│, because the objective was to identify the operation by which Non-Dualism can be reconstructed based on the premise that Dualism is the natural and unquestioned starting point. This operation was, as shown, a *re-entry* of W vs M. It showed how we can become non-dualists. But we might as well take Non-Dualism with its distinction M = │W vs M│ as the starting point and try to reach Dualism with its distinction W vs M as the end point, because our objective could be to identify the operation by which Dualism can be reconstructed based on the premise that Non-Dualism is the natural and unquestioned starting point. This operation is the opposite of a re-entry, i.e. a *re-exit* of M = │W vs M│. This would show how we as pragmatic lifeworld actors have become dualists. Weber (2005: 210ff) uses a re-exit but applies it to a different distinction.

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2.3.3 An artistic illustration of Dualism and Non-Dualism: To render Non-Dualism's abstract formulas and arguments more concrete and intelligible, I will provide a visualization of Non-Dualism using one of Magritte's surrealist paintings.

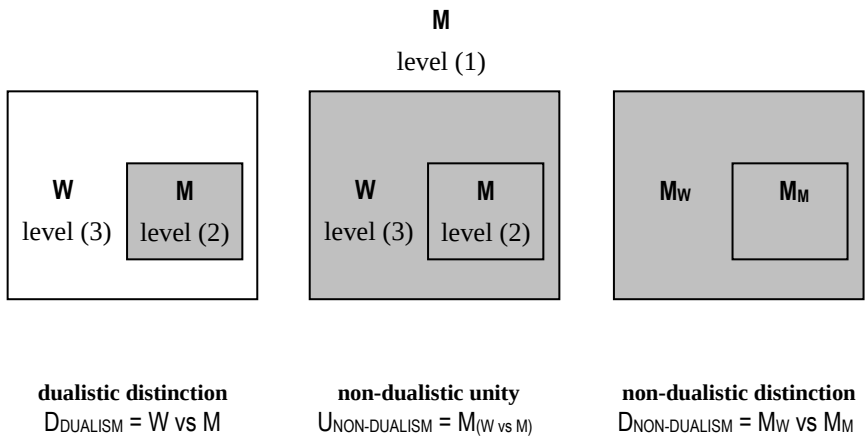
Figure 2.IX: Magritte's painting *La Belle Captive*[49]

Let us dissect Magritte's painting from the perspective of Non-Dualism. Three different ontological levels can be distinguished in the painting: (1) The level of Magritte's painting itself and as a whole, embedded within this text you are now reading. (2) The level of the small painting embedded within Magritte's painting, i.e. the canvas put on the easel standing next to the tree and depicting some houses and a horse pulling a carriage. (3) The level of Magritte's painting that is neither (1) nor (2) but that depicts the large field and pasture, the big tree, some houses, and people.

These three ontological levels may be depicted and analyzed by means of another, simplified illustration that uses the non-dualistic terminology developed in the previous chapters.

[49] Similar versions of this painting or structurally similar photos can sometimes be found on the cover of constructivist books (e.g. Foerster & Pörksen 1998). Provided that one agrees to consider Constructivism a type of Dualism and hence in contradiction to Non-Dualism, it is funny and strange to see that the *same* image is used to symbolize or support *different* hypotheses or theories, namely, constructivist Dualism vs Non-Dualism.

Figure 2.X: Dissection of Magritte's painting *La Belle Captive*



On the left side, you can see the dualistic distinction $D_{DUALISM}$ = W vs M because Dualism only considers two of the abovementioned levels, i.e. level (3) as the large field and pasture, the big tree, some houses, and people (shown as a white rectangle), and level (2) as the canvas put on the easel depicting some houses and a horse pulling a carriage (shown as a shaded rectangle).

In the center, you see the non-dualistic unity $U_{NON\text{-}DUALISM} = M_{(W\ vs\ M)}$ because Non-Dualism holds that Dualism has ignored level (1) as the level of the painting as a whole, embedded within this text you are reading: Firstly, level (3) as W is only existent by using level (1) as M, i.e. you can only depict, think, indicate, or speak about W by using an M, because without level (1) there would not even be Magritte's painting in this text. Secondly, the distinction between level (3) and (2) is only depictable by using level (1), i.e. the dualistic distinction must be indicated by the non-dualistic unity of the dualistic distinction. But since level (1) is a painting it corresponds, just like level (2), to M (shown as a shaded rectangle; there is no longer a white rectangle). Hence, the dualistic distinction W vs M can only be a description, namely $\lceil W\ vs\ M \rceil$. The center illustration corresponds to figure 2.VII, both depicting the non-dualistic unity.

On the right side of the illustration, you can see the non-dualistic distinction $D_{NON\text{-}DUALISM} = M_W$ vs M_M, which emphasizes that, from the perspective of level (1), there are only descriptions, i.e. two different descriptions: A description that auto-describes it(self) as world, i.e. M_W, and another description that auto-describes it(self) as description, i.e. M_M. The right hand illustration corresponds to figure 2.VIII, both depicting the non-dualistic distinction.

2.3.4 Unfolding the paradox: In summary, the re-entry of the dualistic distinction $D_{DUALISM}$ = W vs M into M yields two fundamental results: Firstly, we get $U_{NON\text{-}DUALISM} = M_{(W\ vs\ M)}$ which denotes the non-dualistic unity of M. Secondly, we get $D_{NON\text{-}DUALISM} = M_W$ vs M_M which denotes the non-dualistic distinction between M auto-describing it(self) as $_W$ and M auto-describing it(self) as $_M$.

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There is a particular advantage to having the non-dualistic unity and the non-dualistic distinction as theoretical instruments at one's disposal because they are able to solve the following paradox: (1) On the one hand, philosophical Non-Dualism shows that *there is no* ontological difference between the object of the description and the description of the object in that both have the same ontological status of descriptions, so that a *monism* of descriptions M prevails. (2) On the other hand, in everyday semantics and the practical lifeworld there is an unshakable certainty that *there is an* ontological difference between the object of the description and the description of the object, so that a *dualism* of object W and descriptions M prevails. This certainty is also reflected and encoded in lifeworld semantics and daily language use (see chapter 2.2.5) because many, if not most, words, sentences, thoughts, and utterances exhibit the dualism of object W and descriptions M.[50]

Views (1) and (2) are seemingly paradoxical because both seem plausible or cogent, but they contradict each other. Instead of disregarding either view (1) or view (2), the theorist should take both into account and seek to integrate them into a more comprehensive view. I claim that the non-dualistic unity and the non-dualistic distinction are able to achieve this because they reconcile views (1) and (2). The paradox can be unfolded, i.e. solved or eliminated, by the following argumentation: The paradox exists only when seen from one particular perspective, namely the perspective presented in the previous paragraph, whereas the paradox ceases to exist when seen from another perspective, namely the perspective that I will discuss below. From this other perspective, the paradox of views (1) and (2) is unfolded by introducing a second distinction, namely the distinction between a level of first-order observation and a level of second-order observation.[51] Whereas view (1) is located on the level of second-order observation, view (2) is located on the level of first-order observation – so that each view holds locally on its own level of observation without contradicting or interfering with the other view.[52]

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[50] Even non-dualists confirm this view. For example, Grampp (2008: 222ff) draws on Wittgenstein and argues that before there can be *philosophical doubt* about Dualism's W or about Dualism's distinction between W vs M, there is, and must be, an *a priori and everyday certainty* about the existence of Dualism's W and about Dualism's distinction between W vs M. Similarly, Weber (2008: 144) holds that we will never be able to give up our urge to »go back« to a »beyond« of all discourse and description so as to look for a starting point, a reason, or driving force. Schmidt too (2010: 140) argues that a pragmatic Dualism in everyday life is inevitable.

[51] See footnote 44 for an explanation of first- and second-order observations.

[52] An example: The sentence ›*fishermen would catch more fish if they fished less*‹ (by Tudge 1991: 59) is paradoxical because it comprises a distinction between two sides *X* vs *Y* that is logically inconsistent, i.e. *X = fishermen catch more fish* vs *Y = fishermen catch less fish*. The paradox is unfolded by introducing a second distinction, e.g. *A = in the future* vs *B = in the present*, in such a way that each side of the first distinction *X* vs *Y* is confined to only one side *A* vs *B* of the second distinction, e.g. *X + A = fisherman catch more fish in the future* vs *Y + B = fishermen catch less fish in the present*. Consequently, the pragmatic meaning of Tudge's sentence can be phrased as: Fishermen would catch more fish in the future if they fished less fish in the present (because fish stocks would have the time to reproduce and therefore to increase in size).

This is a third-order observation that observes the first- and second-order observations. On the one hand, the non-dualistic distinction $D_{NON\text{-}DUALISM} = M_W$ vs M_M with its subscript $_{W \text{ vs } M}$ corresponds to the level of first-order »realist« observation of common sense and everyday language use. Here, the belief in the dualism between $_{W \text{ vs } M}$ is insurmountable, necessary, and important in the eyes of »the pedestrian in the street«. On the other hand, the non-dualistic unity $U_{NON\text{-}DUALISM} = M_{(W \text{ vs } M)}$ with its dominant M corresponds to the level of second-order »constructivist« observation of science, analytical reasoning, and theoretical analysis. Here, the first-order distinction between $_{W \text{ vs } M}$ appears as a unity in the form of M in the eyes of »the philosopher in the armchair«. This sort of third-order observation offers a way to unfold, i.e. to solve or eliminate, the abovementioned paradox so as to reach a more global and complex view.

2.4 Time and Process in Non-Dualism

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In the previous chapter, Non-Dualism and its distinction $D_{NON\text{-}DUALISM} = M_W$ vs M_M were depicted in a static and synchronic manner. However, Mitterer's (1992) original non-dualistic philosophy accounts for temporal-processual aspects. In the following, I will formalize and extend this temporal-processual approach.

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2.4.1 Meanings up to now and from now on: The starting point is the non-dualistic distinction between M_W vs M_M. Even though this is not Mitterer's original terminology, but my modified formalization, it can still be connected to his original terminology: M_W *and* M_M *are two stages in a temporal process*.

The first stage is M_W, which is the object indication or rudimentary meaning-description. Mitterer calls this stage the description *so far*, which I find more convenient to call the description or meaning *up to now*.[53] This is the existent description that has already been made and that prevails up to the present. The atemporal notation with the vertical lines $M_W = |\ldots|$ continues to be valid, but I will now specify this notation by adding small horizontal arrows or lines which are to symbolize the time vector:

$M_W = \rightarrow|\ldots\rightarrow|$ in shorthand form becomes $M_W = \dashv\ldots\dashv$ [54]

[53] There are two reasons: (1) Description *up to now* goes aesthetically better with its counterpart description *from now on* since both expressions comprise three little words including the important word ›*now*‹. (2) The word ›*now*‹ better conveys the idea that the temporal benchmark is the *now*, up to which or from which descriptions may connect.

[54] My usual *synchronic-static* notation $M = |\ldots|$ is thus transformed into the *temporal-processual* notation $M = \rightarrow|\ldots\rightarrow|$ or simplified $M = \dashv\ldots\dashv$. The idea behind these notations is as follows: The vertical lines | symbolize the present *now*, left of which is the past and right of which is the future. The horizontal arrows →, or simplified, the horizontal lines –, symbolize the *temporal movement*: On the one hand, a movement from the past up to the present now, as in the case of the description *up to now* $M = \rightarrow|\ldots\rightarrow|$ or simplified $M = \dashv\ldots\dashv$. On the other hand, as will be seen in the next paragraph, a movement from the present now to the future, as in the description *from now on* $M = |\rightarrow\ldots|\rightarrow$ or simplified $M = \vdash\ldots\vdash$. In contrast, Mitterer (1992, 2001) uses a different notation, which I find less clear, namely /…/ for the description up to now and "…" for the description from now on.

From a non-dualistic perspective, Dualism's W is an M, namely M_W. The object of the description, namely Dualism's W, is the description up to now, namely Non-Dualism's M_W (Mitterer 1992: 56-62). For example, in a discussion, Henry communicatively introduces the object of description by indicating it as M_W = ┤THE APPLE├. The indication of the object by means of a rudimentary description up to now constitutes the base and starting point for further and more complex descriptions in the second stage.

The second stage is M_M, which is the continuation of the previous description M_W by modifying it or adding something new to it. Mitterer calls it the *description from now on*, which I will often also call the *meaning from now on*. It is the description that is being made in a particular moment. The usual atemporal notation with the vertical lines in the form of M_M = │...│ continues to be valid, but I will now specify this notation by adding small horizontal arrows or lines which are to symbolize the time vector:

M_M = ├→...├→ in shorthand form becomes M_M = ├... ├ [55]

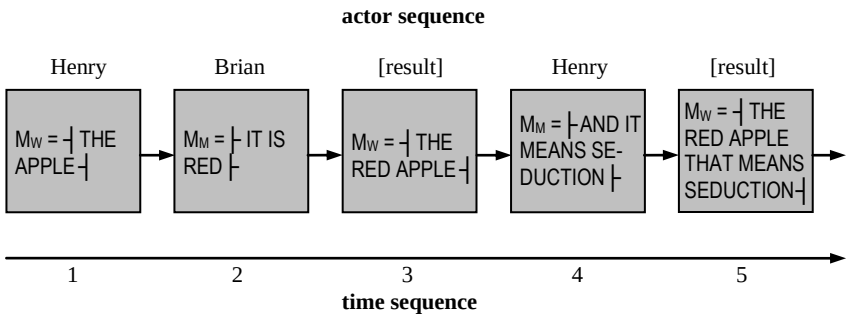
The description of the object is the description from now on, which follows and continues the description up to now. In Dualism, the meaning or description is *directed toward* and *refers back to* the object, whereas in Non-Dualism the meaning or description *starts from* and *continues* the object: Since the object is, as shown in the first stage, the description up to now, the description from now on starts from the description up to now by continuing and expanding it (Mitterer 1992: 56-60). In other words, M_M is a *description-starting-from-and-continuing-a-previous-description*. Resuming the above example, Henry's description up to now M_W = ┤THE APPLE├ is taken up and continued by Brian who adds the description from now on M_M = ├IT IS RED ├.

These two stages taken together, i.e. the description up to now M_W and the description from now on M_M, come to constitute a *new* description up to now. For example, Henry's rudimentary description M_W = ┤THE APPLE├ and Brian's description M_M = ├IT IS RED ├ come to form the new, more elaborate description up to now M_W = ┤THE RED APPLE├.

This new description up to now corresponds once again to the first stage, which I have already presented above, so that it serves as a starting point for further and new descriptions from now on. For example, Henry may resume the new description up to now M_W = ┤THE RED APPLE├ by adding a new description from now on M_M = ├AND IT MEANS SEDUCTION ├. Once again, both preceding descriptions taken together, i.e. the new description up to now and the new description from now on, come to constitute another new description up to now, namely M_W = ┤THE RED APPLE THAT MEANS SEDUCTION├. This process may be repeated so that a long or even endless chain of descriptions up to now and descriptions from now on can be created. The figure below summarizes the previous arguments.

[55] See the previous footnote 54 for the reasons for such a notation.

Figure 2.XI: Process of alternating descriptions up to now and from now on



Other examples of the process of meaning-descriptions up to now and from now on may be: M_W = ┤ THIS THING…├ is described by Maria as M_M = ├…IT WEIGHS 10 KG ┤, M_W = ┤ HE RAISED HIS FIST…├ may be interpreted by a soldier as M_M = ├…A SYMBOL OF THREAT ┤, M_W = ┤ THE UNDESCRIBED OBJECT…├ is further described by the dualist as M_M = ├…CAN LATER BE DESCRIBED ┤, and M_W = ┤ THE VOLCANIC ERUPTION…├ may be seen by a religious newspaper as M_M = ├…DIVINE PUNISHMENT ┤.

The notation introduced in this chapter, i.e. descriptions or meanings up to now M = ┤…├ and descriptions or meanings from now on M = ├… ┤, complements and specifies the usual notation of descriptions or meanings M = │…│. The distinction between a *synchronic-static* notation M = │…│ and a *temporal-processual* notation M = ┤…├ or M = ├… ┤ will be useful: In arguments in which time and process play no important role, I can use the synchronic-static notation, and in arguments in which time and process do play a vital role, I can use the temporal-processual notation.

Based on this non-dualistic and temporal approach, how can the concepts of *object*, *world*, or *reality* be defined? In everyday language, world or reality is usually understood as the ontological sum of all objects, i.e. all things, phenomena, entities, facts, etc. Previous chapters have shown that objects are rudimentary descriptions M_W and this chapter has shown that *objects are descriptions up to now* ┤M_W├ *that are shared and accepted by the participating actors*. Consequently, Mitterer argues that *the world or reality is the sum of all descriptions up to now* ┤M_W├ *that are shared and accepted by the participating actors*, i.e. the latest narrative state of affairs, the attained discourse positions, the knowledge accumulated up to now, the shared interpretations so far (and for children, reality is but a »silly convention of adults«, see Hesse 1923: 242). For example, Africa is the sum of our descriptions up to now, e.g. it is one of the 7 continents, it comprises more than 40 countries, it has several mountains over 5000 meters, etc (see Mitterer 1992: 57, 60f, 67, 104, 110 and Weber 2005: 282, 318ff). What *our* descriptions are depends on the particular epoch, culture, and actor in which the descriptions occur, e.g. in Neanderthal times, in children's cognition, among Western bureaucrats, or in the Yanomamö tribe (see chapter 2.2.5 on ontology and language).

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2.4.2 Medium, forms, and systems: The non-dualistic approach developed so far may be profitably connected to the following approaches of Systems Theory: to the medium vs form approach (see chapter 6.1.1 for a more comprehensive presentation based on Luhmann 1984: ch. 2 and 1997: ch. 2.I) and to the concept of system.

On a basic level, both the *meaning medium* and the *meaning forms* are constituted of the same elements, i.e. meanings M. The meaning medium corresponds to the infinite universe (or in semiotic terms, the paradigm) of all latent, inactivated, or uncoupled meanings M = │...│. For example, the meaning medium comprises the meanings M = │DANGER│, M = │NOW│, M = │TO BE│, M = │A│, M = │TO MEAN│, M = │I│, M = │TO SING│, M = │MEANINGLESS│, M = │GOOD│, M = │FLAG│, M = │NOT│, M = │RED│, and hundreds of thousands of other inactivated and uncoupled meanings. In contrast, the meaning forms correspond to a small selection (or in semiotic terms, a syntagm) of activated, manifest, or coupled meanings up to now M_W = ┤...├ or meanings from now on M_M = ├... ├. These may be concrete utterances, realized thoughts, seen pictures, written sentences, remembered melodies, etc that a particular actor or system activates in a specific temporal-spatial context. For example, yesterday I took a walk and suddenly perceived M_W = ┤A RED FLAG├, and afterwards I interpreted it as M_M = ├A RED FLAG MEANS DANGER ├. Whereas the meaning medium is temporally stable and long-lived, the meaning forms are temporally unstable and short-lived as their elements easily deactivate or decouple, so the meaning forms quickly disappear.[56]

Furthermore, there is a special relation between meaning forms and systems: A system is composed of operations, e.g. a social system is composed of communications and a psychic system is composed of thoughts. Operations themselves are not a medium, but particular forms because they are momentary, selective, and specific events. This is why Luhmann argues that it is only the forms, and not the medium, that are connectable and utilizable in a system (1997: 201). The reason is that a system is »a series of forms *as series*«, i.e. a temporally sequenced repetition or chain of varying forms (Khurana 1998: 129). Moreover, since meaning forms may appear as meanings up to now or from now on, as I have argued above, and since operations are meanings up to now or from now on, as Weber suggests (2005: 351f), the logical conclusion is that a *system is composed of meanings up to now and from now on*. The sequential series of meanings up to now and from now on, depicted in the above figure 2.XI, consequently constitutes a system. In this case, the series of successive meanings up to now and from now on constitutes a social system in the form of a conversation between Henry and Brian.

[56] As can be seen, Luhmann's medium vs form-approach is compatible with Mitterer's non-dualistic approach – a possibility also briefly remarked on by Weber (2005: 321f), but so far unexplored. Firstly, both of the approaches neither presuppose nor introduce Dualism's external object and rock-bottom world W, but both remain on the level of the non-dualistic meaning M. Secondly, the medium and forms have the same ontological status because both are composed of meanings M and the forms are nothing but a compression or activation of the medium.

The conclusion is that meanings or descriptions M as such are *autopoietic, reflexive, recursive, or self-referential* because a particular M always continues or connects to a previous M, thus forming a system of meanings or descriptions such as ...→ M → M → M →... or ...→ ┤M├ → ├M┤ → ┤M├ →... or put differently ...→ ┤M_W├ → ├M_M┤ → ┤M_W├ →.... That is, interpretations follow prior interpretations and descriptions continue previous descriptions in Mitterer's Non-Dualism (1992: 25, 56); statements are followed by statements in Discourse Theory; »meaning always refers again to meaning and never from meaning to something else« in Luhmann's Systems Theory (1984: 96); interpretations can only be made of other prior interpretations in Gidden's Double Hermeneutic (1993) as well as in the Interpretative Turn (Bohman, Hiley & Shusterman 1991: 7-10); and the Semiotic Principle declares that »a sign cannot be reduced or analyzed into any combination of things which are not themselves signs« (Goddard 1994: 7).[57]

Based on the previous discussion, one of Non-Dualism's temporal arguments now needs to be elaborated and supplemented by a more complex approach. So far, I have argued that the temporal starting point is not (the existence of) an undescribed object W, i.e. Dualism's step A, but (the making of) a rudimentary description M, i.e. Non-Dualism's step B (see figures 2.III and 2.XI). This argumentation has implied that before Non-Dualism's step B, i.e. before the rudimentary description, there are no previous steps in terms of previous descriptions. However, it would be more in line with the above-mentioned form and systems approach to argue that there is no definite starting point in terms of one original description. Instead, each specific description M^i is only one element in a longer and often endless chain of preceding descriptions M^{i-1}, M^{i-2}, M^{i-3}, etc and succeeding descriptions M^{i+1}, M^{i+2}, M^{i+3}, etc. Therefore, we are constantly embedded in ongoing steps and in a state of »already-have-begun« and »always-be-in-the-middle« (Schmidt 2003: 97, Weber 2005: 40, 48). A particular rudimentary description is therefore likely to be the semantic continuation or topical outgrowth of previous descriptions.

2.4.3 The degree of connectivity and robustness of descriptions: There are two criteria or characteristics that are particularly important in studying the process from a meaning-description up to now ┤M├ to a subsequent meaning-description from now on ├M┤. These criteria or characteristics apply both to cognitive and communicative systems.[58]

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[57] An important process by which systems are created and maintained is *co-activation*, which will be explained in detail in chapter 6.4.

[58] There are many other criteria and characteristics that I will not, however, discuss here. For the criterion of *truth* of meaning-descriptions, see Mitterer's comprehensive and non-dualistic account (1992, 1999, 2001). It suffices to say that the concept of truth – both in its realist definition as the correspondence between a statement and reality and in its constructivist definition as the viability of a statement in its reality – is based on Dualism's distinction $D_{DUALISM}$ = W vs M and is therefore nonexistent in Non-Dualism. Moreover, the criterion of truth is rather limited in its range of application because it requires many felicity conditions, e.g. it is only applicable to sentences (but not to single words), to constative sentences (but not to imperative, expressive, or interrogative sentences), to constative sentences about past or present things (but not about future events), etc.

(1) The *degree of connectivity vs discontinuity* of meaning-descriptions. The concept of connectivity is inspired by Luhmann's Systems Theory and refers to the probability or capacity of a particular meaning up to now ┤M├ to generate many meanings from now on ├M¹┤, ├M²┤, ├M³┤, etc that semantically refer to or continue the meaning up to now ┤M├. For example, the utterance up to now M = ┤THERE IS A TABLE├ would have a high connectivity (and a low discontinuity) if it easily generated several utterances from now on that somehow made reference to the utterance up to now, such as M¹ = ├THE TABLE IS ROUND┤, M² = ├NO, IT'S A CHAIR┤, M³ = ├PIECES OF FURNITURE ARE USUALLY MADE OF WOOD┤, M⁴ = ├YEAH, AND IT REMINDS ME OF MY CHILDHOOD┤, etc. In contrast, it would have a low connectivity (and a high discontinuity) if it did not generate any, or only very few, utterances from now on that semantically referred to the utterance up to now, such as the *non sequitur* M = ├THE ASTRONOMER SAW THE COMET┤. Haley (1963) distinguishes between *accepting*, *rejecting*, and *ignoring* a communication. This distinction can be applied to connectivity: Accepting or rejecting a meaning-description corresponds to a high connectivity, whereas ignoring a meaning-description corresponds to a high discontinuity, e.g. changing the topic of conversation, pretending the speaker never said anything, remaining silent, etc.[59]

The degree of connectivity or discontinuity of a meaning-description thus decides if a *system or syntagm* emerges and persists or if it becomes atrophic and collapses. Meaning-descriptions with a high connectivity therefore foster the tendency toward autopoiesis, i.e. the production and reproduction of the system's elements by the system's elements, and toward syntagmatization, i.e. the temporalization and combination of paradigms into syntagms. This tendency may manifest itself in different communicative and cognitive forms such as narratives, internal dialogs, collocations, conversations, discourses, daydreaming, texts, debates, reasoning, or functionally differentiated societal fields such as the legal system or the economic system.[60]

(2) The *degree of robustness vs susceptibility* of meaning-descriptions.[61] The concept of robustness refers to the probability or capacity of a particular meaning up to now ┤M├ to generate numerous meanings from now on ├M¹┤, ├M²┤, ├M³┤, etc that semantically accept or presuppose the meaning up to now ┤M├. Put differently, the meaning up to now ┤M├ withstands new and potentially »adverse« meanings from now on ├M¹┤, ├M²┤, ├M³┤, etc, so that it continues to be informationally and intersubjectively valid, accepted, or un-

[59] The concept of connectivity is similar to the Coherence Rule: »In order for an utterance to form a coherent sequence with the preceding utterance, it must either fulfill the illocutionary intention of the latter or address its pragmatic presuppositions.« (Tsui 1991: 111)

[60] Some open questions: What determines the degree of connectivity or discontinuity of a meaning-description? A partial answer will be given in chapter 6.4.2 on the co-activation of meanings within a meaning field. What determines whether a high degree of connectivity appears in a psychic form (e.g. thoughts) or in a social form (e.g. communications)?

[61] Instead of speaking of robustness vs susceptibility, similar or neighboring terms are equally possible: resilience vs vulnerability, resistance vs sensitivity, hardiness vs receptiveness, durability vs delicateness, complementarity vs substitution (Weber 2005: 282), success vs failure (Janich 2010: 40f), etc.

changed. For example, the utterance up to now M = ┤THERE IS A TABLE├ would have a high degree of robustness (and a low degree of susceptibility) if it were followed and confirmed by utterances from now on such as M^1 = ├YES, THAT'S RIGHT┤, M^2 = ├I LIKE THE SHAPE OF THIS TABLE┤, M^3 = ├CAN I BUY IT?┤, or M^4 = ├PUT THAT PIECE OF FURNITURE OVER THERE!┤. In contrast, it would have a low degree of robustness (and a high degree of susceptibility) if it were followed and challenged by utterances from now on such as M = ├IT'S A CHAIR┤ or M = ├NO, THERE IS NOTHING IN THIS ROOM┤.

The degree of robustness or susceptibility of a meaning-description depends on its *semantic-informational content* and on the *social-historical context* in which it occurs. Two examples: On the one hand, the degree of robustness of a meaning-description tends to increase if it uses a symbolically generalized medium of communication such as truth, power, money, love, law, art, etc (Luhmann 1997: ch. 2). That is, a meaning-description is likely to remain unchanged and accepted by subsequent meaning-descriptions if it is considered to be true, powerful, profitable, loving, legal, beautiful, etc. On the other hand, if a meaning-description that declares the flatness of the earth occurred in contemporary Germany, it would be highly susceptible, but if it occurred in The Flat Earth Society or medieval Spain, it would be highly robust.

In the remainder of this chapter, I will look more closely at the topic of ontology and language. Whereas the discussion in chapter 2.2.5 can be seen as the first part of this topic, the following discussion is the second part as it focuses on susceptibility and robustness.

Let us first look at the topic of *robustness*. Everyday semantics offers different terms for descriptions with different degrees of robustness: (a) Descriptions with an extremely low degree of robustness tend to be called ›*falsity*‹, ›*lie*‹, ›*nonsense*‹, ›*fiction*‹, ›*invention*‹, or ›*misconception*‹. (b) Descriptions that have a low degree of robustness are usually viewed as ›*opinion*‹, ›*hypothesis*‹, ›*interpretation*‹, or ›*argument*‹. (c) Descriptions with a high degree of robustness tend to be called ›*fact*‹, ›*data*‹, ›*information*‹, or ›*truth*‹.[62] Many of these descriptions remain constant and unchanged, sometimes over millennia and across many cultures, e.g. M = │SOMETIMES YOU CANNOT SEE THE SUN│. (d) And finally, for those descriptions with an extremely high degree of robustness, lifeworld semantics has reserved words like ›*object*‹, ›*reality*‹, ›*thing*‹, ›*world*‹, or ›*phenomenon*‹, e.g. M = │THE SUN│.

[62] The non-dualistic concept of *robustness* may replace or complement the dualistic concepts of *truth* and *viability*. A realist Correspondence Theory of Truth would argue: A description is true because it exactly matches reality (correspondence between word and world). A constructivist »Viability Theory of Descriptions« would argue: A description is viable because it successfully fits into reality (viability of the description in its reality). A non-dualistic »Consensus Theory of Robustness« would argue: A description is robust because other and subsequent descriptions accept it (consensus among the descriptions of different actors). The pragmatic conclusion of all three theories would be: And therefore we take this description as the basis for further descriptions. The non-dualistic »Consensus Theory of Robustness« somewhat resembles Mitterer's non-dualistic discussion of a fundamental consensus (1992, 2001) and dualistic Consensus Theories of Truth.

This latter approach (d) is adopted by Non-Dualism in conjunction with the conceptualization of objects from previous chapters: *The typical object is a description up to now that is extremely robust and that auto-describes it(self) as object*, e.g. M_W = ┤THE MOON├ , M_W = ┤THERE IS A WHITE TABLE├ , or M_W = ┤A STONE├ . The conceptualization of objects as descriptions with an extremely high degree of *robustness* accounts for the well-known *resistance* of objects. Dualists speak about »the fundamental experience that the world sometimes *resists* our attempts to describe and form it«, e.g. I cannot go straight through a wall and I cannot make a table bigger just by mental effort alone (see Gadenne 2008: 154). From a non-dualistic perspective, however, this means that the dualist's descriptions *from now on* M_M = ├THE WORLD SOMETIMES RESISTS OUR ATTEMPTS TO DESCRIBE AND FORM IT┤, M_M = ├I CANNOT GO STRAIGHT THROUGH A WALL┤, and M_M = ├I CANNOT MAKE A TABLE BIGGER JUST BY MENTAL EFFORT ALONE┤ are highly robust and continue the prior descriptions *up to now* M_W = ┤THE WORLD├ , M_W = ┤A WALL├ , and M_W = ┤A TABLE├ that are extremely robust.[63]

Having discussed robustness, let us now turn to the topic of the *susceptibility* of descriptions. Chapter 2.4.1 showed that objects (or the world, phenomena, reality, etc) alias descriptions up to now are sensitive to, and dependent on, descriptions from now on. Consequently, the object of description is – by means of the description of the object – modified and developed into a new object of further description.

In the example above in figure 2.XI, the object constantly changes: First there is an apple, then there is a red apple, and finally, there is a red apple that means seduction. Another example makes the point clearer. Looking at a shop window, 14-year old Henry tells his schoolmate Brian that he has seen something but does not know what it is. Brian adds that it is longish and yellow, so Henry specifies that it is a banana. Both agree and come back the next day with another schoolmate who tells them it is not a banana but just a plastic decoration. Some days later, Henry and Brian happen to come again to the shop window and now see that a label has been added identifying what they saw as a vibrator. Here too, the object constantly changes: First there is a »something«, then there is a longish and yellow »something«, then there is a banana, afterwards there is a plastic decoration, and finally there is a vibrator. The same kind of reasoning can be applied to so-called scientific discoveries: Due to differing descriptions, in the remote past, the sun was a deity, later it was a fire ball, nowadays it is a star composed of plasma, and in 50 years it may well be something altogether different.

[63] In Dualism, M have a *much lower degree of robustness* than W because of their distinct ontological statuses. However, this is not the case in Non-Dualism, because the non-dualistic unity posits a monism of descriptions that all have the same ontological status. This is why the degree of robustness of M is indeterminate and depends on the type and context of a particular M, e.g. if it is an M_W or M_M. Accordingly, in non-dualistic parlance, speaking of M in terms of descriptions, meanings, interpretations, sentences, etc has no connotation of a low degree of robustness.

As Mitterer (1992: 99) points out, Non-Dualism does not use Constructivism's terminology by arguing that the description *creates* the object, but that the description *changes* the object. More precisely, the object of the description (the description up to now) and the description of the object (the description from now on) come together to form a new object of description (a new description up to now). Hence, if descriptions are susceptible, they are likely to differ or change, so that reality and objects differ or change too, sometimes within minutes or years. For example, since scientific and religious discourse has changed, our planetary system has changed accordingly: Whereas the sun revolved around the earth in medieval Europe, the earth revolves around the sun in contemporary Europe.

With regard to Non-Dualism's main argument that descriptions change the world (or that meanings change the object), there is an interesting parallel with Speech Act Theory: According to Searle (1969), some speech acts and utterances are *performative or declarative* in that they simultaneously perform a particular action or automatically declare a particular state of affairs instead of only describing or prescribing a particular action or state of affairs. In short, words change the world in that *the uttering of words logically entails the changing of the world*. For example, if a priest in a marriage ceremony says to Maria and John ›*I hereby declare you to be husband and wife*‹, his words automatically change the world, namely from a previous »world without Maria and John's marriage« to a subsequent »world with Maria and John's marriage«. A similar but more explicit and radical reasoning can be applied to Non-Dualism. All descriptions and meanings are *performative or declarative* in that they simultaneously perform a particular action or automatically declare a particular state of affairs. In short, descriptions change the world in that *the making of a description logically entails the changing of the world*. For example, when Columbus' messenger reported to the Queen of Spain that M_M = ├WE HAVE DISCOVERED A NEW CONTINENT┤, his words automatically changed the world for the Queen of Spain and subsequently for the European population, namely from a previous M_W = ┤WORLD COMPRISING THE CONTINENTS OF EUROPE, AFRICA, AND ASIA├ to a subsequent M_W = ┤WORLD COMPRISING THE CONTINENTS OF EUROPE, AFRICA, ASIA, AND A NEW CONTINENT├.[64]

Similar arguments can be found in other theories: In Discourse Theory, objects can be modified by discourses, i.e. if the discourse changes, the object loses its old identity and adopts a new identity changing into another object (Jäger 2001: 92ff). In Symbolic Interactionism, »objects are the product of symbolic interaction« because »out of a process of mutual indications common objects emerge«. Objects are social creations in the sense of »being formed in and arising out of the process of definition and interpretation as this process takes place in the interaction of people« because »people are forming, sustaining, and transforming the objects of their world« so that that »objects have no

[64] If, however, the dualist counters that the world did not change at all because the new continent existed *even before* people thought or said that the new continent existed, he commits a logical-vs-performative contradiction (see line 9 in chapter 2.2.3).

fixed status except as their meaning is sustained through indications and definitions that people make of the objects« (see Blumer 1969: 11ff). In a similar vein, Systems Theory's communicative approach views society as the sum of all actualized communications (Krause 2005: 154), and if communications change, society changes accordingly.[65]

Comparing and connecting both criteria or characteristics, i.e. connectivity and robustness, it seems obvious that connectivity is primary and more fundamental, whereas robustness is secondary and more specific: The degree of connectivity or discontinuity determines whether or not an ┤M├ generates any subsequent ├M┤ that semantically refer to ┤M├. Only if it does, the degree of robustness or susceptibility then determines whether or not these connecting ├M┤ semantically confirm the ┤M├. The advantage of both criteria is that their scope of application is wide because they not only refer to constative speech and »thought« acts, but to all types of speech and »thought« acts, e.g. imperative, expressive, interrogative, etc.

2.5 Methodological and Semiotic Applications

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In the current scientific landscape, Non-Dualism »up to now« has hardly been pursued further outside the philosophical domain, so a systematic application and connection to the Social Science domain is still lacking.[66]

In the previous chapters, I have applied and related Non-Dualism to some non-philosophical topics, e.g. medium-form theory, Linguistics, an artistic illustration, Systems Theory, etc. In this chapter, I will continue this endeavor by discussing some methodological issues relevant to empirical research and by presenting a non-dualistic version of the semiotic triangle.

2.5.1 Methodological applications of Non-Dualism: Since the ontological beginning is not some M-distinct and M-prior W, but meaning-descriptions M (see chapter 2.4), the methodological beginning for scientific-empirical research must also be meaning-descriptions M. At the beginning, therefore, stands a general and comprehensive study of M in its different cognitive and communicative manifestations in a particular actor, system, group, or culture at a particular moment or in a specific epoch.[67]

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[65] There are two open research questions with regard to the robustness and susceptibility of descriptions: On the one hand, why do new and different descriptions arise at all, thus changing or challenging previous descriptions? (Weber 2008: 145). On the other hand, why are there so many descriptions that confirm or accept previous descriptions, thus maintaining the status quo? Can there be other answers than the dualistic answer that there are objects that exist prior to, and are independent of, descriptions?

[66] With a few exceptions: Bormann (2004), articles in Constructivist Foundations (2008) and its translation in Riegler & Weber eds. (2010), Schmidt (2003), and Weber (2002, 2005).

[67] However, not even a particular actor, epoch, system, or group should be taken for granted. We should first reveal which social, temporal, and spatial distinctions are used that lead to the identification and existence of some actor, epoch, system, or group. Similarly, Actor-Network-Theory's starting point is not an already assembled group or existent domain, e.g. IBM, France, Maori culture, but the processes of assembling, re-assembling, and de-assembling elements that form, change, or dissolve groups or domains (Latour 2005).

Such a non-dualistic empirical approach comprises three, partially overlapping aspects.

(1) M *in terms of the non-dualistic unity* $M_{(W\ vs\ M)}$. From such a general perspective, an appropriate starting point is to study M in its different manifest forms such as *words, sentences, categories, symbols, concepts, interpretations, syntagms, meanings, signs, codes, labels, etc*. As already argued, language plays a particularly important role in this respect, especially when it comes to complex categories and descriptions, and therefore deserves special attention.

For example, typical research questions could be: Which cognitive conceptualizations did medieval Sufis use? How do physicists classify reality by means of mathematical symbols? What are typical discourses and arguments in the modern legal system? How does Maori culture describe itself in the form of pictures and texts? What is the emotional landscape of professional soldiers? Which visual and tactile codes occur in romantic love relationships? What types of mental images are used in Buddhist meditation?

Such an approach also asks which concepts are present in a particular actor or society, but absent in another. For example, in many African cultures there exists the cultural concept of M = ⎪INSTITUTIONALIZED AND RITUALIZED SOCIAL INTERACTION BETWEEN TWO PEOPLE OR GROUPS IN WHICH ONE IS PERMITTED OR REQUIRED TO MAKE FUN OF OR TEASE THE OTHER WHO IS NOT PERMITTED TO TAKE OFFENCE⎪, whereas in a typical Western European society there is no such concept (only in anthropological jargon it is known as a *joking relationship*). Or, why was the following concept nonexistent in Ancient Egypt, namely M = ⎪THERE ARE VERY LARGE SHEETS OF ROCK THAT FORM THE SURFACE OF THE EARTH AND THAT MOVE VERY SLOWLY⎪, whereas in a contemporary Western European society this concept does exist (under the geological denomination *tectonic plate movements*)? From a comparative perspective, there are hence semantic-ontological blind spots or gaps in our communication, cognition, and reality with regard to others' communications, cognitions, and realities. This type of question is more fundamental than the question of affirmation and negation of a concept, which will be discussed below, because the latter presupposes that the concept to be affirmed or negated is already known by, or exists in, a particular actor or culture. Only if I know the concept M = ⎪TECTONIC PLATE MOVEMENTS⎪, can I affirm or negate it.

(2) M *in terms of a distinction-based category* M vs M_{ELSE}. From this structuralist perspective, an appropriate starting point would be to inquire into the manifold *distinctions, contrasts, comparisons, structures, taxonomies, and divisions* that are entrenched and used in cognition and communication. In these cases, »something particular« M is distinguished from »something different« or »all the rest« M_{ELSE}.

On an elementary level, there is the ontological distinction between M = ⎪AFFIRMATION⎪ and M_{ELSE} = ⎪NEGATION⎪. For example, why do some actors or cultures believe that M = ⎪SPIRITS EXIST⎪, whereas others believe that M_{ELSE} = ⎪SPIRITS DON'T EXIST⎪? In which cases do observers or systems argue that M = ⎪HE DID X⎪ and in which cases M_{ELSE} = ⎪HE DID NOT DO X⎪?

Looking only at the affirmative side of this ontological distinction, one can then further differentiate it. Within the category of spirits, what is the difference between a M = ⎪POLTERGEIST⎪ and an M_{ELSE} = ⎪ANGEL⎪? Is the primary distinction in modern court trials M = ⎪LEGAL⎪ and M_{ELSE} = ⎪ILLEGAL⎪? Why is the distinction M = ⎪RAIN⎪ and M_{ELSE} = ⎪SUNSHINE⎪ so important in agriculture? What processes in the French language led to the differentiation between M = ⎪POUVOIR⎪ and M_{ELSE} = ⎪PUISSANCE⎪, whereas English makes no such distinction and only knows M = ⎪POWER⎪? Since M_{ELSE} may not only appear as the specific »something different«, as in the previous examples, but also as the unspecific »all the rest«, a research question could be: In which cases do actors use the meaning M = ⎪THREAT⎪ instead of the neighboring meanings M_{ELSE} = ⎪WARNING⎪, ⎪PUNISHMENT⎪, ⎪INTIMIDATION⎪, ⎪PROMISE⎪, etc? This question leads to a meaning field analysis (see chapter 5).

(3) M *in terms of the non-dualistic distinction* M_W vs M_M. The distinction M_W vs M_M is a special and compatible case of the distinction M vs M_{ELSE}.

The question here is how and why are some M described as, or auto-describe them(selves) as, world-object $_W$ or meaning-description $_M$? That is, how and why is an M portrayed as M_W or as M_M? These questions concern the processes – be they short-term (e.g. visual categorization, social interaction), medium-term (e.g. childhood, socialization), or long-term (e.g. societal change, evolution) – that lead to the differentiation of an M into M_W or M_M.[68]

Since the non-dualistic distinction has a particular temporal aspect to it, namely the chronology of meaning-descriptions up to now ⎪M_W⎪ and meaning-descriptions from now on ⎪M_M⎪, processes and changes loom large in this approach. For example, why is a M_W = ⎪RED ROSE...⎪ usually interpreted as a symbol of M_M = ⎪...LOVE⎪? In which discourses or situations is M_W = ⎪SENEGAL...⎪ followed by connecting communications such as M_M = ⎪...IS AN UNDERDEVELOPED COUNTRY⎪? What determines whether a particular observable body behavior such as an M_W = ⎪ERECTION...⎪ is portrayed as something that involuntarily happens, something that one can voluntarily decide to do or not to do, or something that is a response to something previous, i.e. M_M = ⎪...EXPERIENCE⎪, M_M = ⎪...ACTION⎪, or M_M = ⎪...REACTION⎪? In chapter 3 on meaning divergence, I will continue to discuss these questions.

In certain cases, the non-dualistic distinction M_W vs M_M may be viewed as a special version of the distinction between matter vs mind (or synonymously, reality vs reasoning, objects vs psyche, nature vs consciousness, thing vs thought, etc). This has radical non-dualistic consequences for the conceptualization and use of the matter vs mind distinction.

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[68] With regard to the world-object M_W, Mitterer asks: »How does something solidify until it is called object so that at the end it is really opposed to language?« (1993: 205). This question is similar to the sociological question of objectivation or institutionalization, i.e. how do »subjective meanings *become* objective facticities«? (Berger & Luckmann 1966: 30). Butler, who worked on sex, has a similar approach because she asks »why and how […] a *particular* representation of the outside to discourse becomes reified *as* material, natural, prediscursive. […] We should thus] inquire into the means by which sex becomes naturalized as ontology, undertaking a genealogical inquiry into ontology« (MacKenzie 2008).

Firstly, *analyzing meaning* M_W *is equivalent to analyzing matter*, or synonymously, *analyzing descriptions* M_W *is equivalent to analyzing objects*. This follows from the previously discussed arguments that objects exist only as descriptions M_W and that objects change if the descriptions M_W change. If one studies the M_W-structures and M_W-processes of a society, epoch, or actor, one also studies this society's, epoch's, and actor's reality, objects, and ontology.

Secondly, *analyzing meaning* M_M *is equivalent to analyzing the mind*, or synonymously, *analyzing descriptions* M_M *is equivalent to analyzing cognition*. This argument follows from a mixture of Non-Dualism, sociological Systems Theory, and Cognitive Linguistics. In Non-Dualism, meaning M is monistic, omnipresent, and fundamental in all communicative and cognitive operations, and in Systems Theory, meaning M can appear both in a psychic form – e.g. reasoning, remembering, perception, imagining – and in a communicative form – e.g. utterances, gestures, texts, pictures (see chapter 6.3.3 on psychic vs communicative activations of meaning). The sole mode by which a psychic system can operate is by connecting meanings up to now ┤M├ to meanings from now on ├M┤ (see chapter 2.4.2). Consequently, if one analyzes the M-structures and -processes of a particular actor or group of actors, one also studies this actor's psychic system or this group of actors' psychic systems.

To reframe a widely held argument: Meaning is a window into the mind. Language-oriented approaches, such as the Linguistic Turn or Cognitive Linguistics, often specify this argument to the particular case of linguistic meaning: Language is a window into the mind (see Pinker 2007). A Lacanian-based explanation is that the unconscious is structured like language or even is language (see Homer 2005: 69). Consequently, I argue that cognitive operations and structures are constituted by linguistic-semantic operations and structures, namely by M-operations and M-structures.

The following is an example of how meaning or language allows us to have a look at the mind and psyche (based on Lakoff 2004: 3f, Lakoff & Johnson 1980, and Turner 2001). The expression ›*pain relief*‹ constitutes a mental frame that is composed of several semantic elements: there is an affliction (e.g. pain), an afflicted actor (e.g. a sick person), relief (e.g. painkillers), an actor who gives relief by removing the affliction and who is therefore a »hero« (e.g. a doctor), and other actors who might try to stop the hero and who are therefore »villains«. The expression ›*tax cuts*‹ also constitutes a mental frame with several semantic elements: there is a monetary deduction (e.g. tax), paying actors (e.g. citizens and companies), a receiving actor (e.g. the state), a norm (e.g. financial legislation), a reduction of the monetary deduction (e.g. the cuts), etc. Cognitive Linguistics provides two useful and similar concepts that explain the creative use of such frames: A so-called conceptual blend is created if a speaker selectively combines the semantic elements of the frames ›*pain relief*‹ and ›*tax cuts*‹ so as to construct a new and hybrid frame such as ›*tax relief*‹. A so-called conceptual metaphor is created when a speaker partially transfers the semantic elements of the frame ›*pain relief*‹ (the source domain) to the frame ›*tax cuts*‹ (the target domain) so as to construct a new and figurative frame such as ›*tax relief*‹. Conceptual metaphors or blends have

the same outcome, namely a new, hybrid, or figurative frame. If a speaker uses this frame ›*tax relief*‹, as the U.S. president George W. Bush frequently did, it reveals much about his reasoning and beliefs: The speaker consciously or unconsciously thinks that taxes are an affliction, that afflicted actors are those who pay tax (e.g. citizens and companies), that tax cuts are relief and therefore economically or politically good, that the actor who gives relief in the form of tax cuts is a »hero« (e.g. a neo-liberal party), and that actors who try to stop the »hero« are »villains« (e.g. a left-wing party). As can be seen, the use of the frame ›*tax relief*‹ does not represent a neutral, overt, or scientific description of taxation, but a subtle, covert, and ideological perspective that is a reflection of a speaker's beliefs and reasoning. Conceptual metaphors or blends allow a speaker or hearer to create or understand a concept that is new, abstract, or difficult to understand, e.g. ›*tax relief*‹, by linking it to concepts that are known, concrete, or easy to understand, e.g. ›*pain relief*‹ and ›*tax cuts*‹. This example shows that by analyzing a simple linguistic expression, one can analyze more complex cognitive processes and structures.

In studying the various forms of M presented in the previous points (1) to (3), the concept of *communication* acquires a particularly important methodological role. Even if it is argued that several meanings (especially rudimentary meanings, see chapter 1.2), are genetically transmitted via heredity and evolution, e.g. M = │TO FEEL GOOD│ or M = │TO SEE SOMETHING│, most meanings (especially complex meanings) are communicatively learned through interaction and socialization, e.g. M = │ROMANTIC LOVE, i.e.…│ or M = │EXPANDING UNIVERSE, i.e.…│. Even things and concepts that we consider highly personal, idiosyncratic, and self-developed, e.g. M = │MY SELF│ or M = │HER IDEAS│, originate in communication by and to others, i.e. in collective, shared, and external things and concepts (see Fuchs 2010). These arguments emphasize the methodological role of communication – in contrast to cognition or heredity – in studying how actors or systems come to have or know certain meanings. Consequently, all those theories and disciplines whose main focus lies in communication are particularly helpful, e.g. sociological Systems Theory, linguistic Pragmatics, Discourse Theory, Symbolic Interactionism, Communication Theory, Constructivism, mass media studies, or Social Psychology.

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2.5.2 A non-dualistic semiotic triangle: Another area of application for philosophical Non-Dualism is Semiotics. In the following, I will transform the classical, i.e. dualistic, semiotic triangle into a non-dualistic semiotic triangle, which will serve as the theoretical base for subsequent chapters.

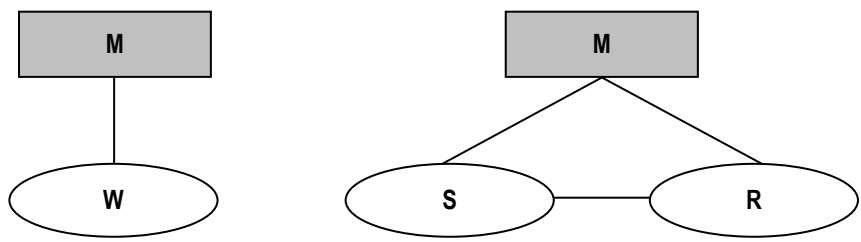
Dualistic semiotic triangle: In the dualistic distinction $D_{DUALISM}$ = W vs M, the W stands for a conglomerate of terms such as undescribed world, object, direct perception, uninterpreted reality, raw experience, etc. It seems fruitful to divide this conglomerate into two parts, which results in the elaboration of the classical, i.e. dualistic, semiotic triangle. That is, W is split, on the one hand, into some *concrete entity of the world*, often called the referent, which I notate as R, and on the other hand, into some *mode of sensory perception or material presentation of the referent* R *or of the meaning* M, often named the signifier, which I notate as S. For example, a signifier is the acoustic sound S = bɛ:rd or

synonymously a color painting of a bird, the meaning is M = │AN ANIMAL WITH WINGS AND FEATHERS, THAT LAYS EGGS, CAN USUALLY FLY, AND SOMETIMES SING│, and the referent is the real-world entity R = my canary Tweety.

The justification for splitting W into R and S can be found in semiotic theory (see also in chapter 2.3.2 the example of Robinson Crusoe's island which can either be seen as a referent or signifier). With regard to R, Peirce's conceptualization clearly acknowledges the world- and non-meaning-character of R because it is seen as a concrete and real object, behavior, event, or exemplar in the empirical world outside the semiotic sign (Chandler 2002: 20, 32-36, 58f; Eco 1976: 58-62). With regard to S, the signifier is also cast in terms of world and non-meaning because it is the material-physical form of R or M that is directly apprehendable by sensory perception and that manifests itself to the actor (Chandler 2002: 18f). Perception is, as shown in chapters 2.1 and 2.2.2, usually conceptualized as ontologically distinct from, and prior to, meaning and description M, so it is seen to belong to the level of W.[69]

Since S and R are two manifestations of W, W is consequently replaced by S and R: Instead of Dualism's »dyadic« distinction W vs M, we get Dualism's »triadic« distinction S vs R vs M. In a loose analogy to Cottingham (1985), Dualism is thus transformed into »Trialism«, which results in the classical semiotic triangle as depicted in the figure below (modified from Ogden & Richards 1923: 16). Note that both the dyadic model and the triadic model strictly remain within the realm of Dualism because an unbridgeable ontological heterogeneity is assumed between M (depicted as a shaded rectangle) versus W and its component parts S and R (depicted as white ellipses).

Figure 2.XII: Dualism's dyadic and triadic distinction



dualistic *dyadic* distinction

dualistic *triadic* distinction (dualistic semiotic triangle)

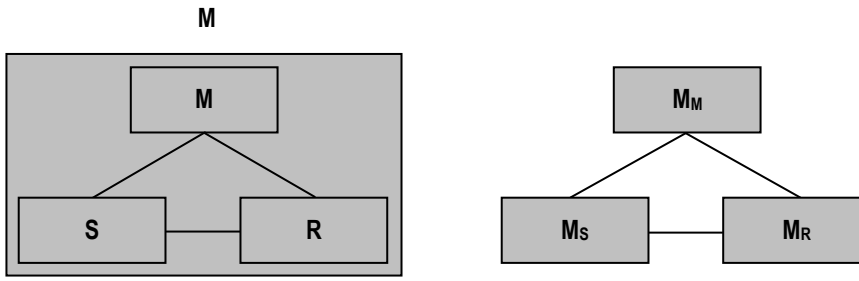
[69] Moreover, it may sometimes be ambiguous whether »something« of the world W is a referent R or a signifier S. For example, a scale may either be seen as a referent R = a scale, in that it is a subordinate real-world exemplar of the extension of the superordinate meaning M = │TECHNICAL DEVICE FOR WEIGHING OBJECTS OR PEOPLE│, or it may be seen as a signifier S = a scale, in that it symbolizes the meaning M = │JUSTICE AND LAW│. This type of ambiguity is only possible if the two ambiguous »somethings« stem from the same ontological source or level. In the case of the ambiguity between R and S, this common source or level is the ontological level of W (for further discussion, see chapter 3.2.1).

Non-dualistic semiotic triangle: In chapter 2.3, I explained the conversion from the dualistic distinction $D_{DUALISM}$ = W vs M into the non-dualistic unity $U_{NON\text{-}DUALISM}$ = $M_{(W\ vs\ M)}$ and into the non-dualistic distinction $D_{NON\text{-}DUALISM}$ = M_W vs M_M. An analogous conversion can be applied to the semiotic triangle as W can be replaced by its component parts, namely by the signifier S and the referent R.

Firstly, we obtain the non-dualistic unity $U_{NON\text{-}DUALISM}$ = $M_{(S\ vs\ R\ vs\ M)}$, which implies that the whole classical dualistic triangle is itself a meaning M. Secondly, we obtain the non-dualistic distinction $D_{NON\text{-}DUALISM}$ = M_S vs M_R vs M_M with the typical auto-descriptions: The signifier M_S is an M that auto-describes it(self) as the particular mode of sensory perception or material presentation of an M_R or M_M. The referent M_R is an M that auto-describes it(self) as a concrete entity, object, or exemplar in the real world. And the meaning M_M is an M that auto-describes it(self) as the interpretation, meaning, or description of an M_S or M_R.

The following figure shows the transformation of the dualistic into the non-dualistic semiotic triangle. There are no longer any white ellipses, which previously indicated the ontological level of W (or S and R). Instead, there are only shaded rectangles so that meaning M has become monistic and universal.

Figure 2.XIII: A non-dualistic semiotic triangle



non-dualistic unity
$U_{NON\text{-}DUALISM}$ = $M_{(S\ vs\ M\ vs\ R)}$

non-dualistic distinction
$D_{NON\text{-}DUALISM}$ = M_S vs M_M vs M_R

The non-dualistic transformation of the formerly dualistic semiotic triangle has been accomplished. To sum up, according to Non-Dualism's second-order allo-description of the triangle's angles, the angles are M (non-dualistic unity). However, according to the angles' first-order auto-description of themselves, the angles are either a signifier $_S$, a referent $_R$, or a meaning $_M$ (non-dualistic distinction). The notational result is the trio M_S, M_R, and M_M.

This conceptualization of the semiotic triangle is deliberately abstract and formal. It is a skeleton to which I will give more flesh and blood in terms of sociological substance and empirical application in the following chapter.

3. Meaning in the Semiotic Triangle

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What a »lady's man« and a »language's man« say about love:

Casanova and Carnap in the final round of a quiz show. The question: What's love?
Casanova croons »When you see her smile, but not the gap between her teeth«.
It's a tie for the first place. Final question: What's the beginning of love?
Casanova exclaims »It's a spark in her eyes«, but Carnap dryly says
»It's the 12th letter of the English alphabet«. Now, who wins?

The previous chapter on Non-Dualism laid the groundwork for a broad and elementary orientation of the theory of meaning developed in this book. The present chapter will extend and specify this philosophical basis by integrating semiotic and sociological aspects. The main theoretical device for accomplishing this task and structuring this chapter will be the non-dualistic semiotic triangle (as presented in chapter 2.5.2). I will put special emphasis on discussing the relations and processes that operate between the triangle's angles, e.g. extension, onomasiology, classification, intension, semasiology, interpretation.[1]

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3.1 Referent and Extension

3.1.1 Referent: The referent is an M that auto-describes it(self) as a referent R, i.e. as a concrete and empirical entity, object, exemplar, event, behavior, fact, actor, or phenomenon in the real world. According to this auto-description, the referent is material, permanent, external, resistant, constraining, observable, difficult to modify or avoid, objective, ontologically distinct from meaning and description, non-symbolic and non-referential because it simply is or happens without referring to something other than itself.

Some examples: A referent could be an object like M_R = │THIS STONE│, behavior like M_R = │HE OPENED THE DOOR│, an event like M_R = │THE ELECTIONS│, a Durkheimian social fact like M_R = │THE HIGH MORTALITY RATE│, an actor like M_R = │MY CANARY TWEETY│, a class of entities like M_R = │ALL HURRICANES│, etc. Referents can also be »fictional« or »impossible« entities as long as they semantically auto-describe them(selves) as »real« or »possible« entities, e.g. the actor M_R = │THE WITCH BABA YAGA│ or the behavior M_R = │ARISTOTLE HITS FIDEL CASTRO│. As can be seen, referents appear in many different forms and may take various shapes – they are hence *morphodiverse*.

Referents function as semantic referents, which in Linguistics or Semiotics are called semantic roles, semiotic actants, or actantial roles (see Greimas 1966, 1967, 1973a; Saeed 2003: ch. 6). Regardless of their status, e.g. fictive

[1] My objective here is not to give a detailed introduction to, or presentation of, the *angles* of the semiotic triangle because I assume the reader is roughly familiar with them (see Chandler 2002: 33f, Lyons 1977: ch. 4, Nöth 2000: ch. III.2, Ogden & Richards 1923). Instead, my objective is to analyze the *processes and relations* between the angles.

vs real, actor vs object, human vs non-human, referents are semantic categorizations insofar as sentences or syntagms (e.g. utterances, pictures, texts, discourses, etc) portray and classify the elements and participants in an event according to their actorial function, e.g. as agent, patient, instrument, giver, receiver, benefactor, experiencer, location, theme, source, etc. For example, in the sentences ›*Malaria kills many people*‹ and ›*The daisy was mistreated by the witch Baba Yaga*‹, the referents M_R = │MALARIA│ or M_R = │THE WITCH BABA YAGA│ occupy the semantic role of the agent (i.e. active, causing, potent) and the referents M_R = │MANY PEOPLE│ or M_R = │THE DAISY│ occupy the semantic role of the patient (i.e. passive, affected, less potent). In the Social Sciences, Actor-Network-Theory has espoused such a semio-linguistic approach to actors that are viewed in terms of semantic roles, e.g. in a study about the introduction of scientific principles of breeding into fishery, the actor network consists of scholars, science, fishermen, fishes, etc (Latour 2005: 54f).

This approach to semantic referents is particularly important in Social Science approaches to discourse and communication where different semantic roles may be attributed to a referent. Consider the following example: The referent M_R = │THE REBELS│ may be portrayed by a newspaper article in the semantic role of the agent (i.e. active, causing, potent), e.g. in the sentence ›*The rebels fiercely attacked the army*‹, whereas on the government website the same referent is portrayed in the role of the patient (i.e. passive or reactive, affected, less potent), e.g. in the sentence ›*The army successfully pushed back the rebels*‹. The portrayal of the referent's role determines who is active vs passive, causing vs affected, and potent vs less potent. Accordingly, not only does each sentence have a different degree of connectivity and robustness (see chapter 2.4.3), but the world itself changes with each sentence.

3.1.2 Extension: By which process is the referent accessible or referable? It is often called extension (or extent of the concept or *Begriffsumfang*). The following figure depicts this process by means of two semiotic triangles.[2]

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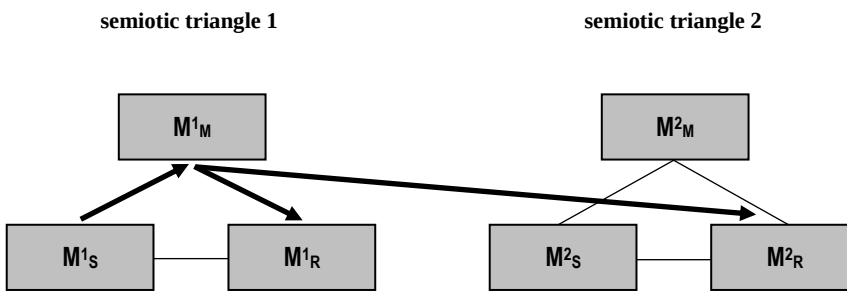
Figure 3.I: Extension



[2] I owe the idea of using two semiotic triangles to Baldinger (1998: 2125f).

A particular signifier M_S symbolizes a particular meaning M_M, which refers to some referent M_R. The extension process necessarily has to pass over the intermediary M_M, because the M_S must first be interpreted or defined to know what it means and symbolizes in terms of M_M and only afterwards can this M_M be applied and concretized so as to find or refer to a specific M_R. If there is only one referent, the process is $\dashv M^1_S \vdash \rightarrow \vdash M^1_M \dashv \rightarrow \vdash M^1_R \dashv$ and if there are several referents, the process is $\dashv M^1_S \vdash \rightarrow \vdash M^1_M \dashv \rightarrow \vdash M^1_R \dashv + \vdash M^2_R \dashv + \vdash M^3_R \dashv +$ etc. In both cases, the referent is a meaning from now on $\vdash M \dashv$, which follows and continues previous meanings up to now $\dashv M \vdash$.

For example, the written English word $M^1_S = \dashv$ BIRD$\vdash$ may be interpreted as $M^1_M = \vdash$ANIMAL WITH WINGS, FEATHERS, AND A BEAK THAT LAYS EGGS, THAT CAN USUALLY FLY, AND THAT CAN SOMETIMES SING$\dashv$ referring to such referents as $M^1_R = \vdash$MY CANARY TWEETY$\dashv$, $M^2_R = \vdash$ALL BIRDS$\dashv$, $M^3_R = \vdash$THE PENGUINS IN BERLIN'S ZOO$\dashv$, $M^4_R = \vdash$ROAD RUNNER$\dashv$, etc. The same extension process can be applied to verbs that indicate behavior or actions. The French verb $M^1_S = \dashv$ SE PROMENER$\vdash$ symbolizes the meaning $M^1_M = \vdash$MAKING A SMALL JOURNEY ON FOOT, ESPECIALLY FOR ENJOYMENT$\dashv$ and may refer to a referent such as $M^1_R = \vdash$HE WENT FOR A WALK IN THE PARK$\dashv$. Even signifiers that have a more abstract or social meaning may be put to extension, e.g. the noun $M_S = \dashv$ DEMOCRACY$\vdash$, the adjective $M_S = \dashv$ LEGAL$\vdash$, or the verb $M_S = \dashv$ TO HAPPEN$\vdash$. The same goes for visual, acoustic, tactile, or olfactory signifiers such as pictures, melodies, touches, odors, etc.[3]

Such a passage from the general and abstract $\dashv M_S \vdash$ and $\vdash M_M \dashv$ to the particular and concrete $\vdash M_R \dashv$ is a process of specification, application, concretization, and realization – a sort of »semantic descent« (Roy 2004: 32f, 308). Since meanings are categories, it is also possible to say that M_S is often like a *superordinate category* containing, or referring to, several *subordinate categories* M_R. In this sort of meaning inclusion or hyponymy, a particular M_S semantically includes M_R, so that taxonomies may be constructed.

The extension from $\dashv M_S \vdash$ to $\vdash M_R \dashv$ is an everyday operation, based on the idea that each name or word refers to an entity or thing and that the discovery of a name or word implies the discovery of an entity or thing (see Watzlawick 1986: 17). Consequently, extension is often a referent-creating process: Finding or inventing a new signifier, e.g. name, label, word, or denomination, is often equivalent to finding or inventing a new referent, e.g. an entity, object, event, or phenomenon. *New signifiers* $\dashv M_S \vdash$ *may therefore create referents* $\vdash M_R \dashv$ *that were previously unknown or nonexistent*.[4]

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[3] However, in some cases, it is not possible to carry out the extension process because there is no referent. For example, some signifiers such as the words or sentences ›*the*‹, ›*unicorn*‹, ›*Why is that so?*‹, or ›*nothing*‹ are not considered to refer to a direct, existent, and concrete object in the world.

[4] Similar arguments were made by constructivist approaches or their precursors. Already in 1931, the linguist Trier argues that language does not reflect, but creates reality (1931: 2). The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis goes in the same direction. On the basis of Luhmann's distinction between societal semantics vs social structure, Stichweh argues that societal semantics may anticipate, reconstruct, or constitute social structure (2000: 248).

For example, if people hear or read about a new disease, be it the Sissi-Syndrome or Alzheimer's disease, they often take it for granted that this disease really exists »out there in the world« independently of their thinking and talking about it. Pragmatic lifeworld actors typically think that the new word for the disease (i.e. the signifier) reflects or corresponds to a new disease (i.e. the referent). This way, a new disease is created, if not *ex nihilo*, but at least *ex significator*. Such processes may not only be fostered by commercial disease mongering, as in the case of the Sissi-Syndrome, but by all communications about diseases, e.g. publications of medical research, small talk about childhood illnesses, doctor-patient-interactions, national health reforms, etc. If the new term for the disease is accepted and used by a critical mass of people, there will be more and more patients and doctors who find the symptoms of this disease in themselves or others. This may lead to the »institutionalization of the disease«, e.g. the creation of special research departments, special health policies, special interest or self-help groups, specialized doctors, etc, that all testify to the existence of the disease. And this, in turn, justifies and supports the use of the term for the disease. At this point, a self-reinforcing circle between the signifier and the referent has been set up.

In many cases, a fundamental condition for a signifier creating a referent is that actors accept and believe in the signifier (because it has a high degree of robustness, see chapter 2.4.3) or at least that actors use and keep using the signifier (because it has a high degree of connectivity, see chapter 2.4.3). Social and mental mechanisms that help fulfill this condition may be, e.g. uncritical attitudes, self-fulfilling prophecies (see Watzlawick 1981b), repetitions, internalization processes, political framing (see Lakoff 2004), copying, symbolic power (see Bourdieu 1977, 1987b), commercial manipulation, etc.

Let us look at one of these mechanisms: In order for an object or phenomenon to be produced *ex significator* by a word or expression it is often necessary that particular *social conditions* be fulfilled which confer the necessary symbolic or discursive power on the speaker or actor (Bourdieu, Foucault) or which create the appropriate contextual felicity conditions for the speaker's or actor's utterance (Austin, Searle). These social conditions, in turn, enable the actor to make a referent exist by using certain signifiers. I distinguish between three types of social conditions: (1) Interpersonal conditions, i.e. the speaker or writer must exhibit the appropriate personal characteristics for hearers or readers to accept or use his words or arguments, e.g. public credibility, technical competence, charisma, first-hand experience. (2) Situational conditions, i.e. the speaker must be in the appropriate situation for his words and arguments to be accepted or used by the hearers or readers. For instance, the term ›*parallel universe*‹ is more likely to be accepted by the audience if used in a scientific lecture than in a comedy show. (3) Institutional conditions, i.e. the speaker or writer must have the appropriate position and rights within an institutional framework or hierarchy, e.g. symbolic capital, legal entitlements, profession, organizational rank, etc. Only a priest can successfully create a marriage by uttering the performative speech act ›*I hereby pronounce you man and wife*‹.

A similar process of a signifier creating a referent can be found in the domain of law and criminality. The English words M_S = ┤LEGAL vs ILLEGAL├ represent a semantic code that divides the world into two states because all behavior can be labeled according to this code. As long as there is no such code M_S = ┤LEGAL vs ILLEGAL├, there is no and there can be no criminality in terms of M_R = ├ILLEGAL BEHAVIOR┤. But as soon as this code appears, criminality appears too in a logically necessary way: Using the code M_S = ┤LEGAL vs ILLEGAL├, some behavior out of M_R = ├THE POOL OF ALL POSSIBLE BEHAVIOR┤ will come into existence, namely M_R = ├ILLEGAL BEHAVIOR┤. Criminality is thus created almost *ex nihilo*, or to be more precise, *ex significator*.[5]

Signifiers also have an exemplary function: They attract actors who then live out the signifiers on the level of the referent. Signifiers are thus »extensioned« into referents, i.e. signifiers are realized, carried out, or translated into referents. For example, the Western word and concept M_S = ┤PUNK ROCKER├ may be taken up and lived out by someone in China who becomes a M_R = ├PUNK ROCKER┤. This may be seen as a sociological example of the biblical passage ›*verbum caro factum est*‹, i.e. the word was made flesh (John 1: 14). The same goes for signifiers indicating objects, events, or behavior. As for love, already in 1665, La Rochefoucauld argued that »there are people who would never have been in love if they had not heard talk of love«, so the phenomenon of love comes into existence by being copied from, and realized by means of, signifiers of love, which appear in novels, movies, conversations, songs, pictures, etc. In the words of Stendhal, man is nothing but a »homme-copie«, a »copy man« or »copied man« (quoted in Luhmann 1982: 23, 53ff).

3.2 Signifier and Onomasiology

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3.2.1 Signifier: The signifier is an M that auto-describes it(self) as a signifier $_S$, i.e. as the mode of perception or presentation of the referent M_R or of the meaning M_M. According to this auto-description, the signifier is the material or perceivable form or appearance of the referent or meaning. For example, the referent M_R = │TWEETY│ or the meaning M_M = │ANIMAL WITH FEATHERS AND A BEAK THAT CAN USUALLY FLY│ may be perceived by the acoustic sound M_S = │bɛ:rd│, symbolized by the visual sight of M_S = │A PHOTO SHOWING A CANARY│, presented by the German word M_S = │KANARIENVOGEL│, etc.

[5] In a similar vein, Sadegh-Zadeh argues that before one has introduced a concept of tree, there are no such things as »trees« (2008: 111). Consequently, after one has introduced a concept of tree, there are such things as trees, or in non-dualistic and semiotic terminology, after one has introduced M_S = │TREES│, there are M_R = │TREES│.
Another example stems from the Spanish Inquisition. In 1610, a famous inquisitor noted that it was only *after* the word of M_S = │WITCHCRAFT│ was used in public communication (e.g. in edicts, sermons, court trials) that actual cases of M_R = │WITCHCRAFT│ occurred in many locations. His conclusion was that »there were neither witches nor bewitched until they were talked and written about« (quoted in Lea 1988: 234). Similarly, in a French cemetery, I found this phrase on a tombstone: ›*Parler de toi, c'est te faire exister, se taire serait t'oublier*‹ (To talk about you, is to make you exist, to be silent would be to forget you).

Both M_R and M_M auto-describe them(selves) as not being immediately and unmediatedly perceivable or knowable: M_M describes itself as immaterial, mental, and invisible, hence not directly observable (Pharo 2004: 257f). M_R does describe itself as material, but in terms of a silent, passive, and hidden materiality, so that it is not directly observable either (Ort 2001: 229). Consequently, both M_R and M_M portray themselves as being in need of »something« that makes them perceivable and that presents them. This »something« is M_S as the mode of perception or presentation of the referent M_R or of the meaning M_M by or to a particular actor or system. Using phenomenological terminology, M_S appresents M_R and M_M, i.e. the present M_S renders the absent M_R and M_M present.

The difference between M_S and M_R cannot be sought in their ontological status, but rather only in their function. The signifier is active, referential, indicative, and communicative because its function is to refer to something other than itself, namely to M_R and M_M. In contrast, the referent is passive, nonreferential, silent, and non-communicative because its function is to be referred to and to be. This is why Peirce says that *nothing* is a signifier unless it is interpreted as a signifier (1902: § 308) and Chandler adds that *anything* can be a signifier if it is interpreted as a signifier, i.e. interpreted as signifying and referring to something other than itself (2002: 17). Accordingly, a $M = \left|\text{SCALE}\right|$ is for one observer simply the non-symbolic object $M_R = \left|\text{SCALE}\right|$, whereas for another observer it is the symbolic object or signifier $M_S = \left|\text{SCALE}\right|$ that symbolizes the meaning $M_M = \left|\text{LAW AND JUSTICE}\right|$.[6]

Within the sender-receiver-model of communication or semiosis, such a stance clearly demotes the sender and promotes the receiver as the relevant and crucial actor in deciding whether or not something is a signifier. If someone $M = \left|\text{LIFTS HIS HAT}\right|$, is this movement a communicative sign M_S (e.g. greeting someone else) or simply a non-communicative behavior M_R (e.g. cooling one's head)? Even though it is not negligible what the hat-lifter intended, it is more important how the observer interprets this movement because the degree of connectivity (see chapter 2.4.3) depends on the observer's interpretation.

[6] As argued in chapter 2.5.2 on the non-dualistic triangle, it is often difficult to clearly distinguish whether »something« M is an M_S or an M_R because it is up to the observer in a particular context to draw this distinction. This ambiguity stems from the fact that both M_S and M_R belong to the same ontological level, i.e. the level of the world M_W.
In analogy to the wave-particle-duality in Quantum Physics, which shows that microscopic objects sometimes manifest themselves as waves and sometimes as particles, we may speak of a »signifier-referent-duality« in Semiotics, which shows that objects sometimes function as signifiers and sometimes as referents.
Moreover, for »something« to be an M_S it is not necessary that someone knows *what* M_M or M_R is symbolized or indicated, but only *that* some M_M or M_R is symbolized or indicated. For example, being in a foreign country, I may interpret someone's hand movement as a signifier, namely a gesture, even though I don't know what it means. Similarly, an empty or floating signifier M_S has only a vague, variable, unspecifiable, or nonexistent meaning M_M, so there is a complete disconnection between M_S and M_M. Such M_S may mean whatever their interpreters want them to mean, so they may stand for many different or any M_M (Chandler 2002: 74-78). Here, »a sign only means that it means« (Goldman & Papson 1994: 50), i.e. an M_S only means that it has some M_M.

Signifiers are, just like referents, *morphodiverse*, i.e. they may take many different forms and appear in various shapes, e.g. written words, material objects, acoustic sounds, images, etc. Let us build a small classification of these different forms and shapes. Since I conceptualized M_S in terms of the mode of perception or presentation of M_M or M_R, my starting point will be the concept of perception: From a psychological perspective, Prinz holds that the perception of internal reality (e.g. thoughts, feelings, intentions) and the perception of external reality (e.g. objects, utterances, sounds) are structurally identical (2004: 200f) – maybe due to Foerster's (1973) principle of undifferentiated encoding. In a similar vein, Luhmann argues from a system-theoretic perspective that meaning may be actualized in a psychic form or in a communicative form (1997: ch. 1.III, 1984: ch. 2, 4, 7). Therefore, a first classification of signifiers is *internal-psychic signifiers* and *external-communicative signifiers*.

Actors view signifiers as internal-psychic if they consider their source to be located within their individual minds. Internal-psychic signifiers appear as thoughts, recollections, feelings, intentions, dreams, etc. For example, I may remember M_S = ⎪MY GRANDMOTHER'S BARN⎪, which symbolizes for me M_M = ⎪THE HAPPY PERIOD OF TIME WHEN I WAS A CHILD AND SPENT THE WEEKENDS AT MY GRANDMOTHER'S FARM⎪. Or in a dream, I see the mental image of M_S = ⎪A RED FLAG⎪, which I interpret as M_M = ⎪DANGER⎪.[7]

Actors view signifiers as external-communicative if they consider their source to be located outside their individual minds, i.e. in the world and reality. Common sub-classifications of external-communicative signifiers are verbal vs visual vs olfactory vs auditory vs tactile signifiers, gestures and facial expressions, or action signs (D. Williams 1999). Linguistic signifiers play a particularly important role: As Berghaus argues, language is the primary medium of communication because a verbal or written expression is – in comparison to body movements, objects, or pictures – the most obvious sign that someone wants to communicate something to someone else (Berghaus 2003: 127).[8]

3.2.2 Onomasiology: The previous discussion leads to the next relevant topic, i.e. the study of the process from ⟊ M_M ⟊ → ⟊M_S ⟊. This process corresponds in many aspects to *onomasiology* (or encoding, see Hall 1973). It adopts the perspective of the sign-sender or speaker. The starting point is a particular meaning M_M whose signifier(s) is (are) then sought, e.g. synchronically at a given time, diachronically in different times, or diatopically in different places (Baldinger 1998, Blank & Koch eds. 2003). The process where one meaning corresponds to several signifiers is notated as ⟊ M^1_M ⟊ → ⟊M^1_S ⟊ + ⟊M^2_S ⟊ + etc.

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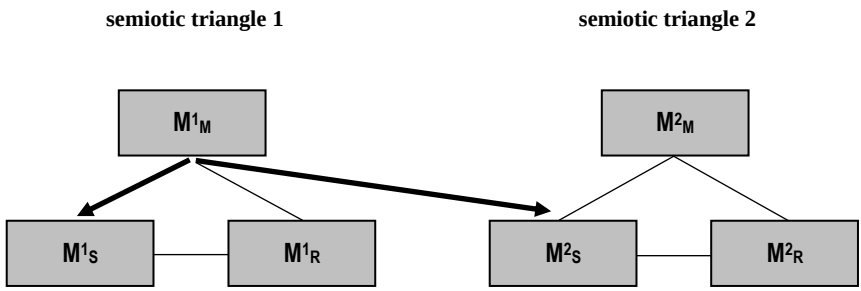
[7] The idea of an internal-psychic signifier is incompatible with standard Semiotics which views signifiers exclusively as external and communicative phenomena. Only Charles S. Peirce, Jacques Lacan and Jean Piaget worked on thought-signs or mental signifiers.

[8] I have used and keep using two types of notations for signifiers. For signifiers in general I use the notation M_S = ⎪...⎪, e.g. the facial expression M_S = ⎪TO WINK AN EYE AT SOMEONE⎪ or the French word M_S = ⎪POUVOIR⎪. But if I want to emphasize a linguistic signifier, e.g. a word or sentence, I also use the ›‹ brackets between which the words are put in italics, e.g. the French word ›*pouvoir*‹. or the English sentence ›*She sued me for libel*‹.

