

focuses on his usefulness for literary analysis. Dominick LaCapra devotes a chapter of *Re-thinking Intellectual History: Texts, Contexts, Language* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1983) to "Bakhtin, Marxism, and the Carnavalesque," providing a lucid summary of Bakhtin's major ideas, both literary and linguistic. Feminist work on Bakhtin by literary scholars is collected in *Feminism, Bakhtin, and the Dialogic* (Albany, N.Y., 1991), ed. Dale M. Bauer and S. Jane McKinstry. A collection edited by Amy Mandelker, *Bakhtin in Contexts: Across the Disciplines* (Evanston, Ill., 1995), presents essays that apply Bakhtin's ideas in Slavic studies, classics, American literature, African American studies, sociology, anthropology, linguistics, and semiotics.

Landmark Essays on Bakhtin, Rhetoric, and Writing, ed. Frank Farmer (Mahwah, N.J., 1998), collects important essays by Charles Schuster, Michael Bernard-Donals, Kay Halasek, Don H. Bialostosky, Marilyn Middendorf, Helen Rothschild Ewald, and other scholars in rhetoric and composition studies. Kay Halasek helpfully surveys this scholarship in *A Pedagogy of Possibility: Bakhtinian Perspectives on Composition Studies* (Carbondale, Ill., 1999), where she articulates Bakhtin's ideas in relation to key composition concepts of the student writer, the audience, the topic, and critical reading and writing.

From *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*

From Part I

CHAPTER I THE STUDY OF IDEOLOGIES AND PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE

The problem of the ideological sign. The ideological sign and consciousness. The word as an ideological sign par excellence. The ideological neutrality of the word. The capacity of the word to be an inner sign. Summary.

Problems of the philosophy of language have in recent times acquired exceptional pertinence and importance for Marxism. Over a wide range of the most vital sectors in its scientific advance, the Marxist method bears directly upon these problems and cannot continue to move ahead productively without special provision for their investigation and solution.

First and foremost, the very foundations of a Marxist theory of ideologies—the bases for the studies of scientific knowledge, literature, religion, ethics, and so forth—are closely bound up with problems of the philosophy of language.

Any ideological product is not only itself a

part of a reality (natural or social), just as is any physical body, any instrument of production, or any product for consumption, it also, in contradistinction to these other phenomena, reflects and refracts another reality outside itself. Everything ideological possesses meaning: it represents, depicts, or stands for something lying outside itself. In other words, it is a sign. Without signs, there is no ideology. A physical body equals itself, so to speak; it does not signify anything but wholly coincides with its particular given nature. In this case there is no question of ideology.

However, any physical body may be perceived as an image; for instance, the image of natural inertia and necessity embodied in that particular thing. Any such artistic-symbolic image to which a particular physical object gives rise is already an ideological product. The physical object is converted into a sign. Without ceasing to be a part of material reality, such an object, to some degree, reflects and refracts another reality.

The same is true of any instrument of production. A tool by itself is devoid of any special meaning; it commands only some designated function—to serve this or that purpose in production. The tool serves that purpose as the par-

Translated by Ladislav Matejka and I. R. Titunik.

ticular, given thing that it is, without reflecting or standing for anything else. However, a tool also may be converted into an ideological sign. Such, for instance, is the hammer and sickle insignia of the Soviet Union. In this case, hammer and sickle possess a purely ideological meaning. Additionally, any instrument of production may be ideologically decorated. Tools used by prehistoric man are covered with pictures or designs—that is, with signs. So treated, a tool still does not, of course, itself become a sign.

It is further possible to enhance a tool artistically, and in such a way that its artistic shapeliness harmonizes with the purpose it is meant to serve in production. In this case, something like maximal approximation, almost a coalescence, of sign and tool comes about. But even here we still detect a distinct conceptual dividing line: the tool, as such, does not become a sign; the sign, as such, does not become an instrument of production.

Any consumer good can likewise be made an ideological sign. For instance, bread and wine become religious symbols in the Christian sacrament of communion. But the consumer good, as such, is not at all a sign. Consumer goods, just as tools, may be combined with ideological signs, but the distinct conceptual dividing line between them is not erased by the combination. Bread is made in some particular shape; this shape is not warranted solely by the bread's function as a consumer good; it also has a certain, if primitive, value as an ideological sign (e.g., bread in the shape of a figure eight [*krendel*] or a rosette).

Thus, side by side with the natural phenomena, with the equipment of technology, and with articles for consumption, there exists a special world—the *world of signs*.

Signs also are particular, material things; and, as we have seen, any item of nature, technology, or consumption can become a sign, acquiring in the process a meaning that goes beyond its given particularity. A sign does not simply exist as a part of a reality—it reflects and refracts another reality. Therefore, it may distort that reality or be true to it, or may perceive it from a special point of view, and so forth. Every sign is subject to the criteria of ideological evaluation (i.e., whether it is true, false, correct, fair, good, etc.). The domain of ideology coincides with the domain of signs. They equate with one another. Wherever a

sign is present, ideology is present, too. *Everything ideological possesses semiotic value.*

Within the domain of signs—i.e., within the ideological sphere—profound differences exist: it is, after all, the domain of the artistic image, the religious symbol, the scientific formula, and the judicial ruling, etc. Each field of ideological creativity has its own kind of orientation toward reality and each refracts reality in its own way. Each field commands its own special function within the unity of social life. *But it is their semiotic character that places all ideological phenomena under the same general definition.*

Every ideological sign is not only a reflection, a shadow, of reality, but is also itself a material segment of that very reality. Every phenomenon functioning as an ideological sign has some kind of material embodiment, whether in sound, physical mass, color, movements of the body, or the like. In this sense, the reality of the sign is fully objective and lends itself to a unitary, monistic, objective method of study. A sign is a phenomenon of the external world. Both the sign itself and all the effects it produces (all those actions, reactions, and new signs it elicits in the surrounding social milieu) occur in outer experience.

This is a point of extreme importance. Yet, elementary and self-evident as it may seem, the study of ideologies has still not drawn all the conclusions that follow from it.

The idealistic philosophy of culture and psychologistic cultural studies locate ideology in the consciousness.¹ Ideology, they assert, is a fact of consciousness; the external body of the sign is merely a coating, merely a technical means for the realization of the inner effect, which is understanding.

Idealism and psychologism alike overlook the fact that understanding itself can come about

deride could not say this
¹It should be noted that a change of outlook in this regard can be detected in modern neo-Kantianism. We have in mind the latest book by Ernst Cassirer, *Philosophie der symbolischen Formen*, Vol. 1, 1923. While remaining on the grounds of consciousness, Cassirer considers its dominant trait to be representation. Each element of consciousness represents something, bears a symbolic function. The whole exists in its parts, but a part is comprehensible only in the whole. According to Cassirer, an idea is just as sensory as matter; the sensoriness involved, however, is that of the symbolic sign, it is representative sensoriness. [Au.]

only within some kind of semiotic material (e.g., inner speech), that sign bears upon sign, that *consciousness itself can arise and become a viable fact only in the material embodiment of signs*. The understanding of a sign is, after all, an act of reference between the sign apprehended and other, already known signs; in other words, understanding is a response to a sign with signs. And this chain of ideological creativity and understanding, moving from sign to sign and then to a new sign, is perfectly consistent and continuous: from one link of a semiotic nature (hence, also of a material nature) we proceed uninterruptedly to another link of exactly the same nature. And nowhere is there a break in the chain, nowhere does the chain plunge into inner being, nonmaterial in nature and unembodied in signs.

