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Mantics and Hermeneutics

ABSTRACT: This paper shows that our epistemological career starts at any rate earlier than Robert Brandom´s theory of inferential reason suggests. So we need a theory of informal ways of getting knowledge in the tradition of Leibniz. To do justice to the intended fragile initial oscillations of primary understanding of a meaningful world we must go back to areas before hermeneutics starts and take recourse to the repertoire of mantic vocabulary.
KEYWORDS: mantics • hermeneutics • semantics • Gadamer • Frege

Let us begin with two gods, Apollo and Hermes. Apollo is the god of music. To symbolize this, he holds a lyre in his hand. But – something often overlooked, for example by Nietzsche – he is also the god of "delayed violence" (Giorgio Colli)[1]. For in his other hand he carries a bow, with which he shoots plague-spreading arrows, for example among the Greek troops besieging Troy. But he is also the god of divination, god of the oracle at Delphi, god of the interpretation of natural signs that permit the revelation of the past, present, and future, i.e., he is also the god of mantics.

Hermes, by contrast, is the god of thieves, herds and shepherds, god of fertility, god of sorcerers, couriers, and translators. In this function, he is the god related to hermeneutics; at least, he has been interpreted this way since St. Augustine, who etymologically interprets the Latin form of his name, Mercurius, as "medio currens". This interpretation was very influential, although Hasso Jäger rightly points out that, etymologically, the Greek verb "hermeneueo" does not derive from "Hermes". But both "Hermes" and "hermeneueo" derive from "eiro", "I ask".

That the two interpretive and explicative areas of translation and divination each have their own god is an indication that mantics and hermeneutics were perceived as distinct areas in Antiquity. Thus, at least in the ancient understanding, hermeneutics could lay no claim to universality, as Hans-Georg Gadamer, for example, influentially maintained in the 20th century. Or such a claim could exist only if hermeneutics absorbed mantics in the course of a "hostile takeover".

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[1] Cf. G. Colli, *La nascita della filosofia*, Milano 1975.

Precisely that has now happened. Without going into the details of the interpretive teachings from the Church Fathers to the Middle Ages[2]: since Georg Friedrich Meier (1718–1777) at the latest, this merger process was completed. In Meier's *Versuch einer Allgemeinen Auslegungskunst* (Halle, 1757), §256 says laconically:

> The general practical art of explication concerns itself with, aside from speech, other genres of signs [...] These may be natural or arbitrary signs. Consequently, it teaches either the interpretation of foretelling signs or other signs. The former is called the art of mantic interpretation (*hermeneutica mantica*) [...][3].

A second testimony for the merger of mantics into hermeneutics is provided by Friedrich Schleiermacher. For him, our efforts to understand a text consist initially in comparing an obscure passage with others. This he calls the "comparative method". In this activity of comparing, however, at some point we should suddenly see how the dark passage is to be understood: how the individual, initially dark text passage is interpretively illuminated in the light of the general and can thus be made hermeneutically communicable. This illuminating interpretive achievement "happens", as he writes, "always only through divination"[4]. In his speech in the Academy on August 12, 1829, Schleiermacher takes the concept of the divinatory explicitly from Plato. In his earlier, compendium-like depiction of his hermeneutics of 1819, Schleiermacher even uses the Greek term "prophetic"[5] in place of the Latin expression "divinatory".

Albeit unconsciously, Gadamer carries on this tradition of a hermeneutics that has absorbed mantics. This becomes very clear in *Wahrheit und Methode*, where he focuses especially on the universal aspect[6]. Here he makes explicit the basic condition of everything that understanding can be directed toward with the meanwhile famous formulation: "Being that can be understood is language"[7]. Thus, on closer examination, the so-called ontological turn that Gadamer claims for his conception of hermeneutics turns out to be possible only on the basis of mantics, which has been absorbed in hermeneutics in the tradition of Meier and Schleiermacher. Only in this way was it possible for

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2 On this, cf. W. Hogrebe, *Metaphysik und Mantik*, Frankfurt am Main 1992, pp. 164gg.

3 Repr., (ed.) L. Geldsetzer, Düsseldorf 1965.

4 *Hermeneutik*, ed. H. Kimmerle, Heidelberg 1974, p. 105.