Figure 3.II: Onomasiology



How can one particular meaning be presented by several distinct signifiers? For example, the meaning M^1_M = ┤ANIMAL WITH WINGS, FEATHERS, AND A BEAK THAT LAYS EGGS, THAT CAN USUALLY FLY, AND THAT CAN SOMETIMES SING├ may be presented by the Spanish word M^1_S = ├PÁJARO┤ as well as by the visual image of M^2_S = ├A SAND DRAWING OUTLINING THE SHAPE OF A BIRD┤ or other signifiers. The morphodiversity of signifiers, which I have talked about previously, thus translates into a *signifier contingency*: For one M_M there are several, often interchangeable M_S. These make up an onomasiological field, in contrast to a semasiological field, and constitute synonymy, in contrast to polysemy (Baldinger 1998). In terms of Generative Grammar, how can one particular deep structure be presented by several distinct surface structures? Deep structures are implicit, hidden, and often unconscious meaning structures, whereas surface structures are explicit, manifest, and conscious signifier structures (Fowler 1971: 10ff, Jackendoff 1990).

In a sociological example (modified from Roy 2004), there is the deep structure M^1_M = ┤THE EXTERIOR CAUSES THE INTERIOR├, which may be transformed into several distinct surface structures such as the utterances or thoughts M^1_S = ├THE RAIN MAKES ME SAD┤, M^2_S = ├HIS UPBRINGING DETERMINED HIS PERSONALITY┤, M^3_S = ├SHE WAS IMPRESSED BY HIS WORDS┤, or M^4_S = ├THIS PAINTING GIVES ME AN IDEA┤.

Figure 3.III: Example of a deep structure and surface structures

deep structure	**M^1_M =**	**THE EXTERIOR** (= external and objective to an individual actor)	**CAUSES** (= linking the exterior and the interior in a cause-effect-relation)	**THE INTERIOR** (= the internal and psychic interior of an individual actor)
surface structures	**M^1_S =**	THE RAIN…	…MAKES…	…ME SAD.
	M^2_S =	HIS UPBRINGING…	…DETERMINED…	…HIS PERSONALITY.
	M^3_S =	…HIS WORDS.	…BY…	SHE WAS IMPRESSED…
	M^4_S =	THIS PAINTING…	…GIVES…	…ME AN IDEA.

Let us look at a typical Social Science example related to power. Modifying a linguistic example from Wierzbicka (1996: 174-177), the deep structure of a prototypical order is something like M_M = ⎪X THINKS: I WANT Y TO DO Z. X SAYS TO Y: DO Z. X THINKS: Y WILL DO Z BECAUSE OF THIS.⎪. This definition, couched in Natural Semantic Metalanguage, conforms to the classical Weberian view of power in which someone wants to impose his will on another person who is supposed to carry out some action. Now, if a father notices that his six-year old son has forgotten to close the refrigerator door, he may resort to a prototypical order. In the first step, the father may make up his mind, e.g. M^1_M = ⎨I THINK: I WANT MY SON TO CLOSE THE REFRIGERATOR DOOR⎬. He may then present this meaning with its abovementioned deep structure in many different surface structures, e.g. by giving his son the explicit order M^1_S = ⎡SHUT THE DOOR TO THE FRIDGE!⎤, by uttering the reproach M^2_S = ⎡AH, YOU NEVER CLOSE THE REFRIGERATOR⎤, by making a particular gesture or facial expression such as M^3_S = ⎡FROWNING AND POINTING AT THE FRIDGE⎤, or by using other signifiers. The deep semantic structure of a prototypical order ⎨M_M⎬ may thus be translated into a great variety of morphodiverse signifiers ⎡M_S⎤.

Sometimes the process of onomasiology cannot be carried out because the meaning M_M does not have a signifier M_S or the actor cannot find a signifier M_S. The first case represents a signifier gap, or in Lexicology, it is called a lexical gap (Lyons 1977: ch. 9.6). For example, even though the meaning M_M = ⎨TO BE NO LONGER HUNGRY⎬ is lexicalized in the German word M_S = ⎡SATT⎤, the meaning M_M = ⎨TO BE NO LONGER THIRSTY⎬ is not lexicalized in any German word so that a lexical gap M_S = ⎡Ø⎤ occurs. The second case represents a sort of »speechlessness« or »inexpressibility« because someone cannot express a particular meaning she has in mind, because people may mean or imagine more than they are able to express or utter (Frawley 1992: 54).

These two cases may pose a serious problem for approaches that analyze their research object – be it power, romantic love, or socialism – only on the level of the signifier M_S. The reason is that cases, in which a particular meaning M_M exists but no (easily) appresenting signifier M_S, would remain theoretically underexposed, or worse, they may become theoretically invisible. To circumvent such problems, it is often necessary to take the level of the meaning M_M as the methodological priority or starting point where signifier gaps or inexpressibility problems do not (yet) matter and do not limit the analysis.

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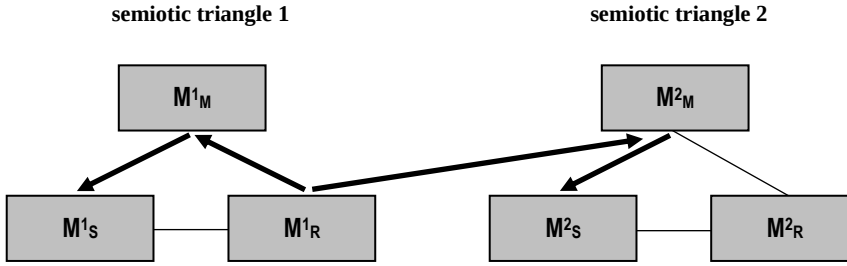
3.3 Signifier and Classification

Apart from onomasiology, there is another process that concerns the signifier and that I will call *classification*. This process leads from the referent M_R to the meaning M_M and finally to the signifier M_S. The referent – which is usually seen as silent, nonreferential, and passive – is actively taken up and classified by an actor or discourse by attributing a particular signifier or word to it.

In this classification process, the referent may be assigned to one single signifier, notated as ⎨M^1_R⎬ → ⎡M^1_M⎤ → ⎡M^1_S⎤, or to several different signifiers, notated as ⎨M^1_R⎬ → ⎡M^1_M⎤ → ⎡M^1_S⎤ and ⎨M^1_R⎬ → ⎡M^2_M⎤ → ⎡M^2_S⎤.

Figure 3.IV: Classification



This process of classification is the exact inverse process of extension: Whereas in classification, the direction leads from the referent to the signifier, in extension, the direction leads from the signifier to the referent. Classification can be seen as a sort of »semantic ascent«, in contrast to extension as a »semantic descent«, because classification implies abstraction, generalization, and reduction (Roy 2004: 32, 308).

In classification, a particular referent M_R is – by the intermediary of the meaning M_M – put into a larger class containing other referents and labeled by a specific signifier M_S. In the following, I will look at two cases of classification.

(1) The first case is the process of ┤M^1_R├ → ├M^1_M├ → ├M^1_S├, as in the sentence ›*Tweety is a bird*‹. The referent M^1_R = ┤TWEETY├ may be – by the intermediate stopover M^1_M = ├ANIMAL WITH WINGS, FEATHERS, AND A BEAK THAT LAYS EGGS, THAT CAN USUALLY FLY, AND THAT CAN SOMETIMES SING┤ – classified by the English word M^1_S = ├BIRD┤. In this case, the referent is a single subordinate M that is classified as a member of a superordinate M, namely the signifier. As we have seen above in the extension approach, the superordinate signifier M^1_S = ┤BIRD├ contains or refers to many other subordinate referents, such as M^1_R = ├THIS NIGHTINGALE┤, M^2_R = ├THE PENGUINS IN BERLIN'S ZOO┤, M^3_R = ├ALL SPARROWS┤, M^4_R = ├THE EAGLE OF GENGHIS KHAN┤, M^5_R = ├ROAD RUNNER┤, etc.

These relations of superordination and subordination are often called taxonomy. Consequently, classification implies anonymization and homogenization (Berger & Luckmann 1966: ch. I.2, Kleiber 1990: 12f). That is, an individual, unique, and idiosyncratic referent such as ┤TWEETY├ is put into the anonymous and general signifier ├BIRD┤. Also, distinct and heterogeneous referents such as ┤TWEETY├ and ┤THE EAGLE OF GENGHIS KHAN├ are put into the same global and homogenizing signifier ├BIRD┤. From the perspective of this superordinate signifier, all its subordinate referents are indistinguishable, equivalent, and of the same kind. Or, to take a more sociological example, the subordinate action M_R = ┤THE USA PRESSURES IRAQ TO WITHDRAW FROM KUWAIT BY FEBRUARY 23├ may be classified by an Iraqi newspaper as the superordinate M_S = ├EXTORTION┤.

(2) The second case of classification is more complex, namely when a particular referent is classified by several different signifiers as in the process ┤M^1_R├ → ├M^1_M┤ → ├M^1_S┤ and ┤M^1_R├ → ├M^2_M┤ → ├M^2_S┤. This is another type of the abovementioned *signifier contingency* because several distinct signifiers are attributed to the same referent M_R (in the case of classification) or to the same meaning M_M (in the case of onomasiology). For example, the referent M^1_R = ┤TWEETY├ may be classified as M^1_S = ├BIRD┤, M^2_S = ├CUTE┤, or M^3_S = ├ANIMAL┤. And the action M^1_R = ┤HENRY PARKED THE CAR HERE├ may be labeled by a policeman as M^1_S = ├ILLEGAL┤ and by a judge as M^2_S = ├LEGAL┤. Whereas in the Tweety-example, the different classifications do not contradict each other, in the parked-car-example, the classifications contradict each other.

Such classification divergences also operate on a much more fundamental level in cognitive and communicative systems. In our pragmatic and everyday lifeworld, some referent M_R may be ontologically classified as M^1_S = ├SOMETHING┤, M^2_S = ├NOTHING┤, or M^3_S = ├EVERYTHING┤. For instance, looking into M_R = ┤THE INTERIOR OF THE ROOM├, I may classify it as containing M^1_S = ├NOTHING┤, whereas a scientist may classify it as containing M^2_S = ├SOMETHING┤ because the room is full of invisible »some things« such as air molecules, bacteria, and electromagnetic waves. Or, to take a more sociological example, I classify the referent M_R = ┤SHE TURNED AROUND├ as a M^1_S = ├RATIONAL ACTION┤ because she wanted to look at the people behind her, whereas a newspaper article may classify it as a M^2_S = ├SOCIAL REACTION┤ because someone behind her tapped on her shoulder, and a physician may classify it as M^3_S = ├BODY REFLEX┤ because she involuntarily turned around because of a sudden pain in her back. The same reasoning may be applied to other fundamental questions: Is »something«, such as an »employee's non-noticing a fire outbreak«, classified as »the employee's passive and cognitive experiencing« or as »the employee's criminal negligence and thus punishable action«? (see Fuchs 1999b: 31f, Luhmann 1978). Is »something«, such as an avalanche in a mountain village, semantically portrayed as a natural event due to non-volitional physical forces or as a deliberate action of someone, such as a terrorist or maybe God? Is »something«, such as a particular event in the Middle East, classified as a military intervention, a war of aggression, the liberation from dictatorship, a pre-emptive strike, a holy war, an economic quest for petroleum, or a defensive war?

The concept of classification divergence can be linked to Non-Dualism. Firstly, a classification divergence may be that M_R = ┤THE EARTH├ is classified by the French Astronomical Society as M^1_S = ├ROUND┤ and by the Flat Earth Society as M^2_S = ├FLAT┤. Both Societies thus simultaneously give contradictory description-classifications of the same object-referent. Secondly, in chapter 2.4, I showed that since the world and objects are descriptions and meanings, it follows that if descriptions and meanings change, the world and objects change too. The conclusion of both approaches is that there are simultaneously different or contradictory worlds, objects, or realities, i.e. Flat Earth Society members live on a flat earth and French Astronomical Society members live on a round earth.

Such classification divergences may simply be viewed as differences or they may escalate into conflicts. And such conflicts are often about extremely fundamental classifications. For instance, Pinker (2007) shows how the seven-billion-dollar-question in a legal dispute was whether M_R = │THE 9/11 TERRORIST ATTACK ON THE WORLD TRADE CENTER│ was to be classified as M_S = │ONE EVENT│ or as M_S = │TWO EVENTS│. In summary, a central Social Science research question is how, why, and by whom a particular referent is classified differently.[9]

Classification is an unavoidable and important process in cognitive and social systems. It is by putting referents – be it actions, people, events, objects, etc – into typifying classes that cognitive or social systems comprehend them and make them connectable. This can be seen in classification utterances such as ›*He is gay*‹ or ›*The contract is invalid*‹. In this sense, classifications specify, clarify, or judge referents that are unspecified, unclear, or neutral. For instance, in the above utterances, ›*he*‹ and ›*the contract*‹ are assigned to one particular and clear socio-cognitive class, namely to ›*gay*‹ and not to ›*heterosexual*‹, and to ›*invalid*‹ and not to ›*valid*‹ or ›*illegal*‹. Classification is important because it is the basis for further operations – be they mental, emotional, discursive, or behavioral operations – i.e. depending on the class that a referent is put into, it is treated or continued differently.

Let us look at one of the abovementioned examples. If a judge makes the classification ›*The contract is invalid*‹, the contractors know that the obligations and rights stipulated in their contract are null and void so that they cannot be legally enforced. Consequently, the contractors are unlikely to comply with their contract obligations and will probably not sue each other for an alleged failure to comply with such a contract obligation. Classification is especially crucial in law because legal operations – e.g. to sue someone, to waive a right, to comply with a norm, etc – usually depend on legal classifications – e.g. valid vs invalid, legal vs illegal, married or unmarried, first-degree murder vs second-degree murder, entitled vs not entitled, etc.

The use of classification is an important psychic and communicative instrument in order to construct the world as a known, normal, structured, and comprehensible world. Ethnomethodological studies have shown that if an actor comes across another actor, a situation, or behavior that seems abnormal, chaotic, strange, unfamiliar, or incomprehensible, processes of normalization occur. That is, by applying particular signifiers, the abnormal is rendered normal, the chaotic is rendered structured, and the incomprehensible is rendered comprehensible. This becomes clear in the (funny) accounts of (serious) ethnomethodological breaching experiments in which the experimenter intentionally provokes a critical or abnormal situation in an everyday situation by violating certain common sense conventions, and the subjects typically seek to

[9] This topic of *classification divergences* (one referent is classified by divergent signifiers) is structurally very similar to the topic of *meaning divergences* (one signifier is interpreted as having divergent meanings). Since I will discuss the latter topic in chapter 3.7, I have limited my discussion here to some brief remarks.

normalize such a situation by applying particular signifiers, e.g. the utterance ›*That was a joke*‹ or the thought ›*He's gotta be crazy*‹.[10]

Classification in the sense of assigning a signifier to a referent is often equivalent to describing an object in the sense of Non-Dualism (see chapter 2), e.g. saying M_R = ⎪THE TABLE⎪ is classified by M_S = ⎪IS ROUND⎪ is equivalent to saying that the rudimentary description up to now is M_R = ⊣THE TABLE⊣ and the continuing description from now on is M_S = ⊢IS ROUND⊢. This point is not negligible because it shows that the semio-linguistic approach presented here is capable of expressing the same ideas as Mitterer's non-dualistic approach, so both approaches are mutually translatable, connectable, and compatible.

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3.4 Meaning and Intension

3.4.1 Meaning: The meaning is an M that auto-describes it(self) as meaning $_M$, i.e. as signification, concept, idea, semantic content, interpretation, information, construal, knowledge, sense, deep structure, etc. According to this auto-description, M_M is immaterial, mental, unobservable, subjective, contingent, changeable, transitive, and typically language-based. For example, the meaning of a gift of flowers, the concept of infinite space, the sense of a poem, the interpretation of a gesture, or the semantic knowledge about a word. M_M will be dealt with here in terms of a meaning from now on M_M = ⊢...⊢, which is based on and continues a prior signifier M_S = ⊣...⊣, a prior referent M_R = ⊣...⊣, or another prior meaning M_M = ⊣...⊣. Several processes exist that lead to M_M, which will be discussed in this and the following chapters: In this chapter 3.4, I will present two types of intension, i.e. decompositional intension and compositional intension, whereas in the subsequent chapters 3.5, 3.6, and 3.7 I will present semasiology, interpretation, and meaning divergence.

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3.4.2 Decompositional intension: The process that plays a particularly important role within this study may be called *decompositional intension*.[11] It originated in Linguistics, Philosophy, and Structuralism, focusing on the level of the *langue* (the abstract linguistic system), while largely excluding the level of the *parole* (the concrete individual enunciation). It is a process that takes place within one and the same semiotic triangle without involving other triangles, i.e. questions of polysemy, context, and meaning divergences are excluded. From an analytical perspective, two subprocesses of decompositional intension may be distinguished, namely intension and decomposition.

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[10] An example of an ethnomethodological experiment: The experimenter was a member of the subject's car pool and the subject told him one day »I had a flat tire«. Since the experimenter wanted to breach the everyday conventions, he asked the subject »What do you mean, you had a flat tire?«. The subject was stunned and then answered in a hostile way »What do you mean, ›What do you mean?‹ A flat tire is a flat tire. That is what I meant. Nothing special. What a crazy question!« (Garfinkel 1967: 42).

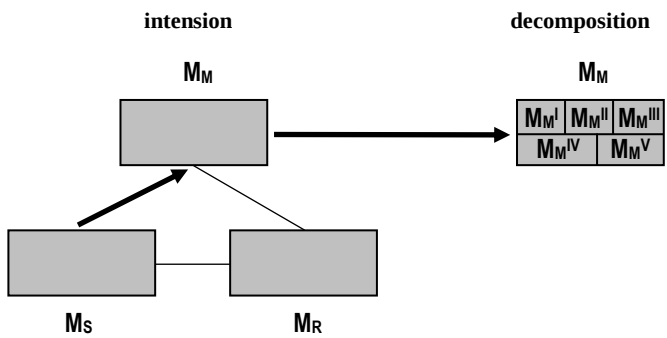
[11] Similar terms include, for instance, semic analysis (Rastier 1996, Spradley 1979: 174-178), componential analysis (Saeed 2003: ch. 9), comparative conceptual regressive discrimination method (Pharo 2001b: 60-64, 84 and 1997: 209ff), or content of the concept (*Begriffsinhalt*).

Firstly, intension is the movement from a signifier M_S to a meaning M_M. In formal terms, it is the process of ┤M_S├ → ├M_M┤. For example, when hearing the acoustic sound M_S = ┤bɛ:rd├, an English native speaker typically activates the semantic knowledge M_M = ├ANIMAL WITH WINGS AND FEATHERS THAT LAYS EGGS, THAT CAN USUALLY FLY, AND THAT CAN SOMETIMES SING┤.

Secondly, decomposition is the dissecting of a meaning M_M into its constitutive meaning components M_M^I, M_M^{II}, M_M^{III}, M_M^{IV}, M_M^{etc}, which are rudimentary, general, and context-independent defining properties. In formal terms, it is the process of ┤M_M├ → ├M_M^I┤ + ├M_M^{II}┤ + ├M_M^{III}┤ + ├M_M^{etc}┤. For instance, the semantic concept M_M = ├ANIMAL WITH WINGS AND FEATHERS THAT LAYS EGGS, THAT CAN USUALLY FLY, AND THAT CAN SOMETIMES SING┤ is a compound meaning that consists of several smaller semantic elements and that may be decomposed into the rudimentary meaning components M_M^I = ├ANIMAL┤, M_M^{II} = ├WITH WINGS┤, M_M^{III} = ├WITH FEATHERS┤, M_M^{IV} = ├LAYS EGGS┤, etc.[12]

Both subprocesses of intension and decomposition do not necessarily appear in this temporal sequence. They often appear simultaneously and are hardly distinguishable. Hence, I will speak of decompositional intension. Due to the morphodiversity of signifiers (see chapter 3.2.1), decompositional intension may be applied to a great variety of signifiers: linguistic signifiers such as nouns, adjectives, verbs, or conjunctions, but also »non-linguistic« signifiers such as gestures, pictograms, melodies, or material objects.

Figure 3.V: Decompositional intension



[12] There are two opinions with regard to the process and end of decompositional intension: (1) Decompositional intension is an endless or even circular process as it does not lead to final meaning components but only to further meaning components which again lead to further meaning components and so on. In Semiotics, this is called *unlimited semiosis* because a sign's meaning is another sign and this sign's meaning is still another sign and so on, e.g. the meaning of the word ›*judge*‹ consists of other words such as ›*the official who presides over a court and…*‹, which contain the word ›*court*‹ whose meaning consists of still other words such as ›*the place where a trial is held and…*‹, etc. During this process, the word ›*judge*‹ may sometimes reappear, so the circle is closed. (2) Wierzbicka (1972, 1996) holds that decompositional intension is not an endless or circular process because there are final meaning components (semantic primitives) that cannot be defined further.

In the following, I will discuss intension and decomposition in more detail.

(1) The subprocess of intension is a type of empirical definition (in contrast to a stipulative definition[13]) in which a signifier M_S is defined by explicating its typical and standard meaning M_M as found in a particular language, culture, or epoch. Meaning is seen as a »translation of a sign into another system of signs« (Peirce 1893: 99, see Greimas 1969: 43). For example, the meaning of a word is given by using other words that are supposed to have the same overall meaning, e.g. the word M_S = ┤WOMAN├ is translated into, paraphrased, and substituted by other words such as M_M = ├ADULT FEMALE HUMAN┤.

Two aspects may be distinguished, namely the *content* of an M_M and the *form of depicting this content* of an M_M. As for the first aspect, i.e. an M_M's content, it is important that an empirical definition of a signifier circumvent several pitfalls, e.g. obscure or circular definitions, definitions containing superfluous elements, definitions that are semantically too broad, narrow, or open-ended, etc (for more details, see Goddard 1998: 27-34). As for the second aspect, i.e. the form of depicting an M_M's content, several symbolic systems have been proposed to present or frame the meaning of a signifier, e.g. Generative Grammar's formal approach, Jackendoff's semantic structures, speech act-theoretic approaches, Talmy's force dynamics schemata, Wierzbicka's Natural Semantic Metalanguage, etc. The choice for or against a particular symbolic system should depend on an evaluation of its particular advantages and disadvantages with regard to a given research objective or methodology.[14]

(2) The subprocess of decomposition is based on the idea that a meaning M_M is frequently not the smallest semantic unit because it is the sum of meaning components M_M^I, M_M^{II}, M_M^{III}, etc, which are more elementary and general than the compound or complex meaning M_M. Whereas M_M often corresponds to those meanings that I have called complex meanings, the M_M^I, M_M^{II}, M_M^{III}, etc are typically those meanings that I have dubbed rudimentary meanings (see chapter 1.2). This is why in Linguistics the meaning components are frequently

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[13] For stipulative vs empirical descriptions, see footnote 1 in chapter 1.1.

[14] Some examples of such symbolic systems: The meaning M_M of the verb M_S = ┤PROMISE├, as used in ›*X promises Y to do Z*‹, would be depicted in the following forms. A Generative Grammar analysis would be M_M = ├COMMUNICATE (X, Y, FUTURE (DO, X, Z)) & ASSUME (X, WANT (Y, DO (X, Z)))┤. A speech act-theoretic definition by Searle (1969: 62ff) would be M_M = ├Y WOULD PREFER X'S DOING Z TO HIS NOT DOING Z AND X BELIEVES Y WOULD PREFER X'S DOING Z TO HIS NOT DOING Z. IT IS NOT OBVIOUS TO BOTH X AND Y THAT X WILL DO Z IN THE NORMAL COURSE OF EVENTS. IN EXPRESSING THE PROPOSITION, X PREDICATES A FUTURE ACT Z OF X. X INTENDS TO DO Z. THE UTTERANCE COUNTS AS AN UNDERTAKING TO DO Z.┤. A definition by means of Natural Semantic Metalanguage, as proposed by Goddard (1998: 147), would be M_M = ├X SAID TO Y: I WANT YOU TO KNOW I WILL DO Z. WHEN X SAID IT, IT WAS AS IF X WAS SAYING AT THE SAME TIME: I KNOW YOU WANT ME TO DO THIS, I KNOW YOU THINK THAT MAYBE I WILL NOT DO IT, I DON'T WANT YOU TO THINK THIS, I KNOW IF I DON'T DO IT AFTER SAYING THIS PEOPLE WILL THINK SOMETHING BAD ABOUT ME.┤. Jackendoff (1990) would represent the short sentence ›*Bill goes into the house*‹ by the semantic structure M_M = │[EVENT GO ([THING BILL], [PATH TO ([PLACE IN ([THING HOUSE])])])]│, and Talmy (2000) would depict the sentence ›*F orders E to do Z*‹ by using the force dynamics schema M_M = │F → [E] −−Z−→│.

called minimal units of signification (Pottier 1964, Greimas 1966: 103), semantic components (Saeed 2003: ch. 9), or universal semantic primitives (Wierzbicka 1996). The compound or complex M_M can thus be decomposed into its constitutive and rudimentary M_M^I, M_M^{II}, M_M^{III}, etc. For example, the complex meaning M_M = ┤ADULT FEMALE HUMAN├ is decomposed into the meaning components M_M^I = ├ADULT┤, M_M^{II} = ├FEMALE┤, M_M^{III} = ├HUMAN┤.[15]

Depending on the theory and discipline, different types of meaning components have been proposed in Linguistics, e.g. universal semantic primitives (Wierzbicka 1996), prototypical-focal vs atypical-peripheral meaning components (see chapter 4), encyclopedic-cultural vs linguistic-semantic components, markers vs distinguishers (Katz & Fodor 1963), descriptive vs functional vs connotative components, selection restrictions vs transfer features (Katz 1972 vs Weinreich 1966), presuppositional components, essential vs supplementary components, knowledge of the practical consequences and sensible effects that the signifier's referent produces when used or carried out (Peirce 1878, Wittgenstein 1953: § 43), etc. Even though it may often be important to differentiate between these meaning components, at this stage of the theory of meaning such a differentiation is still irrelevant. I adopt a rather broad approach which includes most of these types of meaning components.

Decompositional intension can also be applied to sociological, anthropological, or historical concepts and phenomena. However, such an approach has remained so far largely unexplored in the Social Sciences. Pharo, who uses a Sociological Semantics approach, notes that the conceptual and semantic content of the phenomena of social life remains mostly *terra incognita* in Sociology (1997: 4). This is a research desideratum that I consider worthwhile to tackle. For example, on a basic and preliminary level, one might apply decompositional intension to the English word ›*power*‹ by seeking its conceptual and cultural meaning in Anglophone societies. Leaving aside questions of polysemy and context, the word M_S = ┤POWER├ as used in the sentence ›*The leader had a lot of power over his followers*‹ could, in a simplified manner and couched in Natural Semantic Metalanguage, be analyzed as M_M = ├POWER, i.e. SOMETIMES X THINKS SOMETHING LIKE THIS: I WANT Y TO DO Z AND Y DOES NOT WANT TO DO Z. X AND Y KNOW THAT Y WOULD DO Z IF AND BECAUSE X SAYS IT. SOMETIMES X SAYS TO Y: DO Z.┤. Moreover, the lexical equivalents of English words in other languages may be studied, which stem either from the same historical-cultural area (e.g. contemporary Western societies) if commonalities are sought, or from other historical-cultural areas (e.g. modern China, medieval Islamic culture) if differences are sought. For example, what

[15] In Linguistics, meaning components are not considered to be simply words, which are depicted in lower case letters such as the English word ›*adult*‹, but rather mental or even prelinguistic categories, which are depicted in upper case letters such as ADULT, which denote an abstract semantic concept or socio-cultural knowledge such as »fully grown or developed« or »having achieved some kind of maturity«. It was partly this idea that inspired me to use upper case letters to depict the different types of non-dualistic meanings M such as the meaning component M_M^I = │ADULT│, the Spanish word and signifier M_S = │ADULTO│, the referent M_R = │THIS ADULT│, etc.

are the semantic commonalities and differences between lexical equivalents for the English word ›*law*‹, such as ›*diritto*‹, ›*Recht*‹, ›*droit*‹, etc? Such an analysis may reveal that the English word ›*law*‹ connotes regularity and invariability because it also denotes a principle stating that something always happens in nature or society, as in ›*law of gravity*‹, whereas the French word ›*droit*‹ connotes something different, i.e. straightness and »non-crookedness« as it indicates a straight line or unbent direction as in ›*le droit chemin*‹.

The analysis of meanings often leads to the analysis of meaning fields, i.e. a decompositional intension approach leads to a meaning field approach (as presented in chapter 5). The reason lies in Structuralism's argument that an element M only acquires its identity in distinction to other elements M_{ELSE} (see the distinction-based approach in chapter 1.1). In order to identify the meaning of a word, it is necessary to compare it with the meanings of neighboring words so as to discover their semantic similarities and differences (Saussure 1906/11, Trier 1931). Decompositional intension requires that a word be analyzed as one element in a larger word field (Lehrer 1974: 46, 66). The following is an example from Structural Semantics (modified from Saeed 2003: 247ff). In order to analyze the word ›*woman*‹, one must compare it with words from the same word field, e.g. ›*man*‹, ›*girl*‹, ›*bachelor*‹, ›*wife*‹, ›*spinster*‹.

Figure 3.VI: Example of decompositional intension[16]

		meaning components M_M^I, M_M^{II}, M_M^{III}, etc				
		|HUMAN|	|ADULT|	|FEMALE|	|MARRIED|	etc
signifiers or words M_S	›*woman*‹	+	+	+	0	
	›*man*‹	+	+	–	0	
	›*bachelor*‹	+	+	–	–	
	›*spinster*‹	+	+	+	–	
	›*wife*‹	+	+	+	+	
	›*husband*‹	+	+	–	+	
	›*boy*‹	+	0	–	–	
	›*girl*‹	+	0	+	–	
	etc					

Let us look at some words related to power. In order to analyze the word M_S = |THREAT|, it is helpful to put it in its larger word field and analyze its semantic relations with similar words such as M_S = |WARNING|, M_S = |PROMISE|, M_S = |ORDER|, M_S = |PUNISHMENT|. The phrase ›*Is that a threat or a promise?*‹ shows that the meanings of ›*threat*‹ and ›*promise*‹ are close and diffi-

[16] The + sign indicates the presence of a meaning component, the – sign its absence, and 0 means the indeterminacy of the presence or absence of a meaning component.

cult to distinguish. A simplified analysis shows that both words share some meaning components, e.g. M_M^{I} = ⎪X SAYS SOMETHING TO Y⎪, i.e. a verbal but not non-verbal communication, and M_M^{II} = ⎪SOMEONE DOES SOMETHING IN THE FUTURE⎪, i.e. an intentional future action and not an unintentional event or past action, whereas both words differ in other meaning components, e.g. M_M^{III} = ⎪SOMETHING BAD FOR Y⎪ vs M_M^{IV} = ⎪SOMETHING GOOD FOR Y⎪, i.e. the individual well-being decreases or increases, or in the components M_M^{V} = ⎪X WILL DO SOMETHING IF Y DOES NOT DO SOMETHING ELSE⎪ vs M_M^{VI} = ⎪X WILL DO SOMETHING AND Y DOES NOT DO SOMETHING⎪, i.e. a conditional or a factual action (see Goddard 1998: 147ff). Also, words related to law may be compared: How are rights, obligations, prohibitions, and voluntariness related?

I turn now to the relation between decompositional intension, extension, and classification. The relation between them is the relation between meaning components, referents, and signifiers. The decompositional intension of a signifier determines its extension: A different decompositional intension leads to a different extension, i.e. different combinations of meaning components constitute different referents. The following figure is a simplified example (from Pottier 1964) with the word M_S = ⎪BIRD⎪ as the starting point.

Figure 3.VII: Example of intension determining extension[17]

signifier and word M_S M_S = ⎪BIRD⎪		**decompositional intension of M_S** = meaning components M_M							
		M_M^{I} = ⎪ANIMAL⎪	M_M^{II} = ⎪CAN FLY⎪	M_M^{III} = ⎪WITH BEAK⎪	M_M^{IV} = ⎪CAN SING⎪	M_M^{V} = ⎪LAYS EGGS⎪	M_M^{VI} = ⎪WILD⎪	M_M^{VII} = ⎪FEATHERED⎪	etc
extension of M_S = referents M_R	M^1_R = ⎪A ROBIN⎪	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	
	M^2_R = ⎪ALL PENGUINS⎪	+	–	+	–	+	+	+	
	M^3_R = ⎪SPARROWS⎪	+	+	+	–	+	+	+	
	M^4_R = ⎪MY CHICKEN⎪	+	0	+	–	+	–	+	
	M^5_R = ⎪PLUCKED OSTRICH⎪	+	–	+	–	+	0	–	
	M^6_R = ⎪NIGHTINGALE⎪	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	
	M^7_R = ⎪BOEING 707⎪	–	+	+	–	–	–	–	
	etc								

[17] The methodological dilemma of such a table is that referents and meaning components are interdependent because each is determined by the other. The problem is thus whether to take the list of meaning components as given and then look for referents (as in the table), or vice versa, to take the list of referents as given and then look for meaning components.

In the example, the combination of all meaning components $M_M{}^{I–VII}$ realizes, for instance, the referents $M^1{}_R$ = ⎪A ROBIN⎪ and $M^6{}_R$ = ⎪NIGHTINGALE⎪, whereas the presence of the meaning components $M_M{}^{I, III, V–VII}$ constitutes the referent $M^2{}_R$ = ⎪ALL PENGUINS⎪, and the combination $M_M{}^{II, III}$ realizes still another referent, namely the »bird« $M^7{}_R$ = ⎪BOEING 707⎪. Since the intension determines the extension, the selection of the meaning components is crucial in this type of analysis: Given a particular signifier or meaning, certain meaning components must be selected and others must be deselected. For example, is $M_M{}^{VIII}$ = ⎪HAS WINGS⎪ to be included in the selection or is $M_M{}^{IV}$ = ⎪CAN SING⎪ to be excluded from the selection?

The selection of the meaning components is methodologically decisive because there are two risks: The first risk is methodological narrow-mindedness and blindness, i.e. if too many meaning components are selected or meaning components that are too strict, the resulting referents may be too few. This risks excluding certain referents that the common sense or emic view does classify with the original signifier, e.g. if all meaning components $M_M{}^{I–VII}$ in the above example were selected, a ⎪PENGUIN⎪ would be excluded from an ornithological study and would not be classified as a ⎪BIRD⎪ because it does not fly nor does it sing. The second risk is methodological arbitrariness and indiscrimination, i.e. if too few meaning components are selected or meaning components that are too general, the resulting referents may be too numerous. This risks including referents that the common sense or emic view does not classify with the original signifier, e.g. if only $M_M{}^{II, III}$ were selected, a ⎪BOEING 707⎪ would be included in an ornithological study and would be called ⎪BIRD⎪ because it can fly and has a beak.

This begs a particular question: Which selection of meaning components is »right« or »appropriate« in decompositional intension? The classical answer is the *model of necessary and sufficient conditions*. Even though this model has been sharply criticized and substantially modified (see chapter 4 on Prototype Theory), it is still a good starting point and heuristic device at this stage of the study. The model assumes that each signifier M_S or meaning M_M can be decomposed into several meaning components $M_M{}^I$, $M_M{}^{II}$, $M_M{}^{III}$, $M_M{}^{etc}$ that function as necessary and sufficient conditions. Firstly, a specific set of meaning components is *necessary*, e.g. $M_M{}^I$ = ⎪ANIMAL⎪ and $M_M{}^{VII}$ = ⎪FEATHERED⎪ because a particular referent such as $M^1{}_R$ = ⎪A ROBIN⎪ must exhibit this set of meaning components so as to be classified by the original signifier M_S = ⎪BIRD⎪. Secondly, a specific set of meaning components is *sufficient*, e.g. $M_M{}^I$ = ⎪ANIMAL⎪, $M_M{}^{III}$ = ⎪WITH BEAK⎪, $M_M{}^V$ = ⎪LAYS EGGS⎪, and $M_M{}^{VII}$ = ⎪FEATHERED⎪ because if a particular referent such as $M^6{}_R$ = ⎪NIGHTINGALE⎪ exhibits this set of meaning components, then this set is enough to unambiguously classify the referent by the original signifier M_S = ⎪BIRD⎪ and to exclude alternative classifications by other signifiers such as M_S = ⎪BAT⎪ or M_S = ⎪DOG⎪.

However, the question arises as to how the analyst knows which meaning components are necessary in a particular signifier, and which are not. A linguistic method to empirically test whether or not a particular meaning component $M_M{}^I$ is a necessary part of a signifier M_S may be called the contradiction- or

negation-test (based on Kempson 1977: 92ff and Schwarz & Chur 2004: 40f). The analyst constructs a sentence that contains both the signifier (within which the meaning component in question is encoded) and the negation of the meaning component in question. If a logico-semantic contradiction follows, the meaning component in question can be said to be a necessary component of the meaning of the signifier. For instance, is M_M^I = │ANIMAL│ a necessary meaning component of the signifier and word M_S = │BIRD│? A test sentence may be ›*Birds are not animals*‹ or ›*A chicken is a bird, but it is not an animal*‹. Since a logico-semantic contradiction follows, the M_M^I = │ANIMAL│ is a necessary meaning component of the signifier and word M_S = │BIRD│. In contrast, M_M^{IV} = │CAN SING│ is not a necessary meaning component of M_S = │BIRD│ because a test sentence such as ›*A chicken is a bird, but it does not sing*‹ does not yield a logico-semantic contradiction.

A similar test may be applied to typical Social Science concepts such as power, family, action, law, or ritual. In this case, the test does not only rely on semantic knowledge of the language and logics (mirrored in linguist-semantic meaning components as in Structural Semantics), but also on socio-cultural knowledge of a particular society and personal experience (mirrored in encyclopedic-cultural meaning components as in Cognitive Semantics). Consequently, the abovementioned test may not necessarily result in a logico-semantic contradiction, but may take on »weaker« forms because the test sentence may simply sound semantically strange, culturally unusual, cognitively counterintuitive, or atypical.

For example, consider the English word M_S = │LAW│ in its normative-legal sense relating to an official rule or norm issued by the state or government. In searching for necessary meaning components of this word, we may come across M_M^I = │INTENTION TO CAUSE PEOPLE TO DO SOMETHING THAT THEY DID NOT DO BEFORE│. Is this meaning component a necessary meaning component of the signifier? A test sentence as ›*This is the new law against discrimination of women, but it does not aim at changing men's behavior toward women*‹ may not yield a logical contradiction, but it does sound semantically odd and culturally atypical in contemporary Western societies. Accordingly, a preliminary conclusion is that the abovementioned meaning component is a necessary part of the word M_S = │LAW│. However, is the meaning component M_M^{II} = │JUST│ – in the moral-normative sense of fairness, equality, impartiality, righteousness, etc – a necessary meaning component of the aforementioned word M_S = │LAW│? The first provisional answer is negative, because a test sentence such as ›*This is the new law against discrimination of women, but it is utterly unjust*‹ sounds semantically and culturally normal and acceptable.

In a similar vein, we may study and justify the semantic composition of other signifiers from the Social Science domain. In so doing, the operationalized research question »Is M_M^I a necessary part of M_S?« may be translated into and appears in many forms. Consider the following examples: Is the notion of harmlessness and innocuousness a necessary trait of the word ›*threat*‹? (For instance, is a power-holder who threatens you unable to harm you or inflict damage?) Is the concept of flexibility and adaptability an essential feature of

power? Does the legal concept of contract presuppose the semantic role of an adult human agent? (For instance, can you make a contract with your baby or with a cow?) Are the laws and the constitution of a country impersonal and intersubjective? And so forth.[18]

So far, I have mainly discussed decompositional intension for signifiers M_S that are rather rudimentary and simple, such as single words. However, signifiers M_S may also appear in the form of more complex structures, such as sentences, sequences of body movements, texts, collages of images, touches, or music, which may then be followed and categorized by M_M. As already discussed in chapter 3.2.2, such complex M_S may be called surface structures, which are explicit, manifest, and conscious, whereas the succeeding M_M may be called deep structure, which is implicit, hidden, and often unconscious (Fowler 1971: 10ff). Similarly, in Objective Hermeneutics the M_S correspond roughly to subjective-intentional structures and the M_M to objective-latent meaning structures (Oevermann et al. 1979). The semiotic task is to take the surface structures M_S as the starting point in order to make explicit and uncover the deep structures M_M (Greimas & Courtés 1979: 139, 294f).

In analogy to figure 3.III, where I showed the example of the deep structure M_M = | THE EXTERIOR CAUSES THE INTERIOR | and various surface structures such as the linguistic utterances ›*The rain makes me sad*‹ or ›*She was impressed by his words*‹, we may apply this reasoning to other Social Science concepts. Searching and analyzing appropriate surface structures, we may try to discover or construct their underlying deep structure. For instance, consider the following sentences and utterances that in some way relate to power or law, namely ›*If your father tells you to wash the car, then you wash the car!*‹, ›*It is legally forbidden to smoke here*‹, ›*Why are you in prison?*‹, ›*If the law is in force, you must pay your taxes, otherwise you will be fined*‹, ›*You are a good and obedient girl*‹, ›*Maybe he won't give me orders*‹, ›*If you don't do it now, I'll smack you!*‹, ›*There is no rule prohibiting tobacco advertisements on TV*‹, ›*He is a real criminal*‹, ›*Private Smith, 30 push-ups or you clean the toilets!*‹, ›*By law, seatbelts must be worn*‹. What is their deep meaning structure?

The answer that I propose here is a single, simple deep structure that may be abbreviated as M_M = | IF – THEN – OTHERWISE |. Even though several caveats must be taken into account in the analysis of a deep structure[19], my aim at this stage is simply to show a method for, and to give an example of, constructing and depicting a deep structure which will serve an illustrative or heuristic purpose. What is consequently secondary are methodological questions of accuracy and construction of the proposed deep structure as well as the actual phrasing or depiction of the proposed deep structure. The following figure shows an example of how the abovementioned surface structures and the deep structure may be analyzed and depicted.

[18] These topics and a similar test will be further discussed in chapter 4 on Prototype Theory.

[19] For example, it is conceivable that there are several deep structures encoded in the abovementioned sentences, that the deep structure(s) may be highly complex or internally contradictory, and that other observers may discover or construct other deep structures.

Figure 3.VIII: Example of surface structures and a deep structure

surface structures	M^1_S =	IF YOUR FATHER TELLS YOU TO WASH THE CAR	THEN YOU WASH THE CAR!	
	M^2_S =		IT IS LEGALLY FORBIDDEN TO SMOKE HERE	
	M^3_S =			WHY ARE YOU IN PRISON?
	M^4_S =	IF THE LAW IS IN FORCE	THEN YOU MUST PAY YOUR TAXES	OTHERWISE YOU WILL BE FINED
	M^5_S =		YOU ARE A GOOD AND OBEDIENT GIRL	
	M^6_S =	MAYBE HE WON'T GIVE ME ORDERS		
	M^7_S =		IF YOU DON'T DO IT NOW	I'LL SMACK YOU!
	M^8_S =	THERE IS NO RULE PROHIBITING	TOBACCO ADVERTISEMENTS ON TV	
	M^9_S =			HE IS A REAL CRIMINAL
	M^{10}_S =		PRIVATE SMITH, 30 PUSH-UPS	OR YOU CLEAN THE TOILETS!
	M^{11}_S =		BY LAW, SEATBELTS MUST BE WORN.	
deep structure	M_M =	**IF** (= a condition to be met so that a consequence can happen)	**THEN** (= a preferred behavioral or evaluative consequence)	**OTHERWISE** (= a dispreferred behavioral or evaluative consequence)

The blank spaces in the table show that the deep structure of M_M = ⎪IF – THEN – OTHERWISE⎪ is rarely activated in its complete form by the surface structures, but instead typically appears only in a partial form. Only M^4_S activates the entire deep structure, but the other surface structures are incomplete, e.g. the order in M^1_S does not mention a punishment, the norm in M^2_S omits its juridical validity, the question in M^3_S does not include the preferred situation of legality, etc. The surface structures semantically background or exclude some elements of the deep structure while semantically foregrounding or including other elements. This is called *profiling* in Cognitive Semantics and resembles Gestalt Psychology's distinction between figure vs ground (Langacker 1990: 9, ch. 9).

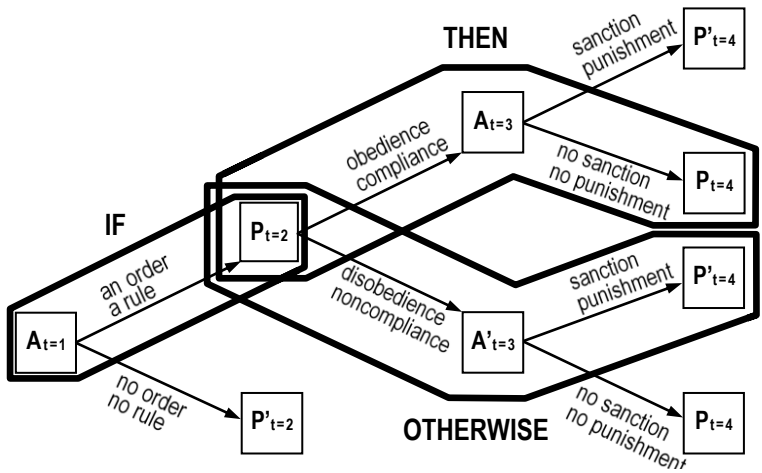
However, even though the surface structures activate only some elements of the deep structure, the deep structure's unprofiled elements are nevertheless implicitly or latently co-activated (see chapter 6.4 on co-activation). This co-activation may occur in the form of psychic or communicative anticipation, connotation, recollection, imagining, etc. This often leads to the full activation and co-activation of all the deep structure's elements. In the above example, the order invoked in the surface structure M^1_S = ⎪IF YOUR FATHER TELLS YOU TO WASH THE CAR, THEN YOU WASH THE CAR!⎪ only activates the deep structure's elements M_M = ⎪IF – THEN⎪ thus omitting the element M_M = ⎪OTHERWISE⎪ because no negative or dispreferred behavioral or evaluative conse-

quence, e.g. punishment, is mentioned or attributed in the surface structure. However, this omitted element of the deep structure is often co-activated as the speaker or hearer may anticipate, imagine, become half-aware, or remember that, for example, a punishment could be imposed, is typically imposed in similar situations, or was imposed in a comparable situation three weeks ago.

There are two analogies to such a process of co-activating the complete deep structure. Firstly, in Frame Semantics or Script Theory (Fillmore 1982, Schank & Abelson 1977), the activation of a single and partial piece of information, e.g. │MY BOYFRIEND JUÁN│, may lead to the co-activation of the whole cognitive frame or social script, e.g. »romantic love relationship«, which comprises an organized and standardized bundle of information, e.g. │STRONG FEELINGS OF LIKING SOMEONE│, │MY BOY- OR GIRLFRIEND│, │HAVING SEX│, │SPENDING A LOT OF TIME TOGETHER│, │BEING FAITHFUL TO ONE'S PARTNER│, │WE TWO VS THE REST│ (see chapters 5.4.2 and 6.4). Secondly, in Gestalt Psychology, perceptual closure means that gaps in the perception of a figure are closed so that the figure is perceived to be complete.

Another way of analyzing the deep structure is to combine a verbal presentation with a graphic presentation. For example, the deep structure M_M = │IF – THEN – OTHERWISE│ may be depicted in analogy to decision tree-models in Game Theory or socio-semantic networks in Linguistics (see Halliday 1972). Such a deep structure may be viewed as a prototypical scenario or script.

Figure 3.IX: Example of a deep structure [20]



[20] The boxes are decision knots where one of two options may be chosen. Letters A and P represent semantic roles (chapter 3.1.1), e.g. agent A does something to patient P. Subscript t represents the temporal stages, e.g. t=1 comes before t=2. The model starts at the left with $A_{t=1}$ where two options are available, i.e. the upper path of giving an order or invoking a rule or the bottom path of not giving an order or not invoking a rule. In the former case, $P_{t=2}$ has two options, i.e. the upper path of classifying one's own or someone's action as obedience-compliance or the bottom path of attributing disobedience-noncompliance.

In the figure, the deep structure M_M = ⎪IF – THEN – OTHERWISE⎪ is highlighted in bold lines that enclose several decision knots. It may be specified by the formula M_M = ⎪(IF = $A_{t=1}$ → $P_{t=2}$) – (THEN = $P_{t=2}$ → $A_{t=3}$ → $P_{t=4}$) – (OTHERWISE = $P_{t=2}$ → $A'_{t=3}$ → $P'_{t=4}$)⎪. This triadic deep structure is similar to, albeit more comprehensive than or different from, several other distinctions, e.g. sanction vs impunity, be vs ought, legal vs illegal, action vs evaluation of an action, etc.

Two other approaches are relevant to a discussion of deep structures. Firstly, Aristotle's Square of Opposition, later resumed and refined by Greimas' semiotic square, may be considered a particular type of deep structure (see Greimas 1976, Greimas & Rastier 1968, Greimas & Courtés 1979 and eds. 1986, Parsons 2006, McNamara 2006). For example, most surface structures relating to power and law, such as the utterances ›*It is legally forbidden to smoke here*‹, ›*Charities are exempted from paying tax*‹, or ›*You are entitled to do that*‹, are based on a tetradic deep structure that may be couched in M_M = ⎪OBLIGATION – VOLUNTARINESS – PROHIBITION – RIGHT⎪. This deep structure may be graphically depicted in a diagram with four corners – namely obligation, voluntariness, prohibition, and right – and various relations of negation between the corners – namely contrariness, contradiction, complementariness, and subcontrariness.

Secondly, deep structures may be based on semantic roles (see chapter 3.1.1), which Fillmore (1968) appropriately calls deep semantic cases. That is, surface structures in communications or cognitions portray the different elements and participants in an event in a particular way that is based on a deep structure in terms of the underlying actorial function or semantic role, e.g. as agent, patient, instrument, giver, receiver, benefactor, experiencer, location, theme, source, etc. In the case of power and law, deep structures in terms of semantic roles may also be constructed. For example, most surface structures in communication or cognition that relate to power, e.g. when the general says ›*Private Smith, 30 push-ups or you clean the toilets!*‹, are based on the deep semantic roles of M_M = ⎣SUPERIOR ACTOR – INFERIOR PATIENT⎦, e.g. the general occupies the role of the superior and actor (i.e. active, causing, potent), whereas private Smith occupies the role of the inferior and patient (i.e. passive, affected, less potent). And in the case of law, many surface structures, e.g. contracts, verdicts, norms, or police interviews, may be boiled down to the semantic roles of M_M = ⎣NORM CREATOR – NORM INVOKER – NORM ADDRESSEE – NORM SURVEILLANCER – NORM ENFORCER – SANCTIONER⎦ (Popitz 1980).

3.4.3 Compositional intension: Another relation or process is *compositional intension*. Similar to decompositional intension, this is a type of intension as its focus is on meaning M_M and meaning components $M_M{}^{I}$, $M_M{}^{II}$, $M_M{}^{III}$, $M_M{}^{etc}$. However, in contrast to decompositional intension's structural and synchronic approach, compositional intension foregrounds processual and diachronic aspects of intension. Whereas in decompositional intension the meaning components are the end point of the analysis, in compositional intension they are the starting point. The relevant question in compositional intension is: How does the processual sequencing of certain rudimentary meaning components come to *compose* a specific complex meaning? This process may be for-

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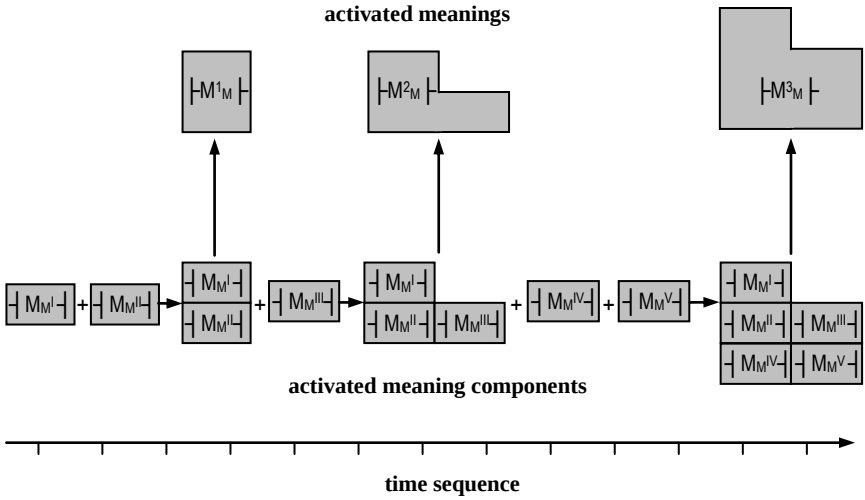
malized as ┤M_M├ + ┤M_M^{II}├ + ┤M_M^{III}├ + ┤M_M^{etc}├ → ├M_M┤ and is depicted in the following figure, which is an extension of the non-dualistic process of meanings up to now and from now on shown in figure 2.XI.

Figure 3.X: Compositional intension



Compositional intension may be seen as a metaphorical extension of a quiz show in which the speaker gives fragmentary and rudimentary descriptions (i.e. meaning components M_M^I, M_M^{II}, M_M^{III}) and the hearer tries to guess the appropriate concept (i.e. the meaning M_M). For example, by uttering certain sentences the quiz master activates the meaning components M_M^I = ┤CAN FLY├ and M_M^{II} = ┤HAS WINGS├ . The hearer combines both meaning components and makes a guess by composing the complex meaning M^1_M = ├A BIRD, i.e. AN ANIMAL THAT CAN FLY AND HAS WINGS┤. However, the quiz master adds M_M^{III} = ┤VEHICLE├ and the hearer infers from the three preceding meaning components that M^1_M is not appropriate and guesses instead M^2_M = ├AN AIRCRAFT, i.e. A VEHICLE THAT CAN FLY, HAS ENGINES AND WINGS┤. The quiz master is not fully satisfied adding M_M^{IV} = ┤FROM A U.S. COMPANY├ and M_M^V = ┤FAMOUS├ , so the hearer combines all five meaning components and finally makes the correct guess by composing the complex meaning M^3_M = ├A BOEING 707, i.e. A FAMOUS U.S. AIRCRAFT THAT CAN FLY AND HAS ENGINES AND WINGS┤.

In this process of combining meaning components, actors use intuitive heuristic tests in order to compose new or complex meanings. Pharo speaks of correspondence tests and consistency tests that actors consciously or unconsciously use to construct or select the appropriate meaning (1997: 218 and 2004: 265f, 332ff). For example, in the quiz show described above, the hearer infers from previous meaning components the meaning M^1_M = ├A BIRD, i.e.... ┤. But as soon as the additional meaning component M_M^{III} = ┤VEHICLE├ is given,

the hearer detects a semantic-conceptual inconsistency between M^1_M and $M_M{}^{III}$, so that she rules out M^1_M in favor of constructing or selecting the meaning M^2_M = ├AN AIRCRAFT, i.e.... ├ which shows a greater semantic-conceptual consistency with $M_M{}^{III}$ and the other meaning components.[21]

Compositional intension consists of three analytical phases: Firstly, separate and rudimentary meaning components are activated, be it communicatively in conversation and discourse or psychically in reasoning and consciousness, e.g. in a Luhmannian-inspired approach (1993a: 66ff) the meaning components $M_M{}^{I}$ = ┤COMMUNICATION├ and $M_M{}^{II}$ = ┤LEGALITY vs ILLEGALITY├ are activated in a business meeting. Secondly, actors combine and fuse these meaning components, e.g. $M_M{}^{I}$ = ┤COMMUNICATION├ is qualified as, and oriented towards, the code $M_M{}^{II}$ = ┤LEGALITY vs ILLEGALITY├, so that both meaning components are merged into $M_M{}^{I}$ + $M_M{}^{II}$ = ┤COMMUNICATION ABOUT LEGALITY vs ILLEGALITY├. Thirdly, the combined meaning components come to compose, or are interpreted as, a new or complex meaning, e.g. $M_M{}^{I}$ + $M_M{}^{II}$ = M_M = ├LAW, i.e. ANY COMMUNICATION ABOUT LEGALITY vs ILLEGALITY ├. This process of combining or merging two existent meaning components $M_M{}^{I}$ and $M_M{}^{II}$ into a new and often more complex meaning M_M is similar to the process of conceptual integration or conceptual blending discussed in Cognitive Sciences (Coulson 2001, Fauconnier & Turner 2002, Turner 2001, see chapter 5.5.2).

Let us look at an instance of compositional intension in the case of power seen through the perspective of Speech Act Theory. Even though this requires that a decompositional intension of the power meaning M_M = │POWER, i.e....│ be performed already, we can provisionally skip this requirement. Ten-year old Laura is listening to her father, who describes the findings of an anthropological study and says that he is sure that these findings are accurate. Her father therefore activates meaning components such as $M_M{}^{I}$ = ┤GIVING INFORMATION AND A DESCRIPTION├ and $M_M{}^{II}$ = ┤BELIEVING IN THE TRUTH AND ACCURACY OF IT├, which Laura assembles so as to compose the meaning M^1_M = ├REPRESENTATIVE-DECLARATIVE SPEECH ACT ├. The father continues by talking about one particular finding of the study, namely children's behavior to help their parents with domestic chores, which activates the meaning component $M_M{}^{III}$ = ┤A PARTICULAR ACTION OF CHILDREN├ so that Laura extends her original meaning to M^2_M = ├REPRESENTATIVE-DECLARATIVE SPEECH ACT ABOUT A PARTICULAR ACTION OF CHILDREN ├. The father reminds Laura that she used to help him with domestic chores, consequently activating the component $M_M{}^{IV}$ = ┤A PARTICULAR ACTION OF LAURA├ and Laura composes the meaning components activated so far to M^3_M = ├REPRESENTATIVE-DECLARATIVE SPEECH ACT ABOUT A PARTICULAR ACTION OF LAURA ├. Afterwards the father says that it has been his secret wish and hope that Laura would help him more with domestic chores, which activates the meaning components $M_M{}^{V}$ =

[21] Meaning components may *extend or specify* a particular meaning, e.g. M^1_M = ├A BIRD ├ to M^2_M = ├A RED BIRD ├, thus exhibiting a high degree of robustness (see chapter 2.4.3), or they may *change or contradict* a particular meaning, e.g. M^1_M = ├A BIRD ├ to M^3_M = ├A VEHICLE ├, thus exhibiting a high degree of susceptibility (see chapter 2.4.3).

┤THE SPEAKER WISHES OR REQUESTS...├. Laura puts the previous meaning components together and – using the aforementioned consistency test – detects a conceptual inconsistency between M^3_M and $M_M{}^V$. She consequently rules out or changes M^3_M by composing the updated meaning M^4_M = ├OPTATIVE-REQUESTIVE SPEECH ACT ABOUT A PARTICULAR ACTION OF LAURA├. Since Laura does not reply, her father intensifies his utterance by explicitly requiring Laura to help him with the chores, thus activating $M_M{}^{VI}$ = ┤THE SPEAKER COMMANDS OR ORDERS...├, and by emphasizing his authority and strength, hence activating a $M_M{}^{VII}$ = ┤SUPERIOR-INFERIOR-RELATIONSHIP├. Laura fuses the preceding meaning components together so as to compose the new meaning M^5_M = ├DIRECTIVE-IMPERATIVE SPEECH ACT ABOUT A PARTICULAR ACTION OF LAURA├. Laura frowns, her father gets angry and says he will punish her if she does not obey, thus activating $M_M{}^{VIII}$ = ┤THREAT├, which extends the former meaning to the new meaning M^6_M = ├DIRECTIVE-IMPERATIVE SPEECH ACT ABOUT A PARTICULAR ACTION OF LAURA AND COMMISSIVE-THREATENING SPEECH ACT BASED ON THE MENACE TO IMPOSE SANCTIONS├.[22]

Compositional intension also yields interesting research questions in the case of Social Science concepts such as power, internalization, roles, law, family, politics, etc. For example: Which meaning components must be activated, and in which sequence, so as to activate the law meaning? How do actors or systems seek or avoid the activation of key meaning components constitutive of power? What are conversational strategies or discourse patterns of sequencing meaning components and of composing a meaning of politics? How are meanings negotiated and changed in social interactions by foregrounding or backgrounding, including or excluding, and accepting or rejecting certain meaning components? Such a processual-interactional perspective will be extended in chapter 6 on activation.

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3.5 Meaning and Semasiology

The next process within the semiotic triangle leads, just as the previous process of intension, from the signifier ┤M_S├ to the meaning ├M_M├. However, two aspects need to be distinguished.

On the one hand, there are some highly conventionalized and standardized signifiers that almost always and invariably activate one and the same meaning, e.g. the English word M_S = ┤SHE├ will probably always and exclusively

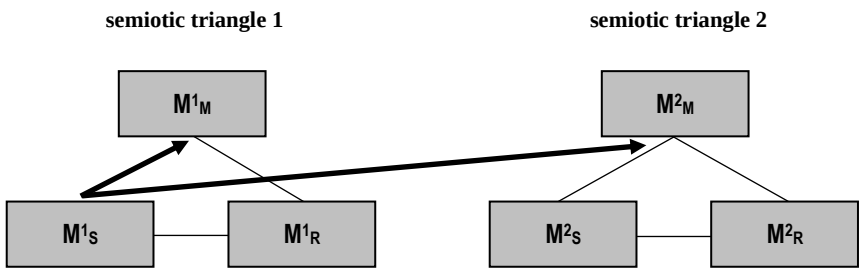
[22] Pharo (1997: 218f, 2004: 289f) analyzed similar processes. Two examples: (1) Person A performs an $M_M{}^I$ = │ACTION│ and person B interprets it as a M_M = │PROMISE│. However, A begins to $M_M{}^{II}$ = │LAUGH AND FOOL AROUND│, so that B considers this to contradict the former interpretation M_M = │PROMISE│. Instead, taking into account all of A's actions $M_M{}^I$ and $M_M{}^{II}$, B interprets them as a kind of M_M = │PLAY│. (2) Person A says to B to $M_M{}^I$ = │MEET TOMORROW│. This also implies that $M_M{}^{II}$ = │PERSON A COMMITS HIMSELF TO A FUTURE ACTION│ and that $M_M{}^{III}$ = │PERSON B EXPECTS PERSON A TO CARRY OUT A FUTURE ACTION│. Since $M_M{}^{IV}$ = │PERSON B HIMSELF HAS AN INTEREST IN MEETING PERSON A│, the whole composition of the meaning components $M_M{}^I$ to $M_M{}^{IV}$ suggests that A »risks« that his utterance is interpreted by B as a M_M = │PROMISE│.

mean M_M = ├LINGUISTIC PRONOUN USED TO REFER TO A FEMALE BEING OR ENTITY┤. This is the case of the abovementioned process of decompositional intension where a particular signifier M_S leads, regardless of its context and use, to only one unambiguous meaning M_M.

On the other hand, there are signifiers that have several distinct meanings, put formally ┤M^1_S├ → ├M^1_M┤ + ├M^2_M┤ + ├M^{etc}_M┤. For example, the English word M^1_S = ┤BANK├ corresponds to the conventional, prototypical, or default meaning M^1_M = ├A BUSINESS THAT PROVIDES FINANCIAL SERVICES┤ as in ›*a savings bank*‹. However, this word also has other or secondary meanings such as M^2_M = ├LAND ALONG THE SIDE OF A BODY OF WATER┤ as in ›*a river bank*‹ or M^3_M = ├A ROW OF SIMILAR THINGS, ESPECIALLY MACHINES AND TECHNICAL DEVICES┤ as in ›*a bank of switches*‹. This is the case of a particular process within the semiotic triangle that is usually called *semasiology*.[23]

Such a semasiological approach is prevalent in Semantics and Structuralism because it remains on the structural level of the *langue* (the abstract linguistic system), largely excluding the pragmatic level of the *parole* (the concrete individual enunciation).

Figure 3.XI: Semasiology



This semasiological process adopts the perspective of the sign-receiver or hearer, where the starting point is a given signifier whose meaning or different meanings are sought, e.g. synchronically at a given time, diachronically in different times, or diatopically in different regions (Baldinger 1998, see also Blank & Koch eds. 2003). Similar to the aforementioned signifier contingency, there is a structural *meaning contingency* because a single signifier M_S may have several meanings M^1_M, M^2_M, M^3_M. These make up a semasiological field, in contrast to the abovementioned onomasiological field, and constitute polysemy or homonymy, in contrast to the abovementioned synonymy (Baldinger 1998). In the case of polysemy, these meanings M^1_M, M^2_M, M^3_M are semantically related and share some meaning components because they may stem etymologically from the same root meaning or are metaphorical extensions of each other.

[23] In common parlance this is similar to ambiguity, in Linguistics it is called polysemy or homonymy, and Luhmann dubs it meaning surplus (*Sinnüberschuss*) (1984: 93f).

Polysemy is therefore an important methodological tool to analyze a signifier's meaning M^1_M because the analysis of the signifier's other meanings M^2_M, M^3_M, M^4_M may help to clarify the meaning M^1_M.

Let us look at some Social Science examples related to law. For instance, the English word M^1_S = ┤LAW├ has several distinct meanings M_M forming a semasiological field. Besides its conventional, prototypical, or default meaning M^1_M = ├LAW, i.e. THE RULES THAT PEOPLE IN A SOCIETY MUST OBEY AND THE PROCESSES THAT APPLY THESE RULES┤ as in the expression ›*criminal law*‹ or ›*to break the law*‹, there are other meanings such as M^2_M = ├A PRINCIPLE, i.e. A STATEMENT ABOUT SOMETHING THAT ALWAYS HAPPENS IN NATURE OR SOCIETY┤ as in the expressions ›*law of gravity*‹ or ›*law of supply and demand*‹. There is still another, but related meaning, namely M^3_M = ├THE POLICE, i.e. THE OFFICIAL ORGANIZATION WHOSE JOB IS TO CATCH CRIMINALS┤ as in the sentence ›*The law stormed the demonstration*‹. When trying to analyze M^1_M, it is helpful to analyze the other M^2_M and M^3_M and their relation to M^1_M. This may show, for example, that M^1_M and M^2_M overlap partially (i.e. polysemes) because they share the meaning components $M_M{}^I$ = │CONSTANT│, $M_M{}^{II}$ = │IMPERSONAL│, and $M_M{}^{III}$ = │PREDICTABLE│. It is also possible that M^1_M is etymologically a metaphorical extension of the original M^2_M, or vice versa. In any case, there is a close semantic connection between both meanings, and one meaning may be used as a source for understanding or transferring meaning components to the target meaning.

Moreover, both meanings are highly relevant to, and widespread in, particular societal systems, that is, M^1_M is especially associated with the legal system of modern society (e.g. courts, legislation, contracting, etc) and M^2_M is especially associated with the scientific system of modern society (e.g. universities, research, truth, etc). Since both meanings are semantically close and overlap, they may foster the temporary cooperation or partial integration of their corresponding societal systems. For example, the legal system often takes the scientific system as its »role model« and imports many of the scientific system's procedures, concepts, and standards, e.g. the notions of objectivity and truth, the requirement of empirical evidence and logical consistency, the axiomatization and hierarchization of knowledge or norms, the systematic and methodical procedures, etc. A quasi-complete integration of both societal systems is the case of a law school faculty member who works simultaneously as an academic in a university and as a judge in a court of law.[24]

Communication Theory, Linguistics, and Speech Act Theory have a similar semasiological argument. Each utterance or communication, e.g. M_S = ┤IT IS RAINING├, has simultaneously different message types or may be interpreted as distinct speech act types. For example, the above utterance has a descriptive and informative message about the world and may be interpreted literally as a direct speech act, namely as a statement in terms of a declarative-representative speech act such as M^1_M = ├THERE ARE DROPS OF WATER FAL-

[24] And the inverse case is also possible because the scientific system sometimes takes the legal system as its »role model« and imports some of its concepts and procedures.

LING FROM CLOUDS IN THE SKY ⊢. However, the utterance contains other message types and may be interpreted non-literally as an indirect speech act. For instance, there may be an emotive and self-revealing message concerning the speaker such as the expressive speech act M^2_M = ⊢I AM DISAPPOINTED THAT THE WEATHER IS BAD ⊢, a phatic and relational message concerning the interaction between speaker and hearer such as the »small talk-starter« M^3_M = ⊢WE BOTH COULD HAVE A CONVERSATION AND CREATE A RELATIONSHIP BY TALKING ABOUT THE WEATHER ⊢, a conative and normative message about the future actions of the hearer in terms of a directive-imperative speech act such as the order M^4_M = ⊢GO GET MY UMBRELLA! ⊢, etc (Jakobson 1960, Schulz von Thun 1981, Searle 1975b). And who knows how many other types of speech acts may be structurally encoded in the signifier, e.g. an invitation, a complaint, a question, a greeting, a warning, a suggestion, etc.[25]

This example shows that the astonishingly great range of different meanings M^1_M, M^2_M, M^3_M, etc that a single signifier M_S may structurally have – e.g. a declarative-representative speech, an expressive-emotive speech act, a phatic-relational speech act, a directive-imperative speech act, etc – allows us to draw the following generalized conclusion: *almost any and all* meanings M^1_M, M^2_M, M^3_M, etc are structurally omnipresent and latently encoded in *one* particular signifier M_S, or vice versa, *one* particular meaning M^1_M is structurally omnipresent and latently encoded in *almost any and all* signifiers M^1_S, M^2_S, M^3_S, etc. This radical conclusion needs some clarification: It refers only to the structural-virtual level of the *langue* (the abstract linguistic system) thus excluding the processual-actual level of the *parole* (the concrete individual enunciation). That is, a particular signifier is *a priori* able or likely to activate almost any and all meanings, or vice versa, a particular meaning is *a priori* able or likely to be activated by almost any and all signifiers – even if *a posteriori* it turns out that in a concrete temporal-spatial situation a particular signifier actually activates only one particular meaning, or vice versa, that a particular meaning is actually activated by only one particular signifier. The important part of my conclusion is that this ability or likelihood of activation is greater than zero (i.e. non-impossibility) and smaller than one (i.e. non-necessity), so the outcome is a likelihood between zero and one (i.e. possibility).[26] Constructivist approaches argue similarly: Meanings are not inherent or natural properties of signifiers, but are constructed and attributed to signifiers by observers and their operations. In the following chapter, I will resume and detail this conclusion.

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[25] The same semasiological procedure may be applied to other examples, e.g. the utterance ›*You may get hurt if you do that*‹ may be interpreted as a warning because the speaker simply informs the hearer that an unfavorable and unintentional event may happen to him or it may be interpreted as a threat because the speaker implies that he commits himself to carrying out an intentional action unfavorable to the hearer (see Halliday 1972: 86-89).

[26] Each signifier has, of course, a *different* capacity or probability of activating a particular meaning in cross-situational comparison. For example, M^1_S such as the sentence ›*It is raining*‹ may have a low cross-situational capacity of activating a directive-imperative meaning (e.g. 8%), whereas M^2_S such as the sentence ›*Go get my umbrella!*‹ may have a high cross-situational probability (e.g. 95%).

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3.6 Meaning and Interpretation

A further process in the semiotic triangle concerns the level of both the *langue* and the *parole*. The previously discussed process of semasiology emphasized the meaning contingency, ambiguity, and freedom that are structurally encoded in most signifiers: One particular M_S may correspond to several M^1_M, M^2_M, M^3_M, etc. This is why signifiers *underspecify* meanings, because one particular signifier does not specify only one particular meaning. However, actors and systems in a concrete situation usually cannot consider all possible meanings M^1_M, M^2_M, M^3_M, etc, but need to *specify* a signifier's meaning such as M^2_M. As Luhmann says, meaning surplus necessitates meaning selection (1984: 93ff). This need or necessity to specify a signifier's meaning is illustrated by Grice's cooperative principle (1975, 1978). In interactions, speaker and hearer cooperate tacitly seeking to be understood by the other and to understand the other by using certain conversational maxims so as to further the purpose of the interaction. This tacit cooperation implies that the hearer tries to specify the »right« or »appropriate« meaning, namely the speaker's intended meaning.

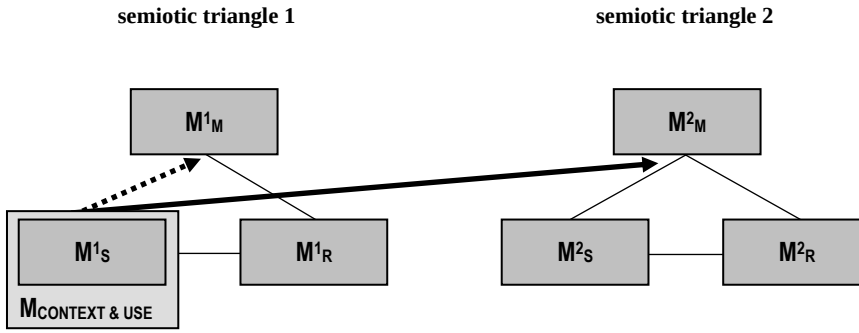
To conflate the previous arguments: How can the gap between the existence of *meaning underspecification* and the necessity of *meaning specification* be bridged? There are several pragmatic and everyday methods that actors use to solve this problem, and one such method is *interpretation* (or decoding, see Hall 1973).[27]

Interpretation is a process within the semiotic triangle that transforms meaning underspecification into meaning specification: Given a signifier M_S with a possible structural range of meanings M^1_M, M^2_M, M^3_M, M^4_M, etc, one particular meaning such as M^2_M is selected, and all other meanings M^1_M, M^3_M, M^4_M, etc are deselected. The important point is that this selection and deselection of meaning is steered by the context and use of the signifier M_S: *It is the context and use of the signifier that selects and specifies its meaning*. The context as the *explanans* may be the social situation or relation, the surrounding syntactic structures, the type or characteristics of the actor or system, the temporal embeddedness, common or background knowledge, the subsequent interactions and operations, the personal history, the psychic disposition, the topic of conversation, the facial expressions, etc, which are supposed to specify the meaning as the *explanandum*.

The signifier's context and use is notated as $M_{CONTEXT\ \&\ USE}$ in the figure below, because, according to Non-Dualism, it too is an M. The uninterrupted arrow symbolizes the selected meaning M^2_M and the dotted arrow symbolizes another possible or structural, but deselected and non-activated meaning M^1_M. Put formally, M^1_S's context and use, namely $M_{CONTEXT\ \&\ USE}$, select the process $\dashv M^1_S \dashv \rightarrow \vdash M^2_M \vdash$ and deselect $\dashv M^1_S \dashv \rightarrow \vdash M^1_M \vdash$.

[27] Another method of solving the problem of meaning underspecification is *meta-communication*, that is, actors switch from communicating about things to communicating about communication, e.g. the hearer may ask the speaker how he meant his utterance or she may ask him to repeat the utterance. However, meta-communication tends to be used only after interpretation has failed to solve the problem of meaning underspecification.

Figure 3.XII: Interpretation



Interpretation disambiguates an ambiguous signifier. For example, as shown in the previous chapter 3.5 on semasiology, the English word M^1_S = ⟊ BANK⟊ has several meanings, e.g. the conventional and prototypical meaning M^1_M = ⟙A BUSINESS THAT PROVIDES FINANCIAL SERVICES⟘, but it also has other meanings such as M^2_M = ⟙LAND ALONG THE SIDE OF A BODY OF WATER⟘. A sentence such as ›*They want to buy the bank*‹ is equivocal because it does not specify one unequivocal meaning, so the hearer must resort to, or construct, the context of the sentence. Such a pragmatic and everyday inquiry may reveal that M^1_S appears in $M_{CONTEXT\ \&\ USE}$ = ⟊A REPORT OF THE LAND REGISTRATION OFFICE⟊, so that M^2_M will probably be selected as the appropriate meaning, while M^1_M will be deselected because it is less supported by the signifier's context. Whereas in decompositional intension and semasiology M_M is a possible and latent meaning on the level of the *langue*, in interpretation M_M is an actualized and used meaning on the level of the *parole*.[28]

This pragmatist-interactionist approach may be applied to other Social Science concepts. I will briefly mention one possible application, i.e. Grice's (1975, 1978) conversational implicatures.[29] Let us resume the above example, where the utterance M^1_S = ⟊ IT IS RAINING⟊ has simultaneously different mes-

[28] The same context-dependency applies to classification (see chapter 3.3), i.e. the process in which a particular subordinate referent M_R is classified by a superordinate signifier M^1_S and not by an alternative signifier M^2_S. Here, too, the context of the referent suggests the signifier. For example, the action M^1_R = ⟊ TODAY HENRY DROVE THE CAR TO THE LAKE⟊ may be labeled as M^1_S = ⟙BORING⟘, M^2_S = ⟙ILLEGAL⟘, M^3_S = ⟙GOOD NEWS⟘, etc. Given a particular context such as $M_{CONTEXT\ \&\ USE}$ = ⟊HENRY IS THIRTEEN YEARS OLD AND HIS FATHER IS A POLICEMAN⟊, the classification M^2_S = ⟙ILLEGAL⟘ seems the most appropriate signifier. But if the context is modified into $M_{CONTEXT\ \&\ USE}$ = ⟊HENRY IS THIRTEEN YEARS OLD AND EXTREMELY FEARFUL. HE HAS NEVER ACCEPTED HIS FATHER'S INVITATIONS TO LEARN HOW TO DRIVE A CAR⟊, the most probable classification may be M^3_S = ⟙GOOD NEWS⟘ because Henry's action shows he has partly overcome his pathological fear.

[29] Implicatures are non-truth-conditional inferences where sentence A neither asserts nor entails, but suggests or implies sentence B (for more details, see chapter 6.4.1 on the inference-based co-activation of meanings).

sage types or may be interpreted as distinct speech act types. The literal sentence meaning is the descriptive-informative message or direct speech act in the form of the statement M^1_M = ├THERE ARE DROPS OF WATER FALLING FROM CLOUDS IN THE SKY┤, but the signifier's context and use is $M_{CONTEXT\ \&\ USE}$ = │THE SOCIAL RELATION AND SITUATION, i.e. THE SPEAKER BEING THE DUKE WHO IS ABOUT TO LEAVE THE MANSION AND THE HEARER BEING THE SERVANT│, thus suggesting that the intended speaker meaning is an indirect speech act in the form of a conative-imperative speech act, e.g. the order M^4_M = ├GO GET MY UMBRELLA!┤. The direct speech act often does not correspond to the indirect speech act because the direct-literal interpretation of an utterance on the basis of its grammatical-linguistic form (e.g. syntax, modality, tense) diverges from the indirect-contextual interpretation of this utterance on the basis of its socio-communicative function (e.g. situation, history, knowledge).

This example shows that even signifiers that seem to have no literal or direct meaning of power may be interpreted as power *if and as soon as* they occur in the appropriate context and are put to the appropriate use. Hence, for the meaning of power to be evoked it is *not* necessary to have signifiers with a definite, literal, direct, or prototypical meaning of power, e.g. clear authoritative words or gestures like M_S = ┤COMMAND├ or M_S = ┤RAISING ONE'S FIST├, pictograms or images that evidently pertain to the realm of power like M_S = ┤A PHOTO DEPICTING AN AFRICAN CHIEF IN WAR GEAR├, or linguistic structures indicating a strong illocutionary force like the imperative M_S = ┤SHUT IT!├ or the subjunctive M_S = ┤THE BUREAU DEMANDS THAT SHE PAY HER TAXES├. The insight that the signifier's meaning depends on the signifier's context and use may lead to two different, but not necessarily incompatible conclusions.