This ideological chain stretches from individual consciousness to individual consciousness, connecting them together. Signs emerge, after all, only in the process of interaction between one individual consciousness and another. And the individual consciousness itself is filled with signs. Consciousness becomes consciousness only once it has been filled with ideological (semiotic) content, consequently, only in the process of social interaction.

Despite the deep methodological differences between them, the idealistic philosophy of culture and psychologistic cultural studies both commit the same fundamental error. By localizing ideology in the consciousness, they transform the study of ideologies into a study of consciousness and its laws; it makes no difference whether this is done in transcendental or in empirical-psychological terms. This error is responsible not only for methodological confusion regarding the interrelation of disparate fields of knowledge, but for a radical distortion of the very reality under study as well. Ideological creativity—a material and social fact—is forced into the framework of the individual consciousness. The individual consciousness, for its part, is deprived of any support in reality. It becomes either all or nothing.

For idealism it has become all: its locus is somewhere above existence and it determines the latter. In actual fact, however, this sovereign of the universe is merely the hypostatization in idealism of an abstract bond among the most general forms and categories of ideological creativity.

For psychological positivism, on the contrary, consciousness amounts to nothing: It is just a conglomeration of fortuitous, psychophysiological reactions which, by some miracle, results in meaningful and unified ideological creativity.

The objective social regulatedness of ideological creativity, once misconstrued as a conformity with laws of the individual consciousness, must inevitably forfeit its real place in existence and depart either up into the superexistential empyrean of transcendentalism or down into the presocial recesses of the psychophysical, biological organism.

However, the ideological, as such, cannot possibly be explained in terms of either of these superhuman or subhuman, animalian, roots. Its real place in existence is in the special, social material of signs created by man. Its specificity consists precisely in its being located between organized individuals, in its being the medium of their communication.

Signs can arise only on *interindividual territory*. It is territory that cannot be called "natural" in the direct sense of the word:² signs do not arise between any two members of the species *Homo sapiens*. It is essential that the two individuals be *organized socially*, that they compose a group (a social unit); only then can the medium of signs take shape between them. The individual consciousness not only cannot be used to explain anything, but, on the contrary, is itself in need of explanation from the vantage point of the social, ideological medium.

The individual consciousness is a social-ideological fact. Not until this point is recognized with due provision for all the consequences that follow from it will it be possible to construct either an objective psychology or an objective study of ideologies.

It is precisely the problem of consciousness that has created the major difficulties and generated the formidable confusion encountered in all issues associated with psychology and the study of ideologies alike. By and large, consciousness has become the *asylum ignorantiae* for all philosophical constructs. It has been made the place

²Society, of course, is also a *part of nature*, but a part that is qualitatively separate and distinct and possesses its own specific systems of laws. [Au.]

where all unresolved problems, all objectively irreducible residues are stored away. Instead of trying to find an objective definition of consciousness, thinkers have begun using it as a means for rendering all hard and fast objective definitions subjective and fluid.

The only possible objective definition of consciousness is a sociological one. Consciousness cannot be derived directly from nature, as has been and still is being attempted by naive mechanistic materialism and contemporary objective psychology (of the biological, behavioristic, and reflexological varieties). Ideology cannot be derived from consciousness, as is the practice of idealism and psychologistic positivism. Consciousness takes shape and being in the material of signs created by an organized group in the process of its social intercourse. The individual consciousness is nurtured on signs; it derives its growth from them; it reflects their logic and laws. The logic of consciousness is the logic of ideological communication, of the semiotic interaction of a social group. If we deprive consciousness of its semiotic, ideological content, it would have absolutely nothing left. Consciousness can harbor only in the image, the word, the meaningful gesture, and so forth. Outside such material, there remains the sheer physiological act unilluminated by consciousness, i.e., without having light shed on it, without having meaning given to it, by signs.

All that has been said above leads to the following methodological conclusion: *the study of ideologies does not depend on psychology to any extent and need not be grounded in it*. As we shall see in greater detail in a later chapter, it is rather the reverse: *objective psychology must be grounded in the study of ideologies*. The reality of ideological phenomena is the objective reality of social signs. The laws of this reality are the laws of semiotic communication and are directly determined by the total aggregate of social and economic laws. Ideological reality is the immediate superstructure over the economic basis. Individual consciousness is not the architect of the ideological superstructure, but only a tenant lodging in the social edifice of ideological signs.

With our preliminary argument, disengaging ideological phenomena and their regulatedness from individual consciousness, we tie them in all

the more firmly with conditions and forms of social communication. The reality of the sign is wholly a matter determined by that communication. After all, the existence of the sign is nothing but the materialization of that communication. Such is the nature of all ideological signs.

But nowhere does this semiotic quality and the continuous, comprehensive role of social communication as conditioning factor appear so clearly and fully expressed as in language. *The word is the ideological phenomenon par excellence.*

The entire reality of the word is wholly absorbed in its function of being a sign. A word contains nothing that is indifferent to this function, nothing that would not have been engendered by it. A word is the purest and most sensitive medium of social intercourse.

This indicatory, representative power of the word as an ideological phenomenon and the exceptional distinctiveness of its semiotic structure would already furnish reason enough for advancing the word to a prime position in the study of ideologies. It is precisely in the material of the word that the basic, general-ideological forms of semiotic communication could best be revealed.

But that is by no means all. The word is not only the purest, most indicatory sign but is, in addition, *a neutral sign*. Every other kind of semiotic material is specialized for some particular field of ideological creativity. Each field possesses its own ideological material and formulates signs and symbols specific to itself and not applicable in other fields. In these instances, a sign is created by some specific ideological function and remains inseparable from it. A word, in contrast, is neutral with respect to any specific ideological function. It can carry out ideological functions of any kind—scientific, aesthetic, ethical, religious.

Moreover, there is that immense area of ideological communication that cannot be pinned down to any one ideological sphere: the area of *communication in human life, human behavior*. This kind of communication is extraordinarily rich and important. On one side, it links up directly with the processes of production; on the other, it is tangent to the spheres of the various specialized and fully fledged ideologies. In the

following chapter, we shall speak in greater detail of this special area of behavioral, or life ideology. For the time being, we shall take note of the fact that the material of behavioral communication is preeminently the word. The locale of so-called conversational language and its forms is precisely here, in the area of behavioral ideology.

One other property belongs to the word that is of the highest order of importance and is what makes the word the primary medium of the individual consciousness. Although the reality of the word, as is true of any sign, resides between individuals, a word, at the same time, is produced by the individual organism's own means without recourse to any equipment or any other kind of extracorporeal material. This has determined the role of word as *the semiotic material of inner life—of consciousness* (inner speech). Indeed, the consciousness could have developed only by having at its disposal material that was pliable and expressible by bodily means. And the word was exactly that kind of material. The word is available as the sign for, so to speak, inner employment: it can function as a sign in a state short of outward expression. For this reason, the problem of individual consciousness as the *inner word* (as an *inner sign* in general) becomes one of the most vital problems in philosophy of language.

