

## M&Ms – Mentally Mediated Meanings

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The slogan according to which “vocal sounds signify things by means of concepts” (*voces significant res mediantibus conceptibus*) expresses the standard medieval (in fact, Boethian) interpretation of the opening lines of Aristotle’s *De interpretatione*. Yet, the formula has been subject to divergent interpretations according to the various understandings of what ‘*mediantibus*’ was taken to mean: do concepts constitute an intermediary step in the semantic process, being at the same time *significata* and *signa* (e.g. Thomas Aquinas)? Are they rather that without which no vocal sound would be significant, being *signa* but not *significata* (e.g. William of Ockham)? A careful reader of the scholastics, Anton Marty takes up the medieval slogan and interprets it along the lines of the “pragmatic semantics” elaborated in his *Sprachphilosophie*. Names are involved in a twofold semantic relation: they mean (*bedeuten*) that a certain presentation (*Vorstellung*) should be triggered in a hearer; and they name (*nennen*) the object of that presentation – a dynamic situation which is precisely caught by another medieval slogan, apparently unknown to Marty: *significare est intellectum constituere* – “to mean is to bring about a concept”. The paper will deal with the three following issues: *i)* which are the main competing medieval interpretations of the slogan *voces significant res mediantibus conceptibus*? *ii)* how is Marty’s use of the slogan to be understood in the light of its medieval origins? *iii)* are there medieval instances of pragmatic semantics?