5 Ibidem, p. 83.

6 H.-G. Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode*, 1960, p. 449.

7 Ibidem, p. 459.

him to expand the concept of speech so far that even t h i n g s speak to us: "Thus we are not speaking about a language of art, but about a l a n g u a g e o f n a t u r e , indeed about a language spoken by things"[8]. Language thus becomes for Gadamer, as for Novalis, "that great cipher writing"

> that one glimpses everywhere, on wings, eggshells, in clouds, in the snow, in crystals and rock formations, on freezing water, in the interior and exterior of mountains, plants, animals, people, in the lights of the heavens, in touched or stroked sheets of pitch and glass, in iron filings under the influence of a magnet, and in strange conjunctions of chance. In these one seeks the key to this wondrous script, the linguistics of the same; but this search does not want to submit to any fixed form [...]"[9].

The claim of Gadamer's hermeneutic to universality, including his ontological turn in hermeneutics, can therefore be summarized, putting a fine point to it, as follows: in Gadamer's concept of hermeneutics, Hermes has not only stolen his brother Apollo's cows, he has beaten Apollo to death.

Incidentally, I do not say this in order to discredit this concept, but merely to make it understandable in its specific character. Certainly, and here Hasso Jäger is absolutely right[10], Gadamer is not propounding the concept of a hermeneutics in the tradition of the *Hermeneutica generalis* of Johann Conrad Dannhauer (1603–1666). The latter's undertook to teach that, for all disciplines, "verum sensum a falso discernere in omnibus auctorum scriptis et orationibus"[11]. But precisely this tradition was taken up in the 1990s by many younger authors who turned against Gadamer's conception of hermeneutics because they simply did not understand its specific character as sketched here[12].

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[8] Ibidem, p. 450.
[9] *Die Lehrlinge zu Sais*, in: Novalis, *Schriften*, Vol. 1, (ed.) P. Kluckhohn/R. Samuel, Stuttgart 1977³, p. 79.
[10] Cf. H. Jäger, *Studien zur Frühgeschichte der Hermeneutik*, „Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte" 18 (1974), pp. 35–84.
[11] Quoted after O. Scholz, *Verstehen und Rationalität*, Frankfurt am Main 1999, p. 40.
[12] I mention here the collection *Unzeitgemäße Hermeneutik*, ed. A. Bühler, Frankfurt am Main 1994, with contributions on the hermeneutics of the Enlightenment by L. Cataldi Madonna, P. Lombardi, H.-P. Schütt, L. Danneberg, O. Scholz, G. Hornig, and M. Longo. O. R. Scholz, *Verstehen und Rationalität*, Frankfurt am Main 1999 should also be considered. This has the merit of having steered the conversation to the discussion of hermeneutics with the interpretational approaches of analytical philosophy. Though I want to restrict myself to these references to explicit works on hermeneutics in the 1990s, this is not enough to provide an impression of the entire backdrop of philosophical works on the theory of interpretation that have emerged in noteworthy manner in precisely these 1990s. Among these are, of course, the works of G. Abel (*Interpretationswelten*, Frankfurt am

A future history of philosophy of the period after 1989 will have to explore why precisely the 1990s were such a flourishing era for the philosophical analysis of understanding and interpreting. Understanding probably did not become easier in this world after 1989, since after the 1960s' optimistic prospect of a fusion of horizons we were suddenly confronted with the historical phenomenon of a s h a t t e r i n g   o f   h o r i z o n s that seems to be the real hermeneutic secret of globalization. But who knows this? – everyone merely undergoes it.

As I said, Gadamer achieved the opportunity of a claim to universality of hermeneutics by clandestinely including mantics in hermeneutics. His critics realize this as little as he does. They criticize his concept because it has little to do with the proper understanding of the *intentio auctoris*, with an analysis of the prerequisites of the success of correct interpretations, but instead wants more: an analysis of understanding as an elemental form of our historical existence. Precisely this seems suspicious to his older critics, like Emilio Betti, as well as his younger critics.

This is why I want to attempt to rescue at least Gadamer's intuition. I want to do this by accentuating the aspect of understanding that, vice versa, is given short shrift by some theoreticians of a hermeneutics of analytical provenience.