It is clear, from the very start, that this problem cannot be properly approached by resorting to the usual concept of word and language as worked out in nonsociological linguistics and philosophy of language. What is needed is profound and acute analysis of the word as social sign before its function as the medium of consciousness can be understood.

It is owing to this exclusive role of the word as the medium of consciousness that *the word functions as an essential ingredient accompanying all ideological creativity whatsoever*. The word accompanies and comments on each and every ideological act. The processes of understanding any ideological phenomenon at all (be it a picture, a piece of music, a ritual, or an act of human conduct) cannot operate without the participation of inner speech. All manifestations of ideological creativity—all other nonverbal signs—are bathed by, suspended in, and cannot be entirely

segregated or divorced from the element of speech.

This does not mean, of course, that the word may supplant any other ideological sign. None of the fundamental, specific ideological signs is replaceable wholly by words. It is ultimately impossible to convey a musical composition or pictorial image adequately in words. Words cannot wholly substitute for a religious ritual; nor is there any really adequate verbal substitute for even the simplest gesture in human behavior. To deny this would lead to the most banal rationalism and simplification. Nonetheless, at the very same time, every single one of these ideological signs, though not supplantable by words, has support in and is accompanied by words, just as is the case with singing and its musical accompaniment.

No cultural sign, once taken in and given meaning, remains in isolation: it becomes part of the *unity of the verbally constituted consciousness*. It is in the capacity of the consciousness to find verbal access to it. Thus, as it were, spreading ripples of verbal responses and resonances form around each and every ideological sign. Every *ideological refraction of existence in process of generation*, no matter what the nature of its significant material, is accompanied by ideological refraction in word as an obligatory concomitant phenomenon. Word is present in each and every act of understanding and in each and every act of interpretation.

All of the properties of word we have examined—its *semiotic purity*, its *ideological neutrality*, its *involvement in behavioral communication*, its *ability to become an inner word* and, finally, its *obligatory presence*, as an accompanying phenomenon, in any conscious act—all these properties make the word the fundamental object of the study of ideologies. The laws of the ideological refraction of existence in signs and in consciousness, its forms and mechanics, must be studied in the material of the word, first of all. The only possible way of bringing the Marxist sociological method to bear on all the profundities and subtleties of "immanent" ideological structures is to operate from the basis of the philosophy of language as the *philosophy of the ideological sign*. And that basis must be devised and elaborated by Marxism itself.

From Part II

CHAPTER 3 VERBAL INTERACTION

Utterance, as we know, is constructed between two socially organized persons, and in the absence of a real addressee, an addressee is presupposed in the person, so to speak, of a normal representative of the social group to which the speaker belongs. The *word is oriented toward an addressee*, toward *who* that addressee might be: a fellow-member or not of the same social group, of higher or lower standing (the addressee's hierarchical status), someone connected with the speaker by close social ties (father, brother, husband, and so on) or not. There can be no such thing as an abstract addressee, a man unto himself, so to speak. With such a person, we would indeed have no language in common, literally and figuratively. Even though we sometimes have pretensions to experiencing and saying things *urbi et orbi*, actually, of course, we envision this "world at large" through the prism of the concrete social milieu surrounding us. In the majority of cases, we presuppose a certain typical and stabilized *social purview* toward which the ideological creativity of our own social group and time is oriented, i.e., we assume as our addressee a contemporary of our literature, our science, our moral and legal codes.

Each person's inner world and thought has its *stabilized social audience* that comprises the environment in which reasons, motives, values, and so on are fashioned. The more cultured a person, the more closely his inner audience will approximate the normal audience of ideological creativity; but, in any case, specific class and specific era are limits that the ideal of addressee cannot go beyond.

Orientation of the word toward the addressee has an extremely high significance. In point of fact, *word is a two-sided act*. It is determined equally by *whose* word it is and *for whom* it is meant. As word, it is precisely the *product of the reciprocal relationship between speaker and listener, addresser and addressee*. Each and every word expresses the "one" in relation to the "other." I give myself verbal shape from an-

other's point of view, ultimately, from the point of view of the community to which I belong. A word is a bridge thrown between myself and another. If one end of the bridge depends on me, then the other depends on my addressee. A word is territory shared by both addresser and addressee, by the speaker and his interlocutor.

But what does being the speaker mean? Even if a word is not entirely his, constituting, as it were, the border zone between himself and his addressee—still, it does in part belong to him.

There is one instance of the situation wherein the speaker is the undoubted possessor of the word and to which, in this instance, he has full rights. This instance is the physiological act of implementing the word. But insofar as the act is taken in purely physiological terms, the category of possession does not apply.

If, instead of the physiological act of implementing sound, we take implementation of word as sign, then the question of proprietorship becomes extremely complicated. Aside from the fact that word as sign is a borrowing on the speaker's part from the social stock of available signs, the very individual manipulation of this social sign in a concrete utterance is wholly determined by social relations. The stylistic individualization of an utterance that the Vosslerites speak about represents a reflection of social interrelationships that constitute the atmosphere in which an utterance is formed. *The immediate social situation and the broader social milieu wholly determine—and determine from within, so to speak—the structure of an utterance.*

Indeed, take whatever kind of utterance we will, even the kind of utterance that is not a referential message (communication in the narrow sense) but the verbal expression of some need—for instance, hunger—we may be certain that it is socially oriented in its entirety. Above all, it is determined immediately and directly by the participants of the speech event, both explicit and implicit participants, in connection with a specific situation. That situation shapes the utterance, dictating that it sound one way and not another—like a demand or request, insistence on one's rights or a plea for mercy, in a style flowery or plain, in a confident or hesitant manner, and so on.

The immediate social situation and its immediate social participants determine the "occasional" form and style of an utterance. The deeper layers of its structure are determined by more sustained and more basic social connections with which the speaker is in contact.

Even if we were to take an utterance still in process of generation "in the soul," it would not change the essence of the matter, since the structure of experience is just as social as is the structure of its outward objectification. The degree to which an experience is perceptible, distinct, and formulated is directly proportional to the degree to which it is socially oriented.

In fact, not even the simplest, dimmest apprehension of a feeling—say, the feeling of hunger not outwardly expressed—can dispense with some kind of ideological form. Any apprehension, after all, must have inner speech, inner intonation and the rudiments of inner style: one can apprehend one's hunger apologetically, irritably, angrily, indignantly, etc. We have indicated, of course, only the grosser, more egregious directions that inner intonation may take; actually, there is an extremely subtle and complex set of possibilities for intoning an experience. Outward expression in most cases only continues and makes more distinct the direction already taken by inner speech and the intonation already embedded in it.

