

DICHOTOMIES

- Theoretical debate often centers around a series of key **dichotomies**.
- Each of these **dichotomies** is expressed in the selections from Plato's *Republic* (VII, X).
- **IDEAL vs MATERIAL**
- **REASON vs IMAGINATION**
- **USE VALUE vs "ART FOR ART'S SAKE"**
- **EMPIRICISM** (objectivity) vs. **EXPRESSIVISM** (subjectivity)
- **UNCHANGING vs MUTABLE**
- **UNIVERSAL vs PARTICULAR**
- **ELITE vs COMMON**
- **SELF-CONTROL** (mastery) vs **SELF-LOSS** (inspiration)
- **TRUTH vs REPRESENTATION**

HUME: STANDARDS OF TASTE

THE PROBLEM: how to establish STANDARDS of EVALUATION, to make the connections between the particular and the GENERAL

- relationship between EXPERIENCE and STANDARDS
- CONDITIONS that shape EXPECTATIONS
- the roles of HISTORY and CHANGE
- methodology for distinguishing among
 - "mere liking"
 - intrinsic "value" of the object
 - absolute principles of value

MEDIEVAL LITERARY THEORY

SOME DEFINITIONS TO CARRY AROUND IN OUR BRAINS

SIGNIFICATION: the expression of meaning by way of signs

SEMIOTICS: the study of signs and sign systems

POLYSEMY: literally, "many meanings"; the tendency for signs to have multiple meanings; an indicator of the instability of meaning

HERMENEUTICS: a method of literary interpretation based on the trope of "discovery," "revealing" and/or "explication" of a meaning inherent to the text

EXEGESIS: a method of literary interpretation (especially of *Scripture*) based on an understanding of *allegory*, that is, the assumption that the true meaning of a text lies not or not only in its *literal* meaning, but in its *figurative* meaning (Augustine demonstrates Scriptural EXEGESIS in Chapter 10 of "The Trinity" [193, 18])

AUGUSTINE

THE SIGN

(188.2)

Words (189)

Smoke

“conventional”

“natural”