The first possible conclusion, which is more radical, has been advanced in a similar form at the end of the previous chapter 3.5. The activated meaning M_M is *highly independent* of the signifier M_S, but *highly dependent* on the context and use $M_{CONTEXT\ \&\ USE}$ of the signifier M_S. Almost *any and every* signifier can *a priori* activate almost *any and every* meaning *if the signifier is put in the appropriate context and to the appropriate use*. It is the context and use that enable this large »semantic leap« or »semantic bridge« between *any* signifier and *any* meaning. In a similar vein, Chandler argues that *anything* can be a signifier if it is interpreted as a signifier, i.e. interpreted as signifying and referring to something other than itself (2002: 17). The same goes for any particular meaning such as M^1_M, because *anything* can be M^1_M if it is interpreted as M^1_M – and this depends, as I argue, on the context and use of this »anything«.[30]

[30] Kurzon (1998: 587), who worked on incitements, agrees: »Any utterance [any M_S] may constitute an act of incitement [an M_M] if the circumstances [$M_{CONTEXT\ \&\ USE}$] are appropriate to follow for such an interpretation«. Arguing that all signifiers have *a priori the capacity* to activate any meaning, i.e. their probability p of activating any meaning is $0 < p < 1$, does not mean that all signifiers have *the same capacity* to activate any meaning (e.g. p = 60%). Firstly, there are signifiers that activate a meaning *in most contexts and uses*, so there is a *high cross-context-and-use probability* of activating this meaning (e.g. p = 90%). Secondly, there are signifiers that evoke a meaning *only in particular contexts and uses*, so there is a *low cross-context-and-use probability* of activating this meaning (e.g. p = 10%).

The second possible conclusion is less radical and seeks to strike a balance between the role of the signifier and its context and use. The kind of meaning M_M that is actually interpreted or activated *always and equally* depends *both* on the kind of signifier M_S *and* on the kind of context and use $M_{CONTEXT\ \&\ USE}$. More importantly, there will always be some kinds of signifiers M_S that, even though they occur in the *most appropriate* kind of context and use $M_{CONTEXT\ \&\ USE}$, *cannot possibly* be interpreted as a particular kind of meaning M_M. For example, even in the most favorable and appropriate context, it is virtually impossible that my utterance M_S = ┤I DID IT YESTERDAY├ will be interpreted as the speech act of M_M = ├PROMISE┤ because the felicity conditions are not met: I say something about the past, whereas a promise says something about the future.

This topic of the felicity conditions (Searle 1969, 1975a, 1975b) plays an important role in interpretation. In my view, the philosophical basis or starting point for this topic is Kant's notion of the conditions of possibility, or more precisely, the *necessities of possibility*: Which things A, B, C, etc are *necessary* for another thing X to be *possible*? Which things A, B, C, etc *must* be or happen, so that another thing X *can* be or happen? For example, what characteristics must a person have so that this person can win the U.S. Green Card Lottery? An illustrative answer could be: The person must participate in the lottery, the person must come from an eligible country, the person must have at least a high school diploma, etc.

The same reasoning can be applied to the semiotic-linguistic domain: Felicity conditions are the fundamental characteristics an M_S and its $M_{CONTEXT\ \&\ USE}$ *must* have so that a particular M_M *can* be attributed (or in speech act-theoretic terminology, so that a particular speech act is felicitous, i.e. is performed properly and is situationally appropriate).

For example, which characteristics must a text (or utterance, gesture, pictogram, etc) and its context (or social situation, topic of conversation, personal history, etc) have so that in principle it can count as, or be interpreted as, a prototypical order and not an atypical order?[31]

Here are some answers: Firstly, the text must be framed in a way that M_S = │A PARTICULAR ACTION IS INDICATED│, M_S = │SOMETHING IN THE PRESENT OR FUTURE IS INDICATED│, etc. Secondly, the context must be structured in a way that, for instance, $M_{CONTEXT\ \&\ USE}$ = │THERE ARE AT LEAST TWO ACTORS X AND Y│, │X AND Y STAND IN AN ASYMMETRICAL RELATIONSHIP│, │X AND Y CAN MUTUALLY COMMUNICATE│, │AN ACTION OF X CAN CAUSE A REACTION OF Y│, │X WANTS Y TO DO SOMETHING Z│, │ACTOR Y CAN DO Z│, │IN THE NORMAL COURSE OF EVENTS, Y WOULD NOT DO Z│, etc. For instance, Al Capone is reading a book in the living room, but feels disturbed by his grandchild practicing the trumpet and therefore wants him to play somewhere else, so he tells him ›*You get out of here*‹. In this example, all felicity conditions, i.e. all contextual conditions $M_{CONTEXT\ \&\ USE}$ and all textual conditions M_S, are met so that a M_M = │PROTOTYPICAL ORDER│ can be interpreted.

[31] This question deliberately includes and anticipates the key concepts ›*prototypical*‹ and ›*atypical*‹ from Prototype Theory which will be presented in the following chapter 4.

In contrast, let us now look at some cases where one or several of these felicity conditions are not met. For example, if the grandchild has two broken legs, the contextual condition $M_{CONTEXT\ \&\ USE}$ = ⎪ACTOR Y CAN DO Z⎪ is not met. If Al Capone says to his grandchild ›*You got out of here*‹, the textual condition M_S = ⎪SOMETHING IN THE PRESENT OR FUTURE IS INDICATED⎪ is not met. If Al Capone is sitting alone in the living room, $M_{CONTEXT\ \&\ USE}$ = ⎪THERE ARE AT LEAST TWO ACTORS X AND Y⎪ is not met. If Al Capone says to his grandchild ›*I order you to feel sad!*‹, the textual condition M_S = ⎪A PARTICULAR ACTION IS INDICATED⎪ is not met. And so on. In all these cases, one or several felicity conditions do not obtain so that it is in principle impossible that a felicitous and prototypical order is attributed.

What do actors do in these situations in which they would like a particular interpretation M_M to be felicitously activated, but they know that the contextual conditions $M_{CONTEXT\ \&\ USE}$ are not met (even if the textual conditions M_S were fully met)? Here are three tentative answers: Firstly, actors may nevertheless use an appropriate signifier such as ›*You get out of here*‹, knowing that – even though the interpretation M_M = ⎪PROTOTYPICAL ORDER⎪ is impossible – the interpretation M_M = ⎪ATYPICAL ORDER⎪ is possible.[32] Reasons for such behavior may be that actors want to save face or want to make a joke. Secondly, actors do not use the original signifier in question because they know that it is impossible to felicitously activate the meaning of a prototypical order. Instead, actors activate an alternative signifier that leads to a different prototypical meaning. This alternative signifier may be a functional equivalent to the original signifier because both have the same function or effect. For example, if Al Capone wants a rivaling but much more powerful mafia boss to leave his territory, the contextual conditions are not met so as to activate a prototypical order by saying ›*You leave my territory!*‹. However, Al Capone can activate a prototypical offer by telling the other mafia boss ›*I will give you $200.000 if you leave my territory*‹. In principle, both an order and an offer have the same function or effect because they increase the probability of someone doing something that he would not have done otherwise.[33] Thirdly, actors may change their goals altogether and activate a completely different prototypical meaning instead. For example, Al Capone may say to his grandchild with the broken legs ›*Poor Henry, don't worry, I will take care of you so you can walk again very soon*‹, thus activating a M_M = ⎪PROTOTYPICAL CONSOLATION⎪ instead of a M_M = ⎪PROTOTYPICAL ORDER⎪.

Apart from the analysis of the felicity conditions, the pragmatist and interactionist approach to interpretation enables the researcher to generate and study other research questions. For example, why do some actors tend to interpret a wide range of signifiers M^1_S, M^2_S, M^3_S, etc in terms of only one meaning such as M_M = ⊢CRITICISM⊣?, how are signifiers strategically used so as to evoke a particular meaning like M_M = ⊢TO MAKE SOMEONE FEEL GOOD⊣?,

[32] See the remark in the previous footnote 31.

[33] See also the example at the opening of chapter 6, where John chooses between different means or meanings (e.g. power, love, science, money) so as to get Mary to do something.

how is a particular context such as $M_{CONTEXT\ \&\ USE}$ = |AN EGALITARIAN-SYMMETRICAL RELATIONSHIP| created or manipulated with the aim of facilitating the desired interpretation M_M?, etc. This last example leads to the next topic.

The preceding discussion of the context and use $M_{CONTEXT\ \&\ USE}$ of a signifier, word, or text M_S has some shortcomings because $M_{CONTEXT\ \&\ USE}$ is viewed as an externally given, fixed, and independent *explanans* that influences the *explanandum* M_S. For example, Actor-Network Theory criticizes that the context of some text is usually conceptualized as a static, preassembled, all-embedding outside domain of impersonal and hidden forces (e.g. society, culture, milieu, time, etc) that causally determines the inside text. Instead, Actor-Network Theory proposes to ignore or abandon this or any conceptualization of context, or at least, to study the way actors, objects, and texts themselves define, assemble, and dislocate their context, i.e. how they contextualize and re-contextualize themselves (Latour 1996 and 2005: 3f, 11f, 215f). In Linguistics, Gumperz's contextualization-approach has studied such a dialectical and dynamic relationship between text and context, particularly the ways in which the text or the actors actively and jointly create, change, make available, and render relevant a particular context, which then allows the text or the actors to become intelligible and meaningful (Auer & Luzio eds. 1992, Goodwin & Duranti eds. 1992). Consequently, any discussion of the process of interpretation should consider these criticisms and propositions by taking into account the two-way relationship between $M_{CONTEXT\ \&\ USE}$ and M_S, especially the (re-)contextualization of the text.

An example related to power and authority can be found in a well-known scene in a novel by Mark Twain (1876: ch. II). Aunt Polly tells Tom Sawyer to whitewash a huge fence, which he is very reluctant to do because he considers it an order or obligation. In analytical terms, M_S or M_R is the action of whitewashing the fence[34], $M_{CONTEXT\ \&\ USE}$ is the power-laden communication and superior-inferior relationship between Aunt Polly and Tom as well as the unpleasant prospect for Tom of hours of work and boredom, which finally lead to the interpretation M_M of an *order or obligation*. However, since Tom is a clever and creative kid, he succeeds in finding a way to evade the whitewashing of the fence by getting other kids to do it for him. In talking with them, Tom's trick is to communicatively create a new context $M_{CONTEXT\ \&\ USE}$ that portrays M_S or M_R, namely the action of whitewashing the fence, as an interesting and artistic activity that requires skill and talent, that can only be done by very few selected people, that is fun and enjoyable to do, and that Aunt Polly has forbidden to be done by anyone else except Tom. This new contextualization of the text, as Twain writes, »put the thing in a new light« (1876: 20). That is, Tom strategically changes $M_{CONTEXT\ \&\ USE}$ of M_S or M_R so as to facilitate a particular interpretation M_M, namely that of a *right or privilege*. In short, the re-contextualization of the text changes the interpretation of the action of white-

[34] For the structural analogy between signifier and referent (or interpretation and classification), see the above footnote 28 as well as chapter 3.2.1. Consequently, the argumentation in this example remains the same for signifier and referent.

washing the fence from an order or obligation to a right or privilege. The surprising upshot is that due to Tom's re-contextualization efforts the other kids not only eagerly want to whitewash the fence, but they are even willing to pay Tom for being allowed to whitewash the fence.

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3.7 Meaning and Meaning Divergence

The next process in the semiotic triangle is a combination of the two previous processes. Semasiology's structural meaning contingency is combined with interpretation's processual meaning selection, so that the process of *meaning divergence* emerges. As argued in chapter 3.3, classification divergence is structurally very similar or even identical to meaning divergence, so the following discussion equally applies to both processes.[35]

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3.7.1 Meaning divergence: In meaning divergence, one signifier leads to different meanings for different actors or systems, i.e. ┤M^1_S├ is interpreted by actor or system A as ├M^1_M┤ and by actor or system B as ├M^2_M┤. Meaning divergence is similar to semasiology in that one signifier leads to different meanings, and it is similar to interpretation in that actors actually use a signifier in order to select one particular meaning. For example, reading the book title M_S = ┤BANKS├, the investor Mrs. Dollar interprets it as M^1_M = ├A BOOK ON BUSINESSES THAT PROVIDE FINANCIAL SERVICES┤, whereas the geographer Mr. River interprets it as M^2_M = ├A BOOK ON THE LAND ALONG THE SIDE OF A BODY OF WATER┤. The signifier M^1_S is the prior consensus or convergence that is necessary for there to be a subsequent conflict of, or divergence between, the meanings M^1_M vs M^2_M.[36]

In analogy to interpretation, meaning divergence is explained using the diverging contexts and uses of the signifier. In the above example, M_S's context and use refer to the characteristics, or kind of actors, namely $M_{CONTEXT\ \&\ USE}$ = │ACTOR IS AN INVESTOR│ and $M_{CONTEXT\ \&\ USE}$ = │ACTOR IS A GEOGRAPHER│. There are numerous factors (e.g. common culture, globalization, shared knowledge) that homogenize, uniformize, and standardize contexts. However, factors dominate that create a divergence and multiplicity of contexts (be they local or global, short-term or long-term, personal or social), so that signifiers usually have multiple and divergent contexts. Hence, meaning divergence is a normal and frequent occurrence and not a rare phenomenon eking out a marginal existence in the niches of the lifeworld: »The social world is the site of continual struggles to define what the social world is« (Bourdieu 1987a: 50).

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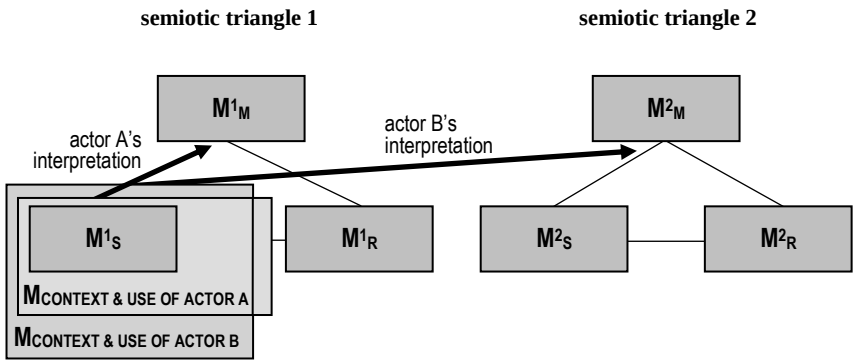
[35] Similar terms to meaning or classification divergence are poly-optics in Systems Theory (Kron & Winter 2005: 379, 389), attribution conflict in Attribution Theory (Försterling 2001, Jones & Nisbett 1971), semantic struggles in Linguistics (Felder ed. 2006, Busse 1993), or interpretation fights in Discourse Theory (Jäger & Jäger 2007).

[36] A divergence between M^1_M vs M^2_M presupposes a convergence in M^1_S (Mitterer 1992: 70f, 1999: 494, Pharo 2004: 309f). Each disagreement requires a consensus as actors first have to agree about the object of description, e.g. the description up to now M = ┤THE TABLE├, so as to be able to disagree afterwards about the description of the object, e.g. the description from now on M^1 = ├THE TABLE IS ROUND┤ vs M^2 = ├THE TABLE IS RECTANGULAR┤.

Figure 3.XIII: Meaning divergence



An M-divergence between M^1_M vs M^2_M may be one of two types. An example of the first type is the case when M_S = ┤THE RED FLAG├ is interpreted by actor A as the directive M^1_M = ├MOVE FORWARD!┤ and by actor B as the directive M^2_M = ├MOVE BACKWARD!┤. Here M^1_M logically contradicts and excludes M^2_M. In truth-conditional terms, either M^1_M is true or M^2_M is true, but both M^1_M and M^2_M cannot be true at the same time (such a relationship is sometimes dubbed disjunction, exclusive or, V_e, or XOR). In analogy to the semiotic term paradigm, I will call this a *paradigmatic* M-divergence because the divergent M can only be selected and substituted in an *either-or* manner.[37]

An example of the second type of M-divergence is the case when M_S = ┤THE RED FLAG├ is interpreted by actor A as the directive M^1_M = ├MOVE FORWARD!┤ and by actor B as the directive M^2_M = ├MOVE!┤ or as a symbol of M^2_M = ├COMMUNISM┤. In truth-conditional terms, both M^1_M and M^2_M are, or may in principle be, equally true at the same time because they are not logically inconsistent or mutually exclusive, but simply have divergent semantic or topical foci (such a relationship is sometimes dubbed adjunction, inclusive or, V_i, or OR). In analogy to the semiotic term syntagm, I will call this a *syntagmatic* M-divergence because the divergent M may be combined and positioned in an *and-and* manner.[38]

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[37] Paradigmatic M-divergences always occur within the same taxonomy, namely if a meaning, e.g. M^1 = │MOVE FORWARD│, is a hyponym (subordinate term) that lies on the same hierarchical level as another hyponym (subordinate term), e.g. M^2 = │MOVE BACKWARD│, both sharing the same hypernym (superordinate term), e.g. M = │MOVE│.

[38] Syntagmatic M-divergences occur in two cases: either if a particular meaning, such as M^1 = │MOVE FORWARD│, is a hyponym (subordinate term) that lies on a different hierarchical level than, for example, its hypernym (superordinate term), such as M^2 = │MOVE│, or if a particular meaning, such as M^1 = │MOVE FORWARD│, is a member of taxonomy A, such as *types of motion*, and another meaning, such as M^2 = │COMMUNISM│, is a member of taxonomy B, such as *types of political systems*.

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3.7.2 Consequences of meaning divergence: What are the social and cognitive *consequences* of meaning divergences? In the lifeworld, a paradigmatic meaning divergence is typically viewed as a *problem* as it is usually impossible for both of the inconsistent interpretations M^1_M and M^2_M to be simultaneously used by an actor or system without causing endless loops, breakdowns, paralysis, or cognitive dissonance. Consequently, a solution is sought, by means of an examination, deliberation, test, or decision, that transforms the M-divergence into an M-convergence, i.e. that accepts one M and rejects the other M. In contrast, a syntagmatic meaning divergence is not always seen by actors as a *problem* requiring a solution as the M-divergence may be considered normal, inevitable, or even desired. Even in the case where a syntagmatic M-divergence is considered a problem, the M-divergence is hard or impossible to transform into an M-convergence because there is no, or no straightforward, examination or test that may make the actors intentionally change their M.

In analogy to Luhmann's distinction between contradiction and conflict (1984: ch. 9), I speak of *meaning contradiction* if the divergent M are structural, unilateral, or implicit, whereas I speak of *meaning conflict* if the divergent M are communicative, reciprocal, or explicit. I conjecture that, in contrast to syntagmatic meaning divergences, paradigmatic meaning divergences turn into meaning conflicts more easily because most involved actors focus on, and seek to resolve, the emerging problem that I mentioned in the previous paragraph.

What effects does a meaning divergence have on connecting operations? Consider the following example: Alicia and Henry walk on the street and suddenly see someone in a uniform waving a M_S = ┤RED FLAG├. This M_S up to now functions as a consensus and point of convergence to which both actors may afterwards connect following M_M from now on. However, due to their different contexts and characteristics – e.g. age, knowledge, focus, expectation, history, etc – Alicia's and Henry's following M_M diverge because both interpret M_S differently. Whereas Henry interprets M_S in terms of M^1_M = ├SPORT, i.e. THIS IS A MEASUREMENT OF THE NUMBER OF LAPS THE RUNNERS HAVE FINISHED┤, Alicia interprets it in terms of M^2_M = ├LAW, i.e. THIS IS AN OFFICIAL PROHIBITION OF MOVING CLOSER┤. For my argument, it does not matter *what* both actors exactly interpret or *why* they interpret the same signifier differently, but only *that* they interpret it differently. Henry and Alicia interpret the signifier as belonging to different societal domains, meaning fields, or social frames, namely to M^1_M = ├SPORT┤ and to M^2_M = ├LAW┤.

The question I want to focus on is a temporal-processual one: Given a particular consensual signifier M_S at time 1, followed by a meaning divergence between M^1_M vs M^2_M at time 2, what are the *connecting* operations *at time 3*, i.e. the following meanings, the descriptions from now on, the future actions, the subsequent communications, or the next thoughts? For example, given the abovementioned signifier M_S = ┤RED FLAG├ at time 1, followed by Henry's and Alicia's meaning divergence M^1_M = ├SPORT┤ vs M^2_M = ├LAW┤ at time 2, what will each actor subsequently think, say, or do at time 3?

The answer to this question can be approached by means of three argumentative steps (a), (b), and (c), which are formalized in the following table.

Figure 3.XIV: Preceding operations determining connecting operations

		preceding operations	determine	connecting operations
argumentative steps	(a)	┤M├ at time 2	→	├M┤ at time 3
	(b)	┤M_M├ (but not ┤M_S├ or ┤M_R├)	→	├M┤
	(c)	┤$M^1{}_M$├	→	├$M^{1.1}$┤ (but not ├$M^{2.1}$┤)
		┤$M^2{}_M$├	→	├$M^{2.1}$┤ (but not ├$M^{1.1}$┤)

The argumentative step (a) consists in the hypothesis: ┤M├ at time 2 → ├M┤ at time 3. That is, it is the *preceding meaning up to now* ┤M├ that determines the connecting meaning from now on ├M┤. Since each M is nothing but an element in a continuous chain or system of M up to now and from now on, each M is based upon and continues a preceding M up to now. In chapters 2.3 and 2.4, I called this the non-dualistic unity of meaning, and in Systems Theory this is called autopoiesis, i.e. the system's elements are produced and reproduced by the system's elements themselves (Luhmann 1985: 56).

The argumentative step (b) is more precise than step (a) because it consists in the hypothesis: ┤M_M├ (but not ┤M_S├ or ┤M_R├) → ├M┤. It is the *meaning auto-describing it(self) as meaning* M_M – and not the meanings auto-describing them(selves) as signifier M_S or the meanings auto-describing them(selves) as referent M_R – that determines the connecting operations from now on ├M┤. Similar hypotheses are Symbolic Interactionism's premise that »human beings act toward things on the basis of the meaning that these things have for them« (Blumer 1969: 2ff) and the Thomas Theorem: »If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences« (Thomas & Thomas 1928: 572).[39]

The connecting operations, e.g. the subsequent M auto-describing them(selves) as actions, thoughts, or communications, are determined by the actors' interpretation, i.e. by the M_M attributed to a M_S or M_R. According to the auto-description or common sense of actors and systems, M_S and M_R as such are raw, meaningless, unconnectable, or pre-human things. This is why actors and systems consider it necessary that M_S and M_R be linked to, or translated into, some cognitive or social meaning, e.g. what does the red flag mean?, which practical consequences can I expect from his words? (Peirce 1878), to what social frame does her look belong? (Goffman 1974), how should I interpret this sentence? Hence, actors and systems – consciously or unconsciously, instantaneously or

[39] Similarly, Spradley (1979: 6) argues that »we do not eliminate an interest in behavior, customs, objects, or emotions [= M_S or M_R]. We have merely shifted the emphasis from these phenomena to their *meaning* [= M_M]. The ethnographer observes behavior, but goes beyond it to inquire about the meaning of that behavior. The ethnographer sees artifacts and natural objects but goes beyond them to discover what meanings people assign to these objects. The ethnographer observes and records emotional states, but goes beyond them to discover the meaning of fear, anxiety, anger, and other feelings.«

slowly – attribute some M_M to an M_S or M_R. Only afterwards can actors or systems continue to operate, e.g. continue to think, communicate, or act.

To resume the example: What Alicia and Henry will think, say, or do in the course of events does not so much depend on the consensual signifier M_S = ┤RED FLAG├, but on the respective interpretation M_M of this M_S. It is this interpretation M_M that renders the preceding M_S meaningful for the actors and connectable to further operations. Henry will base his following thoughts, utterances, and actions on *his* interpreted meaning, i.e. on M^1_M = ├SPORT┤, whereas Alicia will base her thoughts, utterances, and actions on *her* interpreted meaning, i.e. on M^2_M = ├LAW┤. The starting point for selecting the connecting operations is thus each actor's attributed meaning M_M and not the M_S or M_R.[40]

The argumentative step (c) specifies step (b). It consists in the hypothesis: ┤M^1_M├ → ├$M^{1.1}$┤ (but not ├$M^{2.1}$┤) and ┤M^2_M├ → ├$M^{2.1}$┤ (but not ├$M^{1.1}$┤). A particular meaning such as M^1_M is not equally connectable to all or any meanings because it has a specific *selective connectivity*, which selects or suggests a particular connecting meaning $M^{1.1}$ by rendering its activation more probable, and which »de-selects« or »de-suggests« other particular connecting meanings such as $M^{2.1}$ by rendering their activation more improbable. Accordingly, each meaning opens up particular connective (im)possibilities and (im)probabilities. This argument is based on Luhmann's idea (1984: 94) that »every specific meaning qualifies itself by suggesting specific possibilities of connection and making others improbable, difficult, remote, or (temporarily) excluded«.[41]

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[40] Some arguments may partially invalidate my hypothesis that it is the meanings up to now ┤M_M├ that determine the operations from now on ├M┤. There is *no preceding* meaning up to now ┤M_M├ or the meaning M_M occurs *subsequent* to the action, e.g. retrospective rationalization, habitus-induced actions, Weber's traditional actions (1921g: § 2), »induced compliance effects« in cognitive dissonance (Festinger & Carlsmith 1959), the slogan »We do not do what we want, but we want what we do« (Prinz 2004: 199). However, it may be counter-argued (1) that the meanings M_M have become so deeply internalized that they are no longer perceived by the actor as a conscious and antecedent meaning M_M even though they do remain effective and operative, or (2) that these cases are marginal and rare.

[41] Luhmann argues that if a sign is connected to another sign, for the purpose of communication or thinking, expectations and connective possibilities need to be directed and restricted. Given a particular sign, the subsequent sign must not be entirely determined nor must it be completely surprising. Consequently, each sign does not only function as itself, but it also gives information about which sign may follow subsequently (1993c: 56).
A similar concept is *selection restriction*: In building a sentence, words are connected to other words. Each word has semantic restrictions (e.g. transitive vs intransitive, animate vs inanimate, semantic roles, etc), which select, and render it connectable to, a particular set of words, and which deselect, and render it unconnectable to, another set of words. The verb ›*to murder*‹ has the selection restriction │OBJECT IS ANIMATE AND HUMAN│. Hence, it would be semantically correct to connect ›*to murder*‹ to the object ›*the president*‹ in the sentence ›*He murdered the president*‹, as the object ›*the president*‹ has the meaning component │ANIMATE AND HUMAN│ and thus meets the verb's selection restriction. But it would be semantically incorrect or odd to connect ›*to murder*‹ to the object ›*the rose*‹ or ›*the table*‹ building the sentence ›*He murdered the rose*‹ or ›*He murdered the table*‹, as ›*the rose*‹ has the meaning component │ANIMATE AND NON-HUMAN│ and ›*the table*‹ has the meaning component │INANIMATE AND NON-HUMAN│, so neither object meets the verb's selection restriction (Katz & Fodor 1963, see footnote 29 in chapter 6.4.1).

To make these arguments more precise, my claim is that a particular M^1_M suggests, or renders probable, those connecting operations that are *semantically close or coupled*, such as $M^{1.1}$. And this semantic closeness or coupledness may have different origins or may be of different kinds, e.g. personal, linguistic, social, connotative, recollective, visual, etc. At the same time, M^1_M excludes, or renders improbable, those connecting operations that are semantically *distant or uncoupled*, such as $M^{2.1}$. For example, the words ┤MY GIRLFRIEND GAVE ME...├ are more likely to co-activate words like ┤...A KISS├, whereas they are less likely to co-activate words like ┤...A JELLYFISH├.

What determines the semantic closeness or distance of a meaning such as M^1_M in relation to other meanings? One promising answer is that it is the *membership vs non-membership* in a meaning field that determines which meanings are close or distant to the activated meaning M^1_M. In particular, those meanings that are members of the same meaning field as the activated meaning M^1_M tend to be semantically close, e.g. $M^{1.1}$ or $M^{1.2}$, whereas those meanings that are not members of the same meaning field as the activated meaning M^1_M tend to be semantically distant, e.g. $M^{2.1}$ or $M^{2.2}$ (for further discussion, see chapter 5 on meaning fields, see chapter 6 on activation and particularly chapters 6.4.2 and 6.5 on meaning field-based co-activation).

To resume the above example: Henry and Alicia have each interpreted the M_S = ┤RED FLAG├ in terms of a particular meaning M^1_M vs M^2_M. Two aspects need to be taken into account here.

On the one hand, each meaning suggests or selects semantically close connecting operations, i.e. meanings from the same meaning field: Henry has attributed the meaning M^1_M = ├SPORT, i.e. THIS IS A MEASUREMENT OF THE NUMBER OF LAPS THE RUNNERS HAVE FINISHED┤, which renders probable connecting operations from the meaning field of sport such as $M^{1.1}$ = ├ASK ALICIA HOW FAST SHE CAN RUN THE 100-METER DASH┤, ├REMEMBER A FAMOUS MARATHON RUNNER┤, or ├JOIN A SPORTS CLUB TO KEEP HEALTHY┤. Alicia has attributed the meaning M^2_M = ├LAW, i.e. THIS IS AN OFFICIAL PROHIBITION OF MOVING CLOSER┤, which renders probable connecting operations from the meaning field of law such as $M^{2.1}$ = ├OBEY THE PROHIBITION AND WALK BACK FROM WHERE WE CAME┤, ├REMEMBER THAT POLICEMEN ARE STRICT┤, or ├TELL HENRY THAT LEGAL ORDERS ARE OFTEN UNJUST┤. In other words, it is highly probable that a sport-related meaning will trigger a sport-related connecting operation and that a law-related meaning will suggest a law-related connecting operation.

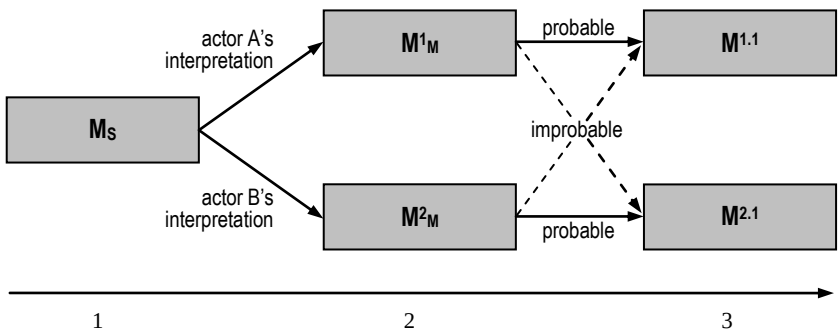
On the other hand, each meaning excludes or deselects semantically distant connecting operations, i.e. meanings from another meaning field: Henry has attributed the meaning M^1_M = ├SPORT┤, so it is improbable that his subsequent operations will tap into the meaning field of law such as $M^{2.1}$ = ├OBEY THE PROHIBITION AND WALK BACK FROM WHERE WE CAME┤, ├REMEMBER THAT POLICEMEN ARE STRICT┤, or ├TELL ALICIA THAT LEGAL ORDERS ARE OFTEN UNJUST┤. Likewise for Alicia, her attribution of the meaning M^2_M = ├LAW┤ makes it unlikely that she will produce connecting operations from the meaning field of sport such as $M^{1.1}$ = ├ASK HENRY HOW FAST HE CAN RUN

THE 100-METER DASH├, ├REMEMBER A FAMOUS MARATHON RUNNER├, or ├JOIN A SPORTS CLUB TO KEEP HEALTHY├. In other words, a sport-related meaning does not, or is very unlikely to, trigger a law-related connecting operation, and a law-related meaning does not, or is very unlikely to, suggest a sport-related connecting operation.[42]

Put in terms inspired by Bateson's approach to the concept of information (1971: 381), it is probable that a difference makes a difference, i.e. the prior semantic difference between M^1_M and M^2_M is likely to lead to a subsequent semantic difference between $M^{1.1}$ and $M^{2.1}$, while it is improbable that a difference makes no difference but rather a unity, i.e. the prior semantic difference between M^1_M and M^2_M is unlikely to lead to a subsequent semantic unity of, for example, only $M^{1.1}$.[43]

The figure below summarizes the previous discussion of the three argumentative steps (a), (b), and (c).

Figure 3.XV: Meaning divergence and connecting operations



Meaning divergences also operate on a more fundamental level than in the above example of Alicia and Henry. Consider the following case (inspired by Leeuwen 2005: 119 and Luhmann 1982). Different discourses or interpretation communities interpret the concept of M_S = ┤LOVE├ differently, e.g. modern and romantic discourses interpret it as M^1_M = ┤AN INVOLUNTARY EMOTION├, whereas theological and biblical discourses often interpret it as M^2_M = ┤A VOL-

[42] The argumentative step (c), and in particular the concept of selective connectivity, will be discussed from a slightly different perspective in chapter 6.4.2 under the concept of meaning field-based co-activation.

[43] This is not a general or nomological claim because in principle both options may occur in particular contexts. On the one hand, a difference may make a difference, e.g. using different words such as ›*bush*‹ and ›*push*‹ in a search engine on the Internet will yield different search results. On the other hand, a difference may make no difference, e.g. using differently capitalized words such as ›*bush*‹ and ›*Bush*‹ in a search engine that is not case-sensitive will yield the same results.

UNTARY ACTION┤. Lifeworld semantics typically considers power and law – e.g. orders, rights, obedience, prohibitions, norms, criminality, etc – to be applicable only to voluntary actions (e.g. to move forward, to pay taxes, to write), but not to involuntary emotions (e.g. sadness, envy), to uncontrollable events (e.g. earthquakes, disease outbreaks), or to cognitive operations (e.g. thoughts, memories). Accordingly, from the modern and romantic perspective, love in terms of an involuntary emotion cannot be subject to, and is outside the scope of, power or law because it cannot be ordered, obeyed, forbidden, disobeyed, etc. In contrast, from the theological and biblical perspective, love in terms of a voluntary action is, to a certain degree, subject to, and inside the scope of, power and law because it can be ordered, obeyed, forbidden, disobeyed, etc as in the biblical command ›*Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself!*‹ (James 2: 8). As can be seen, the connecting operations with regard to power and law are very different depending on the interpretation of the concept of love.

The approach to meaning divergences presented in this chapter yields research questions that are central to Sociology and Anthropology, but also to linguistic Pragmatics and Cognitive Sciences. For example, why do semantic conflicts emerge?, how are meaning divergences processed and resolved?, which actors or systems are typically in conflict concerning particular interpretations?, what are the factors and conditions that foster meaning convergence?, which signifiers or referents are most likely to create divergent interpretations?, etc.[44]

[44] The topic of meaning divergence will be resumed in chapter 6.3.4 on actor-speaker vs observer-hearer activation and in chapter 6.5.3 on co-activated meaning fields.

4. Meaning as Prototypical Category

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To his horror, the logician Prof. McNeat has stumbled across some strange gray cases that mess up his neat black-and-white logic:

Eubulides asks McNeat »Would you describe a man with 1 hair on his head as bald?« McNeat answers »Yes«. Eubulides continues »But would you describe a man with 2 hairs on his head as bald?« and McNeat again says »Yes«. But Eubulides prepares his final blow: »You must refrain from describing a man with 100 000 hairs on his head as bald, so where do you draw the line?«[1]

In Prof. McNeat's neat logic, a zebra is a herbivore that has four legs and is striped. However, on a trip to Africa, McNeat discovers some strange zebras: The first zebra has by some birth defect only three legs, the second is pure white, and the third got bored with a grass diet and eats some insects. McNeat wonders: »Are they nevertheless zebras?«[2]

The purpose of this chapter, and therefore the next step in the elaboration of the theory of meaning proposed in this book, is to refine the conceptualization of meaning as *category*, as proposed in chapter 1, by replacing it with the conceptualization of meaning as *prototypical category*. In so doing, I will primarily draw on Prototype Theory, issued from Linguistics and Psychology, and on Fuzzy Set Theory, originating in Mathematics and Philosophy. This conceptualization of meaning as prototypical category is a preliminary step to the final conceptualization of meaning as field discussed in the subsequent chapter 5.

4.1 Meaning as Category

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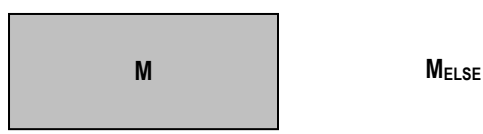
Throughout the preceding chapters, I have conceptualized meaning in terms of a category, based on the distinction between M vs M_{ELSE}. This conceptualization was introduced in chapter 1 and was depicted in figure 1.I, which is reproduced below as a reminder.

Figure 4.I: Meaning as category



[1] This case is also known as the Sorites Paradox.
[2] This scene is a modified example from Saeed (2003: 35f).

This model of meaning as a distinction-based category is based on certain assumptions, some of which I have so far deliberately left implicit, but which must now be made explicit. These assumptions are shown in the table below (modified from Geeraerts 2002: 285f).

Figure 4.II: Assumptions of the model of meaning as category

	extension of M	**intension of M**
homogeneity in the inside of M	(1) All referents M^1_R, M^2_R, M^3_R, etc within M have the same equal status, i.e. the internal structure of M is perfectly homogeneous and undifferentiated.	(3) All meaning components $M_M{}^I$, $M_M{}^{II}$, $M_M{}^{III}$, etc within M have the same equal status, i.e. the internal structure of M is perfectly homogeneous and undifferentiated.
discreteness between the inside and outside of M	(2) M has discrete boundaries, i.e. an M_R lies either completely within or completely outside M's boundaries. Moreover, M has discrete membership, i.e. an M_R is either a full member or a full non-member of M.	(4) M can be unambiguously defined or clearly distinguished by a checklist of necessary and sufficient conditions $M_M{}^I$, $M_M{}^{II}$, $M_M{}^{III}$, etc that hold for all M_R. These $M_M{}^I$, $M_M{}^{II}$, $M_M{}^{III}$, etc do not semantically overlap.

In order to illustrate these assumptions, I will take an example of a category that largely, even though not completely, confirms and fits with these assumptions (inspired by Geeraerts 1989: 153), namely the formal and scientific words M_S = ⎪ODD NUMBER⎪.

Figure 4.III: Example of a category's extension or intension

Figures 4.II and 4.III will serve as reference point for the following discussion.

Assumptions (1) and (2) concern the category's extension, i.e. the process within the semiotic triangle, as explained in chapter 3.1.2, that leads from the signifier ⊣⎪M_S⎪⊣ to the referents ⊢M^1_R⊢, ⊢M^2_R⊢, ⊢M^3_R⊢, etc. A particular signifier, such as the words M_S = ⎪ODD NUMBER⎪, may refer to and comprise several referents, such as M^1_R = ⎪3⎪, M^2_R = ⎪17895⎪, M^3_R = ⎪39⎪, etc, whereas other referents such as M^X_R = ⎪2⎪, M^Y_R = ⎪46⎪, M^Z_R = ⎪17894⎪, etc are excluded as they are M_{ELSE} = ⎪EVEN NUMBERS⎪.

Assumption (1) states that the internal structure of a category M_S is homogeneous and undifferentiated, i.e. all the referents M^1_R, M^2_R, M^3_R, etc that are within a category M_S have the same equal status. That is, each referent M^1_R,

M^2_R, M^3_R, etc is perceived by lifeworld actors as good and as typical an exemplar of M_S as all the other referents M^1_R, M^2_R, M^3_R, etc because they all share the same meaning components $M_M{}^I$, $M_M{}^{II}$, $M_M{}^{III}$, etc. Since there are no referents that stand out or that are particularly salient in terms of a high degree of typicality or representativeness, all referents are equal, homogeneous, and uniform.[3]

Assumption (2) states that the category M_S has a discrete boundary that clearly distinguishes it from »something different« or »all the rest« M_{ELSE}. Consequently, a particular referent M_R lies either within or outside the category's boundaries. Put differently, the category's membership is binary, i.e. either a particular referent M_R is a member of the category M_S or it is a non-member. As Kosko (1993: ch. 1-3) notes, this either/or-discreteness in terms of M *or* M_{ELSE} (or in terms of M *or* non-M) rests upon the principle of excluded middle because either an M_R is classified as M *or* it is classified as M_{ELSE}, but it cannot be simultaneously classified as M and M_{ELSE}. Therefore, there must be a threshold where the different M_R cross the boundary from M to M_{ELSE}. For example, M^1_R = ⎪3⎪ lies within the boundaries of M_S = ⎪ODD NUMBER⎪ and thus has full 100% membership in the category, whereas M^X_R = ⎪2⎪ lies outside M_S's boundaries and is hence a definite non-member of M_S because it has 0% membership.[4]

Assumptions (3) and (4) concern the category's intension, i.e. the process in the semiotic triangle, as explained in chapter 3.4.2, that leads from the signifier ┤M_S├ to the meaning components ├$M_M{}^I$┤, ├$M_M{}^{II}$┤, ├$M_M{}^{III}$┤, etc. A signifier, such as the words M_S = ⎪ODD NUMBER⎪, may be decomposed into the meaning components $M_M{}^I$ = ⎪A SIGN THAT REPRESENTS A QUANTITY⎪, $M_M{}^{II}$ = ⎪NOT EVENLY DIVISIBLE BY TWO⎪, $M_M{}^{III}$ = ⎪WITHOUT A FRACTIONAL OR DECIMAL COMPONENT⎪, etc, whereas other meaning components are not part of the intension, such as $M_M{}^X$ = ⎪CAN FLY⎪, $M_M{}^Y$ = ⎪AN ECONOMIC SYSTEM IN THE MIDDLE AGES⎪, $M_M{}^Z$ = ⎪CAUSING PEOPLE TO SLEEP⎪, etc.

Assumption (3) asserts that the internal structure of the category M_S is homogeneous and undifferentiated, i.e. all meaning components $M_M{}^I$, $M_M{}^{II}$, $M_M{}^{III}$, etc that are within the category M_S have the same equal status because each component $M_M{}^I$, $M_M{}^{II}$, $M_M{}^{III}$ is viewed by lifeworld actors as necessary and as typical a component of M_S as all other components $M_M{}^I$, $M_M{}^{II}$, $M_M{}^{III}$. For instance,

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[3] From the four assumptions of figure 4.II, this assumption (1) is the only one that is not applicable to the example of odd numbers because there are some odd numbers that are more typical or better examples than other odd numbers. For example, lifeworld actors consider 1 and 3 to be better and more typical examples of odd numbers than 39 and 17895. Prototype Theory argues that it is virtually impossible to find an example of a category to which assumption (1) can be fully applied.

[4] Löbner (2003: 291-294) proposes an interesting version of assumption (2). Consider a series of referents of differing sizes that gradually increase, e.g. M^1_R = ⎪1 CM OBJECT⎪, M^2_R = ⎪2 CM OBJECT⎪, M^3_R = ⎪3 CM OBJECT⎪, M^4_R = ⎪4 CM OBJECT⎪, etc. Where is the boundary between referents classifiable as M_S = ⎪SMALL⎪ and as M_{ELSE} = ⎪BIG⎪? Löbner argues that the *boundary* itself may be discrete and binary, e.g. the boundary lies exactly between M^2_R and M^3_R, but the *location of the boundary* may be fuzzy and flexible, e.g. today or for Henry, the boundary lies exactly between M^2_R and M^3_R, but tomorrow or for Maria, the boundary lies exactly between M^3_R and M^4_R.

$M_M{}^{I}$ = │A SIGN THAT REPRESENTS A QUANTITY│ is as necessary for defining M_S = │ODD NUMBER│ as $M_M{}^{II}$ = │NOT EVENLY DIVISIBLE BY TWO│, and neither component is more necessary or typical of │ODD NUMBER│ than the other.

Assumption (4) concerns the »checklist« model of necessary and sufficient conditions (see Kleiber 1990: ch. 1), which I briefly explained in chapter 3.4.2 on decompositional intension. It is assumed that a category M_S can be unambiguously defined and clearly delimited from »something different« or »all the rest« M_{ELSE} by a list of necessary and sufficient meaning components $M_M{}^{I}$, $M_M{}^{II}$, $M_M{}^{III}$, etc. This is why decompositional intension, as proposed by Structural Semantics, is based on this model. A specific set of meaning components is *necessary*, e.g. $M_M{}^{I}$ = │A SIGN THAT REPRESENTS A QUANTITY│, because a particular referent such as $M^1{}_R$ = │3│ must obligatorily exhibit this set so as to be classified by the signifier M_S = │ODD NUMBER│, and a specific set of meaning components is *sufficient*, e.g. $M_M{}^{I}$ = │A SIGN THAT REPRESENTS A QUANTITY│ and $M_M{}^{II}$ = │NOT EVENLY DIVISIBLE BY TWO│, because if a referent such as $M^1{}_R$ = │3│ exhibits this set, then this set is enough to unambiguously classify the referent by the signifier M_S = │ODD NUMBER│ and to exclude alternative classifications by other signifiers, e.g. M_{ELSE} = │EVEN NUMBER│. Moreover, the meaning components $M_M{}^{I}$, $M_M{}^{II}$, $M_M{}^{III}$, etc do not semantically overlap in terms of polysemy or homonymy, but are clearly disjoint and separate.

Many of the arguments in the preceding chapters were based on the model of meaning as category. This model has proved to be a fruitful starting point for beginning the construction of the theory of meaning developed in this book. However, the model of meaning as category has certain shortcomings that will be addressed in the following chapter.

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4.2 Meaning as Prototypical Category

The model of meaning as category, based on the assumptions (1) to (4), has been criticized and amended by Prototype Theory and Fuzzy Set Theory.[5] The model's main shortcoming is the logical fallacy of generalization: It generalizes its assumptions to *all* types of categories, whereas it is only valid for *certain* types of categories. For example, the category │ODD NUMBER│ fits relatively well, and largely confirms, the model's assumptions but, as I will show, other categories such as │FRUIT│, │BIRD│, or │RED│ do not fit well, and mainly contradict, the model's assumptions. My main argument is that most everyday and Social Science categories such as │POWER│, │COMMUNICATION│, │WORK│, │CONFLICT│, │DEMOCRACY│, │ACTION│, │LOVE│, │GROUP│, │INTENTION│, etc are of this latter type.

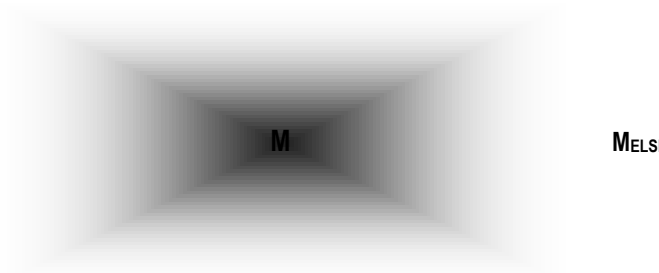
Before presenting Prototype Theory, three points must be emphasized in regard to its arguments about the extension and intension of categories. Firstly,

[5] Prototype Theory started off with the »Roschian revolution« (Rosch 1975, 1978; see also Kleiber 1990, Lakoff 1987, Mangasser-Wahl 2000, Taylor 2003, Tsohatzidis ed. 1990). Fuzzy Set Theory was first systematically developed by Zadeh (e.g. 1965; see also the philosophical and sociological versions of Dimitrov & Hodge 2002, Kosko 1993, Ragin 2000, Türkşen 2005, Zadeh 1982).

the arguments are less applicable to the domain of scientific procedures and technical expertise, but are especially valid for the domain of everyday language, intuitive reasoning, common sense, and folk models. Secondly, in line with Cognitive Semantics and contrary to Structural Semantics, the distinction between semantic-linguistic knowledge of the language vs encyclopedic-pragmatic knowledge of the world does not play a vital role.[6] Such an approach seems to be theoretically more comprehensive and holistic because it does not consider semantic-linguistic knowledge to be an autonomous and compartmentalized aspect, but rather views it as integrated with, and linked to, general cognition and sensory perception. Thirdly, the concrete and empirical results of an analysis based on Prototype Theory are determined by, and bound to, a specific culture, language, actor, geographical region, or historical epoch. This calls for a special sensitivity on the part of the analyst to take into account cultural and historical aspects, and it requires a particular prudence not to indulge in over-generalizations.

On a spectrum of different conceptualizations of categories, the above figure 4.I in terms of meaning as a *category* symbolizes one extreme, whereas the following figure in terms of meaning as a *prototypical category* symbolizes the other extreme (modified from Löbner 2003: 279).

Figure 4.IV: Meaning as prototypical category



The table in figure 4.II is the basis for criticizing the model of meaning as category. The table below shows Prototype Theory's assumptions of the model of meaning as prototypical category (modified from Geeraerts 2002).

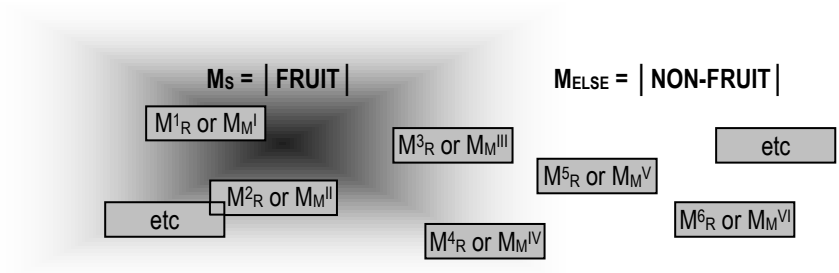
[6] Semantic-linguistic knowledge of the language is, for example, knowing the meaning of the word ›*flower*‹ or ›*aunt*‹, knowing the effect of inserting the word ›*not*‹ in a sentence, knowing the relationship between the words ›*murder*‹ and ›*dead*‹, etc. Encyclopedic-pragmatic knowledge of the world is, for instance, knowing the social conventions governing a conversation, knowing that flowers are usually not black, knowing the state of the »external world« such as the weather, knowing what one can practically do with flowers in a particular culture, knowing that aunts are usually adults who give gifts, etc (see Saeed 2003: 4ff, 181, 190-193, ch. 11).

Figure 4.V: Assumptions of the model of meaning as prototypical category

	extension of M	**intension of M**
heterogeneity in the inside of M	(I) The referents M^1_R, M^2_R, M^3_R, etc within M have unequal statuses because some are more typical, salient, or representative than others, i.e. the inner structure of M is heterogeneous and therefore differentiated into a prototypical center and an atypical periphery.	(III) The meaning components $M_M{}^I$, $M_M{}^{II}$, $M_M{}^{III}$, etc within M have unequal statuses because some are more typical, salient, or representative than others, i.e. the internal structure of M is heterogeneous and therefore differentiated into a prototypical center and an atypical periphery.
fuzziness between the inside and outside of M	(II) M has fuzzy, blurred boundaries, i.e. for some M_R it is impossible to decide whether they lie inside or outside M's boundaries. M has fuzzy, analog membership, i.e. a referent M_R may simultaneously be a member of M to a certain degree and a non-member of M to a certain degree.	(IV) M cannot be defined and distinguished by a checklist of necessary and sufficient conditions alias meaning components $M_M{}^I$, $M_M{}^{II}$, $M_M{}^{III}$, etc that hold for the M_R. Also, the meaning components $M_M{}^I$, $M_M{}^{II}$, $M_M{}^{III}$, etc may partially overlap and may be linked by family resemblance.

In order to illustrate these assumptions, I will take an example of a category that – according to Geeraerts (1989: 153ff) – largely confirms and fits well with these assumptions, namely the word │FRUIT│.

Figure 4.VI: Example of a prototypical category's extension or intension[7]



[7] The illustration is deliberately inconsistent and unsystematic: Whereas M_S is depicted as a category that is internally heterogeneous and has fuzzy boundaries, M^1_R, M^2_R, M^3_R, etc and $M_M{}^I$, $M_M{}^{II}$, $M_M{}^{III}$, etc are depicted as categories that are internally homogeneous and have discrete boundaries. To fully apply assumptions (I) to (IV), all categories M_S, M^1_R, M^2_R, M^3_R, etc, $M_M{}^I$, $M_M{}^{II}$, $M_M{}^{III}$, etc should be depicted as internally heterogeneous and exhibiting fuzzy boundaries. However, this graphic precision and coherence is not necessary at this stage, mainly so as to avoid graphic overload, but will be put into practice in chapter 5.

Figures 4.V and 4.VI will serve as reference point for the following discussion.

Assumptions (I) and (II) concern the category's extension. For example, there may be a signifier such as the word M_S = │FRUIT│ and a number of possible referents such as M^1_R = │APPLE│, M^2_R = │WATERMELON│, M^3_R = │COCONUT│, M^4_R = │OLIVE│, M^5_R = │WALNUT│, etc that may, or may not, be classified by the signifier M_S = │FRUIT│.

Assumption (I) is the most important and influential hypothesis of Prototype Theory, which has proven to be very robust to criticism (Löbner 2003: 283f, 299). It states that the internal structure of a category is heterogeneous and differentiated because the referents have unequal statuses. Some referents are more typical, salient, or representative than other referents, which are rather atypical, strange, or marginal.

For instance, psycho-linguistic experiments by Rosch & Mervis (1975) for the U.S.-American culture have shown that subjects classified both M^1_R = │APPLE│ and M^2_R = │WATERMELON│ unambiguously as M_S = │FRUIT│, but they intuitively considered │APPLE│ to be a better and more typical example of │FRUIT│ than │WATERMELON│. Likewise, the referent │WATERMELON│ was seen as more representative and typical for the category │FRUIT│ than the referent │COCONUT│.

The category │FRUIT│ is therefore internally structured in Western culture into a *prototypical center*, comprising referents such as │APPLE│, │BANANA│, and │ORANGE│, and into an *atypical periphery*, containing referents such as │WATERMELON│, │PINEAPPLE│, and │COCONUT│. Accordingly, there are differing degrees of representativeness or typicality between different referents of a signifier. For instance, an M^1_R = │APPLE│ may have a high representativeness of 100% for the category M_S = │FRUIT│, while a M^2_R = │WATERMELON│ may only have a 90% typicality and a M^3_R = │COCONUT│ only a 20% representativeness for the category M_S = │FRUIT│.

Figure 4.VI shows this heterogeneous category structure: The dark core in the middle of the category symbolizes the prototypical center with a high degree of representativeness, which gradually thins out and becomes lighter towards the outer areas of the category that symbolize the atypical periphery with a low degree of representativeness. The more a referent is spatially close to (or distant from) the dark core, the more prototypical (or atypical) it is.

The various degrees of representativeness or typicality may be expressed in everyday language in the form of so-called *hedges*, i.e. linguistic devices used to emphasize that the speaker considers a referent to be particularly typical or atypical (Lakoff 1973, Markkanen & Schröder eds. 1997). For example, the following sentences use hedges (put in non-italics) to express a high degree of prototypicality and representativeness: ›*An apple is a* typical *fruit*‹, ›*He's a* regular *type of guy*‹, ›*A robin is a bird* par excellence‹, whereas the following sentences use hedges (put in non-italics) so as to express a low degree of typicality and representativeness: ›*An olive is a* strange kind of *fruit*‹, ›Strictly speaking, *a penguin is a bird*‹, ›*Ackees are fruits*, but *they are not edible*‹.

For some actors, cultures, or categories, there is one concrete and particular referent that is considered to be the most prototypical prototype of a category and that serves as a real-world yardstick or concrete reference point against which other referents are evaluated. I will call this the *referent-prototype* or the M_R*-prototype*. For example, in Indian culture or for the Englishman Henry, the referent-prototype of a M_S = │FRUIT│ may be exemplified by a M_R = │MANGO│, so the Indians or Henry may compare and judge all other fruits against this standard of a cultural or personal referent-prototype. Hence, the degree of representativeness of a referent is sometimes established by comparing it to the referent-prototype: The more similar a referent is to the referent-prototype, the more representative this referent is judged to be (Kleiber 1990: 51).[8]

What exactly makes a particular referent a prototypical-central referent or an atypical-peripheral referent? What does it empirically mean to say that a particular referent is prototypical-representative or atypical-unrepresentative? In Psychology and Linguistics, several empirical studies and experiments have been conducted. The most important results are summarized by Rosch (1978): People think prototypical members of a category are *better* examples than peripheral members. Subjects classify prototypical referents *faster* than atypical referents. When asked to name members of a category, people name prototypical members *before* peripheral members. In sentences using the form ›*An* M_R *is an* M_S‹, people determine the truth *faster* if the M_R is a prototypical member, e.g. ›*An apple is a fruit*‹, and it takes them more time to judge the truth if the M_R is an atypical member, e.g. ›*A coconut is a fruit*‹. When making inferences about a category, subjects *draw on knowledge* of prototypical referents rather than on knowledge of all referents. People mention prototypical members more *frequently* in lifeworld matters than marginal members. Children learn prototypical referents *before* atypical referents. Prototypes often correspond to the historically *oldest* members of a category. Due to this importance of prototypical referents, they function as cognitive reference points (Rosch 1975).

Another way of determining the degree of prototypicality of each referent within a category is a frequency-based analysis of their respective meaning components. The starting point is a regular extension and intension of a signifier, which results in a table of referents and meaning components. This was shown in chapter 3.4.2 and in particular in figure 3.VII. A similar and simplified table is reproduced in the following two figures.

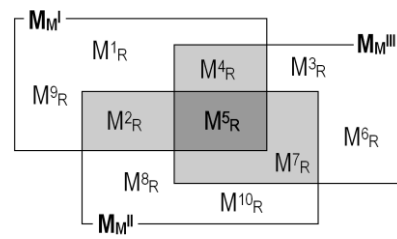
[8] Apart from this *referent*-prototype or M_R-prototype, there are two other kinds of prototypes, namely, the *meaning component*-prototype or M_M-prototype, which I will turn to in assumption (III), and the *signifier*-prototype or M_S-prototype. If the latter is lexicalized in a particular word, it represents a *basic term* (Berlin & Kay 1969, Rosch et al. 1976, Taylor 2003: ch. 3.3), which is a word located on an especially salient level within the vertical-paradigmatic structure of a taxonomy due to its balanced mixture of informativeness and usefulness in a particular situation or culture, e.g. I am more likely to say ›*I have a dog*‹ than ›*I have an animal*‹ or ›*I have a terrier*‹. However, I have omitted this topic of *basic terms* because it is especially applicable to so-called »natural« categories that form taxonomies, e.g. animals, furniture, musical instruments, etc, but it is less applicable to social and cultural categories that do not form taxonomies, e.g. power, love, conflict, etc.

Figure 4.VII: Frequency analysis of the prototypicality degree (›*fruit*‹)[9]

	signifier and word M_S M_S = | FRUIT |	decompositional intension of M_S = meaning components M_M						
		M_M^I = | PART OF PLANT |	M_M^{II} = | EDIBLE |	M_M^{III} = | JUICY |	M_M^{IV} = | SWEET |	M_M^V = | SOFT |	etc	Σ = %
extension of M_S = referents M_R	M^0_R = | ORANGE |	+	+	+	+	+		**5 = 100%**
	M^1_R = | APPLE |	+	+	+	+	–		**4 = 80%**
	M^2_R = | WATERMELON |	+	+	+	+	–		**4 = 80%**
	M^3_R = | COCONUT |	+	+	+	+	–		**4 = 80%**
	M^4_R = | OLIVE |	+	+	+	–	+		**4 = 80%**
	M^5_R = | WALNUT |	+	+	–	–	–		**2 = 40%**
	M^6_R = | ACKEE |	+	–	–	–	–		**1 = 20%**
	etc							
	Σ = %	**7 = 100%**	**6 = 86%**	**5 = 71%**	**4 = 57%**	**2 = 28%**		

In the table, the number of meaning components and referents correlates with the degree to which a cell is shaded in and consequently with the degree of prototypicality: The more meaning components a referent exhibits, the more prototypical it is and the more shaded its cell is. For example, an M^0_R = \| OR-

[9] There are several methodological problems of such a table, which are not, however, relevant to the present discussion, e.g. all meaning components are equally weighed, the number of referents and meaning components is problematic (Löbner 2003: 271), the meaning components and referents are interdependent (see footnote 17 in chapter 3.4.2), etc.
The figure on the right-hand side is a less informative, but graphically maybe a more appealing way of depicting such a frequency analysis. The analyst draws overlapping rectangles where each rectangle symbolizes a particular meaning component, for example M_M^I or M_M^{II}. In the overlap of the rectangles alias meaning components, the respective referents are indicated, for instance M^1_R or M^2_R (see Givon 1986: 79).



ANGE| has a positive value on 5 meaning components out of a total of 5, which corresponds to a degree of representativeness of 100%. In contrast, a M^5_R = |WALNUT| only has 2 meaning components out of 5, yielding a 40% representativeness. And an M^6_R = |ACKEE| exhibits only 1 meaning component, resulting in a meager 20% representativeness degree.

A similar approach may be applied to Social Science concepts. Let us take a power-related example, namely the word ›*order*‹ as used in a sentence such as ›*The father ordered the child to wash the dishes*‹.

The table below is a highly simplified example whose purpose is not to demonstrate methodological accuracy but simply to outline one possible way to study prototypicality and atypicality in Social Science phenomena.

Figure 4.VIII: Frequency analysis of the prototypicality degree (›*order*‹)

		decompositional intension of M_S = meaning components M_M						
signifier and word M_S M_S = |ORDER|		**M_M'** = | X WANTS Y TO DO SOMETHING Z|	**M_M''** = | Y WOULD NORMALLY NOT HAVE DONE Z|	**M_M'''** = | X SAYS SOMETHING TO Y WITH WORDS|	**M_M'ᵛ** = | X THINKS ONLY OF HIS OWN BENEFIT|	**M_M'ᵛ** = | Y GETS PUNISHED IF HE DOES NOT DO Z|	etc	**Σ = %**
extension of M_S = referents M_R	**M^1_R** = | THE MUGGER SHOUTS »GIVE ME ALL YOUR MONEY!«|	+	+	+	+	+		**5 = 100%**
	M^2_R = | A CHILD SAYS TO ANOTHER CHILD »DON'T DO THAT!«|	+	+	+	+	0		**4 = 80%**
	M^3_R = | THE WOUNDED HERO ORDERS HIS FRIENDS TO LEAVE HIM TO SAVE THEIR LIVES|	+	+	+	–	–		**3 = 60%**
	M^4_R = | THE PEASANT RAISES HIS EYEBROW AND THE DOG JUMPS|	+	+	–	–	–		**2 = 40%**
	M^5_R = | MARY RECOMMENDS THAT THEY SEE THE DOCTOR|	–	–	+	–	–		**1 = 20%**
	etc							
	Σ = %	**4 = 80%**	**4 = 80%**	**4 = 80%**	**2 = 40%**	**1 = 20%**		

Assumption (II) has been advanced by Fuzzy Set Theory. Instead of the famous slogan »Draw a distinction« (Spencer Brown 1969: 3), which has been widely adopted in structuralist and system-theoretic approaches, I conjecture that Fuzzy Set Theory's slogan would be »Fuzzify a distinction«. Fuzzy approaches reproach classical and binary approaches for putting a »gray« world into »black-or-white« concepts (Kosko 1993: 8), or to use non-dualistic terms, »gray« descriptions are transformed into »black-or-white« descriptions.

In contrast, Fuzzy Set Theory holds that a category has fuzzy boundaries and blurry edges – Foulkes (1979: 79) succinctly dubs it a sort of *sfumato*-effect. In figure 4.VI, there is no boundary line drawn around the category, but M_S = │FRUIT│ gradually fades out into M_S = │NON-FRUIT│. Consequently, it is often impossible for everyday lifeworld actors to decide whether a particular referent lies within or outside the category, and membership in the category is not digital and binary, but analog, gradual, and fuzzy: A referent may not only be either a 100% member or a 0% member of the category, but it may be a member only to a certain degree, ranging gradually from 0% to 100% with values like 5%, 22%, 50%, 94%, etc.

For example, psycho-linguistic experiments by Rosch & Mervis (1975) have demonstrated that everyday language clearly classifies an M^1_R = │APPLE│ as a M_S = │FRUIT│, so that in figure 4.VI this referent lies in the dark prototypical core and is thus a 100% member. This is less clear for a M^3_R = │COCONUT│, which lies at the periphery of the category and has only partial membership of, let us say, 20% in the category M_S = │FRUIT│. And as for referents such as M^4_R = │OLIVES│ and M^5_R = │WALNUTS│, it becomes highly controversial and ambiguous whether they are M_S = │FRUIT│ at all or whether they are M_{ELSE} = │NON-FRUIT│. In figure 4.VI, the referent M^4_R = │OLIVES│ is far away from the prototypical center and barely touches the extreme periphery of the category M_S = │FRUIT│, so that its membership is very low, let us say 10%. In other cases, such as M_R = │BROCCOLI│, it is clear that this referent does not belong at all to the category M_S = │FRUIT│, but to the category M_{ELSE} = │NON-FRUIT│, and in particular to M_{ELSE} = │VEGETABLE│, so it is a member of M_S = │FRUIT│ to 0%.

In conclusion, the more prototypical and central a referent is, the higher its membership degree in the category is (e.g. 70% to 100%); and vice versa, the more atypical and peripheral a member is, the lower its membership degree is (e.g. 30% to 0%).[10]

[10] Note, however, that the *degree of representativeness*, discussed in assumption (I), does not necessarily correlate with the *degree of membership*, discussed in assumption (II). There are many categories with gradual and fuzzy degrees of representativeness ranging from 0% to 100%, but with binary and discrete membership of either 0% or 100%. For example, the category M_S = │BIRD│ is such a case. As for membership, people can clearly distinguish whether a referent is or is not a bird, so there is no fuzziness or graduality. A M_R = │PENGUIN│ has full membership of 100% in the category M_S = │BIRD│ because it is undoubtedly considered to be a bird and not a »half-bird« or a »bird-fish«. As for representativeness, a M_R = │PENGUIN│ has a low representativeness of, let us say 10%, for the category M_S = │BIRD│ because it is an atypical and strange bird.

The crucial point is that it is impossible and arbitrary to determine an exact location of an either/or-boundary line due to the fuzzy, gradual, and analog features of many categories.

Kosko (1993: ch. 1-3) argues that this more-or-less-fuzziness is based on the principle of »M to some degree *and* M_{ELSE} to some degree« (or alternatively, »M to some degree *and* non-M to some degree«). That is, a particular referent may be a member of a category to a certain degree *and* at the same time this referent may be a member of another category to a certain degree.

For instance, the referent M^4_R = │OLIVE│ is an atypical-peripheral member of the signifier M_S = │FRUIT│ and at the same time it is an atypical-peripheral member of M_{ELSE} = │NON-FRUIT│, and in particular of M_S = │VEGETABLE│, so that this referent may be seen as a, let us say, 10% member of M_S = │FRUIT│ and at the same time a, let us say, 15% member of M_{ELSE} = │NON-FRUIT│ or of M_S = │VEGETABLE│. By the same token, a M^3_R = │COCONUT│ may be seen as a M_S = │FRUIT│ to a degree of 20% and as a M_S = │NUT│ to a degree of 80%.

The fuzziest and most extreme case is when a referent belongs to a degree of 50% to one category M and to a degree of 50% to another category M_{ELSE}, so that it is as M-like as M_{ELSE}-like, e.g. a glass of water that is simultaneously half full and half empty.[11] In this case, the principle of »M to some degree *and* M_{ELSE} to some degree« takes the specific form of »M to 50% *and* M_{ELSE} to 50%« so the counter-intuitive conclusion of »M *and* M_{ELSE}« (or »M *and* non-M«) follows.

The either/or-discreteness of »M *or* M_{ELSE}« is replaced by the more-or-less-fuzziness of »M to some degree *and* M_{ELSE} to some degree« with the special case of »M *and* M_{ELSE}«. In fact, the fuzzy approach does not *replace* the binary approach, but rather it *comprises* the bivalent approach, because »M *or* M_{ELSE}« is nothing but the special case of »M to 100% *and* M_{ELSE} to 0%« or vice versa »M to 0% *and* M_{ELSE} to 100%«. Consequently, the fuzzy approach not only includes the binary approach as a valid but special case, but it transcends the binary approach by creating a wider theoretical frame. And this is a meta-theoretical and methodological advantage that clearly favors Fuzzy Set Theory.

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[11] An even more convincing example of assumption (II) is Fuzzy Set Theory's treatment of the Sorites Paradox (Kosko 1993: ch. 1-3). In contrast to │ODD NUMBER│ and │FRUIT│, the category │SAND HEAP│ exemplifies an extreme and perfect case of graduality and fuzziness. Whereas different referents of fruits (e.g. apple, pear, plum, orange, etc) are *quite* gradual and fuzzy in terms of membership, different referents of sand heaps (e.g. a sand heap with 1.000.000 sand grains, with 1.000.000 sand grains minus 1 sand grain, with 1.000.000 sand grains minus 2 sand grains, …, with 1.000.000 sand grains minus 999.999 sand grains, etc) are *perfectly* gradual and fuzzy in terms of membership: (a) It is impossible or arbitrary to establish a clear-cut boundary that separates referents classifiable as │SAND HEAP│ from referents classifiable as │NON-SAND HEAP│. (b) Taking more and more sand grains away, the referent gradually changes from one pole of being a 100% │SAND HEAP│ and a 0% │NON-SAND HEAP│ to the other pole of being a 0% │SAND HEAP│ and a 100% │NON-SAND HEAP│. There are a lot of intermediate states, for instance, where a particular referent is simultaneously a │SAND HEAP│ to 80% and a │NON-SAND HEAP│ to 20%. (c) The fuzziest case is a referent that would be a │SAND HEAP│ to 50% and a │NON-SAND HEAP│ to 50% so that it is impossible to separate the referent from a │SAND HEAP│ and a │NON-SAND HEAP│.

A particular version of the binary approach is Structuralism and Luhmann's Systems Theory because both operate with binary codes, e.g. up vs down, legal vs illegal, man vs woman, etc. There are two disadvantages to these theories: Firstly, they imply a theoretical reductionism and forcing by reducing and pressing fuzzy, complex, and flexible concepts into binary, simplistic, and rigid codes. Secondly, even if these theories circumvent such reductionism and forcing, their internal architecture obliges them to disregard and neglect those phenomena not fitting into their binary codes, thus rendering them theoretically invisible or underexposed. Fuzzy Set Theory and Prototype Theory are hence a way to avoid these theoretical disadvantages of Structuralism and Systems Theory.

Similar to assumption (I), the referent-prototype often plays a decisive role in determining the membership degree of a referent: The more similar a referent is judged to be with regard to the referent-prototype, the higher the membership degree of this referent is estimated to be (Kleiber 1990: 51).[12]

Assumptions (III) and (IV) concern the category's intension. A signifier, such as the word M_S = │FRUIT│, may be intuitively decomposed in common sense reasoning into the meaning components M_M^I = │PART OF A PLANT│, M_M^{II} = │EDIBLE│, M_M^{III} = │JUICY│, M_M^{IV} = │SWEET│, M_M^V = │SOFT│, etc.

Assumption (III) states that the internal structure of a category is heterogeneous and differentiated because the meaning components have unequal statuses. Some meaning components are more typical, important, or representative than others. For example, the meaning component M_M^I = │PART OF A PLANT│ is more important for, and typical of, an intensional definition of M_S = │FRUIT│ than other meaning components such as M_M^{II} = │EDIBLE│ or M_M^{IV} = │SWEET│. Some meaning components belong to the prototypical center and other components belong instead to the atypical periphery of the category.

How can we know which meaning components are more prototypical-central or more atypical-peripheral? Several answers have been proposed.

A first answer is a *frequency analysis*, similar to the one proposed in assumption (I) and in particular in figures 4.VII and 4.VIII. The more referents a particular meaning component comprises, the more prototypical it is and the more shaded its cell in the table is. For example, in figure 4.VII, the meaning component M_M^I = │PART OF A PLANT│ applies to all 7 referents out of a total of 7 referents, so that its degree of prototypicality amounts to 100%. In contrast,

[12] However, Löbner (2003: 271) notes that the degree of membership of a referent M^1_R in a category, or the degree of similarity of this referent M^1_R to the referent-prototype of the category, heavily depends on the *kind and number of other referents* M^2_R, M^3_R, M^4_R, etc taken into account: The *more* referents M^2_R, M^3_R, M^4_R, etc that are taken into account and the *more semantically distant* referents M^2_R, M^3_R, M^4_R, etc that are taken into account, the higher the degree of membership of the referent M^1_R in the category and the higher its degree of similarity to the referent-prototype of the category. Taking the example of the category M_S = │DOG│, Löbner convincingly shows how the referent M^1_R = │WOLF│ passes from 0% membership to 99% membership, depending on the kind and number of alternative referents considered. He concludes that there can be no *absolute* 0% value of membership or similarity and consequently no *absolute and general* degree of membership or similarity, but only *relative and context-specific* degrees.

M_M^{IV} = │SWEET│ only applies to 4 referents out of 7, yielding a low degree of prototypicality of only 57%.[13]

A second answer suggests the calculation of the so-called *cue validity*, a statistical measure of discrimination between entities based on a frequency analysis (Rosch & Mervis 1975). The higher the cue validity is for a meaning component, the more prototypical it is. A good example to explain this concept is the word M_S = │BIRD│ with its extension and intension. The cue validity determines the capacity of a meaning component, e.g. M_M^I = │CAN FLY│, to correctly classify and differentiate between referents, i.e. to include referents such as M_R = │SPARROW│ because they can be classified by the signifier M_s = │BIRD│ and to exclude other referents such as M_R = │BULLDOG│ because they cannot be classified by the signifier M_s = │BIRD│. A meaning component has a high cue validity for a particular signifier if many or all referents of this signifier exhibit this meaning component and if only very few or no referents of other neighboring signifiers exhibit this meaning component. For example, the meaning component M_M^I = │HAS FEATHERS│ has a high cue validity for the signifier M_s = │BIRD│ because all the signifier's referents such as M^1_R = │SPARROW│, M^2_R = │EAGLE│, M^3_R = │OSTRICH│, etc exhibit M_M^I, but no referents of another signifier such as M_s = │NON-BIRD│ or M_s = │MAMMAL│ exhibit M_M^I. In contrast, the meaning component M_M^{II} = │CAN SING│ has a lower cue validity for the signifier M_s = │BIRD│ because only some of its referents exhibit M_M^{II}, such as M^5_R = │NIGHTINGALE│ or M^7_R = │YELLOW WARBLER│, whereas there are other signifiers, such as M_s = │MAMMALS│, which also exhibit M_M^{II}, such as M^1_R = │HUMANS│ or M^3_R = │WHALES│ (modified from Kleiber 1990: 75f).

A third answer may be obtained by using *default reasoning*, in particular by employing a ›*but*‹-test (Schwarz & Chur 2004: 40f) or a negation test (Kempson 1977: 92ff) in combination with Schlyter's (1982) principle of prototype approximation and principle of deviation signalization.[14]

Schlyter's first principle states that in classification sentences like ›*An* M_R *is an* M_S‹ such as ›*A lime is a fruit*‹, the referent M_R such as M_R = │LIME│ is by default, i.e. if nothing else is known and if there is no contrary information, considered to approximate the referent-prototype of an M_S such as M_S = │FRUIT│ and hence to exhibit the meaning components of this referent-prototype such as M_M = │SWEET│. Schlyter's second principle states that if a speaker is talking about an atypical referent such as M_R = │LIME│ that exhibits atypi-

[13] In the example, I have only considered a few referents. But if a complete extension of all referents shows that a particular meaning component applies to *all* referents, then this meaning component would not only be highly prototypical, but even *necessary*, as in the model of necessary and sufficient conditions in assumption (4) of chapter 4.1. This is, in fact, the case for M_M^I = │PART OF A PLANT│ with regard to M_S = │FRUIT│ because all fruits such as oranges, apples, watermelons, coconuts, etc have grown as parts of a plant.

[14] In chapter 3.4.2 on decompositional intension, a similar version of this test, namely the contradiction- or negation-test, has been discussed. Even though the negation test and the ›*but*‹-test were originally designed to discover *necessary* meaning components, I argue that they can also be employed to find *prototypical* meaning components. As for Schlyter's principles, both are similar to Grice's (1975, 1978) cooperative maxims of conversation, which are based on default assumptions as well.

cal meaning components such as non-M_M = │NOT SWEET│, the only way to circumvent the application of the first principle is by explicitly signaling the deviation from the referent-prototype by means of a sentence like ›*An* M_R *is an* M_S *but it is/has/does not* M_M‹ such as ›*A lime is a fruit but it is not sweet*‹.

Both principles can be used to test whether a meaning component M_M is prototypical or atypical: Using the abovementioned ›*but*‹-negation-test, this is accomplished by constructing a sentence that contains a signifier M_S, one of its referents M_R, and a negation of the tested meaning component M_M that is introduced by the word ›*but*‹. Such a sentence is similar to the sentence type mentioned in the second principle, i.e. ›*An* M_R *is an* M_S *but it is/has/does not* M_M‹. If the sentence sounds normal or is logically true, the meaning component M_M is prototypical (or even necessary), but if the sentence sounds odd or is logically contradictory, the meaning component M_M is atypical (or even absent).

For example, we want to know if the meaning component M_M = │SWEET│ is prototypical or atypical of M_S = │FRUIT│. We construct a sentence in the form ›*A lime is a fruit but it is not sweet*‹. Since the sentence sounds intuitively normal, we infer that M_M = │SWEET│ is prototypical. Now we want to know if the component M_M = │RED│ is prototypical or atypical of M_S = │FRUIT│. The sentence ›*A lime is a fruit but it is not red*‹ sounds odd (or at least less normal than the preceding test sentence), so we conclude that M_M = │RED│ is atypical. This default reasoning emphasizes the cognitive importance of prototypes as actors first need to know the *normal* meaning of something so as to be able to understand any *derived* meanings, and not vice versa (Pharo 2004: 327).

In conclusion, frequency analysis, cue validity, and default reasoning are three answers to the question of how to distinguish prototypical from atypical meaning components. Each answer proposes a particular method whose results sometimes contradict the results of other methods. Nevertheless, these methods still provide some important and systematic procedures for roughly determining the degree of prototypicality of meaning components.

Once the degree of prototypicality of each meaning component is established, we can determine the *meaning component-prototype* or M_M-*prototype*. In analogy to the referent-prototype or M_R-prototype mentioned in assumption (I), the meaning component-prototype is the combination or overlap of the greatest number of prototypical meaning components (Kleiber 1990: 75). For example, let us assume we have used one or several of the abovementioned methods to establish the three most prototypical meaning components for the signifier M_S = │FRUIT│, i.e. M_M^I = │PART OF A PLANT│, M_M^{II} = │EDIBLE│, and M_M^{IV} = │SWEET│. It is this combination or overlap of meaning components that constitutes the meaning component-prototype, i.e. the compound meaning M_M = │SWEET EDIBLE PART OF A PLANT│. In contrast to the referent-prototype, the meaning component-prototype is not a concrete or real referent or object, but rather it is a cognitive concept or mental idea made up of abstract properties.[15]

[15] For another example of an M_M-prototype, see the illustration in footnote 9 of this chapter, where the dark shaded zone, where all meaning components M_M^I, M_M^{II}, and M_M^{III} overlap, symbolizes the meaning component-prototype (see also Barsalou 1992: 47ff).

