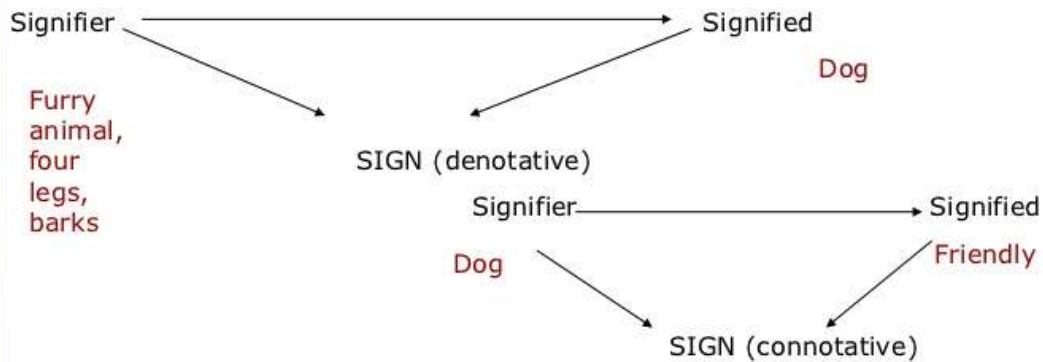


The two levels of signification: DOG



Remember at the second level of signification meaning is less 'fixed'. The number of connotative response to the image of a dog will be varied and numerous although some will be more common than others. Shared connotations can be described as 'socially agreed'

Note that the word d-o-g is arbitrary and only functions if the word's meaning is understood by the reader or speaker. On the denotative level (or dictionary definition) the word signifies an animal of the canine species with fur, 4 legs etc... From here, symbolic or connotative meanings are attributed to the idea of dog. Who attributes these meanings? They are usually derived (or at least acculturated) by the dominant cultural power.

The myth is the second level of signification (the connotative). The myths of "dog" can be many, depending on the context of the word.

Possible myths for "dog":

Loyalty

Protection

Man's best friend

Etc...

Note that in the phrase "man's best friend" the male dominant perspective has become naturalized (mythological) and usually is taken at face value, without the patriarchal connotation being realized. Once the myth has been established and naturalized, the fact that the ideas have been constructed for consumption disappears. The myth becomes how things are.