Intentional

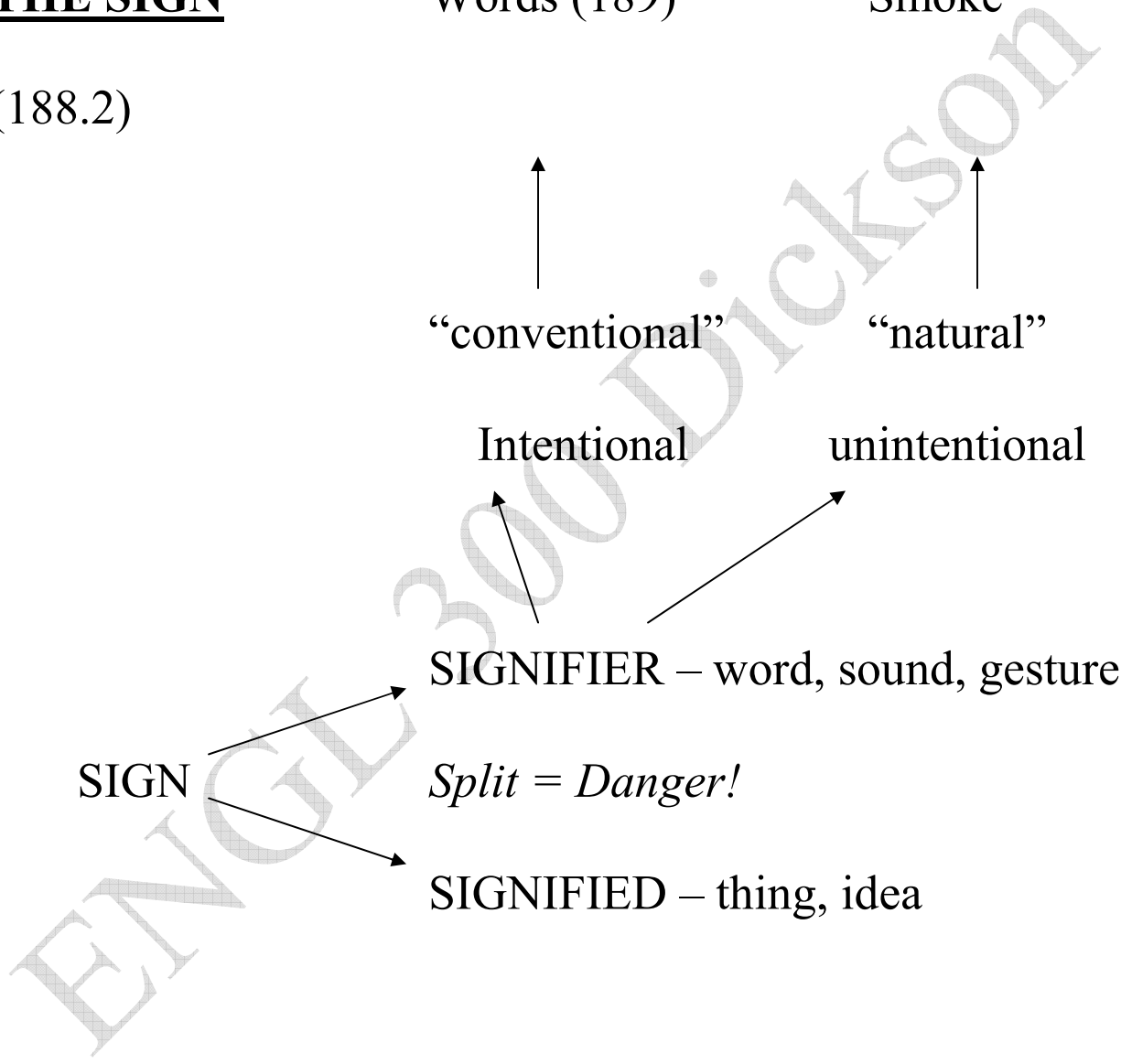
unintentional

SIGNIFIER – word, sound, gesture

SIGN

Split = Danger!

SIGNIFIED – thing, idea



HUGH OF ST. VICTOR HIERARCHY OF SIGNIFICATION

LETTER - LOGIC

SENSE - LITERAL

INNER - FIGURATIVE (“DEEPER”)

HISTORICAL - LITERAL

ALLEGORICAL - SPIRITUAL

TOPOLOGICAL - MORAL

THUS// instead of a number of possibly contradictory meanings.

There are a SERIES of related meaning, each one pointing to or NECESSARY to the others

AQUINAS

STRUCTURE OF ARGUMENT → LOGIC

consider the measured, even rigid construction of his argument which follows a standard scholastic form:

1. statement of question
2. statement of objections
3. statement of opposing position
4. systematic response to objections

NOTE: these are FORMS OF PROLEPSIS

RENAISSANCE HUMANISM

1. urban
2. mercantile (or supported by growing capitalism)
3. iconoclastic (challenge to medieval stadium)
4. literary (emphasis on “letters” – poetry, history, rhetoric)
5. historically-conscious (posterity and the past)
6. politically active
7. HUMAN-CENTERED

Giraldi, du Bellay, de Pizan:
Some
COMMON THREADS

1. The ANXIETY OF INFLUENCE (Harold Bloom)

→ the relationship among THE 3 Ps:

PRECURSORS

PRESENT

POSTERITY

2. SELF-FASHIONING

→ Access to the MEANS of SELF-FASHIONING

- Representation, Writing, Language

WHO gets to speak?

WHICH utterance COUNTS?

WHO DECIDES?

HOBBS: On PERSPICUITY

The Light of Human minds is Perspicuous [clearly expressed] Words, but by exact Definition first snuffed and purged from ambiguity, *Reason* is the *pace*, *Encrease* of *Science*, the *way*, and the Benefit of man-kind, the *end*. And on the contrary, Metaphors, and senseless and ambiguous words, are like *ignus fatui*; and reasoning upon them is wandering among innumerable absurdities; and their end, contention, sedition, or contempt.

