

Ruth Edith Hagengruber

Reply to a Reply: Knowledge in the Digitized World: The Third Knowledge Dimension¹

First of all, I would like to thank Luciano Floridi for his openness to my proposal to link the new way of knowing in the information age in a mental leap with the ideas of a very different ontological construction as elaborated in the work of Giordano Bruno and especially Tommaso Campanella. The latter was already thinking four hundred years ago of a non-hierarchical categorical system that would build an ontology of experience on the basis of an »is« and »is not« statement in which overlaps or aggregations in all dimensions of the topology would reflect different kinds of perspectives of knowledge instead of a hierarchically structured tree of knowledge.

Of course, it makes a big difference whether these connections are presupposed – as in Renaissance philosophy – or whether they are generated as sequences of algorithmic patterns and aggregated connections, as is possible today.² For both basic philosophical concepts, however, it is true that the human being or human rationality plays a different role than in anthropocentric philosophies. And anthropocentric dominance is said to be the *only* determining force. This is no longer true and can no longer be asserted in the face of the rapidly evolving determinative power of artificial intelligence. I have shown elsewhere that the knowledge production of artificial intelligence must be seen as an independent factor of our epistemic world and cannot be reduced to the first two elements. It constitutes the *third dimension* of our knowledge and complements the other two epistemically relevant dimensions we know, the subject and the

¹ This essay is a comment on Luciano Floridi's investigation into the »The Green and the Blue«, presented in: *Philosophisches Jahrbuch* 127(2) (2020), 307–338, my response to his paper in: *Philosophisches Jahrbuch* 128(1) (2021), 122–135 and his response to my response in the *Philosophisches Jahrbuch* 128(2) (2021), 385–386.

² See Hagengruber (2017), 331–341.

object. Artificial intelligence generates its own dimension of contexts and categorial orders. They may not always seem meaningful to us and we only assign »meaning« to part of them, but we do it. For this reason, and based on these considerations, I argue that the dominance of the human subject as the sole producer of knowledge is outdated.³

Once again, I would agree with Luciano Floridi, to call this other ontological account »posthumanist« is infelicitous. Nevertheless, it is correct to point out that what knowledge and science mean to us humans, namely to strive for the goals that we have researched and try to produce out of our capacity as »the best«, is no longer entirely produced by and limited to human capacity. Knowledge today is also generated by the functioning of artificial intelligence. Knowledge is therefore no longer completely and exclusively bound to »human« knowledge.

For a long time, philosophy has worked with a two-dimensional epistemology, presenting the essential elements of gaining knowledge as a relationship between subject and object.

Today's knowledge machines break this binary scheme. They emerge as a third element that is as productive of knowledge as we are. Together and separately, we are creating a new world of knowledge.

The new epistemology is thus three-limbed. And this three-memberedness is the cause of the fact that our knowledge, and that means also our interpretation of the world, will be different in the future, than it was before. It will anchor us differently in nature and society than before. Algorithmic methods, new ways of knowledge aggregation and changed compositions of knowledge clusters structure knowledge of the world in new ways.

³ Hagengruber (2022). See also, Ruth E Hagengruber, *The Third Knowledge Dimension. How AI Changes Epistemology*, Digital Talk, at: *Ethics and Digitalization, Cultural Entrepreneurship Institute Berlin and Venice International University 2021*, Talk 25th November 2021. The Third Knowledge Dimension. How AI Changes Epistemology (Berlin); see also: *The Third Knowledge Dimension. How AI Changes Epistemology* (IAPH)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z1sOlQ5vktY>.

Bibliography

Hagengruber, R. E. (2017), »Creative Algorithms and the Construction of Meaning«, in: *Berechenbarkeit der Welt?*, edited by Jörg Wernecke, Wolfgang Pietsch, and Maximilian Ott, Wiesbaden, 331–341.

– (2022), »Die >dritte Wissensdimension<. Eine Epistemologie für eine neue Wissenswelt«, in: *Cyberscience – Wissenschaftsforschung und Informatik. Digitale Medien und die Zukunft der Kultur wissenschaftlicher Tätigkeit*, edited by Gerhard Banse and Klaus Fuchs-Kittowski, Berlin, 253–258 (Sitzungsberichte der Leibniz-Sozietät der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, Bd. 150/151).