Analytically oriented theoreticians of understanding and interpreting are initially interested in increasing the "net distinction product" in this difficult terrain, in order to ensure that we know at all what we are talking about. Thus, Axel Bühler alone distinguishes 17 subspecies of declarative interpreting of texts[13]. This is impressive and shows how differentiated our understanding dealings with texts are. Decisive for our intentions, however, is not the critical discussion of this table or its comparison with others, for example with Oliver Scholz's list of levels of understanding of expressions in speech, in which he at any rate distinguishes 10[14] – what interests us here is not this business of distinctive miniatures, but the fundamental distinction between declarative interpreting and non-declarative interpreting. Tak-

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Main 1993, *Sprache, Zeichen, Interpretation*, Frankfurt am Main 1999, H. Lenk (*Interpretationskonstrukte*, Frankfurt am Main 1993), but also works as early as W. Strube (*Analyse des Verstehensbegriffs*, „Zeitschr. f. allg. Wiss.-theorie", XVI 1985, pp. 315–333) and W. Künne (*Prinzipien der wohlwollenden Interpretation*, in: *Intentionalität und Verstehen*, ed. Forum für Philosophie Bad Homburg, Frankfurt am Main 1990). Finally, here we should also mention P. Thom (*Making Sense. A Theory of Interpretation*, Lasham 2000, p. 54) and R. Brandom (*Making it Explicit*, Harvard Univ. Press 1994; German *Expressive Vernunft*, Frankfurt am Main 2000). Of course one could add many more titles.

[13] Cf. A. Bühler, *Die Vielfalt des Interpretierens*, „Analyse & Kritik" 21 (1999), pp. 117–137.

[14] O. Scholz, *Verstehen und Rationalität*, pp. 294gg.

ing recourse to Paul Thom[15] and Jerrold Levinson[16], Büchler distinguishes declarative from performative forms of interpretation[17]. Performative interpreting takes place when an actor interprets a role in a performance or when a musician interprets a score when playing. But precisely these forms of interpretation do not interest Axel Bühler, so they fall outside the focus of his further considerations. This is significant inasmuch as p r e c i s e l y a n d s o l e l y o n t h i s t r a c k can we find hermeneutic concepts that are not armchair hermeneutics, but that really confront understanding as an elemental mode of the human condition. Here, of course, further distinctions are necessary.

Performative interpreting, for example, is surely not restricted to where someone interprets a theater role, but exists everywhere where someone plays any role at all, for example when he assumes an office or function. Thus, the Governing Mayor of Berlin interprets the role of being the Mayor of Berlin in the way he carries out his office. Thus, all of us, including as philosophers, interpret professional possibilities of life in the repertoire of this society in the way we act out our specific roles, i.e., acting as philosophers in the lecture hall, when giving a lecture, or in a book. In distinction to the performative interpretation of a musical store or theater play, however, there is no score or script. What is there is merely a description of the role in terms of competence criteria and the legally defined position with determined duties and room for discretion in the framework of competence. Another kind of performative interpreting consists in forms of our communication. Here, too, there is no script, but determinations of situational requirements and grammatical and pragmatic prerequisites for success. Situational requirements include the following: Someone communicating at a wedding interprets, in the way he communicates, his role as wedding guest. This interpretation is distinguished from the role that he communicatively assumes as a guest at a burial or that he carries out as a scientist in a laboratory. But all forms of performative interpreting are more or less contingent. Albeit not all roles in the society's repertoire are open to us for a performative interpretation, generally several a r e open: The jurist could have also become a poet, as indeed frequently occurs. And yet there are also very basic, indeed rigid forms of performative interpreting that are not contingent or not contingent in the same way. Non-contingent forms of performative interpreting are those that have to do with our being on the spot, with our registration of

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[15] P. Thom, *Making Sense*, Lasham 2000, p. 54.

[16] J. Levinson, *Performative versus Critical Interpretations in Music*, in: Michael Krausz (ed.), *The Interpretations of Music*, Oxford 1993, pp. 33–60.