Which way the intoning of the inner sensation of hunger will go depends upon the hungry person's general social standing as well as upon the immediate circumstances of the experience. These are, after all, the circumstances that determine in what evaluative context, within what social purview, the experience of hunger will be apprehended. The immediate social context will determine possible addresses, friends or foes, toward whom the consciousness and the experience of hunger will be oriented: whether it will involve dissatisfaction with cruel Nature, with oneself, with society, with a specific group within society, with a specific person, and so on. Of course, various degrees of perceptibility, distinctiveness, and differentiation in the social orientation of an experience are possible; but without some kind of evaluative social orientation there is no experience. Even the cry of a nursing

infant is "oriented" toward its mother. There is the possibility that the experience of hunger may take on political coloring, in which case its structure will be determined along the lines of a potential political appeal or a reason for political agitation. It may be apprehended as a form of protest, and so on.

With regard to the potential (and sometimes even distinctly sensed) addressee, a distinction can be made between two poles, two extremes between which an experience can be apprehended and ideologically structured, tending now toward the one, now toward the other. Let us label these two extremes the "*I-experience*" and the "*we-experience*."

The "*I-experience*" actually tends toward extermination: the nearer it approaches its extreme limit, the more it loses its ideological structuredness and, hence, its apprehensible quality, reverting to the physiological reaction of the animal. In its course toward this extreme, the experience relinquishes all its potentialities, all outcroppings of social orientation, and, therefore, also loses its verbal delineation. Single experiences or whole groups of experiences can approach this extreme, relinquishing, in doing so, their ideological clarity and structuredness and testifying to the inability of the consciousness to strike social roots.³

The "*we-experience*" is not by any means a nebulous herd experience; it is differentiated. Moreover, ideological differentiation, the growth of consciousness, is in direct proportion to the firmness and reliability of the social orientation. The stronger, the more organized, the more differentiated the collective in which an individual orients himself, the more vivid and complex his inner world will be.

The "*we-experience*" allows of different degrees and different types of ideological structuring.

Let us suppose a case where hunger is apprehended by one of a disparate set of hungry persons whose hunger is a matter of chance (the man down on his luck, the beggar, or the like). The

³On the possibility of a set of human sexual experiences falling out of social context with concomitant loss of social cognizance, see our book, *Freudism* [Freudianism] (1927), pp. 135–36. [Au.]

experience of such a declassé loner will be colored in some specific way and will gravitate toward certain particular ideological forms with a range potentially quite broad: humility, shame, enviousness, and other evaluative tones will color his experience. The ideological forms along the lines of which the experience would develop would be either the individualistic protest of a vagabond or repentant, mystical resignation.

Let us now suppose a case in which the hungry person belongs to a collective where hunger is not haphazard and does bear a collective character—but the collective of these hungry people is not itself tightly bound together by material ties, each of its members experiencing hunger on his own. This is the situation most peasants are in. Hunger is experienced “at large,” but under conditions of material disparateness, in the absence of a unifying economic coalition, each person suffers hunger in the small, enclosed world of his own individual economy. Such a collective lacks the unitary material frame necessary for united action. A resigned but unashamed and undemeaning apprehension of one’s hunger will be the rule under such conditions—“everyone bears it, you must bear it, too.” Here grounds are furnished for the development of the philosophical and religious systems of the nonresistor or fatalistic type (early Christianity, Tolstoyanism).

A completely different experience of hunger applies to a member of an objectively and materially aligned and united collective (a regiment of soldiers; workers in their association within the walls of a factory; hired hands on a large-scale, capitalist farm; finally, a whole class once it has matured to the point of “class unto itself”). The experience of hunger this time will be marked predominantly by overtones of active and self-confident protest with no basis for humble and submissive intonation. These are the most favorable grounds for an experience to achieve ideological clarity and structuredness.⁴

⁴Interesting material about expressions of hunger can be found in Leo Spitzer’s books, *Italianische Kriegsgefangenenbriefe* [Italian Prisoner-of-War Letters—not translated into English.—Ed.], and *Die Umschreibungen des Begriffes Hunger* [Expressions of the Idea of Hunger—not translated into English.—Ed.]. The basic concern in these studies is the capability of word and image to the conditions of an excep-

All these types of expression, each with its basic intonations, come rife with corresponding terms and corresponding forms of possible utterances. The social situation in all cases determines which term, which metaphor, and which form may develop in an utterance expressing hunger out of the particular intonational bearings of the experience.

A special kind of character marks the individualistic *self-experience*. It does not belong to the “I-experience” in the strict sense of the term as defined above. The individualistic experience is fully differentiated and structured. Individualism is a special ideological form of the “we-experience” of the bourgeois class (there is also an analogous type of individualistic self-experience for the feudal aristocratic class). The individualistic type of experience derives from a steadfast and confident social orientation. Individualistic confidence in oneself, one’s sense of personal value, is drawn not from within, not from the depths of one’s personality, but from the outside world. It is the ideological interpretation of one’s social recognizance and tenability by rights, and of the objective security and tenability provided by the whole social order, of one’s individual livelihood. The structure of the conscious, individual personality is just as social a structure as is the collective type of experience. It is a particular kind of interpretation, projected into the individual soul, of a complex and sustained socioeconomic situation. But there resides in this type of individualistic “we-experience,” and also in the very order to which it corresponds, an inner contradiction that sooner or later will demolish its ideological structuredness.

An analogous structure is presented in solitary self-experience (“the ability and strength to stand alone in one’s rectitude”), a type cultivated by Romain Rolland and, to some extent, by Tolstoj.⁵ The pride involved in this solitude also depends upon “we.” It is a variant of the “we-experience” characteristic of the modern-day West European

tional situation. The author does not, however, operate with a genuine sociological approach. [Au.]

⁵Romain Rolland (1866–1944), French novelist, winner of the Nobel Prize for literature in 1917. “Tolstoj” is Lev Tolstoy (1828–1910), the Russian novelist. [Ed.]

intelligentsia. Tolstoj's remarks about there being different kinds of thinking—"for oneself" and "for the public"—merely juxtapose two different conceptions of "public." Tolstoj's "for oneself" actually signifies only another social conception of addressee peculiar to himself. There is no such thing as thinking outside orientation toward possible expression and, hence, outside the social orientation of that expression and of the thinking involved.

Thus the personality of the speaker, taken from within, so to speak, turns out to be wholly a product of social interrelations. Not only its outward expression but also its inner experience are social territory. Consequently, the whole route between inner experience (the "expressible") and its outward objectification (the "utterance") lies entirely across social territory. When an experience reaches the stage of actualization in a full-fledged utterance, its social orientation acquires added complexity by focusing on the immediate social circumstances of discourse and, above all, upon actual addressees.

Our analysis casts a new light upon the problem of consciousness and ideology that we examined earlier.

Outside objectification, outside embodiment in some particular material (the material of gesture, inner word, outcry), *consciousness is a fiction*. It is an improper ideological construct created by way of abstraction from the concrete facts of social expression. But consciousness as organized, material expression (in the ideological material of word, a sign, drawing, colors, musical sound, etc.)—consciousness, so conceived, is an objective fact and a tremendous social force. To be sure, this kind of consciousness is not a supraexistential phenomenon and cannot determine the constitution of existence. It itself is part of existence and one of its forces, and for that reason it possesses efficacy and plays a role in the arena of existence. Consciousness, while still inside a conscious person's head as innerword embryo of expression, is as yet too tiny a piece of existence, and the scope of its activity is also as yet too small. But once it passes through all the stages of social objectification and enters into the power system of science, art, ethics, or law, it becomes a real force, capable even of exerting in turn an

influence on the economic bases of social life. To be sure, this force of consciousness is incarnated in specific social organizations, geared into steadfast ideological modes of expression (science, art, and so on), but even in the original, vague form of glimmering thought and experience, it had already constituted a social event on a small scale and was not an inner act on the part of the individual.

