

D. Brent Sandy, Plowshares and Pruning Hooks: Rethinking the Language of Biblical Prophecy and Apocalyptic, Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002

**“Plowshares and Pruning Hooks and the Hermeneutics of Dispensationalism,”
Evangelical Theological Society, 59th Annual Meeting, 2007 (Dispensational Study Group)**

Quotes from Anthony Thiselton cited in Thomas:

“Absolute scientific objectivity in interpreting scripture. . .[is] an illusion. . . .The biblical scholar therefore needs the help of someone who has made it his life’s work to wrestle with the problem of how these two sides [i.e., the ideal of a ‘pure’ description of the text’s meaning and the inability of the interpreter to escape the confines of his finite or ‘historical’ existence] of the situation can be held together, without either being lost to view.”

“We cannot put the clock back to the era before Kant. Objectivity is not the same as objectivism, and the relevance to hermeneutics of the Cartesian model of knowledge must not be assumed without question and accorded a privileged position.”

“Traditional hermeneutics. . .limits the horizon to which understanding belongs, and pays insufficient attention to human facticity. . .[It is] naïve objectivity.”

KANTIAN VIEW OF KNOWLEDGE

“Noumenal”:

*God, soul,
immortality, value*

[religious area]

“Phenomenal”:

*observations, facts
organized by the
mind*

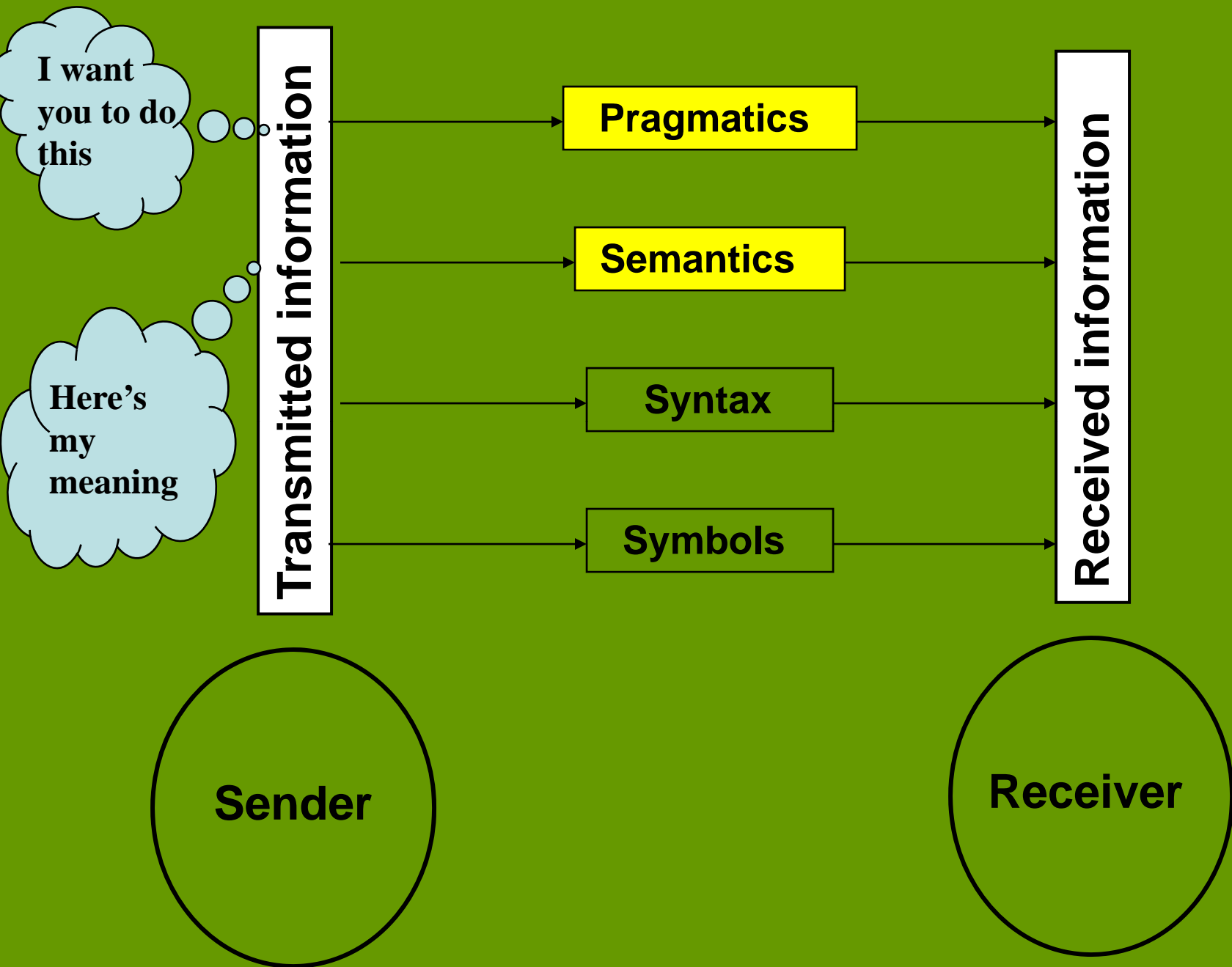
[science area]