[17] A. Bühler, *Interpretieren – Vielfalt oder Einheit*, forthcoming.

the scene we find ourselves in at the moment, in which we act, and in which our life is at stake. These forms of performative interpreting are built into a scenic understanding[18]. Only here do we reach forms of interpreting or understanding that include all the registers of our physical existence, from reflex to mood, feeling, and inkling. These forms of performative interpreting are non-contingent in the sense that we fundamentally cannot extract ourselves from them and cannot arrange to be represented by others, as we can, for example, break off the performance of a theater play or pass on our stage role to another. We can also resign from an office or deputize someone to carry it out. All of this is not possible in regard to our situational understanding, except through desperate, sinister, radical egress, as in suicide. The p e r f o r m a n c e of our existence in the world is thus identical to the w a y we e x i s t. That these kinds of existing are always already forms of interpreting or understanding[19] makes a project like Heidegger's in *Sein und Zeit*, i.e., the project of an e x i s t e n t i a l h e r m e n e u t i c s, possible in the first place. There is nothing mysterious in this. It is true even if this use of the word hermeneutics is unusual, because subsemantically-registering forms of existence are mantic by nature. Heidegger rightly conceives of human existence a l i m i n e as semantically-impregnated being. And it is equally correct when he propounds the view that the meaning of being must first be examined where a special being in the form of meaning-being appears, i.e., in the human being with his I-, we-, and "one"-perspectives of existence. The primary form of meaningfulness of existence that need not be deduced or inferred is our emotional state. In the emotional registries, it is beyond doubt that each situation is i n i t i a l l y present. Heidegger methodologically conceived this fact as a characteristic of the way we exist. In this respect, one can then also speak of an ontological finding that terminates in the concept of an ontosemantic existence. We thereby grasp the fact that whereas we "exist" physically at a position in space-time and "vegetate" biologically/physiologically as an "agglomeration of cells" in a corresponding milieu, we also always "live" biographically, and that means semantically or "sense-consumingly". And here that means initially no m o r e than that we cannot remove ourselves from the arena of our emotional states. The first semantic illumination of our scenic understanding is always of the mood and feeling type. Heidegger clearly expresses this so: "We must in fact o n t o l o g i c a l l y

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[18] This use of the expression is, of course, broader than with A. Lorenzer, who introduced the expression "szenischer Verstand" (scenic understanding) to designate psychoanalytical understanding (idem, *Sprachzerstörung und Rekonstruktion*, Frankfurt am Main 1970, pp. 104gg.).

[19] G. Abel, *Interpretationswelten*, op.cit.; idem, *Sprache, Zeichen, Interpretation*, op.cit.

leave the primary discovery of the world up to 'mere mood'"[20]. He then underscores that this note on the first semantic illumination of our scenic understanding "in the unsteady, moodily flickering seeing of the 'world'"[21] must not, of course, be confounded with the "attempt to ontically surrender science to 'feeling'"[22]. Here Heidegger had a sense of what could become an avenue of invasion for critical voices. It is the reproach of irrationalism when one brings "feelings" into play in epistemology.

But those who might have misgivings can still learn in this respect today from Leibniz, who in unique manner "placed" emotions and cognitions in a semantic continuum ranging from implicit to explicit meaning. This panorama shows that our epistemological career starts at any rate earlier than Robert Brandom's theory of inferential reason suggests. He concedes that we are as much feeling as understanding beings. But for him, feelings are m e r e l y   t r i g g e r s for our acknowledgement of propositionally meaningful doxastic statements[23]. The subsemantic or subpropositional peculiarity of the feelings arising in us is lost in the analysis or is only made serviceable to the c o m m i t m e n t s of speech acts in giving and demanding reasons. So what we need is thus a   t h e o r y   o f   i n f o r m a l   f o r m s   o f   k n o w l e d g e in the tradition of Leibniz. And to do justice to this fragile initial oscillation of the understanding of meaning, we can in turn take recourse to the repertoire of the mantic vocabulary that was tailored for a finely differentiated practice of risky interpretations. Even today, we interpret differently when, instead of reading a book in an armchair, we are in unfamiliar surroundings in the dark and do not want to lose our orientation. Sounds then take on a completely different valence for us and powerfully influence our behavior. More precisely, two different things are relevant for our behavior in such risky situations. F i r s t , there are the s i g n s of the weakly illuminated visual and auditory backdrop, from which we extract indications; and s e c o n d , there is the panicky mixture of feelings in us that influences our behavior.

Since Classical Antiquity, people have accordingly distinguished two forms of mantic interpretation. The first is called t e c h n i c a l or i n d u c - t i v e and consists in the correct interpretation of natural signs that are relevant for our behavior under risk. The second form is called n a t u r a l mantics; it interprets our agitated moods that, when they discharge completely without control in dreams, intoxication, or ecstasy, require in turn their own interpretations (Delphi). In particular, the form of mantics called technical

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[20] M. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, Tübingen 1963[10], p. 138.