From the very start experience is set toward fully actualized outward expression and, from the very start, tends in that direction. The expression of an experience may be realized or it may be held back, inhibited. In the latter case, the experience is inhibited expression (we shall not go into the extremely complex problem of the causes and conditions of inhibition). Realized expression, in its turn, exerts a powerful, reverse influence on experience: it begins to tie inner life together, giving it more definite and lasting expression.

This reverse influence by structured and stabilized expression on experience (i.e., inner expression) has tremendous importance and must always be taken into account. The claim can be made that it is a matter *not so much of expression accommodating itself to our inner world but rather of our inner world accommodating itself to the potentialities of our expression, its possible routes and directions*.

To distinguish it from the established systems of ideology—the systems of art, ethics, law, etc.—we shall use the term *behavioral ideology* for the whole aggregate of life experiences and the outward expressions directly connected with it. Behavioral ideology is that atmosphere of unsystematized and unfixed inner and outer speech which endows our every instance of behavior and action and our every "conscious" state with meaning. Considering the sociological nature of the structure of expression and experience, we may say that behavioral ideology in our conception corresponds basically to what is termed "social psychology" in Marxist literature. In the present context, we should prefer to avoid the word "psychology," since we are concerned exclusively with the content of the psyche and the consciousness. That content is ideological through and through, determined not by individual, organismic (biological or physiological) factors,

but by factors of a purely sociological character. The individual, organismic factor is completely irrelevant to an understanding of the basic creative and living lineaments of the content of consciousness.

The established ideological systems of social ethics, science, art, and religion are crystallizations of behavioral ideology, and these crystallizations, in turn, exert a powerful influence back upon behavioral ideology, normally setting its tone. At the same time, however, these already formalized ideological products constantly maintain the most vital organic contact with behavioral ideology and draw sustenance from it; otherwise, without that contact, they would be dead, just as any literary work or cognitive idea is dead without living, evaluative perception of it. Now, this ideological perception, for which alone any ideological piece of work can and does exist, is carried out in the language of behavioral ideology. Behavioral ideology draws the work into some particular social situation. The work combines with the whole content of the consciousness of those who perceive it and derives its apperceptive values only in the context of that consciousness. It is interpreted in the spirit of the particular content of consciousness (the consciousness of the perceiver) and is illuminated by it anew. This is what constitutes the vitality of an ideological production. In each period of its historical existence, a work must enter into close association with the changing behavioral ideology, become permeated with it, and draw new sustenance from it. Only to the degree that a work can enter into that kind of integral, organic association with the behavioral ideology of a given period is it viable for that period (and of course, for a given social group). Outside its connection with behavioral ideology it ceases to exist, since it ceases to be experienced as something ideologically meaningful.

We must distinguish several different strata in behavioral ideology. These strata are defined by the social scale on which experience and expression are measured, or by the social forces with respect to which they must directly orient themselves.

The purview in which an experience or expression comes into being may, as we know, vary

in scope. The world of an experience may be narrow and dim; its social orientation may be haphazard and ephemeral and characteristic only for some adventitious and loose coalition of a small number of persons. Of course, even these erratic experiences are ideological and sociological, but their position lies on the borders of the normal and the pathological. Such an experience will remain an isolated fact in the psychological life of the person exposed to it. It will not take firm root and will not receive differentiated and full-fledged expression; indeed, if it lacks a socially grounded and stable audience, where could it possibly find bases for its differentiation and finalization? Even less likely would such an adventitious experience be set down, in writing or even more so in print. Experiences of that kind, experiences born of a momentary and accidental state of affairs, have, of course, no chance of further social impact of efficacy.

The lowest, most fluid, and quickly changing stratum of behavioral ideology consists of experiences of that kind. To this stratum, consequently, belong all those vague and undeveloped experiences, thoughts, and idle, accidental words that flash across our minds. They are all of them cases of miscarriages of social orientations, novels without heroes, performances without audiences. They lack any sort of logic or unity. The sociological regulatedness in these ideological scraps is extremely difficult to detect. In this lowest stratum of behavioral ideology only statistical regularity is detectable; given a huge quantity of products of this sort, the outlines of socioeconomic regulatedness could be revealed. Needless to say, it would be a practical impossibility to discern in any one such accidental experience or expression its socioeconomic premises.

The upper strata of behavioral ideology, the ones directly linked with ideological systems, are more vital, more serious, and bear a creative character. Compared to an established ideology, they are a great deal more mobile and sensitive; they convey changes in the socioeconomic basis more quickly and more vividly. Here, precisely, is where those creative energies build up through whose agency partial or radical restructuring of ideological systems comes about. Newly emerging social forces find ideological expression and

take shape first in these upper strata of behavioral ideology before they can succeed in dominating the arena of some organized, official ideology. Of course, in the process of this struggle, in the process of their gradual infiltration into ideological organizations (the press, literature, and science), these new currents in behavioral ideology, no matter how revolutionary they may be, undergo the influence of the established ideological systems and, to some extent, incorporate forms, ideological practices, and approaches already in stock.

What usually is called "creative individuality" is nothing but the expression of a particular person's basic, firmly grounded, and consistent line of social orientation. This concerns primarily the uppermost, fully structured strata of inner speech (behavioral ideology), each of whose terms and intonations have gone through the stage of expression and have, so to speak, passed the test of expression. Thus what is involved here are words, intonations, and inner-word gestures that have undergone the experience of outward expression on a more or less ample social scale and have acquired, as it were, a high social polish and lustre by the effect of reactions and responses, resistance or support, on the part of the social audience.

In the lower strata of behavioral ideology, the biological-biographical factor does, of course, play a crucial role, but its importance constantly diminishes as the utterance penetrates more deeply into an ideological system. Consequently, while bio-biographical explanations are of some value in the lower strata of experience and expression (utterance), their role in the upper strata is extremely modest. Here the objective sociological method takes full command.

So, then, the theory of expression underlying individualistic subjectivism must be rejected. *The organizing center of any utterance, of any experience, is not within but outside—in the social milieu surrounding the individual being.* Only the inarticulate cry of an animal is really organized from inside the physiological apparatus of an individual creature. Such a cry lacks any positive ideological factor vis-à-vis the physiological reaction. Yet, even the most primitive human utterance produced by the individual organism is,

from the point of view of its content, import, and meaning, organized outside the organism, in the extraorganismic conditions of the social milieu. Utterance as such is wholly a product of social interaction, both of the immediate sort as determined by the circumstances of the discourse, and of the more general kind, as determined by the whole aggregate of conditions under which any given community of speakers operates.

