

In the *Fragmente* (1766–68), a set of mainly literary essays, he suggests, much as Condillac (see *Condillac, Etienne Bonnot de*) had done, that language originated from a combination of gesture and natural reflex cries, which developed into irregular utterances, and thence into poetry. In social use language evolved further into oratory, before declining eventually into the dull regularity of ‘philosophical’ (i.e., scientific) language. His view of a language as a key to the national character of its speakers—also anticipated by Condillac—is often seen as a source of similar ideas expressed by Humboldt (see *Humboldt, Wilhelm von*).

The treatise on the origin of language, unlike other writings of the time, asserts unequivocally that language is not God-given, but man-made. However, instead of Condillac’s scheme of development it suggests a specifically human quality of ‘reflection’ (*Besonnenheit*), nature’s compensation for man’s weak instinctual endowments, which enables man to identify an object by selecting one of the set of features which characterize it. For example, a lamb is identified by its bleat; the observer bleats mentally on seeing it again; this event alone is sufficient to constitute language, even without a listener. What a listener hears is not a reflex sound, but Herder also denies it is merely imitative. Later passages speak of a gestural component in language, and of the mutual reinforcement of reason and language.

The recognition of an object by a distinguishing mark is also used as the initial stage of identification in the mental processes set up in the *Metacritique to the Critique of Pure Reason* (1799), an empiricist attack on Kant’s *Critique*, paralleling the increasingly complex perceptions of identity, quality, and activity by the progressive introduction of nominals, adjectives, and verbs in grammar.

While Herder is best known to linguists for his views on the origin of language, the *Abhandlung* is perhaps more important for its vigor than its views; his most influential contribution may lie rather in his sense of the organic growth and decay of language, in his consciousness of the distinctive national quality of languages, and in his propagating the use of simple unaffected German.

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Hermeneutics

‘Hermeneutics’ is a Continental, mainly German, philosophical tradition whose originators include Friedrich Schleiermacher (d. 1834) and Wilhelm Dilthey (d. 1911).

The former based text interpretation on the interaction between ‘grammatical understanding’ (of what a sentence means) and ‘psychological understanding’ (of what the writer means by a sentence). The latter emphasized the difference between the natural sciences and the human sciences (*Geisteswissenschaften*). Karl-Otto Apel may be mentioned as a modern representative of hermeneutics. Relying in part on work by Peter Winch, he has shown close similarities between many traditional hermeneutic themes and Wittgenstein’s later philosophy (see *Wittgenstein, Ludwig*).

Hermeneutics is naturally opposed to ‘methodological monism’ (also called ‘positivism’). According to this philosophical doctrine, there exists only one scientific method which applies equally well to all types of phenomena. Yet it is precisely within physics that this method has been most fully developed, with the consequence that all other sciences are supposed to imitate the example of physics in every respect.

As against this standpoint, hermeneutics adduces several nonmonistic arguments. First, while the causal relation between two physical events can only be externally observed, it may be claimed that in the ‘causation of human actions’ the causal tie between reasons and actions is experienced directly, and that understanding actions by others is based on this kind of experience. This is the famous distinction between observation and understanding (= *Verstehen*, also called ‘re-enactment’ by R. G. Collingwood). This distinction goes back to the ancient distinction between ‘observer’s knowledge’ and ‘agent’s knowledge’ already employed by Plato and Aristotle.

Second, it is evident that the human world contains entities that are absent from the inanimate world, most notably ‘norms.’ And since norms, although directly known by intuition, are not reducible to the physical space and time, it follows that those sciences which analyze norms must remain qualitatively different from physics. This seems to be the case not just for grammatical theory (also called ‘autonomous linguistics’), but also both for (formal) philosophy and for (philosophical) logic (see Itkonen 1978).

Third, the study of the social world may give rise to a (scientific) ‘critique’ of this very world. Again, this dimension is necessarily absent from (the study of) the inanimate world.

After stating (some of) the differences between the natural sciences and the human sciences, it is good to point out that there are similarities as well. In fact, the issue of ‘similarity vs. difference’ is relative to the level of abstraction: the higher the level of abstraction, the more similarities emerge between the sciences. At the highest level, all sciences (or ‘academic disciplines’) are similar insofar as they yield theoretical descriptions which are evaluated and ranked on the basis of (more or less) intersubjective criteria.

On a more purely philosophical level, hermeneutics continues the tradition of transcendental philosophy insofar as, rather than analyzing that which is known, it tries to explicate that which makes knowledge possible in the first place. It rejects, however, the Kantian approach (see also *Kant, Immanuel*), which assumes the existence of some timeless and intra-individual framework. Instead, the historical and social (= interindividual) preconditions of

knowledge are emphasized. As a consequence, hermeneutics is much concerned with the issue of 'relativism vs. universalism.' This also shows the connection with Husserl's notion of *Lebenswelt* (see also Husserl, Edmund), and with Wittgenstein's notion of 'form of life.'