[21] Ibidem.

[22] Ibidem.

[23] Cf. Robert Brandom, *Expressive Vernunft*, op.cit, pp. 400–401.

or inductive, whose purpose is the correct interpretation of natural signs or what was later called *omina*, was originally fed by a natural history that lived from millennia of experience with a threatening or abetting environment. This kind of mantics makes use of an effusive inductive practice. Euripides therefore said the best seer was the one who drew the best conclusions: *mantis aristos ostis eikazei kalos*. Kalchas, who was a seer and simultaneously the admiral of the Greek fleet and who navigated it along the coast of Troy, did this *dia mantosyne*, by power of his divinatory art.

Thus, genuine bodies of knowledge were integrated in inductive mantics, to which we owe a large part of our pharmaceutical and medical knowledge, among other things. Surely inductive mantics came into discredit precisely when its administrators had l o s t c o n t a c t w i t h t h e m a t t e r i t s e l f and no longer interpreted except canonically, i.e., along the guidelines of collections of interpretations, for example dream books (of which, unfortunately, only Artemidor of Daldis' has come down to us). This was already the case in Antiquity, as we can see in Plato's critical stand on mantics and in Cicero's explicit criticism of mantics in the second part of *De divinatione*. Plato nevertheless uses the mantic vocabulary where he wants to characterize a first inkling of the idea of ideas, i.e., a knowledge of the idea of the good. Everyone orients himself toward what seems good to him. And thus it seems advisable, with Eudoxos of Knidos, to call "good" just what "every soul strives for and for the sake of which it does everything, guessing that such a thing exists (*apomanteuomene ti einai*)"[24]. Socrates even once calls himself a s o o t h s a y e r (*mantis*) – though he is no great one, it suffices for his private use. It is his voice of the daemon that he makes a point of listening to, a vestigial level of natural mantics that later, in the Christian era, will be grasped as the voice of conscience. In this weakened form, to be precise, every individual is an heir of the seer, and Socrates says why: "Like a soothsaying being, my friend, is the soul as well (*mantikon ti kai he psyche*)"[25]. The basis of our epistemological constitution "flickers" mantically, even today.

Despite Plato's unambiguous criticism of commercially performed mantics, which, even before his time, had already become epistemically frivolous and even an institution of the purest superstition, he still clung to the mantic phenomenon for his characterization of our mental constitution. Without the i n t i m a t i n g p a r t , even today we would not cope well in our dealings with people, animals, and the world in general. Hermeneutically

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[24] *Polit.* 505 d.
[25] *Phaid.* 242 c.

read, this mantic portion also affects our everyday communication. W h a t s o m e o n e   w a n t s   t o   t e l l   m e I initially can only g u e s s until I know it. For this reason, communication in speech also always demands from the listener a kind of a c c o m m o d a t i n g or c o o p e r a t i v e   u n d e r s t a n d - i n g. Interestingly enough, none other than Gottlob Frege has a sensitive feeling for such informal forms of knowledge[26]. Much to his annoyance, he cannot help but recognize that even the fundamental concepts needed for his logically-oriented foundation of mathematics cannot be exhaustively defined, because they are simply elemental. This unfortunately also goes for such important terms as t r u e,   g o o d,   b e a u t i f u l, and unfortunately also p o i n t and f u n c t i o n. To introduce these terms into scientific usage, despite their indefinability, one must, as Frege says, be able to count "on a bit of good will, on accommodating understanding, on guessing"[27].

Because of the fact of indefinability, there are limits to expression in speech, also according to Frege, that are not at the same time limits to under-standing. Also according to Frege, our understanding extends further than our definitory competence. We can confirm this because, when trying to define difficult terms, we are often at a loss even though we believe we clearly know or understand the meaning of the term in question. In our everyday practice of communication, we have no problem using certain terms and are also understood. Nonetheless, when asked, we have difficulties explaining their usage. For example, if we try to explain such everyday expressions as "tender", "gentle", "delicacy", "meticulous", or "elegant" or "awkward", we will be unable to avoid using examples and images and even then – as Frege, as a hermeneut, rightly saw – we will have to rely upon an accommodating understanding.

