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# An Application of Self-Understanding to the Language of the Sciences: Retrieving their Narrative Dimension

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**AN APPLICATION OF SELF-UNDERSTANDING TO THE LANGUAGE OF THE  
SCIENCES: RETRIEVING THEIR NARRATIVE DIMENSION**

**Keywords:** narration; self-understanding; hermeneutics; semiotics; rationalism; salvation; destiny; time; story-telling.

**Abstract**

Religion adds to our experience of the world a dimension of non-indifference to the aspect of our destiny, and of our salvation. It has been said that, in the natural sciences, in particular in their mathematized form, the quest for ever-more encompassing equations amounted to a building-up of a universe in "zero words." When one attempts at passing from an experience of the religious dimension, to a self-induced reflection on its status in front of the claims of rationality in the sciences, one finds that this embeddedness in stories is inevitable from an epistemological viewpoint. There is a transformative experience that gives itself in time, and the mere reconduction of time to the dimension of measurement, makes it lose its meaning. It seems therefore inevitable that the work of justifying our knowledge progression specifically in terms of its containing a progress, makes it incomplete should it dismiss any relation to an horizon where every experience of meaning happens. This hermeneutic dimension, we will claim, is part of the presupposition of narration, and as such has a direct bearing on the language of stories, but we will claim that all languages, including those of the natural sciences, are hermeneutical. It is not simply that the hermeneutical character would come in

degrees, but more deeply, that the pursuit of science, just like any other activity, and as Whitehead saw, is itself a value, for which antecedent conditions will inevitably be brought in, and also for which an ensemble of “reasons” will be adduced. As one calls into examination those reasons, in particular as the rationalist tradition had construed it (“*causa seu ratio*”), one finds that the principle deemed “principle of sufficient reason” and mostly associated with Leibniz, in fact only makes sense if one is ready to seek a *locus* between necessity and contingency, and as such, to create a space for a rational *backwards* illumination of a trajectory already adopted. Whereas metaphysical endeavours might want to use this as a means to deploy all knowledge from a God’s viewpoint so to speak, the hermeneutical dimension of languages frees theological discourse and propositions from such a requirement.

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