(Leviathan)

Introduction: The Enlightenment

Francis Bacon: 1561-1626

John Locke: 1632-1704

Thomas Hobbes: 1588-1697

Rene Descartes: 1596-1650

“Revolution”

- English “Civil War”
 - French Revolution
 - American Revolution
 - Industrial Revolution
 - Scientific Revolution
-

English Civil War

→ Religious Fragmentation

→ Charles I TRIED & BEHEADED

→ INTERREGNUM / COMMONWEALTH

RESTORATION

ENLIGHTENMENT

“Age of Reason”

→ rise of empiricism

LITERARY STYLE = “PLAINSPOKEN”

→ EMPIRICISM based on OBSERVATION of the

MATERIAL WORLD

Therefore, Bacon insisted → must be recorded in direct

PROSE to eliminate uncertainty, achieve ABSOLUTE

CLARITY of VISION & EXPRESSION

NEWTON, LOCKE → MECHANISTIC UNIVERSE

→ notion of the universe as a MACHINE, put in motion

by God, but pretty much running on its own →

ORDERED and UNDERSTANDABLE through

OBSERVATION of the MATERIAL WORLD

→ working according to UNIVERSAL LAWS

LOCKE: tabula rasa : the mind is a blank slate that is

written on by experiences of the MATERIAL WORLD

→ DESCARTES called this the “geometric spirit” which

assumes that everything becomes understandable

according to pure mathematical principles.

AUGUSTINISM – Queen Anne (1714-1748)

➔ NOVEL: interest in the domestic and the individual psyche

➔ SOCIAL SATIRE

BUT// continuing debate between ‘ancients’ and ‘moderns’

➔ EPIC = epitome of poetic accomplishment

➔ shows the SHIFT of EMPHASIS TOWARD

SCIENCE & RATIONALISM ➔ **PROGRESSIVISM**

NEOCLASSICISM

HORACE becomes key with his

1. plain-speaking style
2. prescriptive model for poetry
3. DECORUM – wh. in the Augustan age takes on the idea of urbane gentlemanliness, proper society, good humor, etc.

INFLUENCE OF FRANCE

➔ FRENCH PHILOSOPHS – esp. Denis Diderot

Influence of Oliver Goldsmith, Boswell (biography of

Voltaire), Adam Smith, Horace Walpole, Montaigne

➔ liberal, or radical, thinkers

➔ PRE-CURSORS of the French Revolution

LATE 18c – SENTIMENTALISM

→ rx vs. “Hobbsian” notions of self-interest expressed in

Leviathan

- REFORM
- UTILITARIANISM
- SENSIBILITY

ENGL 300 Dickson

HEGEL
DISTINCTION between the INDIVIDUAL and the
SUBJECT

SELF / ~~OTHER~~

→ INDIVIDUAL

-the sense of autonomous
a
self that derives from the
b/t
erasure of the Other

SELF / OTHER

→ SUBJECT

-the self construed as
dynamic, relation
self and Other

- SO// when we talk about the SUBJECT or SUBJECTIVITY, we're talking about this process or relation

BEAUTY ACCORDING TO KANT

- A SUBJECTIVE UNIVERSAL
- A PARTICULAR WITHOUT A **SPECIFIED** GENERAL; OBJECT without a CONCEPT (an example governed by a rule that cannot be definitively stated)

"rule that cannot be definitively stated":
THINK: TRANSCENDENTAL SIGNIFIER

- "...an object's form of *purposiveness* insofar as it is perceived in the object *without the presentation of a purpose*" (517)

IE. PURPOSIVENESS WITHOUT PURPOSE

- "... the object of a *necessary* liking" (519)
- ART FOR ART'S SAKE
- "... the symbol of the morally good" (534) (think Sidney and "delight")
- HARMONY between the object and the mind