Immanuel Kant



1724-1804

*Absolute
Subjectivity*



“Speech Acts”:

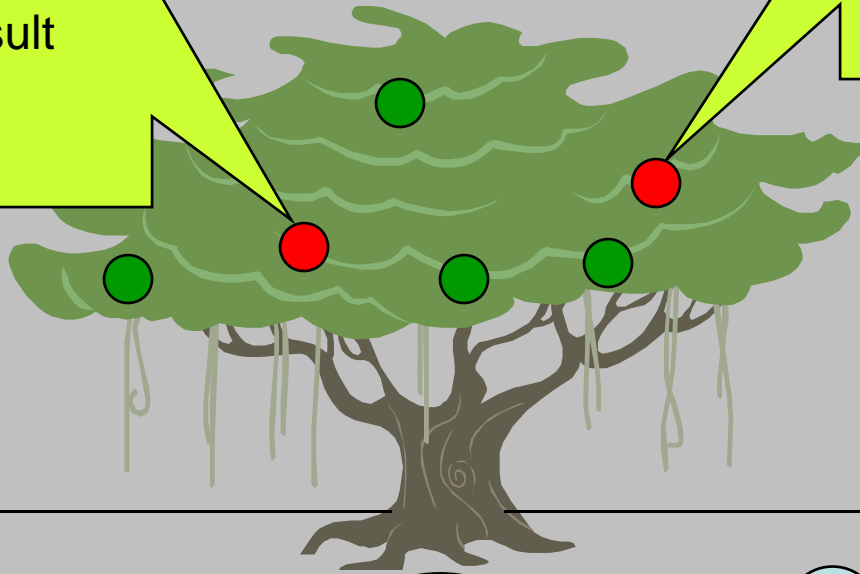
Locution = say it

Illocution = intention

Perlocution = result

Subtleties of figurative
speech/writing
(metaphor):

=> express emotions &
conceptualize abstractions



~~Semantics~~

Meaning
from
within
man

Inescapable
“Pre-
understanding”

10 Concepts of a Biblical Philosophy of Language

1. Intra-Trinity Language

2. Creation Language

3. Initialization of Human Language

4. Human Language Extended

5. Metaphoric Language

6. Sin Damage to Language

7. Babel Judgment on Language

8. Continuity & Uniqueness of Biblical Language

9. The Incarnation & Language

10. Great Commission, Pentecost & Language

Sandy's View of Human Language

- “Language originates in humankind’s fundamental need to communicate.” (p. 25)
- “God’s choices [for a language of revelation] were limited. . .the other issue God faced was how to describe heavenly concepts in human language” (p. 26f)
- “In a sense prophecy was assigned an impossible task. With language limited to what we have experienced, how can God be described?” (p. 27)
- “Under divine empowerment, the prophets created metaphors and similes. . .as best they could.” (p. 28)