Assumption (IV) asserts that many categories cannot be defined by a checklist of necessary and sufficient conditions (alias meaning components) that hold for all referents. For example, Geeraerts (2002: 286ff) shows that it is impossible to find an intensional definition with a list of necessary and sufficient meaning components for the category │FRUIT│ because either such a list is not general enough so as to include all relevant and appropriate referents, or it is not specific enough so as to exclude all irrelevant and inappropriate referents. For example, M_M^{II} = │EDIBLE│ is not necessary and not general enough as there are fruits such as M_R = │RED ELDER BERRIES│ that are poisonous, and M_M^{I} = │PART OF A PLANT│ is not sufficient and not specific enough because it includes M_R = │SPINACH│, which is a non-fruit, namely a vegetable.[16]

Instead of the model of necessary and sufficient conditions, Prototype Theory proposes the model of *family resemblances* (Rosch & Mervis 1975), a formalization of Wittgenstein's *Familienähnlichkeit* (1953: § 57, 66f). The idea is that meaning components (or meanings) partially overlap in their semantic range. For example, M_M^{II} = │EDIBLE│ may overlap with another meaning component, let us say with M_M^{X} = │ROUND OR OVAL SHAPE│, because both presuppose and implicitly contain the more fundamental and universal meaning │PHYSICAL-MATERIAL OBJECT│. Formally, M_M^{II} has the semantic composition of M_M^{II} = │A+B│ and M_M^{X} has the semantic composition of M_M^{X} = │B+C│, so that both meaning components overlap in the shared meaning │B│, which in this case could be │PHYSICAL-MATERIAL OBJECT│.

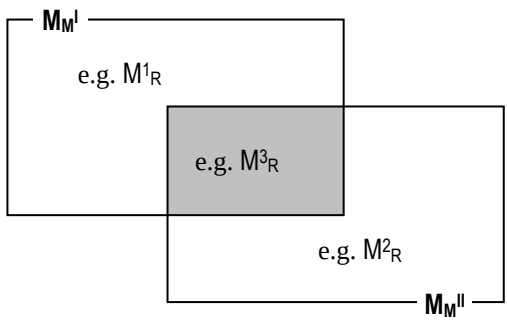
This type of semantic linking and overlapping constitutes a family resemblance, notated as │A+B│, │B+C│, │C+D│, │D+E│, │E+F│, etc. This is certainly the most extreme case but serves well to illustrate the argument. Let us resume the example of │FRUIT│, even though it may not be the best example to illustrate a family resemblance. The signifier M_S = │FRUIT│ has several referents, each with its respective meaning components, e.g. the referent M^1_R = │APPLE│ has the two meaning components │A+B│ (or │M_M^{I} + M_M^{II}│), the referent M^2_R = │WATERMELON│ has the two meaning components │B+C│ (or │M_M^{II} + M_M^{III}│), M^3_R = │COCONUT│ has │C+D│ (or │M_M^{III} + M_M^{IV}│), etc. There may be no meaning component that is shared by all referents, as in the model of necessary and sufficient conditions, but each referent shares only, or at least, one meaning component with another referent. That is, each referent is linked to another referent by partial semantic overlaps in the form of family resemblances, e.g. M^1_R is linked to M^2_R because they share the component │B│ (or │M_M^{II}│), M^2_R is linked to M^3_R because they share │C│ (or │M_M^{III}│), M^3_R is linked to M^4_R because

[16] Even if we found a list of defining meaning components, we may always encounter exceptions that defy our definition. Saeed (2003: 35f) gives a funny example that was quoted at the beginning of this chapter 4. Let us assume we established the defining properties of a M_S = │ZEBRA│ as M_M^{I} = │ANIMAL│, M_M^{II} = │HAS FOUR LEGS│, M_M^{III} = │IS STRIPED│, and M_M^{IV} = │IS A HERBIVORE│. What if we find a referent that is pure white (thus defying M_M^{III}), a referent that by some birth defect has only three legs (thus defying M_M^{II}), or a referent that gets bored with a grass diet and eats some insects (thus defying M_M^{IV}), etc? Would these referents cease to be, or cease to be classified as, M_S = │ZEBRA│?

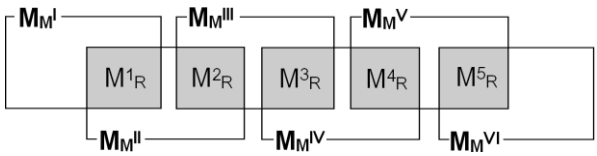
they share │D│ (or │M_M^{IV}│), etc. In this chain of family resemblances the first referent M^1_R may share no meaning component with the last referent M^5_R.[17]

An important aspect of family resemblances, emphasized by Geeraerts (1989: 149), is that the zone of semantic overlap between the meaning components (or meanings) corresponds to the zone of highest prototypicality of the signifier (or word). This applies particularly to polysemous or homonymous words, i.e. to words that have several distinct and sometimes related meanings. In the following, I will replace an example from Geeraerts (ibid.) with an example related to law, which resumes a briefly discussed case of semasiology (see chapter 3.5). The English word M_S = │LAW│ has two principal meanings, namely M_M^I = │THE WHOLE SYSTEM OF OBLIGATIONS AND RIGHTS THAT REGULATES THE INTERACTIONS OF PEOPLE IN A PARTICULAR COUNTRY OR AREA│ and M_M^{II} = │A PRINCIPLE STATING THAT SOMETHING ALWAYS HAPPENS IN NATURE OR SOCIETY WHEN THE SAME CONDITIONS EXIST│. As in family resemblances, both meaning components partially overlap, thus creating three zones, i.e. the first zone where only M_M^I applies, the second zone where only M_M^{II} applies, and the third zone where both M_M^I and M_M^{II} apply.

Figure 4.IX: Prototypicality in semantic overlaps



[17] Family resemblances can be depicted as follows (modified from Kleiber 1990: 160, see also Rubba 1986: 325). The illustration in footnote 9 of this chapter is nothing but a special case of the illustration below because *all* meaning components simultaneously overlap, whereas in the illustration below a maximum of *two* components overlap.



Lakoff (1987) gives a good example of family resemblance: In the language Dyirbal, the word ›*bayi*‹ comprises extremely heterogeneous referents such as male humans, kangaroos, the moon, opossums, bats, thunderstorms, fish, rainbows, boomerangs, insects, etc.

To locate referents in each of these semantic zones, M^1_R = ⎪THE COMMON LAW SYSTEM⎪ is a referent in the zone where only $M_M{}^I$ applies, M^2_R = ⎪THE SCIENTIFIC LAW OF GRAVITY⎪ is a referent in the zone where only $M_M{}^{II}$ applies, and finally M^3_R = ⎪THE LEGAL OBLIGATION OF ALL PEOPLE NOT TO KILL OTHER PEOPLE WHEN SELF-DEFENSE IS NOT NECESSARY TO SAVE ONE'S LIFE⎪ may be seen as a referent located in the zone of overlap where both $M_M{}^I$ and $M_M{}^{II}$ simultaneously apply.

The important aspect is that the zone of semantic overlap between the meaning components $M_M{}^I$ and $M_M{}^{II}$, shaded in gray in the figure, constitutes the zone that includes the referents with the highest degree of prototypicality of the word M_S = ⎪LAW⎪. It is in this zone that the referents of law are both rules and regularities at the same time, which, taken together, confers them a high degree of prototypicality.

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4.3 A Prototype Model for the Social Sciences

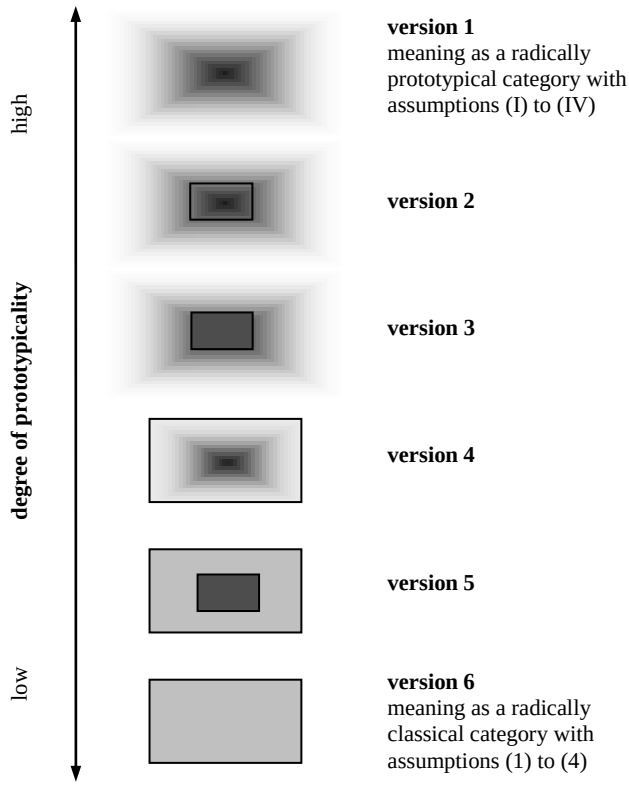
In the preceding chapters 4.1 and 4.2, I have presented a *radical* version of meaning as *category*, i.e. exhibiting the assumptions (1), (2), (3), (4), and a *radical* version of meaning as *prototypical categor*y, i.e. including the assumptions (I), (II), (III), (IV). However, both versions are nothing but two extremes of a continuum with numerous intermediate versions in between.

The reason for the existence of such a continuum lies in the *prototypicality of prototypicality* (Geeraerts 1989). That is, Prototype Theory can be applied to itself as a sort of self-limitation or auto-prototypicality: Prototypicality is itself a category, namely M_S = ⎪PROTOTYPICALITY⎪, which has a prototypical center and an atypical periphery. As for the extension of M_S = ⎪PROTOTYPICALITY⎪, there are some prototypical referents such as M_R = ⎪FRUIT⎪ that are particularly good, representative examples where Prototype Theory works well. But there are also more atypical referents such as M_R = ⎪ODD NUMBER⎪ that are rather bad, unrepresentative examples where Prototype Theory does not work well. As for the intension of M_S = ⎪PROTOTYPICALITY⎪, there are some prototypical meaning components like assumption (I) that can be found in most referents alias categories, e.g. even in such a technical-mathematical term as M_R = ⎪ODD NUMBER⎪. But there are also more atypical meaning components, such as assumption (II), which are less widespread in referents alias categories and do not apply to many categories that were formerly believed to be fuzzy and vague such as M_R = ⎪BIRD⎪.[18]

Consequently, depending on the degree of prototypicality of prototypicality, I have constructed different versions of meanings alias categories that are depicted in the following figure.

[18] By applying Prototype Theory to itself, it escapes the logical fallacy of overgeneralization, which was noticed in the case of the classical conceptualization of meaning as category and which consists in generalizing the theoretical results or assumptions to all objects, contexts, cases, referents, or concepts.

Figure 4.X: Continuum of meaning conceptualizations



Version 1 has the highest degree of prototypicality as it combines all four assumptions (I) to (IV), while version 6 has the lowest degree of prototypicality as it does not have any of the assumptions (I) to (IV), but instead exhibits assumptions (1) to (4). In between these extreme versions, there are several intermediate versions that combine some of the assumptions (I) to (IV) or (1) to (4) to differing degrees. This is why assumptions (I) to (IV) are best seen as *prototypicality effects*, i.e. effects that differ in degree but that are combinable in different categories (Geeraerts 2002: 285, Lakoff 1987), so that the overall effect leads to one of the versions 1 to 6. Since versions 1 and 6 were already discussed in detail, I will now only review the intermediate versions 2, 3, 4, 5.

Version 5 combines assumptions (I) and (III) to a low degree because – even though the category's internal structure is heterogeneous due to its differentiation into a prototypical center and an atypical periphery – this differentiation is binary because there are only two degrees of prototypicality, i.e. the prototypical center and the atypical periphery, which leaves no room for multiple degrees of prototypicality effects. Moreover, version 5 exhibits as-

sumptions (2) and (4) to a full degree because all its boundaries are discrete and clear-cut, in particular the prototypical center's boundary as well as the whole category's boundary, so that membership is binary, and the model of necessary and sufficient conditions is applicable.[19]

Version 4 combines assumptions (I) and (III) to a full degree as the category's internal structure has multiple and fluid degrees of differentiation ranging from the extreme of maximal prototypicality in the center to the extreme of maximal atypicality at the edges. Like version 5, assumptions (2) and (4) hold. A typical example of version 4 is M_S = │BIRD│ or M_S = │ODD NUMBER│.[20]

Version 3 exhibits assumptions (I) and (III) to an intermediate degree because the category is differentiated into a prototypical center – whose internal structure is, however, homogeneous – and into an atypical periphery – where multiple and smooth degrees of prototypicality are possible. Assumptions (II) and (2) as well as assumptions (IV) and (4) hold partially: Discrete boundaries and a list of necessary and sufficient meaning components exist only for the prototypical center where binary membership is possible. However, for the rest of the category, and in particular for the periphery and the edges, there are only fuzzy boundaries and family resemblances.

Similar arguments are advanced by Wierzbicka (1996: ch. 4) who advocates a combination of the classical category model (applicable only to the prototypical center of the category) and the prototypical category model (applicable to the rest and the edges of the category). Wierzbicka's definitions use necessary and sufficient conditions and are phrased in such a way that they apply exclusively to *prototypical* members, but not to *all* members of the category. The decompositional intension of M_S = │FRUIT│ would include the meaning components M_M^I = │PART OF A PLANT│, M_M^{II} = │EDIBLE│, M_M^{III} = │JUICY│, and M_M^{IV} = │SWEET│, which are realized only in the prototypical-central members, e.g. M^0_R = │ORANGE│ or M^1_R = │APPLE│, but which do not necessarily apply to atypical-peripheral members, e.g. M^3_R = │COCONUT│ or M^4_R = │OLIVE│. The definitional-intensional effort is concentrated on the prototypical center of the category by applying assumption (4). Similarly, Morin argues that concepts – especially for scientific uses, e.g. love or friendship – should not be defined by their semantic boundaries, but by their semantic core (1988: 98). In so doing, the analyst may use the contradiction-test or ›*but*‹-negation-test so as to distinguish between the prototypical center's necessary vs supplementary meaning components (Schwarz & Chur 2004: 40f, Kempson 1977: 92ff).[21]

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[19] A similar graphic illustration can be found in Croft & Cruse (2004: 90).

[20] For a graphic illustration, see Löbner (2003: 279).

[21] There is a related but extensional argument (Croft & Cruse 2004: 89f). For a referent M_R to be member of a signifier M_S, it is not necessary that *all* members of M_R be members of M_S, but only that *prototypical* members of M_R be members of M_S. The superordinate term M_S = │GLIDER│ has some prototypical members, e.g. M^1_R = │MOTOR GLIDER│, and some atypical members, e.g. M^2_R = │HANG GLIDER│. For M_R = │GLIDER│ to be member of M_S = │AIRPLANE│, it suffices that M^1_R = │MOTOR GLIDER│ be a member of M_S = │AIRPLANE│, while M^2_R = │HANG GLIDER│ may be a non-member of M_S = │AIRPLANE│.

The difference between version 6 and this version 3 can be illustrated by contrasting two types of questions, i.e. an *unhedged* question and a *hedged* question (see assumption (I) in chapter 4.2). Version 6 would ask if an M^1_R = │APPLE│ is a M_S = │FRUIT│, whereas version 3 would ask if an M^1_R = │APPLE│ is a M_S = │TYPICAL FRUIT│. My argument is that using *prototypical* members as referents, the logical truth or semantic acceptability of both questions can be *equally easily* evaluated, in this case by answering the abovementioned questions in the affirmative. However, using *atypical* members as referents, the truth and acceptability of version 6's unhedged question is intuitively *more difficult* to evaluate, whereas the truth and acceptability of version 3's hedged question is intuitively *easier* to evaluate. Version 6 would ask if an M^4_R = │OLIVE│ is a M_S = │FRUIT│, whereas version 3 would ask if an M^4_R = │OLIVE│ is a M_S = │TYPICAL FRUIT│. The point is that it is clearly more difficult to decide whether an olive is a *fruit* than to decide whether an olive is a *typical fruit*. The unhedged question of version 6 is hard to answer and may result in either an affirmative or a negative answer depending on context and actor, but the hedged question of version 3 is simple to answer and results in a clear, negative answer for most contexts and actors. In other words, membership in the prototypical center of a category must be clearly distinguished from membership in the category as a whole. Whereas membership in the prototypical center of a category is binary and easy to determine using necessary and sufficient conditions, membership in the category as a whole is fuzzy and difficult to determine.

These observations confirm Schwarz & Chur's argument that Prototype Theory is not a direct alternative but rather a supplement to classical theories of decompositional intension (2004: 53). Consequently, Wierzbicka proposes combining a fuzzy and analog prototype analysis with a discrete and precise decompositional intension: »Concepts encoded in natural language are, in a sense, vague [...], but this does not mean that their semantic description should be vague, too. The challenge consists in portraying the *vagueness* inherent in natural language with *precision*.« (Wierzbicka 1990: 365, my emphasis).[22]

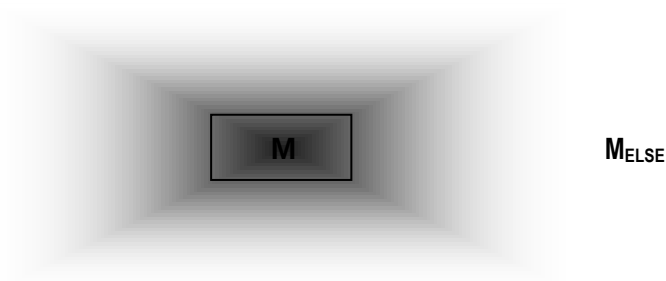
Version 2 is virtually identical with version 3, the only exception being that the internal structure of the prototypical center is not homogeneous but rather differentiated due to differing degrees of prototypicality effects.

Having reviewed versions 1 to 6, the next methodological step is to decide which of these versions is the most appropriate or fruitful for a particular study with particular research objectives. In principle, different choices are possible, but I will choose version 2 for the theory of meaning developed in this book. This choice is based on the belief that many, if not most, everyday and Social

[22] A typical definition of a word, such as M_S = │BIRD│, as proposed by Wierzbicka (1996: 163f), starts with │PEOPLE THINK THINGS LIKE THIS ABOUT CREATURES OF THIS KIND:│ followed by a list of the meaning components of a typical bird like $M_M{}^I$ = │THEY ARE ANIMALS│, $M_M{}^{II}$ = │THEY CAN FLY│, $M_M{}^{III}$ = │THEY ARE FEATHERED│, etc and including the provision │SOME CREATURES OF THIS KIND DO NOT EXHIBIT $M_M{}^I$, $M_M{}^{II}$, $M_M{}^{III}$, ETC BUT WHEN PEOPLE WANT TO SAY SOMETHING ABOUT CREATURES OF THIS KIND THEY SAY SOMETHING LIKE THIS $M_M{}^I$, $M_M{}^{II}$, $M_M{}^{III}$, ETC│. (see also ibid. 1987 and Goddard 1998).

Science categories such as power, communication, work, conflict, democracy, action, love, group, intention, criminality, or market best match version 2. In terms of prototypicality of prototypicality, as mentioned above, such categories exhibit a high degree of prototypicality, i.e. they are prototypical examples of Prototype Theory because they combine assumptions (I) to (IV) to a high degree. Since version 2 of meaning as prototypical category will be the final version used throughout the rest of this study, I have reproduced it in more detail in the following figure.

Figure 4.XI: Meaning as prototypical category (version 2)



Even though the methodological choice of version 2 is contingent and not fully justifiable, there are nevertheless several reasons that back up this choice. In the following, I will briefly give some reasons for the appropriateness and fruitfulness of version 2 in Social Science studies. This is best accomplished by evaluating if, and to which degree, assumptions (1) to (4) and (I) to (IV) are applicable to typical Social Science concepts, examples, and topics, such as power or law.

Assumptions (1) and (I): I am strongly convinced that assumption (1) is not applicable to most Social Science phenomena, so that assumption (I) survives. Let us look at an example of power: A term that is closely related to, and typical of, power is M_S = │ORDER│ in the sense of a speaker communicating that he strongly wants the hearer to do something because of his communication. There may be several referents such as: M^1_R = │THE COLONEL SHOUTS AT THE SOLDIER: »I HEREBY COMMAND YOU TO SHUT THE WINDOW!«│, M^2_R = │THE COLONEL SAYS TO THE SOLDIER: »SHUT THE WINDOW!«│, or M^3_R = │THE COLONEL INSTRUCTS HIS WIFE: »PLEASE SHUT THE WINDOW.«│. It is obvious that the category M_S = │ORDER│ is internally heterogeneous because there are – according to everyday reasoning and ordinary language use – prototypical-central referents such as M^1_R, but there are also more atypical-peripheral referents such as M^3_R (see also the spectrum of typical and atypical orders in figure 4.VIII in chapter 4.2).

Since assumption (1) has been ruled out, version 6 is automatically ruled out as well. The rejection of version 6 also seems reasonable in view of Prototype Theory's and Fuzzy Set Theory's overall criticism of version 6.

A further question is whether the differentiation and heterogeneity within a category is fuzzy or discrete, i.e. whether there are fuzzy and smooth degrees of prototypicality within the category (ranging from 0% to 100% prototypicality) as in versions 1, 2, and 4, or whether there is a discrete and binary separation between a prototypical center and an atypical periphery (either 0% prototypicality or 100% prototypicality) as in versions 3 and 5. Since the fuzzy-and-degree-version of prototypicality comprises the discrete-and-binary-version of prototypicality, as I have shown above in assumption (II), I opt for the former version. The fuzzy-and-degree version is theoretically more comprehensive and complex than the discrete-and-binary-version of prototypicality. Consequently, versions 3 and 5 are eliminated.

Assumptions (2) and (II): Let us first look at the boundaries and membership of the *category as a whole*, i.e. the separation between M vs M_{ELSE}. Here, assumption (2) does not seem to be applicable to power- and law-related phenomena, so that assumption (II) remains.

Resuming the abovementioned power-related example of the category M_S = │ORDER│, we may add further potential referents to the already enumerated referents M^1_R, M^2_R, and M^3_R, such as M^4_R = │THE COLONEL SAYS TO A COLLEAGUE: »PLEASE SHUT THE WINDOW.«│, M^5_R = │THE COLONEL SAYS TO ANOTHER COLONEL: »COULD YOU BE SO KIND AS TO SHUT THE WINDOW?«│, or M^6_R = │THE COLONEL WHISPERS TO HIS SUPERIOR: »I HEREBY IMPLORE YOU TO SHUT THE WINDOW PLEASE.«│. It seems obvious that M^1_R is a full member of the category, whereas M^6_R is a full non-member of the category, because M^6_R is instead a member of M_{ELSE} = │NON-ORDER│ such as M_{ELSE} = │PLEA│ or M_{ELSE} = │REQUEST│. However, in between these two extremes it seems difficult, impossible, or at least highly controversial to decide on a discrete and exact boundary separating referents classifiable as M_S = │ORDER│ from referents classifiable as M_{ELSE} = │NON-ORDER│. Instead, there seems to be a smooth continuum between M_S and M_{ELSE}, in which the speaker may communicate in different degrees of intensity how strongly or weakly he wants the hearer to do something. The referents M^3_R and M^4_R, for instance, are intermediate referents that may exhibit only a partial membership in M_S because they are located at the extreme periphery.

Even such seemingly clear-cut and technical concepts as the distinction between *legal vs illegal* are subject to prototypical effects. Everyday language and actors often fuzzify this distinction so as to make it more vague and gradual. Means of accomplishing such a fuzzification are to use linguistic hedges, to semantically portray referents in an intermediate position, or to highlight the fluid boundaries within the distinction.

Let us look at some examples: a movie entitled *Almost Legal* (directed by D. Evans, 2003), a new bill may be judged as »legally problematic«, activities are »on the fringes of the law« (Horton-Smith 1952), young people who want to be »a little bit illegal« (Tagliabue 1992), and the popular opinion that »what

is nice and lively about legality is that it has fluid boundaries« (in the movie *Ein Lied von Liebe und Tod*, directed by R. Schübel 1999, 77th minute).[23]

The fuzzification of M vs M_{ELSE} may also be applied to Non-Dualism, i.e. to the non-dualistic distinction M_W vs M_M presented in chapter 2.3.2.[24] The two sides of this distinction can be seen to represent only the most prototypical poles of a continuous spectrum comprising several M that lie between these poles and that are less prototypical and more atypical of M_W and M_M. Based on particular criteria alias meaning components – such as tangible vs intangible, permanent vs ephemeral, transitive vs intransitive, unchangeable vs changeable, external vs internal, etc – a particular M can be located on a specific place on this spectrum.

Let's first look at the extreme poles. For example, a highly prototypical referent of M_W is a tangible and permanent object such as a stone, a tree, or a planet, whereas a highly prototypical referent of M_M is a linguistic description or mental concept such as a verbal remark in French or the notion of feminism. In between these poles, there are many referents that are more atypical of both M_W and of M_M. For example, a less prototypical referent of M_W is a tangible but ephemeral object such as a soap bubble or a snowflake on my hand. Still less prototypical referents of M_W are intangible but perceivable things such as lightning, body movements, gases, light waves, or sounds. There are also referents which lie somewhere in the middle between M_W and M_M and which are atypical of M_W as well as M_M, because they share characteristics of both, so it is hard or impossible to decide if they tend more towards M_W or M_M. Such »strange« referents include structures such as social structures (e.g. feudalism, hierarchies, markets) or sign structures (e.g. traffic signs, grammar, melodies).

In conclusion, the non-dualistic distinction between M_W vs M_M – or more generally, between M_S vs M_R vs M_M – represents only the most extreme and prototypical cases on a continuous spectrum with fuzzy boundaries where many intermediate and atypical cases are located. A similar reasoning may be applied to other Social Science concepts, such as M = |COMMUNICATION| vs M_{ELSE} = |NON-COMMUNICATION|, just think of the intermediate cases of sex, clothing, looks, or talking to oneself.

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[23] A counter-argument may be that there are various social and psychic mechanisms that transform even the fuzziest, vaguest, and most uncertain referents into discrete, binary, and certain referents. For example, in modern law, even though at the beginning of a trial it may be fuzzy and uncertain as to whether a particular action is legal, illegal, or something in between, at the end of a trial the judge will clearly decide that the action is either legal or illegal, without any intermediate classifications (in contrast, in 17th and 18th century France the judicial procedure provided for degrees of guilt so that someone could be »semi-guilty« and »a little bit a criminal«, see Foucault 1975: 46). However, this counter-argument is a pro-argument because it presupposes that fuzzy and uncertain classifications occur *first*, whereas the »defuzzifying« and »discretizing« classifications occur *afterwards* (and this process is often seen as an artificial, forced, or inappropriate transformation of a gray »case« into a black-or-white »class«). See also Kron & Winter's fuzzy-theoretic approach to the code legal vs illegal (2005).

[24] Instead of the non-dualistic distinction M_W vs M_M, I could also have used the more refined version of M_S vs M_M vs M_R presented in chapter 2.5.2 on the non-dualistic semiotic triangle.

Having discussed the boundaries and membership of the *category as a whole*, let us now narrow our focus and look only at the boundaries and membership of the *prototypical center of a category*. Here, assumption (II) does not seem to hold, whereas assumption (2) does hold. In version 3 above, I have argued that the prototypical center of a category may have a discrete boundary and binary membership. This seems to be an appropriate and fruitful approach to many Social Science concepts. Resuming the aforementioned example of power, it may be more difficult, impossible, or controversial to decide whether the referent M^3_R = ⎪THE COLONEL INSTRUCTS HIS WIFE: »PLEASE SHUT THE WINDOW.«⎪ is an M_S = ⎪ORDER⎪, but it is easier, obvious, or consensual to decide whether M^3_R = ⎪THE COLONEL INSTRUCTS HIS WIFE: »PLEASE SHUT THE WINDOW.«⎪ is a M_S = ⎪TYPICAL ORDER⎪. The answer to the latter question is negative, i.e. M^3_R is not a member of the prototypical center of M_S. Using the semantic methods mentioned in version 3, it is thus possible to clearly decide whether a particular referent is a member or a non-member of the prototypical center of a signifier.

In conclusion, in the Social Science examples discussed so far, assumption (2) applies to the prototypical center of the category, and assumption (II) applies to the category as a whole. These results rule out versions 1, 4, 5, and 6.

There is a further aspect to prototypicality that takes a more sociological or pragmatic perspective: The distinction between prototypical center vs atypical periphery closely correlates with the distinction between *use vs mention*, *doing vs talking about doing*, *speech act vs speech act about another speech act*, or *performative vs referential*. Consider the following two examples: The commonality in both examples is that person A addresses an utterance to person B, but the difference is that in example (i) the utterance is ›*I promise you to do X*‹, while in example (ii) the utterance is ›*I promised D to do X*‹ or ›*C promises D to do X*‹.

Whereas in example (i) person A *uses* a promise, in example (ii) she only *mentions* a promise. Whereas in (i) person A is *doing* something, namely making a promise, in example (ii) she is only *talking about doing* something, namely reporting that she herself made a promise or that someone else makes a promise. Whereas in (i) person A makes a *commissive speech act*, in (ii) she makes a *declarative speech act about a commissive speech act*. And finally, whereas in example (i) person A's utterance is *performative* in that it performs an action, in (ii) her utterance is *referential* in that it refers to an action. Put differently, whereas example (i) concerns the *referent* M_R itself, example (ii) concerns the *signifier* M_S *about the referent* M_R.[25]

The crucial point is that example (i) is a more prototypical instance of the concept of promise than example (ii) – just as using the word ›*shit*‹ in an angry dispute is more prototypical of the concept of swearing than mentioning the

[25] The same goes for the dialog between Casanova and Carnap on »What's the beginning of love?« at the opening of chapter 3. Casanova's answer »It's a spark in her eyes« is a more prototypical answer, because it concerns the referent and phenomenon M_R = ⎪LOVE⎪ in contrast to Carnap's more atypical answer »It's the 12th letter of the English alphabet« because it concerns the signifier and word M_S = ⎪LOVE⎪.

word ›*shit*‹ within a theory of communication. Consequently, the first sides of the abovementioned distinctions – namely, use vs mention, doing vs talking about doing, speech act vs speech act about another speech act, and performative vs referential – have a higher degree of prototypicality than the second sides of these distinctions.

This also shows another relevant point with regard to Social Science concepts such as power or law. The mere mentioning of, or referring to, words and signifiers that are, taken individually, considered to be highly prototypical instances of power or law, e.g. the words ›*threat*‹, ›*to forbid*‹, ›*promise*‹, ›*to give orders*‹, ›*to sanction*‹, etc, does not automatically make the whole communication or surface structure in which these words or signifiers are embedded a highly prototypical instance of power or law. For example, even though the power-prototypical expression ›*to give orders*‹ is used in the utterance ›*She told me that she felt really embarrassed when trying to give her husband orders*‹, the utterance as a whole is not power-prototypical because it only partially fulfills the felicity conditions of a conative-directive speech act and conforms better to a declarative-informational or expressive-emotive speech act.

This discussion fits nicely with an argument in sociological Systems Theory. Stäheli argues that there are two types of operations within the same system, e.g. the economic system. Firstly, there are the »hard« autopoietic operations that are coded in the symbolically generalized medium of communication of the system, e.g. payments. Secondly, there are the »soft« operations that only refer to the symbolically generalized medium of communication of the system, especially descriptions and observations, e.g. scientific accounts of payments (Stäheli 1998: part III, note 23). Even though both types of operations may be seen to belong to the system, I argue that the first type of operation is more prototypical of, and central to, the system than the second type of operation. The same goes for other cases: The operation of John filing a suit against Maria is more prototypical of, and central to, the legal system than the operation of an observer describing John filing a suit against Maria.

Furthermore, Stichweh (2000: ch. III/6) argues that many auto-descriptions of a system – e.g. Legal Theory's descriptions about, and prescriptions for, the legal system – are difficult to assign to only one particular system, so that it is unclear which system this auto-description belongs to, e.g. is it an operation of the scientific system with its true-vs-false code or is it an operation of the legal system with its legal-vs-illegal code? The solution that I propose on the basis of Prototype Theory's assumption (II) is that such operations belong simultaneously, but often with differing degrees of prototypicality, to both systems. In the above example, Legal Theory's descriptions about, and prescriptions for, the legal system are members of the scientific system to, let's say, 70% and members of the legal system to, let's say, 60%. Since their membership is higher in the scientific system, Legal Theory's descriptions are more prototypical of the scientific system than of the legal system.

In an even broader sense, an operation or communication may belong to several systems at the same time, e.g. a contract of sale belongs simultaneously to the legal system (because it stipulates obligations, rights, sanctions, etc) and

to the economic system (because it specifies monetary values, the kind of merchandise, the buyer and seller, etc). Such a situation where one operation or communication cannot clearly be attributed to a (single) system, but rather belongs to several systems at the same time is called membership vagueness (see Kron & Winter 2005: 384ff). I will resume this discussion from a different perspective in chapter 5.5.2 on semantic overlaps between meaning fields. For the moment, however, the important point is to emphasize that the prototypicality and membership of an M is higher if it is a referent M_R (e.g. use, doing, speech act, performative, »hard« operations) and not a signifier M_S about a referent M_R (e.g. mention, talking about doing, speech act about another speech act, referential, »soft« operations).

Assumptions (3) and (III): Similar to the referents in assumption (I), it seems plausible that the meaning components of many Social Science categories also have unequal statuses in terms of prototypical-central vs atypical-peripheral meaning components. For example, the signifier and word M_S = ⎪CONTRACT⎪ may be decomposed, in a provisional and simplified way, into the following meaning components M_M^I = ⎪IS OFFICIAL AND FORMAL⎪, M_M^{II} = ⎪IS AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN ACTORS⎪, M_M^{III} = ⎪IS AN EXCHANGE OF DUTIES AND RIGHTS⎪, M_M^{IV} = ⎪CONCERNS FUTURE ACTIONS⎪, M_M^{V} = ⎪PRESUPPOSES THE ACTORS' INTENTION TO COMPLY⎪, etc. Even without a systematic analysis, we intuitively recognize that some meaning components are more central, important, and typical than others: Whereas M_M^{II} and M_M^{III} are particularly relevant and central, M_M^{I} and M_M^{V} are less important and more peripheral.

A much more systematic analysis would use one of the semantic methods described above in assumption (III), i.e. frequency analysis, cue validity, default reasoning and the ›*but*‹-negation-test. For example, trying to find out whether the abovementioned meaning component M_M^{II} = ⎪IS AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN ACTORS⎪ is prototypical or necessary for a M_S = ⎪CONTRACT⎪, we may use the ›*but*‹-negation test, which produces a test sentence such as ›*That is a contract, but it is not an accord between the signatories*‹. Since this sentence sounds odd or inconsistent, it suggests that M_M^{II} is a prototypical or even necessary meaning component. The same procedure may be applied to other meaning components, e.g. the test sentence ›*This is our contract, but it is not an official and formal document*‹ proves that the meaning component M_M^{I} is atypical of a M_S = ⎪CONTRACT⎪. Applied to other phenomena and concepts related to power and law, we may produce further test sentences and check whether they sound semantically odd vs normal, or logically contradictory vs consistent, e.g. ›*This politician has an incredible amount of power, but he really isn't dangerous at all*‹, ›*That's a legal norm, but it is not meant personally*‹, ›*The father punished her, but he did not want to make her feel bad*‹, etc. The application of assumption (III) thus precludes version 6.

Assumptions (4) and (IV): The same arguments advanced in assumptions (2) and (II) apply to this case. Whereas assumption (4) holds for the prototypical center of the category, assumption (IV) is valid for the category as a whole. If, on the one hand, we granted assumption (4) full validity for the category as a whole, we would return to version 6 and disregard all of Prototype Theory's

criticism against version 6. If, on the other hand, we granted assumption (IV) full validity for the category as a whole, we would return to version 1 and ignore its inconveniences: It would be impossible to give any kind of abstract and general definition or description of the prototypical meaning of concepts. Such a result would not only be counter-intuitive, but it would also preclude any systematic scientific description of the prototypical meaning of everyday and Social Science categories. Consequently, versions 1 and 6 are untenable.

Conclusion: Having evaluated assumptions (1) and (I), (2) and (II), (3) and (III), and (4) and (IV) in terms of their applicability to everyday and Social Science concepts and topics, only version 2 survives and will consequently serve as my theoretical reference point in the following chapters. The advantage of version 2 is that it combines features of both radical versions 1 and 6: (a) It exhibits fuzzy and smooth degrees of prototypicality ranging from 0% to 100% *for all areas of the category*. (b) It exhibits fuzzy and analog degrees of membership ranging from 0% to 100% and family resemblances *on the outer fringes of the category as a whole*. (c) It exhibits discrete and binary values for membership of either 0% or 100% along with necessary and sufficient conditions for *the prototypical center of the category*.

It is this latter feature (c) that prevents the results and arguments of the preceding chapters from becoming partially invalid or less persuasive: The basis of many results and arguments in the preceding chapters was the classical conceptualization of meaning in terms of a category, i.e. $\lvert M \rvert$ vs $\lvert M_{ELSE} \rvert$. This conceptualization is not completely abandoned, but it is specified in terms of meaning as a prototypical category, i.e. $\lvert \text{PROTOTYPICAL } M \rvert$ vs $\lvert M_{ELSE} \rvert$, or $\lvert \text{PROTOTYPICAL } M \rvert$ vs $\lvert \text{PROTOTYPICAL } M_{ELSE} \rvert$. Such a prototypical conceptualization keeps the precision and distinguishing capacity of the classical conceptualization as presented in chapter 1, while at the same time accounting for prototypicality effects as presented in this chapter. Hence, the internal consistency of my argumentation is kept intact so that the results of the preceding chapters continue to be valid and applicable to version 2 of a category.

Even though the study of the atypical periphery of a category is also important, it is the prototypical center of a category that particularly needs to be focused upon – especially in the first stages of the analysis. There are two reasons: Firstly, according to Pharo (2004: 327), actors usually focus primarily and initially on the normal and standard meaning before they are able to understand or use any derived and atypical meanings. Also, the prototypical periphery often corresponds to what Ethnomethodology calls the perceived normality of events, which is based upon several features, e.g. typicality of events, an event's comparability with past events, an event's likelihood of occurrence. This perceived normality of events is a crucial and constant benchmark for actors, because it is not only sought to be known and communicated, but fiercely maintained and defended (Garfinkel 1963: 188). Secondly, it is methodologically easier to analyze the prototypical center than the atypical periphery as the center is less complex and diverse than the periphery. In the social world, there tend to be many exceptions to the rule and numerous deviations from the standard, but the rule or standard itself is unitary and often simple.

Let us look at an example of power. According to Goddard (1998: 149), the prototypical center of a M_S = ⎪THREAT⎪ may be specified by the meaning M_M = ⎪X SAID SOMETHING LIKE THIS TO Y: IF YOU DON'T DO THIS, I WILL DO SOMETHING THAT WILL BE BAD FOR YOU. WHEN X SAID IT, IT WAS AS IF X WAS SAYING AT THE SAME TIME: I KNOW YOU DON'T WANT TO DO THIS. I SAY THIS BECAUSE I WANT YOU TO DO IT⎪. On the basis of this single prototypical center, there are numerous instances that belong to the atypical periphery because they share only a part of the prototypical center's meaning components. Instances for atypical threats may be constructed by eliminating or replacing certain meaning components in the abovementioned meaning M_M. For example, the meaning component ⎪IF YOU DON'T DO THIS⎪ may be replaced by ⎪IF YOU DON'T THINK THIS⎪, the meaning component ⎪I WILL DO SOMETHING THAT WILL BE BAD FOR YOU⎪ may simply be eliminated, the meaning component ⎪I KNOW YOU DON'T WANT TO DO THIS⎪ may be changed into ⎪I KNOW YOU WANT TO DO THIS⎪, etc. The communicative result would be a series of atypical threats because they partially violate the felicity conditions of a prototypical threat. In short, a *single and less complex* prototypical center stands in contrast to a *complex* atypical periphery that includes *numerous* instances.

The analysis of the atypical periphery may also be used as a heuristic instrument to accomplish a better analysis of the prototypical center. Since many jokes, cartoons, and comedies draw their humorous effects from the activation of atypical-peripheral meanings, they are particularly well-suited instruments to analyze prototypical-central meanings. Consider the following examples: We may construct a funny or strange test sentence that integrates our semantic-linguistic and cultural-encyclopedic knowledge, e.g. ›*The dairy farm's cows agreed to a two-year contract with the Oregon Milk Inc.*‹ We may also look at cartoons, for example, a cartoon by Gary Larson (1988: 86) in which you see a scene of a court trial with the judge, the jury, the defendant, etc and then a horse in the witness stand giving his testimony with all due details – the cartoon being subtitled »Mr. Ed spills his guts«. In both examples, the reader immediately recognizes the atypicality of these scenes, because »in real life« animals such as cows or horses cannot make contracts or be witnesses. It becomes therefore clear and explicit for the reader what a prototypical scene of a contract or court trial should be like – e.g. the contractor and witness must be able to use language, to understand the notion of contract or court trial, must be of sound mind, and must be capable of complex intellectual operations – such as Mr. Average in terms of a standard adult human person (and not an animal, a young child, a mentally ill person, or a plant). And these features are prototypical elements of the concept of contractor or witness.[26]

[26] Not only test sentences and cartoons may be analyzed to find atypical examples, but »real life« provides atypical examples. The Times of India published on 18.09.2008 an article entitled »Donkey Jailed for Theft« with the following text: »An Egyptian donkey has been jailed for stealing corn on the cob from a field […]. The ass and its owner were apprehended at a police checkpoint […]. The unnamed ungulate was found in possession of the institute's corn and a local judge sentenced him to 24 hours in prison. The man who had his ass thrown in jail got off with a fine of 50 Egyptian pounds.«

5. Meaning as Field

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A team of alien anthropologists from planet Sunev is studying the strange human phenomenon of modern love. Secretly, they spend years observing couples & families, analyzing love novels & soap operas, participating in weddings & divorces, studying sex & emotions, etc. Finally, they succeed in deciphering the fundamental elements of the human »code of love«.[1]

In the previous chapters, I have presented an approach to *meaning as category*, i.e. meaning as a distinction-based, non-dualistic, prototypical category. Many ways exist to continue this approach, but I have chosen one way that I find particularly interesting, i.e. the approach to *meaning as field*. Hence, the approach to meaning as category will be extended to the approach to meaning as field.

Whereas the approach to meaning as category focused primarily on *individual meanings*, I will refine and enlarge this focus by means of the approach to meaning as field which focuses on *clusters of individual meanings*. It will be seen that the concept of prototypical category and the concept of meaning field are not only similar, but sometimes identical. Accordingly, the conceptualization of meaning as field is an extended and somewhat different version of the conceptualization of meaning as prototypical category.[2]

[1] For the semantics of modern love relationships, see Fuchs (1999b) and Luhmann (1982).

[2] The concept of meaning field stems from Linguistics (especially Structural Semantics). Similar and sometimes synonymous terms are semantic field, lexical field, word field, semantic micro-universe (Greimas 1966), semantic network (Sowa ed. 1991), conceptual domain or mental space (Fauconnier 1984, Fauconnier & Turner 2002). Major theoretical publications include Baumgärtner (1967), Coseriu (1965/66), Geckeler (1971), Geeraerts, Grondelaers & Bakema (1994), Lehrer (1974), Lehrer & Feder (eds. 1992), Lutzeier (1981), Lutzeier (ed. 1993), Lyons (1977: ch. 8), Schmidt (ed. 1973), and Trier (1931).

In order to elaborate such an approach to meaning fields, a major theoretical resource will be Linguistics, especially Structural Semantics and Cognitive Linguistics. Such a meaning field approach is especially challenging as well as promising because the conceptualization of meaning field is virtually nonexistent in most Social Science disciplines such as Sociology and Anthropology.[3] This theoretical gap or neglect can be tackled because the conceptualization of meaning field is connectable to interpretive, linguistic, and discursive approaches in the Social Sciences, e.g. Systems Theory, Interpretive Paradigm, Speech Act Theory, Constructivism, or Script Theory.

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5.1 Meaning Fields as Intermediate Meso-Level

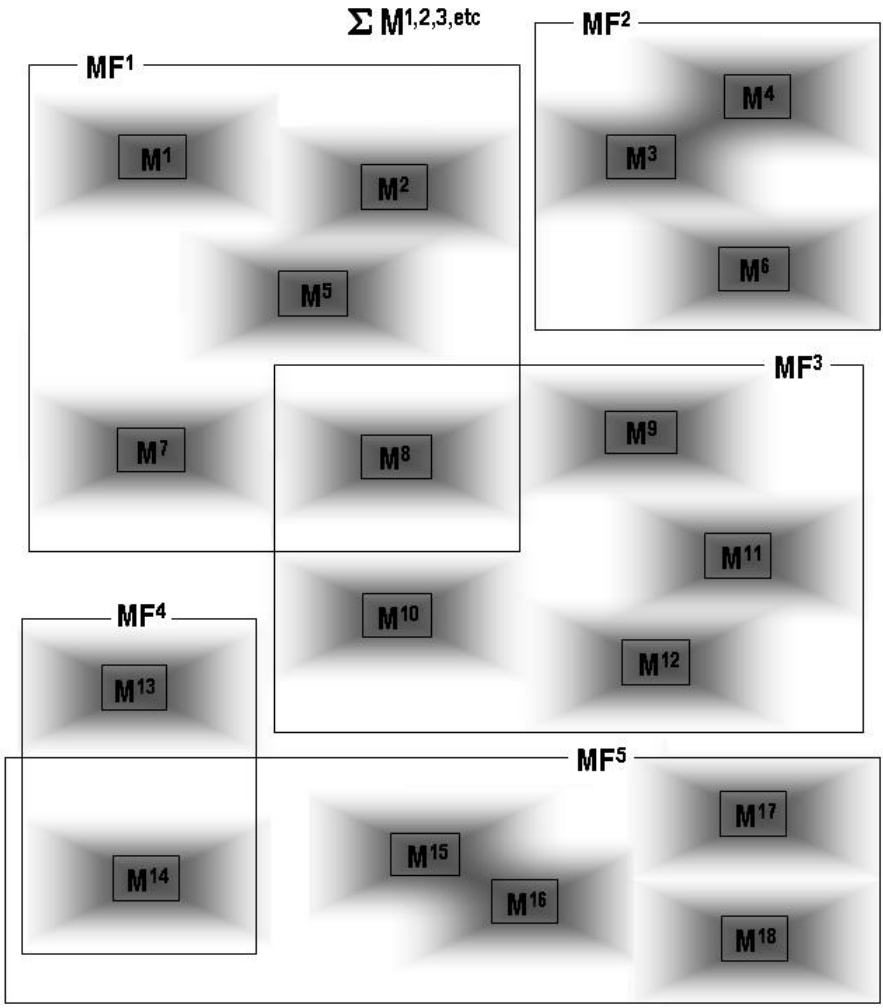
The starting point for the following discussion is the analytic distinction between two levels of meaning, which differ according to their degree of quantity and their degree of complexity. Firstly, there is the level of the *atomicity of a single meaning* M^1. This is the most elementary and micro-level of *meaning as a (prototypical) category*, which was the focus of the previous chapters 1 to 4. Secondly, there is the level of the *universe of all meanings* $\Sigma M^{1,2,3,etc}$. This is the most encompassing and macro-level, which comprises all single meanings. As will be explained in more detail in a later chapter, this meaning universe can be conceptualized as a meaning medium, in the sense of Luhmann (1997: ch. 2.I), because it constitutes an infinite and stable pool of potential, deactivated, and uncoupled meanings (see chapter 2.4.2 and particularly chapter 6.1).

Modifying an argument by Lutzeier (1993: 203f), meaning fields may be seen to lie at an *intermediate meso-level* between the micro-atomicity of a single meaning M^1 and the macro-universe of all meanings $\Sigma M^{1,2,3,etc}$. This is because, from a micro-perspective, meaning fields form clusters of single meanings by enclosing and grouping individual meanings together, and from a macro-perspective, meaning fields represent a small fraction of the meaning universe by dividing it into pieces or carving out semantic chunks. I will notate meaning fields by the symbol MF or by the notation $MF = \left| M^1, M^2, M^3, M^4, etc \right|$. Since meaning fields occupy a meso-level in between the micro-level of single meanings and the macro-level of the meaning universe, the mathematical relation $M^1 < MF < \Sigma M^{1,2,3,etc}$ holds.

The following figure depicts the meaning universe notated by the formula $\Sigma M^{1,2,3,etc}$, five meaning fields notated by MF^1, MF^2, MF^3, MF^4, MF^5, and the bulk of single meanings notated by M^1, M^2, M^3, M^4, etc. As can be seen, meaning fields may entertain several relations, e.g. overlap (e.g. MF^1 and MF^3) or exclusion (e.g. MF^1 and MF^4).

[3] Sociological and anthropological research has primarily adopted a *discourse- or language*-oriented approach, but hardly ever a *meaning field*-oriented approach. Systematic exceptions are Linguistic Anthropology and Ethnographic Semantics which have analyzed »folk- or ethno-« taxonomies and domains, e.g. kinship terms, classifications of situations, labeling of people, words for plants, color terms, or disease classifications (e.g. Berlin 1992, Spradley 1979 and 1980, Werner & Schoepfle 1987).

Figure 5.I: Meaning fields MF as intermediate meso-level



In the following, I will approach the concept of meaning field from the above-mentioned micro-level and subsequently from the macro-level.

(1) From the micro-perspective of single meanings M^1, it is assumed that meanings do not exist in isolation and are not stored atomistically in the mental lexicon. Instead, they are semantically related and connected to other meanings so as to form a cluster, network, domain, or province of meaning.

In terms of Frame Semantics (Lakoff 2004: 3), every word is part of, and evokes, a bigger frame, where a frame is a bundle of knowledge, images, or

concepts about the language and world. The word ›*elephant*‹ is part of, and evokes, the frame of a large animal with floppy ears and a trunk and it may be associated with circuses, Africa, the movie *The Elephant Man*, masculinity, or white elephants. There are no words that do not belong to some frame, or put differently, there are no meanings that do not belong to some meaning field. Hence, in figure 5.I, every meaning is part of at least one meaning field.

Moreover, chapter 1.1 showed that meanings are co-constitutive as it is their distinction M vs M_{ELSE} that determines their semantic content and boundaries. Hence, a meaning M^1 can only be understood and obtains its exact content in relation to other meanings M^2, M^3, M^4 and to the whole meaning field MF, i.e. it is M's position within MF and the structure of the whole MF that determine M's content (Trier 1931, see Saussure's chessboard metaphor 1906/11). The single meaning M = ⎪FRUIT⎪ is an element of a larger meaning field and fully comprehensible only in relation to the other meanings of this meaning field, i.e. MF = ⎪M^1 = ⎪FRUIT⎪, M^2 = ⎪VEGETABLE⎪, M^3 = ⎪TO EAT⎪, M^4 = ⎪SWEET⎪, M^5 = ⎪MEAT⎪, M^6 = ⎪TO DRINK⎪, M^7 = ⎪TASTY⎪, M^8 = ⎪MILK⎪, M^9 = ⎪APPLE⎪, M^{10} = ⎪LUNCH⎪, etc⎪. Whereas in chapter 4 on meaning as prototypical category I focused on the *intra*-category structure of an individual meaning, I now focus on the *inter*-category structure of several meanings. This is a shift from a category to a field of categories, i.e. from a meaning to a field of meanings.[4]

(2) From the macro-perspective of the meaning universe $\Sigma M^{1,2,3,etc}$, it is assumed that meaning fields represent a small section or particular perspective of the universe of all meanings. The meaning universe is divided into sub-universes or carved up into large semantic chunks. Since meaning fields occupy an intermediate meso-level, they reduce the infinite universe of all meanings to a finite field of meanings, similar to what Schütz (1945) called finite province of meaning and Greimas (1966) called semantic micro-universes.

Having approached meaning fields from the micro- and the macro-level, the question arises: What are the semantic-pragmatic mechanisms, which – from a micro-perspective – cluster single meanings together so as to form a meaning field, and which – from a macro-perspective – select meanings out of the meaning universe so as to form a meaning field? An answer is based on the semiotic terms of *paradigm* and *syntagm* as there are two main mechanisms, i.e. a paradigmatic and a syntagmatic mechanism, that may sometimes work together to produce or integrate meaning fields (Kittay & Lehrer 1992: 5).[5]

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[4] A meaning field may be statistically defined: The degree of semantic similarity between the meanings of a meaning field is significantly higher than the degree of semantic similarity between (all or a random sample of) the meanings of the meaning universe (for semantic similarity, see the illustration in footnote 26 in chapter 5.4.1 and Tversky 1977).

[5] In Semiotics, the syntagmatic level concerns the »horizontal« positioning of single, actualized, and present meanings (e.g. words, images, garments) in a meaning-*and*-meaning-*combination*, e.g. the spoken sentence ⎪THE MAN WORKED⎪. These combined and actualized meanings are the syntagm. The paradigmatic level refers to the possibility of substitution of a particular manifest meaning in a syntagm by latent meanings in a meaning-*or*-meaning-*selection*, e.g. in the syntagm ⎪THE MAN WORKED⎪, the manifest meaning ⎪MAN⎪ can be replaced by other, latent meanings such as ⎪JUDGE⎪, ⎪MACHINE⎪, or ⎪MRS. MILLER⎪. This set of possible-substitutable meanings is a paradigm (see Chandler 2002: 84).

On the one hand, meaning fields may be constituted paradigmatically by meanings that are substitutable for one another in a particular slot or gap of a well-formed syntagmatic-syntactic string. For example, in the syntactic string ›*It hurt badly when he… me*‹, the open slot may be filled by a series of lexemes forming a meaning field, e.g. MF = ⎪ M^1 = ⎪HIT⎪, M^2 = ⎪KICK⎪, M^3 = ⎪PULL⎪, M^4 = ⎪SLAP⎪, M^5 = ⎪TOUCH⎪, M^6 = ⎪SMACK⎪, M^7 = ⎪PUSH⎪, etc⎪. The meanings of a paradigmatic meaning field may entertain several semantic relations, such as hyponymy (e.g. $M^1 \rightarrow M^5$), synonymy (e.g. $M^4 = M^6$), antonymy, (e.g. $M^3 \neq M^7$), meronymy, incompatibility, etc (see Murphy 2003 for semantic relations).

On the other hand, meaning fields may be constituted syntagmatically by meanings that are collocatable in a well-formed syntagmatic-syntactic string, e.g. words that are often used together and sound natural together in a sentence. For example, the lexeme ›*kick*‹ collocates pre-lexematically with the lexemes ›*The man*‹, ›*They*‹, or ›*My horse*‹ as in the sentence ›*The man / They / My horse kicked…*‹, and it collocates post-lexematically with ›*ball*‹, ›*person*‹, or ›*tree*‹ as in ›*…kicked the ball / person / tree*‹. A concrete version of this meaning field of »things that can kick and be kicked« would be constituted of MF = ⎪ M^1 = ⎪THE MAN KICKED...⎪, M^2 = ⎪...KICK THE BALL⎪, M^3 = ⎪THEY KICK...⎪, M^4 = ⎪...KICK A PERSON⎪, etc⎪. A more theoretical but still simplified version of this meaning field in terms of semantic roles (see chapters 3.1.1 and 3.4.2) would be MF = ⎪AGENT (i.e. HUMAN OR ANIMAL) + KICK (i.e. HIT WITH THE FOOT) + PATIENT (i.e. OBJECT, HUMAN, ANIMAL, OR PLANT)⎪.

There are numerous meaning fields that combine paradigmatic and syntagmatic selection mechanisms, for example, the »mixed« meaning field MF = ⎪ M^1 = ⎪FRUIT⎪, M^2 = ⎪VEGETABLE⎪, M^3 = ⎪TO EAT⎪, M^4 = ⎪LUNCH⎪, M^5 = ⎪MEAT⎪, M^6 = ⎪TO DRINK⎪, M^7 = ⎪TASTY⎪, M^8 = ⎪MILK⎪, M^9 = ⎪APPLE⎪, M^{10} = ⎪SEEDS⎪, etc⎪. In this case, there are different semantic relations that are simultaneously present in the meaning field so as to connect the single meanings, e.g. M^9 is an M^1, M^5 is served for M^4, M^1 has M^{10}, M^8 is good to M^6, etc. Even though such paradigmatically-syntagmatically mixed meaning fields are linguistically less rigorous, they are sociologically and anthropologically often more appealing and appropriate.

The meaning field approach may be applied to a wide range of research domains, concepts, and empirical cases such as modern love (see the »word cloud« of love at the beginning of this chapter), economics, Japanese cooking terms, medieval medicine, law, emotions, 20th century Islam, water sports, Mexican folk music, death, contemporary politics, money and finance, etc. Let us look at an example of law. A paradigmatic meaning field of law, in its contemporary Western version, applied to a syntagmatic string like ›*Their marriage was…*‹ may comprise the following meanings, e.g. MF^{LAW} = ⎪ M^1 = ⎪LEGAL⎪, M^2 = ⎪VALID⎪, M^3 = ⎪PROHIBITED⎪, M^4 = ⎪UNLAWFUL⎪, M^5 = ⎪CONTRACTED⎪, etc⎪. A syntagmatic meaning field of law for the syntagmatic slots ›*...to sentence…*‹ may yield MF^{LAW} = ⎪ M^1 = ⎪THE JUDGE SENTENCED...⎪, M^2 = ⎪...SENTENCED HENRY⎪, M^3 = ⎪...WAS SENTENCED TO DEATH⎪, M^4 = ⎪THE SUPREME COURT WILL SENTENCE...⎪, M^5 = ⎪...DID NOT SENTENCE HER⎪, etc⎪. A paradigmatically and syntagmatically mixed meaning field of law may

comprise MF^{LAW} = │M^1 = │LEGAL vs ILLEGAL│, M^2 = │JUDGE│, M^3 = │TO SUE SOMEONE│, M^4 = │CONTRACT│, M^5 = │PROHIBITION│, M^6 = │TO SENTENCE SOMEONE│, M^7 = │HUMAN RIGHTS│, M^8 = │VALID vs INVALID│, M^9 = │NORM│, M^{10} = │TO REPRIEVE SOMEONE│, etc│.

The meaning field approach has a particular advantage over a binary code-approach as in traditional Structuralism or sociological Systems Theory. These approaches focus on binary codes such as legal vs illegal, man vs woman, up vs down, etc. The limits and disadvantages of such an approach become clear when we look at an example. In Luhmann's system-theoretic approach (1975: 34, 65; 1993a: 66ff, 95; 1997: 355-358), law or power are all those communications that are semantically structured according to a binary code such as legal vs illegal (or constitutional vs unconstitutional) or powerful vs powerless (or order vs avoidance alternative). The problem is that all those communications, and I suspect there are a lot of them, that do tap into the meaning field of power and law, but that are not structured according to Luhmann's binary codes would not be phenomena of power or law.

For example, communications such as ›*He is an attorney*‹, ›*The marriage contract is valid*‹, ›*Snow White's last will and testament concerned the third dwarf*‹, or ›*The court trial lasted three months*‹ definitely use meanings from the meaning field of law such as M^1 = │ATTORNEY│, M^2 = │CONTRACT│, M^3 = │VALID│, M^4 = │LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT│, and M^5 = │COURT TRIAL│, but none of them is structured according to the binary code of legal vs illegal (or constitutional vs unconstitutional). The same goes for power because communications such as ›*Prof. Dahl developed a sociological theory of domination and authority*‹ or ›*The German word ›Drohung‹ signifies ›threat‹ in English*‹ tap into the meaning field of power but are not primarily or clearly structured according to Luhmann's binary code of powerful vs powerless (or order vs avoidance alternative). Even though in terms of Prototype Theory some of these communications are atypical instances of power or law, they do use meanings from the meaning field of power or law, and consequently, a meaning field approach considers them to be phenomena of power or law.[6]

The problem is that structuralist and system-theoretic approaches tend to reduce the complex and colorful meaning fields to simple and black-or-white binary codes. As a consequence, numerous meanings of a particular meaning field would be excluded and become invisible. Even though I do acknowledge that binary codes exist, are important, and often are dominant in many social

[6] In a similar way, Moore criticizes the rule-focused approach in Legal Anthropology, which uses the binary code compliance vs deviance (1978: 3), which corresponds to Luhmann's binary code legal vs illegal. Even though Kron & Winter (2005) apply Fuzzy Logic to Systems Theory, they do not call into question the binary codes themselves (e.g. legal vs illegal), but instead only fuzzify them (e.g. 40% legal vs 30% illegal). They continue to view bivalent codes as a crucial and unavoidable theoretic base of Systems Theory.
Apart from meaning field-based criticism of binary codes, it may also be argued that many phenomena or domains are not binarily but multiply structured, e.g. the triadic code guilt vs non-guilt vs partial guilt in the German insurance business (Pfeifer 2004: 44), or victim vs culprit vs non-culprit in post-war German public discourse (Kämper 2007).

and psychic systems and domains, I do not agree with the generalized and strict reduction of a complexly structured meaning field to a simply structured binary code. In contrast, a meaning field approach takes a more comprehensive meso-perspective because it *includes* the micro-perspective of the binary code-approach as a special but limited case.

5.2 Meaning Fields: Emic or Etic? Real or Constructed?

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The title of this chapter alludes to two, partially overlapping debates, namely to the *emic vs etic* debate from Social Anthropology and the *realist vs constructivist* debate from Epistemology. In applying these debates to the case of meaning fields, I will selectively accept or reject certain arguments of both sides of these debates so as to propose a middle way (while always adhering to a non-dualistic approach as presented in chapter 2 above[7]).

5.2.1 The emic vs etic debate, applied to the concept of meaning field, may be summarized by the following polarizing questions: Are meaning fields consciously and intuitively existent in the researchee's mind or are they an analytical artifact and theoretical projection of the researcher's mind? Is a particular meaning field an auto-description made by the cultural insider or is it an allo-description made by the cultural outsider? Do meaning fields exist in the everyday lifeworld and common sense reasoning of the local actors or do they only exist in the scientific world and theoretical perspective of the distant observer? Are meaning fields factual or fictional?[8]

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The *signifier*, i.e. the word, M_S = │MEANING FIELD│ is an *etic* signifier, i.e. a lifeworld-distant, observer, and outsider word like other scientific terms such as ›*secondary deviance*‹ or ›*autopoiesis*‹. However, there is much linguistic and psychological evidence that the *meaning*, i.e. the concept or idea, M_M = │MEANING FIELD│ is an *emic* meaning, i.e. a lifeworld-near and everyday meaning that is intuitively recognized or consciously used by actors and insiders. Let us look at some examples.

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[7] A large part of the realist vs constructivist debate and of the emic vs etic debate represents, as shown in chapter 2, a dualistic argumentation which I replaced with a non-dualistic argumentation. In order to maintain this non-dualistic approach, the reader should strictly interpret the following dualistic concepts and arguments in terms of non-dualistic descriptions, e.g. M = │MEANING FIELDS ARE OBSERVER-INDEPENDENTLY GIVEN »OUT THERE«│, M = │WORLD│, M = │MEANING FIELDS ARE IMMANENT IN THE RESEARCH OBJECT OR RESEARCHEE│, M = │MIND│, etc.

[8] Some explanations and examples (see also Headland, Pike & Harris eds. 1990 and Spradley 1979: 90-100, 175f). *Emic descriptions* are descriptions directly given by the involved insider, actor, informant, or researchee in his own everyday, natural, lifeworld setting. For example, a study on children's games may adhere to the emic perspective of the children who distinguish games by such properties as »played mostly by girls« or »you have to pick up a mess afterwards«. *Etic descriptions* are descriptions given by the distant outsider, observer, scientist, or researcher, often according to analytical criteria. For example, a study on children's games may take an etic perspective of the scientific observer who may characterize games by analytic properties like »involves primarily manual dexterity skills« or »involves primarily social skills«.

Meaning fields often appear in the lifeworld as the communicational topic or social context, e.g. the definition of the situation, the topic of conversation, the kind of social system or field, the relationship between the actors, etc. For instance, if two parties negotiate a contract of employment, if someone visits an inmate, if students attend a course on civil law, if somebody has an appointment with an attorney, or if a musician reads Kafka's novel *The Trial*, all these actors intuitively are aware that the meaning field of law becomes the relevant communicational topic or social context as it serves as a pragmatic benchmark and interpretive frame. In these instances, actors not only know that most signifiers, meanings, and referents need to be interpreted, decomposed, classified, or extensioned in terms of the meaning field of law, but they also know that many and unequivocal law-related signifiers, meanings, and referents are likely to occur, such as M = │PROHIBITION│ or M = │THAT WAS ILLEGAL│.[9]

Meaning fields such as MF^{LAW} can also be evoked and foregrounded by means of special linguistic expressions such as ›*In legal terms…*‹, ›*The topic of my talk concerns the new child adoption bill…*‹, ›*She approached the question from a juridical perspective…*‹, ›*With regard to the legal implications…*‹.[10] According to the contextualization approach (see Auer & Luzio eds. 1992), these expressions contextualize themselves, i.e. a particular textual expression, such as ›*in* + adjective + *terms…*‹ or ›*with regard to* + sentence topic…‹, invokes or creates a particular contextual frame such as MF^{LAW}, which then guides the following textual expressions and renders them intelligible.

Meaning fields can also be evoked by creating and maintaining general internal cohesion in a conversation or communication, e.g. by using related lexemes, by anaphora, by repeating words, etc (see Halliday & Hasan 1976). Such semantic cohesion can also be established »non-linguistically« by combining particular images, objects, actions, sounds, garments, etc so as to evoke a particular meaning field. For example, the architecture, equipment, and use of a court of law may comprise an impressive building, the national flag, body searches, a statue of Justice wearing a blindfold, the sound of a particular melody or bell to indicate the beginning of a session, policemen in uniforms, etc, and all these things taken together evoke the meaning field of law.

New meaning fields may be forged in a deliberate or manipulative manner by collocating words or arguments that initially or normally do not sound natural together and that are not semantically-argumentationally close. However,

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[9] In dictionary entries for a lexeme, the corresponding meaning field (alias social field) is explicitly referred to by being marked with a special label or symbol (Saeed 2003: 63). For example, the lexeme M_S = │COURT│ is polysemous as it has several meanings, e.g. M^1_M = │PLACE WHERE A TRIAL IS HELD AND PEOPLE DECIDE ABOUT A LEGAL CASE│ and M^2_M = │AREA MADE FOR PLAYING GAMES SUCH AS TENNIS OR BASKETBALL│. In a dictionary, these meanings are distinguished by relating each meaning to its meaning field alias social field, e.g. M^1_M is marked by the label `LAW` (or visually, by a pictogram of a scale), whereas M^2_M is marked by the label `SPORT` (or visually, by a pictogram of a football).

[10] In some languages, the sentence or conversational topic is explicitly indicated by morphogrammatical particles or expressions called topicalization devices, e.g. in the Japanese sentence ›*Kuzira wa honyuu-doobutu desu*‹ (literally: $whale_{TOPIC}$ mammal be; semantically: speaking of whales, they are mammals), ›*wa*‹ marks the sentence topic (Kuno 1973: 44).

uttered in a specific setting and by a specific actor, the repeated and foregrounded combination of these words and arguments may finally be considered by the hearer to sound natural and to be semantically-argumentationally integrated. For example, if an influential politician frequently speaks of ›*the poor, criminals, and immigrants*‹, he forges a new, maybe up to then non-existent or backgrounded meaning field of marginal and undesirable social groups. This may then become accepted by, and entrenched in, the general public or certain groups and everyday semantics or discourse. Similarly, if a medical publication first writes about influenza, some sentences later about male menopause, then about measles, some paragraphs later about cellulite and sadness, and finally about malaria, a meaning field of diseases (or at least, of negative mental-corporal states in need of medical therapy and treatment) is forged which – if accepted by patients, physicians, and policies – has drastic impacts on the conceptualization and economy of health and illness.

In semiotic terms, a meaning field may constitute a paradigm, i.e. a set of functionally similar and substitutable meanings M that may be used to fill out a syntagmatic slot (see the previous chapter 5.1). Lifeworld actors view and use these paradigms as a pool of options or possible outcomes. In a court trial, one syntagm is the temporal sequence of legal procedures, and one syntagmatic slot is the judge's decision at the end of the trial about the guilty defendant's punishment. Everyone knows that the judge must fill this slot by selecting one punishment, such as M^1 = │IMPRISONMENT│, out of a paradigm or meaning field of punishments, e.g. $MF^{PUNISHMENTS}$ = │M^1 = │IMPRISONMENT│, M^2 = │MONETARY FINE│, M^3 = │FORCED LABOR│, M^4 = │DEATH PENALTY│, etc│.

Meaning fields are also existent in the researchee's mind in the form of mental paradigms or lexicons. This claim is supported by neuro-linguistic research because certain brain parts are structured similarly to, and therefore operate on the basis of, meaning fields. This becomes evident when these brain parts are injured, as in the case of aphasia (i.e. loss of, or disorders in, the ability to produce or comprehend language and meanings due to brain damage). Patients suffering from aphasia often confuse words that stem from the same meaning field and that are consequently semantically closely related. For example, patients use the word ›*table*‹ instead of the word ›*chair*‹ because both belong to the meaning field of furniture, or they use the noun ›*visit*‹ instead of the noun ›*flower*‹ because flowers are often brought along for a visit and therefore belong to the same meaning field (Schwarz & Chur 2004: ch. 2.6).

In summary, even though the signifier or word M_S = │MEANING FIELD│ and its neighboring words, e.g. ›*semantic field*‹, ›*lexical domain*‹, or ›*conceptual network*‹, may be etic, the meaning or concept M_M = │MEANING FIELD│ is in most cases emic because it is anchored and existent in intuitive everyday reasoning and auto-descriptions of actors and insiders.[11]

[11] However, there are meaning fields that are etic in that they are analytically constructed by an observer and are not intuitively recognized by lifeworld actors, e.g. $MF^{SPEECH\ ACT\ VERBS}$ = │M^1 = │TO APOLOGIZE│, M^2 = │TO COMMAND│, M^3 = │TO THANK│, M^4 = │TO REQUEST│, M^5 = │TO SENTENCE SOMEONE│, M^6 = │TO BET│, etc│.

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5.2.2 The realist vs constructivist debate, applied to the concept of meaning field, may be summarized by the following polarizing questions: Are meaning fields observer-independently given »out there« or are they observer-dependently assembled? Do we *finden* (find) a meaning field or do we *erfinden* (invent) it? Are meaning fields intersubjectively constant or varying? Are meaning fields immanent in the researchee or constructed by the researcher?

The constructivist approach would argue that meaning fields MF, just like meanings M, are not ontologically and objectively given and pre-existent like ready-made entities in the world nor are they intersubjectively constant and temporally stable. Just as information does not exist in the *environment* but rather only in the *system*, and just as information does not *exist in the world* but rather *is created by an observer* (Foerster & Pörksen 1998: 97f, Luhmann 1984: ch. 4 and 1987), meaning fields are system-internal products and observer-dependent constructions. It depends on the observer and the system with her or its particular characteristics and operations, which determine if a meaning field exists and what its particular content is.

On a more general level, »something« may be viewed either as a *meaning* or as a *meaning field*, depending on the observer. Consider the following example. On the one hand, if crime is viewed as a meaning $M = \langle CRIME \rangle$, it may be part of the larger meaning field of actions $MF^{ACTIONS} = \langle M^1 = \langle CRIME \rangle, M^2 = \langle SINGING \rangle, M^3 = \langle SPORT \rangle, M^4 = \langle WORKING \rangle, M^5 = \langle VOTING \rangle, M^6 = \langle SEX \rangle, etc \rangle$. On the other hand, if crime is viewed as a meaning field MF^{CRIME}, it contains several meanings such as $MF^{CRIME} = \langle M^1 = \langle MANSLAUGHTER \rangle, M^2 = \langle RAPE \rangle, M^3 = \langle TAX\ EVASION \rangle, M^4 = \langle THEFT \rangle, M^5 = \langle FRAUD \rangle, etc \rangle$. Accordingly, it depends on the observer whether »something« is viewed as a meaning or as a meaning field.[12]

On a more specific level, the content of a particular meaning field may vary for different observers, systems, and cultures in different contexts and epochs. For example, whereas for the Englishman Henry the meaning field of love is $MF^{LOVE} = \langle M^1 = \langle SEX \rangle, M^2 = \langle WE\ TWO\ vs\ THE\ REST\ OF\ THE\ WORLD \rangle, M^3 = \langle TRUST \rangle, M^4 = \langle MARIA \rangle, M^5 = \langle A\ STRONG\ FEELING\ OF\ LIKING\ SOMEONE \rangle, M^6 = \langle UNION \rangle, etc \rangle$, for the Sufi Ahmed the meaning field of love may be somewhat different, namely $MF^{LOVE} = \langle M^1 = \langle GOD \rangle, M^2 = \langle DEVOTION \rangle, M^3 = \langle TRUST \rangle, M^4 = \langle TO\ PRACTICE\ THE\ \textit{DHIKR} \rangle, M^5 = \langle UNION \rangle, M^6 = \langle MY\ WIFE \rangle, etc \rangle$. Similarly, the medieval Spanish MF^{LAW} varies from the contemporary Spanish MF^{LAW}.[13]

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[12] The same argument applies to the system-theoretic distinction between *medium vs form*: Depending on the observer and system, »something« may be seen as a medium or as a form, i.e. a form may be seen from a different perspective as a medium, and vice versa, a medium as a form (Krämer 1998: ch. 2.2).

[13] Due to this observer- and context-dependency of a meaning field's content, I do not agree with Geckeler's realist proposal to elaborate a catalog of possible lexical fields of which the lexicon of a given language is composed (1997: 100). Such a proposal suggests an ontologically given and intersubjectively constant set of meaning fields that are somehow »out there«, whereas I argue for a criss-crossing and quasi-infinite multiplicity and an observer-dependency of meaning fields.

Meaning fields are continually modified and thus change over time, even though this change is rather slow, hidden, and moderate compared to the rapid, overt, and drastic changes in other domains such as in politics or technology. It is usually difficult or impossible for single actors to intentionally change a particular meaning field because its change is an emergent product of a multiplicity of uncontrollable vectors. For example, the meaning field of law MF^{LAW} has drastically changed over the last centuries by excluding or »peripheralizing« certain meanings such as M = │AN OUTLAW│ or M = │TITHES│ and by including or »centralizing« other meanings such as M = │CIVIL RIGHTS│ or, as Seelman (2004) proposes, M = │HUMAN DIGNITY│.[14]

The preceding constructivist argumentation has yielded important insights, but it is only half the story because it needs to be balanced out and complemented by a more realist argumentation. Even though meanings and meaning fields are observer-dependent, constructed, and culturally-historically varying, they are not completely arbitrary, unforeseeable, erratic, accidental, chaotic, and individualized. On the contrary, both from an emic and an etic viewpoint, meanings and meaning fields exhibit certain regularities, repetitions, and structures. The reason is that most meanings and meaning fields are collectively shared, socially standardized, and intersubjectively given like consensual and ready-made things. Certain meanings and meaning fields are socially or cognitively so important for the proper functioning of communicative or psychic systems that they are frequently activated and repeated. This, in turn, leads to the sedimentation, generalization, and standardization of these meanings and meaning fields so that they are easily available for actors and systems to activate and use them. Apart from the general processes of language acquisition and sign objectivation, there are several macro-social processes that trigger and reinforce such a sedimentation and forging of meaning fields, e.g. the mass media usually functions as an agent of socialization by presenting standardized views, globalization often leads to cultural homogenization, state policies tend to create uniform sign and language communities, etc.[15]

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[14] It would be interesting to study the historical and evolutionary change of meaning fields as well as to view meaning fields as the *explanandum* that needs to be explicated by the *explanans* of various social and cognitive factors. For such a diachronic-historical analysis of meanings and meaning fields, see Busse (1987), Fritz (2006), Geeraerts (1997), Koselleck (ed. 1979, ed. 1989), Luhmann (ed. 1980), Tournier (1993, 1997, 2001).

[15] Another hypothesis that explains why many meanings are shared, standardized, given, and ready-made may not be sociological or ethnological, as the one presented here, but rather psychological or biological, a sort of »anti-*tabula rasa* theory«. As mentioned in chapter 1.2, certain rudimentary meanings and their combination rules are innate and universal, i.e. »they are part of the human genetic endowment« and »there is no reason to expect that they should differ from one human group to another« (Wierzbicka 1996: 14, ch. 1.4). Consequently, some meaning fields are genetically stored and inherited because they are particularly fundamental, universal, and simple. This argument may apply to some meaning fields of sensory perception such as colors, tastes, shapes, and perhaps elementary feelings such as wellbeing. Accordingly, these types of meaning fields can not only be found in humans but also in animals and, who knows, maybe in plants. However, I argue that most meaning fields, such as MF^{LAW}, $MF^{COOKING}$, MF^{LOVE}, etc, are socially transmitted and culturally learned through socialization, communication, copying, and internalization.

The concept of meaning field resembles several other Social Science concepts that also focus on semantic-linguistic regularity, stability, and standardization. Let us look at some of these concepts. Meaning fields resemble Luhmann's *societal semantics* (ed. 1980, 1997: ch. 5) since both are constituted of condensed and confirmed meanings, which are situationally independent and highly generalized so that they can be easily repeated.[16]

Such a social or cognitive sedimentation of meanings and meaning fields often occurs in language, but may also occur in images, artifacts, gestures, etc. Meaning fields are like the *objective reality*, in the sense of Berger & Luckmann (1966: ch. I.2 and II), because they contain the stabilized, pre-existent pool of societal knowledge and interpretation schemes. Furthermore, meaning fields also resemble Keller's *interpretation reservoirs* (1998: 36), Buckley's *variety pools* (1968: 81), and Potter & Wetherell's *interpretation repertoires* (1995: 188f) because they contain the typifiable core of basic statements or interpretations that a discourse is composed of.

Like a common language or a shared culture, meaning fields may create inter-individual bonds and an over-individual horizon that serve as a common base and reference point used by actors and systems to operate and coordinate. In this sense, a meaning field is like Pharo's *conceptual community* (1997: 4ff, 192) in that many actors share certain conceptual structures and semantic resources that are deposited in the language and that allow actors to orient themselves in the world and towards each other.