The individual utterance (*parole*), despite the contentions of abstract objectivism, is by no means an individual fact not susceptible to sociological analysis by virtue of its individuality. Indeed, if this were so, neither the sum total of these individual acts nor any abstract features common to all such individual acts (the "normatively identical forms") could possibly engender a social product.

Individualistic subjectivism is *correct* in that individual utterances *are* what constitute the actual, concrete reality of language, and in that they *do have* creative value in language.

But individualistic subjectivism is *wrong* in ignoring and failing to understand the social nature of the utterance and in attempting to derive the utterance from the speaker's inner world as an expression of that inner world. The structure of the utterance and of the very experience being expressed is a *social structure*. The stylistic shaping of an utterance is shaping of a social kind, and the very verbal stream of utterances, which is what the reality of language actually amounts to, is a social stream. Each drop of that stream is social and the entire dynamics of its generation are social.

Individualistic subjectivism is also completely *correct* in that linguistic form and its ideological impletion are *not* severable. Each and every word is ideological and each and every application of language involves ideological change. But individualistic subjectivism is *wrong* insofar as it also derives this ideological impletion of the word from the conditions of the individual psyche.

Individualistic subjectivism is *wrong* in taking the monologic utterance, just as abstract objectivism does, as its basic point of departure. Certain Vosslerites, it is true, have begun to consider the problem of dialogue and so to approach a

more correct understanding of verbal interaction.⁶ Highly symptomatic in this regard is one of Leo Spitzer's books we have already cited—his *Italienische Umgangssprache*, [*Italian Conversational Language*] a book that attempts to analyze the forms of Italian conversational language in close connection with the conditions of discourse and above all with the issue of the addressee.⁷ However, Leo Spitzer utilizes a *descriptive psychological* method. He does not draw from his analysis the fundamentally sociological conclusions it suggests. For the Vosslerites, therefore, the monologic utterance still remains the basic reality.

The problem of verbal interaction has been posed clearly and distinctly by Otto Dietrich.⁸ He proceeds by way of subjecting to criticism the theory of utterance as expression. For him, the basic function of language is not expression but *communication* (in the strict sense), and this leads him to consider the role of the addressee. The minimal condition for a linguistic manifestation is, according to Dietrich, *twofold* (speaker and listener). However, Dietrich shares assumptions of a general psychological type with individualistic subjectivism. Dietrich's investigations likewise lack any determinate sociological basis.

Now we are in a position to answer the question we posed at the end of the first chapter of this section of our study. *The actual reality of language-speech is not the abstract system of linguistic forms, not the isolated monologic utterance, and not the psychophysiological act of its*

implementation, but the social event of verbal interaction implemented in an utterance or utterances.

Thus, verbal interaction is the basic reality of language.

Dialogue, in the narrow sense of the word, is, of course, only one of the forms—a very important form, to be sure—of verbal interaction. But dialogue can also be understood in a broader sense, meaning not only direct, face-to-face, vocalized verbal communication between persons, but also verbal communication of any type whatsoever. A book, i.e., a *verbal performance in print*, is also an element of verbal communication. It is something discussable in actual, real-life dialogue, but aside from that, it is calculated for active perception, involving attentive reading and inner responsiveness, and for organized, *printed* reaction in the various forms devised by the particular sphere of verbal communication in question (book reviews, critical surveys, defining influence on subsequent works, and so on). Moreover, a verbal performance of this kind also inevitably orients itself with respect to previous performances in the same sphere, both those by the same author and those by other authors. It inevitably takes its point of departure from some particular state of affairs involving a scientific problem or a literary style. Thus the printed verbal performance engages, as it were, in ideological colloquy of large scale: it responds to something, objects to something, affirms something, anticipates possible responses and objections, seeks support, and so on.

Any utterance, no matter how weighty and complete in and of itself, is only a moment in the continuous process of verbal communication. But that continuous verbal communication is, in turn, itself only a moment in the continuous, all-inclusive, generative process of a given social collective. An important problem arises in this regard: the study of the connection between concrete verbal interaction and the extraverbal situation—both the immediate situation and, through it, the broader situation. The forms this connection takes are different, and different factors in a situation may, in association with this or that form, take on different meanings (for instance, these connections differ with the different factors

⁶See "The Problem of Speech Genres," note 2 on p. 1228. [Ed.]

⁷In this respect, the very organization of the book is symptomatic. The book divides into four main chapters. Their titles are as follows: I. *Eröffnungsformen des Gesprächs*. II. *Sprecher und Hörer; A. Höflichkeit (Rücksicht auf den Partner)*. B. *Sparsamkeit und Verschwendung im Ausdruck*; C. *In einandergreifen von Rede und Gegenrede*. III. *Sprecher und Situation*. IV. *Der Abschluss des Gesprächs*. [I. *Conversational Openings*. II. *Speaker and Listener; A. Courtesy (Consideration of the Partner)*. B. *Economy and Extravagance in Expression*. C. *The Intertwining of Statement and Response*. III. *Speaker and Situation*. IV. *The Conclusion of Conversation*.—Ed.] Spitzer's predecessor in the study of conversational language under conditions of real-life discourse was Hermann Wunderlich. See his book, *Unsere Umgangssprache* (1894). [Au.]

⁸See *Die Probleme der Sprachpsychologie* (1914). [Au.]

of situation in literary or in scientific communication). *Verbal communication can never be understood and explained outside of this connection with a concrete situation.* Verbal intercourse is inextricably interwoven with communication of other types, all stemming from the common ground of production communication. It goes without saying that word cannot be divorced from this eternally generative, unified process of communication. In its concrete connection with a situation, verbal communication is always accompanied by social acts of a nonverbal character (the performance of labor, the symbolic acts of a ritual, a ceremony, etc.), and is often only an accessory to these acts, merely carrying out an auxiliary role. *Language acquires life and historically evolves precisely here, in concrete verbal communication, and not in the abstract linguistic system of language forms, nor in the individual psyche of speakers.*

From what has been established, it follows that the methodologically based order of study of language ought to be: (1) the forms and types of verbal interaction in connection with their concrete conditions; (2) forms of particular utterances, of particular speech performances, as elements of a closely linked interaction—i.e., the genres of speech performance in human behavior and ideological creativity as determined by verbal interaction; (3) a reexamination, on this new basis, of language forms in their usual linguistic presentation.

This is the order that the actual generative process of language follows: *social intercourse is generated (stemming from the basis); in it verbal communication and interaction are generated; and in the latter, forms of speech performances are generated; finally, this generative process is reflected in the change of language forms.*

One thing that emerges from all that has been said is the extreme importance of the problem of the forms of an utterance *as a whole*. We have already pointed out that contemporary linguistics lacks any approach to the utterance itself. Its analysis goes no further than the elements that constitute an utterance. Meanwhile, utterances are the real units that make up the stream of language-speech. What is necessary in order to study the forms of this real unit is precisely that it

not be isolated from the historical stream of utterances. As a whole entity, the utterance is implemented only in the stream of verbal intercourse. The whole is, after all, defined by its boundaries, and these boundaries run along the line of contact between a given utterance and the extraverbal and verbal (i.e., made up of other utterances) milieu.