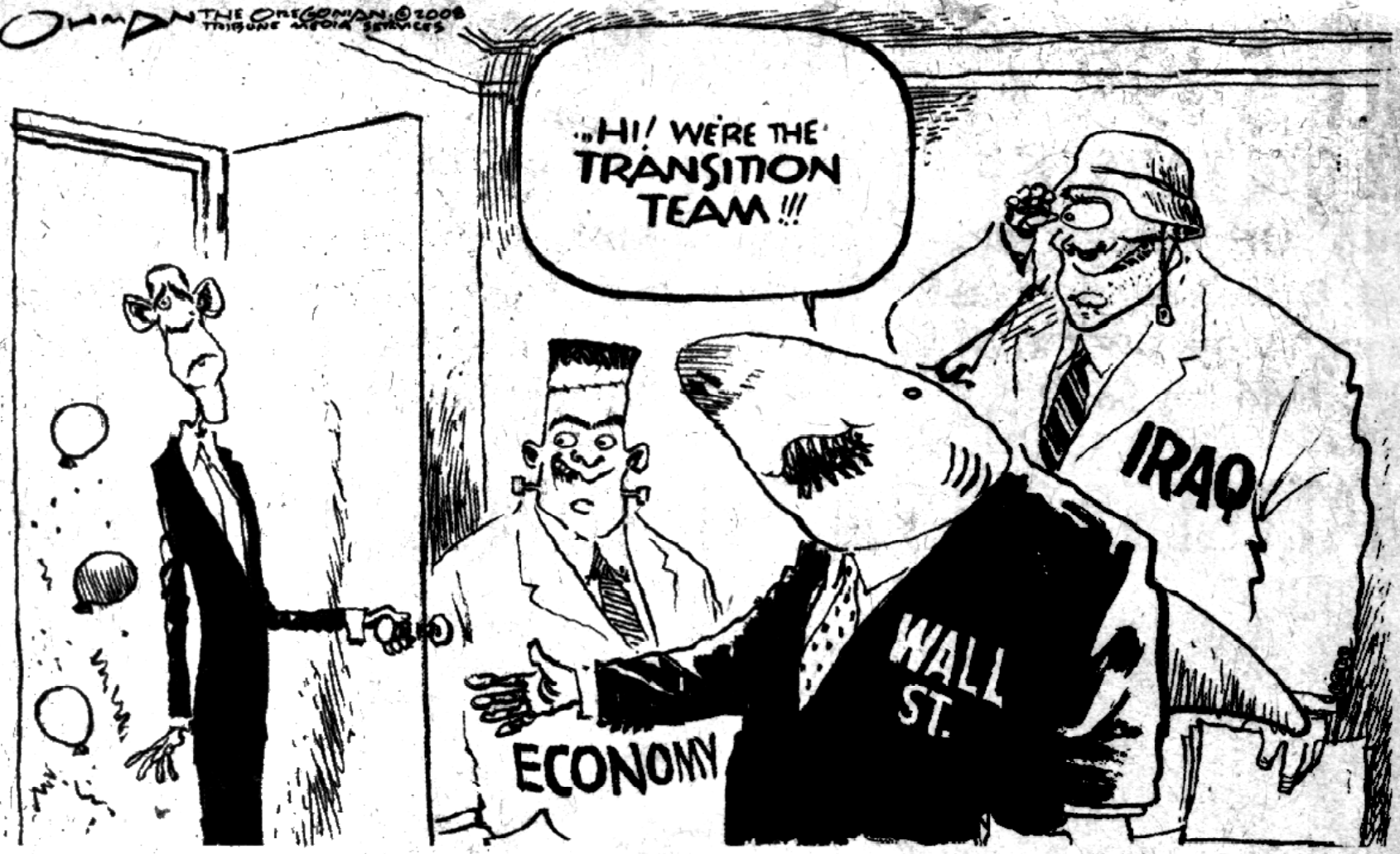
Sandy's Argument

Prophecy requires metaphor (because of human language limitations).

Zeal for knowledge of future details harms prophecy and the Church (because figurative language is so different from ordinary language that details don't merit the same kind of attention).

Prophetic language is to produce repentance toward God so its metaphors must be understood)

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