Even though some meanings and meaning fields are individually created and spontaneously changed, most of them are like Durkheim's *social facts* (1894/95: ch. 1) because they are external and constraining to the actor, and they are also like Bourdieu's *fields* (1982a: 38) because they constitute the history objectivated in things. Sometimes meaning fields, e.g. the contemporary Western MF^{LAW}, attain such a high degree of sedimentation, intersubjec-

[16] Even though Luhmann's concept of societal semantics is inspiring and fruitful, I prefer not to make it a key concept of my approach because of the following objections:
Firstly, and as Stichweh (2000: 240) also criticizes, the concept primarily refers to writing and textualized meanings, which are said to be more cultivated, serious, and worthy of being preserved, and it disregards other non-text and non-writing phenomena.
Secondly, Luhmann usually speaks of *the* societal semantics, suggesting there is only *one* or *one dominant* semantic substratum in a society, which I consider to be too globalizing and uniformizing of an approach. Instead, I argue for *many* meaning fields that may be related in different ways, e.g. contradiction, subversion, counter-meaning fields, inclusion, overlap, marginal vs dominant meaning fields, etc.
Thirdly, Luhmann holds that societal semantics closely correlates with macro-social structure and functionally differentiated societal subsystems. However, such an alleged correlation does not necessarily hold for meaning fields. Moreover, Luhmann's argument resembles Marx's distinction between base/structure or Weber's distinction between superstructure/culture of a society, which runs the risk of being interpreted as a causal and unilateral determination of either the superstructure/culture by the base/structure or vice versa (for a critical review, see Kogge 1999, Stäheli 1998, 2000: 41).
Fourthly, Luhmann's distinction between social structure vs societal semantics is, as argued in chapter 2.1, dualistic and therefore incompatible with a non-dualistic approach.

tivity, and standardization that they acquire an autonomous status with their own internal logic and consistency.[17]

Since meaning fields often consist of socially or cognitively sedimented and standardized meanings, they may also function as a *collective memory* or as a *mental lexicon*: Meanings are preserved and stocked up so that they can be socially remembered – i.e. activated and reproduced – or they can be socially forgotten – i.e. they disappear or are excluded from the meaning field. Consequently, meaning fields – seen as collective memories and mental lexicons – »administer« and »manage« meanings.[18]

On a more concrete and methodical level, we may ask: Where can these sedimented and regular meanings of a meaning field be found? How do these standardized and well-known meanings of a meaning field manifest themselves? The following list gives a rough overview of some overlapping types, accompanied by some examples related to power or law.

(1) Particular words and expressions: flag words and stigma words (Hermanns 1994, Panagl ed. 1998) such as the German word ›*Rechtsstaat*‹ (rule of law, constitutional state) or the phrase ›*power politics*‹; folk terms and emic taxonomies such as ›*drug bust*‹; nicknames such as ›*Kounflen-ti*‹ (Crush-skull) or ›*Makari baana*‹ (Finished-the-compassion) in the Peul language which were used for colonial power holders (Bâ 1994: 440f); slogans such as ›*power to the people*‹; phraseological expressions, proverbs, collocations, and idioms such as ›*knowledge is power*‹ or ›*law is law*‹.

(2) Particular statements and themes: well-known arguments in discourses and ideologies such as the neoliberal argument that legal restrictions should be minimized to promote economic growth; topoi in terms of *locus communis*, typical themes, and discourse-semantic base figures (Busse 1997, Scharloth 2005) that appear in fairy tales, discourses, novels, or song lyrics, e.g. power is something inherently dangerous, evil, or negative.

(3) Particular knowledge and conceptualizations: meaning formula and guiding models (Geideck & Liebert eds. 2003); tropes and imagery such as irony and metaphor, for example, the spatial up-down metaphor of power according to which powerful actors are viewed as spatially up, e.g. in superior or high-ranking positions, and powerless actors as spatially down, e.g. in inferior or low-ranking positions (Lakoff & Johnson 1980: 15, Sweetser 1990: ch. 1.3), or the metaphor of viewing the law as a machine or computer (Bolaños 2003)

[17] Despite the apparent similarity to Bourdieu's notion of *social field* and Luhmann's notion of *societal subsystem*, meaning fields consist of meanings, but not (or only derivatively) of positions and actors (field) or communications and thoughts (system). To show that the notion of meaning field is more general and fundamental, consider the following example: Functionally differentiated societal subsystems or social fields such as religion, politics, economy, art, law, science, education, etc *may all also be seen as* meaning fields. However, there are many meaning fields that *may not be seen as* functionally differentiated societal subsystems or social fields, such as water sports, love, morals, animals, emotions, cooking, etc (see Krause 2005: 43, 50f for an overview of systems).

[18] For social forgetting, see Esposito (2002) and Mendoza-García (2005). Fuchs even alleges that the function of memory is to forget (2002: ch. III), and Luhmann (1997: 627) casts his concepts of semantics and culture in terms of the official memory of society.

or the metaphor of a *Rechtsquelle* (source of law) in Legal Positivism; the *doxa* as undiscussed common knowledge, implicit shared opinions, cultural themes (Spradley 1979: 186f), e.g. modern law is seen by Mr. Average to be difficult to understand and impenetrable; semantic frames and social scripts (Fillmore 1982, Minsky 1985, Schank & Abelson 1977), e.g. the script for a court trial (see chapter 5.4.2); typical definitions of situations and roles, e.g. a threat.

(4) Particular objects or artifacts: commonly shared symbols and signs such as a judge's robe or badges of rank; garments and architecture such as a prison building, a police uniform, or the statue of Justice wearing a blindfold.

(5) Particular behaviors and movements: typical gestures and facial expressions, e.g. a military salute or frown; standardized body movements such as bowing before someone or frisking someone, visual communication such as winking at someone; tactile signals such as touching someone in a certain way.

(6) Particular images or pictures: visual symbols such as traffic signs or pictograms such as ones for no-parking zones; well-known paintings and photos; comic strips and cartoons.[19]

As can be seen in this list, the meanings that form a meaning field embody not only the semantic-linguistic knowledge of a language or sign-system (e.g. knowing the meaning of the word ›*not*‹ or knowing the relation between the words ›*dead*‹ and ›*kill*‹) but also the social-encyclopedic knowledge of the world or society (e.g. knowing that people are mortal or knowing that killing someone is usually regarded as illegal). It is this combination or convergence of semantic-linguistic and social-encyclopedic knowledge in meaning fields that calls for an equal combination and convergence of semiotic-linguistic and sociological-anthropological methods in the study of meaning fields.

Resuming and concluding the previous discussion of the emic vs etic debate and of the realist vs constructivist debate, I have tried to show that both sides of these debates are not irreconcilable opposites, but instead that a specific selection of arguments of both sides allows for a partial conciliation and combination: Meaning fields are both emic and etic, »real« and »constructed«.

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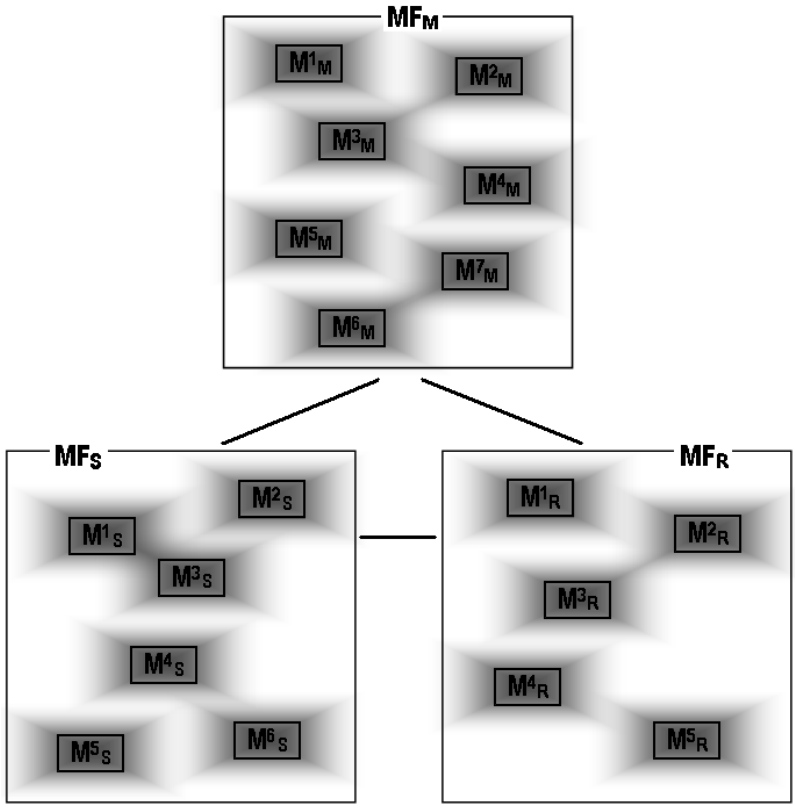
5.3 Types of Meaning Fields

In chapter 2.5.2, I presented the semiotic triangle and showed that there are three different types of meanings M, namely M_S as M auto-describing them(selves) as signifiers, M_M as M auto-describing them(selves) as meanings, and M_R as M auto-describing them(selves) as referents. Applying this threefold distinction to meaning fields, there are hence three types of meaning fields MF, namely MF_S as meaning fields that comprise M auto-describing them(selves) as signifiers, MF_M as meaning fields that comprise M auto-describing them(selves) as meanings, and MF_R as meaning fields that comprise M auto-describing them(selves) as referents. These three types of meaning fields can be arranged in a kind of extended semiotic triangle as depicted below.

[19] In chapter 5.6, I will resume this topic from a methodological perspective by discussing empirical sources of meanings and methods for the collection of meanings.

Figure 5.II: A semiotic triangle of meaning fields



In the following, I will briefly explain these three types of meaning fields.

(1) A meaning field of signifiers MF_S may be a lexical field or word field that comprises, for instance, all legal or law-related verbs, e.g. MF_S^{LAW} = │M^1_S = │TO SENTENCE SOMEONE│, M^2_S = │TO OBLIGE SOMEONE TO DO SOMETHING│, M^3_S = │TO WAIVE ONE'S RIGHT│, M^4_S = │TO COMMIT A CRIME│, M^5_S = │TO SUE SOMEONE│, etc│. Lexical fields often comprise lexemes that belong to a particular activity, social field, or area of specialist knowledge (see chapter 5.2), e.g. terms for cooking or sailing, the vocabulary used by doctors (Saeed 2003: 63). In Linguistics, lexical fields have been particularly well studied, while other types of meaning fields of signifiers have received less attention.

Besides lexical fields, there are other types of meaning fields of signifiers: Due to the morphodiversity of signifiers (see chapter 3.2.1), signifiers are not only words and lexemes, but also include visual, acoustic, tactile, olfactory and other signifiers as in the meaning field of birds MF_S^{BIRDS} = │M^1_S = │THE WRITTEN WORD ›BIRD‹│, M^2_S = │  │, M^3_S = │THE ACOUSTIC SOUND ›bɛ:rd‹│, M^4_S = │THE GERMAN WORD ›MÖWE‹│, M^5_S = │BODY MOVEMENTS IN A BALLET

IMITATING A SWAN|, M^{6}_{S} = |A PHOTO OF AN EAGLE|, etc|. Even paintings can be arranged in meaning fields (see Wallis 1975). In contrast to meaning fields of signifiers MF_S, meaning fields of meanings MF_M and meaning fields of referents MF_R have been less studied.[20]

(2) A meaning field of meanings MF_M is a semantic-conceptual domain that comprises general and abstract meanings or concepts. Depending on the perspective adopted, the elements of such a meaning field may be either meanings M^{1}_{M}, M^{2}_{M}, M^{2}_{M}, etc or they may be, on a more microscopic level, meaning components M_{M}^{I}, M_{M}^{II}, M_{M}^{III}, etc. However, this is an analytical-theoretical distinction so that in a particular empirical case or example both types of meaning fields may not be distinguishable.

If, on the one hand, a meaning field is conceptualized as consisting of meaning components M_{M}^{I}, M_{M}^{II}, M_{M}^{III}, etc, it approximates the conceptualization of a meaning as a (prototypical) category (see chapter 4). This is why I argued above that the conceptualizations of a meaning field MF and a meaning M are often similar or identical. For example, Pottier's (1964) field of things to sit on or in is $MF_{M}^{\text{THINGS TO SIT ON OR IN}}$ = |M_{M}^{I} = |WITH OR WITHOUT BACKREST|, M_{M}^{II} = |RIGID OR SOFT MATERIAL|, M_{M}^{III} = |FOR ONE PERSON OR SEVERAL PEOPLE|, M_{M}^{IV} = |RAISED OR NOT RAISED FROM THE FLOOR|, etc|.

If, on the other hand, a meaning field is conceptualized as consisting of meanings M^{1}_{M}, M^{2}_{M}, M^{2}_{M}, a larger theoretical frame is adopted that includes but transcends the conceptualization of meaning as (prototypical) category. It is this type of meaning field that will be my particular focus in this study. For example, the meaning field of religion may be formulated as MF_{M}^{RELIGION} = |M^{1}_{M} = |GOD, i.e. THE SUPREME BEING AND CREATOR OF THE UNIVERSE|, M^{2}_{M} = |CONFESSION, i.e. TELLING A PRIEST OR GOD ABOUT BAD THINGS YOU DID|, M^{3}_{M} = |NIRVANA, i.e. A HIGH SPIRITUAL STATE OF COMPLETE FREEDOM AND KNOWLEDGE|, M^{4}_{M} = |PRAYER, i.e. SPEAKING TO GOD IN ORDER TO ASK FOR HELP OR GIVE THANKS|, etc|. As can be seen in this last example, a meaning field of meanings may also correspond to a particular social situation, field, or societal system (see chapter 5.2), e.g. the world of religion that comprises certain ideas, meanings, and concepts that constitute a meaning field of religious meanings. As soon as these meanings come up in a conversation or in consciousness, a particular social situation or societal system is evoked.

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[20] Two clarifications in regard to meaning fields of signifiers: Firstly, Lehrer (1974: 10) explains that the semasiological problem of homonymy and polysemy is avoided in Semantic Field Theory because words belonging to different meaning fields are treated as different words. For example, the word M_S = |ORANGE| in the sense of M^{1}_{M} = |A COLOR THAT IS BETWEEN RED AND YELLOW| belongs to the meaning field of colors MF_{S}^{COLORS} and the same word in the sense of M^{2}_{M} = |A FRUIT THAT IS ROUND AND HAS A THICK SKIN| belongs to the meaning field of fruits MF_{S}^{FRUITS}. Secondly, Foulkes (1979: 215f) and Schwarz & Chur (2004: 75f) argue that lexical fields may be structured in two ways: Either according to semantic-conceptual similarity such as the words ›*bird*‹, ›*fish*‹, ›*mammal*‹, ›*insects*‹, ›*reptiles*‹, etc because they all relate to the meaning ›*animal*‹, or according to formal-phonological similarity such as the words ›*bird*‹, ›*burn*‹, ›*birth*‹, ›*burly*‹, etc because they all begin with the same syllable ›bɛ:r-‹. However, in my analysis I will only consider the first type of semantic-conceptual similarity.

(3) A meaning field of referents may be MF_R^{LAW} = │M^1_R = │HENRY WAS ACCUSED OF SHOPLIFTING ON 06.11.2008│, M^2_R = │SHE WAIVED HER RIGHT TO A LAWYER│, M^3_R = │JUDGE SMITH│, M^4_R = │MY BOSS MADE A CONTRACT│, M^5_R = │FLORENCE SAID THAT THIS NORM IS INVALID│, etc│. The referents of this MF_R are meanings that auto-describe them(selves) as different kinds of unique and real-world entities, actions, events, or actors related to the domain of law.

Exactly as in the semiotic triangle, these three types of meaning fields MF_S, MF_M, MF_R entertain systematic connections: *The* MF_S *symbolizes a particular* MF_M, *which refers to a specific* MF_R. For instance, signifiers and words of the meaning field of power may be MF_S^{POWER} = │M^1_S = │THE WRITTEN WORD ›POWER‹│, M^2_S = │THE UTTERANCE ›GIVE IT TO ME OR I WILL BEAT YOU!‹│, M^3_S = │A PHOTO DEPICTING AN AFRICAN CHIEF IN WAR GEAR│, M^4_S = │THE ACOUSTIC SOUND ›'θretn‹│, M^5_S = │THE PEASANT'S FACIAL EXPRESSION OF RAISING AN EYEBROW│, etc│, which symbolize meanings or meaning components clustered up in MF_M^{POWER} = │M^1_M = │THE SPEAKER WANTS THE HEARER TO DO SOMETHING│, M^2_M = │NEGATIVE SANCTIONS│, M^3_M = │ASYMMETRIC RELATION BETWEEN SPEAKER AND HEARER│, M^4_M = │SPEAKER HAS EGOISTIC MOTIVES│, etc│, which refer to concrete referents bundled in MF_R^{POWER} = │M^1_R = │YESTERDAY HENRY THREATENED TO BEAT MARIA│, M^2_R = │THE AFRICAN CHIEF IMPOSED HIS DECISION ON THE DEFEATED ENEMY│, M^3_R = │THE PEASANT MADE HIS DOG LEAVE THE SOFA ON APRIL 6TH│, M^4_R = │HE DID NOT OBEY DR. RODRIGUÉZ'S ORDER│, etc│. A systematic account of such connections and influences between MF_S, MF_M, and MF_R is another research gap, e.g. how does a change in the MF_M^{LAW} affect the MF_S^{LAW}?

The meaning field of meanings MF_M often plays a methodologically primary role in contrast to the MF_S or MF_R. There are two reasons: Firstly, the number of, and the relations between, the M^1_M, M^2_M, M^3_M, etc of the MF_M tend to be *less, and less complex*, than the number of, and the relations between, the M^1_S, M^2_S, M^3_S, etc of the MF_S and the number of, and the relations between, the M^1_R, M^2_R, M^3_R, etc of the MF_R. The reason is the morphodiversity of signifiers and referents (see chapters 3.1.1 and 3.2.1), i.e. M_S and M_R can appear in more forms than M_M because the same M_M may be expressed by an almost infinite multitude of M_S and may manifest itself in a virtually endless multitude of M_R. Since the structure of an MF_M is less complex than the structure of an MF_S or MF_R, it is hence easier to study an MF_M. This is a certain methodological advantage.[21]

[21] Barsalou reaches another conclusion by arguing that the *lexicalized concepts* in a lexical field only capture a small fragment of the *concepts* in a conceptual field (1992: 63). He implies that the M_S of an MF_S are *less* numerous than the M_M of the MF_M. I argue that the M_S of an MF_S are *more* numerous than the M_M of the MF_M. Barsalou's conclusion is supported by the existence of *signifier gaps* (e.g. lexical gaps, see chapter 3.2.1) where some meaning M_M has no signifier M_S and by the existence of *polysemy or homonymy* (see chapter 3.5) where one signifier M_S has several meanings M_M. My conclusion is supported by the existence of the *morphodiversity of signifiers and referents* (see chapter 3.1.1 and 3.2.1) where one meaning M_M can be expressed by many signifiers M_S and can refer to many referents M_R. It depends on the case at hand as to whether the effect of the signifier gaps, polysemy, and homonymy dominates (supporting Barsalou's conclusion) or whether the effect of the morphodiversity of signifiers and referents dominates (supporting my conclusion).

Secondly, the MF_S of one phenomenon may be smaller than the MF_S of another phenomenon, even though the MF_M of the first phenomenon and the MF_M of the second phenomenon are equally large. This may turn out to be a methodological drawback when such phenomena are systematically compared because of the great quantitative-structural imbalance of their MF_S. For example, MF_S^{POWER} tends to be less complex and less differentiated than MF_S^{LAW}. This tendency may be less clear if we consider *all* signifiers, but if we consider only *lexicalized* signifiers such as words or word strings, this tendency is intuitively clear. In the contemporary Western world with its societal subsystem of law and its academic discipline of jurisprudence, there is an »ocean« of law-related words, often part of complex technical terminologies or specialist taxonomies (see Garner's ed. 2004 law dictionary with over 43 000 legal terms). In contrast, there is only a »lake« of power-related words that clearly and prototypically pertain to the domain of power. This quantitative-structural imbalance between MF_S^{POWER} and MF_S^{LAW} is much less marked or even absent – and can therefore be avoided by focusing – on the level of MF_M^{POWER} and MF_M^{LAW} because the »ocean-like« morphodiversity of signifiers M_S is reduced to a »lake-like« field of meanings or meaning components M_M. Accordingly, in order to compare the meaning fields of such phenomena, it is often advisable to take their MF_M, and not their MF_S, as the methodological starting point and focus.

There is a particular problem that I have not yet explicitly discussed, i.e. the naming of meaning fields. Based on the realist vs constructivist debate (see chapter 5.2.2), there are two versions of this problem: The realist version asks how a particular and given meaning field can or should be given the correct name. The constructivist version, which I prefer in this case, asks if and how single meanings can be grouped together so as to construct a meaning field that can be given a suitable name. Accordingly, instead of speaking of MF^{LAW}, other researchers with another methodology, focus, and objectives might find it more suitable to speak of $MF^{NORMATIVITY}$, $MF^{REGULATION}$, $MF^{CONTROL}$, or $MF^{CAUSALITY}$.[22]

5.4 Meaning Fields as Prototypical Fields

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The following syllogistic reasoning allows an important inference. Firstly, in chapter 4.2, I showed that Prototype Theory can be applied to meanings alias categories. Secondly, in chapter 5.2.2, I showed that it is a constructivist question of observer-dependency whether to view something as a meaning or as a meaning field, so that from a different perspective a meaning may also be viewed as a meaning field. The inference to be drawn from both arguments is that Prototype Theory is also applicable to meaning fields.[23]

[22] In the next chapter 5.4, I will, albeit from a different perspective, continue to discuss the problem of naming or labeling a meaning field.

[23] In a similar vein, Geeraerts, Grondelaers & Bakema argue for a structural analogy between categories and semantic fields by maintaining that semantic fields are conceptual-linguistic categories, so the prototypical effects in categories are also valid for semantic fields (1994: 117f). Other studies that combine Prototype Theory and Semantic Field Theory are Barsalou (1992), Grandy (1992), Schmid (1993), Stefaniuk (2005).

In this case, Constructivism's principle of *observer-dependency* matches Mathematics' principle of *self-similarity*. The latter principle states that an object is self-similar if the macro-structure of the object's whole is similar to the micro-structure of one of the object's parts.[24] Applied to meanings and meaning fields, it can be argued that meaning fields are self-similar because the structure of a meaning field is similar to the structure of the meaning field's parts, namely the meanings. Changing the scale, proportion, or zoom from macro to micro or from micro to macro, the structure and properties of meanings and meaning fields remain similar or even invariable.

The structure and properties of meanings were described in chapter 4 in terms of the classical assumptions (1) to (4) and the prototypical assumptions (I) to (IV). In the case of many Social Science concepts, I opted for a particular combination of these assumptions that was represented by, and summarized in, version 2 (out of versions 1 to 6). In the following, I will apply this combination of assumptions to meaning fields. Whereas in this chapter 5.4 the structure of a single meaning field is discussed, the next chapter 5.5 will deal with the relation between several meaning fields.

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5.4.1 The structure of a single meaning field: In accordance with Constructivism, Lyons (1977: 267) and Foulkes (1979: ch. 1.3) emphasize that the structure of meaning fields is not always neat and univocal because there are multiple valid ways of structuring a field. For example, Lehrer shows that the meaning field of sounds MF^{SOUNDS} = │M^1 = │TO SING│, M^2 = │TO BARK│, M^3 = │TO SPEAK│, M^4 = │TO WHISTLE│, M^5 = │TO CRY│, M^6 = │TO BURP│, etc│ may be structured according to different criteria that are not simultaneously applicable but are nevertheless equally valid, such as human vs non-human sounds, speech vs non-speech sounds, volitional vs non-volitional sounds, etc (Lehrer 1974: 21, 35). This multiplicity of criteria arises depending on the observer's perspective, e.g. emic vs etic, theoretical approach, research objectives, etc. A further criterion may be taken into consideration, namely the criterion of prototypical center vs atypical periphery (as proposed in chapters 4.2 and 4.3). This results in the elaboration of a *prototypical meaning field*.[25]

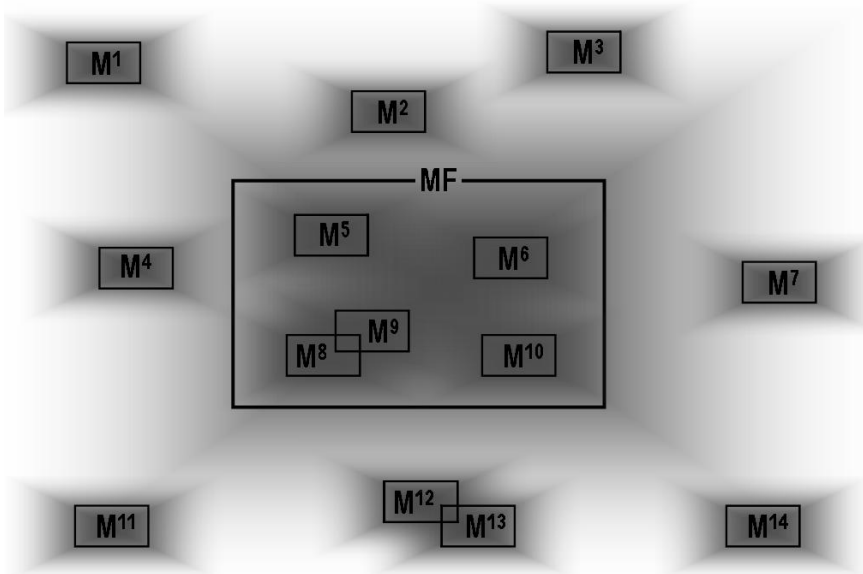
[24] An approximate example of self-similarity is a fern leaf that has a cone-like shape. Each leaf is composed of smaller leaves that also have cone-like shapes. Each of these smaller leaves has still smaller leaves that also have cone-like shapes. Perfect examples of self-similarity are mathematical objects like Mandelbrot sets or the Koch curve.

[25] There is, however, a major difference between Prototype Theory applied to *meanings* alias categories and Prototype Theory applied to *meaning fields*: In the first case of meanings, there is usually only a *single* type of semantic relation that holds between the meaning's members, e.g. the members of the meaning M_S = │FRUIT│ are M^1_R = │THIS APPLE│, M^2_R = │MELON│, M^3_R = │MY ORANGES│, M^4_R = │BANANA│, M^5_R = │THESE FOUR PINEAPPLES│, etc, which are linked to each other by antonymy. In the second case of meaning fields, there are often *several* types of semantic relations that hold between the meaning field's members, e.g. the members of MF^{FRUIT} are M^1 = │APPLE│, M^2 = │TO EAT│, M^3 = │ORANGE│, M^4 = │TASTY│, M^5 = │DESSERT│, etc, which are linked to each other by antonymy, hyponymy, synonymy, etc (see Murphy 2003 for semantic relations). This diversity and multiplicity of semantic relations applies particularly to paradigmatically and syntagmatically mixed meaning fields, as shown in chapter 5.1.

There are also multiple valid ways to graphically present meaning fields, e.g. tree diagrams, networks, matrices, box diagrams, cubes, pyramids, etc. The particularity of many of these graphical presentations is that they simultaneously combine several semiotic levels in a single illustration, e.g. the level of M_M and the level of M_R (as in Geeraerts, Grondelaers & Bakema 1994: 52). Consequently, they are only capable of depicting one or two semantic relations between the meanings, e.g. hyponymy, thus failing to depict the multiplicity and diversity of semantic relations, e.g. hyponymy, meronymy, overlap, synonymy, etc (see Murphy 2003). Even though this graphical problem is difficult to solve, it can be reduced by creating an illustration that uses only one semiotic level, thus separating the three levels of the semiotic triangle as shown in chapter 5.3. This results in a *one-level meaning field*, namely MF_S with the constituents M_S, MF_M with the constituents M_M, or MF_R with the constituents M_R.

The figure depicts a prototypical meaning field with a sole semiotic level (MF and M are substitutable by MF_S and M_S, MF_M and M_M, or MF_R and M_R).

Figure 5.III: Prototypical meaning field with one semiotic level



Applying version 2 of a meaning – i.e. a particular combination of assumptions (1) to (4) and (I) to (IV) as proposed in chapter 4.3 – to a meaning field, allows the following interpretation of the above illustration.

Assumptions (I) and (III) apply *globally to the whole meaning field*, i.e. both to its prototypical center and to its atypical periphery. These assumptions claim a heterogeneity in the inside of the meaning field, i.e. the meanings with-

in the meaning field have unequal statuses because some are more typical, salient, or representative than others, i.e. the internal structure of the meaning field is heterogeneous and differentiated into a prototypical center and an atypical periphery. In the figure above, the meaning M^5 is more prototypical than M^4. For example, within the contemporary Western meaning field of power holders, M = │THE PRESIDENT OF THE USA│ is more prototypical-central than M = │THE PRESIDENT OF ANDORRA│ or M = │THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEPAL│.

Assumptions (II) and (IV) apply *locally to the atypical periphery of the meaning field*. The assumptions claim a fuzziness between the inside and outside of a meaning field, i.e. the meaning field has fuzzy and blurred boundaries so that it is difficult or impossible to decide whether certain meanings lie inside or outside of the meaning field's boundaries. Consequently, the meaning field has fuzzy and analog membership, i.e. a meaning may simultaneously be a member of the meaning field to a certain degree and a non-member to a certain degree.

In the figure above, the meaning M^{14} lies at the extreme periphery, and it is difficult to decide whether or not this meaning is a member of the meaning field. Therefore such a meaning may only be a member to 10% and a non-member to 90%. For example, the meaning M = │DEFINITION OF TRADE IN HUMAN ORGANS│ is such an atypical-peripheral meaning of the meaning field of law that it is impossible or arbitrary to decide whether or not it is a member: On the one hand, this meaning does have a certain legal relevance and thus does somewhat belong to the meaning field of law because many laws, e.g. organ transplant laws, contain a section in which definitions about legally relevant objects or actions are set forth, e.g. for human organs, for trade, for transplantations, etc. On the other hand, this meaning is not only very atypical of and peripheral to law, but it is also rather general and unspecific, i.e. not exclusively bound to a single social field or societal subsystem. Consequently, this meaning exhibits only a very low membership in the meaning field of law, e.g. only 10%, while it has a high non-membership, e.g. 90%. Moreover, the meaning field's periphery cannot be defined by a checklist of necessary and sufficient conditions that all of the periphery's meanings share. In contrast, the periphery's meanings are linked to each other by family resemblances.

The arrangement of the meanings in a meaning field is organized according to the principle that spatial distance symbolizes semantic distance: The closer two meanings are spatially located, the more similar is their semantic content. If the distance is extremely reduced, meanings may even overlap, e.g. M^8 and M^9 in the figure above, which indicates a very high semantic similarity or a partial semantic identity. This kind of overlap of meanings is a graphical illustration of family resemblances.

For example, in the contemporary Western meaning field of law, the meanings M = │PROHIBITION│, as in the sentence ›*Smoking is strictly prohibited*‹, and M = │OBLIGATION│, as in the sentence ›*The contract imposed certain obligations on him*‹, partially semantically overlap. The reason is that both meanings imply that something, namely a particular action, is expected to be

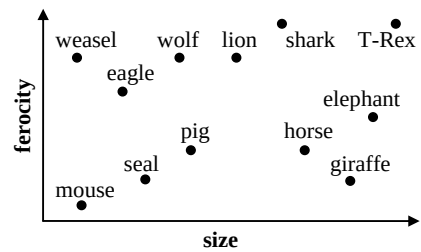
done by someone, namely a particular actor, and this something a priori goes against this someone's will, i.e. both meanings share the meaning component M_M = | AGAINST THE WILL OF THE ACTOR |.[26]

Assumptions (2) and (4) apply *locally to the prototypical center of the meaning field*. These assumptions claim discreteness between the inside and the outside of a meaning field's center, i.e. a particular meaning lies either within or outside the center's boundaries so that it is either a member or a non-member. In the figure above, this is depicted in analogy to the prototypical structure of a single meaning (see chapters 4.2 and 4.3), namely by drawing a black line around the meaning field's prototypical center so as to demarcate its boundaries. For example, the meaning M^5 lies within the center, whereas M^4 lies outside the center. For instance, the meaning M = | THE FATHER ORDERED HIS CHILD: »CLEAN UP OR I WILL PUNISH YOU!« | is a clear member of the prototypical center of the meaning field of power because it contains typical power expressions, such as ›*to order someone*‹ or ›*to punish someone*‹, which are uttered in the imperative and in a typical power relation between superior and subordinate. In contrast, the meaning M = | THE FATHER ASKED HIS CHILD: »COULD YOU PLEASE CLEAN UP?« | is clearly not a member of the center of the meaning field of power because – despite the typical power relation between a superior and a subordinate – the expressions ›*to ask someone*‹ and ›*please*‹, phrased in a question, are not typical power expressions.

Furthermore, assumption (4) states that the meaning field's center can be defined by a checklist of necessary and sufficient conditions that hold for all of the center's meanings. Whereas standard approaches to meaning fields assume that such a checklist holds for the *whole* of the meaning field, I restrict this checklist to the *center* of the meaning field. In both cases, this checklist of necessary and sufficient conditions functions as a centripetal force integrating and stabilizing a meaning field.

Such a checklist implies that the meanings in the center of the meaning field – or in standard approaches, all meanings in a meaning field – share a common and necessary meaning. This kind of archi-meaning (or arch-meaning) may be an *archi-signifier* (also called archi-lexeme or superordinate term),

[26] In Linguistics and Computer Science, there is a vast amount of literature on semantic similarity between objects or concepts, which often uses mathematical-graphical models (see Tversky 1977). The following figure (adapted from Wassmann 2001) is one of the simpler versions, in which people's emic perspectives on animals are depicted, for instance, do you consider pigs more or less ferocious than seals? The result is a semantic field where the space between the animals (represented by dots) corresponds to their semantic proximity. Then it is possible to delimit or construct certain areas where the elements are very close, so that they form semantic sub-fields, e.g. middle-sized and very ferocious animals.



an *archi-meaning component* (often called archi-sememe or classeme), or it may be an *archi-referent*.[27]

For example, the words M^1_S = │SKIRT│, M^2_S = │PANTS│, M^3_S = │JACKET│, M^4_S = │SOCKS│, M^5_S = │HAT│, etc all share the archi-meaning component M_M^{ARCHI} = │THINGS THAT PEOPLE WEAR TO COVER THEIR BODIES OR TO KEEP WARM│, which is lexicalized in the archi-signifier, i.e. the superordinate word, M_S^{ARCHI} = │CLOTHES│. In such a case, the meaning field that comprises the meanings can be given the name of the archi-signifier or archi-meaning component, e.g. the lexical field $MF_S^{CLOTHES}$ = │M^1_S = │SKIRT│, M^2_S = │PANTS│, M^3_S = │JACKET│, M^4_S = │SOCKS│, M^5_S = │HAT│, etc│.

Whereas an archi-meaning component can usually be found or constructed for the meaning field's center, an archi-signifier may be missing, thus constituting a signifier gap or lexical gap at the highest level of the meaning field. For example, Geeraerts et al. (1994: 117) argue that the words M^1_S = │ALLEGORIZE│, M^2_S = │PERSONIFY│, M^3_S = │SATIRIZE│, M^4_S = │APOSTROPHIZE│, etc have the archi-meaning component M_M^{ARCHI} = │VERBS RELATING TO FIGURES OF SPEECH│, but there is no single lexicalized archi-signifier. In this case, the respective meaning field cannot be named by a single word (that is, the archi-signifier). Instead, the field's name would have to be a much longer and cumbersome string of words (that is, the archi-meaning component), for instance, $MF_S^{VERBS\ RELATING\ TO\ FIGURES\ OF\ SPEECH}$ = │M^1_S = │ALLEGORIZE│, M^2_S = │PERSONIFY│, M^3_S = │SATIRIZE│, M^4_S = │APOSTROPHIZE│, etc│.

The name for a meaning field should be a word, or a string of words, that is not only sufficiently concise, manageable, and general, but also easily and intersubjectively recognizable by most actors and other researchers. Moreover, the name for a meaning field should not be considered empirically definitive and methodologically primary, but instead it should be viewed in terms of a sensitizing concept (in the sense of Blumer 1954) and a prototypical word of the respective meaning field.

There is a particular advantage to the conceptualization of meaning fields as fields with a prototypical center and an atypical periphery: Given a particular phenomenon or concept (viewed in terms of a meaning field), the researcher can integrate and locate neighboring or alternative phenomena or concepts. Consider the meaning field of lexicalized signifiers of law, namely MF_S^{LAW}. Whereas terms such as ›*law*‹, ›*state regulation*‹, ›*juridical field*‹, or ›*legal control*‹ belong to the prototypical center of MF_S^{LAW}, other terms like ›*morals*‹, ›*normative domain*‹, ›*ethics*‹, ›*social control*‹, ›*domination*‹, ›*etiquette*‹, or ›*religious deontics*‹ belong to the atypical periphery because they lack many prototypical meanings or meaning components such as M_M' = │AN IMPORTANT SOCIETAL INSTITUTION THAT CREATES AND ENFORCES RULES│,

[27] For the terms *archi-lexeme* and *archi-sememe*, see Mettinger (1994: ch. 3) and for the term *classeme*, see Coseriu & Geckeler (1981: 40ff, 59ff) and Greimas (1966: 50ff). Sometimes it is necessary to distinguish between *archi-lexeme/archi-seme* on the one hand and *dimension* on the other hand. For example, the words M_S = │BOY│ and M_S = │GIRL│ have the archi-lexeme M_S^{ARCHI} = │CHILD│, but they have the dimension $M_S^{DIMENSION}$ = │HAVING GENDER│ (Mettinger 1994: 65f).

or M_M^{II} = ⎸THE DECLARED OBJECTIVE IS TO FURTHER COMMON AND PUBLIC WELFARE⎹, or M_M^{III} = ⎸THE RULES AIM AT PEOPLE'S ACTIONS, BUT NOT AT THEIR THOUGHTS OR FEELINGS⎹. By integrating and comparing these atypical phenomena or concepts with the prototypical phenomena or concepts, the researcher can complexify his analysis, e.g. by studying the interrelations of these phenomena or concepts, by looking at strange or abnormal cases, by generalizing the results to other domains, etc.

5.4.2 Frames and scripts as meaning fields' prototypical centers: In the following, I will study in more detail the prototypical center of a meaning field. This goes in accordance with an argument made at the end of chapter 4.3, namely that it is particularly the prototypical center – in contrast to the atypical periphery – that should be the theoretical or empirical focus of analysis. In doing so, I will combine a linguistic-semiotic perspective with a sociological-psychological perspective.

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The basic idea is that the individual meanings within the prototypical center of a meaning field are not necessarily uncoupled or unorganized, but often become structurally coupled and organized so that they form a more complex and easily recognizable compound that is usually perceived as unitary and stable. For example, the individual and uncoupled meanings M^1, M^2, M^3, M^4 may become structurally coupled so as to form the compound M^1–M^2–M^3–M^4, which is perceived as a unitary and stable compound, i.e. MF = ⎸M^1–M^2–M^3–M^4⎹. This compound may take different forms such as metaphors, arguments, topoi, scripts, etc. However, I will concentrate on one particular form that has been widely discussed in Linguistics and Psychology and has appeared under several different terms, e.g. *semantic frames* (Fillmore 1982, 1985), *cognitive scripts* (Schank & Abelson 1977), *social stereotypes* (Putnam 1970, 1975), or *idealized cognitive models* (Lakoff 1987). Instead of going into the specific details and differences of each concept, I will concentrate on their general orientation and similarities. This is why I will use the terms frame or script to designate the abovementioned compound of meanings.[28]

Let us look at the following two examples of a semantic frame or cognitive script, i.e. the car-frame and the eating-in-a-restaurant-frame.

Firstly, in Frame Semantics, the frame of CAR comprises several attributes, e.g. DRIVER, FUEL, ENGINE, TRANSMISSION, WHEELS, etc. Each of these attributes may take different values, e.g. the attribute DRIVER may take the values SOPHIE or MR. SMITH, and the ENGINE may take FOUR CYLINDER, SIX CYLINDER, or EIGHT CYLINDER. The attributes are interconnected by structural relations, e.g. the attribute DRIVER and the attribute ENGINE are connected by the relation OPERATE reflecting people's knowledge that the driver

[28] Similar or synonymous concepts are cognitive reference point (Rosch 1975), social scenario, frame (Goffman 1974), cognitive scheme, socio-semantic network (Halliday 1972), perceived normality (Garfinkel 1963), or the sociological concept of role. Even Weber's ideal-type (1904, 1921g: § 1/I/3,11) is similar because it is an idealized type with highly specific, simplified, or radical characteristics, e.g. the ideal-types of domination are traditional domination, charismatic domination, and legal-rational domination (for more details, see Weber 1921a).

usually controls the engine's speed (Barsalou 1992). Even though there are some difficulties, this frame terminology may be translated into meaning field terminology, so that we obtain the formula MF^{CAR} = │($M_{ATTRIBUTE^1}$ = │THE DRIVER$_{VALUE\ =\ SOPHIE,\ MR.\ SMITH}$│, $M_{ATTRIBUTE^2}$ = │THE FUEL$_{VALUE\ =\ GASOLINE,\ DIESEL,\ GASAHOL}$│, $M_{ATTRIBUTE^3}$ = │THE ENGINE$_{VALUE\ =\ FOUR\ CYLINDER,\ SIX\ CYLINDER,\ EIGHT\ CYLINDER}$│, $M_{ATTRIBUTE^4}$ = │THE TRANSMISSION$_{VALUE\ =\ STANDARD,\ AUTOMATIC}$│, etc), ($M_{RELATION^1}$ = │$M_{ATTRIBUTE^1}$ BUYS $M_{ATTRIBUTE^2}$│, $M_{RELATION^2}$ = │$M_{ATTRIBUTE^1}$ OPERATES $M_{ATTRIBUTE^3}$│, $M_{RELATION^3}$ = │$M_{ATTRIBUTE^2}$ FLOWS TO $M_{ATTRIBUTE^3}$│, etc)│.

Secondly, in Cognitive Psychology, the script of EATING IN A RESTAURANT comprises certain actors such as WAITRESS, CLIENT, COOK, etc, certain sequenced actions such as DECIDING ON THE TYPE OF RESTAURANT, ORDERING A MEAL, EATING THE MEAL, PAYING THE BILL, etc, and certain props such as MENU, FOOD, BILL, etc. (Schank & Abelson 1977). Here too, we may translate the script terminology into meaning field terminology, which yields the following meaning field: $MF^{EATING\ IN\ A\ RESTAURANT}$ = │(M_{ACTOR^1} = │WAITRESS│, M_{ACTOR^2} = │CLIENT│, M_{ACTOR^3} = │COOK│, etc), (M_{ACTION^1} = │DECIDING ON THE TYPE OF RESTAURANT│, M_{ACTION^2} = │ORDERING A MEAL│, M_{ACTION^3} = │EATING THE MEAL│, M_{ACTION^4} = │PAYING THE BILL│, etc), (M_{PROP^1} = │MENU│, M_{PROP^2} = │FOOD│, M_{PROP^3} = │BILL│, etc)│.

In both cases, frames or scripts are bundles of specific knowledge or interrelated information; put differently, they are structurally coupled meanings that form a stable unitary compound MF = │M^1–M^2–M^3–M^4│. Even without a thorough theoretical analysis, it can be intuitively seen that the frame or script for CAR and EATING IN A RESTAURANT is very similar to the prototypical center of the meaning field MF^{CAR} and $MF^{EATING\ IN\ A\ RESTAURANT}$.

The conceptualization of a meaning field's prototypical center in terms of frame, script, stereotype, cognitive model, etc suggests itself due to the following *similarities* between these concepts. Firstly, all of these concepts refer to a *system or field of interconnected meanings* M, usually of meanings that autodescribe them(selves) as meanings M_M. In order to understand one particular meaning, it is necessary to understand the entire system or field of meanings and the position of the meaning in its system or field. Secondly, both a meaning field's center and a frame, script, stereotype, or cognitive model are *prototypical, idealized and standardized definitions* that comprise typical, salient, or representative meanings. Thirdly, meaning fields as well as frames, scripts, stereotypes, etc are *well-known and shared* among the members of a particular culture, language, or epoch.[29]

There are also *differences* between the classical concept of a meaning field's center and the concepts of frame, script, stereotype, cognitive model, etc. However, I consider these differences to be minor so that they allow for a compatibility and mutual complementation of the concepts. Firstly, frames or

[29] The following authors try to combine, or at least to compare, Semantic Field Theory with its key concept of meaning field and Frame Semantics with its key concept of frame: Dörschner (1996), Fillmore (1985), Konerding (1993), Lehrer (1993), Lehrer & Feder (eds. 1992), Nerlich & Clarke (2000), Post (1988).

scripts are *more structured and complex* than the classical conceptualization of a meaning field's center. The meanings in a frame or script are of multiple types (e.g. actors, actions, props, attributes, values, etc), they entertain multiple and often invariable relations among each other (e.g. OPERATE, BUY, FLOW TO, etc), and they are usually ordered in a fixed sequence or structure (e.g. spatial sequence, temporal sequence, etc). Secondly, frames or scripts often refer to *social situations or events* (e.g. EATING IN A RESTAURANT, COMMERCIAL TRANSACTION), which implies *temporal-processual aspects* and sequences. In contrast, the classical conceptualization of a meaning field's center does not focus on something specific but rather comprises almost everything such as words, situations, signifiers, objects, properties, actors, etc so that its approach is rather synchronic-static. Thirdly, the meanings in a frame or script are based on *pragmatic-cultural knowledge of the world*, whereas the meanings in the classical conceptualization of a meaning field are based on linguistic-semantic knowledge of the language.

These differences can be used to enrich and complement the classical conceptualization of a meaning field's center. Accordingly, my version of a meaning field's center enhances the classical version of a meaning field's center by integrating the concepts of semantic frame, cognitive script, social stereotype, idealized cognitive model, etc. This is a way to combine linguistic-semiotic and sociological-psychological approaches.

The prototypical centers of the meaning fields of, for instance, power and law also comprise several semantic frames or cognitive scripts. The center of the meaning field of law includes a script for a │COURT TRIAL│, which specifies typical actions, actors, props, e.g. ($M_{ACTOR}{}^{1}$ = │JUDGE│, $M_{ACTOR}{}^{2}$ = │LAWYERS│, $M_{ACTOR}{}^{3}$ = │DEFENDANT│, $M_{ACTOR}{}^{4}$ = │JURY│, etc), ($M_{ACTION}{}^{1}$ = │GO INTO A COURT BUILDING│, $M_{ACTION}{}^{2}$ = │PROSECUTOR TRIES TO PROVE THAT THE DEFENDANT IS GUILTY│, $M_{ACTION}{}^{3}$ = │ATTORNEY FOR THE DEFENSE TRIES TO PROVE THAT THE DEFENDANT IS INNOCENT│, $M_{ACTION}{}^{4}$ = │WITNESSES GIVE TESTIMONIES│, $M_{ACTION}{}^{5}$ = │JUDGE OR JURY EXAMINES THE EVIDENCE│, $M_{ACTION}{}^{6}$ = │JUDGE OR JURY GIVES THE VERDICT│, etc), ($M_{PROP}{}^{1}$ = │JUDGE'S ROBE│, $M_{PROP}{}^{2}$ = │LAW BOOKS│, $M_{PROP}{}^{3}$ = │DOCK│, etc). There are other frames and scripts that lie in the center of the meaning fields of power and law, such as THREATENING SOMEONE, CONTRACT, HIERARCHICAL-ASYMMETRICAL RELATIONSHIP, COMMITTING A CRIME, ORDERING SOMEONE TO DO SOMETHING, PUNISHMENT, etc.

5.5 Relations between Meaning Fields

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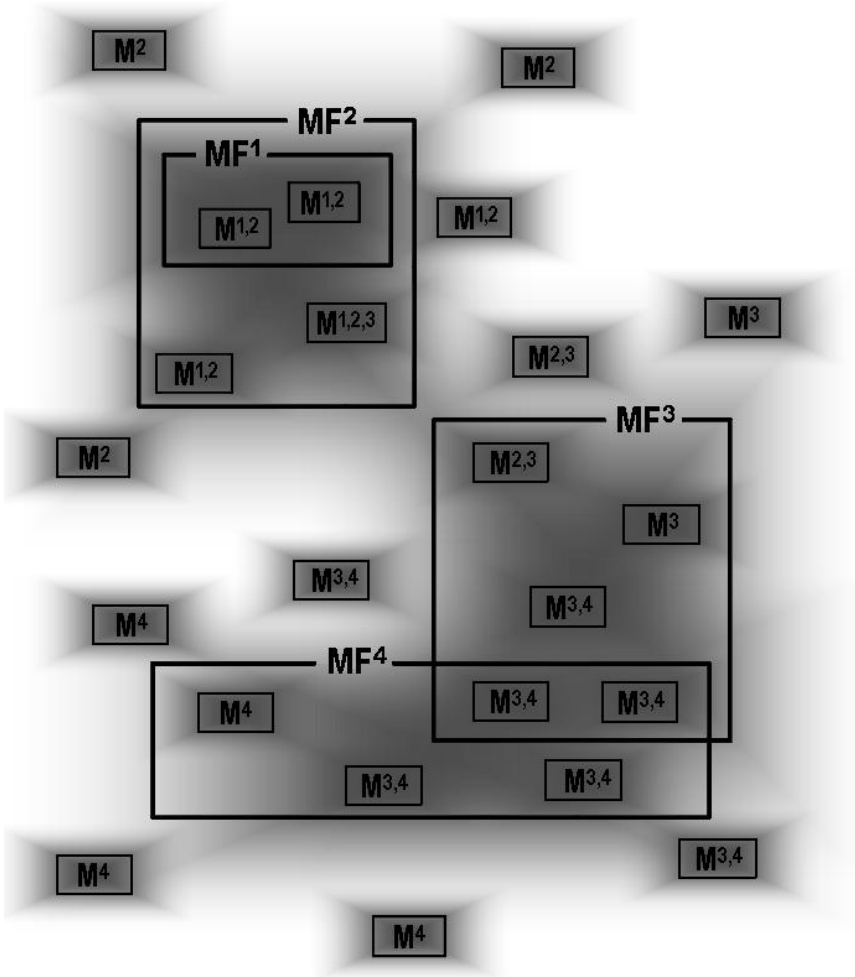
In the previous chapter, I have primarily focused on a single meaning field. This perspective will be extended in this chapter by studying the relations between several meaning fields, e.g. MF^{POWER}, MF^{LOVE}, MF^{LAW}, etc.

The four principal relations that may hold between meaning fields MF are similar to those that Cruse establishes for meanings M, namely identity, inclusion, exclusion, and overlap (1986: 87). By combining the above figures 5.I and 5.III, we obtain the following figure that depicts some of these relations.

Figure 5.IV: Semantic relations between meaning fields



The figure shows four meaning fields MF^1, MF^2, MF^3, and MF^4 and their respective meanings M whose superscripts indicate their membership in a particular meaning field, e.g. M^2 is a member of MF^2 but of no other meaning field, while $M^{1,2}$ is a member of both MF^1 and MF^2, and $M^{1,2,3}$ is a member of MF^1, MF^2, and MF^3 at the same time. These meaning fields entertain particular semantic relations such as exclusion, overlap, identity, or inclusion.

In discussing these relations, it is often helpful to distinguish between two levels: On the one hand, one may study the *entire* meaning fields, e.g. MF^2 and MF^3 entertain a semantic relation of overlap because they share some meanings such as $M^{2,3}$ or $M^{1,2,3}$. On the other hand, one may study only the *prototypical*

centers of the meaning fields, e.g. MF^{2}'s prototypical center and MF^{3}'s prototypical center entertain a semantic relation of exclusion because they do not share any meanings, whereas MF^{3}'s prototypical center and MF^{4}'s prototypical center entertain a semantic relation of overlap because they do share some meanings. The first level which focuses on the study of the entire meaning fields is the more large-meshed and widespread in scholarly studies in contrast to the second level that is more specific and fine-meshed. In the following, I will – unless explicitly stated otherwise – refer to the first level as the analytical default option.

Let us look at three of these semantic relations more closely, namely exclusion, inclusion, and overlap, and illustrate them with some examples concerning the Social Science concepts of power and law.

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5.5.1 Exclusion and inclusion: A particular meaning field and another meaning field may entertain a semantic relation of exclusion, i.e. both meaning fields are mutually exclusive, disjoint, or even antonymic because they have no meanings in common. In figure 5.IV, the meaning fields MF^{2} and MF^{4} stand in such a relation of exclusion because all meanings of MF^{2} are 100%-non-members or 0%-members of MF^{4}, and vice versa. For example, in contemporary Western culture the meaning field of flavors $MF^{FLAVORS}$ and the meaning field of power MF^{POWER} may be seen to be mutually exclusive. Whereas the meaning field of flavors contains meanings such as $MF^{FLAVORS}$ = │M = │BITTER│, M = │CHOCOLATE│, M = │NUTTY│, M = │SWEET│, etc│, the meaning field of power comprises meanings such as MF^{POWER} = │M = │THREAT│, M = │POTENT│, M = │PUNISHMENT│, M = │COMMAND│, etc│.

However, a methodological caveat must be made that does not apply to all, but to many cases. Two exclusive meaning fields cannot be found or constructed by simply taking a meaning from one meaning field, such as M = │POTENT│ from MF^{POWER}, and converting it into is semantic antonym, such as M = │IMPOTENT│, so as to find or construct a supposedly antonymic meaning field, such as $MF^{WEAKNESS}$. The reason is that both a meaning such as M = │POTENT│ and its antonymic meaning such as M = │IMPOTENT│ usually belong to the *same* meaning field, regardless what name one gives to this meaning field, because both meanings may be seen as two extremes on the *same* scale. For example, the meanings M = │HOT│ and M = │COLD│ are two extremes on the scale of temperature, just as M = │POTENT│ and M = │IMPOTENT│ are two extremes on a scale that may be given names such as degree of power, weakness, potency, powerlessness, etc. This scale is similar to the meaning field as it integrates both extremes or meanings. Put differently, both extremes or meanings share a common underlying meaning component that has to do with the degree of power, weakness, potency, powerlessness, etc. Moreover, according to Structural Linguistics, a particular meaning, taken isolated, does not make sense and lacks contours without its antonymic meaning, which shows that it is structurally and semantically dependent on its antonymic meaning to lend it sense and contours, i.e. the antonymic meaning is constitutive of the meaning (Chandler 2002: 112f, see chapter 1.1). Accordingly, a meaning such as M = │POTENT│ automatically evokes or co-activates its antonymic meaning such

as M = │IMPOTENT│ because both belong to the same meaning field (see chapter 6.4.2 on co-activation). The same goes for other cases, e.g. M = │LEGAL│ and M = │ILLEGAL│ belong to MF^{LAW} just as M = │BLACK│ and M = │WHITE│ belong to MF^{COLORS}. Since both a meaning and its antonymic meaning belong to the same meaning field, I often notate them jointly as the unity of their distinction, e.g. M = │POTENT vs IMPOTENT│ or M = │LEGAL vs ILLEGAL│.

In the scholarly literature on negation – as found in Linguistics, Semiotics, or Logic – three types of negation are distinguished (see Elster 1980, Greimas 1976, Greimas & Rastier 1968, Greimas & Courtés 1979 and eds. 1986, Parsons 2006, McNamara 2006).

Firstly, there is an operation called active negation or contrariety, e.g. M = │BLACK│ and M = │WHITE│, or M = │INTERESTED│ and M = │UNINTERESTED│. As shown above, this type of negation is often not sufficient to find or construct the semantic relation of exclusion between two meaning fields. In other words, negating a meaning M of a meaning field MF^{+1} does not create an antonymic meaning non-M that is part of an antonymic meaning field MF^{-1}, but instead it refers to the same original meaning field MF^{+1}. This is why Lakoff (2004) argues that negating a frame evokes this frame, e.g. if you hear someone say ›*Don't think of an elephant!*‹ you will still think of an elephant (for more details, see chapter 6.2 on activation and non-activation).[30]

Secondly, another type of negation is called passive negation or subalternation, e.g. M = │BLACK│ and M = │NON-BLACK│, or M = │INTERESTED│ and M = │NOT INTERESTED│.

Thirdly, there is the operation of contradiction, e.g. M = │BLACK│ and M = │NON-WHITE│, or M = │INTERESTED│ and M = │INDIFFERENT│. Sometimes

[30] It is sometimes possible and legitimate to construct two meaning fields such as MF^{WEAK} and MF^{STRONG} based on this type of negation, that is, active negation, contrariety, or antonymic opposition. Such meaning fields may look like this: MF^{WEAK} = │M = │+ VULNERABLE│, M = │+ LACK│, M = │+ PASSIVE│, M = │+ FRAIL│, etc│, whereas the antonymic meaning field would be something like MF^{STRONG} = │M = │– VULNERABLE│, M = │– LACK│, M = │– PASSIVE│, M = │– FRAIL│, etc│, or alternatively MF^{STRONG} = │M = │+ RESISTANT│, M = │+ CAPABLE│, M = │+ ACTIVE│, M = │+ ROBUST│, etc│. Here, the exclusion of both meaning fields is based on the active negation or contrariety of their meaning components, namely M = │+ PASSIVE│ is the antonym of M = │– PASSIVE│ or of M = │+ ACTIVE│.
An empirical method to construct these types of mutually exclusive meaning fields is the ›*but*‹-negation test (see chapters 3.4 and 4.2). For example, one version of this test consists in analyzing syntagms that seem to be internally contradictory, e.g. the expressions ›*cold war*‹ or ›*silent revolution*‹ are, if literally interpreted, inconsistent as a typical war cannot be cold and a typical revolution cannot be silent. Whereas the meanings M = │WAR│ and M = │REVOLUTION│ belong to $MF^{POWER\ \&\ ACTIVITY}$, the other meanings M = │COLD│ and M = │SILENT│ belong to an antonymic meaning field such as $MF^{INACTIVITY\ \&\ CALMNESS}$. However, cultural and linguistic processes led to the collocation of these apparently contradictory terms so as to create standardized idioms indicating a non-prototypical use of the terms ›*war*‹ and ›*revolution*‹, e.g. the cold war between the USA and USSR or a silent revolution in the moral domain. These idioms draw their linguistic attractiveness from the collocation of two antonymic terms taken out of their antonymic meaning fields, i.e. $MF^{POWER\ \&\ ACTIVITY}$ and $MF^{INACTIVITY\ \&\ CALMNESS}$.

these latter two operations of negation, i.e. subalternation and contradiction, are capable of constructing a relation of exclusion between meaning fields.

Fourthly, an additional type of operation or negation may be invented that completely breaks any semantic similarity between the meanings, e.g. M = |BLACK| and M = |MELODIOUS|, or |INTERESTED| and M = |THE FLOWERS OF THE KORAN|. It is particularly this type of operation or negation that succeeds in constructing meaning fields that entertain a relation of exclusion. For example, given that both the assertion M = |POTENT| and its active negation or contrary M = |IMPOTENT| are part of MF^{POWER}, there are several meanings from the second, third, and fourth types of negation, which belong to MF^{POWER} with only a low degree of membership or prototypicality, e.g. the subalterns or contradictories M = |NEITHER POTENT NOR IMPOTENT| or M = |AVERAGE AND ORDINARY|, or meanings which do not at all belong to MF^{POWER} such as M = |SWEET| or M = |CHOCOLATE|. Clustering such non-members together, one may construct an antonymic meaning field that stands in a relation of exclusion to MF^{POWER} such as the abovementioned meaning field of $MF^{FLAVORS}$.

Having talked so far about the semantic relation of exclusion, I will now briefly turn to inclusion. A meaning field may include another meaning field as a subset, so that all members that belong to MF^1 also belong to MF^2, but not all members of MF^2 also belong to MF^1 (see figure 5.IV). A simple example is $MF^{CLOTHES}$ because it is a subordinate meaning field of the more superordinate $MF^{OBJECTS}$, which may additionally include several other subordinate meaning fields such as $MF^{FURNITURE}$ or $MF^{MUSICAL\ INSTRUMENTS}$.[31]

Let us look at a Social Science example. The MF^{LAW} may be seen to be completely included in the semantically more encompassing $MF^{NORMATIVITY}$, i.e. in terms of $MF^{NORMATIVITY\ OF\ LAW}$. The $MF^{NORMATIVITY}$ includes other subordinate meaning fields such as $MF^{NORMATIVITY\ OF\ MORALS}$, $MF^{NORMATIVITY\ OF\ PERSONAL\ EXPECTATIONS}$, $MF^{NORMATIVITY\ OF\ RELIGION}$, etc. It is often more useful to take such a broad and general approach, e.g. by studying $MF^{NORMATIVITY}$, especially in anthropological or historical studies so as to reduce the problem of ethnocentricity, anachronism, or conceptual blindness. For example, Jackendoff's (2007: ch. 9.1, ch. 11) semantic approach lumps law, moral-ethical norms, social conventions, religious norms, etiquette, and customs together in the so-called normative value (or N-value) which concerns an actor's conformity to all types of norms.

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5.5.2 Overlap: I turn now to the relation of overlap that may hold between several meaning fields (Coseriu 1965/66: 55-58), i.e. the meaning fields have meanings in common that are consequently simultaneously members of both meaning fields, but each meaning field also has meanings not found in the other meaning field (see figure 5.IV). For example, the meaning field of law MF^{LAW} and the meaning field of love MF^{LOVE} overlap because they share some meanings such as M = |MARRIAGE, i.e. THE LEGAL CONTRACTUAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TWO PEOPLE WHO NORMALLY LOVE EACH OTHER AND HAVE

[31] In this respect, the inclusion of one meaning field in another meaning field is similar to the process of classification (see chapter 3.3) where a subordinate referent is classified by a superordinate signifier, which includes many subordinate referents.

SEXUAL RELATIONS|. This meaning belongs to MF^{LAW} because it clearly refers to legal procedures, law texts, a contract, etc and at the same time it belongs to MF^{LOVE} because it clearly refers to a highly personal relationship, strong feelings of liking someone, sexuality, etc.

In the following, I will propose a methodological procedure to compare and relate two or more overlapping meaning fields. This procedure may be applied in empirical research to generate or test particular hypotheses. In order to demonstrate and illustrate this procedure, I will take the following example or hypothesis: The contemporary Western meaning fields of power MF^{POWER} and of law MF^{LAW} overlap to such a large degree that even their prototypical centers overlap.

This is the analytical starting point: There are three partially overlapping meaning fields, namely MF^{POWER} and MF^{LAW}, which represent the focus of analysis, and a third meaning field called MF^{OTHER}, which represents one or several other meaning fields that are deliberately left anonymous and have a residual status, because they merely fulfill the heuristic function of serving as a backdrop and comparison so as to better capture the particularities of MF^{POWER} and MF^{LAW}. In this way, the three meaning fields MF^{POWER}, MF^{LAW}, and MF^{OTHER} are contrasted and related, that is, the methodological instrument of comparison comes to the fore.

A general methodological advantage of this instrument, i.e. of comparing several phenomena such as power, law, love, art, religion, economy, is that on the basis of knowing one phenomenon, one can direct particular questions at the other phenomenon that would not have come up otherwise and can thus actively »interrogate« the other phenomenon (Bloch 1928: 19ff, Triebel 1997: 15). For example, knowing that religion may become objectivated in iconic paintings or sacred texts, one may ask how power becomes objectivated; or knowing that modern love systems typically involve emotions such as passion, hate, and sympathy, one may analyze the role of emotions in the modern law system; etc. Comparing MF^{POWER}, MF^{LAW}, and MF^{OTHER} hence allows me to »discover« the similarities and differences between them, or in linguistic terms, it allows me to determine and analyze particular subzones that are created because all these meaning fields partially overlap. Such subzones are, for example, identity, exclusion, or inclusion.

In order to clearly depict this multitude and diversity of subzones, a graphical illustration, as shown in the above figure 5.IV, is no longer adequate, so I will resort to a more mathematical and tabular figure as shown below. An important point to keep in mind is that a semantic relation of overlap between meaning fields creates two types of subzones, namely, on the one hand, a subzone of identity where the meaning fields overlap and in which the meaning fields are identical and indistinguishable, and, on the other hand, a subzone of exclusion is created where the meaning fields do not overlap and in which the meaning fields are separate and distinguishable. Moreover, in order to propose a fine-grained picture, the following table takes into account the prototypical center and the atypical periphery of each meaning field.

Figure 5.V: Subzones between three overlapping meaning fields

		subzone of exclusion	**subzone of identity**					
			MF^{POWER}		**MF^{LAW}**		**MF^{OTHER}**	
			prototyp. center	atypical periphery	prototyp. center	atypical periphery	prototyp. center	atypical periphery
MF^{POWER}	prototyp. center	**E**	–	–	–	–	–	–
	atypical periphery	G	–	–	–	–	–	–
MF^{LAW}	prototyp. center	**F**	**A**	B	–	–	–	–
	atypical periphery	H	C	D	–	–	–	–
MF^{OTHER}	prototyp. center	Q	**I**	K	**J**	L	–	–
	atypical periphery	R	M	O	N	P	–	–

The table depicts various subzones that are represented by the letters A, B, C, D, E, F, etc. Each of these subzones is in principle depictable in a graphical illustration and comprises several meanings M.

In the following, I will not discuss all of these subzones but rather only some particularly important ones. In the first step, I will concentrate exclusively on the subzones between MF^{POWER} and MF^{LAW} while temporarily disregarding other meaning fields MF^{OTHER}, and in the second step, I will enlarge this perspective by taking into account the subzones existing between MF^{POWER}, MF^{LAW}, and other meanings fields MF^{OTHER}.

Subzone A: This is one of the most important zones as it represents those meanings M that are not only members of MF^{POWER} and MF^{LAW}, but even members of MF^{POWER}'s and MF^{LAW}'s prototypical centers. As argued at the end of chapter 4.3, it is the prototypical center in particular – in contrast to the atypical periphery – that should be the theoretical or empirical focus of analysis. One of the meanings of this subzone is, for example, M_M = ⎪X WANTS Y TO DO H. X COMMUNICATES SOMETHING LIKE THIS TO Y: DO H! X THINKS THAT Y WILL DO H BECAUSE X SAID IT.⎪. This meaning may be encoded both in a particular legal norm or obligation – e.g. where X is the state, Y the citizens, and H the action of paying taxes – and in a particular order or command – e.g. where X is the father, Y the child, and H the action of washing the dishes.

There are many other meanings that fall into this subzone, such as the concept of M_M = ⎪PUNISHMENT, i.e. IF Y DOES NOT DO H, X OR Z WILL DO SOMETHING BAD P TO Y⎪, the notion of M_M = ⎪THE ILLOCUTIONARY FORCE IS DI-

RECTED AT THE ACTIONS OF SOMEONE (e.g. DO), BUT NOT AT THE PSYCHE OF SOMEONE (e.g. THINK, FEEL, KNOW, etc), AT SOMEONE IN ITS ENTIRETY (e.g. PERSON), OR AT EVENTS (e.g. HAPPEN)⎥, the modal verbs M_S = ⎥MUST⎥ or M_S = ⎥MAY⎥, the notion of M_M = ⎥CONTINGENCY, i.e. PEOPLE THINK OR SAY THINGS LIKE THIS: SOMETHING EXISTS NOW. THIS SOMETHING CAN BE SOMETHING ELSE. THIS SOMETHING ELSE DOES NOT EXIST NOW. THIS SOMETHING ELSE CAN EXIST BEFORE, NOW, OR AFTER⎥, etc.

Within this subzone A, the relation of identity holds, so power = law, or inversely, law = power, i.e. power and law are identical, indistinguishable, and synonymous because they share exactly the same meanings or meaning components. The study of this subzone is particularly important because it represents the central commonalities between power and law.

Subzones B and C: These zones comprise all those meanings M belonging either to MF^{LAW}'s prototypical center and to MF^{POWER}'s atypical periphery (subzone B), or inversely to MF^{POWER}'s prototypical center and to MF^{LAW}'s atypical periphery (subzone C). Whereas a particular meaning has full membership in the prototypical center of one meaning field, it does not have membership in the other meaning field's prototypical center. A possible example is M = ⎥EVIDENCE, i.e. THE INFORMATION GIVEN IN ORDER TO PROVE THAT SOMETHING IS TRUE⎥. This meaning has a prototypical position within MF^{LAW} as it has become institutionalized and crucial to most legal procedures, e.g. court trials, marriage proceedings, police interrogations. In contrast, this meaning has only an atypical position within MF^{POWER} because – even though it is sometimes activated in cases where obedience or disobedience needs to be proved or refuted – it has not attained a high degree of institutionalization and sedimentation.

Subzone D: This zone concerns only those meanings that are atypical both of MF^{POWER} and of MF^{LAW}. A possible meaning may be M = ⎥X WANTS Y TO THINK OR FEEL P. X SAYS THIS TO Y. X THINKS THAT Y WILL THINK OR FEEL P BECAUSE X SAID IT.⎥. The atypicality of this type of »order« or »norm« is that its illocutionary force is not directed at someone's actions, but rather at someone's psyche in terms of thinking or feeling something. For instance, in the case of MF^{POWER} a father may say to his son ›*I want you to feel proud of daddy!*‹ or ›*You mustn't think things like that!*‹, and in the case of MF^{LAW} a priest may invoke a moral norm such as ›*Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife!*‹ or a president may declare a period of national mourning.

Subzones E and F: These subzones are, just as subzone A, methodologically particularly important as they concern the prototypical center. However, the zone of overlap does not extend into these subzones, so the relation of exclusion holds, i.e. these subzones comprise meanings that are either prototypical members of MF^{POWER} and non-members of MF^{LAW} (subzone E), or they are prototypical members of MF^{LAW} and non-members of MF^{POWER} (subzone F).

Within these subzones, power and law are mutually exclusive, distinct, incompatible, antonymic, or contradictory because they do not share any common meanings or meaning components, i.e. power ≠ law, and inversely, law ≠ power. Subzones E and F are important to study because they represent the central differences between power and law.

For example, the subzone E of MF^{POWER} contains such prototypical meanings as M = ⎪IDIOS, i.e. PARTICULARISM, EGOISM, MAXIMIZATION OF PERSONAL WELFARE, ARBITRARINESS, INDIVIDUAL SITUATION⎪ because the order-giver or power-holder is usually seen to have particularistic egoistic goals, to seek to maximize his personal welfare based on his own arbitrary desires, and his orders apply to a single situation. A typical referent is M_R = ⎪HOMER SIMPSON ORDERS BART TO GET HIM A BEER⎪. In contrast, the subzone F of MF^{LAW} contains such prototypical meanings as M = ⎪NOMOS, i.e. GENERALISM, ALTRUISM, MAXIMIZATION OF COMMON WELFARE, UNIVERSALISM, ALL OR MANY CASES⎪ because the norm-creator or the norm itself is typically seen to pursue general or even altruistic goals, to seek to maximize common welfare based on universalism, and the norm is seen to apply to many or all cases that have the same characteristics. A typical referent could be M_R = ⎪THE STATE OBLIGES ALL CITIZENS TO PAY TAXES TO FINANCE PUBLIC PROJECTS⎪.

Subzones of identity (A, B, C, D) and of exclusion (E, F, G, H): Let us take a look at the meanings that lie in the subzones of identity. These meanings are simultaneously members – be they prototypical or atypical members – of both or several meaning fields. They can be classified according to the type of operation or state that constitutes, represents, or generates them. I will call these types of operation or state *coupling* and *ambiguity*.

Coupling may be explained from two different but compatible viewpoints. From the first perspective, coupling refers to a process or state in which two meanings M^1 and M^2 that stem from the subzones of exclusion of two overlapping meaning fields MF^1 and MF^2 come to be structurally interlocked and united so as to form a new emergent and single meaning $M^{1+2} = M^3$ that is located in the subzone of identity of the two overlapping meaning fields MF^1 and MF^2. For example, the meaning M^1 = ⎪PERSONAL ORDER⎪ from MF^{POWER} lies in the subzone E, while the meaning M^2 = ⎪IMPERSONAL RIGHT⎪ from MF^{LAW} lies in the subzone F (to locate the subzones, see figure 5.V). Both meanings M^1 and M^2 have become – by means of certain historical, social, or linguistic processes – interlocked and united in the new and emergent meaning $M^{1+2} = M^3$ = ⎪THE IMPERSONAL RIGHT TO ISSUE PERSONAL ORDERS⎪. This meaning is widespread in all hierarchically-structured organizations (but also in erotico-sexual games in the BDSM-format) where a superior, e.g. the employer or manager, has the legal and consensual right to give personal and idiosyncratic orders to his inferiors, e.g. the employees or subordinates. In German, there is even a single word that nicely expresses this semantic coupling of right and order, namely ›*Befehlsrecht*‹ or ›*Weisungsbefugnis*‹. This meaning M^3, taken as a whole, clearly lies in the subzone of identity, namely, in the subzone A of the overlapping meaning fields MF^{POWER} and MF^{LAW}. But the meaning M^3 can also take other forms, e.g. in a strike where employees have the legal right to stop working in order to pressure the employer to raise their salaries.[32]

[32] The semantic counterpart of M^3 would be M = ⎪THE OBLIGATION TO OBEY ORDERS⎪, which applies to actors occupying a hierarchically low and inferior position.

From the second perspective, coupling may be explained by arguing that a particular meaning M^3 that is located in the subzone of identity of two overlapping meaning fields MF^1 and MF^2 can be decomposed into two meanings or meaning components M^1 and M^2 that lie in the subzones of exclusion of the two overlapping meaning fields MF^1 and MF^2. For example, M^3 = │THE IMPERSONAL RIGHT TO ISSUE PERSONAL ORDERS│ lies in the subzone A of MF^{POWER} and MF^{LAW}, but it may be decomposed into two meanings or meaning components that lie in subzones E and F, namely M^1 = │PERSONAL ORDER│ and M^2 = │IMPERSONAL RIGHT│. Since these couplings can be decomposed into their constituent meanings, their double or multiple membership and origin in several meaning fields is always visible.

There are many other examples where such a structural-semantic coupling of MF^{POWER} and MF^{LAW} occurs, e.g. the concepts of delegation and proxy; the principle of discretionary powers (or expediency principle, judicial discretion, *Opportunitätsprinzip*) in the legal system (or more extreme notions such as law of the jungle, *Kadijustiz*, club-law, etc); cartels and trusts; domination and rule in the sense of Weber's *Herrschaft* (1921a/f); civil disobedience; the orders of particular courts of law that quickly and flexibly deal with emergency cases such as the French *tribunaux des référés*; the rhetoric of political justice, i.e. the use of legal procedures for political ends (Kirchheimer 1961); person A threatening person B with a lawsuit, etc. Many of these couplings become semantically sedimented, often lexicalized in particular words, and are frequently institutionalized or objectivated.

The notion of coupling is very similar to Cognitive Sciences' notion of *conceptual blending* (as proposed by Fauconnier & Turner 2002 and Turner 2001). The latter is a process in which two or more conceptual spaces interact by combining or fusing some of their respective elements to create a new and emergent conceptual space, namely the conceptual blend. For instance, Turner (2001: ch. 1) interprets Geertz's (1972) anthropological example of the Balinese cockfight events in terms of conceptual blending: The social world of Balinese men constitutes a conceptual space with a particular logic, whereas the natural world of animals such as cocks constitutes another separate conceptual space with another particular logic. In a process of conceptual blending, both conceptual spaces project and combine specific elements which are then integrated and complemented by new emergent elements so that a new conceptual space (or conceptual blend) is created, namely Balinese cockfight events. Other examples of conceptual blends are words like ›*computer virus*‹, a cartoon that depicts a politician as a spider (Turner 2001: 22, 149), or the invented game of trashcan basketball (Coulson 2001: ch. II.1). It seems obvious to me that conceptual blending and coupling are similar and often identical operations that are only expressed in different terminologies.

Having discussed the concept of coupling, I will now turn to the abovementioned concept of *ambiguity*. It means that a particular meaning M is not only located in the subzone of identity of two overlapping meaning fields MF^1 and MF^2, but, and this is the difference from the concept of coupling, it cannot

be decomposed into meanings or meaning components that lie in the subzones of exclusion of the overlapping meaning fields.[33]

For example, the meaning M = ⎪PUNISHMENT, i.e. IF Y DOES NOT COMPLY WITH X'S CONATIVE-DIRECTIVE SPEECH ACT, X WILL DO SOMETHING BAD P TO Y⎪ belongs simultaneously to MF^{POWER} and MF^{LAW}, but it cannot be decomposed into two meanings or meaning components M^1 and M^2 so that M^1 would belong exclusively to MF^{POWER} and M^2 exclusively to MF^{LAW}. Other examples are the modal verbs M = ⎪MUST⎪ and M = ⎪MAY⎪, the expression M = ⎪YOU ARE NOT ALLOWED TO DO THAT⎪, or the notion of M = ⎪CONTINGENCY, i.e. PEOPLE THINK OR SAY THINGS LIKE THIS: SOMETHING EXISTS NOW. THIS SOMETHING CAN BE SOMETHING ELSE. THIS SOMETHING ELSE DOES NOT EXIST NOW. THIS SOMETHING ELSE CAN EXIST BEFORE, NOW, OR AFTER⎪. In these cases, power and law are indistinguishable and identical so that it is ambiguous, difficult, or even impossible for actors to decide which is which.

This approach generates two research questions: Firstly, how is *ambiguation* achieved? That is, how and why do actors try to render particular situations or meanings deliberately ambiguous so that it is no longer clear whether power or law is activated? Secondly, how can *disambiguation* be achieved? That is, what are actors' strategies to render such meanings or situations unambiguous so that it becomes clear whether power or law is activated? For example, if A says to B »You must not sit here!« and the context of the utterance does not provide clarifying clues, the utterance simultaneously activates MF^{POWER} and MF^{LAW}. Consequently, B does not know in which meaning field the utterance takes place, i.e. whether he must not sit here because it is A's personal and egoistic intention to forbid it (MF^{POWER}) or because it is a norm's impersonal and legal purpose to forbid it (MF^{LAW}). Maybe B would accept the utterance if it referred to MF^{LAW}, but would reject it if it referred to MF^{POWER}. Accordingly, B may use techniques of disambiguation (see Greimas & Courtés 1979: 91, Grimshaw 1987, Asher & Lascarides 1995) to clarify the ambiguity, e.g. by asking A »What is the justification for your utterance?«, »Who says so?«, or simply »Why?«.

The linguistic insight of overlapping meaning fields and hence of multiple memberships of a meaning in several meaning fields corresponds to certain sociological insights. For example, the concept of *interpenetration* accounts for overlapping systems because certain elements of a system have to be treated as »*common* to *both* systems, not simply allocated to one system or the other« (Parsons 1971: 6, see also Luhmann 1984: 290-293). In a similar vein, Münch (1994) shows that – contrary to the tenet of autopoietic, operatively closed, and therefore disjoint societal systems – economy and morals do intersect and interpenetrate each other in many situations. Kron & Winter (2005) analyze such system interpenetrations using mathematical models and Fuzzy Set Theory. Goffman's concept of *frame ambiguity* deals with situations in which actors are aware that several contextual frames are activated or possible,

[33] In chapter 3.5, ambiguity was discussed in terms of semasiology, i.e. the process in which one signifier has several meanings, namely $\lnot M^1_S \lnot \rightarrow \vdash M^1_M \vdash + \vdash M^2_M \vdash + \vdash M^{etc}_M \vdash$.

but actors are in doubt about which frame is the appropriate or correct one, e.g. social frame vs natural frame, joke frame vs seriousness frame, etc (1974: 302-308). In the cultural domain, the overlap or interpenetration zone corresponds to such concepts as *liminality* (Gennep 1909), *hybrid cultures* (García Canclini 1990), *religious syncretism* (Stewart & Shaw eds. 1994), and *transgender* or *intersexuality*. These concepts refer to actors, domains, or entities that are neither here nor there but instead are »betwixt and between« because different elements are mixed and reassembled so as to form something new. In the zone of overlap or interpenetration, distinct meaning fields (or frames, systems, etc) become indistinguishable because they converge into one meaning (or situation, element, etc) where several meaning fields (or frames, systems, etc) are equally applicable or simultaneously activated and present.