For Frege, this is also true for how infants acquire language: "One must be able to rely upon an accommodating understanding in them, just as in the animals with which man can arrive at mutual understanding"[28]. Thus, according to Frege, even children and animals possess a m u t u a l u n d e r s t a n d i n g   t h a t   i s   n o t   y e t   o f   l i n g u i s t i c   n a t u r e, upon which one must be able to rely. This delineates a type of understanding that, of mantic origin, is also universally important for the hermeneutics of com-municative relations.

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[26] Cf. on the following W. Hogrebe, *Frege als Hermeneut*, Bonn 2001.

[27] G. Frege, *Über die Grundlagen in der Geometrie*, p. 288; see also idem, *Logik in der Mathematik*, p. 224. On this complex of issues in Frege, cf. Wolfram Hogrebe, *Frege als Hermeneut*, op.cit.

[28] G. Frege, *Erkenntnisquellen der Mathematik und Naturwissenschaften*, in: *Nachgelassene Schriften*, eds. Hermes/Kaulbach, Hamburg 1969, p. 290.

Thus, in such zones of informal understanding, we can definitely communicate – as Frege says, by means of linguistic "cues".

Of course, he does not regard the latter as belonging to science, but indeed as indispensable in the pre-scientific area, because otherwise we cannot even introduce the indivisible or irreducible, and thus indefinable, categorial distinctions that we nonetheless urgently need to build up our scientific language. But despite this functional indispensability, Frege sees another function of linguistic "cues" that goes beyond that. With their aid, namely, we explore beyond that an "intimating" knowledge near the zones of the inexpressible. He writes, literally, "Where the point is to approach the cognitively ungraspable on the path of intimation, these components [the linguistic "cues", W.H.] have their complete justification"[29].

What Frege here calls the cognitively ungraspable is the broad realm of the non-propositional, to which we remain connected even when we heuristically strive to form true sentences. Frege was not the first to make it clear that linguistic "cues" can promote a creative understanding even in the realm of non-propositional forms of knowledge. This insight is found long before Frege in Plato's 7th letter, as Wolfgang Wieland has impressively elucidated[30]. But this insight is found just as prominently after Frege in Ludwig Wittgenstein, who was extraordinarily sensitive to informal forms of knowledge, especially in his later period.

A marked example of non-propositional knowledge, perhaps also a form of *know-how*, is surely what we call "knowledge of human nature" or "judgment of character". Here Wittgenstein asks, "Can we learn to have knowledge of human nature?" And he answers, "Yes; Some can learn it. But not by means of instruction; rather, by means of 'e x p e r i e n c e'. Can another person be a teacher in this? Certainly. He can give the right cue from time to time. – That is how learning and teaching look here"[31].

This example of Wittgenstein's makes it clear in particular that the greatest part of our life-reality is present to us in non-propositional forms of knowledge. It is all the more astonishing that in our time philosophers have seldom epistemologically faced the challenge of this informal epistemological backdrop. But at other times in the history of philosophy, they have. Thus, we must relearn that, for example, in Alexander Baumgarten, stimulated by insights conveyed via Wolff from Leibniz, the birth of aesthetics can basically be traced back to an astonishing rediscovery of non-propositional forms of

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[29] Idem, *Logische Untersuchungen*, in: idem, *Kleine Schriften*, ed. I. Angelelli, Darmstadt 1967, p. 347.
[30] Cf. idem, *Platon und die Formen des Wissens*, Göttingen 1982.
[31] L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophische Untersuchungen*, Frankfurt am Main 1967, p. 264.

knowledge in Leibniz. At any rate, our understanding extends further than our knowledge; this is the message of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. And Leibniz saw the same thing when he said,

> Every soul understands (*connait*) the infinite, understands everything, but in a confused (*confusement*) way; just as, when I stroll along the shore of the sea and hear the great noise it makes, I hear the specific noises of each individual wave, from which the total sound is composed, but without distinguishing them individually. Our confused perceptions [i.e., our non-propositional understanding] are the result produced in us by the entire universe[32].

That our understanding extends further than our knowledge is a fundamental insight of philosophy. And from this perspective of an understanding reaching beyond knowledge, Heidegger could write the sentence: "Science does not think"[33]. And this sentence is true.