The first and last words, the beginning and end points of real-life utterance—that is what already constitutes the problem of the whole. The process of speech, broadly understood as the process of inner and outer verbal life, goes on continuously. It knows neither beginning nor end. The outwardly actualized utterance is an island rising from the boundless sea of inner speech; the dimensions and forms of this island are determined by the particular situation of the utterance and its audience. Situation and audience make inner speech undergo actualization into some kind of specific outer expression that is directly included into an un verbalized behavioral context and in that context is amplified by actions, behavior, or verbal responses of other participants of the utterance. The full-fledged question, exclamation, command, request—these are the most typical forms of wholes in behavioral utterances. All of them (especially the command and request) require an extraverbal complement and, indeed, an extraverbal commencement. The very type of structure these little behavioral genres will achieve is determined by the effect, upon a word, of its coming up against the extraverbal milieu and against another word (i.e., the words of other people). Thus, the form a command will take is determined by the obstacles it may encounter, the degree of submissiveness expected, and so on. The structure of the genre in these instances will be in accord with the accidental and unique features of behavioral situations. Only when social custom and circumstances have fixed and stabilized certain forms in behavioral interchange to some appreciable degree, can one speak of specific types of structure in genres of behavioral speech. So, for instance, an entirely special type of structure has been worked out for the genre of the light and casual causerie of the drawing room where everyone “feels at home” and where the basic differentiation within the

gathering (the audience) is that between men and women. Here we find devised special forms of insinuation, half-sayings, allusions to little tales of an intentionally nonserious character, and so on. A different type of structure is worked out in the case of conversation between husband and wife, brother and sister, etc. In the case where a random assortment of people gathers—while waiting in a line or conducting some business—statements and exchanges of words will start and finish and be constructed in another, completely different way. Village sewing circles, urban carouses, workers' lunchtime chats, etc., will all have their own types. Each situation, fixed and sustained by social custom, commands a particular kind of organization of audience and, hence, a particular repertoire of little behavioral genres. The behavioral genre fits everywhere into the channel of social intercourse assigned to it and functions as an ideological reflection of its type, structure, goal, and social composition. The behavioral genre is a fact of the social milieu: of holiday, leisure time, and of social contact in the parlor, the workshop, etc. It meshes with that milieu and is delimited and defined by it in all its internal aspects.

The production process of labor and the processes of commerce know different forms of constructing utterances.

As for the forms of ideological intercourse in the strict sense of the term—forms for political speeches, political acts, laws, regulations, manifestos, and so forth; and forms for poetic utterances, scientific treatises, etc.—these have been the object of special investigation in rhetoric and poetics, but, as we have seen, these investigations have been completely divorced from the problem of language on the one hand, and from the problem of social intercourse on the other.⁹ Productive analysis of the forms of the whole of utterances as the real units in the stream of speech is possible only on a basis that regards the individual utterance as a purely sociological phenomenon. Marxist philosophy of language should and

must stand squarely on the utterance as the real phenomenon of language-speech and as a socio-ideological structure.

Now that we have outlined the sociological structure of the utterance, let us return to the two trends in philosophical linguistic thought and make a final summing up.

R. Shor, a Moscow linguist and an adherent of the second trend of thought in philosophy of language, ends a brief sketch of the contemporary state of linguistics with the following words:

"Language is not an artifact (*ergon*) but a natural and congenital activity of mankind"—so claimed the romanticist linguistics of the 19th century. Theoretical linguistics of modern times claims otherwise: "Language is not individual activity (*energeia*) but a cultural-historical legacy of mankind (*ergon*)."¹⁰

This conclusion is amazing in its bias and one-sidedness. On the factual side, it is completely untrue. Modern theoretical linguistics includes, after all, the Vossler school, one of Germany's most powerful movements in contemporary linguistic thought. It is impermissible to identify modern linguistics with only one of its trends.

From the theoretical point of view, both the thesis and the antithesis made up by Shor must equally be rejected, since they are equally inadequate to the real nature of language.

Let us conclude the argument with an attempt to formulate our own point of view in the following set of propositions:

1. *Language as a stable system of normatively identical forms is merely a scientific abstraction, productive only in connection with certain particular practical and theoretical goals. This abstraction is not adequate to the concrete reality of language.*
2. *Language is a continuous generative process implemented in the social-verbal interaction of speakers.*
3. *The laws of the generative process of language are not at all the laws of individual*

⁹On the topic of disjuncture of a literary work of art with conditions of artistic communication and the resulting inertness of the work, see our study, "Slovo v žizni i slovo v poezii" [Word in Life and Word in Poetry], *Zvezda*, 6 (1926). [Au.]

¹⁰R. Shor, "Krizis sovremennoj linivistiki" [The Crisis in Contemporary Linguistics], *Jafetičeskij sbornik*, V (1927), p. 71. [Au.]

psychology, but neither can they be divorced from the activity of speakers. The laws of language generation are sociological laws.

4. *Linguistic creativity does not coincide with artistic creativity nor with any other type of specialized ideological creativity. But, at the same time, linguistic creativity cannot be understood apart from the ideological meanings and values that fill it.* The generative process of language, as is true of any historical generative process, can be perceived as blind mechanical necessity, but it can also become "free necessity" once it has reached the position of a conscious and desired necessity.
5. *The structure of the utterance is a purely sociological structure.* The utterance, as such, obtains between speakers. The individual speech act (in the strict sense of the word "individual") is *contradictio in adjecto*.

CHAPTER 4 THEME AND MEANING IN LANGUAGE

Theme and meaning. The problem of active perception. Evaluation and meaning. The dialectics of meaning.

The problem of meaning is one of the most difficult problems of linguistics. Efforts toward solving this problem have revealed the one-sided monologism of linguistic science in particularly strong relief. The theory of passive understanding precludes any possibility of engaging the most fundamental and crucial features of meaning in language.

The scope of the present study compels us to limit ourselves to a very brief and perfunctory examination of this issue. We shall attempt only to map out the main lines of its productive treatment.

A definite and unitary meaning, a unitary significance, is a property belonging to any utterance *as a whole*. Let us call the significance of a whole utterance its *theme*.¹¹ The theme must be

unitary, otherwise we would have no basis for talking about any one utterance. The theme of an utterance itself is individual and unreproducible, just as the utterance itself is individual and unreproducible. The theme is the expression of the concrete, historical situation that engendered the utterance. The utterance "What time is it?" has a different meaning each time it is used, and hence, in accordance with our terminology, has a different theme, depending on the concrete historical situation ("historical" here in microscopic dimensions) during which it is enunciated and of which, in essence, it is a part.

It follows, then, that the theme of an utterance is determined not only by the linguistic forms that comprise it—words, morphological and syntactic structures, sounds, and intonation—but also by extraverbal factors of the situation. Should we miss these situational factors, we would be as little able to understand an utterance as if we were to miss its most important words. The theme of an utterance is concrete—as concrete as the historical instant to which the utterance belongs. *Only an utterance taken in its full concrete scope as an historical phenomenon possesses a theme.* That is what is meant by the theme of an utterance.