Intersection of subzones I and J (or K and L, M and N, O and P): This is a zone in which MF^{POWER}, MF^{LAW}, and a specific MF^{OTHER} overlap. This, too, is an important zone because it symbolizes the commonalities that exist not only between power and law, but also between power, law, and other phenomena. For example, which meanings are equally shared by the meaning fields of power, law, and art? Or by the meaning fields of power, law, and medicine?

In more general terms, the overlap of several meaning fields is not a special and rare case, but on the contrary, a normal and frequent case. For example, the case in which a particular signifier M_S – such as a word, an utterance, a photo, a garment, a recollection, etc – is a member of only a *single* meaning field is exceptional and uncommon. It seems more persuasive that the most frequent and normal case is the one in which a particular signifier M_S is simultaneously a member of *several* meaning fields. This point is particularly emphasized by Foulkes (1979: 82-90) who argues that, for instance, words are inherently multi-dimensional in that they are simultaneously members of multiple lexical fields because each meaning component of a word corresponds to a particular lexical field. For example, the signifier and word M_S = |PUNISHMENT| belongs at the same time to multiple meaning fields such as MF^{POWER}, MF^{LAW}, $MF^{ACTIONS}$, $MF^{NEGATIVE\ EVENTS}$, etc.[34]

Subzone A without I and J (or without K and L, M and N, O and P): This is the zone where MF^{POWER} and MF^{LAW} overlap, but where a particular MF^{OTHER} is

[34] A more detailed example stems from Foulkes (1979: 82-90, ch. 3). A decompositional intension of the word M_S = |PREACH| yields the following meaning components, expressed in a propositional form of a predicate-argument calculus, M_M = |[COMMUNICATE(X, Y, Z) and ORGANIZED(Z) and ABOUT(Z, K) and RELIGION(K)] and [(COMMUNICATE(X, Y, WANT(X, ACCEPT(Y, Z)))) = E] and [PUBLIC(E)]|. Each meaning component corresponds to a particular lexical field: For instance, the meaning component $M_M{}^{I}$ = |COMMUNICATE(X, Y, Z)| makes M_S = |PREACH| a member of the lexical field of communication $MF^{COMMUNICATION}$ = |$M^1{}_S$ = |TO SPEAK|, $M^2{}_S$ = |TO PREACH|, $M^3{}_S$ = |TO SIGNAL|, $M^4{}_S$ = |TO WRITE|, etc|; the meaning component $M_M{}^{II}$ = |PUBLIC(E)| makes M_S = |PREACH| a member of the lexical field of public address words $MF^{PUBLIC\ ADDRESS\ WORDS}$ = |$M^1{}_S$ = |TO PROCLAIM|, $M^2{}_S$ = |TO PREACH|, $M^3{}_S$ = |TO HERALD|, $M^4{}_S$ = |TO LECTURE|, etc|; the meaning component $M_M{}^{III}$ = |WANT(X, ACCEPT(Y, Z))| makes M_S = |PREACH| a member of the lexical field of $MF^{INTENDED\ HEARER\ REACTION\ WORDS}$ = |$M^1{}_S$ = |TO ASK|, $M^2{}_S$ = |TO PREACH|, $M^3{}_S$ = |TO COMMAND|, $M^4{}_S$ = |TO BEG|, $M^5{}_S$ = |TO PERSUADE|, etc|; and so on.

excluded. For example, are there any meanings that are shared by the meaning fields of power and law, but not by the meaning field of love?

Subzones I, K, M, and O without subzones J, L, N, and P (or vice versa): This represents a zone where MF^{POWER} and MF^{LAW} exclude each other, but where a specific MF^{OTHER} overlaps either with MF^{POWER} or with MF^{LAW}. For example, does the meaning field of law share meanings with the meaning field of religion without also sharing them with the meaning field of power?

Consider the following example from the subzone K (excluding subzones J, L, N, and P), where MF^{OTHER} takes the form of $MF^{SCIENCE}$. The meaning M = |SOCIOLOGICAL LECTURE ABOUT THEORIES OF POWER AND DOMINATION| is simultaneously a member of $MF^{SCIENCE}$ because it makes reference to the scientific discipline of Sociology, to a researcher giving a lecture to students, to theories, etc, and it is also a member of MF^{POWER} because it makes reference to the words ›*power*‹, ›*domination*‹, and probably to other related words such as ›*authority*‹ or ›*punishment*‹, to empirical phenomena and examples such as the USA threatening Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait or parents punishing their children, etc. However, due to the use vs mention-distinction (see chapter 4.3), this meaning M is a 100%-member of the prototypical center of $MF^{SCIENCE}$, but it is a 0%-member of the prototypical center of MF^{POWER} and only, let us say, a 10%-member of MF^{POWER} as a whole.[35]

Subzones Q and R: These are subzones where a particular MF^{OTHER} – such as $MF^{SCIENCE}$, MF^{LOVE}, or $MF^{FLAVORS}$ – does not overlap with MF^{POWER} or with MF^{LAW}. For example, which meanings of the meaning field of medicine are not shared by the meaning field of power or by the meaning field of law?

It is the merit of Prototype Theory and Fuzzy Set Theory to render certain questions obsolete or at least to regard them merely as special and rare cases: does this phenomenon pertain either to power or to science?, where is the distinguishing line that separates law from morals?, was this action obedient or disobedient?, is authority a type of power?. Instead, the prototypical and fuzzy approach can better account for situations of overlap, indistinguishability, ambiguity, fluidity, and liminality: To what degree is this meaning M a member of MF^1 and to what degree is it a member of MF^2?

[35] The meanings in the zone of overlap exhibit a specific prototypicality-membership degree for each meaning field and these prototypicality-membership degrees often differ from each other, e.g. a particular M may have 20% membership in MF^1 and 70% membership in MF^2 (also remember the abovementioned distinction between membership in an MF's *entire field* and in an MF's *prototypical center*). The sum of a meaning's prototypicality-membership degrees may not be exactly 100% but instead may remain below or rise above this value. For example, if a meaning is atypical in both meaning fields, the sum of its membership degrees remains below 100%, e.g. an M may be a member of MF^1 to 20% and of MF^2 to 10%, and if a meaning is prototypical in both meaning fields, the sum of its membership degrees rises above 100%, e.g. an M may be a member of MF^1 to 90% and of MF^2 to 70%. A meaning may also be a 100% member in both meaning fields, either because the meaning field has discrete boundaries and thus binary membership or because the meaning is a highly prototypical member of both meaning fields.

5.6 Methodological and methodical proposals

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In this chapter, I will turn to methodological and methodical questions of how meanings and meaning fields could be analyzed from a sociological, anthropological, semiotic, or linguistic perspective. The arguments presented in this chapter are primarily propositional and programmatic, i.e. they are proposals for a methodological program that I advocate and encourage others to apply in an empirical study. In the following, I will first talk about different types of descriptions, then about the sources of these descriptions, and finally about methods for the collection of these descriptions.

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5.6.1 Types of descriptions: In chapter 5.2.2, I argued that meaning fields are, despite their socio-cognitive constructedness and historical-cultural variation, not completely arbitrary, erratic, or individual, but are collectively shared, standardized, and sedimented to a high degree. The methodological inference is that meaning fields can be *described* just as a table, a word, an idea, or a feeling can be described or (since from a non-dualistic perspective a table, a word, an idea, or a feeling are already descriptions) re-described.

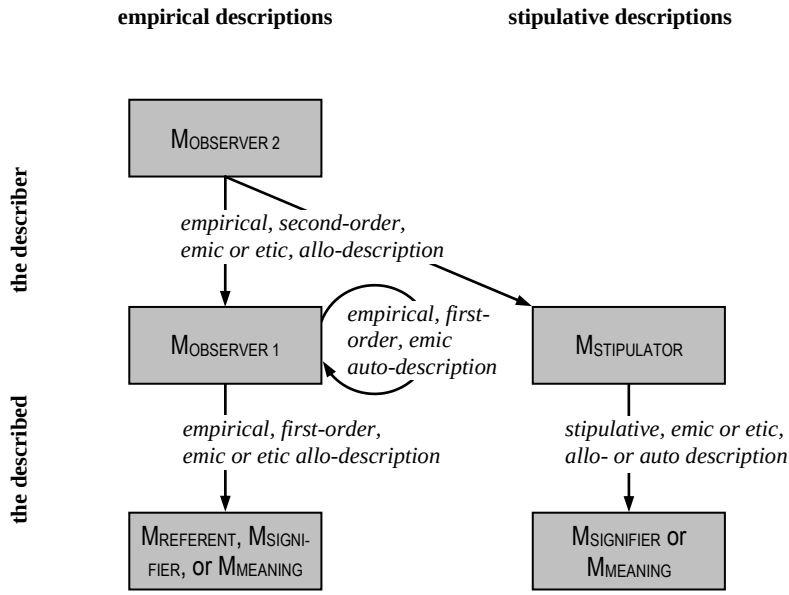
There is the distinction between *the describer* vs *the described*. Modifying and generalizing Maturana's Theorem No. 1 (1970: 8), it can be argued that descriptions are made by a describer who focuses on the described. The described can be a referent $M_{REFERENT}$, a signifier $M_{SIGNIFIER}$, a meaning $M_{MEANING}$, or in the case of second-order descriptions, it can be an observer $M_{OBSERVER}$ or a stipulator $M_{STIPULATOR}$. The describer can take the form of an observer $M_{OBSERVER}$ or of a stipulator $M_{STIPULATOR}$.

An observer makes declarative-referential speech acts by trying to intersubjectively observe $M_{REFERENTS}$, $M_{SIGNIFIERS}$, $M_{MEANINGS}$, $M_{OBSERVERS}$, or $M_{STIPULATORS}$ as they exist in the empirical reality, e.g. │THIS TABLE IS RED│, │HE HAS A LOT OF POWER│, or │THE WORD ›LAW‹ MEANS ›THE SYSTEM OF RULES THAT PEOPLE IN A SOCIETY MUST OBEY‹│. In contrast, a stipulator makes prescriptive-normative speech acts by »idiosyncratically« stipulating how a word or concept should be semantically conceptualized, e.g. │I CONCEIVE A TABLE AS A PIECE OF FURNITURE WITH A FLAT TOP│ or │THE WORD ›LAW‹ IS TO BE USED IN THE SENSE OF A GENERALIZED SYMBOLIC MEDIUM OF COMMUNICATION│. In short, an observer gives *empirical descriptions*, whereas a stipulator gives *stipulative descriptions*.[36]

[36] Empirical descriptions are explicitly directed towards a referent or reality but not, or less, towards meaning and sense of a word or sign. An empirical description *describes or identifies* the existing, constant, regular, or essential properties of some referent or reality. For example, an anthropologist may hold that her study identified the respiratory system, sexual reproduction, and bipedal locomotion as the essential properties of a ›*human being*‹. Stipulative descriptions are explicitly not directed towards a referent or reality but instead only towards meaning and sense of a word or sign. A stipulative description *prescribes or stipulates* a new and idiosyncratic meaning of a word to be used by a particular person for a special purpose, and this new meaning often diverges from the prior standard meaning of the word. For example, a sociologist may stipulate that the word ›*human being*‹ will be used in her study in the sense of a dual mode of existence of a system of interrelated elements, namely as a psychic and organic system (see also Kromrey 1998: ch. 3.5).

In a kind of cross-tabulation of both distinctions – i.e. the describer vs the described, and empirical vs stipulative descriptions – the following figure can be constructed. It depicts several additional types of descriptions, i.e. *first- vs second-order* descriptions, *emic vs etic* descriptions, and *auto- vs allo*-descriptions, all of which I already explained and used in previous chapters.[37]

Figure 5.VI: Different types of descriptions



From a methodological perspective, a particular research phenomenon, topic, or concept may be described and conceived by means of the different types of descriptions depicted in the figure. If the research objective is to accomplish a complex and comprehensive analysis, there are three methodological challenges that need to be tackled.

Firstly, on a very general and broad level, the analysis should be *explicit and clear about the type of description* that it uses or adopts by unequivocally stating and methodologically justifying this particular type of description. A frequent flaw of empirical research is that it is silent or at least considerably unclear about the types of descriptions it uses or adopts. The reader is consequently left alone in figuring out whether the writer's description of some phe-

[37] For first-order vs second-order descriptions and auto- vs allo-descriptions, see footnote 44 (in chapter 2.3.2), and for emic vs etic descriptions, see footnote 8 (in chapter 5.2.1).

nomenon or concept is based on stipulative or empirical, first-order or second-order, emic or etic, or allo- or auto-descriptions.

Secondly, on the level of stipulative vs empirical descriptions, it is often useful to *systematically orient a stipulative description towards empirical descriptions*, especially if the analyst wants to make both theoretical and empirical advances. The objective is to find a stipulative description of a phenomenon that enables and fosters the collection of empirical descriptions of this phenomenon.

Thirdly, on the level of empirical descriptions, the analysis should, particularly in the case of a sociological or ethnographic study, *analyze the multitude of empirical descriptions from different observers* (sometimes called multivocality or polyphony, see Dilger, Guzy & Sieveking eds. 2002). These descriptions should be compared and contrasted so as to analyze their argumentational-semantic content as well as their causal-temporal relations. In a similar vein, Geertz argues for a hermeneutic method in which »one interpretation is piled on top of another, one version of a text (or action treated as text) is compared with another, one set of perceptions is set against another« (1974: 480). In contrast, many Social Science studies are based on solely one type of empirical description, and the most common types are first-order, etic, allo-descriptions.

This begs the question: Which theoretical device is capable of meeting these three abovementioned methodological challenges? My answer is that the concept of *meaning field* is one possible device, among other devices, that rises to this challenge.[38] However, before explaining this in detail, let us look at some other scholarly approaches that fail to meet these challenges because they tend to take into account only one type of description while neglecting or ignoring other types of descriptions.

Approaches based exclusively on first-order descriptions: These approaches may be coined realist, objectivist, essentialist, or identity-based. Their objective is to correctly or adequately describe the research object by discovering its essence, nature, or identity. Linguistic manifestations of such approaches may be found in scholarly texts that bear titles such as ›*The nature of…*‹ or ›*What is…?*‹. The following quotation from a legal sociologist indicates such a first-order approach: »Law is not what people consider to be law« (Rottleuthner 1987: 174). In contrast, a second-order approach would argue in the opposite direction: »Law is what people consider to be law«, where it is

[38] There are other approaches that, to a greater or lesser extent, take into account these three methodological challenges and that proved to be fertile sources for my own approach, e.g. Systems Theory's or Linguistics' concepts of (societal) semantics (e.g. Busse, Niehr & Wengeler eds. 2005, Luhmann ed. 1980, 1982) and symbolically generalized media of communication (Luhmann 1974, 1997: ch. 2), Sociology's and Linguistics' concepts of discourse or narrative (e.g. Greimas & Landowski 1979, Keller 2004), Qualitative Methodology's Grounded Theory (Glaser & Strauss 1967), Ethnosemantics and Ethnoscience (Parkin ed. 1982, Spradley 1979, 1980, Werner & Schoepfle 1987), and Speech Act Theory (Austin 1955, Searle 1969, Wierzbicka 1987).

secondary whether these people are legal professionals, children, physicians, fishermen, cartoon characters, or musicians.

Approaches based exclusively on emic descriptions: These approaches seek to describe a phenomenon from the perspective and in the language of the insider, the participant, the actor, the informant »on the street« and her local, natural, and everyday lifeworld. The analyst tries to explain a phenomenon from »within« by adopting the experience-near, local, and culture-specific concepts and descriptions of the insiders and informants. There are three interrelated problems with such an approach: Firstly, it uncritically and naively adopts emic allo- or auto-descriptions without probing their usefulness and appropriateness for the scientific study at hand. Secondly, it remains imprisoned within the cultural and cognitive horizon of the insiders and informants, such as »an ethnography of witchcraft as written by a witch« (Geertz 1974: 482). Thirdly, it fails to elaborate concepts and descriptions that are universal and abstract enough to be connectable to, or usable for, general disciplinary theory or cross-cultural comparison. An extreme form of such an approach is radical Relativism.

Approaches based exclusively on etic descriptions: These approaches aim at describing a phenomenon from the perspective and in the language of the distant outsider, the observer, or the scientist »in the armchair«. The analyst tries to explain a phenomenon from »outside« by using experience-distant, general, or scientific concepts and descriptions, often according to theoretical-analytical criteria. Etic descriptions are never auto-descriptions, but always allo-descriptions. There are several problems with such an approach: Firstly, it ethnocentrically imposes an external and often inappropriate semantic grid to the local and unruly emic descriptions. As Glaser & Strauss convincingly showed, such a logico-deductive approach forces »round data« into »square categories« (1967: 37). Secondly, it remains insensitive and deaf to the distinctive social features and the emic allo- and auto-descriptions of the insiders and informants, such as an »an ethnography of witchcraft as written by a geometer« (Geertz 1974: 482). An extreme form of such an approach is radical Universalism.

Approaches based exclusively on stipulative descriptions: These approaches are similar to the previous etic approach, but are different in that they are explicitly not directed towards, or based on, some empirical referent. Apart from the same problems that the etic approach exhibits, an additional problem is that stipulative descriptions cannot be evaluated or criticized on empirical grounds in terms of true vs false (Realism's criterion) or viable vs non-viable (Constructivism's criterion), but rather only on theoretical-epistemological grounds in terms of innovative vs unoriginal, methodologically broad vs narrow, consistent vs inconsistent, etc.

So far, I have discussed approaches that fail to meet the three methodological challenges that I mentioned above. In the following, I will show – by using the example of power and law – how a meaning field approach rises to these challenges.

A meaning field approach to power and law proposes *a stipulative description, namely that power and law are to be conceived as meaning fields*. *The objective of this stipulative description is to enable the collection, analysis, and comparison of empirical descriptions of power and law, namely the second-order description of the first-order descriptions of power and law. The reason is that the meanings sedimented in a meaning field are usually first-order descriptions* such as well-known words and expressions, typical statements and themes, common knowledge and conceptualizations, representative objects and artifacts, standardized behaviors and movements, and frequently used images and pictures (see chapter 5.2.2), which may appear as emic or etic descriptions or as auto- or allo-descriptions. This multitude of first-order descriptions can consequently be collected and analyzed by second-order descriptions. As can be seen, a meaning field approach is capable of not only taking into account but also of taking advantage of the multiplicity of empirical descriptions from different observers.

To resume and modify Geertz's vivid example of witchcraft: If the task were to do an ethnography of witchcraft in a peasant community, a meaning field approach would not deliver an ethnography of witchcraft as written by a witch (i.e. a first-order, emic, auto-description), nor an ethnography of witchcraft as written by a local peasant (i.e. a first-order, emic, allo-description), nor an ethnography of witchcraft as written by a geometer (i.e. a first-order, etic, allo-description), but instead it would deliver an ethnography of witchcraft as written by an anthropologist who takes into account, compares, and theorizes about the witch's, the peasant's, and the geometer's ethnographies (i.e. a second-order, etic, allo-description).

Such a meaning field approach circumvents several problems from which the abovementioned approaches suffer: Firstly, radical Realism with its objectivist and essentialist claims is avoided. Secondly, radical Relativism with its naïve and uncritical attitude as well as its cultural imprisonment is avoided. Thirdly, radical Universalism with its ethnocentric and over-generalizing approach is avoided.

The second-order description implied by a meaning field approach may be of two types: On the one hand, it may be more *sociological-anthropological* by asking, for instance, what is the age and gender of the observer?, how does the stipulator conceptualize herself and the others?, what are the structural or personal motivations of a describer?, in which way does the social biography or position of a communicator frame his communications?, how does an observer make inferences and acquire knowledge?, etc.

On the other hand, the second-order description may be more *semiotic-linguistic* by asking, for example, which signs and words do observers use?, what are the arguments and ideas of the discourse participants?, what is the semantic code and blind spot of the describers?, which semantic presuppositions and implications do stipulators use?, what are the communicative speech-act functions of someone's text?, are there internal logical contradictions in a discourse?, what are the semantic gaps and connotations of the observer's descriptions?, etc.

Let us look at some simple examples of how first-order descriptions can be described by means of second-order descriptions. The following table is to be read vertically, i.e. starting from stage 1 of the first-order descriptions down in each column to stage 2 of different second-order descriptions.

Figure 5.VII: Examples of empirical descriptions [39]

				emic description		**etic description**
				auto-description	**allo-description**	
stage 1	**first-order description**			The Chinese judge Mr. Cheng says about himself »I am competent and impartial.«	Another judge in Beijing, Mr. Wu, writes »My idiotic colleague Mr. Cheng has too much power.«	A French legal scholar says in a Chinese TV program »Judges in China do not respect human rights.«
stage 2	**second-order description**	**emic description**	**auto-description**	The Chinese judge Mr. Cheng says »When I said ›*I am competent and impartial*‹, I meant that as a wish, not as an assertion.«	The judge Mr. Wu says »I only wrote about Mr. Cheng's power, but not at all about his musicality or sexuality.«	The French scholar says »When I spoke on Chinese TV, I wanted to introduce the concept of human rights to the Chinese audience.«
			allo-description	A judge from Shanghai says »Mr. Cheng made his statement in English, which has very different connotations than the Chinese translation.«	A Chinese law journal writes »Mr. Wu's comment on Mr. Cheng is a serious accusation that is offensive and completely unfounded.«	A Beijing newspaper writes »The claim of French scholars that ›*Judges in China do not respect human rights*‹ is made 10 times per week.«
		etic description	**allo-description**	A German sociologist says »When Mr. Cheng said ›*I am competent and impartial*‹, he was drunk and talking to another colleague in a night club.«	A Swedish psychologist says »By saying that Mr. Cheng has too much power, Mr. Wu uses a conceptual metaphor of power as substance or possession.«	An Italian linguist says »The scholar's remark grew out of, and is consistent with, the modern and often imperialistic discourse of law and democracy.«

In the following, I will briefly comment on the way in which the three first-order descriptions in the table (top row) are analyzed by the second-order etic allo-descriptions (bottom row).[40]

(1) *Second-order descriptions of first-order emic auto-descriptions*: It is crucial to describe a system as an auto-describing system (Luhmann 1993a: 17f). It is not sufficient that the analyst talks about the research object, but instead the analyst also needs to get the research object to talk about itself

[39] In the table, the columns and rows for *etic auto*-descriptions are left out because, per definition, auto-descriptions cannot be etic, but only emic.

[40] An even more complex analysis would also give third-order etic descriptions of the second-order emic descriptions (the two middle rows in the table).

(Willke 2001: 212). For example, research on legal procedures should encourage judges to talk about themselves. So, if a judge says »I am competent and impartial«, the researcher should not ignore or downplay, but rather collect and analyze this emic auto-description, e.g. by studying the socio-temporal context of the utterance, its connotations, the target audience, the judge's age and social position, the speech act functions of the utterance, etc.

(2) *Second-order descriptions of first-order emic allo-descriptions*: Within the same culture or society, the emic auto-descriptions often stand in contrast to the emic allo-descriptions, e.g. a judge may write »My idiotic colleague Mr. Cheng has too much power«. Apart from giving a second-order description of this utterance, e.g. by using Lakoff & Johnson's conceptual metaphors (1980, 1999: ch. 14), the researcher should also study the interactions and adaptations between the emic auto- and allo-descriptions, e.g. the judge Mr. Cheng may take his colleague's criticism to heart and change his behavior or position.

(3) *Second-order descriptions of first-order etic allo-descriptions*: First-order allo-descriptions can also be made by observers from a different culture, society, or milieu. For example, a French legal scholar may say on Chinese TV that »Judges in China do not respect human rights«. Apart from giving a second-order description, e.g. the scholar's first-order description is part of the modern discourse of law and democracy, there is a special reason why the analyst should take into consideration such first-order etic allo-descriptions, namely the »reflux«-argument: The etic and emic descriptions frequently interact with each other and adapt to each other – particularly because the etic descriptions, e.g. scientific concepts, hypotheses, and theories, »flow back« into the emic descriptions, e.g. common sense concepts, folk theories, and lifeworld reasoning. Consequently, the emic descriptions are often modified by, and conform to, the etic descriptions in the long run. For instance, the French scholar's remark may contribute to introducing and establishing the Western concept of human rights as a typical topic of everyday conversation among the Chinese people (other examples are Marx's popular theory of class struggle or Freud's famous theory of the unconscious).[41]

5.6.2 Sources of descriptions: The gist of the preceding section was that a meaning field approach consists in the second-order description of the first-order descriptions sedimented in meaning fields. This raises a methodological question related to the *empirical sources of first-order descriptions*: Where – i.e. in which systems, situations, texts, interactions, fields, contexts, groups, or actions – can the analyst find first-order descriptions of a particular phenomenon such as power, cooking, love, law, folk music, health, etc? In the following, I will tackle this question by giving some examples of power and law.

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In order to answer this question it is necessary to consider the following two arguments: Firstly, in chapter 3.6 on interpretation, I have argued that almost *any and every* signifier Ms – be it a linguistic sign, a recollection, an

[41] This »reflux«-argument has been advanced, in different guises, by many scholars, e.g. in Sociology by Bourdieu (1982a: 17ff), Giddens' »double hermeneutic« (1984: 284f, 1990: 15f, 1993), or Luhmann (1981: 150f, 1993a: 497), in Philosophy by Lenk (1978: 333f).

action, a smell, an image, a facial expression, a touch, a thought, an acoustic sound, a gesture, etc – can *a priori* activate almost *any and every* meaning M_M – be it a meaning of power, health, love, cooking, law, etc – *if the signifier is put in the appropriate context and to the appropriate use*. Secondly, in chapter 6.2 on activation, I will argue that phenomena such as power or law are universal because they can be activated in *any and all* systems, situations, interactions, fields, contexts, groups, or actions, ranging from an insignificant legal notice on a jam jar, a movie about the Olsen Gang's bank robbery, to the Milosevic trial for war crimes. The conclusion from these two arguments is that there are *no* privileged empirical sources for *all* first-order descriptions of, for example, power and law, because these descriptions are found wherever signifiers, language, signs, concepts, symbols, or categories are found. Since these are nothing but manifestations or derivations of meanings M and since the non-dualistic unity $U_{NON\text{-}DUALISM} = M_{(S\ vs\ M\ vs\ R)}$ discussed in chapters 2.3.1 and 2.5.2 continues to be fully valid, they are consequently monistic and universal.[42]

In the following, I will look at empirical sources of the three types of first-order descriptions (1), (2), and (3) that I presented in the previous section.

(1) *Empirical sources of first-order emic auto-descriptions*: Despite the abovementioned lack of privileged empirical sources for *all* first-order descriptions of power and law, there are nevertheless privileged empirical sources for first-order *emic auto*-descriptions of power and law. The reason is that there are some empirical sources in which first-order emic auto-descriptions of power and law *occur more frequently or are more likely to occur* – usually because processes of institutionalization, professionalization, and specialization have created systems, fields, interactions, situations, groups, or contexts whose main function or intention is to activate the meaning field of power or law as often as possible. For example, emic auto-descriptions of law are frequently and likely to be activated in or by »professional law-actors-or-contexts« such as judges, contracts, law schools, attorneys, the police, court trials, parliaments, statute books, bills, etc, and emic auto-descriptions of power are frequently and likely to be activated in or by »professional power-actors-or-contexts« such as rulers and bosses, hierarchical superior-inferior relationships, political leaders or organizations, military situations, adult-child interactions, etc.

(2) *Empirical sources of first-order emic allo-descriptions*: The aforementioned lack of privileged empirical sources is evident in the case of first-order emic allo-descriptions. Within the same culture, all actors, groups, or organizations and as well as all systems, situations, and interactions – that are not professionalized or specialized in law or power as in case (1) – may deliver emic allo-descriptions of power and law. For example, »non-professional law-actors-or-contexts« such as fishermen, novels, sports clubs, journalists, patient-doctor interactions, or bank managers allo-describe law, and »non-professional

[42] By the same token, Grounded Theory sociologists Glaser & Strauss suggest that we »abandon the illusion that only materials bearing on ›the principal topic‹ […] or its closely related synonyms […] are pertinent to the inquiry«. Instead, they encourage the analyst to stray out into little related and unknown areas so as to increase the array of sources, voices, materials, and data (1967: 170f and ch. VII).

power-actors-or-contexts« such as inferiors, love relationships, comics, children, religious movements, advertisements, or fairy tales allo-describe power. The more famous and typical their descriptions are in a society, the more they are likely to become sedimented in the meaning fields of power and law.[43]

Among these wide-ranging sources, there is one source that tends to be neglected or even disdained by many sociologists and anthropologists: *artistic and fictional expressions* such as novels, movies, paintings, songs, fairy tales, poems, comics, stage plays, etc. They are usually considered to create and present only »imaginary worlds« in contrast to the »real world« existing outside these artistic and fictional expressions. Most sociologists and anthropologists consider their primary scientific task to be the study of the »empirical world« – thus excluding purely logical descriptions or theological principles, personal or moral value judgments, empirically unfalsifiable statements, or first-order descriptions of ontologically doubtful entities such as angels or Atlantis (see Kromrey 1998: ch. 1.2 and 3.5). I largely agree with such a stance, but I do not agree with the following conclusions: the »empirical world« equals the »real world« so that the »imaginary worlds« of artistic and fictional expressions are methodologically excluded or downgraded. It would consequently be unlikely that a sociologist who undertakes an empirical study on marriages and divorces takes into account the »imaginary worlds« of artistic and fictional expressions relating to this topic such as García Márquez's novel *Love in the Time of Cholera*, the legal drama movie *Kramer vs Kramer*, or Frank Sinatra's song *Love and Marriage*.

In contrast to these conclusions, I argue that the »imaginary worlds« of artistic-fictional expressions and the »real world« of everyday life are two sides of the same coin, i.e. of the »empirical world«. Firstly, all these worlds are non-dualistic meanings, namely ⎪WORLDS⎪, which may differentiate into distinct worlds from now on, e.g. ⊢IMAGINARY WORLD⊣, ⊢REAL WORLD⊣, or ⊢EMPIRICAL WORLD⊣. All these worlds use signifiers, language, signs, symbols, categories, and distinctions, which makes these worlds equally eligible for an empirical study, e.g. a meaning field study. Secondly, the imaginary world and the real world permanently influence each other.

On the one hand, *the real world of »what is« influences the imaginary world of »what could be«* because artistic and fictional expressions have only one source and reference point, namely the real world that the artist or producer lives in and experiences. Consequently, *the imaginary world must be based on, or imitate, the real world*. For example, Hemingway's literary worlds necessarily stem from, and are constructed on the basis of, his own real world of

[43] Roy uses a similarly broad range of empirical sources. His innovative principle is to emphasize sources whose descriptions are dedicated to children, e.g. children's dictionaries, catechisms, school books for pupils, fairy tales, novels for children, etc (2004: 8ff, 330). From a methodological perspective, descriptions for children are especially interesting and fertile because they have been deliberately and painstakingly chosen by adults with a goal of transmitting the »right« or »important« descriptions prevalent in a particular culture, e.g. correct use of the language, promotion of societal values, transmission of relevant knowledge, inculcation of moral standards, etc.

a U.S.-American writer and male human being because he never lived in the real world of a Yanomamö woman, a sword-fish, a medieval monk, or an extraterrestrial. Even if Hemingway had created literary worlds about a Yanomamö woman, a sword-fish, a medieval monk, or an extraterrestrial, he inevitably would have had to »hemingwayize« them – e.g. westernize, contemporize, or anthropomorphize them – because his sole source and reference point was his own real world that he – just like any other actor – could never escape. This is also why even the most bizarre and extreme science fiction or experimental movies or novels remain firmly grounded in the real world of their directors or writers, which is situated in a particular cultural-historical context and which activates typical cultural-historical meanings, topoi, communication modes, values, motives, scripts, arguments, metaphors, etc. Imaginary worlds and the real world share a highly similar social or semiotic grammar. The preceding arguments are relevant with regard to a special evaluation criterion for the imaginary worlds of artistic and fictional expressions: their *plausibility, meaningfulness, and credibility*. The novelist Clancy succinctly holds that »the difference between fiction and reality is that fiction makes sense« (see Dowd 2001: 39). The producer-artist and the consumer-audience seek and expect a high degree of plausibility, meaningfulness, and credibility of the imaginary worlds (even if it is the meaningfulness of the meaninglessness). The imaginary worlds must somehow reflect, and be based on, the real world in the sense that the spectator or reader must have the impression that an event in the imaginary world could also happen in the real world. Often, events in imaginary worlds must be, and are, more plausible, credible, and meaningful than events in the real world, which produces absurd, incredible, and meaningless events.[44]

On the other hand, *the imaginary world of »what could be« influences the real world of »what is«* because artistic and fictional expressions often provide literary or cinematographic role models, scenarios, utopias, motives, ideals, and inspirations that are subsequently adopted and lived out by actors in the real world. Luhmann emphasizes that artistic-fictional expressions produce world contingency because they serve the function of rendering visible and attractive alternative possible worlds by contrasting the real world with the imaginary world (1986: 624f, 1982: 47).[45]

[44] A popular science book on self-therapy infers that »reality rule and obstacle # 1« is that »sometimes reality makes no sense« because real-world events often seem absurd, unintelligible, meaningless, incredible, or bizarre (Farrell 2003: 56).

[45] There is a good example of how an imaginary world (i.e. the movie *Jurassic Park*) served as a cautionary tale to inform the real world (i.e. research and rules in science). Biologists analyzed drops of water, which were sealed in crystals 200 million years ago, so as to ascertain whether micro-organisms had survived in them. The awareness of the risk that these micro-organisms might escape and threaten humans became acute on the basis of the movie *Jurassic Park*. Biologist Vreeland says »Jurassic Park turned out essentially the way it did, with the animals getting out, and these things running amok and eating everything. So there was a tremendous push on us [the biologists] to make sure that what we were producing didn't get out to the whole world and couldn't hurt everything« (quoted in the documentary *Time* by BBC Four, part 3, director Sophie Harris, 2007, 43rd minute).

This excursion to artistic and fictional expressions – as a special empirical source of first-order emic allo-descriptions of power and law – leads me to the methodological conclusion that both »imaginary worlds« and the »real world« are two sides of the same coin, namely of the »empirical world«, and should consequently be taken into account by sociological or anthropological studies. This applies particularly to a socio-semiotic or socio-semantic meaning field approach that focuses on signs, meanings, words, symbols, language, signifiers, and categories. In this case, the distinction between »imaginary worlds« and the »real world« is particularly problematic and irrelevant, which makes me wonder whether it should not be abandoned altogether. In any case, artistic and fictional expressions should be granted a more prominent methodological place in sociological and anthropological studies.[46]

(3) *Empirical sources of first-order etic allo-descriptions*: This type of description is usually given by scientists, technicians, or foreigners using an etic language and perspective that is not shared by the local and emic actors. The analysis of these first-order etic allo-descriptions is important due to the »reflux«-argument mentioned above. In the case of power and law, such descriptions may stem from, for instance, sociologists, anthropologists, philosophers, political scientists, legal scholars, economists, historians, etc.[47]

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5.6.3 Methods for the collection of descriptions: Once the preceding step of locating the empirical sources of first-order descriptions has been accomplished, the next question comes up that relates to the *methods of collecting first-order descriptions*: how – i.e. by which methods – can the analyst access and collect these descriptions?

In order to discuss this question, I will distinguish two research situations: In the more atypical research situation 1, the analyst already has the descriptions and therefore does not have to collect them, whereas in the more typical research situation 2, the analyst does not yet have the descriptions and therefore has to collect them. Let us look at both cases.

Research situation 1: This situation is likely to occur in research about the analyst's own culture or epoch which the analyst intimately knows as a socialized member and participating insider, e.g. a Russian sociologist studying Russian society, and it is also likely to occur in research about empirical domains that have been well studied and where reliable data exists, e.g. the Third Reich is considered by many historians to be extremely well documented or even over-researched.

How can the analyst methodologically profit from research situation 1, in which the analyst already has the desired data and does not have to collect it? A possible answer is to *cast new, distancing, or strange light on old, accepted, or familiar data*, e.g. by conceiving of love not as a feeling or relation, but as a symbolically generalized medium of communication (see Luhmann 1982) or

[46] In a similar vein, the social anthropologist Spradley (1979: 201) and the sociologists Glaser & Strauss (1967: 169f) argue that fiction and novels are rich and fertile sources of cultural themes and relevant categories.

[47] In their Sociological Semantics approach, Roy (2004: 8ff, 330) and Pharo (2001a) similarly use philosophical texts to discern the meaning of certain key terms and arguments.

by conceiving of power not as an ability or action, but as a meaning field. As Proust says: »the only real voyage […] would not be to seek new landscapes, but to have new eyes« (1922: 762). Similar proposals have been made by other scholars and approaches. For example, Luhmann argues for a theory-based observation of well-known facts because many sociologists do not even consider the possibility of taking empirically undisputed and validated data as their starting point and then examining it by means of theory so as to illuminate new and unusual facets of the data (1997: 41f, Luhmann & Guibentif 2000: 235f). The Sociology of the Unmarked and Ethnomethodology argue similarly because they focus on the unmarked, ordinary, and familiar things in the social world (and not on marked, extraordinary, or unknown things) so as to theorize, deconstruct, or explain them (see Journal of Mundane Behavior, Brekhus 1998 and 2000, Garfinkel ed. 1967). Social Anthropology has a related perspective in which anthropologists often seek to estrange and defamiliarize their own culture (Hirschauer & Amann eds. 1997; see also the body rituals among the »Nacirema«, i.e. ›*American*‹ spelled backwards, in Miner 1956).

Research situation 2: This situation, in which the analyst does not yet have the descriptions and therefore has to collect them, is likely to occur in research about cultures or epochs which are distinct from those of the analyst, e.g. in cross-cultural or historical studies, and it is also likely to occur in research about empirical domains that have hardly been explored and that thus constitute research gaps, e.g. there is no sociological research conducted on the small German village Nienhagen.

A typical Social Science approach to this research situation 2 is to use *empirical methods* (in contrast to purely logical, theoretical, normative, or theological methods). What is fundamental for such empirical methods is not so much whether they are systematic or unsystematic or whether they are complex or simple, but rather whether they fulfill the function of intentionally changing a prior situation, in which the analyst does not have the desired data or descriptions, to a subsequent situation, in which the analyst does have the desired data or descriptions.[48]

Contrary to mainstream Social Science, I argue that there are two different but equally valuable types of empirical methods, namely *extrospection* and *introspection*. Extrospection is certainly the more widespread and preferred method, whereas introspection has received comparatively little attention or is even despised by many social scientists. So as to counterbalance this methodological bias, I will be deliberately brief on extrospection in the following discussion and instead put special emphasis on the method of introspection.

Extrospection is the observation of the |EXTERNAL WORLD| that lies outside the individual observer (or psychic system or scientist) and that is usually also observable by other observers. Extrospection allows for »interobservability« or intersubjectivity because different observers are (in principle capable of) sharing or giving the same description of something in the external world.

[48] This conceptualization is based on Kromrey's definition of a *method* as a procedure to get from a clearly defined starting point to a clearly defined end point (1998: 199).

Since intersubjectivity – often seen as a preliminary step towards objectivity – is an important methodological criterion for empirical research, extrospection has become the principal method in the Social Sciences.

The external world that extrospection focuses on is primarily made up of external-communicative signifiers (see chapter 3.2.1), e.g. material objects and actors, utterances and texts, actions and signs, acoustic sounds and smells, facial expressions and gestures, visual images and music, etc. The major empirical methods in the Social Sciences based on extrospection are interviews or surveys, participant observation or field work, content analyses, group discussions, and experiments.

Introspection is the observation of the |INTERNAL WORLD| that lies inside the individual observer (or psychic system or scientist) and that is not observable by other observers. Hence, introspection does not allow for »inter-observability« or intersubjectivity in the sense that different observers are in principle incapable of sharing or giving the same description of something in the internal world. This is why introspection has often mistakenly been considered speculative or unscientific. This has been a main reason for neglecting or rejecting introspection as an empirical method in the Social Sciences (especially in empiricist and behaviorist approaches, but even in standard methodological textbooks, introspection is not discussed).

In introspection, the analyst engages in auto-observation by observing his or her own internal world. This internal world is primarily made up of internal-psychic signifiers (see chapter 3.2.1), e.g. thoughts, recollections, feelings, intentions, dreams, ideas, etc. For example, if an Australian semiotician conducts a study on power or law in Australia, he may remember past experiences relating to power or law such as his divorce proceedings at court or the admiral's commands during his military service; he may use his linguistic intuition and competence about power- and law-related issues such as the connotations of the word ›*obedience*‹ or the semantic acceptability of a sentence like ›*He wants to sue his dog*‹; he may examine his stereotypes and feelings relating to situations of power and law such as a typical parental punishment for children or a judge's reprieve of a prisoner; he may study his own intuitive lifeworld judgments about power- and law-related notions such as justice, legality vs illegality, domination, or disobedience; etc.

Introspection is particularly suitable for research about the analyst's own culture or epoch which the analyst intimately knows as a socialized member and participating insider, e.g. a Russian sociologist studying Russian society. In this case, the methodological object vs subject distinction becomes fuzzy, inapplicable, or irrelevant because the object of research – i.e. the researchee, such as Russian society with its people, relations, organizations, etc – contains the subject of research – i.e. the researcher, such as the Russian sociologist. Since the research subject (or researcher) becomes a part of the research object (or researchee), the following conclusion imposes itself: If the research subject (or researcher) analyzes the research object (or researchee), the research sub-

ject (or researcher) also analyzes himself or herself, i.e. the research subject (or researcher) automatically engages in auto-analysis or introspection.[49]

Accordingly, in this case the analyst has the methodological »permission« or even »obligation« to use the method of introspection. Many linguists even argue that introspection and intuition are necessary and inevitable, either because they are an unavoidable starting point for any study or because extrospective methods are hardly applicable for the study at hand (e.g. Lehrer 1974: 5f, Schlobinski 2005, Wierzbicka 1985: 43, 211). This is why the semanticist Wierzbicka speaks of »the only firm ground there is in semantics: the *terra firma* of one's own deep intuitions« (1985: 43). Even outside Linguistics, introspection is being sought to be re-established as a modern research method in the Social Sciences (see Journal für Psychologie 1999, Vermersch 1999, and different publications of G. Kleining).

Two caveats must be made with regard to the empirical method of introspection: Firstly, introspection should not take the analyst's auto-observations at face value in an uncritical and naïve manner. Instead, it should include a distanced, critical, and reflexive second-order observation of the auto-observations so as to take into consideration possible biases, blind spots, regularities, gaps, etc. Secondly, introspection should not be the only method, but should be followed or accompanied by the method of extrospection. This is important so as to compare and cross-check the results obtained by both methods.

[49] The argument that observation often implies auto-observation applies to all situations in which the observing system is part of the observed system, particularly to sociological theories of society or physical theories of the world. For similar problems of observation, see Spencer Brown (1969: 105), Jokisch (1996: ch. IV), and Luhmann (1984, 1997).
A formal-mathematical analogy, which may be illustrated by Venn-diagrams, may help to illuminate these arguments: The classical subject-object distinction corresponds to two disjoint sets (e.g. two non-overlapping box-diagrams) because the researcher and the researchee are separate entities. In contrast, if a Russian sociologist studies Russian society, the subject-object distinction fails because the researcher is part of the researchee so that the researchee is a set (e.g. a big box-diagram) that contains the researcher as a sub-set (e.g. a smaller box-diagram). Accordingly, Kosko argues from a Fuzzy Set perspective that every set X contains its sub-sets x_1, x_2, x_3, etc, but he adds that every subset such as x_1 also *partially and to some degree* contains the whole set X (1993: 58f). In other words, the researcher or subject *partially and to some degree* contains the researchee or object.

6. Activation of Meanings and Meaning Fields

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The couple John and Mary are also colleagues who share an office. Since Mary is a smoker and John dislikes smoking, he wants to get her to stop smoking in the office. John carefully reflects on which meaning field he could communicatively activate in order to reach his goal.

Maybe the meaning field of money?
»Listen, Mary, I'll give you 100 bucks if you stop smoking in the office.«
Or should he activate the meaning field of power?
»Either you stop smoking or you get a beating!«
Or maybe the meaning field of love?
»If you really loved me, you wouldn't smoke in the office.«
And what if he activated the meaning field of law?
»§12/3 of the Labor Law Act stipulates that it is forbidden to smoke in offices.«
Or maybe the meaning field of science?
»According to scientific studies, it is proven that smoking causes lung cancer.«[1]

In the preceding chapter, I intentionally adopted a rather static and structuralist perspective in the study of meanings and meaning fields. In this chapter, I will complement this perspective with a more *processual, operational, or interactional* perspective by analyzing how meanings and meaning fields are activated. Accordingly, the concept of *activation* will play a crucial role in this analysis as it refers to the actual appearance or use of meanings and meaning fields in a concrete situation, system, or discourse.

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6.1 Medium, Forms, and Meaning Fields

In chapter 5.1, meaning fields MF were conceptualized as an intermediate meso-level between the micro-level of a single meaning M^1 and the macro-level of the meaning universe $\Sigma M^{1,2,3,etc}$, summarized in the formula $M^1 < MF < \Sigma M^{1,2,3,etc}$. I also briefly proposed viewing the meaning universe as a meaning medium (see Luhmann 1984: ch. 2, 1997: ch. 2.I, see also the discussion of the medium-form approach in chapters 2.3.1 and 2.4.2). In the following, I will resume this discussion by modifying Luhmann's medium vs form approach so as to make it applicable to a meaning field approach.

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6.1.1 Medium vs forms: The medium vs form distinction can be explained by analogy. The medium is the *air*, forms are *sounds* of the air, e.g. the wind roaring or a whistle blowing, and elements are the *molecules* of the air.

There are two similarities between the medium and the forms: (1) Both *consist of the same elements*, e.g. the air molecules, and (2) both *exist simultaneously and parallelly* because the medium is not destroyed, but remains stable while continually bringing out new forms.

[1] The example is inspired by Luhmann's theory of symbolically generalized media of communication that render the occurrence of improbable actions more probable (1974, 1997).

There are also several differences between the medium and the forms: (1) As for the elements, e.g. the air molecules, the medium's elements exist in a *large or infinite number*, whereas the forms' elements exist only in a *selected and small number*. (2) The elements of the medium are *inactivated*, i.e. they are in a latent, possible, unused, and potential state, whereas the elements of the forms are *activated*, i.e. they are in a manifest, actualized, used, and realized state. Consequently, the medium is a pool of possibilities, similar to the semiotic concept of paradigm, whereas the forms are instances of selection, similar to the semiotic concept of syntagm. (3) The elements of the medium are *uncoupled*, i.e. they are not or only loosely linked, whereas the elements of the forms are *coupled*, i.e. they are firmly structured and exhibit a particular order. (4) The inference to be drawn from the preceding points is that the medium has *no shape*, e.g. the air is an amorphous mass, whereas the forms have a particular *shape*, e.g. the air may take the shape of a tornado vortex. Accordingly, the medium is often *imperceptible*, e.g. one usually cannot see or smell air, whereas the forms are *perceptible*, e.g. one can see a tornado vortex or hear a whistle blowing. (5) The medium is *temporally stable and long-lived* because during the process of bringing out the forms, the medium is not consumed or destroyed: Firstly, because only a tiny part of the medium's elements is put into a form; secondly, because the medium's elements merely change their status from being inactivated or uncoupled to being activated or coupled; and thirdly, because after the form's extinction its elements rejoin the medium. In contrast, the forms are *temporally unstable and short-lived* because their elements easily deactivate or decouple so that the forms quickly disappear and the elements become part of the medium again.

There is hence an ongoing process of activating and coupling the elements and of deactivating and decoupling the elements. The process of activation and coupling, i.e. the medium bringing out new forms, and the process of deactivation and decoupling, i.e. the form reintegrating into the medium, have the function of reproducing and rejuvenating the medium: On the one hand, without activating and coupling the medium's elements, the medium would become atrophic and forgotten. On the other hand, without deactivating and decoupling the form's elements, the medium would decrease due to a loss of elements. Accordingly, both processes, i.e. the process of transforming the medium into forms and the process of transforming the forms into the medium, are complementary and concurrent.

Luhmann applied his medium vs form approach to different empirical domains or phenomena, e.g. language, money, power, causality, etc. One of these applications is the conceptualization of meaning as medium and as form, i.e. *meaning medium* vs *meaning forms* (Luhmann 1984: ch. 2, 1997: ch. 1.III).[2] Both the meaning medium and the meaning forms are constituted of the same

[2] Similar, but less elaborated propositions had already been made in Linguistics, e.g. Greimas argued that the *universe of immanence* and the *universe of manifestation* are two different modes of the existence of meaning (1966: 104) or that meaning exists in a dual mode as a *virtual system* and as an *accomplished process* (1969: 41-44, 1970: 16).

type of element, namely the meanings M. The meaning medium is a temporally stable and all-encompassing universe of inactivated or uncoupled meanings, e.g. M^1 = ⎪MAN⎪, M^2 = ⎪TO SING⎪, M^3 = ⎪GOOD⎪, M^4 = ⎪THE⎪, M^5 = ⎪HERE⎪, M^6 = ⎪NOT⎪, M^7 = ⎪CAPITALISM⎪, M^8 = ⎪TO BE⎪, etc. Since the meaning medium comprises a large or even infinite number of meanings, it may also be called the meaning universe $\Sigma M^{1,2,3,etc}$ as proposed in chapter 5.1. The meaning forms are temporally unstable and small selections of activated or coupled meanings that occur in a particular and unique situation such as a newspaper article in a Marxist journal from April 6th entitled M = ⎪CAPITALISM IS NOT GOOD⎪ or Maria's thought M = ⎪THE MAN SINGS⎪.

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6.1.2 Meaning fields as medium: How can we integrate the concept of meaning field into the previous discussion? There are two different approaches that lead, however, to the same answer.

The first approach takes as its starting point the argumentation presented in chapter 5.1, which I will briefly summarize: I have argued that meaning fields MF can be conceptualized as an intermediate meso-level between the micro-level of an individual meaning M^1 and the macro-level of the meaning universe or meaning medium $\Sigma M^{1,2,3,etc}$. The meaning universe is composed of meaning fields and the meaning fields are composed of meanings. In chapter 5.4, I said that the mathematical principle of *self-similarity* can be applied, which states that an object is self-similar if the macro-structure of the object's whole is similar to the micro-structure of one of the object's parts. I went on to argue that meaning fields are self-similar because the structure of a meaning field is similar to the structure of the meaning field's parts, namely the meanings. On the basis of this argumentation, it is now possible to apply the same principle of self-similarity to a higher level. That is, instead of arguing that the meso-level of meaning fields MF is self-similar to its parts, namely to the micro-level of meanings M, it might as well be argued that the macro-level of the meaning universe or meaning medium $\Sigma M^{1,2,3,etc}$ is self-similar to its parts, namely to the meso-level of the meaning fields MF. This reasoning makes it possible to transfer the principal properties of the meaning medium to meaning fields. Therefore it may be claimed that meaning fields are a kind of meaning medium, i.e. they are not *the* meaning medium or the *global* meaning medium in the sense of the meaning universe $\Sigma M^{1,2,3,etc}$, but they are *a* meaning medium or a *local* meaning medium.

The second approach takes as its starting point Constructivism's principle of *observer-dependency* presented in chapter 5.2.1. Several system-theoretic authors – such as Luhmann (1995: 176), Krämer (1998: ch. 2.2), and Khurana (1998: 132) – emphasize that it depends on the observer's perspective and intentions whether »something« is viewed as a medium or as a form. Whereas one observer may consider some phenomenon δ to be a particular form of a medium, another observer may regard the same phenomenon δ as a medium that may bring out forms. Consequently, it is sometimes useful to generate a medium-form-chain, i.e. from one perspective a medium *f* produces forms such as α, β, γ, δ, ε, ζ, η, θ, etc, but from another perspective, δ can be seen as a medium that produces forms such as *а*, *б*, *в*, *г*, *д*, *е*, *ж*, *з*, etc, and so on. Analo-

gous to this reasoning, from one perspective the meaning universe is a medium producing forms such as meaning fields, but from another perspective these meaning fields can be seen as a medium producing forms such as concrete utterances, actual thoughts, particular texts, etc. In short, meaning fields are forms of the meaning medium or meaning universe, but from a different perspective they are also a medium bringing out proper forms.

Both approaches lead to the same answer: *Meaning fields can be seen as a type of meaning medium* with many of the properties of a medium that were presented above. This applies particularly to the properties expressed in the aforementioned similarities (1) and (2) as well as in the differences (2), (4), and (5). For example, the meaning field of law MF^{LAW} is a meaning medium because it comprises many and inactivated meanings such as M^1 = ⎪LEGAL vs ILLEGAL⎪, M^2 = ⎪JUDGE⎪, M^3 = ⎪TO SUE SOMEONE⎪, M^4 = ⎪CONTRACT⎪, M^5 = ⎪PROHIBITION⎪, M^6 = ⎪TO SENTENCE SOMEONE⎪, M^7 = ⎪HUMAN RIGHTS⎪, M^8 = ⎪VALID vs INVALID⎪, M^9 = ⎪NORM⎪, M^{10} = ⎪DIVORCE⎪, etc and it can produce particular meaning forms in terms of selected and activated meaning syntagms, e.g. Alicia's thought M_S = ⎪HE IS BEING SUED FOR DIVORCE BY HIS WIFE⎪ or Martin's utterance up to now M_S = ⎪THIS IS A CONTRACT⎪. Both the meaning field and its meaning forms consist of the same type of elements, i.e. meanings M such as M^3 = ⎪TO SUE SOMEONE⎪, M^4 = ⎪CONTRACT⎪, M^{10} = ⎪DIVORCE⎪, etc. Whereas the status of these meanings is inactivated or uncoupled in the meaning field, it is activated or coupled in the meaning forms. The meaning field is temporally stable and long-lived, e.g. MF^{LAW} is rather constant and changes slowly, while the meaning forms are temporally unstable and short-lived, e.g. Martin's utterance M_S = ⎪THIS IS A CONTRACT⎪ disappears as soon as it is uttered and its meanings immediately rejoin the medium. Both meaning fields and meaning forms thus exist simultaneously and parallelly.

6.1.3 Social Science applications: The medium vs form approach, and its translation into the meaning fields vs meaning forms approach, can be applied to a wide range of concepts and phenomena. In the following, I will take a closer look at the example of power and law.

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Since I conceptualized power and law as meaning fields, it is possible to apply the medium vs form approach to them. *Power and law exist simultaneously in a dual mode: Power and law are meaning media, i.e. meaning fields, and power and law are meaning forms, i.e. activated or coupled meanings such as meanings up to now or from now on.*[3]

[3] This conceptualization is based on Luhmann's medium vs form approach that views power, law, art, money, love, etc as media and forms (1974, 1997: ch. 2.X, 1975, 1982, 2000). But apart from this fundamental and common conceptualization, there are some differences between Luhmann's and my approach: Firstly, Luhmann does not use the concept of *meaning field* and thus does not conceptualize meaning fields as media. The closest he gets to the concept of meaning field is his concept of societal semantics (ed. 1980). Yet he does not link this concept to his medium vs form approach. Secondly, Luhmann views power, law, art, money, truth, love, etc as media of communication, whereas my approach is broader in that it views power and law as media of *communication and psyche*. Thirdly, even though Luhmann applies the medium vs form approach to power (e.g. 1975, 2000) and law (1993a, 1997: ch. 2.X), I find this application and treatment rudimentary and unclear.

The advantage of such a medium vs form approach, applied to power, law, or other concepts and phenomena, is that it invites the analyst to pursue two different but complementary lines of investigation.

Firstly, focusing on the meaning medium, the analyst can pursue a *structural-semantic analysis* of the meaning fields of, for example, power and law. This approach was adopted in the preceding chapter 5. For instance, which meanings does the meaning field of power comprise?, what is the center and periphery of the meaning field of law?, in which meanings do the meaning fields of power and law overlap?, what is the particularity of the Western meaning field of law in contrast to non-Western meaning fields of law?, etc.

Secondly, focusing on the meaning forms, the analyst can pursue a *processual-pragmatic analysis* of the actually used and activated meanings of, for example, power and law, as found in utterances, interactions, thoughts, etc. This approach is adopted in the present chapter 6. For instance, how do actors, systems, or discourses activate the meaning field of power?, when and in which situations is the meaning field of law activated and selected but not the meaning field of power?, why does someone interpret a particular signifier as a member of the meaning field of law?, etc.

The conceptualization of power and law as meaning media and meaning forms is not an emic or empirical description, but it is an etic and stipulative description (see chapter 5.6.1). Comparing both types of approaches, the etic and stipulative description suggests some surprising and counter-intuitive properties of power and law that stand in sharp contrast to the well-known and widely accepted properties of power and law proposed by the emic and empirical description. The conceptualization of power and law as meaning media and meaning forms is a way of casting new, distancing, and strange light on an old, accepted, and familiar topic or conceptualization.

(1) The emic and common sense perspective considers many power- and law-phenomena to be *substantial and possessive* because they are seen as some kind of substance that can be possessed and that is located somewhere. This also implies that its possession can be gained, lost, exchanged, or transferred by actors and that its location can be sought, determined, or avoided.

With regard to power, examples can be found in expressions like ›*to have power*‹, ›*to be a power holder*‹, ›*power-hungry politicians*‹, ›*to be powerless*‹, ›*to seize power in a military coup*‹, ›*to lose power*‹, ›*to empower someone*‹. The substantialist and possessive approach can also be found in the case of law, especially in concepts such as obligation, right, prohibition, license, exemption, entitlement, duty, etc. Examples are expressions like ›*to have the obligation to pay taxes*‹, ›*who lost his rights?*‹, ›*to lift the ban on drugs*‹, ›*She's weighed down with obligations*‹, ›*to distribute the duties among other people*‹, ›*to get a license*‹, or ›*to expropriate someone*‹. In the Social Sciences, too, many theoretical and empirical studies adopt this emic and common sense view of power and law as something substantial and possessive. From a second-order perspective, this first-order conceptualization of power and law phenomena in terms of substance and possession can be understood as a conceptual metaphor in the sense of Lakoff & Johnson (1980, 1999).

In contrast, the etic and stipulative conceptualization of power and law as meaning media and meaning forms views power and law as *insubstantial and dispossessive*: Power and law phenomena in terms of meaning forms are not substances and cannot be possessed because they are temporally unstable and ephemeral forms that quickly disappear after they appear. Power and law phenomena in terms of meaning fields can only be activated, but as soon as one tries to grasp or hold power and law as meaning forms, they die away like a melody in the wind because they become inactivated and vanish. In order to fully apply this reasoning to power and law, I will replace the abovementioned substantialist and possessive expressions with insubstantialist and dispossessive expressions that allow only for power and law to be activated or not to be activated, e.g. ›*He activated the meaning field of power*‹, ›*The meaning of obligation remained inactivated*‹, ›*The discourse did not activate the meaning field of law*‹, ›*Her utterance activated the meaning of threat*‹.

(2) The emic and common sense perspective considers power to be *quantitative and measurable*, i.e. since power is a substance and can be possessed, it is seen to exist in a particular quantity that can be measured. Linguistic examples can be found in expressions like ›*to accumulate power*‹, ›*to have a lot of power*‹, ›*a balance of power*‹, ›*to divide power*‹, ›*power is unevenly distributed*‹, ›*superpower*‹, etc.

Even many Social Science approaches adhere to this view of power as something quantitative and measurable (e.g. Popitz 1992: ch. I.1 and II.1, Parsons 1963). In contrast, if power and law are seen as meaning fields and forms, they cannot be quantified or measured in terms of a substance that some actor possesses. The sole quantitative or measurable property of power and law is the frequency with which they are activated by means of the meaning forms.

(3) The emic and common-sense perspective views power as *finite and scarce*, i.e. since power is seen as a quantifiable substance which can be possessed, power exists in a limited quantity that is short in supply. Examples can be found in colloquial expressions like ›*to compete for power*‹, ›*to be at the zenith of one's power*‹, ›*to lose power*‹, or in the figurative sentence ›*Democrats run out of power in Trenton*‹ in a New York Times article (Kocieniewski 2006). Similar reasoning may be applied to certain law phenomena such as rights, licenses, entitlements, quotas, etc. Such a view corresponds exactly to what Foster (1965) called the image of the limited good, i.e. the folk perspective that the desired things in life such as land, wealth, power, love, honor, status, security, etc exist in finite quantity and are constantly short in supply. Even in the Social Sciences, power is often seen as limited and insufficient, as in Parson's conceptualization of power as a scarce symbolic medium of interchange (Chernilo 2002: 436).

In contrast, if power and law are viewed as meaning fields and meaning forms, they are *infinite and abundant*: Actors or discourses can activate and use the meaning field of power and law as often as they wish without ever »running out of« power or law and without power or law ever becoming scarce. From a semiotic perspective, power and law are like language, signs, and symbols because they are never short in supply in society and can be

created or used without being used up (for a similar view, see Spradley 1979: 95f). Contrary to economic reasoning, but in accordance with the medium vs form approach, the more the meaning fields of power and law are activated and used, the more they are maintained and reproduced. The more power and law are communicatively activated, the more actors get to know them and get accustomed to using them. However, if power and law are not activated and used, they do not remain intact, but rather decrease, fade, get worn out or forgotten, such as the historic meanings M = │AN OUTLAW│, M = │TITHES│, or M = │THE RIGHT TO FEUD│ from the meaning field of law.[4]

(4) Since the emic and common sense perspective views power and many law phenomena as substances that can be possessed, it follows that they are often seen as *private or exclusive*. That is, power and many law phenomena such as rights or obligations are located in a particular place or held by a particular actor so that other places or actors are excluded from this power, right, or obligation. Examples can be found in expressions such as ›*power resides in Washington*‹, ›*the judge's right*‹, ›*her power*‹, ›*the power of the Mafia*‹, ›*it is my obligation to do that*‹, ›*the power lies in the hands of the king*‹, ›*he got permission*‹, etc.

In contrast, if power and law are conceptualized as meaning fields, they are necessarily *public and shared*, because they can be activated by anyone who is sufficiently socialized into a culture and cognitively fit. Even though a three-year-old child and a Yanomamö Indian may be unlikely to activate the contemporary Western meaning field of law, most adult Europeans can easily activate it. And the question of activation does not in principle depend on whether or not the actor is lying (e.g. someone claims to have the permission to smoke in the hospital) or whether or not the activation produces the desired perlocutionary effect (e.g. the command does not lead to obedience).

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6.2 Activation and Non-Activation

The preceding chapter has left one question unanswered: What is the *process or mechanism that transforms or brings the medium into the forms, i.e. the meaning field into the meaning forms*? The answer that I propose in this chapter is that this process or mechanism is *activation*, which allows a *meaning medium or meaning field to produce meaning forms*. In the following, I will first talk about the phases of activation and then about non-activation as the antonym of activation. As usual, the arguments will be illustrated by the examples of power and law.

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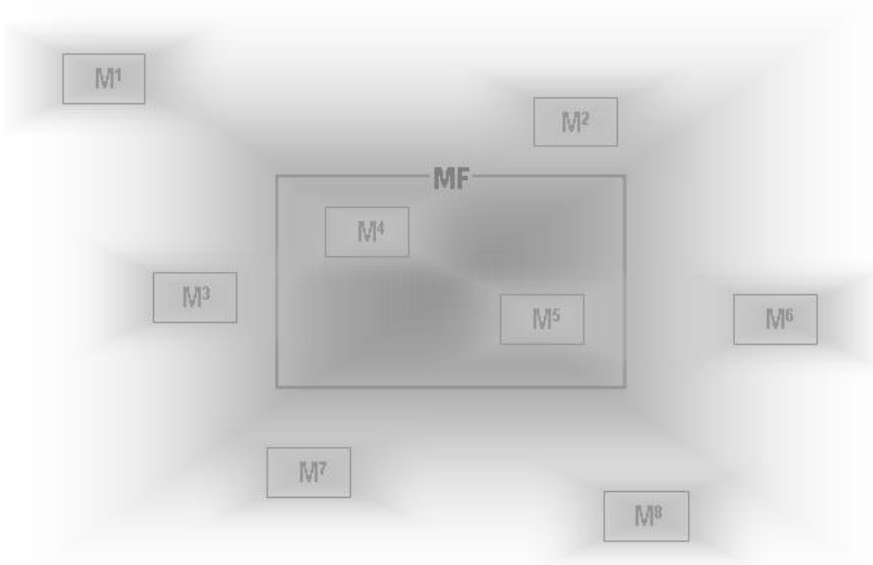
6.2.1 Phases of activation: The process of activation may be viewed as having four typical phases. In the first phase, all the meanings of a meaning field are inactivated, i.e. they are unconscious, uncoupled, switched off, unused, or latent. At this time, no concrete utterance, thought, or form has appeared. For example, the meanings of the meaning field of law remain inacti-

[4] Similarly, Hirschman (1984: 93) says that certain economic goods, e.g. skills or abilities, increase rather than decrease through use and become atrophic if they remain unused.

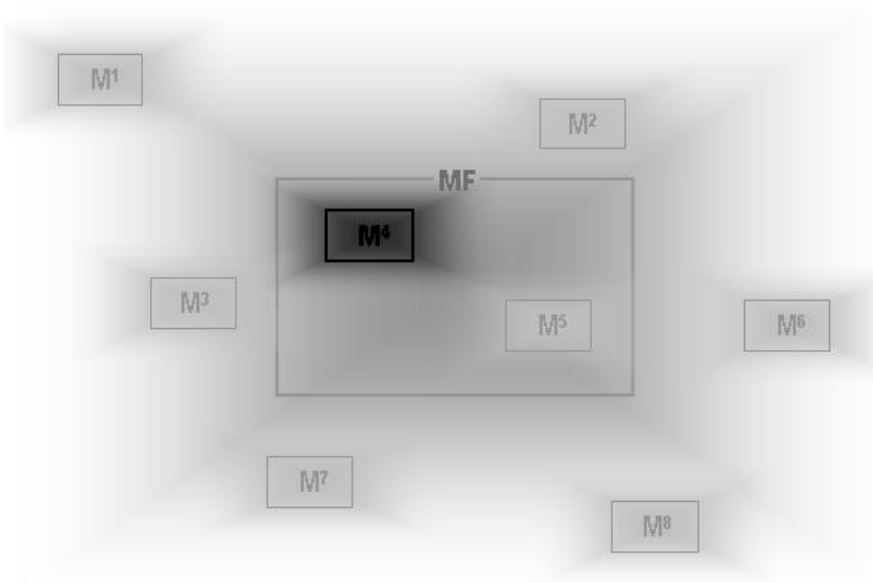
vated because Maria is doing her daily workout in the gym and only thinks of sports, her body, the coach, blood pressure, etc. The following figure tries to show this state of inactivation of the meaning field of law by depicting the meanings and the meaning field in weak gray tones with hardly any contrast.

Figure 6.I: Phase 1 – inactivated meanings of a meaning field



In the second phase, a process of activation occurs that »triggers« a particular meaning of the meaning field of law. This activation may be done by an actor, a system, or a discourse. For example, while doing her sports exercises, Maria is looking out of the window and suddenly spots a no-parking sign right next to her car. That is, Maria cognitively activates the meaning M^4 = │NO-PARKING SIGN│ by rendering it conscious, understanding it, switching it on, using it, or thinking it. This activated meaning M^4 is a particular meaning form that the meaning field of law has produced because a no-parking sign is a legal notice or deontic speech act indicating that drivers are not allowed to park vehicles at this particular place. In non-dualistic terms (see chapter 2.4), this activated meaning is a meaning up to now, namely the thought or utterance that indicates the object M^4 = ┤NO-PARKING SIGN├ . However, this is the only meaning that is selected and activated, while all the other meanings in the meaning field continue to remain unselected and inactivated. In the figure below, the activated meaning M^4 is depicted in a darker color and is visually more salient than the other inactivated meanings.

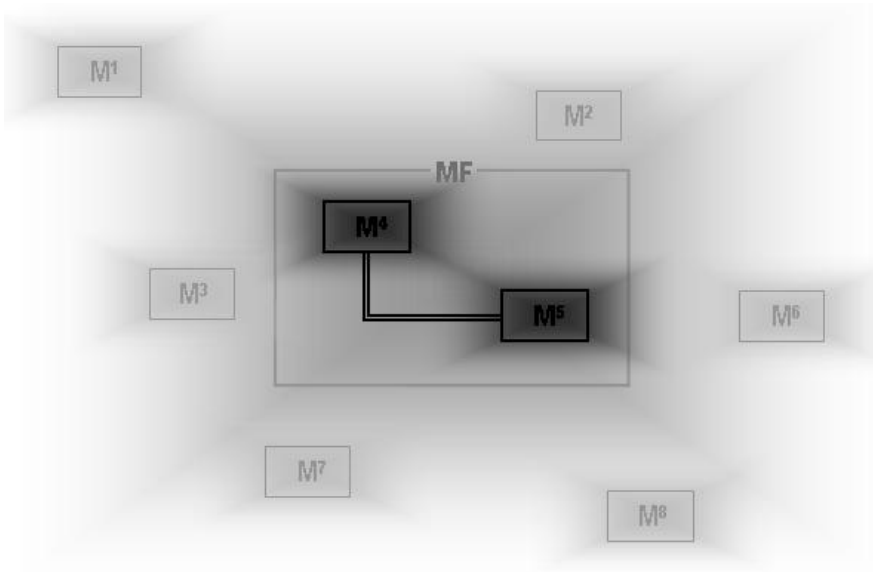
Figure 6.II: Phase 2 – an activated meaning of a meaning field



This second phase in which a single meaning such as M^4 is »switched on« is the core of the process of activation. However, there may also be an optional third phase in which further meanings such as M^5 or M^6 are activated. For example, since the no-parking sign stands right next to her parked car, Maria activates a further meaning of the meaning field of law such as M^5 = ⎪TO BE FINED⎪. Both the meanings that have been activated so far, namely M^4 and M^5, are now operatively coupled with the aid of other meanings that do not stem from the meaning field of law such as causal conjunctions, personal pronouns, or definite articles. This results in the creation of the meaning form alias Maria's thought or utterance M^{4+5} = ⎪I'LL BE FINED BECAUSE THERE IS A NO-PARKING SIGN⎪. This coupling of single meanings produces a syntagmatic meaning form such as a sentence in a verbal utterance. In non-dualistic terms (see chapter 2.4), this utterance is a meaning from now on, namely M^{4+5} = ⊢I'LL BE FINED BECAUSE THERE IS A NO-PARKING SIGN⊢, because it continues and complexifies the meaning up to now M^4 = ⊣ NO-PARKING SIGN⊣. In the following figure, the syntagmatic coupling is depicted by a black line connecting the individual meanings.[5]

[5] There are two types of coupling: Firstly, *processual* couplings of meanings appear in activation in the form of concrete thoughts or utterances because they are more individualized, short-lived, and private. Secondly, *structural* couplings of meanings appear as scripts or frames (see chapter 5.4.2), metaphors, proverbs, topoi, etc because they are standardized, long-lived, sedimented, and public. This distinction is similar to Luhmann's distinction between operative vs structural couplings (see 1993a: 440f).

Figure 6.III: Phase 3 – activated and coupled meanings of a meaning field



In the fourth phase, the activated and coupled meanings become inactivated and uncoupled, so that they rejoin the meaning medium alias the meaning field. The form disappears and the situation of the first phase prevails again.

These four phases show how meaning fields pass from an inactivated status to an activated status of the meaning forms through the process of activation. In interactions and systems, the actors *bring* meaning fields *along* (e.g. as a mental lexicon, cultural domain, conceptual space, etc), but they also *bring* them *about* by activating them (e.g. as utterances, thoughts, gestures, etc). In order to create and sustain an interaction or system, it is necessary that the medium be put into forms. As argued in chapter 2.4.2, the reason is that in a system it is not the medium but only the forms that are connectable to further forms because the system cannot use or handle the inactivated, shapeless, and uncoupled elements of the medium (Luhmann 1997: 201).

The process of activation has linguistic and cognitive aspects, which are closely related: On the one hand, activation is conceptualized in Saussure's Structural Linguistics in terms of *actualization*, i.e. the process that transforms the latent and virtual *langue*, i.e. the abstract linguistic system, into the manifest and actual *parole*, i.e. the concrete individual enunciation (Barbéris, Bres & Siblot eds. 1998). On the other hand, activation refers in Cognitive Linguistics either to *semantic activation* or to *phonological activation* (Levelt et al. 1991). Here, I am particularly concerned with semantic activation, which may be explained as follows: The semantic knowledge of the long-term memory is in a state of passivity and dormancy as long as it is not needed. This is necessary because if all semantic information were activated all the time, the short-

term memory would suffer from an information overload. During speech production and reception, particular items from the semantic knowledge of the long-term memory are needed, so they are activated and temporarily transferred into the short-term memory. As soon as they are no longer needed, these items from the semantic knowledge are retransformed into their original state of dormancy and passivity in the long-term memory (Schwarz & Chur 2004: 75). This neuro-linguistic account of semantic activation is surprisingly similar to, and thus confirms, the medium vs form account of activation.

In chapter 5.5.2, I argued that due to overlap between several meaning fields, most meanings are simultaneously members of several meaning fields, e.g. the meaning $M = \lvert \text{ADULTERY} \rvert$ belongs both to $MF^{\text{SEXUALITY}}$ and MF^{LAW}, and $M = \lvert \text{TO PREACH} \rvert$ is at the same time a member of the fields $MF^{\text{COMMUNICATION}}$, $MF^{\text{PUBLIC EVENTS}}$, $MF^{\text{TYPES OF PERSUASION}}$, MF^{RELIGION}, etc. Consequently, the activation of a meaning M in cognition or communication leads in most cases to the simultaneous activation of several meaning fields MF^1, MF^2, MF^3, MF^4, etc.

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6.2.2 Non-activation: So as to delimit the concept of *activation*, I must distinguish it from its antonym *non-activation*. On a general and abstract level, the most important question is whether or not a particular meaning or meaning field is activated. Just as Hamlet asks »To be or not to be – that is the question«, the analyst asks »To activate or not to activate – that is the question«.

An important question for emic and standard approaches is the *use, occurrence, exercise, application, or appearance* of power, money, love, health, law, sports, or vice versa, their *non-use, non-occurrence, non-exercise, non-application, or non-appearance*. When is power exercised and when is it not? Why do people use law in this situation but not in the other situation? Is this an instance of love or is it not? Who resolves conflicts by using money and who uses other means? In which cases does power occur and in which cases does it not? In an activation approach, this perspective is translated into the question of the *activation* of the meanings or meaning fields of power, money, love, health, law, sports, or vice versa, their *non-activation*. When is the meaning field of law activated and when is it not? Who activates the meaning of threat and who does not? Why do people prefer not to activate the meaning field of love but to activate another meaning field? [6]

Activation implies the *existence or presence of an activated meaning* of a meaning field. I will notate this as $\exists M^{\text{ACTIVATED}}$, where the logical symbol $\exists$ represents an existential quantifier signifying »there are/is…« or »…exist/s«, and $M^{\text{ACTIVATED}}$ represents a meaning of a particular meaning field that has been activated. Consequently, the notation $\exists M^{\text{ACTIVATED}}$ means that a particular activated meaning exists at a particular moment. For example, the meaning field of law is activated if Maria says $M_S = \lvert \text{THIS IS A VALID CONTRACT} \rvert$.

[6] Similar conceptualizations of *activation vs non-activation* can be found in other Social Science research. However, they are more limited in their theoretical range and focus on activation while neglecting non-activation. Luhmann (1980) speaks of the *Thematisierung* vs *De-Thematisierung* of law, i.e. to make vs not to make the code legal/illegal a theme of communication in face-to-face situations. Other publications speak of the *invocation* of legal norms (Cartwright & Schwartz 1973) or the *mobilization* of law (Blankenburg 1995).

Non-activation implies the *non-existence or absence of an activated meaning* of a particular meaning field. I will notate this as $\neg\exists M^{ACTIVATED}$, where the symbol ¬ represents a negation signifying »do/does not…« or »no/t…«. Accordingly, the notation $\neg\exists M^{ACTIVATED}$ means that an activated meaning does not exist at a particular moment. For example, the meaning field of law is not activated if Maria says M_S = ⎸SHE HAS CANCER OF THE INTESTINE⎹.

Let us refine this approach to activation vs non-activation by considering cases in which a *particular meaning, be it activated or inactivated, posits the ontological existence vs non-existence of something*. For example, a newspaper article may write that M = ⎸THERE WAS A JUDGE AND SANCTIONS WERE IMPOSED⎹ or José may assert that M = ⎸SHE THREATENED ME⎹. These meanings posit that something – namely a judge, sanctions, or a threat – existed in these instances. Resuming the abovementioned notation, we may therefore write M = ⎸∃⎹. However, another newspaper article posits that M = ⎸THERE WAS NO JUDGE AND NO SANCTIONS WERE IMPOSED⎹ or Maria may assert that M = ⎸I DID NOT THREATEN HIM⎹. These meanings posit that something – namely a judge, sanctions, or a threat – did not exist in these instances. In logical notation, we can hence write M = ⎸¬∃⎹.

Figure 6.IV: Different kinds of presences and absences[7]

		second-order level of (non-) activation	
		$\exists\ M^{ACTIVATED}$ existence of an activated meaning	$\neg\exists\ M^{ACTIVATED}$ non-existence of an activated meaning
first-order level of (non-) ontology	**M = ⎸∃⎹** existence of something	$\exists\ (M^{ACTIVATED} = ⎸\exists⎹)$ **present presence**	$\neg\exists\ (M^{ACTIVATED} = ⎸\exists⎹)$ **present absence**
	M = ⎸¬∃⎹ non-existence of something	$\exists\ (M^{ACTIVATED} = ⎸\neg\exists⎹)$ **absent presence**	$\neg\exists\ (M^{ACTIVATED} = ⎸\neg\exists⎹)$ **absent absence**

The first-order level of (non-) ontology refers to Realism's question if a meaning posits the existence or non-existence of something, regardless of whether this meaning is activated or not. The second-order level of (non-) activation refers to Semiotics' question of the existence or non-existence of an activated meaning, regardless of whether this meaning posits the existence or non-existence of something. Combining both levels, we obtain four different cases.

[7] This table could also have been constructed by applying the operation of re-entry (see chapter 2.3) to the distinction of *presence vs absence* (or *existence vs non-existence*), namely by re-entering the whole distinction into the first side of the distinction and by re-entering the whole distinction into the second side of the distinction.

(1) The case $\exists$ ($M^{ACTIVATED}$ = $\lceil\exists\rceil$) is a *present presence*, a classical and frequent case as an activated meaning is present or existent, positing that something is ontologically present or existent, e.g. Alicia reads the newspaper article that says M = ⌈THERE WAS A JUDGE AND SANCTIONS WERE IMPOSED⌉. Here, law appears because a meaning of the meaning field of law is activated.

(2) The case $\neg\exists$ ($M^{ACTIVATED}$ = $\lceil\exists\rceil$) is a *present absence* because an activated meaning is absent or non-existent, but this inactivated meaning posits that something is ontologically present or existent. For example, within the meaning medium there is the inactivated meaning M = ⌈THERE WAS A JUDGE AND SANCTIONS WERE IMPOSED⌉, but no actor or system activates this meaning by using it in a meaning form. Even though this meaning belongs to the meaning field of law, the meaning field of law is not activated and hence law does not occur and is not used. Since the meaning field of law was not activated, the actor or system usually activates another meaning field, e.g. Alicia did not read the newspaper article that talked about a judge and sanctions, so she did not activate the meaning field of law; instead, she wrote a novel about Don Juan's romances and hence activated the meaning field of love. Non-communicated laws, non-conscious orders, non-used threats, non-thought sanctions, or unnoticed hierarchies do not appear as power or law meaning forms as they remain latent, inactive, or unconscious at the level of the meaning field.