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E. Itkonen

Hesseling, Dirk Christiaan (1859–1941)

Dirk Hesseling was born in Amsterdam and died in Wassenaar. From 'a well-to-do merchant's family' (Muysken and Meijer 1979: vii), he enjoyed a first-rate education, with studies of Greek and Latin at Leiden, trips to the Mediterranean, and the study of Modern Greek in Paris. His doctoral thesis at Leiden was *On the Use of Wreaths among the Greeks: Selected Chapters* (in Latin). At the University of Leiden, he became 'privaatdocent' in 1893, and was appointed to the chair of Byzantine and Modern Greek in 1907, a post which he held until 1929. His 'knowledge of languages was encyclopedic; we find references to all stages of English, French, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Russian, German, Spanish, Portuguese, and several other languages. It is unclear, however, whether he considered himself more of a Greek scholar, or more of a creole scholar' (Muysken and Meijer 1979: viii).

Hesseling was a highly original scholar, who, throughout most of his professional life, pursued an unlikely combination of classical languages and creole languages. When one realizes, however, that his focus on Greek and Latin was on their koineization (see *Koinés*) and dispersal in space and time, it is not hard to follow his reasoning in seeing the same principles operating in the diaspora of the European colonial languages of the last 500 years, especially with regard to Dutch and English, and to Portuguese, French, and Spanish. He was a contemporary of Hugo Schuchardt (see *Schuchardt, Hugo*), and it is clear that each scholar had much to tell the other. In preparing his early published work on Afrikaans and Negerhollands, for example, Hesseling shows that he was well aware of his German colleague's studies of the Romance- and English-based creoles, publications dating from the 1880s. More than 20 years later, after Schuchardt's interests had turned primarily to other areas of linguistics (Basque and Georgian, for instance), it was Hesseling who encouraged him to publish Schumann's eighteenth-century manuscript dictionary of Saramaccan, which had been sent to Schuchardt from South America many years previously. Schuchardt, then over 70, took the occasion to express his well-considered views on the origin and development of the Saramaccan language, and on

creolistics generally. Prior to John Reinecke's 1937 Yale doctoral dissertation (see *Reinecke, John E.*), this was the closest thing the world had seen to a textbook on the subject (Gilbert 1980: 90). Despite the complications of the onset of World War I (in which Austria and the Netherlands found themselves on opposing sides), Hesseling was successful in seeing the work through its publication in 1914 in Amsterdam. (Hesseling's correspondence with Schuchardt on the publication of Schumann's dictionary, and on other matters, is preserved in Graz.) Hesseling's 1899 and 1905 books, on Afrikaans and Negerhollands, were very much products of the spirit prevalent at the *fin de siècle*. As Muysken and Meijer put it:

In a sense, Hesseling was very much between two worlds, 'at the turning point of two centuries,' to use the phrase coined by the Dutch historian Jan Romein. He was a classical scholar who much preferred spoken modern Greek and Italian to their classical ancestors. Yet he was a philologist who never got around to doing fieldwork at a time when Boas (see *Boas, Franz*) and his students were already studying the native languages of North America actively (1979: xix).

Hesseling regarded Afrikaans as a 'semi-creole,' to use the term evidently coined by Reinecke in 1937 or 1938. 'African [sic] was originally a "semi-creole patois" as you say, but the process has been brought to a stand' (letter from Hesseling to Reinecke, dated December 22, 1938, the original preserved in Honolulu, with a copy in Hesseling's hand, in Leiden). He emphasized the (until then) surprisingly strong influence, unwelcome in many white South African circles, of Malayo-Portuguese, as it had been described by Schuchardt, in the formation of Afrikaans. He was also inclined to accept broadly universalist and developmental explanations of the similarities that had been observed worldwide in the evolution of creole languages—essentially the point of view expressed in the 1880s by Coelho (see *Coelho, Francisco Adolpho*) (more an intuitive suggestion than anything else) and by Schuchardt in his later years, roughly 1905–27 (based on the most comprehensive study of those languages up to that time). Accordingly, he would have little to do with the extreme substratal position (retention of L1 structure in the lexical clothing of the European L2, in both pidgins and creoles) espoused by the French anthropologist, Lucien Adam. Although his work formed an important link in the chain of scholarship, stretching from Coelho through Valkhoff (see *Valkhoff, Marius François*) and Whinnom, that clarified the role of Portuguese in the development of modern creoles of whatever lexical base, Hesseling was clearly not the author of the monogenesis theory, namely that Portuguese Creole was the ur-creole from which most others developed (Muysken and Meijer 1979: xvi–xvii). (Most scholars agree in giving Keith Whinnom the credit for that proposal.) The fact that Hesseling wrote largely in Dutch has doubtless impeded access to his writings—most of which remain unavailable in any other language. Notwithstanding, his thorough and interesting comparisons of creole languages, and his suggestions for future research, reserve for him a distinguished place in twentieth-century creolistics.

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