

Günter Figal, *Gegenständlichkeit: Das Hermeneutische und die Philosophie* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006).

In this book, Günter Figal develops a foundation for hermeneutic philosophy. Interpretation and understanding are newly conceived. Interpretation shows itself to be the original reference to a subject matter; it is a reference to something which stands opposite and, as such, poses a challenge. As oppositionality, therefore, it stands at the center of hermeneutic philosophy. The critique of “objectification,” so commonly found in modern continental thinking, is here criticized. Figal shows that hermeneutic experience is but an intensified mode of human life. Life itself is generally dominated by the reference to objects which come to stand in opposition. This objectivity and oppositionality of life are possible in a world with hermeneutic dimensions. These dimensions can be phenomenologically described as freedom, language, and time.

Maurizio Ferraris writes on Figal’s book: “Derrida said that justice is the indeconstructible. Indeed, he renounced ontology in the name of ethics. With this epochal book, the greater hermeneutic philosopher of our days, Günter Figal, argues that objectivity is the indeconstructible. Certainly, objectivity alone does not guarantee solidarity, freedom, and justice. But without it we would have nothing, or rather, we would only have the illusion of solidarity, freedom, and justice.”