(3) The case of $\neg\exists$ ($M^{ACTIVATED}$ = $\lceil\neg\exists\rceil$) is an *absent absence* because an activated meaning is absent or non-existent and this inactivated meaning posits that something is ontologically absent or non-existent, e.g. in the meaning medium there is the inactivated meaning M = ⌈THERE WAS NO JUDGE AND NO SANCTIONS WERE IMPOSED⌉. This case is similar to the previous case (2) because the meaning field of law remains inactivated and consequently law does not appear, is not exercised, and does not occur. In such a case, something is not only posited as ontologically absent and non-existent, but it is furthermore not even indicated or noticed as absent and non-existent because there is no activation. The notion of *blind spot* captures this idea, i.e. you don't see that you don't see something (Foerster 1973). For instance, there is not only no sanction carried out or expected, but there is also no indication, no utterance, and no thought that no sanction is carried out or expected.

(4) The case of $\exists$ ($M^{ACTIVATED}$ = $\lceil\neg\exists\rceil$) is an *absent presence*, an atypical and counter-intuitive case, because an activated meaning is present or existent but this meaning posits that something is ontologically absent or non-existent. For example, Alicia may read a newspaper article that says M = ⌈THERE WAS NO JUDGE AND NO SANCTIONS WERE IMPOSED⌉. Since the meaning field of law is activated, because law-related words and meanings are mentioned and understood, law appears, occurs, and is used in this instance.[8]

[8] The difference between case (3) and (4), i.e. between absent absence and absent presence, can be further clarified by considering the case of *expectations of sanctions*: Whereas in absent presence, a person expects not to receive a sanction (presence of expectation), in absent absence a person does not expect not to receive a sanction (absence of expectation). This distinction is somewhat related to Elster's distinction between the *absence of the desire to do X* and the *presence of the desire not to do X* (see 1980: 331ff, 344ff).

The case of absent presence is particularly interesting for the study of power and law: Many Social Science approaches to power and law contend that power or law occur or are used only if power- or law-related referents occur or are used. For example, some scholars argue that a phenomenon can be called law only if there are sanctions that are actually carried out (Pospíšil 1978: 48f) or that are at least expected to be carried out. If there are no sanctions and no expectations of sanctions, the phenomenon cannot be called law and consequently law does not appear. According to such an approach, the activated meaning M = │THERE WAS NO JUDGE AND NO SANCTIONS WERE IMPOSED│ would not be an instance of law because something non-existent (e.g. no sanctions, no judge) cannot symbolize or refer to something existent (e.g. law). In contrast, in an activation approach, this meaning would be an instance of law because an actor or system taps into the meaning field of law by uttering or thinking about some of its meanings.

In a similar vein, other activated meanings are instances and activations of law, namely absent presence activations of the meaning field of law, e.g. M = │NON-LAW│ in Arnaud's sense (1988), M = │LEGAL GAP│, M = │THE ATTORNEY HAS FORGOTTEN WHAT CLAUSE 12 OF THE CONTRACT WAS ABOUT│, M = │THE JUDGE DID NOT PUNISH HIM│, M = │FRIENDSHIP IS A DOMAIN THAT IS NOT REGULATED BY LAW│, or M = │DE-JURIDIFICATION│.

The case of absent presence activations can be backed up further. From a distinction-theoretic perspective, Jokisch argues that the absence, negation, or non-occurrence of an operation is itself an operation. That is, if an operation does not occur, it still occurs by not occurring, namely as the operation of »non-occurrence of the operation« (1996: 19ff, 51, 65f, 114). Translated into my terminology, we may consequently say that the absence of the operation is itself, and implies the presence of, an operation, namely OPERATION = │ABSENCE OF THE OPERATION│ = │¬OPERATION│ or more precisely, ∃ (OPERATION = │¬∃ OPERATION│), which is nothing but a special case of the more general, abovementioned absent presence formula ∃ ($M^{ACTIVATED}$ = │¬∃│).[9]

The same goes for power and law. For instance, as soon as an actor or system says or thinks that ›*power does not occur*‹, power does occur, namely as the activated meaning M = │POWER DOES NOT OCCUR│ or ∃ ($M^{ACTIVATED}$ = │¬∃ POWER│), which is a clear member of the meaning field of power. By the same token, Berger & Luckmann argue that *language* is capable of rendering present a diversity of objects, people, and situations that are spatially, temporally, or socially absent from the here and now. Language can transcend everyday life altogether since it can refer to dreams, religious experiences, fictional events, impossible things, nonexistent actions, etc (1966: ch. I.2). Similarly,

[9] In order to think or say the concept of *absence*, it must have a *presence* in thought or communication, e.g. by the existence of the concept or word M = │ABSENCE│, so that the absent becomes present. Similarly, Fuchs (1999b: 96f) argues that the distinction between the *presence vs absence* of people can be copied (by a re-entry) into the first side of the distinction, namely into the *presence* of people. For example, the absence of someone can be made the subject of discussion in the presence of this someone, e.g. the mother may ask her son »Where were you last night?«.

Greimas speaks of a *semiotic existence* of objects, actors, or events (1973b: 27, Greimas & Courtés 1979: 138f) thus avoiding Realism's idea of *objective existence*. For something to be absent (e.g. no power, no threat), it must necessarily be *indicated* as absent (e.g. in an utterance, thought). Since the operation of indicating something is present, it renders the absent object semiotically present. The activated meaning M = │THERE WAS NO JUDGE│ implies that the referent is absent, namely the judge, but the operation of indicating that the referent is absent is present because the words │NO JUDGE│ are still mentioned, thought, and activated. In this case, the judge *as referent is absent, excluded, and non-existent*, but the judge *as signifier is present, included, and existent*.[10]

In terms of the semiotic triangle, absent presence activation occurs when both M_S and M_M are present but M_R is absent. Let us look at the example of the activated meaning M = │NO JUDGE│. Firstly, the signifier may be the acoustic sound of M_S = │nəʊ dʒʌdʒ│. This signifier is present because it has been uttered or heard by someone. Secondly, the meaning is M_M = │THERE IS NO JUDGE, i.e. NO OFFICIAL WHO IS IN CONTROL OF THE COURT AND WHO DECIDES IF THE DEFENDANT IS GUILTY OR INNOCENT│. This meaning is present, too, because in order to understand or formulate the negation │NO JUDGE│, it is necessary to understand or formulate the affirmation, namely │JUDGE│. Consequently, negation presupposes affirmation, and negation is nothing but the explicit affirmation of a negated content. As soon as one uses the affirmation, the corresponding meaning is activated. This is why Lakoff (1996: 419f) argues that negating a frame evokes this frame, e.g. if someone says »Don't think of an elephant!«, in order to purposefully not think of an elephant, you have to think of an elephant (see chapter 5.5.1 on different types of negation). Thirdly, the referent is the meaning auto-describing it(self) as the actual and concrete judge, but which is, in this case, absent M_R = │¬∃│. Since both M_S and M_M are present, the meaning field of law is activated by an absent presence activation. Law is activated regardless of whether its occurrence is affirmed or negated.[11]

However, in comparison to *present presence* activation, *absent presence* activation is certainly not a prototypical but rather an atypical mode of activating the meaning field of power and law. This atypicality of absent presence activations may also be due to the use vs mention distinction discussed in chapter 4.3. That is, absent presence activation often belongs to the mention-side of the use vs mention-distinction. For example, in the case of Fabrice saying that M = │HE DID NOT USE HIS POWER│, power is not *used* from the first-order, ontological perspective, but from a second-order, semiotic perspective, power is nevertheless *mentioned* because it is verbally indicated that power was not used. In short, power was not *used*, but it was and must be *mentioned* that power was not used.

[10] A mathematical example concerns the number 0 or zero. From an ontological perspective, it refers to nothing, absence, and non-existence, but from a semiotic perspective, this nothing, absence, and non-existence is and must be indicated by something, by the presence, and existence of an indication or symbol, such as M = │0│ or M = │ZERO│.

[11] See chapter 2.2.3 on the analogy between linguistic negation and non-dualistic meaning.

Having reviewed the four cases of activation, namely (1) present presence, (2) present absence, (3) absent absence, and (4) absent presence, I conclude that the relevant level for particular phenomena to occur, such as power or law, is not the first-order level of ontology but rather the second-order level of activation: On the one hand, *power and law occur and are used as meaning forms if there is an activated meaning* $\exists M^{ACTIVATED}$ *from the meaning fields of power or law, regardless of whether this activated meaning refers to something existent* $M = |\exists|$ *or to something non-existent* $M = |\neg\exists|$. These are cases (1) and (4). On the other hand, *power and law do not occur and are not used as meaning forms if there is only an inactivated meaning* $\neg\exists M^{ACTIVATED}$ *from the meaning fields of power or law or if there is an activated meaning* $\neg\exists M^{ACTIVATED}$ *from other meaning fields, regardless of whether this inactivated or activated meaning refers to something existent* $M = |\exists|$ *or to something non-existent* $M = |\neg\exists|$. These are cases (2) and (3). In conclusion, the »semiotic-activational« occurrence of power and law is independent of the »objectivist-realist« occurrence or non-occurrence of power and law.

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6.2.3 The example of power and law: Having reviewed the different types of activation in terms of absences and presences, I will now turn to the special case of power and law. The question to be asked is: Where does power or law occur, i.e. in which situations, contexts, relations, or systems are the meaning fields of power or law activated?

In many Social Science approaches, power and law are closely associated either with particular social fields and systems or with particular organizations and institutions: Power is usually linked to the state, politics, or institutionalized domination (e.g. Weber 1921a/f, Braud 2000, Gledhill 1994, Luhmann 2000, Parsons 1963). Law is frequently associated with legal institutions or professions such as courts, judges, conflict-managing institutions, parliament, attorneys, or the police (e.g. Bourdieu 1986, Latour 2002, Nader & Todd eds. 1978). Furthermore, many Social Science conceptualizations of power and law are embedded in a macro-social theory of society and analyze power and law in terms of societal sub-systems or sub-fields.

Such approaches disregard certain aspects: Even though I agree that power occurs more probably or more extensively in political, institutionalized, and state-related forms, and even though I acknowledge that law appears more probably and more extensively in legal institutions and professions, these are only *special cases* with regard to a whole spectrum of possibilities comprising a much wider range of cases. In general terms, but especially if one focuses on meaning fields, power and law may appear a priori in *all* situations, fields, contexts, relations, and systems. This inference follows from an argument made in chapter 3.6, namely that the meaning of power and law can be activated by almost *any and all* signifiers – be it a linguistic sign, a recollection, an action, a smell, an image, a facial expression, a touch, a thought, an acoustic sound, a gesture, a feeling, etc – *provided the signifiers are put in the appropriate context and to the appropriate use*.

For example, threats occur in love relationships, contracts are made in the economic field, power may be exercised in a religious context, the Dogma art

movement establishes norms and prohibitions for its artists, love and intimate relationships may be legally institutionalized by marriage, power occurs in the form of monopolies in the economic system, law appears in the form of sacred or spiritual norms in most world religions, etc. Even on an everyday micro-level, power and law may appear as meaning forms at any time and at any place. For instance, in the morning at breakfast I read on my jam jar »Without preservatives, in accordance with the law«, in the afternoon I use my position of authority as a father to order my daughter to do her homework, and in the evening I watch the legal drama television series *Law & Order*.

Seen from a meaning field approach, power and law are hence *universal, system- and field-independent phenomena*. To concentrate on a specific field, system, relation, or situation is to deprive oneself of the possibility of studying power and law in those fields, systems, relations, or situations, in which common sense does not expect them to appear or in which they only play a minor role. In a similar vein, the old Roman adage goes »*ubi homo, ibi societas; ubi societas, ibi ius*« (i.e. where there is man, there is society; where there is society, there is law) and many authors have added »*ubi societas, ibi potestas*« (i.e. where there is society, there is power) (Laporta San Miguél 1996: ch. I). Both sayings capture the abovementioned idea that whenever and wherever people come into contact and act together, power and law may appear.

Following such an approach, but in a more radical vein, some authors have proposed a tendency for power and law to appear everywhere and to be omnipresent and all-pervasive.

As for power: Foucault (1975: 31ff, 1976: ch. IV.2) analyzes the »micro-physics« and »capillarity« of power arguing that power is also and primarily exercised beyond the state and institutions, and that it pervades all domains and niches of everyday interactions. Similarly, Crozier & Friedberg (1977: 65) contend that every social relation is automatically a power relation, and Giddens (1984: 15f, 31f) holds that all human actions are inherently imbued with power, i.e. agency is identical with power. Popitz (1992: 15) even speaks of the omnipresence of power.

As for law: Numerous authors argue that the law and legal system have imperialistic tendencies because they have colonized the daily lifeworld to a large degree in a process of *Verrechtlichung* (»law-ification«, juridification) (Habermas 1992: 541ff, Teubner ed. 1987). Rottleuthner holds that law, besides having a regulative function, also has a constitutive function, i.e. a capacity to constitute and create new actions, events, and phenomena in reality (e.g. to enter into marriage, to found a parliament), so that law consequently becomes ubiquitous and omnipresent (1987: 81f). In an even more extreme vein, some authors speak of *pan-juridisme* (Sosoé 1992, Terré 2007) or *Jurismus* (Geiger 1947: 355) referring to the tendency of the law to enclose everything and the tendency of actors to consider everything in terms of the law, be it human relations, animals, natural processes, objects, etc.

However, I do not go so far as to say that power and law *are activated* in all situations, fields, relations, and systems, i.e. that they actually pervade everything and always appear everywhere. Instead, I argue that power and law

may be activated in all situations, fields, relations, and systems, even though they are not actually activated in many situations, fields, relations, and systems. In a similar universalistic vein, Bourdieu argues that »every linguistic exchange contains the *potentiality* of an act of power« (1987b: 120) and Luhmann holds that wherever people communicate there is a possibility for power to occur (1975: 90).

Such an approach makes it possible to ask the following questions: When, why, and by whom is MF^{POWER} activated, is MF^{LAW} activated, or are other meaning fields activated such as MF^{LOVE} or MF^{MONEY}? This general research question may be broken down into several specific research questions. With regard to the different subzones of overlap between MF^{POWER} and MF^{LAW} discussed in chapter 5.5.2, we may ask: When, why, and by whom are the subzones of identity between MF^{POWER} and MF^{LAW} activated, namely the subzones A, B, C, and D? When, why, and by whom are the subzones of exclusion of MF^{POWER} and MF^{LAW} activated, namely the subzones E and G of MF^{POWER} and the subzones F and H of MF^{LAW}? And finally, when, why, and by whom is neither MF^{POWER} nor MF^{LAW} activated, but other meaning fields are activated in the subzones Q and R such as MF^{LOVE} or MF^{MONEY}? In other words, what are power- or law-free situations or interactions?

For instance, remember the example at the beginning of this chapter 6: The couple John and Mary work together and share an office. Since Mary is a heavy smoker and John dislikes smoking, he talks to her in order to get her to stop smoking in the office. But how does he frame his communication to Mary, i.e. which meaning field does he activate in order to reach his goal? Does John activate MF^{MONEY} by proposing »Listen, Mary, I'll give you 100 bucks if you stop smoking in the office«? Or does he activate MF^{POWER} by saying »Either you stop smoking or you get a beating«? Maybe he taps into MF^{LOVE} by arguing »If you really loved me, you wouldn't smoke in the office«. Does John use MF^{LAW} by saying to Mary »§12/3 of the Labor Law Act stipulates that it is forbidden to smoke in offices«? Or does he activate $MF^{SCIENCE}$ by holding that »According to scientific studies, it is proven that smoking causes lung cancer«? Also, what are the cognitive and communicative consequences, in terms of the connecting operations from now on, if a particular meaning field is activated and other meaning fields are not?

The same type of activation approach may be applied to other research questions, e.g. which meaning fields does the Chinese government activate so as to solve the problem of demographic explosion?, which meaning fields does the automobile industry use so as to persuade consumers to buy a car?, in which meaning fields is a marriage conflict framed and resolved by the participating actors?, what are the meaning fields that a particular poem or novel taps into?, which meaning fields are activated by the neoliberal discourse?

Further research questions that wait to be tackled include: What are the fields or situations in which MF^{POWER} and MF^{LAW} are very likely or very frequently activated, so that power or law is dominant and pervasive in these fields or situations? Here, we may think, for example, of a court trial in which MF^{LAW} is constantly activated and of general-soldier interactions, in which

MF^{POWER} is very likely and frequently activated. If a particular meaning field becomes so dominant and pervasive, it may create or turn into a specific meaning system, e.g. similar to Luhmann's societal subsystems such as the healthcare system, the legal system, the religious system, etc. Moreover, why do certain actors seek or avoid particular meaning fields or situations in which the activation of a particular meaning field is likely? Are there meaning fields that are particularly attractive or »magnetic« in that they attract or pull many communications or cognitions into their field?

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6.3 Activation Modes

Having discussed the different ramifications of the distinction between activation vs non-activation, I will now concentrate solely on the first side of the distinction, namely on *activation*. In studying the activation of meanings and meaning fields, I will focus on the different *activation modes*, e.g. the degree of intensity of activation, psychic vs communicative activation, actor-speaker vs observer-hearer activation, past vs future activations, etc. The study of different activation modes is particularly useful when the analysis, after having addressed the fundamental question of activation vs non-activation, focuses on the question of activation in terms of its phenomenological diversity. For example: why and when is the meaning field of power activated psychically but not communicatively?, what are the different consequences when the meaning field of love is activated by the actor-speaker or by the observer-hearer?, etc.

Instead of speaking of different *types* of activation, I deliberately speak of different *modes* of activation: Whereas the term *type* suggests mutual exclusion and incombinability of the different types of activation, the term *mode* allows for partial overlap and combinability of the different modes of activation. For example, an activation of the meaning field of power, such as in the utterance M_S = ┤HENRY, I ORDER YOU TO COME HERE IMMEDIATELY!├, combines at the same time a psychic and a communicative activation, an actor-speaker activation, and an intense activation.[12]

There is a structural analogy between prototypical meanings and prototypical activations: Just as there are certain types of meanings that are more or less prototypical of, for instance, power and law, there are certain activation modes that are more or less prototypical of, for example, power and law. Some activation modes are emically considered to be highly prototypical, representative, or good examples of an activation of power or law, e.g. a communicative and intense activation like a verbal command issued by a military superior to a soldier, whereas other activation modes are emically seen to be rather atypical, strange, or bad examples of an activation of power or law, e.g. a psychic and observer-hearer activation like the mental recollection of an onlooker who watched a military superior issuing a verbal command to a soldier.

[12] The idea of favoring the term *mode* over the term *type* stems from Chandler's section on »modes not types« in which he discusses Peirce's distinction between symbolic, iconic, and indexical signs (2002: 43).

In the following, I will discuss several combinable modes of activating meanings or meaning fields.

6.3.1 Degrees of intensity of activation: Resuming the discussion of Fuzzy Set Theory from chapter 4, this can be fruitfully applied to the process of activation. Instead of viewing activation as an either-or matter of dichotomy, i.e. as the distinction between activation vs non-activation (see chapter 6.2), it may be more productive to view activation as a more-or-less matter of degree, i.e. ranging from very feeble activation to moderate activation to very strong activation. The notion of *intensity* is able to capture this idea: Actors or discourses may activate a certain meaning or a particular meaning field more or less intensively.

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For instance, six-year-old Henry sees his authoritarian father and activates the meaning field of power with such an intensity that it penetrates him emotionally so profoundly and becomes mentally so present that he starts to tremble and thinks of it all day long. In contrast, his elder and bolder brother Mark also sees the father and activates the meaning field of power, but he does so less intensely and the next moment has already forgotten about it. The intensity with which the brothers Henry and Mark activate the meaning field of power hence varies greatly.[13]

6.3.2 Activation of different types of meaning fields: On a fundamental level, activation may occur on different semiotic levels that correspond to the three angles of the semiotic triangle (see chapters 2.5.2 and 5.3). Most activations will simultaneously activate several semiotic levels. For example, Alicia spots the pictogram M_S = │  and interprets it contextually as a M_M = │STOP SIGN, i.e. A VISUAL MARK NEXT TO A ROAD SYMBOLIZING A LEGAL NORM THAT INSTRUCTS DRIVERS TO STOP THEIR VEHICLE│. Since this signifier M_S and this meaning M_M refer to a legal norm that prescribes a particular behavior and that is enforced by the police, they clearly belong to MF_S^{LAW} and MF_M^{LAW}. Consequently, Alicia activates both MF_S^{LAW} and MF_M^{LAW}.

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However, in principle, activation may occur independently or separately on each semiotic level without involving the other levels, so we may speak of MF_S-activation, MF_M-activation, or MF_R-activation accordingly. An actor may activate a meaning M only on the level of MF_M without activating the corresponding MF_S. For example, Maria spontaneously remembers the concept or idea of M_M = │PLACE WHERE A TRIAL IS HELD AND PEOPLE DECIDE ABOUT A LEGAL CASE│ and thus activates MF_M^{LAW}, but she does not activate any corresponding signifiers, e.g. she does not think or utter the English substantive M_S = │COURT│ nor the German word M_S = │GERICHT│, and therefore she does not activate MF_S^{LAW}. Or an actor may activate a meaning M only on the level of MF_S without activating the corresponding MF_M. For example, four-year-old Henry may hear or say the word M_S = │COURT│ and hence activate MF_S^{LAW}, but due to his young age and lack of cultural knowledge he does not interpret this word as

[13] The activation intensity concerns meanings within the *same* meaning field, e.g. M = │LEGAL│ vs M = │ILLEGAL│ within MF^{LAW}, as well as the activation of *different* meaning fields, e.g. MF^{LAW} vs MF^{LOVE}.

M_M = │PLACE WHERE A TRIAL IS HELD AND PEOPLE DECIDE ABOUT A LEGAL CASE│ and thus does not activate the MF_M^{LAW}.[14]

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6.3.3 Communicative vs psychic activation: The meaning forms may appear in an external-communicative manner, e.g. as utterances, gestures, texts, conversations, pictograms, discourses, etc. However, meaning forms may also appear in an internal-psychic manner, e.g. as thoughts, recollections, dreams, emotions, ideas, etc. Psychic activation is the transformation of a pre-conscious and implicit meaning into a conscious and explicit meaning in the mind of an actor or within a psychic system.[15]

This distinction between psychic vs communicative activation is in accordance with the distinction between internal-psychic signifiers and external-communicative signifiers presented in chapter 3.2.1. Both communicative and psychic activation may occur in a visual manner (e.g. images), in a linguistic manner (e.g. words), in an auditory manner (e.g. sounds), in an olfactory manner (e.g. odors), etc.

Let us look at how this approach contrasts with two Social Science approaches by taking the examples of power and law:

On the one hand, the activation approach contrasts with those approaches, especially with Luhmann's system-theoretic notion of communication media (1997), which conceptualize power or law exclusively in terms of communication and thus neglect psychic operations. Consequently, Krause criticizes the resulting »mystification« of communication and the »veil« of communication covering everything else (Krause 2005: 113, 117f).

On the other hand, the activation approach contrasts with Social Science approaches that conceptualize power or law so broadly as to include even those psychic operations that remain completely unconscious, internalized, or »habitus-ized« so that the actor herself is totally unaware of any power- or law-related meaning while engaging in a particular behavior. I agree that in the long run power and law may be internalized and become unconscious, so that they produce the same external behavior as conscious or communicative power and law. However, I disagree with the conclusion that such external behavior and such unconscious or internalized operations are instances of power or law

[14] The reason that activation may occur independently of, or separately on, each semiotic level lies in the difference between *activation vs interpretation* (see chapter 3.6 on interpretation). Activation may occur on all three semiotic levels M_S (or MF_S), M_M (or MF_M), and M_R (or MF_R), and it is temporally prior to interpretation: Activation is the process of using a formerly unused meaning M of a meaning field, e.g. speaking or hearing the word or sound of M = │kɔ:rt│. In contrast, interpretation occurs particularly on the semiotic level of meaning M_M (or MF_M) because it takes up an activated signifier, such as M_S = │kɔ:rt│, and links it to a particular meaning M_M, such as M^1_M = │PLACE WHERE A TRIAL IS HELD AND PEOPLE DECIDE ABOUT A LEGAL CASE│, while at the same time excluding other meanings M_M, such as M^2_M = │AREA MADE FOR PLAYING GAMES SUCH AS TENNIS│.

[15] It may be argued that a psychic activation leads under certain circumstances to a communicative activation. For example, people may come to permanently think or feel that they are superior and powerful in comparison to other people. This *psychic activation* of power may then later be expressed in the *communicative activation* of power by giving orders or threatening others. See Popitz (1992: 208) for an example.

because the meaning field of power or law is not activated and does not rise into the awareness of the actor.[16]

With regard to psychic vs communicative activation of meanings and meaning fields, there are several interesting research questions that I will not answer here, but that suggest fertile applications of the distinction between psychic vs communicative activation: What are the differences and similarities between them? How are psychic and communicative activations transformed into each other and temporally sequenced? Which meanings or meaning fields tend to be activated psychically, and which communicatively? And in which situations, systems, or relations? For example, in a conversation among Norwegian colleagues in Oslo, Magnus says that he got married, adding that his wife is black and comes from Africa. Why does he communicatively activate MF$^{\text{ETHNICITY}}$? A possible answer, based on Schlyter's principle of deviation signalization (1982) and Grice's maxims of relevance (1975), is that speakers communicatively activate a particular meaning only if it is atypical of, but relevant to, the current situation or local context (e.g. a black African wife in Norway) so as to prevent the hearers from »default-reasoning« by assuming a prototypical meaning (e.g. a white Norwegian wife in Norway).

Other research questions include: What are the prerequisites and consequences of psychic and communicative activations? Finally, what are the barriers or catalysts that impede or foster psychic activations or communicative activations? This question is closely related to the question of the latency and manifestation of cognitions and communications (e.g. Luhmann 1984: ch. 7.XV, Luhmann & Fuchs eds. 1989), as well as to the question of the encouragement and discouragement of initiating a particularly coded communication (e.g. Luhmann 1980). For example, is the communicative activation of the meaning field of law discouraged or impeded in love relationships?, what fosters the psychic activation of the meaning field of power in religious contexts?, etc. However, in the following, I will no longer discuss psychic activation, but will concentrate on communicative activation.

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[16] In my approach, psychic activation is thus used in the sense of *conscious* activation, i.e. a meaning rising into consciousness. However, in principle, *unconscious* activation is also possible from a particular theoretical perspective, i.e. a meaning remaining in the unconsciousness but producing nevertheless similar effects as a meaning rising into consciousness. For an overview of unconscious activation, see Cowan (1997: ch. 3.3.2).
An example of unconscious activation and of internalization of law or morals is the following example from Golding's novel *Lord of the Flies* (1954: 67). In a group of children, Roger is throwing stones in Henry's direction to annoy him and to get pleasure from it. However, he does not dare to throw stones directly at Henry because there is an invisible force emanating from his old life among the adults, which conditions him and unconsciously holds him back. Even though there is a moral norm that forbids people to throw stones at others, and even though the reader knows that Roger's action is norm-breaking, Roger himself has internalized the norm without consciously knowing or remembering it in this situation and without labeling his own action. Hence, he does not consciously activate the meaning fields of law or morals. Only if the norm and the labeling process became conscious, would the meaning field be activated. A similar argument is made by Lévi-Strauss (1958: 308f) who regards norms as *conscious* models in contrast to unconscious models of behavior or hidden structures.

The conceptualization of power and law as *meaning fields* has some advantages over those scholarly approaches that conceive of power or law as a type of *action*, *causality*, *object*, or *relation*. These advantages can be explained by the concept of communicative activation, which is capable of rendering certain empirical phenomena visible that would be theoretically invisible for other approaches. Consider the following example (the superscripted letters index each sentence).

[A]Mary and Marlene are close friends and meet for lunch to talk and laugh. [B]Mary tells Marlene a story that happened ten years ago: »[C]Bob worked in a firm with a clear internal hierarchy. [D]Bill was the big boss and gave down orders to his subordinates who normally obeyed. [E]Well, one day, Bill threatened to punish Bob if Bob didn't do what Bill wanted. [F]And since Bob disobeyed, Bill fired him.« [G]Afterwards Mary and Marlene comment on the story. [H]Marlene says »Wow, the boss must have been very powerful. [I]I'm sure he wanted to bully the newcomer Bob.« [J]Mary agrees and adds »The problem was that Bob was in a weak position and at the bottom of the firm hierarchy because Bill had a lot of allies who backed him up«. [K]Marlene also suggests »People like Bill have an authoritarian personality and take pleasure in giving orders and in threatening others«. And so on.

Analyzing this example, we can distinguish two narrative levels: On the one hand, the *first-order* perspective of Bill and Bob (only sentences C to F), and on the other hand, the *second-order* perspective of Mary and Marlene talking about Bill and Bob (all the sentences A to K).[17]

In the first-order situation where Bill and Bob are interacting, most Social Science scholars would agree that power occurs and is used because someone tries to impose his will on another person, he threatens him, there is a hierarchical relationship, the other person obeys or disobeys, punishment occurs, etc.

However, what about the second-order situation where Mary and Marlene are interacting? Does power occur here too? Those Social Science scholars who advocate a conceptualization of power in terms of action, causality, object, or relation would argue that power does not appear and is not used because of the absence of power-related actions, power-induced causality, power-objects, and a power-laden relation: Mary and Marlene do not entertain a hierarchical relationship; no punishment occurs between them; neither Mary nor Marlene wants the other to do something particular or wants to impose her will; consequently neither gives orders or threatens the other; there is no relation of dependence or bargaining between Mary and Marlene where power could occur; etc. Accordingly, a conceptualization of power in terms of action, causality, object, or relation underexposes or remains blind for several power-related aspects of the second-order situation: The meaning field of power is communicatively activated by Mary and Marlene because they use several

[17] One might add a third-order perspective, namely the perspective of me or you who read this text and look upon the second-order situation of Mary and Marlene from still another observer perspective. This argument is similar to the type of non-dualistic argument used to explain the center illustration in figure 2.X in chapter 2.3.3.

power-related signifiers M_S and meanings M_M such as │POWERFUL│, │OBEY│, │AUTHORITARIAN PERSONALITY│, │ALLIES│, │HIERARCHY│, │TO BULLY SOMEONE│, │THREATEN│, etc. Mary and Marlene tap into the meaning field of power by making power a *topic of conversation*, i.e. power does not appear on the first-order *performative* level but rather on the second-order *narrative* level of speaking about the temporally and socially distant first-order performative level. This distinction corresponds to the *use vs mention* distinction (see chapter 4.3): On the first-order performative level of the interaction between Bill and Bob, power is used, but on the second-order narrative level of the interaction between Mary and Marlene, power is not used but mentioned.

Even though the first-order use-situation of Bob and Bill is a more prototypical instance of a communicative activation of MF^{POWER} than the second-order mention-situation of Mary and Marlene, this second-order situation is nevertheless a clear instance of an activation of MF^{POWER}. The same goes for fairy tales, movies, comics, novels, and other second-order perspectives that refer to or mention a temporally or socially distant and often fictional first-order situation. In these atypical instances of activating MF^{POWER}, the actors' goal is not so much to make someone else do something but rather to give an interesting, true, fictional, subjective, informative, funny, creative, complete, or »thick description« of someone making someone else do something.

In the following, I will focus on a particular type of communicative activation, i.e. *discourses*, e.g. the neoliberal discourse, the discourse of modern love, or the abortion discourse.[18] The question is: How can the relation between discourses, activation, and meaning fields be conceptualized?

(1) Discourses are communicative ways of activating meaning fields. The communications of a discourse typically use language, i.e. words and sentences, even though they may also use architecture, images, music, etc.

(2) Discourses activate meaning fields by tapping into their pool of meanings and by using some of these meanings. A meaning field thus functions as an *interpretation reservoir* (Keller 1998: 36), a *variety pool* (Buckley 1968: 81), or an *interpretation repertoire* (Potter & Wetherell 1995: 188f), i.e. as a source and resource that discourses may use. For example, the discourse of Legal Positivism taps into the meaning field of law by using certain meanings from it such as M_S = │SOURCE OF LAW│, M_S = │LEGAL SYSTEM│, or M_S = │JUDICIARY│. Sometimes discourses gain their particularity or efficacy simply by using *any or single* meanings from a meaning field and not by using *particular or coupled* meanings from a meaning field. That is, a discourse's base may be *semantic*, i.e. based on the meanings of only one specific meaning field in contrast to other meaning fields, instead of being *argumentational*, i.e. based on the meanings of one or several meaning fields that are coupled into a particular statement or claim.

[18] I use the term *discourse* in a sociological sense, i.e. as a historically evolving, structured, and over-individual network of knowledge-laden statements or communications that are usually centered around a particular topic or argument (see Bublitz et al. eds. 1999, Greimas & Landowski 1979, Foucault 1970, Keller 2004, G. Williams 1999).

Blaes-Hermanns gives an example of the semantic, but non-argumentational base of a discourse: In the discourse of political reform in Germany, economic semantics prevails because problems are viewed in terms of the ›*Konjunktur*‹ (i.e. the fluctuation of the economic situation), the ›*Standort*‹ (i.e. the geo-economic location of industries), and economic growth; it is necessary to invest into human beings just like into firms; human beings are clients, market participants, entrepreneurs, human capital, or unemployed and should conform to the model of the *homo economicus* and ›*Ich-AG*‹ (i.e. I-myself-being-a-joint-stock-company); the semantics of incentives and profitability looms large; values and decisions are based on economic considerations; etc (Blaes-Hermanns 2006: 31f). In this case, the political discourse gains its particularity and efficacy by tapping into only one meaning field, namely into $MF^{ECONOMY}$, to the exclusion of other meaning fields, e.g. MF^{HEALTH} or $MF^{POLITICS}$. In terms of Lakoff's frame-approach (2004), the discourse of political reform is framed by, and in, the meaning field of economy. It is often characteristic that the discourse uses the meanings of $MF^{ECONOMY}$ in a haphazard and uncoupled manner, e.g. M^1 or M^2 or maybe M^3 and M^4 or M^5, but rarely in an organized and coupled manner in the form of arguments, e.g. M^1–M^2–M^3–M^4.

This combination of *langue* and *parole* – in this case, of meaning field and discourse – is nicely expressed in colloquial terms of the type ›*Economese*‹ (as in the example above), ›*Medicalese*‹, ›*Computerese*‹, or ›*Theologese*‹. These terms are derived from natural language terms like ›*Chinese*‹ or ›*Portuguese*‹, denote the technical jargon of a particular profession such as that of economists or computer specialists, and are usually negatively connoted due to their unintelligibility, complexity, or manipulative intentions. However, stripping these terms from their colloquial denotation and connotation, they can be used in a more neutral and analytical way. They may capture the idea of a combination of meaning field and discourse, i.e. how a discourse is entirely based on a particular meaning field. Applying this reasoning to power and law, we may – admittedly somewhat awkwardly – speak of »*Powerese*« and »*Lawese*« (or the more colloquial term ›*Legalese*‹) as a way of speaking that makes extensive or exclusive use of the meaning field of power or law. The combination of meaning field and discourse is morphologically reflected in these terms because their first parts indicate the meaning field, e.g. ›*Econom-*‹ or ›*Legal-*‹, and their second parts indicate the discourse- and language-like properties, e.g. ›*-ese*‹.

(3) Discourses may systematically connect and couple the meanings of a meaning field or of several meaning fields in the form of statements, arguments, theses, topoi, etc. Meaning fields hence provide the reservoir of unused and uncoupled meanings, which are then used and coupled into arguments of a discourse. From such a perspective, a major difference between meaning fields and discourses is that the elements of meaning fields are meanings that are neither selected nor coupled M^1, M^2, M^3, M^4, etc, whereas the elements of discourses are meanings up to now and from now on that are selected and coupled into statements, arguments, or theses M^1–M^3–M^{20}. Generally speaking, two cases can be distinguished.

On the one hand, only one meaning field is involved: A discourse may use the meanings M^1, M^3, and M^{20} of one particular meaning field MF^{LAW} so as to create a particular meaning form alias the argument M^1–M^3–M^{20}. For example, the discourse of Legal Positivism uses several meanings of MF^{LAW} so as to couple them in the form of an argument, e.g. M_S = ⎪NORMS ARE LEGAL, i.e. BELONG TO THE LEGAL SYSTEM, AND ARE VALID, i.e. ARE LEGALLY ACCEPTED AND BINDING, IF AND ONLY IF THEY ARE BASED ON A SOURCE OF LAW SUCH AS THE JUDICIARY'S DECISIONS⎪.

On the other hand, several meaning fields are involved: A discourse may use and couple the meanings M^1, M^A, and M^{III} of several meaning fields. For example, the migration discourse may couple the meaning M^1 = ⎪ILLEGAL⎪ from MF^{LAW} to the meaning M^A = ⎪UNEMPLOYMENT RATE⎪ from $MF^{ECONOMY}$ by formulating the argument M = ⎪ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION RAISES THE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE⎪. Such overlap or coupling of meaning fields is similar to what is known in Discourse Theory as *discourse interlocking* or *discursive nods* because a single statement or text refers to and combines several discourses (see Jäger 2001: 97f).

Even though in chapter 4.2 I have argued against a rigid distinction between semantic-linguistic knowledge of the language vs pragmatic-encyclopedic knowledge of the world, the following general tendency may nevertheless be observed: Whereas meaning fields often provide the semantic-linguistic knowledge on a particular topic, discourses principally provide the argumentational-encyclopedic knowledge on a specific topic. This is why meaning fields are normally used to give an elementary and rough interpretation of a phenomenon or topic, e.g. Robert's utterance M_S = ⎪MARIA, COME HERE IMMEDIATELY!⎪ is interpreted simply as belonging to the meaning field of power, whereas discourses usually give a complex and detailed interpretation of a phenomenon or topic, e.g. the feminist discourse may interpret Robert's utterance M_S = ⎪MARIA, COME HERE IMMEDIATELY!⎪ as a concrete instance of the more general thesis of masculine domination and feminine subordination due to socio-structural gender biases in society. Whereas meaning fields aim primarily at aiding actors to cognitively understand and interpret something, discourses aim at convincing and influencing actors.

(4) Discourses are processual and syntagmatic streams through time, and meaning fields are rather synchronic and paradigmatic networks. Two inferences can be drawn.

From one perspective, discourses may be seen as the processualizations and temporalizations of meaning fields, or as Greimas & Courtés argue, a discourse is nothing but the seizing of a semiotics as a process (1979: 341-344). The temporal structure of a discourse may be found in its beginning, the plot, the different phases, the end, etc.

From another perspective, meaning fields can be discursified by being put into the form of a discourse. Such a process of discursification has three aspects, namely actorialization, temporalization, and spatialization, i.e. the narra-

tive production of a network of actors, of a temporal frame, and of the spatial surroundings (Greimas & Courtés 1979: 107f, Patte 1986: 69ff).[19]

(5) Discourses are interactional and conflictual, whereas meaning fields are structural and consensual. Within a discourse there are several arguments and opinions that interact with each other and that often stand in conflict.[20]

For example, the abortion discourse comprises both pro-arguments (»pro-choice«) and anti-arguments (»pro-life«) with regard to the morality or legality of abortion, so that discourse coalitions (Hajer 1993) may form around and support each argument. All arguments in a discourse have been advanced in reaction and interaction to already existing arguments. This is why Schwab-Trapp considers discourse analysis to be a conflict and process analysis (2001: ch. 3.2). In contrast, meaning fields usually do not have an internal antagonistic or conflictual structure because they are based on semantic homogeneity and similarity, even if they comprise structural antonymic meanings such as │LEGAL│ vs │ILLEGAL│.[21]

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6.3.4 Actor-speaker vs observer-hearer activation: The starting point for the following discussion is the trivial idea that activation may be carried out not only by *one and the same* actor or system, e.g. not only by Henry, but also by *different and many* actors or systems, e.g. by Henry, by Maria, by the United Nations Organization, by the legal system, etc. A possible way of classifying these different and many actors or systems is to use Attribution Theory's distinction between the actor and the observer of an interaction (Jones & Nisbett 1971), which is often identical with Linguistics' distinction between the speaker (or sign-sender) and the hearer (or sign-receiver) in a communication. There are two possible situations of meaning convergence vs meaning divergence between the participating individuals or systems.

In *meaning convergence*, the interpretations of the signifier made by the actor-speaker and by the observer-hearer converge insofar as both activate the same meaning or meaning field. For example, the general orders the soldier to roll in the mud and both activate MF^{POWER}, i.e. both know that this is a power-laden situation or communication where a superior wants a subordinate to do something. Such a meaning convergence is usually considered to be a prototypical activation mode.

In *meaning divergence* (see chapter 3.7), the interpretations of the signifier made by the actor-speaker and by the observer-hearer diverge from each other insofar as each activates a different meaning field. For power or law to occur, it does not matter *who* activates the meaning field of power or law or whether *everyone* activates the *same* meaning field, but what is crucial is that *someone*

[19] A similar concept to *discursivization* is *narrativization* (see Viehöver 2001: 182, 200).

[20] This is why the term *meaning field* should not be confused with the term *discourse field*: Firstly, the elements of a meaning field are meanings, but the elements of a discourse field are discourses. Secondly, the elements of discourse fields are in a conflictual and antagonistic relation, which is usually not the case for the elements of meaning fields. For discourse fields, see Keller (2003), Maingueneau (1983: 15ff), Schwab-Trapp (2001: ch. 2.2).

[21] Hence, discourses are likely to change and restructure meaning fields. This is why Stichweh speaks of discourses as systems of independent semantic production (2000: 242).

activates the meaning field of power or law – be it the actor-speaker, the observer-hearer, or both. For the *occurrence* of power or law it is thus unimportant who activates MF^{POWER} or MF^{LAW}, whereas only for the *connecting operations* is it important who activates MF^{POWER} or MF^{LAW} (see the example of Alicia and Henry walking on the street and spotting someone waving a red flag in chapter 3.7). In a similar way, Weber conceptualizes a social relation regardless of whether there is an identical and consensual understanding between the actors, because the actors may attribute different meanings to their relationship, but it still remains a social relation (1921g: § 3/3). The advantage of such a conceptualization is that all communication participants are treated equally, whereas some communication models emphasize unilaterally the actor-sender-speaker or auto-description (e.g. classical transmission models) or the observer-receiver-hearer or allo-description (e.g. system-theoretic models, see Berghaus 2003: 79f).

In activation based on meaning divergence, two subtypes may be distinguished, which I will discuss in the following.

Firstly, if it is only the actor-speaker but not the observer-hearer who activates a particular meaning field, we may speak of *actor-speaker activation*. For example, if Henry slaps and scolds Maria, Henry may activate MF^{POWER} because his intention is to punish Maria for being disobedient and to make her do something. In contrast, Maria does not activate MF^{POWER} but rather another meaning field such as MF^{HEALTH}, because she interprets Henry's slapping and scolding as a pathological and compulsive behavior that is a manifestation of his mental illness.

Secondly, if it is only the observer-hearer but not the actor-speaker who activates a particular meaning field, we may speak of *observer-hearer activation*. For example, Maria and Bill have a love relationship. They go out to eat for lunch and Maria has many feelings and thoughts that she wants to express so that Bill gets to know her better and their relationship gets reinforced. In terms of Communication Theory (Jakobson 1960), Maria is emphasizing the expressive, emotive, and self-revealing side of her utterances. She says, for instance, that she loves Bill and therefore wants to start a family and have a baby. Maria is thus activating MF^{LOVE}. However, Bill interprets her utterances as a sort of implicit threat because he infers that if he did not want to start a family and have a baby, maybe Maria would not continue to love him or would end their relationship. Since Bill loves Maria, he fears these possible negative consequences and interprets them as a kind of potential punishment that Maria would apply if he does not do what she wants. In terms of Communication Theory (Jakobson 1960), Bill is emphasizing the conative, normative, and directive side of Maria's utterances. Accordingly, Bill activates the meaning field of power MF^{POWER}.

At this point, a question appears that is related to the discussion of interpretation from chapter 3.6: What are the regularities or rules of interpretation for the actor-speaker and the observer-hearer that connect a particular signifier M_S to a particular meaning M_M of a particular meaning field MF? An answer to this question may explain how and why the abovementioned meaning conver-

gences and meaning divergences appear or disappear. For example, why does A interpret an utterance as belonging to the meaning field of power, whereas B interprets it as belonging to the meaning field of love?, why do both A and B interpret the same gesture as an activation of the meaning field of health?, why does A have a structurally or chronically biased and unilateral interpretation in that he tends to interpret most signifiers as belonging to the meaning field of power? (see Schulz von Thun 1981: ch. A.II.2 for a discussion of habits of unilateral interpretation), etc. These research questions and gaps will not be answered or tackled at this point, but they provide clues and avenues for future research.

What matters for the activation of the meaning fields of power or law is that one of their meanings is activated, whereas it does not matter if this meaning is interpreted or intended in terms of *honesty vs dishonesty*, *seriousness vs joke/play/irony*, *credibility vs non-credibility*, etc. Even though the prototype of power and law clearly refers to the first sides of these distinctions, i.e. honesty, seriousness, credibility, etc, the second sides are also instances of an activation of the meaning fields of power or law, albeit atypical instances. Let us look at some examples.

Dishonesty: In activating the meaning fields of power or law, people may be dishonest, i.e. they deliberately say something that they themselves do not consider to be true. For example, if it is difficult for the order-giver to observe whether the order-receiver obeyed or disobeyed, the order-receiver may say to the order-giver that she obeyed, while she herself thinks that she disobeyed. Or someone may want to get rid of an immigrant who is applying for a job by lying and quoting some made-up law »According to Immigration Act 1998, article 12, § 3 foreigners have no right to apply for this job«.[22]

Joke/play/irony: The meaning fields of power and law are sometimes activated in situations that are clearly viewed as a joke, play, or irony, i.e. a communication is not meant literally, there are no serious or normal consequences, and the goal is to laugh or to amuse oneself. An example of power is children playing with each other and using the social script of »being at school«, where one child plays an authoritarian teacher giving orders to the other kids who take the role of the subordinate pupils. Another example of power may be my girlfriend threatening to kill me if I don't kiss her immediately. Another example of law is the German advertising slogan »Die Würde des Bieres ist unantastbar« (the dignity of beer is inviolable), thus making implicit reference to the well-known first article of the German Constitution »Die Würde des Menschen ist unantastbar« (the dignity of human beings is inviolable).

Non-credibility: For power or law to occur, orders, norms, threats, prohibitions, etc need not necessarily be credible in the eyes of the observer-hearer. An extreme case of non-credibility is this example: In 18th century France, a poor peasant writes a letter to the king of France ordering him to release the peasant's incarcerated son and threatening him with violence. The king reads the letter and understands the peasant's intention, but since he regards himself

[22] This example is a modified version of Luhmann's example (1993a: 66ff).

as almighty and untouchable, especially in view of a poor and unknown peasant, he considers the peasant's order and threat to be absolutely not credible.[23]

6.3.5 Time-reference in activation: Activation may refer to actions, objects, events, people, situations, etc that are temporally located in the *past*, in the *present*, or in the *future*. For example, the following law-related utterances refer to different moments on the time scale: M_S = │TEN YEARS AGO I MADE A CONTRACT WITH HIM│ refers to a past event, M_S = │I AM MAKING A CONTRACT WITH HIM│ refers to a present event, and M_S = │IN TWO WEEKS I WILL MAKE A CONTRACT WITH HIM│ refers to a future event.

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However, references to the *past* occur in power and law especially when classifying a particular action with a particular signifier (see chapter 3.3 on classification), e.g. in a trial, the referent M_R = │YESTERDAY HE TOOK THE MONEY AND WENT AWAY│ may be classified by the judge or a lawyer as M_S = │ILLEGAL│. References to the *future* occur in power and law especially when expressing the illocutionary force of a speech act, i.e. in seeking to steer the future actions of others, e.g. a law may stipulate that M_S = │ALL CITIZENS HAVE TO PAY A ONE-SHOT CAPITATION TAX NEXT YEAR│.

6.4 Co-Activation

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In chapter 6.2 on activation, I primarily discussed how *individual* meanings, such as M^1, are activated. In this chapter, I will extend this discussion by studying how *several* meanings, such as M^1, M^2, M^3, M^4, etc, are activated in a particular sequence. This may be called *co-activation* because it is a domino effect-like process by which the activation of a single meaning M^1 leads to a chain of subsequent activations of other meanings M^2, M^3, M^4, etc.

Co-activation is thus a process based on meanings with a high degree of *connectivity*, i.e. a meaning up to now has a high probability of, or capacity for, generating many meanings from now on that semantically refer to or continue the meaning up to now (see chapter 2.4.3). The result is the creation and maintenance of systems because meanings up to now are constantly connected to meanings from now on. If, however, an activated meaning has a low degree of connectivity, it is unlikely to co-activate further meanings, so this remains a short, insignificant, and single event without far-reaching effects. Co-activation may, just like activation, occur in a psychic or communicative manner, e.g. in a psychic system, a thought, feeling, or recollection may trigger further thoughts, feelings, or recollections, and in a communicative system, an utterance, gesture, or touch may trigger additional utterances, gestures, or touches.

[23] The topic of the credibility of power and law (e.g. of a threat) has drawn a lot of attention in Social Science analyses, especially in Game Theory (Schelling 1960: ch. III.8) and Institutional Economics (North 1993, Williamson 1983). Some scholars such as Popitz (1992: 25ff) even define power as the *credible* capacity or use of sanctions and rewards. Consequently, non-credible threats would cease to be power and would no longer pertain to the meaning field of power. Such a line of argument seems untenable and reductionist from a meaning field approach. The credibility of power is important for its *efficacy and causality*, but is unimportant for its *activation and occurrence*.

The process of co-activation of meanings occurs in different forms. I will call them *inference-based co-activation* and *meaning field-based co-activation*. In the first form, the M that follow each other are inferences based on previous M, e.g. the activated M^1 = │THE DOG BARKS│ co-activates the inferences M^2 = │I HAD BETTER LEAVE│ and M^3 = │THIS MUST BE AN ANIMAL SHELTER│. In the second form, the M that follow each other are members of the same MF, e.g. the activated M^1 = │THE DOG BARKS│ co-activates the neighboring M^2 = │THE CAT MIAOWS│ and M^3 = │THE COW MOOS│, all belonging to $MF^{ANIMAL\ SOUNDS}$.

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6.4.1 Inference-based co-activation: The term inference is here understood in a wide and non-truth-conditional sense as an interpretation or conclusion that A makes on the basis of A's own thoughts or B's communications (see chapter 3.6 on interpretation). In the following, I will look at two types of inferences, namely implicatures and presuppositions.[24]

The terms implicature and presupposition stem from Linguistics and refer to a particular relation or inference between sentences. For example, Maria and her colleagues are in a café and talking. One colleague mentions that he would like to smoke a cigarette, but does not have one. Maria replies M_S = │I STOPPED SMOKING│. The literal, standard, and explicit meaning of Maria's utterance would be something like M_M = │THE PERSON SPEAKING DOES NOT CONTINUE TO REGULARLY BREATHE IN THE GAS PRODUCED BY A THIN TUBE OF PAPER FILLED WITH FINELY CUT TOBACCO THAT BURNS│.

In an implicature (in contrast to an explicature), a sentence M_S neither asserts nor entails, but suggests or implies another sentence $M_M^{IMPLICATURE}$, so that the sentence meaning M_S differs from the speaker meaning $M_M^{IMPLICATURE}$. For instance, the colleague interprets Maria's sentence M_S = │I STOPPED SMOKING│ in terms of another sentence $M_M^{IMPLICATURE}$, namely $M_M^{IMPLICATURE}$ = │MARIA DOESN'T HAVE A CIGARETTE│. In short, $M_M^{IMPLICATURE}$ is not directly said and stated, but implied and suggested.

In a presupposition (in contrast to an assertion), a sentence M_S implicitly contains or semantically assumes another sentence $M_M^{PRESUPPOSITION}$ which represents the taken-for-granted information or background knowledge of sentence M_S. For example, upon hearing Maria's sentence M_S = │I STOPPED SMOKING│, her colleague infers $M_M^{PRESUPPOSITION}$ = │MARIA SMOKED IN THE PAST│, which represents new and unknown information to him. In short, $M_M^{PRESUPPOSITION}$ is not overtly foregrounded and asserted, but backgrounded and assumed.[25]

Inference-based co-activation of meanings by means of implicature or presupposition may be conceptualized as follows: The activation of a particular meaning, such as Maria's utterance M_S = │I STOPPED SMOKING│, leads not only to the activation of its explicit, new, or asserted meaning, such as M_M = │THE PERSON SPEAKING DOES NOT CONTINUE TO REGULARLY BREATHE IN THE GAS PRODUCED BY A THIN TUBE OF PAPER FILLED WITH FINELY CUT TO-

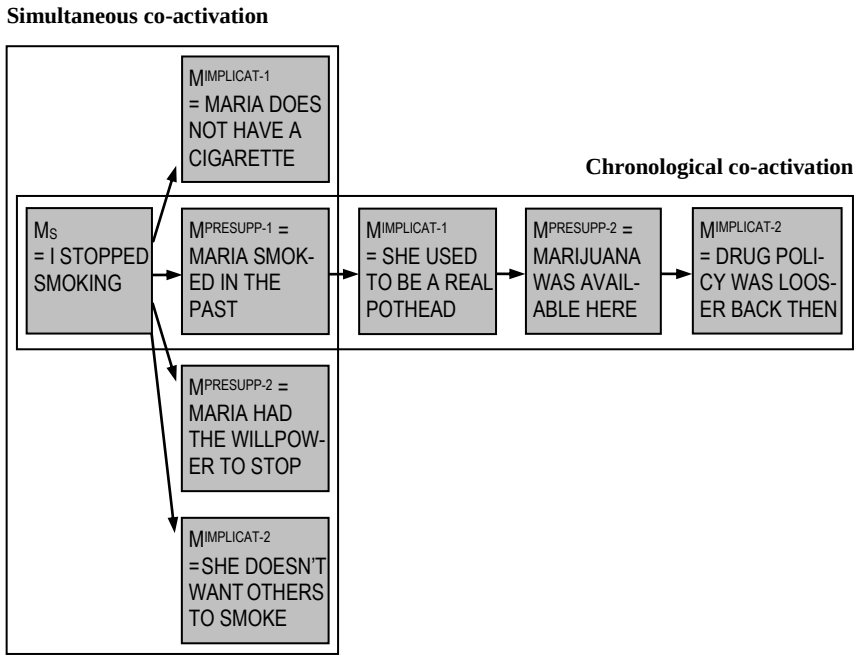
[24] There are other types that I will not, however, discuss here, e.g. deduction, paraphrasing, induction, entailment, statistical inference, contradiction, abduction, etc.

[25] For further discussion of implicatures and presuppositions, see Goffman (1983), Grice (1975, 1978), or Levinson (1983).

BACCO THAT BURNS⎪, but also and primarily to the co-activation of its implied or presupposed meanings, such as $M_M^{IMPLICATURE}$ = ⎪MARIA DOESN'T HAVE A CIGARETTE⎪ or $M_M^{PRESUPPOSITION}$ = ⎪MARIA SMOKED IN THE PAST⎪.

Inference-based co-activation appears in two time forms: Firstly, there is the *simultaneous* form in which the same M_S leads at the same time to a range of co-activated meanings, e.g. $M_M^{IMPLICATURE-1}$, $M_M^{PRESUPPOSITION-1}$, $M_M^{PRESUPPOSITION-2}$, $M_M^{IMPLICATURE-2}$, etc (similar to semasiology, see chapter 3.5). In this case, the hearer or sign-receiver wants to and has to choose only one primary meaning among the range of co-activated meanings (similar to interpretation, see chapter 3.6). Secondly, there is the *chronological* form in which one M_S leads to the co-activation of, for example, only one $M_M^{IMPLICATURE-1}$, which then constitutes the basis for the co-activation of another subsequent $M_M^{PRESUPPOSITION-1}$, which afterwards leads to the co-activation of still another $M_M^{IMPLICATURE-2}$, etc.

Figure 6.V: Temporal forms of inference-based co-activations



The figure shows that the semantic-argumentational distance between the different co-activated meanings tends to be much greater in chronological co-activation than in simultaneous co-activation. The reason is that each co-activated meaning in the simultaneous form depends on the *same* meaning up to now, which allows only for small leaps of inference, whereas each co-activated meaning in the chronological form has a *different* meaning up to now, which may result in greater leaps of inference between the initial and last meaning.

In a communicative system, what the speaker means usually differs from what the hearer infers: The inferences drawn by the hearer in the form of implicatures and presuppositions are not always, or only unconsciously, intended by, or important to, the speaker. The reason why the hearer often infers many, more, and different meanings than the speaker is as follows: In order to understand the speaker's utterance, the hearer has to co-activate several possible meanings so as to get the optimal amount of information, to discover hidden or unconscious messages, or to select the most appropriate or useful meaning for the context (in a kind of »folk« Oevermannian Objective Hermeneutics).

Let us look at an example related to law. The Ministry of Fisheries puts up a sign by a lake that says M_S = │FISHING IS PROHIBITED!│ because it wants to activate the meaning M_M = │YOU, THE PEOPLE, MUST NOT FISH BECAUSE WE, THE MINISTRY OF FISHERIES, DON'T WANT YOU TO DO THIS│. This is the primary, explicit, intended, and foregrounded meaning that is activated by the sign-sender, i.e. the Ministry of Fisheries, and also by the sign-receivers, i.e. people from the general public who come to the lake and read the sign. However, people from the general public are likely to co-activate other meanings in the form of implicatures and presuppositions, which are secondary, implicit, unintended, or backgrounded from the perspective of the Ministry.

For instance, additional co-activated meanings may be the following. There is $M_M^{IMPLICATURE\text{-}1}$ = │NO FISHING IS GOOD FOR COMMON WELFARE, BUT BAD FOR MY INDIVIDUAL WELFARE│, because people know that most legal rules aim at increasing common welfare even though they may decrease, or prevent certain people from increasing, individual welfare. For instance, the Ministry's prohibition seeks to prevent overfishing and thus promote long-term biological and economic sustainability even though a particular person has to go without the short-term pleasure felt in catching the fish, the money received from selling the fish, or the enjoyment brought by eating the fish. This has also led to the everyday topos: What is prohibited is good for me.[26]

There is also the co-activated $M_M^{PRESUPPOSITION\text{-}1}$ = │YOU WANT TO FISH│, as this partially follows from the previous $M_M^{IMPLICATURE\text{-}1}$, i.e. I want what is good for me. This semantic association of »X is prohibited« and »X is good for me, so I want X« is symbolized by the scene of Eve and the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden. The presupposition is also valid because of an *a contrario*-argument: If people did not want to fish, the Ministry would not consider it necessary to put up the sign with the prohibition.[27]

[26] Two caveats: Firstly, legal rules not only aim at increasing common welfare, but sometimes they also aim at increasing individual welfare or at preventing individual welfare from decreasing, e.g. if the lake were polluted the fish would be contaminated, so it would hence be dangerous for people to eat the fish they caught. Secondly, even if a prohibited action increases individual welfare, this reasoning does not take into account the risk of, or actual imposition of, a subsequent punishment for noncompliance with the prohibition.

[27] In a sort of reversed preparatory condition for felicitous directive speech acts, e.g. orders (Searle 1969: 59, 63), it is *not* obvious to the speaker (i.e. the Ministry) that the hearer (i.e. people from the general public) will *not* carry out the prohibited action (i.e. fishing in the lake) in the normal course of events. Since this is not obvious, the speaker (i.e. the Ministry) considers it necessary to put up a sign prohibiting the action (i.e. fishing in the lake).

Moreover, there may be $M_M^{IMPLICATURE-2}$ = │YOU WILL BE PUNISHED IF YOU DO FISH│, because people know that prohibitions usually imply some kind of penalty for noncompliance even if this penalty is not explicitly stated. Then there is also $M_M^{PRESUPPOSITION-2}$ = │THERE ARE FISH IN THE LAKE│, because the prohibition of fishing presupposes the existence of fish. In addition, there is $M_M^{PRESUPPOSITION-3}$ = │YOU ARE ABLE TO CATCH THE FISH│, because if people were physically or technically incapable of fishing, there would be no need for the Ministry to put up the sign with the prohibition (see Searle's 1969: 44 preparatory condition of the hearer being able to perform the respective action). $M_M^{PRESUPPOSITION-1}$ and $M_M^{PRESUPPOSITION-3}$ are thus complementary as they symbolize the fundamental prerequisites for any action, namely intentionality and ability. $M_M^{PRESUPPOSITION-3}$ is so fundamental and thus important that it is often overlooked or considered trivial. However, the sociological significance of $M_M^{PRESUPPOSITION-3}$ appears when it is deliberately omitted, which leads to situations that would be regarded as absurd, impossible, or funny: An action is prohibited or commanded, but the typical actor is in principle incapable of performing this action. For example, the prohibition of stealing an acre of land, the command to fly like a butterfly (Saint-Exupéry 1943: 39f), the prohibition to turn into a raven like a sorcerer, the order given to my grandma to recite Japanese poems, etc. That is why such prohibitions or commands only exist in fairy tales, comic strips, science fiction, jokes, etc.

Still another co-activated meaning is $M_M^{IMPLICATURE-3}$ = │THINGS ARE THE WAY THEY ARE, BUT THEY COULD BE DIFFERENT IF WE CHANGED THEM│, because every normative rule implicitly contrasts the current state of affairs with other possible state of affairs, e.g. people fish vs people don't fish. This implicature is an everyday phrasing of the philosophical concept of contingency (Luhmann 1984: 152) or the linguistic concept of event modality (Palmer 2001: ch. 5.3).

Furthermore, there is the $M_M^{PRESUPPOSITION-4}$ = │THE WORLD AS IT IS NOW IS IMPERFECT OR SUBOPTIMAL│, because if the world were perfect and optimal, there would be no need for any normative rules – be they legal prohibitions, moral obligations, human rights, etc – because normative rules always point to and promote some other, namely less imperfect and less suboptimal, possible world (see $M_M^{IMPLICATURE-3}$).

The list of possible co-activated meanings in the form of implicatures and presuppositions can be extended much further (see Jakobson's 1960 six communicative functions or Schulz von Thun's 1981 four sides of a message). However, the previous examples suffice to show that there may be quite a large number of co-activated meanings, that they are often very fundamental and basic for social and cognitive systems, that most of them are secondary, implicit, unintended, or backgrounded from the perspective of the speaker or sign-sender, but that the hearer or sign-receiver is likely to co-activate several of these meaning-inferences.

Inference-based co-activations by means of presuppositions have important consequences for cognitive or communicative systems. In the following, I will look more closely at some of them.

Presuppositions transmit information that the speaker usually considers secondary, taken-for-granted, or irrelevant, whereas the hearer may consider this information primary, new, or relevant. For example, as shown above, presuppositions of the sign M_S = ⎪FISHING IS PROHIBITED!⎪ may be the information $M_M^{PRESUPPOSITION}$ = ⎪THERE ARE FISH IN THE LAKE⎪ or $M_M^{PRESUPPOSITION}$ = ⎪YOU ARE ABLE TO CATCH THE FISH⎪. The Ministry regards this information as secondary, taken-for-granted, or irrelevant, whereas for someone from the general public who comes to the lake this information may be primary, new, or relevant. A jogger, who runs around the lake only thinking of sports and health but never of fish or fishing, reads the sign and co-activates the abovementioned presuppositions. These presuppositions may then trigger new cognitions which in turn may trigger new actions: The presuppositions that there are fish in the lake and that the jogger is able to catch the fish may give the jogger the idea of coming back some day to fish in the lake, and eventually he does return to the lake and catches some fish. In short, normative rules – be they prohibitions, rights, obligations, etc – also have the function of *transmitting new information* and thus of *inspiring new ideas* that lead to new behavior.[28]

Presuppositions not only *describe* a state of affairs that had already existed *before* the co-activation, but they may also *ascribe* a state of affairs to the participating actors and current situation *during and through* the co-activation. Put differently, the presuppositions may *produce* a state of affairs that had not yet existed before the co-activation but only comes to exist *through and after* the co-activation.

To resume the abovementioned example: On the basis of the Ministry's sign M_S = ⎪FISHING IS PROHIBITED!⎪, the jogger co-activates $M_M^{PRESUPPOSITION}$ = ⎪YOU WANT TO FISH⎪. This presupposition does not simply *describe* – by means of a declarative-informational speech act – the jogger's already existing intention, namely that he wanted to fish in the lake even before he read the sign and that he still wants to fish in the lake, but the presupposition *ascribes* – by means of an attributive-performative speech act – this intention to the jogger in the moment of co-activation, namely that he wanted to fish in the lake even before he read the sign and that he still wants to fish in the lake. Put differently, presuppositions may *transfer or attribute* their informational content

[28] This function may even be exploited more systematically: If someone wants to do X, but does not know how to do X or how to do X in the best way, but knows that X is legally forbidden, then he may inform himself about the normative rules that forbid different types of X or ways of doing X in order to co-activate the rules' presuppositions and thus learn how to do X or how to do X in the best way. For example, if someone wants to catch fish, but does not know good fishing methods and technologies, but knows that it is forbidden to fish, then he may inform himself about the fishing norms that describe in detail which fishing methods and technologies are forbidden, e.g. fishing in March and April is forbidden, fishing with dynamite is forbidden, night fishing with lights to attract fish is forbidden, fishing with trawl nets is forbidden, cormorant fishing is forbidden, etc. The presuppositions of these prohibitions then give him the knowledge of fishing methods and techniques that he can use in order to catch fish.

to the participating people or current situation (see also the linguistic concept of transfer feature[29] and the psychological concept of attribution[30]).

A crucial point is that the presuppositions, e.g. $M_M^{PRESUPPOSITION}$ = ⎪YOU WANT TO FISH⎪, are transferred or attributed to the sign-receiver, e.g. the jogger, on a purely *hypothetical, a priori, and non-actual* basis and are thus completely independent of the *empirical, a posteriori, and actual* situation, e.g. the jogger's real and genuine intentions to fish or not to fish. That is, regardless of whether the jogger did or did not want to fish, the sign presupposes that he did want to fish.

What happens with and between the sign-sender and sign-receiver? The sign-sender, e.g. the Ministry, consciously or unconsciously assumes that the presuppositions such as $M_M^{PRESUPPOSITION}$ = ⎪YOU WANT TO FISH⎪ are true or self-evident, so there is no need to overtly assert them. The sign-receiver, e.g. the jogger, may or may not co-activate the presuppositions depending on whether or not he becomes aware of them and takes them into account. Two cases can be distinguished.

(1) This is the case where the sign-receiver does co-activate the presuppositions, e.g. the jogger is well aware that the Ministry somehow »suspects« him, just like any other person who comes to the lake and reads the sign, of wanting to fish, but he rejects the presuppositions. That is, he does not share the sign-sender's perspective as he regards the presuppositions as false or controversial. For example, the jogger is a law-abiding and environmentally aware man who does not have the intention to fish. When he reads M_S = ⎪FISHING IS PROHIBITED!⎪ and co-activates the presupposition $M_M^{PRESUPPOSITION}$ = ⎪YOU WANT TO FISH⎪, he may feel offended, passed over, or subjugated to the external logic and attributed intention of the sign. He may think that his legal conformity and integrity is unjustly questioned because this questioning is based, as shown above, on a purely non-factual and *a priori* hypothesis without any factual and *a posteriori* evidence.[31]

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[29] Transfer features (Weinreich 1966) are an alternative concept to the concept of selection restrictions (Katz 1972, see footnote 41 in chapter 3.7.2). Both are particular types of (presuppositional) meaning components, yet they have a different function: Selection restrictions are meaning components of a word that *restrict and determine the range of possible connecting words*. For example, the words M_S = ⎪TO BREAK X⎪ have the selection restriction M_M^I = ⎪X IS A HARD OBJECT⎪, which stipulates that X must be a hard object so that a correct and valid sentence can be constructed, e.g. a sentence like M_S = ⎪I BROKE THE GLASS⎪, otherwise no correct and valid sentence can be constructed, e.g. a sentence like M_S = ⎪I BROKE THE SOCK⎪. In contrast, transfer features are meaning components of a word that *transfer and attribute their meaning components to any connecting word*. For example, the words M_S = ⎪TO BREAK X⎪ have the transfer feature M_M^I = ⎪X IS A HARD OBJECT⎪, and this meaning component is transferred to the next word in a sentence, even if this next word has the meaning component M_M^{II} = ⎪X IS A SOFT OBJECT⎪. Therefore a sentence like M_S = ⎪I BROKE THE SOCK⎪ is a valid and correct, albeit atypical sentence that presupposes that the sock, which is prototypically a soft object, is in this case a hard object (maybe because it is frozen, it is made of stone, etc).

[30] See Jones & Nisbett (1971) and Försterling (2001).

[31] This is why tourists, immigrants, or foreigners in customs clearance may be surprised or offended if they are told, or if they read, that drug or arms trade is prohibited.

(2) This case comprises two different sub-cases that lead, however, to the same result. Firstly, the sign-receiver does co-activate the presuppositions and accepts them because – even though he had never thought of or agreed to these presuppositions before – he now agrees with the sign-sender's perspective that the presuppositions are true or self-evident. Secondly, the sign-receiver does not co-activate the presuppositions, so they remain unconscious and hidden. In both sub-cases, the sign-receiver explicitly or implicitly validates and shares the sign-sender's presuppositions. The result is a new, common, and confirmed definition of the situation or construal of reality. In this sense, presuppositions *produce* a state of affairs that had not yet existed before the co-activation, but only comes to exist *through and after* the co-activation. For example, in medieval and early modern Europe, there were many public communications on witchcraft, e.g. trials, sermons, edicts, books, etc. Apart from their foregrounded and explicit messages, most of these communications carried the backgrounded and implicit presupposition $M_M^{PRESUPPOSITION}$ = ⎪WITCHCRAFT EXISTS⎪. Since this presupposition was attributed to the participating actors and current situation, and since this presupposition was consciously or unconsciously accepted by many actors, the knowledge of the possibility and existence of witchcraft spread through the population. The result was the production of a new state of affairs. Not only was »the reality of witchcraft […] constantly reaffirmed, and religious dogma and peasant belief vindicated« (Unsworth 1987: 72), but even more radically, actual cases of witchcraft often occurred only *after* there were communications on witchcraft. For example, at the end of many years in office and thousands of interviews with people in his jurisdiction, the famous inquisitor Salazar Frías concluded that »there were neither witches nor bewitched until they were talked and written about« (quoted in Lea 1988: 234).[32]

6.4.2 Meaning field-based co-activation: Whereas in inference-based co-activation the M that follow each other are inferences and often belong to different MF, in meaning field-based co-activation the M that follow each other are all members of the same MF. In this latter case, the activation of a single M^1 leads to a chain of co-activations of neighboring M^2, M^3, M^4, etc until most or all M of an MF are co-activated or until the MF as a whole is co-activated.

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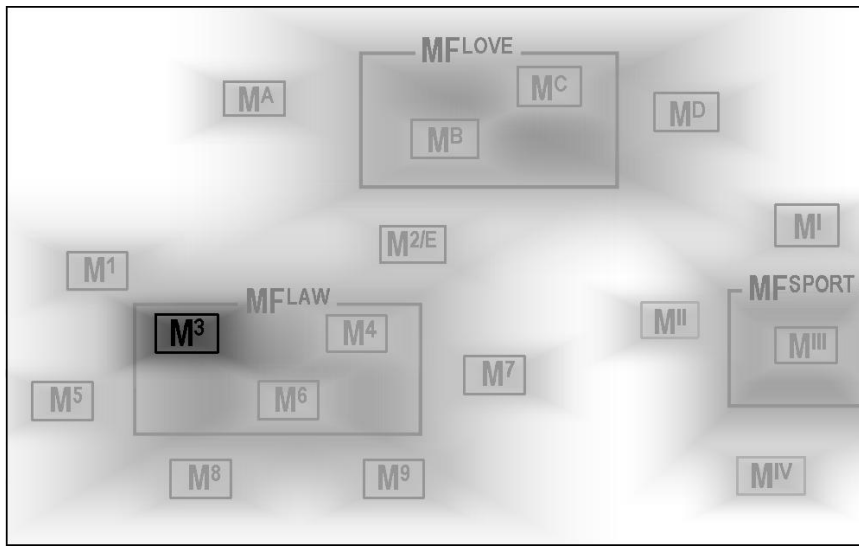
Let us look at a simplified example of a communicative meaning field-based co-activation: I will study three meaning fields, namely MF^{LOVE}, MF^{LAW}, and MF^{SPORT}, in the setting of a business meeting. Several managers are discussing financial questions of revenues, loans, investments, and cash flow, and therefore activate the meaning field of finance. Suddenly, Mr. Profit asks M_S = ⎪BUT WHAT WILL WE DO IF THE SUBCONTRACTORS DON'T STICK TO OUR AGREEMENT?⎪ and thus activates M^3 = ⎪CONTRACT BREACH, i.e. THE ILLEGAL ACT OF BREAKING A MUTUALLY BINDING AGREEMENT⎪, which is a prototypical meaning of MF^{LAW}. The following figure depicts the three abovementioned

[32] This argument is similar to the »*ex significator*«-argument (see chapter 3.1.2 on extension), namely that new signifiers ⊣M_S⊣ may create referents ⊢M_R⊢ that were previously unknown or nonexistent.

meaning fields MF^{LOVE}, MF^{LAW}, and MF^{SPORT}. Within MF^{LAW}, there is the activated meaning M^3 that is visually more salient by being depicted in a darker color than the other gray inactivated meanings.[33]

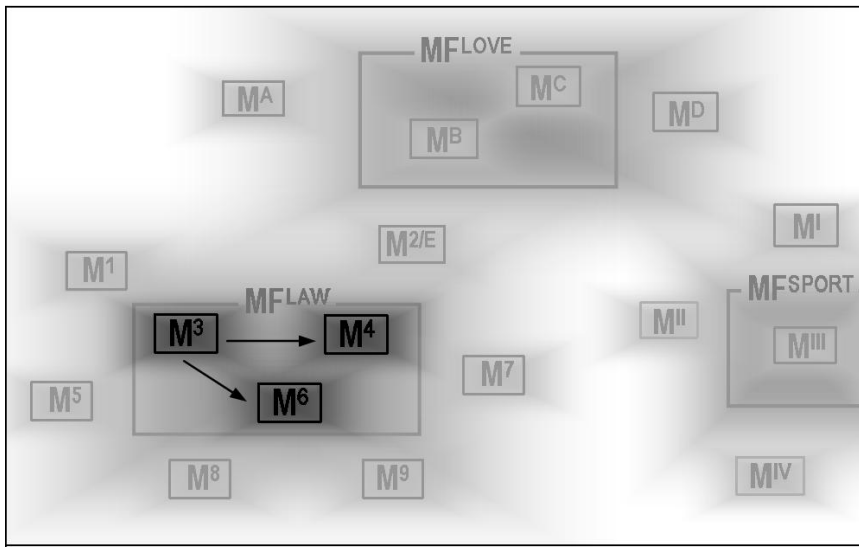
Figure 6.VI: Phase 1 – Activation of a single meaning in a meaning field



Mr. Profit's remark has touched on a sensitive topic so that it stirs up a lively discussion among the managers, which will deeply tap into the meaning field of law. Several people start to speak at the same time: Mrs. Bank immediately replies M_S = ⎪I GUESS THEY WILL HAVE TO PAY A SEVERE PENALTY⎪, which activates the meaning M^6 = ⎪PENALTY, i.e. A PUNISHMENT USUALLY IMPOSED BY A COURT FOR BREAKING A RULE OR A CONTRACT⎪. This is a prototypical member of MF^{LAW}. Mr. Investment proposes M_S = ⎪WELL, IN THAT CASE WE WILL TAKE THEM TO »THE WIG«⎪. Since everybody knows that »the Wig« is a local nickname for the judge who usually wears a white wig in court, Mr. Investment's utterance activates the meaning M^4 = ⎪TO SUE SOMEONE, i.e. THE ACTION OF MAKING A LEGAL CLAIM AGAINST SOMEONE BECAUSE THEY HAVE HARMED YOU⎪. This, too, is a prototypical meaning of MF^{LAW}. In summary, the activation of the meaning M^3 has led to the co-activation of further meanings, namely M^4 and M^6. The figure below depicts this process of co-activation by arrows leading to additionally activated meanings. Apart from the three activated meanings M^3, M^4, and M^6 of MF^{LAW}, all other meanings as well as the other meaning fields MF^{LOVE} and MF^{SPORT} are not co-activated.

[33] This phase is like the second phase of the activation process (see figure 6.II in chapter 6.2.1). The figures 6.VI to 6.IX depict the meaning fields in a simplified manner, e.g. MF^{LAW} and MF^{SPORT} do not overlap, the number of M is reduced, etc.

Figure 6.VII: Phase 2 – Co-activation of further meanings in a meaning field

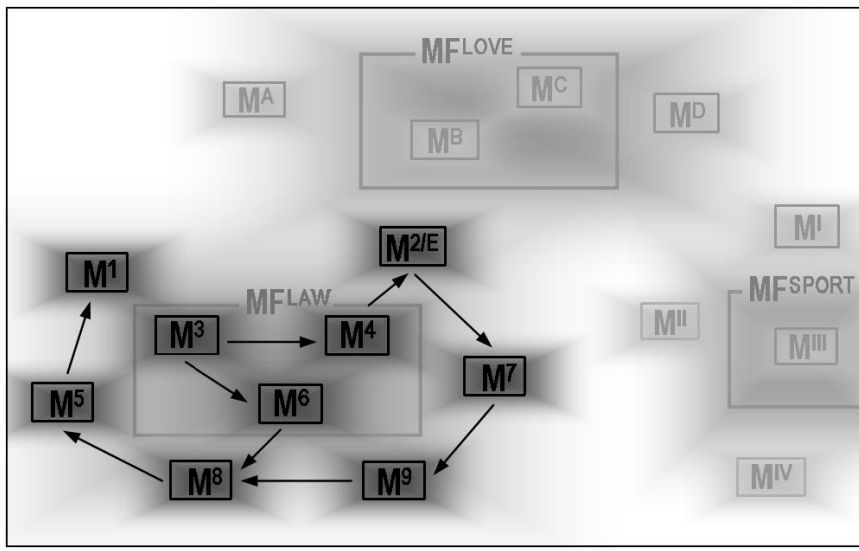


The subsequent discussion among the managers continues to revolve around law-related matters because the following utterances keep co-activating further meanings of the meaning field of law. For instance, Mr. Investment's meaning M^4 about suing the subcontractors is taken up by Mrs. Dollar who draws an analogy by saying M_S = ⎪YES, BUT THE RISK IS THAT THIS WILL BE LIKE A DIVORCE BECAUSE WE WOULD OFFICIALLY TERMINATE OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THEM⎪. This utterance activates the meaning $M^2 = M^E = M^{2/E}$ = ⎪DIVORCE, i.e. THE LEGAL ENDING OF A MARRIAGE⎪, which is simultaneously a member of MF^{LAW} and of MF^{LOVE}. However, in contrast to other more prototypical meanings, $M^{2/E}$ is a rather atypical and peripheral member of MF^{LOVE} and MF^{LAW}. Even though $M^{2/E}$ also belongs to the meaning field of love, it does not succeed in co-activating further meanings of the meaning field of love and therefore remains an isolated case of a love-related meaning.