However, if we were to restrict ourselves to the historical unreproducibility and unitariness of each concrete utterance and its theme, we would be poor dialecticians. Together with theme or, rather, within the theme, there is also the *meaning* that belongs to an utterance. By meaning, as distinguished from theme, we understand all those aspects of the utterance that are *reproducible* and *self-identical* in all instances of repetition. Of course, these aspects are abstract: they have no concrete, autonomous existence in an artificially isolated form, but, at the same time, they do constitute an essential and inseparable part of the utterance. The theme of an utterance is, in essence, indivisible. The meaning of an utterance, on the contrary, does break down into a set of meanings belonging to each of the various linguistic elements of which the

¹¹The term is, of course, a provisional one. *Theme* in our sense embraces its implementation as well; therefore, our concept must not be confused with that of a theme in a liter-

ary work. The concept of "thematic unity" would be closer to what we mean. [Au.]

utterance consists. The unreproducible theme of the utterance "What time is it?" taken in its indissoluble connection with the concrete historical situation, cannot be divided into elements. The meaning of the utterance "What time is it?"—a meaning that, of course, remains the same in all historical instances of its enunciation—is made up of the meanings of the words, forms of morphological and syntactic union, interrogative intonations, etc., that form the construction of the utterance.

Theme is a complex, dynamic system of signs that attempts to be adequate to a given instant of generative process. Theme is reaction by the consciousness in its generative process to the generative process of existence. Meaning is the technical apparatus for the implementation of theme. Of course, no absolute, mechanistic boundary can be drawn between theme and meaning. There is no theme without meaning and no meaning without theme. Moreover, it is even impossible to convey the meaning of a particular word (say, in the course of teaching another person a foreign language) without having made it an element of theme, i.e., without having constructed an "example" utterance. On the other hand, a theme must base itself on some kind of fixity of meaning; otherwise it loses its connection with what came before and what comes after—i.e., it altogether loses its significance.

The study of the languages of prehistoric peoples and modern semantic paleontology have reached a conclusion about the so-called "complex-ness" of prehistoric thinking. Prehistoric man used one word to denote a wide variety of phenomena that, from our modern point of view, are in no way related to one another. What is more, the same word could be used to denote diametrically opposite notions—top and bottom, earth and sky, good and bad, and so on. Declares Marr:

Suffice it to say that contemporary paleontological study of language has given us the possibility of reaching, through its investigations, back to an age when a tribe had only one word at its disposal for usage in all the meanings of which mankind was aware.¹²

¹²N. Ja. Marr, *Japhetic Theory*, (1926), p. 278. [Au.]

"But was such an all-meaning word in fact a word?" we might be asked. Yes, precisely a word. If, on the contrary, a certain sound complex had only one single, inert, and invariable meaning, then such a complex would not be a word, not a sign, but only a signal.¹³ *Multiplicity of meanings is the constitutive feature of word.* As regards the all-meaning word of which Marr speaks, we can say the following: *such a word, in essence, has virtually no meaning; it is all theme.* Its meaning is inseparable from the concrete situation of its implementation. This meaning is different each time, just as the situation is different each time. Thus the theme, in this case, subsumed meaning under itself and dissolved it before meaning had any chance to consolidate and congeal. But as language developed further, as its stock of sound complexes expanded, meaning began to congeal along lines that were basic and most frequent in the life of the community for the thematic application of this or that word.

Theme, as we have said, is an attribute of a whole utterance only; it can belong to a separate word only inasmuch as that word operates in the capacity of a whole utterance. So, for instance, Marr's all-meaning word always operates in the capacity of a whole (and has no fixed meanings precisely for that reason). Meaning, on the other hand, belongs to an element or aggregate of elements in their relation to the whole. Of course, if we entirely disregard this relation to the whole (i.e., to the utterance), we shall entirely forfeit meaning. That is the reason why a sharp boundary between theme and meaning cannot be drawn.

The most accurate way of formulating the interrelationship between theme and meaning is in the following terms. Theme is the *upper, actual limit of linguistic significance*; in essence, only theme means something definite. Meaning is the *lower limit of linguistic significance*. Meaning, in

¹³It is clear that even that earliest of all words, about which Marr speaks, is not in any way like a signal (to which a number of investigators endeavor to reduce language). After all, a signal that meant everything would be minimally capable of carrying out the function of a signal. The capacity of a signal to adapt to the changing conditions of a situation is very low. By and large, change in a signal means replacement of one signal by another. [Au.]

essence, means nothing; it only possesses potentiality—the possibility of having a meaning within a concrete theme. Investigation of the meaning of one or another linguistic element can proceed, in terms of our definition, in one of two directions: either in the direction of the upper limit, toward theme, in which case it would be investigation of the contextual meaning of a given word within the conditions of a concrete utterance; or investigation can aim toward the lower limit, the limit of meaning, in which case it would be investigation of the meaning of a word in the system of language or, in other words, investigation of a dictionary word.

A distinction between theme and meaning and a proper understanding of their interrelationship are vital steps in constructing a genuine science of meanings. Total failure to comprehend their importance has persisted to the present day. Such discriminations as those between a word's *usual* and *occasional* meanings, between its central and lateral meanings, between its denotation and connotation, etc., are fundamentally unsatisfactory. The basic tendency underlying all such discriminations—the tendency to ascribe greater value to the central, usual aspect of meaning, presupposing that that aspect really does exist and is stable—is completely fallacious. Moreover, it would leave theme unaccounted for, since theme, of course, can by no means be reduced to the status of the occasional or lateral meaning of words.

The distinction between theme and meaning acquires particular clarity in connection with the *problem of understanding*, which we shall now briefly touch upon.

We have already had occasion to speak of the philosophical type of passive understanding, which excludes response in advance. Any genuine kind of understanding will be active and will constitute the germ of a response. Only active understanding can grasp theme—a generative process

can be grasped only with the aid of another generative process.

To understand another person's utterance means to orient oneself with respect to it, to find the proper place for it in the corresponding context. For each word of the utterance that we are in process of understanding, we, as it were, lay down a set of our own answering words. The greater their number and weight, the deeper and more substantial our understanding will be.

Thus each of the distinguishable significant elements of an utterance and the entire utterance as a whole entity are translated in our minds into another, active and responsive, context. *Any true understanding is dialogic in nature.* Understanding is to utterance as one line of a dialogue is to the next. Understanding strives to match the speaker's word with a *counter word*. Only in understanding a word in a foreign tongue is the attempt made to match it with the "same" word in one's own language.

Therefore, there is no reason for saying that meaning belongs to a word as such. In essence, meaning belongs to a word in its position between speakers; that is, meaning is realized only in the process of active, responsive understanding. Meaning does not reside in the word or in the soul of the speaker or in the soul of the listener. Meaning is the *effect of interaction between speaker and listener produced via the material of a particular sound complex*. It is like an electric spark that occurs only when two different terminals are hooked together. Those who ignore theme (which is accessible only to active, responsive understanding) and who, in attempting to define the meaning of a word, approach its lower, stable, self-identical limit, want, in effect, to turn on a light bulb after having switched off the current. Only the current of verbal intercourse endows a word with the light of meaning.

Handwritten notes:
The interaction
what he said rather
if meaning is
interaction and NOT
the sign how can
the sign be