By means of an accommodating understanding understood in this broad way, we in fact conquer a world in which everything and anything is a potential interlocutor. Now Gadamer tailored hermeneutics' claim to universality precisely to such a world. With Frege, we make contact with this world, in which, to speak with Sir Edward Burnett Tylor (1832–1917), "sun and stars, trees and rivers, winds and clouds, become personal animated creatures"[34]. Tylor called this world a n i m i s t i c and took this term of Georg E. Stahl's (1660–1734) from the latter's book *Theoria medica vera* (Halle 1707). Only in this animistic world is Gadamer's main point, strictly speaking, true: "Being that can be understood is language." Thus, in this world, adults can communicate with dogs, children with dolls, and poets with nature in itself. Adults, too, are lastingly tied to this animistic world, at least everywhere where they remain sensitive to natural impressions or inklings, a sensitivity that testifies to not only our active and merely passive but to our m e d i a l (in the sense of Greek grammar) p o s i t i o n i n t h e w o r l d . The history of the theory of animism, all the way to Piaget[35], shows that, without an accommodating understanding, we would never

[32] G.W. Leibniz, *Prinzipien der Natur und der Gnade*, in: idem, *Kleine Schriften*, ed. and transl. H. Heinz Holz, Darmstadt 1965, p. 433.

[33] M. Heidegger, *Was heißt Denken?*, Tübingen 1984 (4th printing.), p. 4 and p. 154. Cf. on this recently P. Stekeler-Weithofer, *Was heißt Denken? Von Heidegger über Hölderlin zu Derrida*, Bonn 2004.

[34] E. Burnett Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, London 1871, 1913⁵; German *Die Anfänge der Kultur*, 2 vols. Leipzig 1879.

[35] Against the criticism of Piaget, L. R. Looft/W. H. Bartz, *Animism Revived*, "Psych. Bull." 71 (1969), pp. 1–9.

have constructed the dark Thou, and here I would like to add the suspicion that without a m i n i m u m   o f   a n i m i s m, our relationship to objects, i.e., our referentiality or intentionality, would collapse. For this minimum of animism originated in a personal relationship that only became a relationship to an object when the dark Thou fell silent. Technical substitutes are the desperate attempt to make it speak again. Technology is a child of animism. And technology begins, as in the myth of Pygmalion, with the image; and, for reasons of loneliness in a speechless world, it wants to return.

However many individual kinds of understanding we may distinguish, the birth canal of explicit understanding, i.e., understanding presentable in the form of sentences, must remain in touch with sources that cannot be presented in the form of sentences, i.e., non-propositional sources, from which the genesis of our relationship to objects is fed. At least three levels have to be considered in this context:

1. Assertions / statements in the form of sentences (**w/f)   a is F semantics
2. Suspicions / interpretations   a can be interpreted as F hermeneutics
3. Impressions / inklings   a seems like an F mantics

Heidegger already distinguished the first two levels[36], specifically with his contrasting pair, the apophantic and the hermeneutic "As". Terminologically, he missed the third level, though he did take account of the matter itself. Below this third level, the existence of meaning cannot be confirmed. It testifies to our semantic resonance nature, which we can also call mantic.

Here, only an image can help. When I rub the edge of a wineglass with a moist finger, it begins to ring when the circular movement of my finger matches the frequency with which it resonates. Our medial (in the sense of Greek grammar) resonance nature should be understood similarly in its register of impressions/inklings. Today, such registers are sometimes analyzed under the term *qualia*, but this infelicitous expression was only chosen to reify impressions or inklings and possibly to lead them to a physical interpretation.

Even the brain researcher Antonio R. Damasio concedes, "Knowledge begins as feeling, [...]"[37] But with him, too, this sentence remains a piece of philosophy, because he cannot translate terms like knowledge and feeling into neurobiology.

[36] M. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, op.cit., § 33.
[37] Idem, *Eine Neurobiologie des Bewusstseins*, in: A. Newen/K. Vogeley (eds.), *Selbst und Gehirn*, Paderborn 2000, p. 327.

I think that we have to be much more careful with the project of a neuronal epistemology than is sometimes the case. At any rate, the following statement must be taken seriously: "The mind is essentially only what it knows about itself." This sentence is from Hegel[38], and it is true. Of course the mind also knows about itself that it does not know everything and that it cannot know some things. Thus, knowledge and non-knowledge belong together. But what is the echo of our knowledge that comes out of the dimension of non-knowledge? This is a good final question.　　　　　〜

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[38] G.W.F. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie § 385*, Werke (Suhrkamp) Vol. 10, p. 33.