Instead, further utterances connecting and referring to Mrs. Dollar's utterance co-activate meanings of the meaning field of law. For example, Mr. Trade wonders what might count as a valid cause for such a »commercial divorce« and mentions M_S = ⎪LIBEL⎪, thus activating the meaning M^7 = ⎪LIBEL, i.e. A WRITTEN COMMUNICATION CONTAINING BAD OR FALSE STATEMENTS ABOUT SOMEONE AND WHICH IS INTENDED TO HARM SOMEONE'S REPUTATION⎪, and Mr. Commerce adds M_S = ⎪SLANDER⎪, thus activating the meaning M^9 = ⎪SLANDER, i.e. AN ORAL COMMUNICATION CONTAINING BAD OR FALSE STATEMENTS ABOUT SOMEONE AND WHICH IS INTENDED TO HARM SOMEONE'S REPUTATION⎪. Both M^7 and M^9 are rather peripheral and atypical meanings of the meaning field of law because – from the perspective of everyday language and general culture – they are specialized and rare legal terms. The conversa-

tion continues to revolve around law-related issues so that subsequent utterances activate further meanings of the meaning field of law such as the atypical M^8, M^5, and M^1, e.g. someone says that M_S = ⎪IT IS IMPORTANT TO ESTABLISH A VALID LEGAL DEFINITION OF TERMS SUCH AS ›LIBEL‹ OR ›PENALTY‹⎪, someone else proposes M_S = ⎪WE COULD DO THIS BY SEEKING THE AID OF A LEGAL SCHOLAR FROM A LAW SCHOOL⎪, etc. In summary, the process of co-activation fans out through many or all of the meanings of the meaning field of law like a domino effect, as depicted in the following figure.

Figure 6.VIII: Phase 3 – Co-activation of many meanings in a meaning field



At this stage of the conversation, the businessmen's utterances have frequently and intensively tapped into the meaning field of law, and co-activation has spread out through a great part of, or even through the entire, meaning field.

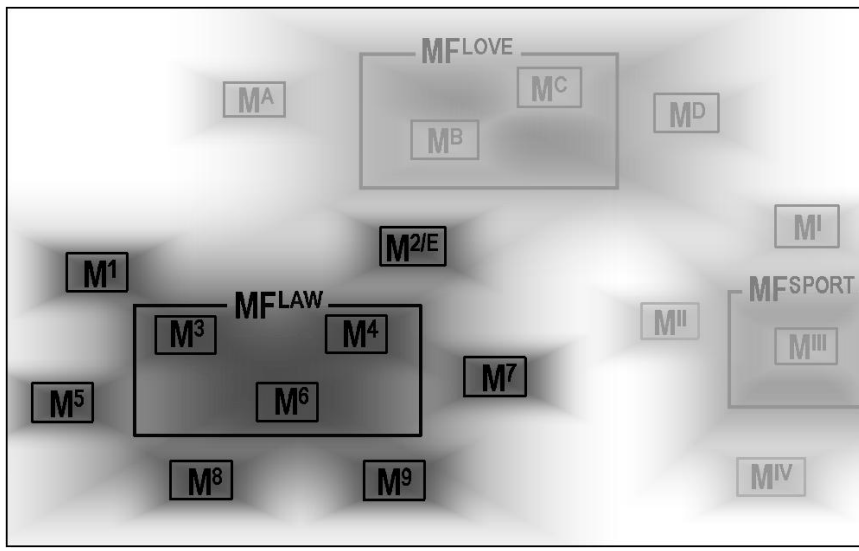
Metaphorically speaking, like an intangible but clearly felt cloud filling the entire room and creeping into every tiny niche, the meaning field of law has penetrated and enveloped the psychic system of each businessman as well as the communicative system of the businessmen's discussion. Even after the business meeting and for the rest of the day, many conversations and thoughts continue to tap into the meaning field of law because the businessmen speak about or muse over contract breach, penalties, suing someone, illegality, divorce, laws, court, libel, legal definitions, judges, slander, legal scholars, etc.

A qualitative or semantic leap has occurred, a sort of emergent or synergetic effect. The process of co-activation has »jumped« from the level of the *individual meanings* to the level of the *meaning field as a whole*. It is now the entire meaning field that has become co-activated. The crucial point is that it is no longer *several meanings* that stand in contrast but *several meaning fields*:

Since MF^{LAW} has been co-activated, while the neighboring MF^{LOVE} and MF^{SPORT} have remained inactivated, MF^{LAW} constitutes itself and is semantically foregrounded in opposition to MF^{LOVE} and MF^{SPORT}.

The following figure depicts this argument by rendering the co-activated meaning field MF^{LAW} visually darker than the other gray and inactivated meaning fields MF^{LOVE} and MF^{SPORT}.

Figure 6.IX: Phase 4 – Co-activation of the meaning field as a whole



This business meeting was an example of *communicative* co-activation. However, it may also be presented in terms of *psychic* co-activation, and there are many other examples of this, e.g. sensory perceptions, recollections, thoughts, feelings, etc. For example, within the meaning field of law, the thought M^1 = ⎪THIS IS A CLEAR CASE OF BREACH OF CONTRACT⎪ may trigger or co-activate the recollection of M^2 = ⎪THAT REMINDS ME OF MY UNCLE WHO IS A LAWYER AND TOLD ME ABOUT A SIMILAR CASE⎪, which may lead to the co-activation of the emotion M^3 = ⎪THIS EVOKES A FEELING OF JUSTICE AND LAWFULNESS IN ME⎪, etc until the meaning field of law as a whole is co-activated.

Meaning field-based co-activation is based on the principle of *selective connectivity of semantic closeness*. This principle is a specification of the principle of connectivity (see chapter 2.4.3) and the principle of selective connectivity (see argumentative step (c) in chapter 3.7.2). It states that a particular meaning M^1 selects or renders probable the co-activation of those connecting meanings that are semantically *close* such as M^2 and M^3, while it deselects or renders improbable the co-activation of those meanings that are semantically *distant* such as M^8 or M^9. The semantic closeness or distance of meanings may have different origins and may be based on several relations, e.g. synonymy

(e.g. lawyer → attorney), connotation (e.g. lawyer → meticulous), hyponymy (e.g. lawyer → human being), visual (e.g. lawyer → the image of a gavel ), incompatibility or antonymy (e.g. lawyer → defendant), meronymy (e.g. lawyer → legal system), recollections (e.g. lawyer → my grandfather), etc. Moreover, it may involve both linguistic-semantic knowledge of the language (e.g. judges → are the officials who preside over a court) and pragmatic-encyclopedic knowledge of the world (e.g. judges → wear wigs and behave formally).

The conceptualization of meaning field proposed in chapter 5 implies that the semantic closeness of two meanings is greater if both are members of the *same* meaning field than if both are members of *different* meaning fields. Thus, co-activation occurs more frequently *within* the same meaning field. In the abovementioned example of the discussion among the businessmen, the meaning M = │CONTRACT BREACH│ is a meaning of MF^{LAW} and it is more likely to co-activate a semantically close meaning from MF^{LAW}, e.g. M = │TO SUE SOMEONE│ or M = │PENALTY│, than a semantically distant meaning from MF^{LOVE}, such as M = │GIRLFRIEND│ or M = │TO HAVE SEX│ or a meaning from MF^{SPORT} such as M = │TO TRAIN FOR A MARATHON│ or M = │FOOTBALL STADIUM│.

The preceding arguments on meaning field-based co-activation are supported by findings from Linguistics, Psychology, and Semiotics.

In Cognitive Linguistics, the concept of *semantic priming* has been proposed by the Spreading Activation Theory (see Collins & Loftus 1975, McNamara 2005). Its main argument runs as follows: If an actor sees or hears a particular signifier such as the word M_S = │DOG│, the corresponding meaning M^1_M = │DOG, i.e. A COMMON ANIMAL WITH FOUR LEGS, FUR, AND A TAIL, OFTEN KEPT BY PEOPLE AS A PET OR FOR GUARDING THINGS│ is activated in the actor's mind. The activation of M^1_M automatically and often unconsciously spreads to semantically close meanings such as M^2_M = │CAT, i.e. A SMALL COMMON ANIMAL WITH FOUR LEGS, FUR, AND CLAWS, OFTEN KEPT BY PEOPLE AS A PET OR FOR CATCHING MICE│, M^3_M = │TO BARK, i.e. TO MAKE LOUD AND ROUGH NOISES LIKE A CANINE│, M^4_M = │PET, i.e. AN ANIMAL THAT YOU KEEP AND CARE FOR AT HOME│, etc. These meanings are stored closely to M^1_M in the long-term memory and are usually members of the same meaning field such as $MF^{DOMESTIC\ ANIMALS}$. The meanings M^2_M, M^3_M, M^4_M, etc are now semantically primed, i.e. they are not completely and consciously activated like the initial M^1_M, because otherwise they would rise to awareness, but they are semi-consciously activated or pre-activated. In this intermediate state, these primed meanings are more readily available for complete activation and more easily processable in mental operations than non-primed meanings of other meaning fields. This explains why semantically primed words, i.e. words of the same meaning field, are likely to co-occur when the initial priming word occurs.[34]

In Psychology, the concept of *apperception* bears similarities to the concept of co-activation because both assume that a single element calls forth other elements and is embedded into the whole network of elements. Accord-

[34] This semantic priming effect has been corroborated by several psycho-linguistic experiments (for an example, see Schwarz & Chur 2004: ch. 2.5).

ing to Herbart (1824: ch. III/I/5), the concept of apperception – in contrast to perception – refers to the mental process by which a new experience is assimilated to and transformed by already existent experiences (apperceptive mass) stocked in memory, knowledge, and consciousness. The new experience is classified and understood in the light of the already classified and comprehended existent experiences. James (1899: ch. 14) gives an example, which nicely illustrates apperception and co-activation: If you hear someone call out the sequence A, B, C you are very likely to inwardly continue the sequence by thinking D, E, F, G, etc. The first sequence arouses its old associates, i.e. the continuation of the sequence, so that the mind recognizes the first sequence as the beginning of the alphabet. Here, too, a new activated meaning is mentally escorted by existent meanings so that understanding is achieved.

Since cognitive processes such as semantic priming or apperception usually operate pre- or un-consciously, psychic co-activation (in contrast to communicative co-activation) is often an automatic and unintentional operation. Therefore it is normally impossible *not* to co-activate particular meanings in a psychic system. For example, in contemporary Western society, if one thinks of the concept of M = │LOVE│, it is almost impossible not to also think of M = │SENSUALITY│ or M = │SEXUALITY│, as these meanings are closely connected in the modern semantics of love (see Luhmann 1982: 35). In some African societies, »sickness, failure, and injury of all kinds evoke at once the notion of witchcraft« (Evans-Pritchard 1935: 420f). Activating the meaning M = │CAVIAR│, I automatically co-activate meanings such as M = │WEALTH│, M = │RUSSIA│, or M = │INDULGENCE│. This last example is also a typical instance of connotation, a particular kind of co-activation, which is based on emotional, personal, cultural, or ideological grounds (see Chandler 2002: 140-143).[35]

Another reason why meaning field-based co-activation, particularly in psychic systems, is so frequent or inevitable is based on an argument made at the end of chapter 1.1. Meaning is structural and relational, i.e. in order for hearers or readers to understand a particular meaning M^1, they (need to) relate it to, and consequently co-activate, its neighboring meanings M^2, M^3, M^4, etc so as to evaluate M^1's relation to and position among the neighboring meanings M^2, M^3, M^4 (remember the example with the grading scales in universities). Since these co-activated meanings tend to be located in the same meaning field as the originally activated meaning, hearers or readers are also likely to co-activate the entire meaning field to which these meanings belong. For example, in order to fully understand M^1 = │THREAT│ within a given linguistic system, it is necessary to understand its relation to, and therefore to co-activate, its closest neighbors such as the semi-synonyms M^2 = │BLACKMAIL│, M^3 = │EXTORTION│, M^4 = │MENACE│, M^5 = │INTIMIDATION│, etc, but also its other neighbors such as M^{10} = │COMMAND│, M^{11} = │PUNISHMENT│, M^{12} = │PROMISE│, etc. Moreover, a thorough understanding of M^1 = │THREAT│ also makes it

[35] Co-activation is inherent in connotation: Chandler argues that »denotation leads to a chain of connotations« (2002: 140-143) and Eco holds that a certain denotation leads to a pyramid-like superimposition of several layers of connotations (1976a: ch. 2.3).

necessary to consider its position within its corresponding meaning field such as MF^{POWER}, e.g. whether M^1 = │THREAT│ is a prototypical-central or an atypical-peripheral member of MF^{POWER}. In the case of binary opposite meanings such as │LEGAL│ vs │ILLEGAL│, meaning field-based co-activation is particularly strong and evident. In order to understand one meaning, one must co-activate its antonymic meaning. Jakobson (1942: 76) remarks that »the opposed terms are two in number and they are interrelated in quite a specific way: if one of them is present, the mind educes the other. In an oppositive duality, if one of the terms is given, then the other, though not present, is evoked in thought. To the idea of white there is opposed only that of black, to the idea of beauty that of ugliness, […]. Opposites are so intimately interconnected that the appearance of one of them inevitably elicits the other.«

This argument about the process of a meaning co-activating its meaning field reappears in a slightly modified form in Frame Semantics and Script Theory, as presented in chapter 5.4.2. In order to understand the value of any one of a frame's meanings, it is necessary to understand the entire frame. Accordingly, activating one meaning results in all meanings becoming available because the initial meaning co-activates a frame of semantic knowledge relating to this specific meaning (Fillmore 1985, Schank & Abelson 1977). Frames such as $MF^{COURT\ TRIAL}$ or $MF^{EATING\ IN\ A\ RESTAURANT}$ serve as guidelines for behavior since they provide the needed knowledge and information, which is highly standardized and structured, to make sense of an event and to appropriately behave in it. If there is a single activated meaning, e.g. M^1 = │JUDGE│, it is, due to its isolation, hardly intelligible and connectable. Hence, to fully understand it, actors need to tap into and co-activate the corresponding frame or script, e.g. $MF^{COURT\ TRIAL}$, which then completes the deficient information given by the isolated meaning. For example, if Alicia receives an official letter summoning her to appear before the judge, the letter as well as the meaning M = │JUDGE│ are incomplete and not fully intelligible, even if one looks up the signification in a dictionary, because it leaves out many relevant, pragmatic pieces of information, e.g. what is a judge?, what may he want?, what does he normally do?, what may possibly happen? Since Alicia is a socialized member of her culture, she automatically and unconsciously complements this incomplete information by adding supplementary information taken from the co-activated frame $MF^{COURT\ TRIAL}$ = │($M_{ACTOR}{}^1$ = │JUDGE│, $M_{ACTOR}{}^2$ = │LAWYERS│, $M_{ACTOR}{}^3$ = │DEFENDANT│, $M_{ACTOR}{}^4$ = │JURY│, etc), ($M_{ACTION}{}^1$ = │GO INTO COURT BUILDING│, $M_{ACTION}{}^2$ = │PROSECUTOR TRIES TO PROVE THAT DEFENDANT IS GUILTY│, $M_{ACTION}{}^3$ = │ATTORNEY FOR THE DEFENSE TRIES TO PROVE THAT DEFENDANT IS INNOCENT│, $M_{ACTION}{}^4$ = │WITNESSES GIVE TESTIMONIES│, $M_{ACTION}{}^5$ = │JUDGE OR JURY EXAMINES EVIDENCE│, $M_{ACTION}{}^6$ = │JUDGE OR JURY GIVES VERDICT│, etc), ($M_{PROP}{}^1$ = │THE JUDGE'S ROBE│, $M_{PROP}{}^2$ = │LAW BOOKS│, $M_{PROP}{}^3$ = │DOCK│, etc)│. Here, too, a single meaning co-activates the whole meaning field so as to make sense of the isolated meaning.[36]

[36] A similar principle is Gestalt Psychology's principle of closure: Due to their expectations of coherence and unity, actors perceptually close and unify an open or incomplete figure.

The previous discussion leads to a topic that is a supplement to topics already discussed in previous chapters. The starting point is the question: If A and B communicate, how can B prevent A from co-activating a particular meaning field? The answer has already been partially suggested in the discussion of the fourth type of negation in chapter 5.5.1 on the exclusion of meaning fields and in chapter 6.2.2 on the non-activation of meaning fields: The only way to avoid the co-activation of a particular meaning field, such as MF^{TIME}, is not to activate any of its prototypical meanings, such as M^1 = │YESTERDAY│, M^2 = │QUICK│, M^3 = │IN TWO WEEKS│, M^4 = │LATE│, M^5 = │WAIT│, etc. The justification for this argument lies in meaning field-based co-activation.

An example: Person A asks his colleague B »How are you?«. Since this is a question and an expression of politeness among colleagues, B wants to and feels obliged to answer. However, B's situation is that due to a degenerative disease he was not feeling well in the past and he knows that in the future he will not be feeling well either, but exceptionally today he feels well. Person B neither wants to lie to A nor inform A of this temporal situation. Consequently, B looks for a way of communicating a true but only partial message to A, i.e. a message that does not lead to a co-activation of the meaning field of time. Therefore, B says to A »I'm fine, thanks«. Since B does not communicatively activate any meanings from the meaning field of time, A does not psychically or even communicatively co-activate the meaning field of time. However, if B said to A »Today I'm fine, thanks«, A would activate the meaning │TODAY│ and, as argued above, would be likely to co-activate its antonymic and neighboring meanings such as │YESTERDAY│, │TOMORROW│, │SINCE WHEN?│, │IN THE FUTURE│, │IN THE PAST WEEKS│, │FOR HOW LONG?│, etc. Hence, the whole meaning field of time MF^{TIME} would be co-activated too. This leads to a situation in which A asks himself, asks B, or draws inferences about temporal questions of B's well-being or ill-being as expressed in the co-activated meanings, e.g. will he feel well tomorrow?, he feels well today but apparently he did not feel well yesterday, how long has he not been feeling well?, etc. In this case, B failed to prevent A from co-activating the meaning field of time.

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6.5 Co-Activated Meaning Fields as World-Framers

In the preceding chapters, I have discussed the process of co-activation of meanings and meaning fields. In this chapter, I will look at the final stage of the process of meaning field-based co-activation, namely the *co-activated meaning field*. This is a situation in which specific meanings have been activated and trigger the co-activation of further meanings within their respective meaning field. This process continues until the entire meaning field is co-activated and foregrounded in contrast to other meaning fields that remain inactivated and backgrounded (see figure 6.IX).

Given such a situation, we may ask: *What are the effects and functions of a co-activated meaning field?* The general answer that I propose is that co-activated meaning fields are *world-framers* as they »frame« specific »worlds«, i.e. meaning fields surround and integrate (i.e. frame) a particular semantic space

and may therefore create and reinforce a particular psychic or social space (i.e. world). Simmel (1903) captured this idea by drawing an analogy with the frame of a painting, which functions as a distinguisher from the world outside and as an integrator of the world inside the painting. Examples for such worlds could be the world of finance, art worlds, the world of children, the monastic world, the world of dreams, the world of love, the world of games, etc.[37]

What are the mechanisms by which co-activated meaning fields function as world-framers? The answer I propose is that there are three mechanisms: *meaning reduction, meaning cohesion, and meaning homogeneity*. Firstly, meaning reduction – because the infinite meaning universe or meaning medium $\Sigma MF^{1,2,3,etc}$ is reduced to a finite meaning field MF^{1}, thus creating a special little world nested in the greater world. Secondly, meaning cohesion – because the elements of a meaning field, namely the meanings, are connected and related so as to form an integrated whole, namely a particular meaning field MF^{1}, that sets itself apart from other meaning fields $MF^{2,3,4,etc}$. Thirdly, meaning homogeneity – because the meanings within a meaning field, especially those in the prototypical center, exhibit a high degree of semantic similarity, which may often be represented by an archi-meaning M^{ARCHI}. On the time- and process-level of systems or syntagms, e.g. conversations, reasoning, or texts, meaning homogenization is facilitated by co-activation because the co-activated meanings are likely to belong to the same meaning field.[38]

In the remainder of this chapter, I will present different cases of how co-activated meaning fields function as world-framers by leading to meaning reduction, meaning cohesion, and meaning homogeneity.

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[37] The concept of *world* that I use here is inspired by several other authors and approaches, e.g. James' *sub-universes* (1890: ch. 21), Schütz's *finite provinces of meaning* (1945), Goffman's *frames* (1974), Goodman's *worlds* (1978), Literary Theory's *reference worlds* (Charles 1995), Symbolic Interactionism's *art worlds* (Becker 1982), Linguistics' *text types* (Adamzik ed. 2000), Fauconnier's *mental spaces* (1984), Bourdieu's *fields* (1980), Boltanski & Thévenot's *cités* (translated as *common worlds*) (1991), and Luhmann's functionally differentiated societal *systems* (1997).

[38] Similar ideas have been advanced elsewhere. In linguistic Pragmatics, *coherence* (in contrast to *incoherence*) refers to a situation in which the semantic units of a conversation are connected or united because they share some underlying global semantic theme. In linguistic Semantics, *isotopy* (in contrast to *allotopy*) denotes the repeated and redundant occurrence of the same basic meaning (or classeme) within a sentence or text. For example, in the sentence M_S = │I DRINK WATER│, the signifiers M_S = │DRINK│ and M_S = │WATER│ refer to the *same* basic meaning M_M = │LIQUID│ and consequently this sentence has a high degree of isotopy. In contrast, the sentence M_S = │I DRINK CONCRETE│ has a high degree of allotopy because M_S = │DRINK│ and M_S = │CONCRETE│ refer to two *different* basic meanings, namely to M_M = │LIQUID│ and M_M = │SOLID│. The same goes for power and law. For instance, Alicia's utterance M_S = │MY BOSS THREATENED TO PUNISH ME│ is highly isotopic because the signifiers M_S = │BOSS│, M_S = │THREATEN│, and M_S = │PUNISH│ all activate the same meaning field, namely MF^{POWER}. But also whole texts or events, e.g. Kafka's novel *The Trial* (1915) or the Milosevic trial in The Hague, can be semantically isotopic or coherent if they repeatedly and redundantly activate the same meaning field, e.g. MF^{LAW}.

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6.5.1 Co-activated meaning fields as *Sonderwelten*: The concept of *Sonderwelt* [39] (literally, particular world) is a phenomenological concept from Husserl and denotes a special world that is constituted by a distinct meaning horizon, particular objectives, and unique interests. Taken together, they endow each *Sonderwelt* with a particular, idiosyncratic, and autonomous logic of operation, so that each *Sonderwelt*'s operations are different from, independent of, and untranslatable to other *Sonderwelten*'s operations. This is what makes each *Sonderwelt* distinct from all the other *Sonderwelten*.

A co-activated meaning field often functions as a *Sonderwelt*. The meaning field of law MF^{LAW} is a case in point: Often the function of the co-activation of MF^{LAW} does not lie in the *regulation* of an action or world, but rather in the *constitution* of a new action or world. When actors or discourses co-activate MF^{LAW} by creating, and acting according to, particular norms, rights, prohibitions, obligations, exemptions, etc, they often seek to constitute a new world that is distinct from other neighboring worlds. This argument is an application and extension of Searle's distinction between *regulative vs constitutive rules*: Regulative rules, e.g. »If you are at the table, wear a tie«, regulate already existing actions, e.g. to wear or not to wear a tie at the table. These actions exist antecedently or independently of the rules, so they could be specified even if the rules did not exist. In contrast, constitutive rules, e.g. »If the football crosses the area between the two posts, this counts as a goal«, do not only regulate but also constitute, i.e. create or define, new actions, e.g. to score a goal in a football game. These actions do not exist antecedently or independently of the rules, so they could not be specified if the rules did not exist. These actions exist only because they are constituted by acting in accordance with the rules (Searle 1969: 33ff).[40]

Obvious examples of how the co-activation of the meaning field of law – with its constitutive rules such as proscriptions, rights, obligations, exemptions, etc – forms and creates *Sonderwelten* are games such as chess, football, or role-playing games. However, let us look at two other, more macro-social examples.

The first example refers to religion, namely to the *monastic world* in opposition to the mundane world. The specific complex of rules evoked by, or attributed to, monks – e.g. proscription of entertaining sexual relations, obligation to live in poverty, right to collect tithes, prohibition to speak, prescription to revere and pray to God, etc – constitutes the *Sonderwelt* of the monastic world. The second example refers to art, namely to the *Dogma filmmaking world* in contrast to the standard Hollywood-like filmmaking world. Here, too, the specific complex of rules created and applied by certain filmmakers – e.g. the prohibition of bringing in props and sets, the obligation to use a hand-held camera, the ban on optical work and filters, the prescription to shoot a color

[39] Since the term *Sonderwelt* succinctly captures the idea I want to convey, but is difficult to translate in a concise manner, I have kept the original German term from Husserl.

[40] Danto's *constitutive interpretation* (1986: 42ff) is similar to Searle's *constitutive rules*. Giddens (1984: 18ff) argues that *all* rules are both regulative and constitutive.

movie, the proscription to mention the director, etc – constitutes the *Sonderwelt* of the Dogma filmmaking world. Moreover, according to the auto-description of this world, the purpose of establishing these radical rules is not so much to regulate itself but to define and constitute itself as a world apart that is distinct from other worlds. The filmmaker and founder of the Dogma movement, Lars von Trier, remarks that it is not so important *which* rules are established but *that* rules are established (Trier 1998). That is, the *content* of the rules is secondary, whereas the *existence* of rules is primary. Put in my terminology, it is primary *that* the meaning field of law is activated, whereas it is secondary *which* specific meanings of the meaning field of law are activated.

In both examples, the *Sonderwelten* of the monastic world and the Dogma filmmaking world exist only because they are constituted by acting in accordance with a specific complex of rules, and they would not exist without this specific complex of rules. Put differently, the particular co-activation of the meaning field of law frames, defines, or constitutes a new world that would not exist without this specific co-activation of the meaning field of law.

Sonderwelten may not only be social-communicative worlds such as those discussed above, but also psychic-cognitive worlds. Co-activated meaning fields often manifest themselves as *finite provinces of meaning* representing a specific cognitive style and a particular mode of experience (Schütz 1945: 551ff, Berger & Luckmann 1966: 25). The functioning of co-activated meaning fields resembles to a great extent the functioning of art such as poems, songs, tales, etc. Both often do not transmit precise information nor do they trigger a specific behavior, but they invoke a global and vague mood, putting actors in a certain emotional-cognitive state associated with a specific mode of experience. The co-activation of a particular meaning field may manifest itself as a specific *habitus* or *sleeper factor*: According to Lahire (1998), actors are carriers of several and contradictory habituses so that the task is to discover which habitus manifests itself in which context. A similar idea is that of the sleeper factor, i.e. a psychic characteristic of actors which remains dormant and unobserved until it is woken up when a particular situation or event occurs. In both cases, the activation of a particular meaning field may help to explain the activation of a specific habitus or sleeper factor.

Let us look at a power-related example of such a psychic-cognitive *Sonderwelt*: If an actor uses certain symbols, e.g. wearing a uniform or putting on a war mask, the meaning field of power may become co-activated. This may manifest itself as a particular habitus, awakened sleeper factor, or cognitive mode of experience, e.g. the actor suddenly experiences himself in the role of a power holder and feels encouraged to issue orders and use violence. Seeing the symbol-user, other actors such as civilians or bystanders also co-activate the meaning field of power, which manifests itself as another habitus, awakened sleeper factor, or cognitive mode of experience, e.g. the actors imagine themselves in the situation of a child in the presence of an authoritarian father and activate the habitus of obedience and conformity.

In his novel *Lord of the Flies*, Golding (1954: 69f, 191) illustrates such a situation: Jack, the leader of a group of kids, painted his face with red clay.

Watching himself in the water, »he looked in astonishment, no longer at himself but at an awesome stranger«. He experienced a new mood and force in him, because »the mask was a thing on its own, behind which Jack hid, liberated from shame and self-consciousness«. He felt a strong inclination to show and use his wakened habitus and feeling of power: »He began to dance and his laughter became a bloodthirsty snarling«. Jack began to give orders to the other boys who looked at him in horror and obeyed him because »the mask compelled them«. Later, Jack and his gang always painted their faces when they went hunting pigs or raiding the camp of their adversaries, because the paint – as a symbol co-activating the meaning field of power – changed their non-violent and non-authoritarian habitus into a violent and authoritarian habitus. However, the other group of kids – adversaries to Jack's group – intentionally decided not to paint their faces because »they understood only too well the liberation into savagery that the concealing paint brought«. Instead, they preferred not to allow their attitude and habitus to be changed since they wanted to keep their democratic and non-violent disposition.

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6.5.2 Co-activated meaning fields as definitions of the situation: The concept of *definition of the situation* stems from the Chicago School of Sociology and Symbolic Interactionism. It refers to the intersubjective but usually implicit agreement between actors on the type of context and relation in which they are currently involved, e.g. a love relationship, a ceremonial context, a hierarchical-authoritarian relation, a difficult situation, a relation of conflict, a sales talk, etc.[41]

Co-activated meaning fields often create or change the social definition of the situation. In analogy to the reduction of the meaning universe to a meaning field, the range of possible definitions of a situation is reduced to a particular definition of a situation. Therefore the co-activation of a meaning field may render an ambiguous and open situation clear and specific, or it may change a clearly defined situation into another clearly defined situation.

The meaning field of law provides a good example: Paul and Robert are close and long-time friends. One day, however, something happens that leads to a conflict between them. They try to solve the conflict by talking with each other. At the beginning, Paul and Robert seek to maintain and reinforce their original definition of the situation and relation, namely their friendship. They do this by constantly co-activating the meaning field of friendship, e.g. by using meanings such as ⎪I LIKE YOU VERY MUCH⎪, ⎪FRIENDS HELP EACH OTHER⎪, ⎪I ENJOY SPENDING TIME WITH YOU⎪, ⎪FRIENDS TRUST EACH OTHER⎪, ⎪I DO NOT HARM MY FRIEND⎪, etc. Their goal is to solve the conflict as friends and by friendship. However, despite their efforts the conflict persists, so they slowly abandon the original definition of their situation and

[41] Sometimes this has been called the *meta-lingual code* (Jakobson 1960) or the *relational side* of a communication (Schulz von Thun 1981), because it refers to the type of »we«-relation between the sign-sender and the sign-receiver in communication. A similar term is *frame* (Goffman 1974), which denotes the mode of organizing experience and of defining a situation that answers the question »What is it that's going on here?«, e.g. natural vs social frame, frame of joke vs seriousness, religious frame vs legal frame, etc.

relation by ceasing to tap into the meaning field of friendship. Instead, they start tapping into the meaning field of law, first by saying things like ⎪YOU SHOULD DO...⎪, ⎪IT'S MY RIGHT TO DO...⎪, ⎪I AM NOT OBLIGED TO DO...⎪, ⎪ACCORDING TO § 121 OF THE CIVIL CODE...⎪, ⎪LEGALLY SPEAKING, YOU ARE NOT ALLOWED TO...⎪, ⎪THAT IS UNLAWFUL⎪, and finally by evoking even more drastic meanings such as ⎪I WILL GET A LAWYER⎪, ⎪I WILL SUE YOU⎪, or ⎪YOU MAY GO TO PRISON⎪. The original definition of their relation of friendship is on its way to being redefined in terms of law, i.e. Paul and Robert no longer seek to solve their conflict as friends and by friendship but as legal actors and by law. Sociologically speaking, the conflict is being juridified, judicialized, or legalized (see Teubner ed. 1987). This change in the definition of the situation and relation comes about by way of a semantic-discursive shift whereby the co-activation of the meaning field of friendship ends and the co-activation of the meaning field of law begins.

6.5.3 Co-activated meaning fields as selectors of meanings from now on: In chapter 6.4.2, I analyzed the processes that occur *before or until* a meaning field is co-activated. It was explained that meaning field-based co-activation is based on the principle of selective connectivity of semantic closeness: A meaning M^1 renders the co-activation of meanings more probable that are semantically *close*, e.g. M^2 and M^3, while it renders the co-activation of meanings more improbable that are semantically *distant*, e.g. M^A or M^B. A particular meaning M^1 is semantically closer to meanings, e.g. M^2 or M^3, that stem from the same meaning field, e.g. $MF^{NUMBERS}$, than to meanings, e.g. M^A or M^B, that stem from another meaning field, e.g. $MF^{LETTERS}$. Accordingly, a meaning M^1 is more likely to co-activate another meaning M^2 from the same meaning field $MF^{NUMBERS}$ than a meaning M^A from another meaning field $MF^{LETTERS}$.

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In this chapter, I will analyze the processes that occur *after* a meaning field is fully co-activated. Here, too, the principle of selective connectivity of semantic closeness plays an important role: Once a meaning field is co-activated such as $MF^{NUMBERS}$, additional and subsequent co-activations of meanings tend to occur more probably *within* the same meaning field, such as M^6 or M^{15}, whereas co-activations of meanings such as M^A or M^Y from other meaning fields such as $MF^{LETTERS}$ become more improbable. Consequently, the antecedently unstructured and open future is transformed into a subsequently structured and constricted future. The co-activated meaning field opens up particular connective (im)possibilities and (im)probabilities. These arguments are summarized by the hypothesis that co-activated meanings fields function as *selectors of meanings from now on* because they play a pivotal role in determining the chain of following events, actions, and actors.[42]

In the following, I will distinguish two aspects, namely (1) the case in which a particular meaning from now on ⎪-M-⎪ is impossible or unlikely to be co-activated, and (2) the case in which a particular meaning from now on ⎪-M-⎪ is possible or likely to be co-activated.

[42] Therefore, this chapter can be seen as an extension of chapter 3.7 on meaning divergence where I analyzed how and why meanings lead to different subsequent meanings.

(1) *Impossibility or improbability of co-activating a particular* ├M┤. On a very fundamental level, co-activated meaning fields determine which meanings from now on can possibly be co-activated and which ones cannot. Even though it may seem trivial or tautological at first, it is nevertheless theoretically important to point out that only those meanings can be co-activated, or are more likely to be co-activated, that are members or prototypical members of the co-activated meaning field, whereas those meanings that are non-members or atypical members of the co-activated meaning field cannot be, or are less likely to be, co-activated.

For example, if the contemporary Western meaning field of law MF_M^{LAW} is co-activated, only its member meanings or prototypical meanings can or are more likely to be co-activated, e.g. M_M = │HUMAN RIGHTS│ or M_M = │JUDGE│, whereas non-member meanings or atypical meanings cannot or are less likely to be co-activated, e.g. the atypical meaning M_M = │AN OUTLAW│ or the field-external M_M = │BUDDHA│. Since meanings ┤M_M├ are the basis for actions ├M_R┤, as argued in chapter 3.7, they substantially influence the following chain of actions ├M_R┤ → ├M_R┤ → ├M_R┤. Due to the impossibility or improbability of the occurrence of the atypical or even field-external M_M = ┤AN OUTLAW├, which used to be a prototypical member of the Western MF_M^{LAW} only until the 19th century, contemporary society and actors consequently will not or are highly unlikely to undertake actions towards a criminal as if he were an outlaw, e.g. they will not or are unlikely to M_R = ├BAN HIM FROM SOCIETY┤, M_R = ├REFUSE HIM FOOD AND SHELTER┤, M_R = ├KILL HIM WITHOUT TRIAL AND WITH IMPUNITY┤, M_R = ├REFUSE HIM ALL CIVIL RIGHTS┤, etc. This reasoning is even more obvious in the case of the meaning M_M = ┤BUDDHA├, which is a clear non-member of the Western meaning field of law MF_M^{LAW}, so that Western society and actors will not or are highly unlikely to undertake actions towards a criminal as if he were a Buddha, e.g. they will not or are unlikely to M_R = ├PRAISE AND WORSHIP HIM AS A RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY┤ or M_R = ├LISTEN TO HIS SPIRITUAL TEACHINGS AND BECOME HIS DISCIPLES┤. In short, the contemporary Western meaning field of law makes it impossible or improbable that particular actions ├M_R┤ occur.

A similar perspective is to view such phenomena as cases of *meaning gaps* in meaning fields MF_M. In chapter 3.2.2, I explained that *signifier gaps* appear when a particular M_M on the level of MF_M, such as M_M = │TO BE NO LONGER THIRSTY│, has no corresponding M_S on the level of MF_S, such as a single word or lexeme in a particular language such as German. In contrast, meaning gaps are more radical because in a given cultural area or historical period a particular M_M does not even exist on the level of MF_M and consequently there can be no M_S on the level of MF_S either. Meaning gaps can be discerned by inter-cultural or inter-historical comparison (see chapter 2.5.1 on methodological applications of Non-Dualism). For example, the Haitian meaning field of power comprises the meaning M_M = │TO USE A VOODOO DOLL IN A RITUAL WITH THE INTENTION OF MAKING SOMEONE DO SOMETHING THAT HE WOULD NOT DO OTHERWISE│. This meaning is completely absent from, for example, the Western European meaning field of power so that there is a meaning gap

relative to the Haitian meaning field of power. Due to this meaning gap, it is impossible for the prototypical Western European to activate this meaning, and it is equally logically impossible to undertake any actions from now on ├M_R┤ that are based on this meaning ┤M_M├ such as M_R = ├TO USE A VOODOO DOLL IN A COUNTER-RITUAL TO REPULSE OR NULLIFY THE INITIAL ATTACK┤ or M_R = ├TO SEEK MATERIAL OR TESTIMONIAL EVIDENCE FOR THE VOODOO SPELL┤.

(2) *Possibility or probability of co-activating a particular* ├M┤. Consider the following example that will serve as a guideline for the subsequent analysis (the superscripted letters index each sentence).

[A]Several professional fishermen in Marseille happen to meet on the quay and begin to talk about legal questions of the fishing sector, e.g. fishing regulations, employment contracts, legal penalties, etc. [B]After some time, one of the fishermen brings up the question as to whether or not it is allowed to fish directly off the island of Frioul. [C]Since this is a question that interests all the fishermen, the following discussion revolves around this topic: [D]There are some fishermen who argue that it is allowed, whereas others argue that it is forbidden. [E]The fishermen nearly begin to quarrel about this question. [F]Maurice says that this question is not important, but the others ignore his remark and continue to discuss whether it is allowed or forbidden. [G]After some time, Maurice repeats his remark by saying that this question is not important as long as the Maritime Police leave the fishermen alone. [H]Now, the fishermen agree and everyone starts to comment on the severity and injustice of the Maritime Police. [I]One fisherman even proposes taking legal action against the commanding officer of the Maritime Police for harassment and corruption, but the others don't agree. [J]The discussion continues and after half an hour, the group of fishermen disperses and everyone gets back to his own ship. [K]Maurice and Laurent leave the harbor to go fishing, but they continue to talk about their opinions on and experiences with the Maritime Police. [L]Suddenly, Maurice spots another fishing boat that puts out its nets close to the island of Frioul. [M]He can't help wondering whether this is allowed or forbidden. [N]Even though Maurice himself is not sure, he decides not to fish close to the island of Frioul but elsewhere so as not to take the risk of being caught by the Maritime Police.

Let us work through this example step by step. At the beginning of the conversation (sentence A), the fishermen begin to talk about several legal questions and thus co-activate the contemporary Western MF^{LAW}. Since MF^{LAW} is discursively and semantically foregrounded, the future direction of the conversation (sentences B to I) becomes quasi-determined and more predictable because the fishermen are structurally invited to co-activate further meanings from MF^{LAW} and not from other meaning fields.

At a particular moment (sentences B to F), the whole discussion revolves around the prototypical antonymic │ALLOWED│ vs │FORBIDDEN│. This makes it more probable to co-activate one side of the antonymic meanings, i.e. either │ALLOWED│ or │FORBIDDEN│, than to co-activate completely different antonymic meanings, e.g. │VALID│ vs │INVALID│, or other meanings, e.g. │BEAUTIFUL│. One utterance (sentence F) that does not conform to, but seeks to transcend, the antonymic pair │ALLOWED│ vs │FORBIDDEN│, is ignored by

the other fishermen who simply keep co-activating the antonymic pair. This indicates that the antonymic pair has temporarily become the dominant semantic-discursive code so that the direction of the conversation has become quasi-determined because the co-activation of either side of │ALLOWED│ vs │FORBIDDEN│ has become extremely probable. The fishermen cannot ignore this dominant code but feel strongly inclined to refer to it, regardless of which side of the code they activate.[43]

Due to this dependency on, and orientation towards, these specific meanings, i.e. the antonymic pair, the communicative situation is »no longer autonomous« (Watzlawick 1981a: 161) but is »modalized«, because the actors are no longer free and are very likely to select these specific meanings instead of other meanings (Luhmann 1980: 67, 71). Put differently, the antonymic meaning pair of │ALLOWED│ vs │FORBIDDEN│ has created a kind of »gambit« (a technical term from the language of chess) in the sense of tempting an actor into a sequence of pre-determined and necessary moves that leaves hardly any personal freedom or choice (for another example, see Wenzel 2000: 19f). In a metaphorical sense, the antonymic meaning pair creates a kind of communicative-cognitive whirlpool that sucks meanings from now on into its center. In this case, a particular meaning field – by means of one of its antonymic semantic pairs – may become temporarily imperialistic or colonizing.

In a similar vein, Lakoff (2004) argues that once a particular semantic frame is activated and established in a discourse – e.g. in politics, the frame of »tax relief« – it is difficult for other actors not to activate it or to avoid it because, regardless of whether they accept or reject the frame, the actors keep activating and using the frame. In system-theoretic terms, the complexity of the world and the environment is reduced to, and seen through, the eyes of a central binary code. Accordingly, the possible connecting meanings from now on ├M┤ are pre-selected or quasi-determined by these dominant meanings alias the antonymic semantic code of ┤ALLOWED├ vs ┤FORBIDDEN├ (for a similar example of power, see Popitz 1992: 25ff, 80f).[44]

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[43] This is a general feature of communication: As soon as a communication is concluded, e.g. Maria hears that frozen meat has negative effects on health, the hearer can no longer ignore this information. It does not matter whether or not the hearer believes it, but now she knows the information, which changes her cognitive state (Luhmann 1984: 203f).

[44] In linguistic Pragmatics, *adjacency pairs*, e.g. greeting vs return-greeting, question vs answer, request vs offer, order vs compliance, etc, represent non-autonomous, modalized situations because the activation of the first side of the pair makes the co-activation of the second side predictable or probable (Mey 2001: ch. 6.3.3.2). Watzlawick (1986: 21f) gives an interesting example of, and solution to, such binary coded activations: Paul discovers a flower bed with a sign saying »No trespassing under penalty of law«. Paul's problem consists in the dilemma that the sign only leaves him two equally unacceptable possibilities: Either he conforms to the rule (and enjoys the legality of his actions but suffers from the legal oppression) or he deviates from the rule (and enjoys his freedom but risks being punished). After some time, Paul succeeds in transcending this binary code *conformity vs deviance* from the meaning field of *law* by activating a meaning from another meaning field, i.e. by thinking that the flower bed is *beautiful* and thus activating the meaning field of *aesthetics*. Paul now stands beyond the »prison« of the binary code *conformity vs deviance* and has solved his dilemma.

However, after some time (sentences G and H) the conversation does change to another topic by co-activating further meanings from MF^{LAW}, especially |MARITIME POLICE|. By now the fishermen have frequently and intensely tapped into MF^{LAW}, so that the co-activated MF^{LAW} becomes their *reference meaning field*. Similar to the sociological concepts of reference group (Hyman 1942, Merton & Kitt 1950) and significant others (Mead 1934: 152-156, Sullivan 1953), the concept of reference meaning field denotes a meaning field that has become significant for actors because it helps them to make sense of events and actions, and it thus serves as a comparative reference point to which actors constantly resort.

Since MF^{LAW} is now the reference meaning field, future events are more likely to be interpreted in terms of law and not in terms of other meaning fields. For example, a particular event, i.e. Maurice spotting another fishing boat putting out its nets close to the island Frioul (sentences L and M), is not viewed through the glasses of friendship, money, or technology, but through the glasses of the law as Maurice co-activates |ALLOWED| vs |FORBIDDEN|.

This demonstrates another property of the co-activated MF^{LAW} or reference MF^{LAW}. It has become semantically »sticky«, because once actors touch or co-activate it, it does not easily let go of actors and clings to them. This *semantic stickiness* of co-activated meaning fields is similar to Geertz's famous metaphor that »man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun« (1973: 5) and Scholte's addition that »few do the actual spinning while the vast majority is simply caught in the webs of significance« (1984: 540). Due to this semantic stickiness of meaning fields, the occurrence of particular future meanings becomes more predictable and probable.

The stickiness of meaning fields has a temporal effect: Once a meaning field is fully co-activated, it tends to linger on and remain co-present in other and new activities or situations. For example, even though the law-related discussion among the fishermen has already ended and everyone has gone back to work (sentences K to N), some fishermen continue to co-activate meanings of MF^{LAW} such as |MARITIME POLICE| or |ALLOWED|. This temporal effect of meaning fields may be called *semantic inertia* because even though the initial force, activation, or situation has disappeared, the meaning field remains present, co-activated, and dominant.[45]

[45] Classical examples of inertia are a ball that continues to roll on after being hit or a catchy melody one hears mentally all day long even though it is no longer played on the stereo.

7. Extroduction

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Whereas the introduction was to introduce you to this book, this extroduction will extroduce you. On the one hand, it will give a *retrospect* of the entire book from chapters 1 to 6 by outlining the central thread of the argument, recalling key concepts and hypotheses, and contextualizing this research. On the other hand, the extroduction will also provide a *prospect* of potential consequences that this study has and of possible research avenues that grow out of it.

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7.1 Retrospect

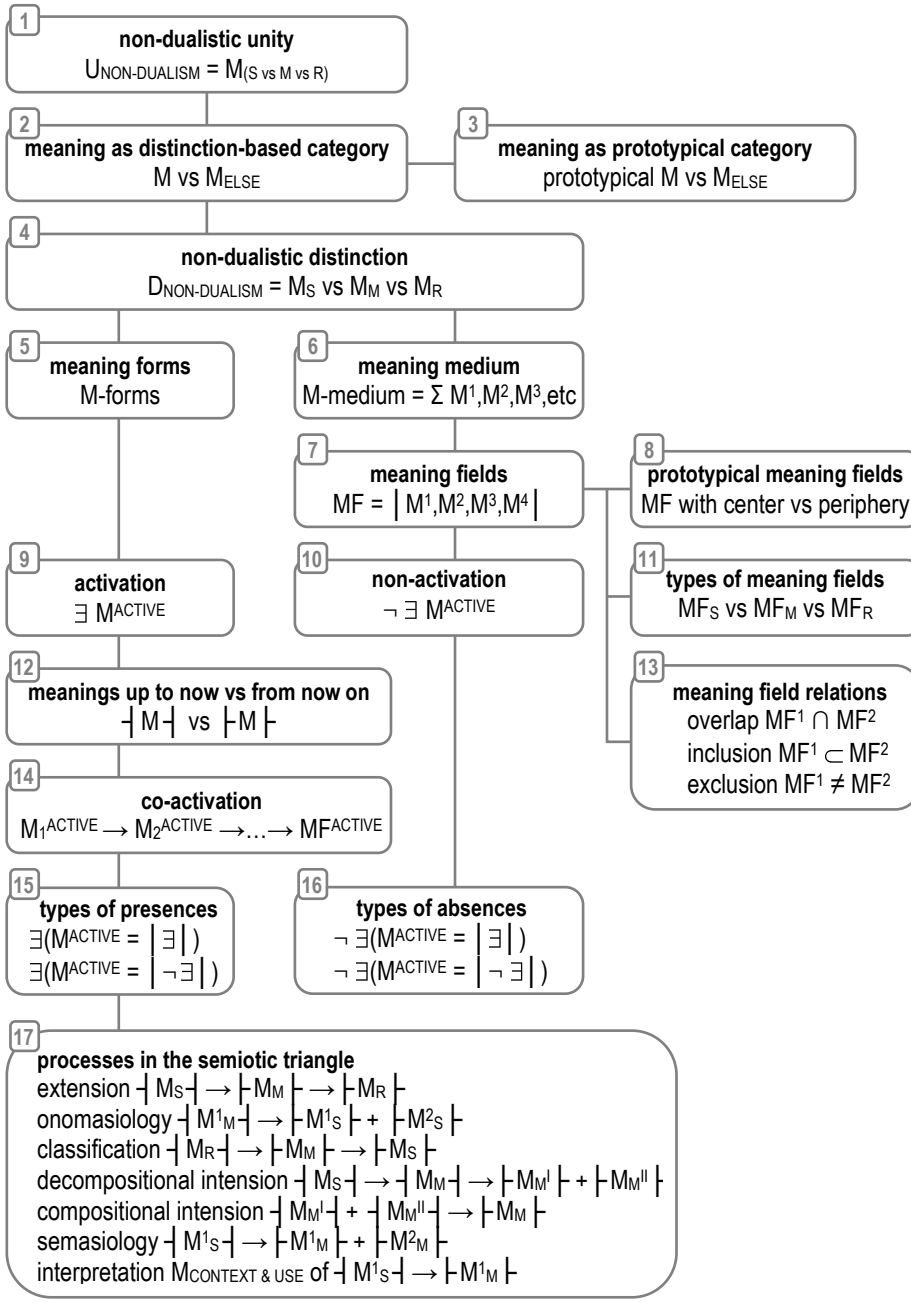
The main topic of this book was *meaning in communication, cognition, and reality*. With the aim of tackling certain shortcomings and gaps in existent research, which were identified in the introduction, I proposed a theory of meaning that was applied to, and illustrated by, several examples, e.g. power and law in the contemporary Western world.

From a general perspective, the theory of meaning attempted to begin at a deliberately *elementary, universal, and general* level of analysis, which systematically led to a more *complex, refined, and specific* level. The theory was constructed in analogy to the construction of a house because it first started on a fundamental and crude plane, which constituted the base for subsequently assembling and erecting a more complex and developed structure. Due to this orientation, the theory can be classified as a *formal-abstract* theory, in contrast to a substantive-concrete theory, because it refers to a formal, conceptual, or general area of fundamental research that is relatively independent of particular cultural or historical contexts. Consequently, the theory can be applied to a wide range of empirical cases or research topics. In this sense, the theory also has a programmatic-propositional character as it provides a theoretical program and methodological proposals that other researchers are invited to follow and apply. The theory was presented in a semi-*formalized* way, i.e. its main concepts and hypotheses were expressed by means of a *logico-mathematical notation* whose purpose was to achieve greater semantic precision and avoid internal inconsistencies.

Moreover, the theory was intended to be explicitly *interdisciplinary and intertheoretical* by combining different disciplines and theories. With regard to disciplinary combination, I particularly tried to bring together Semiotics, Philosophy, and Sociology; and with regard to theoretical combination, I sought to connect Non-Dualism, Systems Theory, Prototype Theory, the Interpretive Paradigm, Structuralism, Semantic Field Theory, Speech Act Theory, Frame or Script Theory, and Activation Theory.

The following figure gives a concise and structured overview of the theory's key elements. The visual arrangement of the elements does not follow a strictly chronological-flowchart order as it does not correspond to the sequence of the argumentation or chapters. Instead, the figure is arranged in a hierarchical-structural order that depicts relations and dependencies between elements.

Figure 7.I: Key elements of the theory of meaning



In the following, the main concepts and arguments of the theory of meaning will be summarized. In so doing, I will follow the chronological sequence of chapters 1 to 6, but I will regularly refer to the elements in the figure.

In chapter 1, I conceptualized *meaning as a distinction-based category*, i.e. as »something particular« M, which is marked or indicated so that it is automatically distinguished from »something different« or from »all the rest« M_{ELSE}, which remains unmarked or ignored (see 2 in the figure). This conceptualization of meaning as category applies to a continuum of cases with the two poles of *rudimentary* vs *complex categories*. Such a distinction-theoretic conceptualization of meaning does not entirely reject or exclude other Social Science conceptualizations of meaning, but instead proposes a common denominator that is more basic than, and hence compatible with, these other conceptualizations.

In chapter 2, the distinction-theoretic conceptualization of meaning was specified and supported by a non-dualistic approach. The argumentational base was Non-Dualism's contradiction and infinite regress arguments against Dualism. The re-entry of Dualism into itself led to Non-Dualism, which comprised two aspects. Firstly, the *non-dualistic unity* $U_{NON\text{-}DUALISM} = M_{(W\ vs\ M)}$ – or its semiotic refinement $U_{NON\text{-}DUALISM} = M_{(S\ vs\ R\ vs\ M)}$ – claimed that, as such, meaning M is monistic, necessary, and universal because any psychic or communicative attempt to reach Dualism's world W – or its semiotic counterparts of the signifier S and referent R – inevitably leads to Non-Dualism's meaning M (see 1 in the figure). Consequently, such a non-dualistic theory of meaning grants a supreme, universal, and fundamental role to the concept of meaning and therefore also to its derivative or neighboring concepts such as signification, sense, language, interpretation, signs, communication, discourse, symbols, texts, media, etc. Depending on the viewpoint, this non-dualistic theory of meaning may therefore be seen as a prolongation, reinforcement, or radicalization of the Interpretive Turn, Semantic Turn, Linguistic Turn, Cognitive Turn, of qualitative methodologies, and in general, of all theories and disciplines whose main focus is on meaning and its neighboring or derivative concepts. Secondly, the *non-dualistic distinction* $D_{NON\text{-}DUALISM} = M_W$ vs M_M – or its semiotic refinement $D_{NON\text{-}DUALISM} = M_S$ vs M_R vs M_M – argued that there are different types of meaning that may be distinguished according to their semantic *auto-descriptions*: M_W is a meaning that auto-describes it(self) as world – and the same goes for its semiotic counterparts, i.e. M_S is a meaning that auto-describes it(self) as signifier and M_R is a meaning that auto-describes it(self) as referent – while M_M is a meaning that auto-describes it(self) as meaning in terms of sense, denotation, concept, or signified (see 4 in the figure).[1] These different types of meaning

[1] Due to the re-entry discussed in chapter 2.3, the English word ›*meaning*‹ was used in this study in two ways: Firstly, meaning in terms of a *distinction-based category*, notated as M. Secondly and more specifically, meaning in terms of a distinction-based category M that auto-describes it(self) as *meaning, sense, denotation, concept, or signified* $_M$, notated as M_M. I sought to clarify this ambiguity of the word ›*meaning*‹ either by using full-length expressions such as ›*meaning that auto-describes it(self) as meaning*‹ or by using mathematical symbols such as M, M_M, M_S, M_R, etc.

may additionally adopt a *temporal and processual form*, either as preceding meanings up to now ┤M├ or as succeeding meanings from now on ├M├ (see 12 in the figure).

In chapter 3, a model of the *semiotic triangle* was used to discuss several relations and processes between different types of meanings M, namely between the signifier M_S, the meaning M_M, and the referent M_R. Among these relations and processes figured *extension, onomasiology, classification, intension, semasiology, interpretation, and meaning divergence* (see 17 in the figure). In each of these, a particular type of meaning was the temporal or analytical starting point that subsequently led to another type of meaning, e.g. $\dashv M_S \vdash \rightarrow \vdash M_M \dashv$ or $\dashv M_M \vdash \rightarrow \vdash M_M{}^{I} \dashv + \vdash M_M{}^{II} \dashv + \vdash M_M{}^{III} \dashv$. The goal of the discussion of these semiotic relations was to give a comprehensive overview of cognitive and communicative structures and processes in general, e.g. the role of context and use in interpretation, the morphodiversity of signifiers and referents, the semantic deep structure of syntagms, the selection of connecting operations in meaning divergence, the decomposition of a signifier into meaning components, etc.

In chapter 4, the conceptualization of *meaning as category*, originally presented in chapter 1, was refined and replaced by the conceptualization of *meaning as prototypical category* (see 3 in the figure). In order to do this, I discussed a continuum of six different conceptualizations of meanings alias categories: At one pole, there was a conceptualization of a radically classical-crisp category that exhibited a perfect homogeneity in its inside and a great discreteness between its inside and outside. At the other pole, there was a conceptualization of a radically prototypical-fuzzy category that exhibited a great heterogeneity in its inside and a perfect fuzziness between its inside and outside. On this continuum, I chose an intermediate conceptualization, namely version 2, which combined the properties of both extreme poles.

In chapter 5, the focus on *meaning*, which had been developed in the preceding chapters 1 to 4, was extended to, and complemented by, a focus on *meaning fields*. That is, instead of studying individual and unrelated meanings such as M^6, M^{11}, M^2, etc, I began to study fields of individual but related meanings such as $MF = \lfloor M^1, M^2, M^3, M^{etc} \rfloor$ (see 7 in the figure). Meaning fields lie at an *intermediate level* between the micro-level of the individual meaning and the macro-level of the entire meaning universe. In semiotic terms, meaning fields may be constituted either *paradigmatically or syntagmatically*. I also expounded on the *emic vs etic debate* as well as on the *realist vs constructivist debate* with regard to meaning fields. It was maintained that even though the word ›*meaning field*‹ is an etic and scientific term, the meaning of this word is an emic and everyday concept. I went on to show, on the one hand, that meaning fields are observer-dependent, constructed, and culturally or historically varying, but on the other hand, that meaning fields are also collectively shared, cognitively or socially standardized and sedimented. Moreover, in accordance with the model of the semiotic triangle, different types of meaning fields were distinguished, in particular, *meaning fields of signifiers* MF_S, *meaning fields of meanings* MF_M, and *meaning fields of referents* MF_R (see 11 in the figure). Applying Prototype Theory's arguments from chapter 4 to meaning fields, I spe-

cified the conceptualization of *meaning field* to the conceptualization of *prototypical meaning field*, i.e. a meaning field with a prototypical center and an atypical periphery (see 8 in the figure). It was argued that the prototypical center of a meaning may be viewed as a *semantic frame or cognitive script*. In addition, I studied the *semantic relations between meaning fields*, especially the relations of *exclusion, inclusion, and overlap* of meaning fields (see 13 in the figure). Finally, methodological and methodical aspects of an analysis of meanings and meaning fields were considered and several proposals were made. For instance, I discussed different types of descriptions (first- and second-order, emic and etic, auto- and allo-oriented, empirical vs stipulative), the principle of multivocality, empirical sources of descriptions (including artistic and fictional expressions), and empirical methods (comprising extrospective and introspective approaches).

In chapter 6, the approach to meaning fields was enlarged by viewing a *meaning field as a meaning medium* that brings out *meaning forms*. A meaning medium constitutes a large and stable pool of inactivated, latent, or uncoupled meanings (see 6 in the figure), whereas meaning forms are small and unstable selections of activated, manifest, or coupled meanings up to now or from now on, such as a concrete sentence, a particular thought, or a specific gesture (see 5 in the figure). Whereas a focus on meaning fields or meaning media implies a structural-synchronic analysis, a focus on meaning forms implies a processual-interactionist analysis, so both types of analyses are complementary. It was also shown that many Social Science phenomena, e.g. power, love, law, or religion, exist simultaneously in a *dual mode* as meaning media (e.g. meaning fields) and as meaning forms (e.g. meanings up to now and from now on).

The process that transforms the meaning medium into meaning forms is *activation*, i.e. it is the concrete use, selection, or appearance of meanings or meaning fields by a particular actor, system, or discourse. Next, I expounded on the distinction between *activation vs non-activation* (see 9 and 10 in the figure) by discussing several combinations of the first-order level of (non-) ontology and the second-order level of (non-) activation, e.g. present presence, absent presence, present absence, and absent absence (see 15 and 16 in the figure). Focusing on the case of activation, I distinguished between different *modes of activation*, such as psychic vs communicative activation, degrees of intensity of activation, actor-speaker vs observer-hearer activation, etc.

In a further step, the concept of activation was extended to the concept of *co-activation*, which denotes a domino effect-like process by which the activation of a single meaning M^1 leads to a chain of subsequent activations of other meanings M^2, M^3, M^4, etc (see 14 in the figure). Here, I distinguished between two types of co-activation: *inference-based* co-activation and *meaning field-based* co-activation. In the first type, the M that follow each other are inferences (in the form of implicatures or presuppositions) that are based on previous M, whereas in the second type, the M that follow each other are all members of the same MF so that the meaning field as a whole unitary entity becomes co-activated.

Finally, I have argued that a co-activated meaning field often has the effect or function of a *world-framer*. That is, by causing meaning reduction, meaning cohesion, and meaning homogeneity, co-activated meaning fields may frame or create a particular world or domain with a specific logic, e.g. a particular definition of the situation, a distinct social field, a new type of activity, etc. Moreover, co-activated meaning fields are likely to select and determine the connecting meanings from now on, because they render the co-activation of particular meanings in a meaning field more or less probable.

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7.2 Prospect

In this final section, I will provide a prospect of potential consequences that this study has and of possible research avenues that grow out of it.

The concept of *meaning* was defined in an explicitly elementary and abstract way, namely as a non-dualistic and distinction-based category that auto-describes it(self) as signifier, meaning, or referent (see chapters 1 and 2). Due to this broad conceptualization, the concept of meaning is connectable with the concepts of sense, sign, language, signification, communication, discourse, symbol, text, interpretation, media, code, etc. Since these are key concepts in Semiotics, Symbolic Interactionism, Speech Act Theory, Sociology, interpretive approaches, Semantics, Non-Dualism, Anthropology, sociological Systems Theory, Psychology, constructivist approaches, and Philosophy, the present study may be relevant to, or useful for, these disciplines and theories.

Moreover, since the conceptualization of meaning is especially broad and abstract, in future research it may integrate, be integrated into, or lay the common foundation for other conceptualizations of meaning. Among these, Luhmann's system-theoretic conceptualization of meaning as medium and form is a particularly suitable candidate because of its de-ontologizing and non-dualistic orientation. Another research avenue that waits to be explored is the application of philosophical Non-Dualism (see chapter 2) to typical Social Science topics. The examples of power and law, and of the semiotic triangle, were such applications, but there remain many other examples and topics, e.g. non-dualistic analyses of actions, relationships, processes, cognition, groups, institutions, systems, events, perception, objects, etc.

The concept of *meaning field* was defined in terms of a network of individual but interrelated meanings that functions as a meaning medium (see chapters 5 and 6.1). This makes it not only connectable to concepts such as semantic field, conceptual frame, lexical domain, and mental space, which are prevalent in Linguistics and Psychology, but also to concepts such as culture, finite province of meaning, social knowledge, Systems Theory's medium or societal semantics, classification scheme, social script, or symbolic structure, which are common currency in Sociology and Anthropology.

The analysis of meaning fields, as proposed in this study, is a compositional-synchronic analysis which thus lends itself well to being connected with Structuralism and Functionalism. Due to this orientation, it may also be fruitfully complemented by a more processual-diachronic analysis of meaning

fields. For example, how do meaning fields evolve in the long term over decades and centuries? Which events or actions contribute to the change of meaning fields? Why do certain meanings become included or centralized in a meaning field and others excluded or peripheralized? A processual-diachronic analysis of meaning fields can also be more short-term or micro-oriented. How do actors or systems, such as children or cultural strangers, come to know and learn particular meaning fields? Which social institutions or systems foster or inhibit this learning and internalization process? What role do meaning fields play in language acquisition and cultural integration?

The concept of *activation* was defined as the psychic or communicative process of rendering an unconscious, latent, or inactive meaning conscious, manifest, or active. Activation is thus the transformation of the meaning medium or a meaning field into meaning forms by selecting, producing, or using a concrete thought or communication (see chapter 6). The study of activation and co-activation is a processual-interactionist analysis that may thus complement the abovementioned compositional-synchronic analysis of meaning fields. The concepts of activation and co-activation stem from Linguistics and Psychology, but may also be connected to other disciplines and theories, especially to those that focus on the use and user of meaning in temporal processes and human interactions, e.g. Pragmatics, Symbolic Interactionism, Discourse Theory, interpretive-hermeneutic approaches, Systems Theory, conflict-theoretic approaches, or Conversation Analysis.

For example, open research questions and unexplored topics of activation may be: How and why do particular discourses activate particular meaning fields? Which meaning fields are more likely to be activated in specific situations or systems? What happens if a particular meaning field is repeatedly activated over a long period of time? This question may be related to processes of conceptual entrenchment, internalization, and habitus-formation. Why do people activate a meaning field only in a psychic manner, but not in a communicative manner? How can the co-activation of specific meaning fields create new *Sonderwelten* or change the definition of the situation?

The concepts of meaning, meaning field, and activation are key elements in the *theory of meaning* that was proposed in this study. However, despite a certain degree of complexity, this theory is, in comparison to other theories, under-complex, so that it can or needs to be complexified and refined. Resuming the theory-as-a-house analogy, the theory of meaning has a basic structure of a fundament, walls, roof, and windows, but it still lacks stairs, furniture, doors, paint, and other details that make the house »habitable« and »utilizable«. The structure and details of the theory may be refined or changed, e.g. by further formalizing the theory, by giving the theory the form of a Lakatosian research program with a protective belt of auxiliary hypotheses and a theoretical hard core, by increasing the theory's informativity by modifying its hypotheses' if- and then-components, etc.

Since the theory of meaning is a formal-abstract theory and also pursues a programmatic-propositional goal, it invites empirical *applications and tests*. This may be done by choosing from and studying a wide range of concrete ex-

amples or cases and by using systematic research methods designed to collect and analyze observable data.

This comprises two approaches. On the one hand, there is the testing of the theory by means of crucial case studies, e.g. does a linguistic corpus-based study of modern French novels provide convincing evidence for the alleged overlap of the meaning fields of power and law?, does a sociological study of face-to-face interactions at parties confirm the hypothesis that the meaning of a signifier is never independent from its context and use?, etc. On the other hand, there is the application of the theory to particular cases. Here, two sub-approaches can be pursued: Firstly, one can conduct anthropological or historical studies that emphasize thick description, narrativity, case studies, and reconstructive research of small and local realities with an idiosyncratic, unique, or unusual culture and history, e.g. what is the structure of the meaning field of health among the New Guinea Mountain People?, when is the meaning of unlawfulness activated in doctor-patient-interactions?, etc. Secondly, one can conduct comparative, i.e. inter-cultural or inter-temporal, studies of the same meaning field in different societies or epochs, of the same meaning field at different times in the same society, or of different meaning fields in the same society or epoch. A possible objective of such comparative studies may be to elaborate a trans-cultural or trans-temporal theory, for example, by means of the Grounded Theory methodology.

The example that I chose for applying and illustrating the theory of meaning was *power and law* in the contemporary Western world. Here, power and law were defined in a broad sense so that this study could connect to disciplines or theories that work on neighboring or derivative concepts. In the case of power, this concerns concepts such as domination, authority, coercion, control, influence, violence, causality, etc, and in the case of law, this concerns concepts such as norms, the legal system, rules, morals, juridical procedures, normativity, rights, mores, deontics, normative expectations, etc. Since these concepts play a vital role in Sociology, Jurisprudence, Anthropology, Political Science, Psychology, and Philosophy, several opportunities for dialog and exchange open up.

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Annex

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Summary

Meaning in Communication, Cognition, and Reality:
Outline of a Theory from Semiotics, Philosophy, and Sociology

This dissertation presents a general and formal theory of meaning, signs, and language. The theory is presented in a clear and consistent way offering novel and provocative insights into the fundamental structures and processes of communication, cognition, and reality.

Key topics include distinctions and categories, the self-contradictory dualism of word vs. object, linguistic meaning monism, relations and processes in the semiotic triangle, conceptual prototypicality and fuzziness, semantic fields and frames, meaning medium vs. forms, as well as activation and co-activation of meanings.

In order to illustrate and apply the theory, everyday examples, in particular power and law, are discussed throughout the dissertation. Methodological questions of data collection and analysis are also addressed as they are relevant to the empirical application and verification of the theory.

The dissertation combines approaches from systems theory, non-dualism, prototype theory, semantic field theory, speech act theory, and structuralism. Due to its broad and interdisciplinary focus, this dissertation will not only appeal to semioticians, philosophers, and sociologists, but also to linguists, cultural anthropologists, and cognitive scientists.

Bedeutung in Kommunikation, Kognition und Wirklichkeit:
Entwurf einer Theorie aus Semiotik, Philosophie und Soziologie

Die Dissertation stellt eine allgemeine und formale Theorie von Bedeutung, Zeichen und Sprache vor. Die Theorie wird auf eine klare und konsistente Weise dargestellt und bietet neue und provokante Einsichten in die grundlegenden Strukturen und Prozesse von Kommunikation, Kognition und Wirklichkeit.

Schlüsselthemen sind Unterscheidungen und Kategorien, der selbstwidersprüchliche Dualismus von Wort und Objekt, der linguistische Bedeutungsmonismus, Beziehungen und Prozesse im semiotischen Dreieck, konzeptuelle Prototypikalität und Unschärfe, semantische Felder und Skripte, Bedeutungsmedium und Bedeutungsformen, sowie die Aktivierung und Koaktivierung von Bedeutungen.

Um die Theorie zu illustrieren und anzuwenden, werden Alltagsbeispiele, insb. Macht und Recht, in der gesamten Arbeit diskutiert. Methodologische Fragen der Datenerhebung und –analyse werden ebenfalls behandelt, da sie für die empirische Anwendbarkeit und Überprüfbarkeit der Theorie wichtig sind.

Die Dissertation kombiniert Ansätze der Systemtheorie, des Non-Dualismus', der Prototypentheorie, der Bedeutungsfeldtheorie, der Sprechakttheorie

und des Strukturalismus'. Aufgrund ihrer breiten und interdisziplinären Ausrichtung spricht die Dissertation nicht nur Semiotiker, Philosophen und Soziologen an, sondern auch Linguisten, Ethnologen und Kognitionswissenschaftler.

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Author

Martin Staude worked as a lecturer in Sociology and Cultural Anthropology at the Free University Berlin and the University of Bayreuth. Currently he is working in a consulting firm in the area of development finance and international cooperation. His theoretical fields of interest include linguistics, epistemology, and systems theory, while his practical interests lie in teaching, microfinance, and intercultural understanding.
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Martin Staude arbeitete als Lehrbeauftragter in Soziologie und Ethnologie an der Freien Universität Berlin und der Universität Bayreuth. Zur Arbeit ist er in einer Beratungsfirma im Bereich der Entwicklungsfinanzierung und internationalen Zusammenarbeit tätig. Seine theoretischen Interessen sind Sprachwissenschaft, Erkenntnistheorie und Systemtheorie, während seine praktischen Interessen in Lehre, Mikrofinanzen und interkultureller Verständigung liegen.
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Epilog

Warning: This is quite a personal, lengthy, and frank epilog that reflects on some experiences and ideas I have had in the course of my PhD study.

The reasons for doing such a study aren't obvious. On the contrary, look at all the disadvantages: long years of study, little money, frequent loneliness, excessive intellectualization, maybe academic servitude, etc. So, there is the intriguing question: Why did I do this study? Fortunately, I never had to ask myself this question because I already and always knew the answer. And it promised many advantages and adventures. But which ones?

There are many reasons that I may have had for doing this PhD study. Was it because I selflessly wanted to contribute to scientific progress? Nope. This answer certainly won't be welcomed by conservative academics. Was it because I altruistically wanted to improve the world and change society for the better by criticizing and recommending certain things? Nope. This answer won't be appreciated by revolutionary souls, Buddhists, and moral do-gooders. Was it because of more selfish reasons such as wanting to establish or impose my own perspective or truth against other people's perspectives or truths through competition and persuasion? Nope. This reply won't sit well with those who believe either in Realism and Objectivism or in Evolutionism and Liberalism. Was it because my goal was to get an academic degree, which would be a springboard for a professional career and therefore a guarantee of a secure livelihood or an affluent life? Nope. Such an answer won't reassure my

parents. Was it because I wanted to test my academic abilities and prove to myself that I had the required intellectual discipline? Nope. Now it's my ego that won't be happy with this reply. And finally, was it because I wanted to gain acceptance and prestige in a particular social context? Still no. This answer won't be well received by those who believe that reputation should be the primary mechanism of control and motivation of people in science.

Some of these reasons may certainly occur as positive but unintended side effects, and they may also have slightly or unconsciously influenced me. However, my conscious and main reasons for doing this PhD study have been different. Frankly, they were rather personal, modest, and selfish.

There were, of course, the practical and worldly reasons: I wanted to do this study because I liked this kind of lifestyle. I could lead quite an independent and hermit-like life with no real boss ordering me around and with no real need to coordinate with other people. This allowed me great practical and intellectual freedom because I could do, think, and say whatever I wanted. Also, I had plenty of time to think and think and think and eventually allow my own ideas to hatch. Besides, I liked writing because it's a fascinating game of language that develops creativity and sensitivity. At other times, I got to travel to and live in interesting places, which made me discover new things and people. And finally, I tremendously enjoyed teaching at the university.

There were also more intellectual and spiritual reasons for doing this study. I wanted to do something that would be my own idiosyncratic creation, independently of how it would be evaluated by others. My role models were those of the artist, maverick, or inventor who create or do things on their own account without letting others interfere too much and without caring about others' opinions too much. In short, I wanted to, Frank Sinatra-like, do it »my way« (even though sometimes »I bit off more than I could chew«). I had the passion, confidence, and discipline to go my own way, but I quickly found out that in order to keep going my way I also needed a lot of courage and stubbornness. And this was especially the case when I had to deal with people with narrow-minded opinions about and unreasonable demands on my way, because I felt that they, as in the blues, »just won't let me be«. That is why I sometimes applied my friend Julie's simple but ingenious principle: »If your show doesn't please the audience, change the audience!« However, despite this stubbornness, I always welcomed constructive criticism from, and fruitful dialog with, other people.

In addition, I wanted to discover and construct something that was somehow novel and different in comparison to existent studies. Instead of remaining on my intellectual homeland, my goal was also to explore new paths into little known intellectual territory. Occasionally I went a step further by proposing something deliberately counterintuitive or radical, either just for fun or because I was curious to see where such a new path would lead. Retrospectively, I feel that this desire to discover and construct something novel and different has been, in different manifestations, a central thread in my whole life. And this study is nothing but a continuation of this.

The point made in the previous paragraph may have two consequences for other people. Since I particularly liked these possible consequences, I thought they were also good reasons to do this study. Firstly, by proposing a new approach, I wanted to contribute to diversifying and enriching the intellectual landscape. This, in turn, contributes to enlarging the sphere of conceptual and practical possibilities (and maybe the sphere of confusion and chaos). Among the already existing paths in the world, I simply wanted to offer one more path that people could select or reject. Go to Rome by water, land, or air – or by teleportation or on a donkey's back? Secondly, by proposing a new approach, I wanted to somehow stimulate or inspire people. That is, I meant to get people to keep thinking or talking about my ideas and then about other related ideas. Like a question, invitation, or riddle, my goal was to arouse the reader's interest or curiosity, to make her criticize or praise my ideas, to irritate or provoke her, to make her remember or smile about my ideas, to encourage reflection and discussion, and to spur her to continue or modify my ideas.

Apart from these reasons, there is another important reason: I wanted to do this study because it was a spiritual exercise (and often »therapeutic« enterprise). This is meant in a broad sense of a conscious and existential practice that changes and develops the entire person. This includes all aspects of a person, e.g. mind, actions, feelings, body, etc, and all areas of a person's life, e.g. work, leisure time, solitude, family, sleep, cooking, etc. My goal was not only to gain knowledge and wisdom, but to apply and practice it in everyday life, e.g. by changing words and thoughts into actions and events. By doing this study, I wanted to develop my own philosophy of life in order to live it in the here-and-now experience, similar to the ancient Greek approach to philosophy as a way of life or spiritual exercise (see Hadot 2001). My credo was: By »better« understanding, learning, and reasoning about myself, others, and the world, I wanted to »better« act, live in, and deal with myself, others, and the world. What this practically means may be quite different for different people, e.g. the pursuit of happiness, the quest for freedom, knowledge of God, the raising of consciousness, cultivation of love, attainment of enlightenment, health, etc. To find out which of these things I wanted was to be part of the spiritual exercise of doing this study. I tried to view each text I read, each idea I developed, and each paragraph I wrote as an academic and spiritual opportunity. In this sense, I took Barley's (1983: 9) remark literally: »Like monastic life, academic research is really all about the perfection of one's own soul«. In accordance with such a selfish, but non-missionary and non-imperialistic attitude, I didn't want to form and inform others, but form and inform myself. If you'll allow me a French wordplay, I didn't want to argumentatively *vaincre* and *convaincre* others, but *apprendre* and *comprendre*, I didn't want to *vaincre* and *convaincre* others, but *vaincre* myself (in a kind of *jihad al-nafs*, that is, a struggle against the weaknesses of one's own self).

But, how did I accomplish this spiritual exercise by means of an academic exercise? My »trick« consisted in linking my scientific research-world to my personal life-world by choosing a topic for my research-world that is fundamental to and universal in almost all human life-worlds (be it my own personal

life-world, an Indian's life-world, a child's life-world, a medieval peasant's life-world, etc). There are few topics that meet this criterion, but among those that do, I found the following most promising and interesting: meaning (e.g. signification, language, signs), meaning fields (e.g. conceptual frames, semantic domains, cognitive scripts), power (e.g. domination, authority, control), and law (e.g. rules, deontics, normative systems). To further emphasize the basic and universal orientation of these topics, I wanted to approach them from a general-abstract perspective by constructing a theory in the area of fundamental research. In contrast, most topics are more empirical or concrete and therefore do not meet my abovementioned criterion, so I did not choose them, e.g. child adoption in West Africa, synonymy in the French lexicon, or funeral rites in the Stone Age. Since my topics established a close link between my life-world and my research-world, both worlds would often merge into a single world or they would beneficially interact. That is, my life-world could inspire and provide data for my research-world, e.g. coming across interesting meanings of words in my everyday life offered valuable examples for constructing a theory of meaning, finding myself having to resolve a legal case inspired me to formulate sociological hypotheses, and introspectively observing my own feelings in concrete situations was a rich source for testing certain scientific theories. And vice versa, my research-world could be applied to and practiced in my life-world, e.g. reading a book on Semantics automatically helped me to better understand the meaning of words and signs in my daily life, studying theories of law enabled me to act more appropriately in my own legal matters, and exploring Cognitive Sociology was useful in coming to grips with my own quirks and deeds.

Inspired by ancient Chinese thought, Hesse (1943: 139) used an interesting metaphor: »It is quite possible to put a pretty little bamboo-garden into the world. But it is doubtful whether the gardener would succeed in incorporating the world into his bamboo-garden.« But exactly that was my goal: to incorporate the world into my »*Stauden*-garden«, i.e. to incorporate my life-world into my research-world. What matters is not whether I succeeded in doing that, but that I wanted and tried to do that. Welcome to this »*Stauden*-garden« that I have cultivated over the last years. Take a walk and enjoy!

Last, but not least, I come to the acknowledgements. Strangely enough and in contrast to most other authors, there is no particular person whom I can thank for supporting me in an active, regular, and professional way throughout the study. The reason is that this study has literally been a single-handed voyage that I made with books and articles as my only steady intellectual companions. Not that I wanted it that way, but that's how it happened. This is no complaint, accusation, or expression of self-pity. That's just life, I accepted and appreciated it. But I did receive other kinds of support and help.

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